
BRING IT!



Take a quick spin with us through what's been happening with **SpeakOut!** and the Community Literacy Center as we launch our **Fall 2017 season!**



WHAT
YOU'LL
FIND
INSIDE...

- **Words from intern blogs -- read about their thoughts as we open up this semester of workshops.**
- **Feminisms and Rhetorics Conference in Dayton**
- **Calendar**
- **Light moment -- ahhhhhhhhh**

I resonated with the point, “SpeakOut! recognizes that many program participants have had negative experiences with traditional schooling” (Jacobi & Johnston, 175). It seems as though it’s been rather difficult to diffuse the traditional teacher-student dynamic that a lot of the writers are used to, especially in a setting where writing is present. I think that I’m doing a pretty good job at acting as a peer and fellow-writer rather than as a facilitator or teacher; I write, laugh, share, and chat along with the other women writers. But, at the same time, I’m having a hard time getting the women to 1) stop raising their hands! (for some reason, it bugs me), 2) stop calling the workshop “class,” and 3) come to the workshop—I think there’s an idea behind it that we “have to write poetry.” I also think that a lot of these writers are scared to turn anything in for publication because they’re nervous that it will be corrected or critiqued. And maybe they haven’t had the best experiences with that (I know that I haven’t always had the best time when I feel like my work is being judged or graded—even in academic settings). I am making a conscious effort to make these workshops feel more like an art space and a secure place of sharing and self-expression, rather than an environment where they feel as though they’re judged or critiqued.

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BREE

I expect that trauma is a challenge that will come up in writing and conversations in workshops this semester as it has in the past.

This is a challenge in the sense that it is always an extremely serious and sensitive topic and we, as the facilitators, need to be able to navigate it in a way that is beneficial for the individual and the group as a whole. This can also create other challenges – for example, if topics such as suicide ideation come up or if someone in the group reacts negatively to another writer’s sharing of something traumatic, these could create serious challenges for us and for the group. Because we’ve really only had one workshop so far, this has not yet been an issue. However, it has a very real possibility of coming up in the future and is something to keep in mind.

I think the other difficult thing is having a trust that is built and maintained between the facilitators of SpeakOut! and the writers, as we come from such different backgrounds. I have never dealt with use or drug abuse, and while my home life was difficult when my parents were divorcing, but it was never anything like many of our writers have been through. In the same regard, many of the writers haven't been able to pursue higher education opportunities like Sam, Ryann, or myself, or been through the same situations. As such, lacking those kinds of similarities make it so that trust in sharing work can be intimidating, especially when it's private to the self. So, this week, to try and confront that challenge of building and maintaining trust between writers, I offered some of my work to be edited for feedback as well. I talked to Kelly, and we discussed how it would be important to bring something that we were invested in, so that we had the same kind of vulnerability in the work being edited. I emphasized very heavily that this wasn't an assignment or homework or required, but if these writers were trusting us to give feedback on their work, I thought that returning that would help connect the group.

**KELLY
KUHN**

**Kelly writes with the men in
Larimer County Jail**

LANEY

Laney writes with youth (boys and girls) in Turning Point

As a kid and teenager myself I struggled with many things and didn't make the best choices. Sure, I can't relate to the kids I work with in a lot of ways but I know there are a few things I could talk with them about on a personal level. The difference is that I have been able to write about and share my experiences to many people. And these kids don't get a chance to share their thoughts and feelings with those outside of Turning Point. I hadn't realized how important sharing your story with other people (not your social workers or therapist) was. How healing it could be. It dawned on me between writing this morning by myself and reading this article why writing was so important to me. IT was a chance for me to speak about things that are hard to share.

That's why these workshops are so important for people in confined areas; those that can't just tell their story to anyone. It is a way for them to give themselves a voice. We (my volunteers and I) are constantly reiterating the fact that this is for them. This is so they can share their life stories or their thoughts or even silly jokes they made up. A lot of them come from places they aren't listened to so we work really hard to make sure we listen to all of them, even if they are just talking to us.

I have had a hard time eliminating the teacher role, especially since I work with youth who have English class on the regular.

As well as, understanding the role of the youth and not over stepping my boundary in a therapeutic perspective. Which is quite a challenge for me because my major does involve a lot of therapy, but I am not a license therapist. It is hard for my personal perspective because all I want to do is help all of the kids that participate and be able to give the resources on how to deal with their personal trauma. Trauma has been hard because my youth are very open to sharing their circumstances; which is just sometimes hard and sad to hear what they have gone through at such a young age. Having previous experience with youth who have experience trauma has been very beneficial when handling trigger points during workshops. I have had to apply a lot of patiences, flexibility, and compassion when working with the youth.

SHELBY

Shelby writes with youth (boys and girls) in Remington House

ZOE

I must be aware as a facilitator of the backgrounds of the people with whom I am dealing, and as we discussed, their personal experiences with literacy in the past and what forms of literacy they are familiar with. Given that most everyone in my workshop chooses to come repeatedly, I'm assuming that the men in my workshops have had positive experiences with literacy in the past, but as the article points out, our relationship to literacy and which different forms we are drawn to changes over time. For now, I have decided that the best course of action when presenting material to my workshop is to present diverse voices and to have the focus of the supplementary pieces I bring in be to inspire the writers. At the moment, I am more concerned with the message the works I bring in are imparting to the writers than anything else. In order to make the workshop not feel like school, the focus is not on the poem, but rather the themes within the poem and what that brings up for everyone in the room.

