



### **WRTC 488: Writing in the Health Sciences | Fall 2020**

In fall semester 2020, a group of students worked with the JMU-affiliate Claude Moore Precious Time (CMPT), “a pediatric respite care program that provides the families of children with special needs an opportunity to take a break from the demands of caregiving” (<http://www.iihhs.jmu.edu/precioustime/>). CMPT wanted to establish “How people with disabilities should be properly, that is, respectfully and inclusively, referred to in daily discourse?” To determine this, students needed to undertake several tasks.

First, students prepared a review of the literature exploring the language of disability. Next, students wrote a formal summary of CMPT and community member interviews to capture different perspectives on terminology and CMPT’s language usage. Then, students composed a final report providing thoughtful and practical recommendations for CMPT going forward. Finally, students delivered a formal presentation on the findings of the report.

While the report and accompanying recommendations proved to be of real value for CMPT, the process of producing them was enormously beneficial for the students, as well. Most of the students had never produced a literature review, a proficiency that is valuable for individuals working in any field. The students also had to develop questions and run focus groups so they could evaluate community members’ opinions about what language would be most appropriate for CMPT to use. Finally, students learned how to synthesize different types of information and present recommendations to key members of the community and organization.