

Iowa Writing Center Consortium

What we wish we knew:

Socially constructing meaning across contexts

Friday, April 5, 2019

Hosted by Mount Mercy University

Cedar Rapids, Iowa

<https://iowawriting.wordpress.com/>

Many thanks to Cyndi Boertje,
Tutoring Coordinator, Central College Tutoring and Writing Center,
for maintaining the website.

Welcome to Mount Mercy University!

We are very glad to have you on our campus. If you have any needs at all while you are here, please speak with Ben Thiel or any of your other hosts for the day. We will do everything we can to answer your questions or point you in the right direction.

The majority of the IWCC activities will be in Basile Hall. Some morning Breakout Sessions will be held in Warde Hall (Room 109), which is a short walk to the southwest of Basile. Room Hosts will be in place to guide you between Basile and Warde.

Restrooms are located at the west end of each hallway in Basile (to the left as you step out of Flaherty Community Room). Water bottle filling stations are located near the restrooms. If you find yourself in need of a pick-me-up, Basile Beans is located on the lowest floor of Basile, on the opposite end from the restrooms.

Schedule-at-a-glance:

8:30 – 9:00	Check-in
9:00 – 9:45	Keynote Activity
9:50 – 10:40	Breakout Session 1
10:50 – 11:40	Breakout Session 2
11:50 – 1:10	Lunch and Campus Tour
1:15 – 1:45	Walk-Through Session
1:50 – 2:40	Breakout Session 3
2:45 – 3:00	Closing

IWCC 2019 co-planned by:

Ben Thiel

Writing Specialist and English Instructor, Mount Mercy University

Jane Nesmith

Assistant Professor of Rhetoric and Director of the Writing Center, Coe College

Laura Farmer

Writing Studio Director, Director of Fellowships and Scholarships, Cornell College

9:00 – 9:45 Keynote Activity

Flaherty Community Room

This activity will set the tone for our day together, as we begin to reflect on who we are as a community of Writing Center professionals. Did you know that, across Iowa, there are almost a dozen different names for the places we work, and more than a half dozen names for who we are? We have Peer Coaches who work in Writing Centers, Consultants who work in Writing Studios, and Tutors who work in Academic Enrichment Centers. Some of us work exclusively with undergraduate or with graduate students, while many of us work with students at all academic levels. Some of us are embedded in courses while others help students during scheduled appointments, during drop-in hours, or online (both synchronously and asynchronously). What other differences exist in our Centers? What do these differences imply about our identities? What do they imply about the ways we co-create meaning in our everyday work and across the IWCC community? What questions do these differences (and similarities) raise about what we “wish we knew” about one another, about our own work, and about the ways we can continue to grow?

9:50 – 10:40 Breakout Session 1

Flaherty Community Room

Teachers in Disguise: How Learning Styles Can Translate into Writing

Kasi Rupert, Coe College

As writing center consultants, we are provided with a plethora of tips for helping students learn to write. But how do we know how to teach students in a way that they will individually understand and process well? I will be discussing VAK, commonly known as Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic, learning theory and how we can apply the ideas to conferences with students. I have tested a quick evaluation survey for students to take before their appointment with a consultant to help them and the consultant get a better scope of their needs.

Error Detection in L2 Student Essays: A Comparison of AWE Systems

Emily Dux, Iowa State University Writing and Media Center

Automated writing evaluation (AWE) systems aim to provide writers with timely, effective feedback to improve overall writing quality. These systems are promising in terms of their abilities to detect lower-level errors which are typical of English language learners. With a growing number of these systems available, writing centers may be threatened by their ease of accessibility to students and their auspiciousness in detecting the types of errors that many students are most concerned about. Therefore, it is important to compare these systems in terms of their accuracy and effectiveness. This study evaluates five freely available automated writing evaluation systems to determine their accuracy in terms of both precision and recall.

Writing and Recording Tutoring: Conflicting Representations of Tutors' Performances

Jody Swilky, Drake University

This presentation focuses on identifying and working to change the misgivings pre-service tutors hold that can undermine working effectively with students affiliated with underrepresented groups. By examining inexperienced tutors' written responses to assigned readings in relationship to footage of their performance during practice, I will identify the tensions between the views they express in writing and contrasting views they exhibit during actual tutoring sessions. I will then describe a series of activities designed to encourage pre-service tutors to look critically at these tensions, determine if they can resolve them, and if they can, formulate strategies for working with a student population that is becoming more diverse each year.

