



Image Credit: <http://itricks.com/news/2014/03/vintage-magical-apparatus-prints-magic-on-the-block/>

## Teaching Magic

University of Oregon Composition Conference

Fall 2015

September 21-24, 2015

**Monday, September 21**

9:30-11:00	<b>Program Staff Meeting: Act 1</b>	129 MCK
11:15-12:30	<b>Session 1: A Plenary on Presti-digitalization, or Mastering the Latest Techno-Tricks</b> 1. Things You Need to Know about Canvas 2. Virtual Tour of new Teacher Resources Blog 3. Revisiting CMET 4. Special Presentation by TEP	129 MCK
12:30-1:30	Break	
1:30-3:30	<b>Session 2A: Pick a Theme, Any Theme: Using Readings Effectively</b>	176 ED
	<b>Session 2B: Hocus Focus: Reinventing WR123 with Themed Readings</b>	276 ED

**Tuesday, September 22**

9:30-11:00	<b>Program Staff Meeting: Act 2</b>	129 MCK
11:15-12:30	<b>Session 3: A Plenary on Perilous Acts of Inquiry, or Politics and Identity in the Inclusive Classroom</b> 1. Two Positions on Politicizing the Classroom 2. The Politics of Identity in Teaching Personas	129 MCK
12:30-1:30	Break	
1:30-3:30	<b>Session 4A: Troubleshooting Your Tricks: Enthymeme and Questions at Issue</b>	176 ED
	<b>Session 4B: Reshuffling the Deck: The New WR121</b>	276 ED
4:00 - 5:00	<b>ENG613 Apprentice Meeting</b>	269 PLC

**Thursday, September 24**

10:00-12:00	<b>Session 5A: ENG612 Introductory Meeting</b>	176 ED
	<b>Session 5B: Orientation for New 184 PLC Teachers</b>	184 PLC
12:00-12:30	Break	
12:30-2:00	<b>Session 6: Elixirs and Potions: Self-Care in the First Year of Teaching</b>	176 ED
2:00-2:15	Break	
2:15-4:00	<b>New Teachers: Syllabus Checks &amp; Tech Orientation</b>	TBA

## Teaching Magic

Teaching often feels like the pursuit of the intangible. In our classrooms, conferences, and comments on student papers, we try to harness that elusive magic *something* that brings a sentence, an argument, or an essay to its highest potential. Watching someone teach can be like witnessing a magician at work: even if you were to examine their notes or materials, there is a mystery to their process and dynamic with the class. Like a magician's performance, a writing class is a careful construction that makes its outcomes feel natural and spontaneous. For first year instructors, watching another teacher can be daunting: how can I put on my own show for that skeptical audience of undergraduates? For experienced instructors, engaging with another teacher's pedagogy can remind us of the amazing things that occur in the classroom—between our students, in their writing, and in our professional growth.

At times, teaching makes us feel like masterful illusionists holding the entire class in thrall. At others, it seems that the students can see straight through the smoke and mirrors of our lesson plans and group activities. Sometimes, tracking what works (and what doesn't) feels as unpredictable as magic itself. The theme of this year's conference is a reminder that what we do has a kind of magic to it: when you realize that you have managed to engage the entire room in conversation, when a student walks out of your class at the end of Week 10 feeling like she's learned something about writing. Those moments are magic.

Still, the volatility of teaching can make the experience difficult to pin down during the Composition Conference. We spend a week disclosing the secrets behind our classroom magic, pretending that it's simple enough to encompass in a few easy steps. The truth is that on the first day of class—no matter how experienced we are—we still often feel like we've been handed an empty hat and asked to pull a rabbit out of it. Thus, at this year's Composition Conference, we hope to share the two sides of the "magic" act: the intangible energy that can build up around our personas and pedagogy, as well as the more practical tricks of the trade that underpin our performances as instructors.

**A note about the conference schedule:** Those of you who are conference veterans will notice a few changes to the traditional conference format. We've streamlined the schedule this year by adding "plenary sessions" but offering fewer sessions overall. During the plenary sessions, we will discuss pedagogical issues that are relevant to everyone teaching in the program. After the plenaries, we have planned sessions specifically for first-year teachers and for returning teachers who are interested in trying something new. **All instructors must attend the Program Staff Meetings (Monday and Tuesday, 9:30 - 11:00) and the plenary sessions (Monday and Tuesday, 11:15 - 12:30); all first-year instructors must also attend the A sessions on Monday and Tuesday, and all of the sessions on Thursday.** We encourage experienced teachers interested in the new developments for WR121 and WR123 to attend sessions 2B and 4B.

