



Call for Proposals

Unwriting the Centre

CWCA/ACCR 2023 Conference

May 24-26 2023, virtual

Introduction

What texts and practices do you consistently find yourself returning to in your writing centre work? What stories and counterstories (Martinez, 2020; Condon & Faison, 2022) about writing, language, knowledge, and learning are told in them? It is important to critically reflect on our roles in these narratives and practices: who are we in relation to them and how do they shape our working lives? Are any of the narratives and practices that come to mind limited, exclusive, prejudicial, and/or colonial? Are there any ways that they are still useful and informative, even as springboards for resistance and creativity (consider, for example, Chantal Gibson's [Altered Books](#) and [Visual Poetry](#))? What narratives and practices come to mind that are expansive, inclusive, and liberatory?

Cherokee writer, orator, scholar, and activist [Thomas King](#) teaches us, "once a story is told, it cannot be called back. Once told, it is loose in the world" (King, p. 10). Writing centres can be meeting places for many different authoritative and authorial experiences: of writings, knowledges, epistemologies, disciplines, languages, cultures, and stories. However, they do not always serve as spaces where this multiplicity can thrive. As a significant body of recent scholarship (Banks, Cox, & Dadas, 2019; Chavez, 2021; Dolmage, 2017; Garcia, 2017; Greenfield & Rowan, 2011; Inoue, 2021; Lockett, 2019; Younging, 2018) unpacks, the writing centre often contributes to the wider academic effort to homogenize and flatten this multiplicity. What can be done when, as Alexandria Lockett writes, we realize that "all expression in the WC occurs beneath the

panoptic microscope of teachers and administrators who make it clear that the function of the place is to improve a dilapidated physical and mental condition—funding depends on that problem’s existence and the hope of fixing it” (2019, p. 22).

With the theme “Unwriting the Centre” the Canadian Writing Centres Association/L’Association canadienne des centres de rédaction invites critical reflection on the authoritative written and unwritten narratives that inform writing centres. We invite you to share how your commitments to equity, diversity, inclusion, antiracism, accessibility, and decolonization are inspiring you to interrogate, resist, and burst open authoritative writing centre texts, practices, and narratives. With this call, we invite engagement from all colleagues involved in writing instruction inside and outside of writing centres. We encourage submissions from people of all writing-related fields of study, all intersecting identities, and all stages of student and professional life.

Proposal Prompts and Questions

Here are some prompts to motivate your thinking:

- What are the oral and written stories and counterstories of writing centres in so-called Canada? What tensions exist? What possibilities arise from looking at both?
- How might we tell the stories and counterstories of writing centres to administrators and faculty members across the university in ways that represent deeper understandings of the centre’s purpose and contributions?
- What (counter)stories do students tell about the role of the writing centre in their lives and studies? What do these (counter)stories teach us about the writing centre - as a place and an idea?
- What happens when our centres are shaken (ex. By funding cuts, by pandemics)? What stories do we return to? What new stories emerge?
- What responsibilities do writing centres have to:
 - the [Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#)?
 - the [Calls to Justice from the National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#)?

- to the [UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#)?
- to [the Scarborough Charter](#)?
- How, when, and why do we let go of things that have made us successful?
 - How do we justify our actions to others when we are choosing to move away from “the tried and true”?
 - Who needs convincing and why when you don’t have the time and resources you need? How do we do that work of convincing them? Whose responsibility is it to take up this work?
 - Do you have an example you can share of “letting go” in practice?
- What enables Peer Tutors to take up their writing centre work in good ways?
 - How can Peer Tutors both make and respond to the kinds of positive changes they want to bring to writing centre praxis?
- What hiring practices can help to re-shape writing centres?
 - What ongoing supports are needed to ensure that those who are recruited don’t burn out?
 - How do we maintain these supports, in the contexts of institutional austerity and funding cuts?
- How do we acknowledge student agency in their choice to use their own languages as well as develop their English language writing for academic and career goals? How can we reflect on the fluidity or fixity of these goals and what might a translingual approach bring as we welcome students?