Basile 212

Increasing LGBT+ Awareness in the Writing Center

Luke Reynolds, Coe College

The Writing Center would not be what it is without every single consultant that walks through its doors. The queer community of consultants is no exception. This presentation will share interviews held with gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and gender non-binary consultants on how their experiences have shaped not only who they are as people but also as resources for helping their clients within the Writing Center. By looking at this rhetoric with a queer lens, multiple voices can be represented and shared, letting future clients know that their experiences and what they write about can make a difference and have value.

All Voices Matter, Even Those With Poor Grammar

Hannah Vercellotti, Augustana College

What is the central feature of good academic writing? In the United States, many students and instructors often believe that prose free of grammatical errors carries the most significance. However, peer tutors are taught that global aspects of writing, such as focus and organization, are the most important. This session will explore the psychological principle of confirmation bias as a potential factor contributing to these conflicting beliefs and propose a potential solution to get students, peer tutors, and instructors on the same page regarding priorities for crafting good academic writing.

What Strategies Do Writing Consultants Use in the Negotiations of Meaning and Form When Working With Students at University Writing Centers?

Tamara Schmeisser, Iowa State University Writing and Media Center

In this presentation, I will explain the various ways in which negotiations of language meaning and form that occur in the correction of language learning errors are also used during consultations in university writing and media centers. I will describe each variety of these negotiation strategies and share results of a preliminary study that show to what extent these strategies, while stemming from the field of linguistics and second language acquisition (SLA), are also used during interactions between writing consultants and students.

Basile 311

How Writing Centers Collaborate with Academic Discourse Communities: Blending Social Contexts

Carol Severino, Emilia Illana Mahiques, and Deirdre Egan, University of Iowa

This panel consists of two presentations, each describing how the writing center collaborates with an academic discourse community. In the first, "Theories of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and the Role of the Writing Center (WC)," Emilia Illanes Mahiques, an SLA researcher and

Spanish writing instructor and Spanish WC tutor, and Carol Severino, director of an English WC, collaborate to discover how different SLA theories imply different definitions of the WC for second language (L2) writers/learners of both Spanish and English. They choose three more popular SLA theories that have spawned not only much SLA research but also a number of important writing center applications. The input-interaction-output hypothesis focuses on the cognitive processing that learners experience in the WC. Sociocultural Theory sheds light on the dynamics of interactions between tutor and learner as well as the learning stages of the student during the WC sessions. Complexity Theory presents an “emergentist” perspective to explain students’ progress and describe the learning patterns determined by multiple non-isolatable factors, that occur in WC settings. In the second presentation, “Using Models in Scientific Writing,” Deirdre Egan, WC Assistant Director and Anthropology Professor, describes her work with graduate students in the sciences. Using models of published scientific articles, she teaches them to break down the structure and language to identify the key rhetorical moves necessary to writing for specific audiences in particular disciplines.

Warde 109

Door Open, Door Shut: How the Context of Space Creates and Limits Writing Collaboration

Stephanie Tsank, Chelsea Burk, and Jennifer Miller, University of Iowa

Our panel offers various perspectives on the ways that space and collaboration interact within the writing center, both in physical and digital space. Panelists tutor and work in spaces around the University of Iowa: the College of Education Writing Resource, the business writing center, the graduate student writing blog, WriteON(line), and Liberal Arts Behind Bars (LABB). In interactive presentations that ask for audience collaboration, we show pictures of our spaces, discuss the rhetorics of space, and the ways that our environments limit and expand our opportunities for collaboration with tutees and peers. Stephanie will discuss how the space of the business writing center promotes collaboration between graduate tutors in the humanities and undergraduate tutors who are also business majors, and how both perspectives are central to student success. Chelsea’s presentation moves us into the digital space of online writing collaboration and support. The University of Iowa’s WriteON(line) program, a service that was the brainchild of a graduate student tutor, offers graduate students at the university a communal space online to make writing goals, keep track of progress, and find community with peers. Chelsea will discuss the program from the perspective of an administrator--a role she held in Fall 2017 and Spring 2018--and as a student user in Fall 2018. Jennifer will compare the cultures and physical spaces across three locations where she currently tutors University of Iowa students. These three spaces are a small office space with a closed door policy in The College of Education, an open room with many tutors working at once in the English Philosophy Writing Center, and classroom spaces used for the Language Arts Behind Bars (LABB) program located inside the Oakdale medium security correctional facility in Coralville, Iowa.

