



Teaching Conference
Spring 2025

Schedule

8:30—9:00	Breakfast
9:00—9:50	Session 1: Presentations
10:00—10:50	Session 2: Presentations
11:00—11:50	Session 3: Presentations
12:00—12:50	Lunch
1:00—1:50	Session 4: Roundtables

Session 1: 9:00-9:50

Using Student-Centered Language to Foster Community and Accountability, Tori Halbert, NE 270

Student-centered language allows instructors to facilitate a space in which both respect and writing are established as community practices. During this presentation, practical examples of written and spoken student-centered language will be provided, with a specific focus on how they can be used in the classroom to support a decentered pedagogy. This language is the first step toward meeting students where they are and conveying an understanding that each of them have different reasons for being in an English class. Speaking to students with the assumption that they are responsible and capable adults encourages them to recognize the boundaries instructors put into place while also seeing the classroom as an open space of educational exploration. This language reminds us to see students as people first and proves that minor shifts can have a major impact.

Flipping the Literature Classroom to Increase Student Agency and Engagement, Dr. Neal Stidham, NE 250

Many Wake Tech students take ENG 231 for a variety of reasons; once in the course, they often find the material challenging if not daunting. As an experiment in several 231 seated and blended sections since 2019, I have developed several alterations to the traditional method of structuring and conducting the class, foremost of which involves rejecting the standard path of studying works chronologically in favor of student choice in both the readings and their order. This allows students a hand in constructing the syllabus for the class, in addition to connecting their choices to individual student expertise in the readings they elect to add to the curriculum (much as literature professionals are specialists focusing on a particular author). Each student leads discussion for their chosen author on the scheduled day, followed by instructor-led follow-up that bridges discussion to other covered authors and fills in gaps in the selections. Students report that this lends a feeling of discovery and exploration to the course that would not be present in a conventional survey course taught “on rails”.

By the end of this session, participants will have a general framework for introducing this approach in their own literature sections, with related assignments and practical advice from experience garnered from prior implementation over multiple sections. Attendees will also be encouraged to embrace the flexible approach to refresh their own connection to material they have often covered to the point of rote memorization.

Balancing Instructor and Student Presence in Online and Seated Classes, Nick Denning and Melody Owens, NE 260

Effective instructor and student presence is crucial for fostering engagement, motivation, and success in both online and seated courses. This session explores best practices for managing presence in dual modalities, ensuring that students feel connected to the course, their peers, and their instructor. Strategies include utilizing structured communication, discussion forums, interactive activities, and timely feedback to enhance engagement. Additionally, we will examine approaches to maintaining instructor visibility without overwhelming students or instructors with excessive interaction demands. Attendees will leave with practical strategies to create an engaging learning environment that supports student success while maintaining a manageable workload.

Session 2: 10:00-10:50

Grading Contracts: Embracing Labor and Process, Patrick Williams, NE 235

Alternative grading methods like grading contracts can be beneficial to students enrolled in process-oriented courses. Using ENG 111 and ENG 112 as examples, this presentation covers the exploration, implementation, and observations of transitioning from traditional grading methods to a hybrid labor/grading contract assessment method. Specifically, the presentation will cover research regarding alternative grading methods to substantiate a rationale for implementation. The next section of the presentation will include sample contracts used for ENG 111 and 112. The presentation will go over the contracts' criteria and how the contracts have evolved through trial, error, and student feedback. The presentation's objectives are to inform faculty of contract grading and provide tools for implementation.

Speed-Dating Your Research: Teaching Fast and Effective Research Skills, Morgan Thompson, NE 250

Research can feel overwhelming for most students, especially when faced with new concepts such as library databases, dense academic journal articles, and confusing words like "peer-reviewed," "abstract," and "Boolean operators." This presentation features my light-hearted approach to teaching academic research to students, stemming from my eight years of experience as an academic librarian. This approach emphasizes student empowerment and efficiency by comparing researching to online "speed-dating."

Faculty will learn practical tools and ideas to teach students how to:

- Locate and scan journal articles quickly for essential information, aka "speed-dating."
- Manage research overwhelm by prioritizing the most relevant and accessible materials.
- Approach research as a discovery process, rather than a daunting, time-consuming chore.
- Empower students to make practical choices and feel in control of their research process.

This session is ideal for educators looking to make research instruction more accessible and engaging, particularly for students who have never used a library database or completed any academic research before. The analogy of online "speed-dating" helps lighten the mood of a heavy research lesson, while giving students practical, librarian-approved skills to quickly research any topic.

