



# 2021 Conference on Engaged Learning

July 11-13, 2021

The annual Conference on Engaged Learning showcases cutting-edge research on engaged learning. Each annual conference features multi-institutional research from a specific [Center for Engaged Learning research seminar](#), invites research updates from past seminar participants and conference presenters, and encourages contributions from other scholars and practitioners studying engaged learning practices.

We invite scholars interested in capstone experiences, writing beyond the university, and other engaged learning topics (see the theme categories below) to join the culminating conversations of the [2018-2020 Research Seminar on Capstone Experiences](#) and the [2019-2021 Research Seminar on Writing Beyond the University](#) at the 2021 Conference on Engaged Learning at Elon University, July 11-13, 2021. We particularly encourage proposals that attend to diversity, inclusion, and equity within or across these engaged learning practices.

We anticipate hosting the conference in-person on Elon's campus but will regularly assess whether a move to a hybrid or fully online format is merited. We will post updates on the conference website.

## Themes

We invite proposals related to one of the following themes:

### Capstone Experiences

Over the last 30 years, many undergraduate institutions have placed a greater emphasis on the development of the capstone experience as a high-impact practice. Although these experiences existed much earlier (Atchinson, 1993; Levine, 1975; Gardner, J., & Van der Veer, G. 1998; Wagenaar, 1993), a call by the Boyer Commission (1998) to reinforce the capstone experience as an integral component of a "new model of educating at the undergraduate research universities" was instrumental in clarifying the value and purpose of the capstone (p. 16). Since then, universities have committed to this culminating concept and developed unique opportunities for their students to demonstrate learning. The capstone experience has taken on many forms, including internships, senior-level courses, service learning projects, undergraduate research, and portfolios. The capstone has also grown beyond

discipline-specific majors (usually in the form of a senior-level course or experience within the major) to university supported, multi-discipline experiences used as the final piece of the general education requirement (NSSE, 2014). The successful implementation of these experiences led the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) to label the capstone as one of several “high impact practices” that encourage transformative learning (Kuh, 2008). Although there is an ever-growing body of literature on the many successful strategies and outcomes of the capstone experience, valid questions and concerns still remain (Kinzie, 2013).

- What is the landscape of contemporary capstone experiences (CEs) and what will be important to the future of effective CEs?
- What is the articulation between CEs and work, civic, and personal life for students, for faculty goals, for institutional missions?
- What are shared and varied structures and characteristics of CEs for different student groups?

## Writing Beyond the University

The Center for Engaged Learning’s 2011-2013 research seminar on Critical Transitions: Writing and the Question of Transfer, sponsored by Elon University, fostered significant growth in what higher education knows about transfer of writing knowledge and practices. Seminar participants’ research appears in a special issue of *Composition Forum*, two edited collections (*Critical Transitions: Writing and the Question of Transfer*, *Understanding Writing Transfer*), and dozens of other publications. Seminar scholars and others have contributed to our understandings of students’ and faculty’s perceptions of writing transfer (Bergmann & Zepernick; Driscoll), students’ meaningful writing experiences (Geller, Eodice, & Lerner), critical transitions within the university (Boyd; Goldschmidt; Gorzelsky, et al.; Hayes, Ferris, & Whithaus; Wardle & Mercer Clement), the ways in which cognitive issues or student dispositions influence writing behaviors (Driscoll & Wells; Yancey, Robertson, & Taczak), and teaching for transfer (Robertson & Taczak; Yancey, Robertson, & Taczak).

