

Call for Papers (Computers and Writing 2010) <http://www.digitalparlor.org/cw2010/cfp>

The Impact of Emerging Literacies on Instant Messaging and Supplemental Writing Instruction

In my presentation, I would like participants to briefly simulate a writing center tutorial conducted through a web-based instant messaging (IM) application in order to gain an understanding of the complexities of the literacy that has emerged from this media and how that literacy expands and reshapes writing instruction. The participants will take part in a demonstration that highlights both the challenges and advantages of using IM technologies as a pedagogical tool for discussing student writing. The goal of the interactive part of the presentation will be for the participants to use the IM application to discuss a piece of writing in a clear and meaningful way, with each person assuming the role of a student or tutor.

I will also discuss both the reasons for using IM in writing center tutorials and the stylistic and pedagogical difference between IM tutorials and asynchronous feedback. Working in this new medium fosters creativity and concision on the part of the tutor and allows a tutor to build rapport with the student through the use of an alternative literacy.

The use of IM in writing instruction has, by necessity, forged a new literacy that is shaped by the technology itself. Tutors need to efficiently communicate about complex writing concepts as well as adapt to students' differing expectations of formality in IM communication. I will argue that the challenges of communicating in this semi-synchronous environment have exposed the flaw in attempting traditional communication strategies that are more appropriate for face-to-face consultation and asynchronous feedback (via email or written comments on drafts).