

Principles for Symposium Discussions

[https://www.ndsu.edu/english/english_extracurriculars/writing_studies /](https://www.ndsu.edu/english/english_extracurriculars/writing_studies/)

WS-L welcomes all advocates for knowledge creation and action-making through collaboration, conversation, and information-sharing.

Openness and Respect

All conversations on the listserv are treated as professional discussions. Participants should approach issues and topics with openness: the willingness to hear and understand views different from our own. This principle asks that each of us recognize the limits of our own experience and perspective and to be self-aware about the limits and reach of one's own view. In turn, as we all work to self-educate and learn, we should give others the space they need to acquire knowledge.

These conversations can sometimes feel uncomfortable, and we invite productive discomfort that helps us unsettle or question beliefs or assumptions. Discomfort is part of a process of navigating new experiences and environments. Infliction of deliberate harm, shaming, or efforts to provoke others is unproductive.

Listening with Intention and Participating to Learn

The conversations sponsored on the listserv enable us to listen to and engage with a range of conversations from people whom we might not otherwise interact with. Such listening can help us figure out our own ideas, expand our horizons into acknowledging how different ideas fit into our own, or to formulate new thoughts as we learn from others' ideas and positions. In this conversation, there is space to adjust perspective as we listen to ideas that may be different from our own and to develop new language as we engage with one another.

Listening with intention requires that we hear what is being said without attempting to formulate a response, always acknowledging that all voices should be/need to be heard. Listening means seeking clarification if a position is unclear or a question has gone unanswered. We invite participants to specifically acknowledge others' contributions to their own thinking and to amplify others' questions and comments that might have been missed.

Deliberative and Mindful Professionalism

The WS-L Symposium will be an opportunity to discuss professional issues, exchange perspectives, and enrich our collective understanding of key issues in the field of writing studies. In addition to *what* we write, share and argue, *how* we write, share and argue should be a continuous concern and subject of inquiry.

Deliberative and mindful professionalism means exploring what several perspectives on an issue may be, but does not include intentionally provoking others on the list.

In a recent piece in *Constellations*, journal editor Alexandra Hidalgo wrote about "disagreeing without rupturing relationships" when we challenge others' ideas. Participation in the symposium is an acknowledgement that the listserv is a community and the goal of conversation is to strengthen, not erode, community.

Operationalizing these Principles

Symposium participants should recognize any message that is submitted for the conversation is assumed to be operating with good intentions, and a generous application of the standards of evaluation will be applied. When there is a question about the appropriateness of a submission, the post will be reviewed by the WS-L Functions group.

In the spirit of these principles, list administrators will be reviewing posts before they go out on WS-L and posters should be aware that not all messages will be approved for distribution to the list. The administrators and symposium facilitators will apply the principles laid out here to determine whether a message will be included in the symposium discussion.

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