
**Sabbatical Proposal for:
Dr. LaToya Watkins, Professor of English
Sabbatical Leave Period: August 2025 - December 2025**

Abstract

I will use this sabbatical period to investigate various writing workshop structures and methods to determine the most current and best practices for undergraduate student engagement and participation in the workshop setting. I will also comb through research on the subject and meet with writing faculty to gain a sense of writing workshop culture and teaching trends. Ultimately, I will use this research, experiences, and open educational resources to create and pilot a virtual composition course that includes a strong workshop component as well as redesign my virtual creative writing course (that will, of course, align with Collin College and the State of Texas Student Learning Outcomes) to appeal to students in ways that promote engagement and participation and enrich the student learning experience.

Students may come to a writing task with stories to tell, examples to share, and arguments; however, the fear of not writing “correctly” can be paralyzing. If student-centered creative writing workshops help creative writers to quickly understand their own individual strengths and weaknesses, they should also help composition students in the same way.

Most writing workshop environments value feedback and criticism over scored-grading, ownership over individualism, and instructor facilitation over lecturing. Papers marked with comments and criticism, instead of grades, can teach students to appreciate the process of becoming a writer and steer them away from the idea of being judged on what they are learning. Centering the students and allowing them the responsibility of engaging with their peers as writers and critics, promotes ownership of the writing and enhances the class experience as a whole. Facilitation, opposed to singular authority, encourages students to share thoughts and concerns as readers and writers.

Collin College will benefit from this research and work as it will enhance the learning experience of student writers, making them stronger and more confident as they move through Collin courses and beyond. This goal aligns with the college’s strategic goal of creating and implementing pathways that enrich the student experience.