

Conference Schedule – Saturday

Saturday, April 4
Media Exhibit 10:30 am – 5:30 pm

| | |
|---------------|--|
| 8:30 – 9:00 | Registration |
| 9:00 – 10:15 | Opening Remarks & Keynote Address |
| 10:30 – 11:45 | Concurrent Sessions 1 |
| 12:00 – 1:00 | Lunch, Awards, Announcement of new NEWCA Steering Committee Members |
| 1:00 – 1:30 | NEWCA’s Birthday Celebration |
| 1:45 – 3:00 | Concurrent Sessions 2 |
| 3:15 – 4:30 | Concurrent Sessions 3 |
| 4:30 – 5:30 | Reception & NEWCA Steering Committee Meeting |

Conference Schedule – Sunday

Sunday, April 5

| | |
|---------------|---|
| 8:30 – 10:00 | Breakfast Reception |
| 9:00 – 10:00 | SIG Meetings & NEWACC Meeting |
| 10:00 – 11:00 | SIG Meetings |
| 9:00 – 11:30 | Northeast Writing Across the Curriculum Consortium (NEWACC) Workshop & Business Meeting |

Concurrent Sessions

Session 1

10:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

1. Creating an 'Ecology of Action' in the Writing Center - workshop

Harry Denny, Director, St John's University
Chris Leary, Associate Director, St. John's University
Jennifer Fontanez, Consultant, St. John's University
Hadia Sheerazi, Consultant, St. John's University

For decades, ecologists have told us that sustainable ecosystems have multiple intelligent feedback mechanisms that account for and respond to fluctuations and patterns within and beyond their boundaries. Informed in part by the ecological work of Gregory Bateson and the ecomposition work of Derek Owens, the Writing Centers at St. John's University implement (and continually revise) mixed methods of assessment and training that are organic and local to the sites, groups, and individuals under scrutiny. In our interactive workshop, we will present "datasets" that suggest how these mixed methods of research -- empirical, qualitative, critical -- can be used to drive renewal and sustainability in our writing centers. Further, we will suggest how to learn from the real-world successes in our writing centers and how we can create social ties that advance diversity and self-management. After providing a cross-section of our methodology, small breakout groups will be prompted to speculate on the possibilities and limitations of our approach; we also hope they will share relevant details from their home institutions. Because the feedback loops we depict in our presentation require input from voices inside and outside of our institution, we expect that the ideas generated by participants in our interactive panel will feed directly into our assessment and training protocols.

2. Reversing the Roles: Non-native English Speaking Tutors – panel

Svetla Marinova, Tutor , Adelphi University
Stefan Yankov, Tutor, Adelphi University

This presentation will discuss the impact WC staff diversity has on the quality of tutoring English and the image of the writing center at our institution. Questions raised address whether good English tutoring skills can be learned or necessarily stem from one's early language acquisition. Revisiting the history of our WC and reflecting on the opinions of international tutees and tutors will be an incentive for other WC representatives at the conference to share their experiences working with tutors from diverse backgrounds.

Conversational Fluency and the Writing Center – panel

Jeff Scott, Tutor, University of Vermont
Zoe Chapman, Tutor, University of Vermont

Writing centers have traditionally been a place for students to work on written material. As we have found this year, the writing center can also be a place for ESL students to practice conversational speaking and listening. In this section, we will present some strategies we used with one ESL student over the course of the academic year as she worked to improve her conversational English.

3. What Would You Like to Work on Today?: Re-thinking Professionalization in the Writing Center – roundtable

Janell Haynes, Consultant, Syracuse University
Amber Luce, Consultant, Syracuse University
Kiffen Dosch, Consultant, Syracuse University

This roundtable discussion will examine the effects on a writing center's environment when that center casts itself as a site of professionalism. We wish to trouble what is expected from and beneficial to a Writing Center when it is situated as a professional site by and for "professionals." Where do students fit when the Center is professionally driven? How do the students, tutors, administrators and corollary departments get cast when the focus is on professionalization?

