

CWCA 2018

[University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan]

Anti-Oppression Work in Writing Centres:

Case Studies and Future Directions

RESOURCE BOOKLET

Presented by:

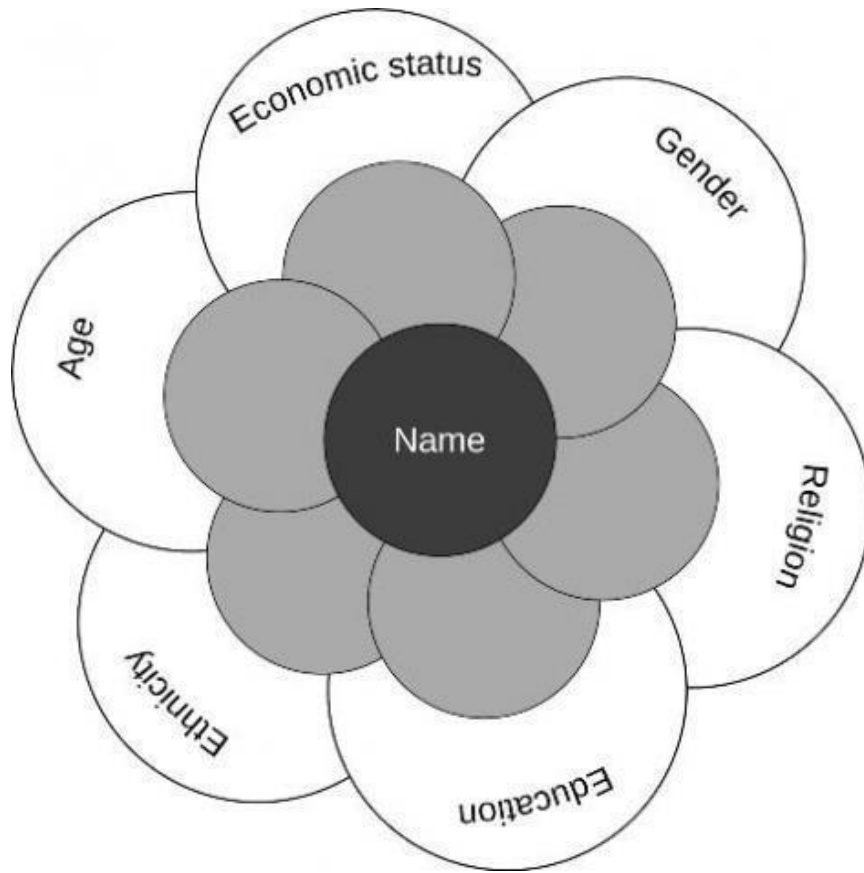
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Huron 
AT WESTERN

Flower of Power



Think about the default settings in most of our communities (middle-class, male, Christian or atheist, Caucasian, Boomer)

Now think about where you fit the dominant demographic and where you diverge from it.

This can help you start to think through your positionality and the **intersections of oppression**: the idea that different axes of privilege and oppression intersect and overlap with each other in particular ways.

PRONOUNS



A pronoun is a word that replaces a noun or noun phrase. Using pronouns correctly eliminates unnecessary noun repetition in your writing.

Unnecessary repetition:

e.g., Mary¹ is in Mary's¹ office, but Mary¹ asked not to be interrupted.

Pronoun use eliminates repetition:

e.g., Mary¹ is in her² office, but she² asked not to be interrupted.

- 1 Noun
- 2 Pronoun

Common Pronouns

Personal Pronouns (the most common type)

Personal pronouns refer to people and things; they can be singular or plural, and their form often changes according to their grammatical function in a sentence, as seen in the table below.

	Pronoun as Subject (Subjective)	Pronoun as Object (Objective)	Possessive
Singular	I you he she it	me you him her it	my/mine your/yours his her/hers its
Plural	we you they	us you them	our/ours your/yours their/theirs

(Adapted from *The Little Brown Compact Handbook*, 3rd Ed., J.E. Aaron, M. McArthur)

Demonstrative Pronouns (this, that, these, those)

Demonstrative pronouns identify or point to a noun.

e.g., *This* lab report is due tomorrow.

e.g., *That* looks like the computer I used to have.

e.g., Put *these* pencils on your desk.

e.g., *Those* were the best days of my life.

Relative Pronouns (who, whom, whose, which, that)

Relative pronouns begin adjective clauses and usually refer to the noun that comes right before them.

e.g., *Rachael is a manager whom everyone respects.*

e.g., *I don't know who is responsible for setting up the lab equipment.*

e.g., *You need to talk to the students whose laptops were stolen.*

e.g., *My Sociology textbook, which costs \$125, is full of factual and grammatical errors.*

e.g., *The new software lacks many of the benefits that the company promised.*



Using Pronouns Clearly and Correctly

Pronouns Should Agree in Number

Generally, singular pronouns refer to singular nouns, and plural pronouns refer to plural nouns. Lack of agreement can lead to awkwardness or confusion.

Incorrect e.g., *The company¹ announced that they² had been sold.*

Correct e.g., *The company¹ announced that it³ had been sold.*

1 Singular noun

2 Plural pronoun

3 Singular pronoun



It is now considered acceptable to use the plural pronouns (*they, them, and their*) to refer to singular generic nouns (a doctor, a student, an IT specialist, etc.) whose gender is undetermined or non-binary. Doing so avoids the grammatically correct but stylistically awkward repetition of *he or she*, and *him or her*. It also ensures inclusivity in your writing because it avoids making assumptions about gender.

e.g., *Someone left their jacket in the theatre.*

Pronouns Should Agree in Person

Throughout your document, you should try to maintain a consistent point of view by avoiding shifts between first, second, and third person pronouns.

Incorrect e.g., *When you¹ go to class, one² should have our³ homework ready.*

Correct e.g., *When you¹ go to class, you¹ should have your¹ homework ready.*

1 Second person

2 Third person

3 First person

Pronouns Should Have Clear References

When there are two or more nouns in your sentence, your reader should not have to think twice when linking the pronoun to its associated noun. The following examples demonstrate unclear pronoun references and potential revisions to improve clarity.

Unclear *e.g., Although the car hit the tree, it was not damaged.*

It is unclear whether *it* refers to the car or the tree.

Clear *e.g., The car was not damaged even though it hit the tree.*

It clearly refers to the car.

Unclear *e.g., I have attached some data on euthanasia in my email. I urge you to consider this seriously.*

It is unclear whether *this* refers to *euthanasia* or *some data*.

Clear *e.g., I urge you to consider this information carefully.*

This clearly refers to *information*.

References

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Additional Resources

- Glow Centre for Sexual and Gender Diversity: <https://uwaterloo.ca/feds/feds-services/glow-centre-sexual-and-gender-diversity>
- University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Gender Pronouns: <https://uwm.edu/lgbtrc/support/gender-pronouns/>
- University of Waterloo's Writing and Communication Centre Learning Resources: <https://uwaterloo.ca/writing-and-communication-centre/resources>
- Lama Abdallah poem reading, *Fluent in Excuses*: <http://www.cbc.ca/player/play/1119746627716/>