

Title: “Here’s what I want YOU to know about ME!”: Using Optional Student Profile Data to Explore Student Writers’ Identities

Session format: Workshop

Summary (500 words or less):

In this workshop, we take up the question, “What kinds of identity construction happen when we ask our clients for specific information about themselves?” For the past two years, our writing center has collected this kind of optional, student-generated data via our Student Profile tool, in which students were able to indicate their preferred name/nickname, a guide to pronouncing their name, the gender pronouns they use to describe themselves, any language(s) they speak and/or write, and anything else they would like our consultants to know about them as writers/learners. In this presentation, we’ll share a brief summary of the Student Profile data we have collected so far, our initial analysis of what we think this data reveals about our clients and their positioning as student writers in higher education, and what new questions this data raises for us.

We will also invite our audience to join into this analysis, both considering what it feels like to be a student writer faced with our Student Profile tool and what it feels like to be a writing consultant with access to this information. What information about yourself as a writer and a person would you choose to share with a writing center and why? How might your writing consultancy practice be influenced by what information students choose to reveal about themselves? How does the personal information our writing center clients have shared with us align with—or challenge—our understandings of college student identity? What does this data suggest about the relationships between writing and personal identity?

We hope our presentation and interactive discussion will be an opportunity for us to investigate together how writing centers can be attentive and responsive to students’ shifting, multiple identities. (284 words)

Very brief summary (50 words):

In this workshop, we explore the question, “What kinds of identity construction happen when we ask our clients for information about themselves?” We’ll share a summary of our data, invite our audience to engage in analysis with us, and explore implications for developing writing center practices responsive to students’ identities. (50 words)