Student-Centered Language and a Growth Mindset, Elena Fleggas, NE 260

Assessing student writing can be challenging. Community college instructors face challenges such as large class sizes, which limit the amount of time they can spend on each student's work. Additionally, writing is subjective, so assessments can vary widely between educators. My recent approach has been to provide constructive feedback that focuses on specific strengths and areas for improvement, rather than simply pointing out mistakes. Encouraging a growth mindset by highlighting progress and potential can motivate students to continue developing their skills. Additionally, offering supportive language and emphasizing student effort can boost their confidence and mental well-being. By looking at samples of student work and comparing their grading approach to others', faculty will evaluate their grading approaches and come up with ways to provide positive feedback to students. The focus will be on helping students develop a positive, growth mindset as they progress as writers.

Session 3: 11:00-11:50

Enhancing Effective and Efficient Tutoring Practices, Beth Keeley and Melanie Morgan, NE 235

This presentation will focus on best practices for effective and efficient tutoring in the English TLC. It will provide faculty tutors with strategies to maximize student engagement, encourage independent learning, and manage tutoring sessions efficiently. Additionally, the session will serve as a collaborative space to discuss challenges and gather ideas on how to better support faculty tutors in their roles and student success.

Objectives:

- Introduce key tutoring strategies that promote active student learning.
- Discuss time management techniques for structured and productive tutoring sessions.
- Explore ways to balance direct instruction with guiding students toward self-sufficiency.
- Identify common tutoring challenges and develop practical solutions.
- Gather feedback from faculty tutors on their needs and how the English TLC can support them.

Meeting Students Where They Are While Limiting AI in the ENG Classroom, Tori Halbert, Gabrielle Volstad, and Nick Denning, NE 250

The objective of the session is to inform and educate fellow instructors on certain digital tools available to them for understanding a student's writing process while limiting the potential use of AI within written assignments and exams. Instructors will be able to consider the use of the following within their classrooms by the end of the session:

- **Respondus:** A presentation that covers how to implement Respondus LockDown Browser for exams and writing assignments in literature classes, in addition to best practices for implementation.
- **Word:** Presentation on how to use Microsoft Word's Track Changes system to review student writing process while also limiting AI use.
- **Google:** Presentation on how to use Google Doc's Version History to review the student writing process as well as limit the use of A.I.

Technology Tools to Enhance Instruction, Faye Stall, NE 260

This presentation will focus on technology tools to enhance instruction in both online and seated classes. During this session, information will be provided on how to use Sign-up Genius for conference times, how to create and embed 2 H5P lessons in Ultra Blackboard (1 graded and 1 nongraded), and how to use Kahoots to review/bring closure to each module and conduct mini-lessons on grammar. Faculty will leave the presentation with several free technology tools that they can easily adapt to use in their classroom.

When is the Assignment Due? AI Chatbots and Student Questions about Course Materials, Melody Cooper, NE 270

This presentation will focus on the use of the role-play feature available with the built-in AI of Blackboard. We will discuss how to program the bot with information about a specific class, how to program its personality, and how to utilize the role play feature to assist faculty in answering frequently asked questions about their courses by students.

Session 4 (Roundtable): 1:00-1:50

Navigating AI: A Faculty Roundtable, Dr. Jenifer Wolkowski, Justin Eatmon, and the AI Committee, NE 250

This roundtable moves beyond surface-level discussions of AI to explore its deeper impact on writing pedagogy. Together, we will examine questions of student agency, critical thinking in an AI-driven world, and the evolving role of writing instructors. Our objectives include fostering open dialogue on the ethical and pedagogical implications of AI, sharing diverse perspectives, and shaping a proactive faculty response to this technological shift. We will also discuss practical strategies for revising and designing assignments that mitigate AI misuse while promoting responsible and thoughtful engagement with AI tools.

Outcomes: Participants will contribute to a shared understanding of AI's challenges and opportunities and leave with fresh insights and actionable ideas.

Teaching Literature Courses at the 200 Level, Alex Doria, Cindy Neighbors, and the Literature Committee, NE 260

The Literature Committee has been considering current issues in teaching 200-level Literature courses in conjunction with the changes to the 111 and 112 curriculum. Under consideration are the following issues:

- Including in the literature curriculum lessons on writing about literature; and
- Considering whether limitations should be placed on assignment of more advanced literary critical theories as paper topics

We would invite anyone who teaches or is interested in teaching literature courses to participate in the discussion and offer their own insights and suggestions, hoping to arrive at some perspectives on these issues of concern, particularly asking the questions:

- In what way(s) should lessons on teaching literature be included in classroom lessons?
- To what level is it appropriate to introduce topics of literary criticism?
- How much engagement with literary criticism do we expect students to have in their essays for literature courses?

The Lit Committee will host and moderate the roundtable and guide the discussion. All instructors introduced in teaching literature courses are invited to participate.