Proposals may also extend to other topics and areas of study in the writing centre and writing studies fields. In other words, if it’s about writing and you aren’t sure if it fits, submit it!

Format of Presentations

Presentations will be virtual. We will accept proposals in the following formats:

Presentation Panels

Presentations can share a study, or an evidence-based pedagogical practice, on engaging writing centre experiences and stories, and on research into the history, theory, philosophies, and praxes of writing centres.

Presentations are programmed into one-hour timeslots. Single presentations are usually 15 minutes in length and can be delivered by a single presenter or a group of co-presenters. The conference committee will organize accepted proposals for single presentations into thematic groupings which will follow this format:

- Presentation A - 15 minutes
- Presentation B - 15 minutes
- Presentation C - 15 minutes
- Q&A - 15 minutes

Alternatively, proposals can be submitted for a thematic grouping of presentations to fill the entire one-hour timeslot, using the format above.

Roundtables/Conversations

In *Indigenous methodologies: Characteristics, conversations and contexts*, Nêhiyaw and Saulteaux scholar Dr. Margaret Kovach (2009) writes, "An open-structured conversational method shows respect for the participant's story and allows research participants greater control over what they share with respect to the research question" (p. 124). While Kovach's own focus is on conversational methods for conducting research, we invite conference participants to share in conversations and stories in the ethos she describes.

Roundtables/Conversations are 30-minutes long. These sessions are ideal for works-in-progress, pedagogical innovations, case studies, story-swaps, and taking up an issue currently being discussed in our field. Roundtables/Conversations can be led by an individual or a group. Individually-led Roundtables/Conversations should invite conversation and/or stories from participants, whereas group-led Roundtables/Conversations can invite attendees to listen in on a group's conversation or story exchange.

Proposals should indicate the focus of the session, why it is of interest to writing centre colleagues, and whether the session will be individually-led or group-led. Individually-led sessions should indicate how you plan to engage an active and dynamic conversation with participants. For a story swap, please provide the theme of stories that you are interested in sharing and inviting others to share about their writing centre foundations and experiences. For case study discussions, please include central elements of the case study that you are looking to work through with colleagues.

Interactive Workshops

Workshops are an opportunity to model a practice, strategy or innovation with your colleagues through collaborative hands-on activities. Proposals should clearly describe the practice you intend to feature, the overall structure of the session, and how you will actively engage the participants. Workshops are typically 50 minutes in length.

Virtual Writing, Research and Pedagogy Poster Session

This Virtual Writing, Research and Pedagogy Poster Session will offer opportunities to showcase writing centre practices. Have an exciting new program you are proud of? Clever new handouts or resources? A poster detailing a research project? A video walkthrough of your centre? Proposals should clearly describe what you intend to showcase, and the materials you will present (poster, audio, and/or video).

It is our intention to use technology to replicate the experience of wandering a poster hall at an in-person conference, virtually. Presenters will have the opportunity to showcase their materials (poster, audio, and/or video) online and interact in real time with conference attendees.

Your Suggestions

We are open to other kinds of presentations — add these to your proposals.

We're looking forward to the following special events!

- ❖ CWCA/ACCR BIPOC caucus
- ❖ Peer-tutor meetup and discussion
- ❖ Regional affiliate meetups and discussions
- ❖ CWCA/ACCR virtual AGM

Presenter Resources

- Even at a virtual conference, include a land acknowledgment! Here is a resource to support creating a [meaningful land acknowledgment](#)
- [Accessibility best practices for conference presentations](#)
- [How-to support & resources for creating accessible digital documents & images](#)
- [Learn how to remove personal information from a word document](#)

Submission Information

Proposals due: January 29, 2023

Proposal abstract: 70-100 words

Detailed proposal descriptions: 300 words

How to Submit

Follow these steps:

1) complete [this form](#)

2) submit a de-identified .docx file to cwcaconference@gmail.com using session title as the document title. A de-identified document is one where your personal information has been removed from both the content in the document and in the document metadata. You can learn how to do this from the resource above.

Become a Reviewer!

Contact the conference committee at cwcaconference@gmail.com

References and Readings

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