10:50 – 11:40 Breakout Session 2

Flaherty Community Room

Writing Slavery: The Ethics of Empathizing

Allexis Mahanna, Austin Turpen, and Deidre Egan, University of Iowa

This panel describes the experiences of two University of Iowa Writing Fellows who were assigned to an introductory history course on North American slavery. Students in this course were given two challenging and novel assignments: writing fictional autobiographies from the perspective of first a slave, then a slave owner. In both, students had to incorporate material from the course readings. These assignments raised some complex ethical questions including how to deal with representations of contemporary speech, whether or not it was appropriate for white students to represent the experience of black enslaved people, and how empathy plays in to learning.

Basile 212

Feedback and Feelings: Instructor Language Choices and Student Emotional Responses to Feedback

Tamar Bernfeld, University of Iowa

As Writing Center professionals, we are uniquely positioned to analyze the language choices instructors make in their feedback, as well as investigate how this language is taken up by students. In this session I will present a work in progress, and welcome feedback as we discuss how emotional responses to feedback can influence students as writers, scholars, and future instructors. In considering both perspectives -- those who give and those who receive feedback -- we can make more sensitive and informed choices in developing workshops and PD for faculty and instructors across campus. This awareness can also serve us as we use our understanding of students' emotional responses to feedback to further inform and develop our WC practice.

Basile 311

Next-Level Peer Leaders: Mentoring and Meaning-Making as Undergraduate Institutional Memory in the University of Iowa Conversation Center

Benjamin Hassman, Sylvia Dean, Nicole Nucaro, and Emilie Portugal, University of Iowa Conversation Center

To support the volunteer undergraduate staff of our service-learning student support model, the University of Iowa Conversation Center developed a next-level Peer Leader Program: veteran staff members returning to mentor new students as they build intercultural communication skills & function as Center leadership. The Peer Leaders honor our roots as an undergraduate initiative, and as they develop personal advocacy skills they also build institutional memory into the structure of our peer-support model. Originally co-founded in 2016 by Rhetoric Faculty and a group of dedicated undergraduates, the Conversation Center works to build informal and intercultural communication skills on a service-learning model. Confident English-speaking students

enroll in a 3-credit course, the Conversation Practicum, and after training, offer one-on-one conversation appointments to predominantly international students. This peer-support program hosted over 2,000 one-on-one sessions in 2018. In this session, you'll hear from director Ben Hassman on being inspired by non-profits in developing the Peer Leader Program, and from Peer Leaders themselves on becoming international advocates *qua* meaning-making out of mentoring.

Warde 109

Bridging the Gap: The Collaborative Construction of Meaning in Tutor-Student Relationships

Emma Holmes and Lillian De La Cruz, University of Iowa

The presenters will begin by discussing personal experiences they have had tutoring international and domestic students in an increasingly globalized and polarized world. They will then come together to consider how the writing process benefits both writers and tutors by asking them to navigate their own complex and potentially disparate beliefs to collaboratively construct meaning and encourage mutual understanding. Finally, they will explore methods that tutors can utilize to aid in this process of collaborative meaning-making.

11:50 – 1:10 Lunch and Campus Tour

Lunch will be served in Flaherty Community Room.

Peer Consultants will remain in Flaherty for table conversations over lunch, while

Directors meet in Basile 212.

Tours led by Mount Mercy Student Ambassadors will leave from Flaherty.

1:15 – 1:45 Walk-Through Session

Basile 200

Creating Meaning Through Creating Resources

Jamie Sass and Lea Johannsen, Iowa State University Ivy College of Business Communications Center

The Communications Center is housed in the Ivy College of Business at Iowa State University and caters exclusively to business students. Ivy's faculty and administration are business professionals expecting students to produce professional products—memos, presentations, case competitions, etc. As a result, the Communications Center has created resources for international students: an English learning club, instructional videos covering grammar and cultural communication, an English language learning certificate program, and extensive handouts. Join us as we showcase what the Communications Center has been doing to collaborate with international students, faculty, and administration to meet the institutional needs of “professional products.”

Spilling the Beans: Thirty Years of Practical Wisdom in the Coe Writing Center

Destiny Perry, Coe College

The Coe Writing Center has been collecting consultant writings since its inception in 1986. In 1998 the CWC released the first anthology of these writings, entitled *Spilling the Beans*. This compilation was intended to serve as a guide for current consultants from their predecessors. The fifth edition of *STB* is currently being transferred to a website format. This website is intended to help restore *STB* as an accessible resource for current consultants, as well as to serve as a touchstone for CWC alumni. In addition, the website will ultimately house new submissions accrued since the collection's last update in 2012.

