

WRITE FREE OR DIE

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“Writing Support Thrives in Its Own Lane: How Distinct Tutoring Services Support Student Learning”

Meaghan Dittrich, PhD
Director, University Writing Programs

The Writing Center continues to offer specialized, student-centered support as part of a thriving network of campus tutoring services.

Typically, this space offers me, as Writing Program Director, a chance to explore current issues in writing pedagogy or reflect on the evolving landscape of writing instruction. For this issue, however, I want to focus on clarifying what services are still available to students at UNH, and how these services differ from one another.

Despite budgetary challenges, many essential student services remain intact—including those like the Connors Writing Center, which supports Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) and beyond. The renewed contract of the Knack subject tutoring platform has prompted questions and concerns surrounding the status of the University Writing Programs and the undergraduate writing assistants at the Connors Writing Center. Let’s take a moment to clear up that confusion.

First and foremost: **the Connors Writing Center is *not* moving to the Knack platform.** These two tutoring services remain separate, since they serve separate student needs. My aim here is to offer information that helps faculty understand the differences between tutoring services on campus so they can refer students appropriately.

Comparing Knack and the Connors Writing Center: Whereas Knack offers tutoring for undergraduate course-specific content and subject matter knowledge, the Connors Writing Center is for all types of writing at all levels, graduate and undergraduate, regardless of whether it is attached to a course. Knack is a third-party tutoring platform that undergraduate students can use to get course-specific help from a peer who has taken that course in the past.

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Future Tense: Upcoming Writing Across the Curriculum Events

To stay up to date, please visit our [Events](#) page on our website

A.I. Student Info Sessions: October 21 & December 2 from 1-2 pm in the Connors Writing Center. Students will learn how to use GenAI ethically and effectively in their writing process. Info includes how AI can support critical thinking, help students brainstorm, and refine ideas without replacing their voice or compromising academic integrity. Send your students!

Writing Intensive Faculty Symposium: Tuesday, June 2, 2026 from 8am-4pm in Dimond Library 352. The annual WI Faculty retreat is now a condensed one-day immersive workshop on campus, open to *any* faculty member interested in integrating writing into their courses. Among the goals will be to give faculty a more complete awareness of the principles underlying WI courses, equip them with practices to enhance working with student writing, and promote exchange and forge connections among faculty. **Breakfast and Lunch provided. Up to 25 available spots. [REGISTER HERE.](#)** For more information, see our flyer on the last page of this issue or contact unh.writing.programs@unh.edu.

WAC(ky) People

UNH Writing Program

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University Writing Committee: College Representatives, Term End

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(Business Administration)

COLSA—Davida Margolin **2027**
(Molecular, Cellular, and Biomedical Sciences)

CEPS—Thomas Ballestero (Civil &
Environmental Engineering) **2026**

COLA 1—Clara Castro-Ponce **2028**
(Literatures, Languages, & Cultures)

COLA 2—Tom Alsip **2026**
(Theatre & Dance)

CHHS—Lauren Ferguson **2026**
(Recreational Management & Policy)

UNHM—C.C. Hendricks* **2026**
(English, Director of First-Year Writing Program)

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There is a vast difference between subject matter tutoring and writing center practice. Writing centers support writers, not just writing. Their goal is to foster long-term development through dialogue, reflection, and process-oriented feedback. In contrast to course-embedded tutoring, writing consultants aim to impart transferable writing skills, not content knowledge about the subject matter. Writing center pedagogy emphasizes collaboration and writer agency.

In addition to writing for courses, many students come in for help with other types of writing, such as cover letters, grad school applications, grant proposals, creative writing, or other forms of composition. Writers and consultants discuss anything from brainstorming, organization, strong thesis statements and main ideas to grammar, mechanics, and citation.

The Connors Writing Center is staffed by peer consultants (undergraduate and graduate) trained in writing pedagogy and student development. The CWC writing consultant training course is a semester-long class engaging with history, theory, and pedagogy arising from the field of writing center studies. We support student writers holistically as they construct new practices for writing and learning. And, with the introduction of Generative Artificial Intelligence, the CWC is developing and deploying professional learning for faculty, writing consultants, and students that address A.I. literacy (see “Future Tense” on page 1 of this issue for details on A.I. info sessions). The CWC defers to instructor policies on A.I., then, when permitted, teaches students to use A.I. tools while maintaining skills necessary to be good thinkers and communicators as they use A.I. responsibly and ethically.

Students can sign up for 30-minute or 60-minute in-person or virtual appointments by dropping-in to the CWC, located in Dimond Library 329, or making an appointment online. We offer support on oral presentations, group projects, URC or GRC presentations, and much more. We also have asynchronous written feedback available for those who are unable to make a one-on-one appointment.

