

2024 Secondary School Conference: Breakout Session Presentations



Tutoring Essentials: Setting the Tone and Building Rapport

Bridget Calderon, Brian Moylan

Part of our “Tutoring Essentials” workshop series, this session provides focused information for key moments in a tutoring session. This year’s workshop centers on how to set the tone for a collaborative session and build rapport with both new and returning writers. Attendants should expect a lively, hands-on opportunity to practice (and showcase) their tutoring skills.

Tactile Tutoring: The “Art Cart”

Anthony Kepseu, Cawley DiStephan, Donal Heaney, Jack Dayton, Liam Smith

Our project aims to create a more welcoming and fulfilling experience for the wide array of neurodiverse writers. Research suggests that different modes of hands-on-oriented note-taking and tutoring styles tackle said lack of accessibility for neurodiverse and neurotypical writers alike. We prepared a presentation on how implementing our “Art Cart” looks to fill that gap and a hands-on learning activity for everyone to try and experience it firsthand.

UConn and Uganda Christian University’s Multicultural Writing Center Experience

Sheryl John, Melisa Mansuroglu, Grace Wright-Goodison, Thomas Busemeyer, Danielle Arsenault

The University of Connecticut’s Writing Center works in partnership with Uganda Christian University’s (UCU) writing center to share skills and to educate each other on writing center tutorials. In this presentation, we’ll discuss how and why UCONN tutors meet with UCU tutors, and will share both strategies and opportunities for participants to begin their own “Talking Across Centers” collaborations.

Translingualism and the Linguistic Justice Statement

Dr. Kathleen Tonry

This session will discuss what “translingualism” and “linguistic justice” mean in the context of writing centers. We will share how the Storrs tutors and administrators developed our own linguistic justice statement, as well as tips and ideas to begin writing your own statements.

Tutoring Auditory Genres: What happens when a writer brings in a podcast, speech, or presentation?

Mckenzie Bergan, Anh Le, Hannah Dang

In this presentation, we will discuss best practices for multimodal tutoring, specifically in auditory or aural genres such as: podcasts, speeches, or presentations. We will not only discuss how to approach a variety of rhetorical situations your writers might encounter, but also practice how to work with composers at different stages of an auditory project.

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Establishing a Writing Center

Dr. Tom Deans

For teachers and administrators: We'll discuss how to work toward establishing a new (or perhaps re-new) center. We'll explore some time-tested strategies for staffing, space, labor, sustainability, working with administration, diversity, and more. Teachers can network during the session to build on each other's ideas, experiences, plans, and successes. We will also share how schools can partner with UConn on a new ECE course keyed to writing center tutors.

Training Tutors

Dr. Alex Menrisky

For teachers and administrators: This session will foster discussion over current writing tutor training practices in both secondary and postsecondary writing centers and offer insight into tutor training taking place in the UConn writing center itself. The first session will begin with a roundtable collaboration in conjunction with "Establishing a Writing Center," and will provide information on how schools can partner with UConn on a new ECE course keyed to writing center tutors.

Room for Everyone: (Re)Designing Writing Center Spaces

Margaret Bugingo, Jenna Ulizio

Using principals from Universal Design, this session discusses ways of intentionally curating the physical spaces that house equitable and accessible writing centers. Specifically, this session defines inclusive spaces in terms of race, language, and class, providing practical examples from the Storrs Center.

AI in the Writing Center

Dr. Tom Deans

How should our writing centers adapt to the emergence of AI? Should it figure in our tutoring practices--and if so, how? Could peer tutors work with teachers to shape a school culture of more responsible AI use? We'll share how we are thinking about AI in the UConn Writing Center, plus survey what centers across the nation are doing. We'll then address your questions and begin figuring out what makes sense for the local circumstances of your school and center.

Breaking Barriers and Opening Doors: Empowering Multilingual Writers to Take Up Space

Eunice Kim, Hannah Dang

In academic institutions where "proper English" is valued, multilingual writers have often been viewed as less competent than monolingual writers. Using other languages, other varieties of English, and a mix of English and one's primary language have often been frowned upon. However, in a world where 43% of the world is bilingual and 17% is monolingual, these standards should be shifting. In our presentation, we will discuss how utilizing multiple languages in writing centers and academic spaces can be a strength that can empower individuals to think and write outside the lines.

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“Ask a UConn Tutor” Q&A

Sheryl John, Sky Cummings, Ramsey Scott, Diana Alvarado

Come and chat with UConn tutors from both the Storrs and Hartford centers. This year's panel is made up of veteran UConn tutors—plus a few tutors who are new to our center this year! Attendants can ask any questions they have about peer tutoring and will have an opportunity to share their own tutoring expertise as our new tutors “flip the script” and ask their own questions.

Flipping the Writing Center

Dr. Kathleen Tonry

For teachers and administrators: This session presents a new initiative in the Storrs Writing Center that works to strengthen connections between instructors, writers, and writing centers by inviting instructors into the Writing Center to workshop their assignments. This session will provide suggestions for adapting the flipped center model to a secondary school context.