

The Feminization of the Writing Center

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Values

- Nurtures lifelong academic skills.
- Embracing femininity.
- Removing ourselves from a world of highly patriarchal academia.
 - Patriarchal academia refers to male-dominated power structures in academics.
 - Underrepresentation of women.

Challenges

- People tend to view femininity as unacademic or not intellectual.
- People expect to get a different experience out of the writing center
 - E.g.
 - Proofreading
 - Editing papers
- Seeing “mothering” as “smothering.”

What is feminization?

Something having more characteristics of or association to women.

Feminist Mothering

- A practice that seeks to dismantle the norms of patriarchal motherhood.
 - The idea that there is only one way to be a mother.
- Popularized by Andrea O'Reilly
- In the writing center, “feminist mothering” promotes **listening**, **reflection**, and **collaboration**.

Practice

- In the classroom, this can look like **discussion-based** learning, **collaborative** assignments, and **consciousness-raising** activities.
 - Incorporates the “whole of one’s identity” (Vanderbilt), key to feminist pedagogy.
 - It’s important to view the emotional parts of learning as intellectual.

Outcomes

- The strengths of writing centers and classrooms lie in femininity and “mothering.”
- Creating comfortable environments for students that promote conversation.
- Supports the goals of the university.
 - Writers that can access their emotions are better writers.