Exploring Other Tutoring Services Available to UNH Students

[CFAR](#): I like to tell folks that CFAR is help with “how to college.” The Center for Academic Resources (CFAR) provides help with study skills, time management, and more that relates to navigating college life and how to succeed academically and beyond. CFAR mentors and advisors work with students to develop habits that help with establishing good study habits, preparing for exams, understanding academic terminology, navigating course materials, transitioning into college social culture, and choosing a major. Like the CWC, CFAR is not course-based, so their mentors are also not on the Knack platform. Students can find quiet spaces to study, make appointments to work with a mentor, or visit during drop-in hours. CFAR is located on the second floor of Smith Hall.

[MaC](#): The Mathematics Center provides free drop-in tutoring and support services for UNH students in 400-level and some 500-level Math courses. The MaC can also provide resources and materials on specific courses. The MaC is located in Kingsbury N333.

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“Find a subject you care about and which you in your heart feel others should care about. It is this genuine caring, not your games with language, which will be the most compelling and seductive element in your style.”

~ Stephen King

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For a list of comprehensive resources across campus (including online), visit <https://www.unh.edu/student-success/center-academic-resources/center-academic-resources/resources/unh-resource-centers>.

It's valuable to remember that students continue to have access to and benefit from a variety of services designed to meet diverse needs. Here's a cheat-sheet to breakdown each service and its function:

- Connors Writing Center (CWC): For all types of writing support in or outside classwork.
- CFAR: For establishing good study skills and academic habits.
- MaC: Math-specific tutoring and support.
- Knack: For specific course-content tutoring.

Looking Ahead: Supporting Student Writers in a Changing Landscape

The Writing Programs' commitment to supporting faculty and student writers remains steadfast. We hope the distinction between tutoring services above will help faculty to disseminate that clarification for students. We also look to promote more awareness across campus about what we can do for both faculty and students.

For faculty, we offer a number of [professional development opportunities and resources](#) for developing writing in their curriculum. We welcome all instructors to submit requests for a classroom visit from one of our CWC staff—either for a 10-minute overview of our services or for a 30-minute presentation on peer review. For students, we encourage them to make appointments with the Connors Writing Center, but to also check out the [resources](#) we have available to them, including handouts, videos, links, and info about upcoming events. Clear communication and shared understanding are essential as we continue to adapt. I invite faculty and administrators to reach out with questions, feedback, or ideas for collaboration. Together, we can ensure that writing support at UNH remains robust, responsive, and pedagogically sound.

The Grammar Box Presents: The Great Prepositional Scandal

Cameron Netland, Assistant Director, University Writing Programs

People vs. Sentences Ending in a Preposition: On one side sit the Traditionalists, who argue that a sentence must not end with a preposition any more than a man should end his day with his shoes still on. While English may allow for exceptions, Latin absolutely forbids ending a sentence with a preposition, and order, they say, must be preserved. On the other side sit the Liberationists: fist-clenching students perched on the edge of their seats, who argue that to forbid ending with a preposition is to forbid breathing mid-sentence. “This is the friend I told you about!” they cry, shaking their fists. “What did you step on? Who are you talking to?” A chorus rises—hundreds of examples of perfectly natural prepositions trailing off...

Somewhere in the middle sits you, one member of the jury, an unmoored and anxious student. You are torn: follow the ancient guardians of propriety, or embrace the elastic jazz of living English? What to do? The Judge leans favorably towards the Traditionalists. Suddenly, a haggard man bursts into the court: “Objection!” he declares. “Language was never a kingdom to bow before, but a wild garden! With your prepositions you both tame it and let it grow unruly, sprawling beyond any hedge or fence you impose. To forbid a preposition at the end of a sentence absolutely is to order a root not to grow, but the tongue of the people is perennial. It cannot be pruned into silence!” He turns towards you. “Lean toward clarity. Lean toward rhythm. Lean toward what feels alive in the mouth. If a preposition at the end feels like a shoe that doesn’t fit, or a weed that is hurting your garden, polish it up and pull it out. If moving it feels as wrong as tending poison ivy, then leave it be.”

Ask Blue & Green:

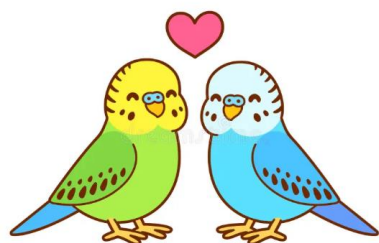
A conversation between two parakeets

As Transposed from Peep to Person by Cameron Netland, Assistant Director, University Writing Programs

Dear Blue & Green,

I've basically made blue books my security blanket—every exam, every in-class writing assignment, I cling to them like they're the last defense against AI. But lately I'm losing sleep wondering... is that really enough?

*-Sincerely,
Bewildered by Blue Books*



Dear Bewildered,

Blue: Greetings! I'm Blue the Budgie.

Green: And I'm Green the Budgie.