4. Re-Inventing Ourselves: How Curricular Change Changes Us – roundtable

Phyllis Benay, Director, Keene State College
Collie Fulford, Assistant Director, Keene State College
Maggie Lavelle, Tutor, Keene State College
Nick Rose, Tutor, Keene State College
Jennifer Kant, Tutor, Keene State College
John Vespa, Tutor, Keene State College
Kate Curtis, Tutor, Keene State College

At Keene State College, the Center for Writing's Partnership Program with a rigorous new first-year writing course is resulting in substantive changes to the Center, especially to the tutoring role. Although still anchored in one-on-one peer sessions, tutors' experiences are now more complex and public than ever before. During this roundtable discussion, our audience will explore with us the ramifications and risks that arise when writing centers re-invent themselves in response to curricular change

5. Record, Reflect, Renew: Using iPods to Understand Writing Center Work – workshop

Betsy Bowen, Director, Fairfield University
Michelle Morrison, Tutor, Fairfield University
Joseph Zagami, Tutor, Fairfield University
Lily Norton, Tutor, Fairfield University
Dana Sharkey, Tutor, Fairfield University
Catherine Forsa, Tutor, Fairfield University

In this workshop, we will present the results of a four-year long staff development project in which tutors have used iPods and digital technology to record and reflect on their work in the Writing Center. We will demonstrate how tutors use iPods and computer technology to record, select, edit, and reflect on their work, and we will discuss ways of using these recordings to enrich staff development.

6. Directive and Nondirective Tutoring: What Do Our Assumptions Tell Us About Power Dynamics? – roundtable

Michelle Deal, Assistant Director, University of Massachusetts-Amherst
Leslie Bradshaw, Graduate Tutor, University of Massachusetts-Amherst
Jessica Ouelette, Undergraduate Tutor, University of Massachusetts-Amherst
Sarah Stanley, Graduate Tutor, University of Massachusetts-Amherst

This roundtable discussion invites participants to revisit long-held assumptions about "directive" and "nondirective" tutoring. The facilitators ask: What power dynamics are ignored when we assume that tutors can choose to be directive or nondirective? To begin, participants will try to define these concepts. Next we will each identify possible corresponding tutoring strategies using excerpts from sample transcripts, published research, and personal experiences. Last, we consider how writing center theory, research, and/or pedagogy might revise itself.

7. Leadership, Anti-Racism and Revolution: When Institutional Culture and Writing Center Missions Clash – panel

Laura Greenfield, Coordinator, Mount Holyoke College
Nicole Payen, Assistant Coordinator, Mount Holyoke College
Christine Overstreet, Assistant Coordinator, Mount Holyoke College
Megan Durling, Peer Mentor, Mount Holyoke College
Hannah Rogal, Peer Mentor, Mount Holyoke College
Mika Weissbuch, Peer Mentor, Mount Holyoke College
Meeral Shafaat Bokharee, Peer Mentor, Mount Holyoke College
Zilin Cui, Peer Mentor, Mount Holyoke College

What can we do when our writing center seeks to be a catalyst for social change (combating racism, for example) while our institution, despite professing a similar mission, seems to resist this in practice? In this interactive presentation, writing center administrators and undergraduate peer mentors will discuss the practical challenges associated with articulating a mission dedicated to student leadership and ask the audience to explore whether and how an institution can be changed from the inside out.

8. Documents and Discoveries: Assessment Moves to the Center – roundtable

Scott Campbell, Assistant Professor, University of Connecticut, Hartford
Wendy Pfenger, Consultant, University of Connecticut, Hartford
Anne Wettersten, Consultant, University of Connecticut, Hartford
Philip Burnham, Tutor, University of Connecticut, Hartford
Alexa Brakonieccki, Tutor, University of Connecticut, Hartford

In this roundtable discussion we invite the audience to reflect with us on the writing center's place in a university education that is increasingly framed by the empirical rhetoric of assessment and outcomes. Our discussion with the audience will hinge on the act of writing in writing sessions – both the writing our students do as a routine part of every session in our center and the writing the tutors do for our record-keeping system.

Post-Lunch Talk
1:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Neal Lerner, MIT

“When the NEWCA was Born”

This presentation will describe the founding of the New England Writing Centers Association and the professional and social contexts in which the first NEWCA conference was situated. Drawing on archival evidence, I will argue that professional organizations are created in response to the exigencies of their time and place, but that these exigencies can be read as a map for future planning.

Session 2
1:45 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

1. Online Tutoring: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow – panel

Agie Markiewicz, Technical Assistant, Pace University
Rekekah Johnson, Coordinator, Pace University

Synchronous online tutoring has gained popularity and has been implemented in many writing centers, and we followed suit. Many centers approach online tutoring as merely an extension of in-person tutoring. After a year of online tutoring, the Pace University Writing Center is revisiting the online tutoring methods we have been using, taking into consideration both the advantages and limitations of the digital environment and the ways online tutoring differs from in-person sessions.