Time and Money: Optimization of Writing Center Scheduling

Ethan Alsop, Ammar Abu-Halawa, and Matthew Appler, Coe College

Currently, consultants at the Coe Writing Center are scheduled based solely on the quota of 2-4 consultants per shift. However, the writers we are employed to serve do not come into the writing center at a steady rate. We set out to change the schedule in two ways: set the number of consultants equal to the average business of the shift and to diversify the consultants on shift by majors and year. We will explain how we used Java programming language to sort our consultants into shifts, helping us to set up a more effective schedule.

A Divide Between Writing Center Staff: Tutors and Administrative Assistants Working Together, Separately

David Perrin, Iowa State University Writing and Media Center

Writing Center Administrative Assistants are diverse and educated staff members that tutors typically overlook when searching for answers to problems that arise during consultations. Additionally, tutors avoid collaboration with other tutors when preparing for sessions or dealing with problems that external resources are not able to solve. To increase writing center collaboration between staff members, writing center administration must promote further communication and teamwork among staff. Monthly professional development days or other team-building techniques could inform writing center tutors of the diverse perspectives other staff members could provide them in brainstorming, understanding assignments, and preparing for difficult sessions with students.

Basile 203

Humor in the Writing Center: Cultural Meaning, Context, and Effects on Collaboration

Clarice Dodd, Iowa State University Writing and Media Center

This presentation will begin with an overview of the topic and what sparked an interest in researching the effects of humor in the writing center and why it is important. The details of my research will be discussed starting off with an overview of past research literature using both psychological and writing center-based sources and how they relate to my project. From there, the data collected from surveys taken by fellow communication consultants will be presented, focusing on their experiences of using humor during sessions and its effects on tutor-tutee collaboration. To conclude the presentation, further research routes for this topic will be explored with an emphasis on eventually comparing and contrasting domestic versus international student responses to humor used during tutoring sessions.

Taking Care of Consultants' Brains: Emotion in the Writing Center

Emma Hodges, Coe College

What does it mean to take care of our brains as consultants and writing tutors who do work that is sometimes emotionally strenuous? How does the nature of that work allow us to create a context in which the work benefits from us, and in which we benefit from the work? Stop by this poster presentation to begin answering questions like these for yourself, and pick up your very own copy of the 'zine (mini magazine), "Taking Care of Consultants' Brains: Emotion in the Writing Center."

Does Artwork Unconsciously Impact Students' Experiences in a Writing Center?

Charlie Esker, Iowa State University Writing and Media Center

Can artwork—specifically, traditional art versus photography—prime students to have more successful and meaningful sessions at the Writing and Media Center? By compiling results from voluntary pre- and post-appointment surveys, people's attitudes before, during, and after each session can be observed. Through this research, we could learn if and how paintings affect the behavior of students and their experience in the writing center. Ideally, the results could determine what types of art prime students to be open to constructive feedback in order to have the most successful encounters possible at the writing center.

How to Read Like a Big Kid

Katie Krob and Kailey Blunk, Coe College

"How to Read Like a Big Kid" reports on the effects of implementing reading conferences into the Writing Center at Coe College. After noticing students having problems with higher-level readings, we attempted to determine if there was anything the Writing Center could do to help. In conferences, consultants guided students with suggestions on how to read these difficult texts, and we assessed their difference in reading skills and ability from the beginning of the semester to the middle of it. In the end, we decided whether adding these conferences assisted students, or if it was less helpful than hoped.

1:50 – 2:40 Breakout Session 3

Flaherty Community Room

Connecting Consultants to the Outside World: A New ESL Perspective

Natalie Hansen and Caleb Rigdon, Coe College

What happens when writing center consultants leave Coe's campus and work with people in the Cedar Rapids community? We wanted to find out how experiences outside the normal environment can shape consultants and make the writing center a more inclusive and helpful experience for everyone that comes in. Our presentation will give insight to the current connection that the Coe College Writing Center has with the Catherine McAuley Center and how this link has improved how we work with English Second Language learners

Undergraduate Tutors and the Culture of Writing at a Small College

Mike Garcia, Luther College

Many small liberal arts colleges lack first-year composition and Writing Across the Curriculum programs, which means the writing center is one of the most visible sites of writing and writing instruction on campus. In this presentation, we ask, "Is it possible for undergraduate Writing Center tutors to amplify their voices and take on a prominent role in the construction of a culture of writing on campus?" We invite our audience to think creatively with us about how undergraduate tutors can be instrumental in collaborating across campus for broader change.