Blue: And we budgies have been all a twitter over the current conversation surrounding the resurrection of the Blue Books!

Green: It reminds me of a recent chattering between the two of us! It's a great example of how I effectively convinced Blue to back off the blue books.

[Flashback...]

Blue: Ah, how soon all of this will be over? Thanks to Blue Books we can reverse all of this nonsense. Look at this in-class assessment. A three-paragraph handwritten response detailing how writing frees the mind from technology that does all the critical thinking? Graded by thesis, order, and...and attention to audience! No computers, no phones, no distractions. Just pure passion from the talons, the greatest machine ever conceived. With these bluebooks in my classroom, I can fight against this evil! This thief of budgie spirit, this distorter of truth, this enemy of thought...

Green: *(flying down to him)* What are you warbling about now?

Blue: ...this cancerous accelerator of production, this wicked sorcery, this distorter of democracy, this—

Green: Blue!

Blue: *(hurls book)* I've had it Green! I'm through. I just can't stand the way the students ignore me and each other with their obsessive attention to IT.

Green: It? What is...

Blue: *(lifts computer)* It is the artificial light of automated technological assistance, but it's replacing the real light, our light. Look at your students, you never see their eyes anymore, their faces are always fluorescent! Dull, detached, devoid. They use ChatGBT to forge all their ideas, handle all their thinking. They don't even know how to speak to one another anymore! *(He flies up to the top of the cage and prepares to hurl the laptop onto the soiled floor below)*

Green: OK! Just calm down. Why don't you tell me some of your plans with these uh Blue Books?

Blue: How kind of you to ask, finally... *(holds aloft Blue Book)* Behold! On Wednesday they will begin with a five minute free write about how drafting connects to their thinking process. They think about their thinking, they metacognate without the Meta —boom, liberation.

(turning back to Green who is now swaying slightly from side to side) But it's not enough! No, they can coast through class if we stop there...I'll have to go further. How about... handwritten finals only from now on. With legibility included and—

Green: Can you stop for just one minute?

Blue: Why?

Green: I'm at a good part of the song.

Blue: Ugh...you are so lost in this technology too.

Green: *(Pausing song on her Apple Watch, taking out AirPods, and sighing)* Look, Blue you know you can be a little extreme when things change right?

Blue: *(blushing)* Well...that's not always—

Green: And that you have good ideas...

Blue: —correct ones.

Green: But extremity is never the entirety.

Blue: If you're referring to replacing all the Dimond library computers with typewriters I still think...

Green: Have you considered that Blue Books are useful for parts of the classroom but not ALL of it?

Blue: But that's the thing Green, IT won't stop at just being part of the classroom soon IT will be all of what we do.

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“Writing is an exploration. You start from nothing and learn as you go.”
~ E. L. Doctorow



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Green: Exactly Blue, which is why we need to learn how to adapt to and see the situation for what it is. We need to find a way to use it responsibly instead of pretending it’s not there.

Blue: But it’s terrifying what it’s doing to these budgies...I just want to have a fun, interactive classroom.

Green: You still can. You can still use the budgie Blue Books for tons of pedagogical work. Like sketching out initial thoughts for papers, interacting with peer writing, or listing out thoughts in response to models of good and bad writing.

Blue: Everyone says that... but why? Why do we have to just stop teaching like before?

Green: Because AI isn’t going anywhere and we need to arm students with skills they can employ with or without the technology and warn them against what AI can produce (a spreading abundance they call *slop*). But there are good things too that you deliberately ignore when you let the brainrot win. Discovery. Learning. Creation. We can execute visions and share our imaginations like never before. It is like us — flawed. An excess of content and ideas. But learning how to separate slop from sustenance is our best way of moving forward.

Blue: Since when did you become a tech bro?

Green: So please, just be careful about Blue Books absolutely replacing everything related to assessment in the classroom. We need to educate students to see the genuine threats to their critical thinking, because in this post-truth era, a digital literacy will help students navigate an increasingly difficult world.

Blue: Ok, but how will I know what to do “responsibly”?

Green: You can look at the [American Historical Association’s Guiding Principles for Artificial Intelligence in History Education](#) They have some pretty insightful ways to move forward.

Blue: Oh no don’t tell me you’re going to parrot...

Green: (*in strange robotic tone*) “AI produces texts, images, audio, and video, not truths. For all its capacities, generative AI regularly hallucinates content, references, sources, and quotation. They can produce material that appears polished and credible, but assessing their outputs demands critical skills that the models themselves can neither teach nor foster.”

Blue: Ok, see! It will NEVER be as strong as good ol’ animal instinct. Anyway —

Green: “Whereby generative AI is seen as a tool that supports the pursuit of knowledge, not a shortcut that replaces meaningful work. Through active engagement and skill_building, students can use AI thoughtfully by integrating outputs that genuinely improve their work and rejecting those that do not.” Faculty can also see the [Association of Writing Across the Curriculum’s Statement on AI and Writing Across the Curriculum](#).