Revisiting the Traditional Writing Center: Developing an Online Writing Center at Salem State College – workshop

Lisa M. Litterio, Consultant/Program Designer, Salem State College

During the 2008-2009 academic year, the Writing Center at Salem State College expanded its services to include synchronous online tutoring sessions, specifically targeting distance degree learners. This presentation will consist of a mock demonstration of a typical online tutoring session and will provide a computerized, dual screen visual of the role of the tutor and the student. Audience members will be given the opportunity to interact directly with the program, generate questions, and discuss the challenges of incorporating online tutoring services with current face-to-face offerings.

2. Revisiting Ethics in the Writing Center – workshop

Barkley Heuser, Tutor, SUNY College at Old Westbury
Winchester Stuart, Tutor, SUNY College at Old Westbury
Taryn Dieckmann, Tutor, SUNY College at Old Westbury
Charlaine Farley, Tutor, SUNY College at Old Westbury

Because ethics is at the root of professional practice, we should all revisit our own ethical tutoring practice. This workshop does not look to dictate a system of ethics, but will instead help participants uncover the foundations for the ethical decisions that they already make in tutoring sessions. Reflection on these foundations should help strengthen participants' intuitive sense of their system of Writing Center ethics.

3. That First Tutorial: What Does it Tell us About Peer Tutoring? – roundtable

Harvey Kail, Coordinator, University of Maine, Orono
Jesse Priest, Tutor, University of Maine, Orono
Andrew Prindle, Tutor, University of Maine, Orono
Ashley Robinson, Tutor, University of Maine, Orono
Thomas St. Pierre, Tutor, University of Maine, Orono
Stephanie Schaffner, Tutor, University of Maine, Orono

This roundtable will focus on “that first tutorial”—the first time a peer writing tutor sits down with another student in the writing center and asks “So, how’s your paper going?” What can we learn about peer tutoring and collaborative learning by revisiting and reflecting on “that first tutorial”? The roundtable will engage both panelists and participants through written reflection, presentations, analysis, and discussion.

4. Choosing Hats: Revisiting What Roles We Play – workshop

Susan Blau, Director, Boston University
John Hall, Associate Director, Boston University
Kaileen Connelly, Writing Fellow, Boston University

- I. A director/professor urges his/her students to visit the writing center and the students turn in work that is still quite flawed (or even worse). How should the director discuss this with students and tutors?
- II. A tutor repeatedly works with classmates, with whom the line between tutoring writing and content becomes blurred. How should the tutor handle the pressures to help his/her classmates get better grades?

Our interactive presentation will reflect on such conflicting roles and how we as directors or tutors switch our various hats.

5. When Rules Fail: Idioms in the Tutoring of ESL Students – roundtable

Dr. Jennifer Mitchell, Director, SUNY Potsdam
Abdel-Rahman Salem, Graduate Assistant, SUNY Potsdam
Josh Clark, Assistant Director, SUNY Potsdam
Shaneah Daise, Tutor, SUNY Potsdam
Meredith Hurley, Tutor, SUNY Potsdam
Brenna Link, Tutor, SUNY Potsdam

Some ESL students know many grammatical rules for English. When those rules fail, as in idiomatic expressions, they may resort to awkward direct translations. But tutors cannot teach rules that do not exist. Why do we say “John made dinner” instead of “John did dinner”? Why “I will arrive on Thursday” and “I arrived at 6pm”? In this session, we’ll explore this breakdown of rules, the problems it presents for tutors and writers, and tutoring strategies.

6. Decentering the Center: Taking Writing Center Pedagogy into the Community – panel

Kerri Mulqueen, Teaching Fellow, St. John's University, Queens
Meridith Leo-Rowett, Teaching Fellow, St. John's University, Queens

We will be discussing work we have engaged in over the past academic year wherein we participated in writing center activities that took place off campus, infusing writing center fundamentals of peer revision, collaboration, and open communication into community groups, such as a high school writing tutoring program and a writing workshop held at a soup kitchen/community center. We will explore the ways in which a university writing center can spread its mission beyond its walls.