Basile 200

What We Wish We Knew About Working With ELL Students: A Roundtable

Abby Richardson, Mount Mercy University

In most ways, working with ELL student-writers is just like working with native English speakers. But what about when it comes to grammar? We are taught not to proofread, edit, or prioritize grammar and other sentence-level issues. However, recent scholarship has raised concerns about ignoring the grammar needs of ELL students. Is our field really changing in the ways we respond when ELL students ask us to review their writing at the sentence level? Are our practices changing in our own writing centers? This session will provide talking points from the literature to lead us into an open-ended discussion about our viewpoints and practices.

Basile 203

How Past and Present Assignments Can Inform Us About the Future

Claudia Chiappa and Christian Chiffy, Coe College

This research looks to establish whether there has been a shift in the type of written assignments college students have been given in the last 20 years. By looking at old client report forms in our school's archive, reading previous research conducted on the matter, and surveying college professors to count for variations in paper length, structure, and subject, we hope to ascertain the general direction written assignments seem to be trending. Our research aims to be an extension of the study "Mistakes are a Fact of Life" conducted by Lundsford, which included reports on papers assigned through the 1980s and 1990s, into the early 2000s.

Re-thinking the Debate on Generalist vs. Expert Consultants

Lila Dabill and Arika Glisan, Coe College

Many writing centers agree that it is best for the consultant to be a generalist because most writing centers want the writer's ideas about the content--not the consultant's--to be the focus of the conference. However, there are not enough studies that actually test the results of a conference with a generalist consultant versus a conference with an expert consultant. This is an area that we believe is worth researching so that writing centers can give students the most effective help. In this presentation, we will share our findings and compare faculty responses to the two types of conferences--expert and generalist.

Website Design and Writing Center Reception

Brittany Eide, Iowa State University Writing and Media Center

A paper focusing on examining the possible correlations between writing center website designs and visitor interactions with the centers themselves. The study acknowledges writing center websites as unique online spaces, working separately and alongside physical locations, where writing centers communicate with tutees. The aim is to determine if certain visual communicative elements within website design promote student interaction with writing centers as well as to examine their place in crafting new social contexts.

Basile 311

CARP, and Not the Fishy Kind: Coe Writing Center's Consultant Alumni Research Project

Ally Roeker and Adam Dreismeier, Coe College

What will your writing center experience mean to you? Being a writing center consultant has translated to real-world applications, successes, and experiences for our alumni. We have identified what about the Coe Writing Center specifically influences our consultants' futures, focusing on the impact of community and skills developed during their employment. Through conducting interviews and distributing surveys, we discovered common themes about what has

influenced alumni the most. We will share how we have begun our research process, what our current findings are, and how other writing centers can conduct their own alumni research.

Diagnosing Writing: Writing Center Interactions from a Medical Perspective

Lauren Young, Iowa State University Writing and Media Center

The writing center is like a hospital providing diverse care, from a maternity ward birthing new ideas, to an urgent care center for a paper due soon. Despite obvious differences, there are meaningful similarities in the work done by medical clinicians and writing tutors. These may be methodological such as triaging problems, diagnosing concerns, working within a time limit, and utilizing appointment notes. Or they may be ethical considerations of confidentiality, noncompliance, and autonomy. The practices used by physicians can be used to inform writing center theory and practice, to improve the quality and health of our consultations.

**If you enjoyed your visit to Cedar Rapids for IWCC 2019,
come on back for MWCA 2020!**

Midwest Writing Center Association Conference

Creating Common Ground:

Crosstalk and Community in the Writing Center

March 12 - 14, 2020

Cedar Rapids, Iowa

CFP available Summer 2019

Don't lose the momentum you've gained at IWCC! If you presented, take your research one step farther and propose for MWCA. If someone else's presentation sparked a new idea, run with it! If you met a new colleague at IWCC, think about collaborating on a project, a panel, or even a carpool. Write the dates on your calendar in indelible ink and start talking it up with your colleagues, tutors, and friends.

As planning continues, information will be sent to the IWCC email list, published in WLN, and posted to the MWCA (<http://www.midwestwritingcenters.org>) and IWCC (<https://iowawriting.wordpress.com>) websites.

Contacts

Conference Chair: Ben Thiel (bthiel@mtmercy.edu)

MWCA Executive Board Chair: Kristin Risley (risleyk@uwstout.edu)