INNOVATION HUB

April 21-23, 2023

Writing centers have creative problem solving and collaboration in their pedagogical DNA. They have always been spaces where writers and learners get individual and small group support (Lerner, The Idea of the Writing Lab). Writing centers have been spaces where institutions, for good or not, seek to address challenges around teaching writing that other venues have failed to be successful at (Boquet, "Our little secret"). They have been at the forefront of helping writers and consultants critically examine the "identity kits" that make or confound academic success (Grimm, Good Intentions), and these spaces have fostered and deconstructed all sorts of grand narratives and lore (Grutch McKinney). As our keynote speaker last year shared, writing centers and all those who circulate through them may act as accomplices in circulating counterstories that complicate the official literacies of our institutions and push them toward greater respect for diversity, equity, and inclusion, against elements of a national culture that seem counterposed to anti-oppression initiatives (Martinez, ECWCA, Michigan State, 2022). Moreover, technology continues to transform our ways of operating and connecting with one another and our clients on campus and beyond. The COVID-19 pandemic forced a reckoning where writing centers needed to accelerate the use of different apps and platforms, though many had long ago embraced the use of software to manage the logistics and record keeping of everyday practices and our OWL or webpages have long been valuable and innovative campus/regional resources for writers and staff.

New technology advances continue to emerge and challenge us to imagine our next innovations, and writing centers are already hubs for creative thinking and cutting edge responses. Technology and artificial intelligence are human created, and thus, can reflect the same systemic oppression and violence experienced in our society, universities, and writing centers (e.g., Noble; Noble & Tynes). With artificial intelligence inching toward the teaching of writing—whether through translation apps, machine scoring of writing, or intelligent response to academic writing— how do writing centers adapt, confront, or subvert these unyielding phenomena? What possibilities does technology offer writing centers or

those they collaborate with to upend the potential dread of innovation that is problematic? Identity movements continue to proliferate and make challenges to public policy and teaching, from opening up curricula to ever more diverse voices and genres, to challenging practitioners to be more accessible and universal in their pedagogical and architectural designs. Yet, backlash pushes teachers, writing coaches, and students alike to imagine how learning happens when laws and policy wish to stave off the discomfort of education. How do we offer innovative challenges in the context of "don't say gay" laws or education regulations that only allow apolitical teaching around anti-racism and our institutions and systems?

At Purdue University, a leading STEM, land-grant institution, innovation is a hallmark of its identity, from being the cradle of astronauts to an academic home of Amelia Earhart or being the launching spot of one of the most used writing center websites in the world, the Purdue OWL. On behalf of ECWCA, Purdue and its On-Campus Writing Lab (OWL) invite proposals that riff on the notion of the "Innovation Hub":

- How are writing centers innovating our theories, methods, and praxis for everyday consulting?

- How might we incorporate the ideas of tutors/consultants and the students who visit us

in the writing center to serve them across various mediums?

- What new technologies are being deployed in inventive ways, particularly those that reach new audiences, challenge conventions, and foster diversity, inclusion, and equity?

- In what ways can we include instructor voices and technological needs in/at the writing center?

- How might writing centers be or become hubs for accessibilities on campus, and/or how might we improve our practices and spaces around accessibility and universal design?

- What controversies and challenges do new technologies pose to teaching and learning around writing? To the historical lessons of writing centers? How might we co-opt technologies to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion?

Proposal abstracts (250 words) are due January 27, 2023, 5:00 p.m. EST. We welcome a variety of formats (workshops, panels, lightning talks, maker activities, interactive art, and participatory activity). As is convention across writing centers, we do not privilege one language over others and encourage individuals to embrace multilingual expression all the while being mindful of an inclusive audience. Like our host campus, ECWCA welcomes a diversity of expression and identity, however one or collectives imagine them. For questions or concerns, reach out to the local hosts at writing.lab@purdue.edu.

Review process: Proposals will be examined by a subcommittee to make selections appropriate for the program. Invitations will be sent no later than February 24. The conference will be held on the campus of Purdue University in West Lafayette, IN, from April 21 to 23.

Accommodations are relatively plentiful in the Greater Lafayette area, while on-campus housing venues can be cost prohibitive. Parking near the venues is typically free, but stay tuned to our website for logistics updates.

Questions? Send an email to writing.lab@purdue.edu

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Works Cited

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Noble, S. U. (2016) "A Future for Intersectional Black Feminist Technology Studies." Scholar & Feminist Online. (https://sfonline.barnard.edu/safiya-umoja-noble-a-future-for-intersectional-black-feminist-technology-studies/)

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