## Monday, September 21

9:00–9:30 Continental Breakfast and Coffee

9:30–11:00 Program Staff Meeting: Act 1

11:15–12:30 Session 1

**A Plenary on Presti-digitalization,  
or Mastering the Latest Techno-Tricks**

12:30–1:30 Lunch Break

1:30–3:30 Session 2A

**Pick a Theme, Any Theme: Using Readings Effectively**

*Presenters: Margaret Bostrom, Rose DeBell, Helen Huang, and Robert Zandstra*

Choosing readings for your students doesn't have to feel like picking cards at random out of a deck. Readings are assets for students when they demonstrate argumentative writing or raise questions at issue, but how do we go about selecting readings that will serve our students best? How can we present these readings in useful and meaningful ways to students when lesson plans already feel jam-packed? Our presenters will talk about course readers and themes that work for them, as well as how they seamlessly integrate reading discussions into their acts.

**Session 2B**

**Hocus Focus: Reinventing WR123 with Themed Readings**

*Presenters: April Anson, Anna Carroll, Brian Gazaille, Mitch Macrae, and Stephen Siperstein*

As WR123 has evolved, members of the composition program have recognized that course readings can get a little lost in the larger process of helping students bridge writing and research. In this session, we'll consider how themed readings can conjure clarity and bring course goals into focus. Five seasoned instructors will unveil their exciting new reading units, and we'll talk with presenters and special guest Bill Fogarty about how themed readings can produce focused research questions and nuanced arguments in WR123. You won't want to miss this if you're teaching WR123 this year!

## Magician's Notes

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**Tuesday, September 22**

9:00–9:30 Coffee Service

9:30–11:00 Program Staff Meeting: Act 2

11:15–12:30 Session 3  
**A Plenary on Perilous Acts of Inquiry,  
or Politics and Identity in the Inclusive Classroom**

12:30–1:30 Lunch Break

1:30–3:30 Session 4A  
**Troubleshooting Your Tricks: Enthymeme and Question at Issue**  
*Presenters: Amanda Bartenstein, Caroline Claiborn, Lizzy LeRud, and Nick Rectenwald*

With so many concepts to address and essays to comment on, we need to use every possible trick to economize our time. The question at issue and enthymeme are so fundamental to the essays and yet so frustrating for many students to generate and revise, creating a conundrum for us as instructors. How can we get to the root of the difficulty while keeping in mind our own limited time and energy? Our experienced presenters will share best practices for preventing confusion and providing feedback that helps students move toward troubleshooting their own enthymemes and questions at issue.

Session 4B  
**Reshuffling the Deck: The New WR121**

*Presenters: Kara Clevinger, Katie Jo LaRiviere, Rachel Rochester, and Jungyeon Yoon*  
Even the best magic acts need a little tinkering sometimes. Some of our most magical teachers have been testing out a pilot version of the WR121 curriculum over the past year, reshuffling the tried-and-true pedagogy in order to foreground critical reading and analysis skills. In this session, a handful of those teachers will bravely violate the magician's code by revealing the secrets behind some of the tricks they've developed while adapting the new curriculum for audiences of actual students. The session is a must-see for any experienced teachers looking to shake up their WR121 routines in the coming year!

4:00-5:00 ENG613 Apprentice Meeting

## Thursday, September 24

10:00-12:00 Session 5A

ENG612 Introductory Meeting

Session 5B

**Orientation for New 184 PLC Teachers**

All teachers who are teaching in 184 PLC for the first time, during any term this year, **must** attend this orientation.

12:00–12:30 Lunch Break

12:30-2:00 Session 6

**Elixirs and Potions: Self-Care in the First Year of Teaching**

*Presenters: Alexis Kielb, Cora Mills, Kate Myers, Annie Narver, and Rosalie Roberts*

Making the magic happen in our courses can be joyful but draining. During the last session of the conference, we'll discuss how to manage teaching when life happens. Presenters will share some of the healing potions they've concocted to protect their time, work, and well-being when the grading and emails pile up. We'll open up to a larger Q&A at the end of the session, so that teachers can ask lingering questions before heading into the composition classroom for the first time.

2:15-4:00 **New Teachers: Syllabus Checks & Tech Orientation**

2:15-3:00 Group 1: Syllabus Checks

Group 2: Computer/Copy Room Orientation

3:15-4:00 Group 1: Computer/Copy Room Orientation

Group 2: Syllabus Checks

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