7. Revisiting and Renewing First-Year Writing at Holy Cross: Reflecting on Tutoring Practices for New Living-Learning First Year Program – roundtable

Elaine Hays, Director, College of the Holy Cross
Lauren Buckley, Peer Tutor, College of the Holy Cross
Lindsey Hugo, Peer Tutor, College of the Holy Cross

Recently, Holy Cross expanded its first-year seminar program to a new first-year experience program that required all first-year students to participate. This roundtable presentation will begin with a description of a new residence hall tutoring program designed for the new first-year program. From there, presenters will facilitate discussion, with participants working out possible solutions to questions raised as a result of integrating tutoring into a living-learning, first-year program.

8. Intellectual Self-Defense: Academe and the Martial Arts – individual

Richard A. Basile, Peer Tutor, University of Connecticut, Storrs

Academic writing is rooted in argumentation modeled by the martial premises of attack and defense. An individual's thesis is attacked by a critical audience intending to negate it and defended through the author's honed writing and precise argumentation. Given the combative nature of scholarly writing, what is the role of an often passive writing center? This presentation offers suggestions by juxtaposing predominant minimalist writing center pedagogy with the austere teaching methodologies of classical martial arts.

When the Writing Student is a Professor: Repurposing and Adapting Writing Center Practices for Faculty Writing Support – individual

Thomas Long, Associate Professor-in-Residence, University of Connecticut School of Nursing

Professional expectations for higher-education faculty require skill with writing in order to meet the criteria for scholarly publication. In the sciences grant funding is also expected for tenure and promotion. However, many science and technology faculty would not characterize themselves as confident writers. This paper will describe the creation of writing support services for faculty in a school of nursing, including needs assessments and adaptation of best practices of student writing centers.

Session 3
3:15 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

1. Writing Center Leadership for Sustainable Campus Change – individual

Al DeCiccio, Provost, Southern Vermont College

In “Preparing to Sit at the Head Table,” Muriel Harris tells us that, for the writing center worker, there is “a place-setting at the head of the table where the speaker’s podium awaits . . .” (19). Harris suggests that the writing center community should renew itself by collaborating with the world(s) outside itself. She forecasts centers’ need to get up to speed with technology, quantitative data collection, and retention. I seek to engage participants by advocating that writing center workers must envision new, practical ways to collaborate, “maintain viability,” and become campus leaders to make and to sustain positive institutional change.

Sustaining the Writing Center for Today’s (And Tomorrow’s) College Students – individual

Kristine E. Barnett, Writing Portfolio Coordinator, Saint Joseph College

Writing centers have always been committed to evolving to meet student needs, and current trends in student demographics create varied implications for the writing center. Thus, because of the unique characteristics of today’s college students, writing center leaders must craft and execute proactive sustainability plans. After a brief description of the diverse characteristics and needs of contemporary college students, implications on writing center practice will be discussed. The presentation will share insights, suggestions and tips, gleaned mostly from writing center professionals, regarding sustainability strategies.

2. Revising Authority and the “Peer” Debate in Writing Centers (or Why Peer Tutors Have Good Reason to Embrace Their Knowledge and Experience) – panel

Haivan V. Hoang, Director, University of Massachusetts-Amherst
Alison Tutlys, Tutor, University of Massachusetts-Amherst
Russell J. Boutelle, Tutor, University of Massachusetts-Amherst

Revisiting an old emphasis on the *peer* tutor, three members of the UMass Writing Center propose that, rather than grow anxious about power and authority, we might recast authority productively and ethically. The presenters invite discussion about (a) why authority is important for tutors (even in a student-centered writing center), (b) how senior tutors can become mentors to new tutors, and (c) how creative writers in the center can share their expertise with fellow tutors.

3. Beyond Accommodations: Universal Design and the Writing Center – individual

Miriam Pollack, Supervisor, Bergen Community College

One of the most valuable tools I've encountered in helping me begin to think through the challenges of working with students with special needs is the philosophy of Universal Design. I'd like to discuss my experience (successes and interesting failures) in implementing Universal Design in order to open up a conversation about what Universal Design might mean in the context of Writing Center pedagogy and practice.

4. Writers Choosing Tutors by Major: Re-envisioning Writing Center Practice – panel

Lucy Sweetman, Tutor, University of Connecticut

Kaylee Czajka, Tutor, University of Connecticut

Candice Pelligra, Tutor, University of Connecticut

Ralph Riello, Tutor, University of Connecticut

This presentation revisits the way we encourage writers to select tutors by major. For some writers, selecting a tutor by major might be the inspiration for a visit; yet for others the selection seems to reinforce old stereotypes about science and humanities writers.

