

Tech + Social:
Supporting Collaborations and
Communities Online



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What is an “online”
writing center”?

What does this “act”
in the service of?

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Technology has fundamentally changed how we can *be together*. (Nancy White)



online consulting (asynchronous)

Strengths	Challenges
Time to develop thoughts	Lack of personal interaction
Writers have permanent documentation	Language lacks defined tone
Writers feel less interpersonal pressure about feedback	Possibility of unclear prioritization with revision needs
Consultant can make a tangible transcript of their holistic feedback	No follow up or writing accountability

What else could be added?

online consulting (asynchronous)

- Logistics and Practices:
 - Email message to writer with overarching impressions and comments; be intentional about personal focus
 - Attached document with comments made in margins
 - Track changes v. comments?
 - Final comment
 - Detailed, open-ended questions
 - Specific citations and references to writer’s text
 - Links to resources or places of interest for writer
 - What is the writer “doing” after the session?
 - Hewett (2010, pp. 122-124)

online consulting (asynchronous)

- Philosophical and Pedagogical Dispositions
 - What is the goal of an online consultation?
 - Writer learning increases and writing improves (is this our goal in all consultations?)
 - How do we achieve this goal?
 - What are best practices to teach writing?
 - How do students perceive written feedback?
 - From peers v. instructors, and in drafts v. final grading
 - How do we prepare consultants for this type of work?

The tension of online consulting (asynchronous)

Student testimony: Online is different because

- No immediate response
- Tone can be “condescending or insulting”
- You can “really think out what you are trying to tell the writer”

But...

“My best advice would be to treat it like a regular consulting session.”

Kristine, OU Consultant

Expanding Interfaces

- Adobe Connect
- Elluminate
- Second Life
- Skype
- Jing
- Go To Meeting
- Google docs
- WC Online
- Open source options through <http://onlinewc.com> and the online writing centers listserv



How do we prepare consultants for this work?



Rather than exchange pedagogical currency, our aim here is to articulate and elaborate **the conditions under which writing center staff can be supported in their search to be in-the-moment-at-the-point-of-need knowledge producers in the writing center.** (Geller, Eodice, Condon, Carroll & Boquet, 2007, p. 9)

How can **technology** support staff in becoming **in-the-moment-at-the-point-of-need knowledge producers , sharers, and negotiators?**



In a community of practice, **technology** should help **people**...

- Discover and appropriate technology for themselves (enable the individual)
- Be in and use communities and networks (create connections)
- Express their identity
- Find and create content
- Participate in whatever way is appropriate in a particular setting

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(Wenger, White & Smith, 2009)



assessment loop?
action research?

Technology stewards attend both to what happens **spontaneously** and what can happen **purposefully**, by **plan** and **cultivation of insights into what actually works**. (Wenger, White & Smith, 2009, p. 24)

Technology stewardship is a team sport.



Community Orientations



Community Orientations:

“pattern[s] of activities and connections through which members experience being a community” (Wenger, White & Smith, 2009, p. 69)

- **Meetings** – in person or online gatherings with an agenda
- **Projects** – interrelated tasks with specific outcomes or products
- **Access to expertise** – learning from experienced practitioners
- **Relationship** – getting to know each other
- **Context** – private, internally-focused or serving and organization, or the wider world
- **Community cultivation** – Recruiting, orienting and supporting members, growing the community
- **Individual participation** – enabling members to craft their own experience of the community
- **Content** – a focus on capturing and publishing what the community learns and knows
- **Open-ended conversation** – conversations that continue to rise and fall over time without a specific goal