Relatively few scholars have looked at writing experiences beyond the university (Faigley; Hughes, Gillespie, & Kail; MacKinnon), with many professional/technical writing scholars providing rich case studies of specific workplace contexts, but without a transfer lens. Fewer scholars, though, have focused on transfer beyond the university, examining work-integrated learning spaces like internships and co-ops (Anson & Forsberg; Brent; Dilger & Baird; Jennings), service-learning (Bacon; Bowden & Scott; Zimmerelli), civic activism (Alexander & Jarratt), transfer for writing center consultants (Driscoll, Devet, Hill), or writing in self-sponsored spaces (Rosinski). The Center’s 2019-2021 research seminar on Writing Beyond the University extended this line of inquiry to address a need for more research on (preparing students for) writing beyond the university. We invite other scholars to join conversations examining:

- How are writers’ developing professional identities, subjectivities, and practices informed by writing experiences *in* academic contexts that give writers opportunities to focus on transitions to contexts *beyond* the university?

- What writing is composed in contexts beyond the university? What writing are alumni encountering? And how is writing perceived, valued, and conceptualized by stakeholders in these contexts?
- How do pedagogies like work-integrated learning influence writers' practices in contexts beyond the university?
- What habits of mind and dispositions facilitate writers' ongoing self-agency and networked learning, enabling them to respond to new rhetorical situations for writing?
- What does a writer's lifespan look like--how is it defined, described, experienced--across different and changing contexts?
- How might universities build writers' capacities for writing, in and beyond the university - as well as writers' appreciation for their own self-agency based on their prior knowledge and experiences?

## Previous Center for Engaged Learning Research Seminar and Conference Topics

We also invite scholars and practitioners studying the following engaged learning topics to submit proposals that extend our previous conference conversations on:

- Global Learning, Study Abroad, and Off-Campus Domestic Study
- Mentored Undergraduate Research
- Residential/Living Learning Communities
- Teaching Democratic Thinking
- Transfer of Writing Knowledge and Practices

## Cross-Cutting Questions about Engaged Learning

In addition, we invite proposals that share research on cross-cutting questions about engaged learning, including but not limited to: scaling up access to engaged learning experiences; attending to diversity, inclusion, and equity across high-impact practices; and supporting students' integration of learning across multiple high-impact practices for engaged learning.

## Proposal Guidelines

To submit a proposal, provide the following information through the online submission form by February 1, 2021:

- Name, professional title, and contact information for all participants
- Presentation title
- Abstract identifying the focus of your research, its significance in relation to the extant literature, and its connection to one of the conference themes

- Maximum word count for Ignite, individual, and poster presentation proposals: 300 words.
- Maximum word count for panel presentations and workshop proposals: 500 words.

## Presentation types

- **Poster Presentation**

Posters offer visual conversation starters about completed research or work-in-progress. (Presented during a 60-minute poster session & reception)

- **Ignite Presentation**

Ignite presentations use 20 slides that automatically advance every 15 seconds, resulting in a 5 minute presentation. Ignite presentations are an ideal way to share work-in-progress to spark conversation or to share research-informed practices to foster engaged learning. Ignite presentations will be combined during a 60-minute session, with time for Q & A for all speakers at the end of the session.

(5 minutes, plus Q & A during a 60-minute session)

- **Individual Presentation**

Short, interactive presentations by one or two speakers, sharing and discussing research. (30 minutes total, with at least 10 minutes for discussion and Q & A; 2 individual presentations will be grouped for a 60-minute time slot)

- **Panel Presentation**

Longer, interactive group presentations by three or more speakers, sharing and discussing related research projects/findings.

(60 minutes total, with at least 10-15 minutes for discussion included in the 60 minutes)

- **Pre-Conference Workshop**

Extended workshops by three or more facilitators, sharing strategies for implementing evidence-/research-informed practices. Pre-conference workshops should be highly interactive. Proposals should indicate what learning outcomes the workshop will support and how facilitators will engage participants in interactive activities throughout the extended time. (3 hours total, with a 15-minute break)

- **Concurrent Session Workshop**

Workshops by three or more facilitators, sharing strategies for implementing evidence-/research-informed practices. Proposals should indicate what learning outcomes the workshop will support and how facilitators will engage participants in interactive activities. (60 minutes)

**Proposals are due by Monday, February 1, 2021.**

Following a double-blind peer review, we will send decision notifications by March 1, 2021.