5. Scapegoat: Revisiting the Writing Center/Classroom Debate – individual

Stephen J. Corbett, Assistant Professor of English, Southern Connecticut State University

How far have we really come in cultivating writing center/writing classroom collaborative attitudes and actions since the 1980s? Drawing on a recent essay by Steve Sherwood "Writing Center as Scapegoat," the rhetorical theory of Kenneth Burke, and the literature on the center/classroom connection by authors like Louise Smith, Dave Healy, and Mary Soliday, I will argue that the divisive discourse separating classroom and center—the two-way scapegoating that occurs—is alive, well, and warrants revisiting.

Mandatory Tutoring Sessions: How Writing Center Tutors Can Squash the Combative Nature of Mandated FYW Tutoring Sessions – workshop

Lauren Kopec, Tutor/Graduate Assistant, St. John's University, Queens

This workshop will focus on the difficulties encountered during tutoring sessions mandated by first-year writing instructors. Tutors will be encouraged to share their own anecdotes about these problematic sessions and propose their own methods for strategically tackling these problems. Finally, we will discuss *Writing Center Wrap-Ups*, a partnership between tutors and instructors that allows for tutor visits to the classroom. The activities that comprise *Writing Center Wrap-Ups* provide the same benefits as mandated sessions while eliminating the animosity felt by students towards their tutors.

6. Tutoring Chinese L1 Writers: Common Problems and Solutions – workshop

Jelena Runic, Graduate Tutor, University of Connecticut, Storrs

This workshop will complement the typical guidance for tutoring ESL students by focusing more sharply on one kind of writer—native Chinese speakers—and on one element of writing—grammar. It is well known that Chinese L1 writers tend to make various grammatical errors while developing their English writing skills. My research indicates that most persistent grammar mistakes occur in the domains of agreement, articles, and relative clauses. In this workshop, I discuss basic differences between Chinese and English in the above-mentioned areas, providing suggestions on how tutors could tackle those issues to reduce the Chinese writers' enduring errors and improve their English writing skills.

7. Tutoring Strategies to Encourage Re-Visits – workshop

Meghan Barry, Consultant, Bryant University
Stephanie Rochefort, Consultant, Bryant University
Zarana Kathrani, Consultant, Bryant University

This interactive workshop will present strategies and techniques to encourage students to “re-visit,” and analyze why our center’s rates of return have drastically increased. After an introduction to our services through statistics and qualitative features, we will present scenarios encouraging audience participation, including critiques of techniques used, as well as discussions of how to increase student return visits through tutor interaction based on our research and audience members’ own methods.

Special Interest Groups

SIGs meet to discuss common interests and to strengthen the bonds of the NEWCA community. Each SIG meets from 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. and from 10:00 – 11:00 a.m.

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| WAC, WID, and the Writing Center | Writing Center Outreach |
| ESL Writers and the Writing Center | Anti-Racism and the Writing Center |
| Technology in the Writing Center | Thinking about NEWCA 2010? (Conference Proposal Writing) |
| Tutoring Strategies | Tutoring in the Disciplines / Classroom-Based Tutoring |
| Archiving and the Writing Center | So You're Thinking about Grad School |
| Writing Center Administrative Issues | |

NEWACC Workshop on WAC Program Assessment

The newly formed Northeast Writing Across the Curriculum Consortium will meet on Sunday to share approaches to WAC program assessment at their institutions. WAC program assessment is becoming a focus at many institutions as part of the larger assessment trend sweeping education. During this workshop, we will focus on some of the key questions swirling around WAC programs these days such as: How do WAC directors handle pressures from administration to implement program assessment that is incongruent with current theory and research? How can WAC directors shape assessment so that the process itself provides opportunities for faculty development and the assessment yields information useful for program development? What models are available for internal assessment, external assessment, assessment that is built from the ground up, ongoing assessment, or for starting program assessment?

Workshop Schedule

9:00 – 10:00 a.m.:

The workshop will open with presentations by WAC directors from several area institutions, showcasing various approaches to WAC program assessment.

10:00 – 11:00 a.m.:

The second hour will be dedicated to small group work, so that participants can share approaches from their own institutions. Then, there will be a larger discussion that focuses on the burning questions about WAC program assessment that arise from the small group discussions.

11:00-11:30 a.m.:

The workshop will be followed by a half-hour business meeting to plan the next NEWACC workshop.