

Alumni Spotlight: Brittany Frye

Brittany Frye, a WRTC major, headed west after graduation into the heart of Oklahoma to take on her new position as a training coordinator at Fast Enterprise, LLC. At Fast Enterprises, Brittany takes on a lot of different responsibilities within the company, such as working with business analysts and developers, training end users to operate the company's integrated tax software, editing, writing documentation, and creating presentations.

WRTC classes have helped Brittany with her many roles at Fast Enterprises. One class that was particularly useful, according to Brittany, was the Lexia practicum where she learned to analyze all different kinds of writing styles.

Another class she found helpful was Online Design II. In Online Design II with Dr. Hawthorne, Brittany said everyone worked together to build websites. This experience has helped her in her new position. She stated, "I work with software everyday, so I have to keep up with my tech skills."



As for the change in scenery, she said living in Oklahoma was "definitely a bit of a transition." One of these differences involves the tornado sirens that are regularly sounded throughout the city.

"Just three weeks ago we had one," Brittany explained. "I went into my bathtub and I hid there. It's a beacon and they put it through the whole city. It's really loud."

Though she is adjusting to life in Oklahoma, she also stated that the location is not permanent. Fast Enterprises has offices all over the world, and Brittany acknowledged that they could relocate her at any second. While she will most likely stay in Oklahoma City until next year, afterward they may send her to another site.

For students still at JMU, Brittany encourages them to get as much experience as possible. "Go to the career fairs, and go to all meetings that STC provides with guest speakers, because that information is helpful when you're applying for jobs and interviews," said Brittany. "Preparation is key."

For Brittany, her hard work and preparation at JMU have resulted in a new career, city, opportunities, and a bright future ahead.

by Kelly Roden

The JMU Chapter of STC has taken advantage of WordPress with its own site. There, you can find our schedule, meeting notes, contact information, and previous editions of EmD@sh. Please visit us at jmustc.wordpress.com If you would like to get involved with managing our site, contact Mackenzie Kelley at kelleymk@dukes.jmu.edu.



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Written Accents: Grammatical Error or Personal Style?

When communicating across cultures, it is important to recognize and understand the "written accent." This term refers to the small differences between the writing of native English speakers and non-native speakers (even ones with high proficiency levels). These written accents come in many forms, and they typically reflect a discord between the writer's native language and English phonetics. For example, you may notice an expression that seems to be worded unnaturally or have missing or extra articles (e.g. a, an, the). Often, native English speakers view writing from non-native speakers as error-prone because it may not have the same cadence or grammatical fluency as writing from someone who has been speaking English since birth. It is more appropriate, though, to think of these "errors" as you would think of a foreign accent when listening to a non-native speaker talk. Although minor grammatical discrepancies may creep into their speech, for the most part these small issues don't impede your ability to understand them.

Any piece of writing reflects the writer's personal style and tone, and is influenced by his or her previous experiences, continued on page 2 (Written Accents...)



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Written Accents...

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so it stands to reason that non-native speakers would write in a way that reflects their language background. Sandarshi Gunawardena, the Assistant Director of International Programs and Services at George Mason University, sums up the written accent, saying, "The way you write is not necessarily the language you learn but the values and beliefs and the cultural norms that influence the patterns of thinking that then influence the writing... so there are lots of things that are hidden."¹ Because these discrepancies may be "hidden," it could be difficult to pinpoint them and know when to correct them.

The University of Washington offers some guidelines for professors when assessing writing from non-native English speakers, which can be transferred to communicating in the business world as well. They suggest that you "learn to read through error." That is, don't let the written accent distract you from the thoughts of the writer.² If you feel that it is necessary to mark up the writing, do so sparingly. Mark the errors that you see, but give the writer the freedom to revise on his or her own. If the errors are serious, provide a more detailed explanation, so the writer understands how to improve in the future. The level of direction that you give to non-native English speakers depends on the job that you have and whether editing is part of your duties. It is always critical, though, to value a written accent as a reflection of a writer's background, and to focus on the ideas that the writer presents, rather than insignificant errors.

by Emily Hudson

EMD@SH™ is produced four times a year. We invite you to submit articles that you wish to be considered for publication. By submitting an article, you permit us to run it in an issue of this newsletter and other STC publications. Please let us know if your article appears in other publications.

Submit your article or ideas to the EMD@SH™ Editor. For reprint policy, go to <http://orgs.jmu.edu/stc/portfolio>.

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Kelly Roden
JMU STC President

A Message from the President

I would like to welcome everyone back to JMU for the spring semester! I hope that everyone had a safe and relaxing winter break, and is refreshed and ready to begin the second half of the year! To start off the new

year, this issue of EmD@sh focuses on expanding our horizon of communicating across the globe with the theme of intercultural communication. Intercultural communication plays an ever-increasing role in the workplace as our lives are interconnected now more than ever. Learning how to work with translators, to market yourself in other cultures, and to use technologies that assist with communication barriers are all important skills to learn when looking to enter the workforce.

Our meetings for this semester will also help to develop skills for the workplace. This semester we will be having our welcome back meeting and an internship providers meeting where various internship providers will come to talk about internship opportunities with their organizations. We will also have a meeting on Illustrator, salary negotiations, job and health benefits, and an HTML competition. We will end with our semester wrap-up meeting where there will be free pizza and an election for the new members of the JMU STC administrative council for the 2015-2016 academic year.

I am happy to continue serving as JMU STC's president for the remainder of the semester. If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact me at rodenka@dukes.jmu.edu or our Publications Committee Officer Mackenzie Kelley at kelleymk@dukes.jmu.edu. Have a wonderful semester.

10 Tips for Better Intercultural Communication

1. Be open to people of other cultures and their communication styles.
2. Listen and pay attention to what is said. Present yourself in a polite and respectful manner.
3. Think about the other's perspective. Consider how the situation might look to the other person.
4. Try to ignore stereotypes when speaking to someone of a different culture.
5. Find common ground to help break the ice.



Photo courtesy of www.natcom.org

6. Don't be afraid to ask for clarification. Avoid confrontational responses such as "You phrased Topic A in a confusing way," and instead say things such as "I am not understanding Topic A."
7. Avoid acronyms such as "ASAP" or idioms such as "beat around the bush." These are commonly used in the English language, but they may not make sense to others.
8. Use proper grammar and avoid jargon and slang.
9. Pay attention to nonverbal communication. It is often more expressive than verbal communication. However, keep in mind that the nonverbal expressions of other cultures may have different meanings.
10. Give the benefit of the doubt. If someone says something offensive, he or she may not have meant it in the way you took it. Kindly explain your issue.