Then, a final line of questioning: what were we trying to get out of this experience. Each of the facilitators touched on the importance of public engagement and with that the discussion became generative: the writers began suggesting ways we could work toward public engagement. One writer suggested we try to get on CSU's radio station and another suggested we read some of the pieces rather than just distributing books.

The writers' questions were specific and insightful, and as much as I was thrilled that they were interested I couldn't help but feel a little embarrassed that I assumed they wouldn't be curious about how our work continued beyond just the creation of the journal.

Using this week's reading as a framework for this conversation, **it became apparent that if we really want to champion these all too often silenced voices, if we want to encourage agency and autonomous thinking, we should make a more concerted effort to include the writers in both the larger goals and smaller details of the project.**

KELLY MARTIN



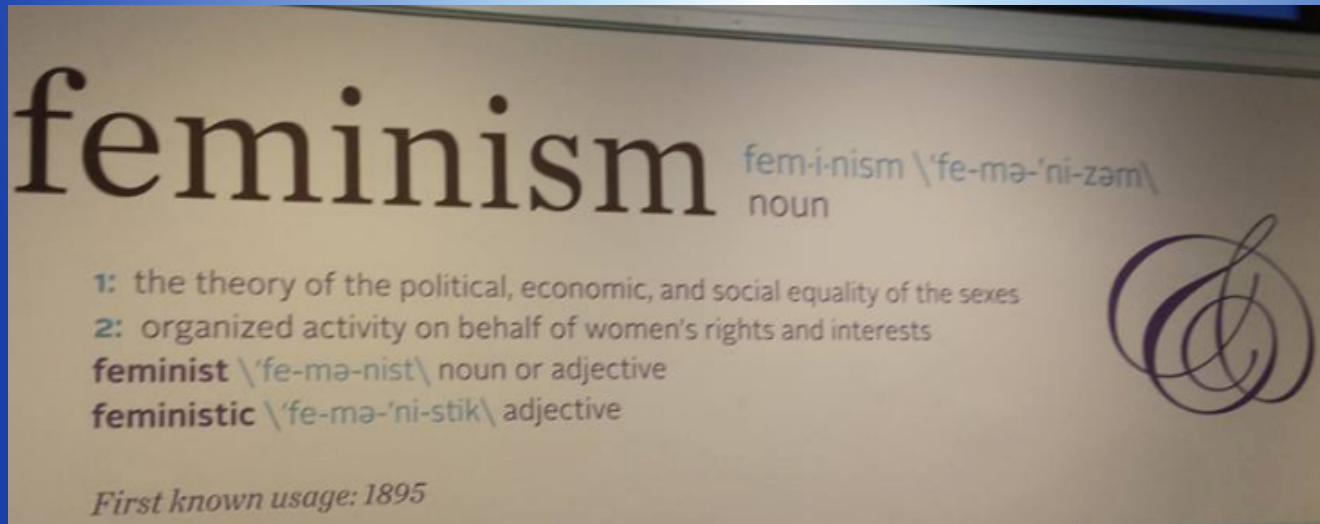
Keynote speaker, Claudia Rankine

Have you read CITIZEN, yet?

GREAT book for poetry prompts!

CLC Director, Tobi Jacobi, attended the Feminisms and Rhetorics Annual Conference in Dayton, OH, where scholars and community members participate in and contribute to a lively exchange of dialogue and action concerning feminist rhetorics and rhetorical practices as they intersect with local, national, and international human rights movements.

When you see Tobi next, ask her how it was!



October

Tuesday, October 17:

4pm to 530pm

**VOLUNTEER TRAINING
SESSION I**

Location TBD

Wednesday, October 18 to
Saturday, October 21

UC Boulder Conference on
Community Writing

what's Happening

what's Happening

Tuesday, November 14:

4pm to 530pm

**VOLUNTEER TRAINING
SESSION II**

Location TBD

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 10

**LAST MANUSCRIPT
SUBMISSION**

November

December

**Final readings for all groups
week of December 11.**

Be thinking of who you would
like to invite -- for jail
readings, we need to submit
legal name and birthday
before event for
authorization to enter.

what's Happening

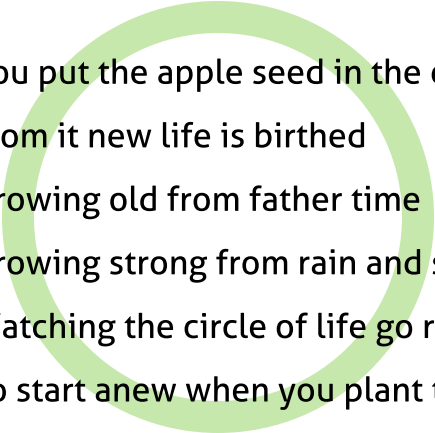
A moment of lightness

because we may need it this week...



Cycle by Yoshi

(Writing group for LCJ Men)



You put the apple seed in the earth
From it new life is birthed
Growing old from father time
Growing strong from rain and sunshine
Watching the circle of life go round
To start anew when you plant the next
Seed in the ground

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