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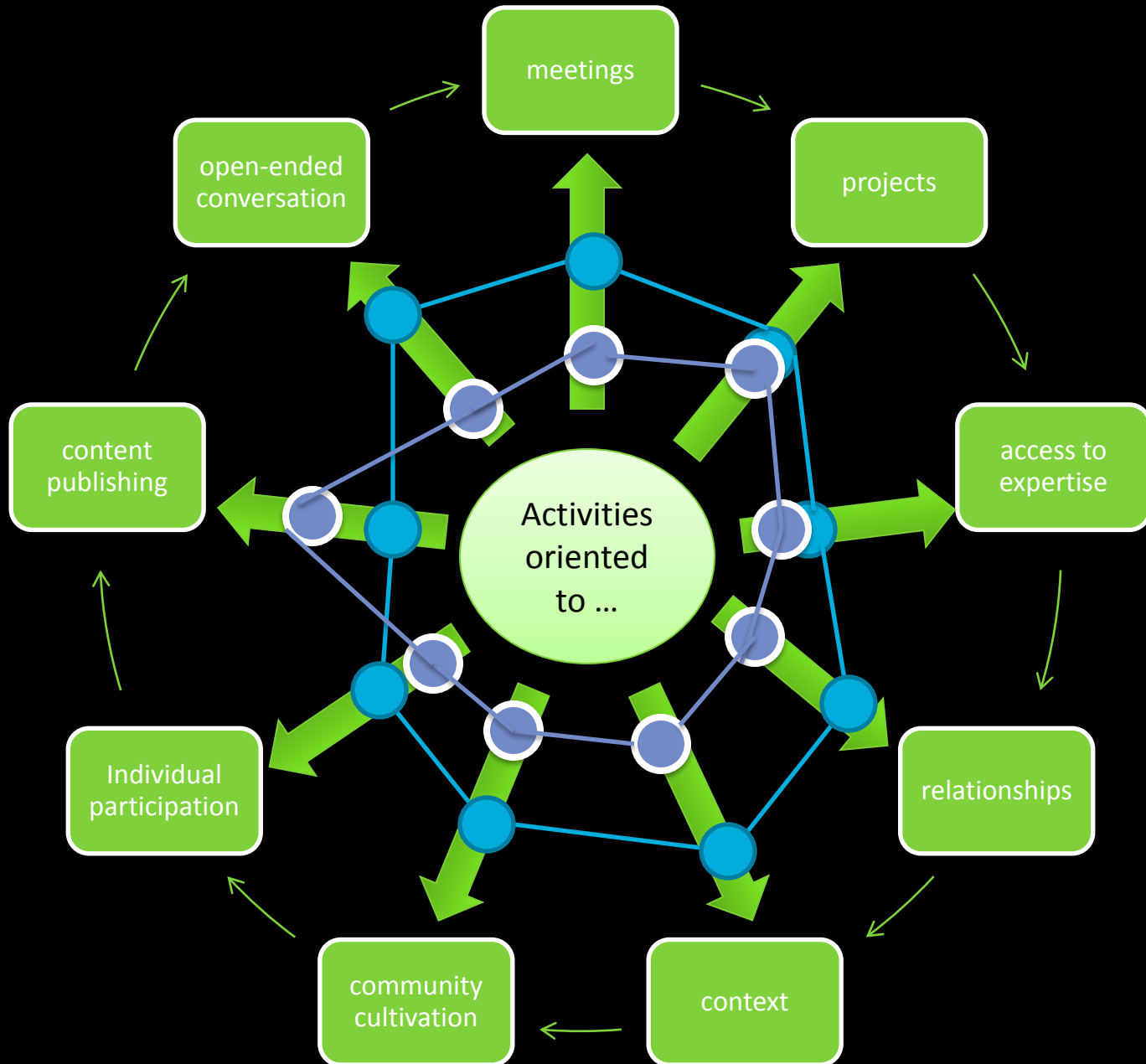


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Additional Resources and Works Cited

Geller, A., Eodice, M., Condon, F., Carroll, M., and Boquet, E. (2007). *The Everyday Writing Center: A Community of Practice*. Logan, UT: Utah State UP.

Hewett, B. (2010). *The Online Writing Conference: A Guide for Teachers and Tutors*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishers.

Wenger, E., White, N., and Smith, J.D. (2009). *Digital Habitats: Stewarding Technology for Communities*. Portland, OR: CPsquare.

Online Writing Centers – <http://onlinewc.com> or <http://owlsummit.com>
Listserv: contact Tammy Conard Salvo at tcsalvo@purdue.edu

Think of it (an annotated bibliography of software for web collaborations, conferencing, online communities and social media) -

<http://thinkofit.com/webconf/index.htm>

Technology for Communities Project (a wiki that describes, explains and suggests technology tools for communities of practice) -

[http://cpsquare.org/wiki/Technology for Communities project](http://cpsquare.org/wiki/Technology_for_Communities_project)

Community Name:

... meetings

... open-ended
conversation

... projects

... content
publishing

... access to
expertise

activities
oriented to ...

... individual
participation

... relationships

... community
cultivation

... context

Base material from:
Digital Habitats: Stewarding technology for
communities
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