Blue: I get it, Green. You always were more socially aware than me. Well... maybe after assessment, they could even ask five questions about ways to adapt the ideas into an upcoming paper. They can interpret, modify, and paraphrase the responses afterwards.

Green: Then...they could find three examples each of helpful and harmful responses from the AI and explain why. Just look for the learning, it’s always out there.

Blue: I know... I got my first free-write lesson plan idea from ChatGPT.

Green: (*Rolls eyes*) You really are amazing.





Dangling Modifier

Think Pair Shares and Write Pair Shares

Cameron Netland, Assistant Director, University Writing Programs

Think-Pair-Share (TPS), originally proposed in [1981 as a teaching strategy by Frank Lyman](#), is a cooperative learning technique where students first think individually, then pair up to discuss their ideas, and finally share their conclusions with the larger group. This structure supports deeper reflection, peer feedback, and refinement in both writing-intensive courses and, in fact, in every course across the curriculum.

Write-Pair-Share (WPS) is a collaborative learning technique adapted from the Think-Pair-Share. Unlike the original model, WPS adds an explicit writing step before discussion. Students first write individually, then pair with a partner to exchange drafts or notes, and finally share their insights with the class. This structure is particularly powerful in writing-intensive courses and beyond because it integrates the act of writing into every stage of the learning process—helping students generate, clarify, and refine ideas.

1. Writing before talking deepens student engagement

Resources such as this pdf from [Kent State University](#) highlight that WPS—where students write their response individually before pairing—is vital to promote careful formulation of ideas and academic engagement. You can always add a “think” element first for a Think/Write, Pair, Share strategy which gives students time to develop and refine their thoughts before vocalizing them in class, reducing cognitive overload and boosting thoughtful contribution.

2. Peer interaction supports early revision and clarity

Write-Pair-Share helps students process information individually before discussing it in pairs or larger groups, effectively scaffolding both comprehension and expression. In writing courses, this means learners begin with drafts, revise based on peer input, and arrive at more polished ideas before formal sharing, which improves clarity and flow in their writing.

3. Increased equity, confidence, and participation

Think-Pair-Share is celebrated for democratizing classrooms: it ensures that quieter or less confident students—especially in writing-heavy environments—have a structured way to participate. TPS “levels the playing field,” encouraging more equitable participation than traditional whole-class Q&A. This is crucial in writing classes where some students may hesitate to share musings or rough drafts. Pairing first boosts confidence and ensures all voices are heard.

4. Scaffolds academic writing development

By embedding writing in each stage, WPS aligns well with the recursive process of drafting and revising. Writing before discussion promotes initial private articulation; pairing introduces feedback opportunities; and sharing helps students reflect on rhetorical strategies used across pairs—this mirrors stages of composing and peer review used in first-year composition courses.

5. Practice processing feedback before public exposure

The pair step serves as an initial filter before public sharing. It reduces anxiety associated with exposing incomplete ideas, making students more willing to take intellectual risks. Even the “share” step is optional or scalable depending on class size or comfort level. Some instructors may even emphasize think and pair without requiring full public sharing.

By integrating TPS, WPS, or TWPS into lesson plans—whether before drafting essays, interpreting literary texts, or planning reflective pieces—writing instructors can foster richer, more inclusive, and more effective learning experiences. This activity furthermore serves as a “low stakes” writing activity which meets criteria #3 of WI course guidelines at UNH.



LAST WORD

“The world is indeed full of peril, and in it there are many dark places; but still there is much that is fair, and though in all lands love is now mingled with grief, it grows perhaps the greater.”

~ J.R.R. Tolkien



University of
New Hampshire

2026 Writing-Intensive Faculty Symposium

Open to *ALL* Faculty (not just WI)
interested in improving student writing.
(tenured, tenure-track, non-tenure track, lecturer, & clinical)

Register by May 15

The UNH Writing Program invites applications for the Writing-Invested retreat at

Tuesday, June 2, 2026

Dimond Library, room 352

Sponsored by the UNH Writing Programs
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Spaces available for up to 25 faculty participants.

INCLUDES

- **Day-long** seminar in Dimond Library
- **Breakfast & lunch**
- **2 follow-up lunch sessions** at UNH (in December and May) to discuss progress of your work and continue the discussion of improving student writing

HIGHLIGHTS

- Learn current, research-based best practices to enhance student writing
- Understand and discuss the multiple roles of writing in the classroom
- Create assignments aligned with the core competencies of your course
- Discuss assessment and revision strategies
- Gain a network of writing-invested faculty colleagues at UNH

CLICK HERE TO REGISTER

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Questions addressed to UNH.Writing.Programs@unh.edu