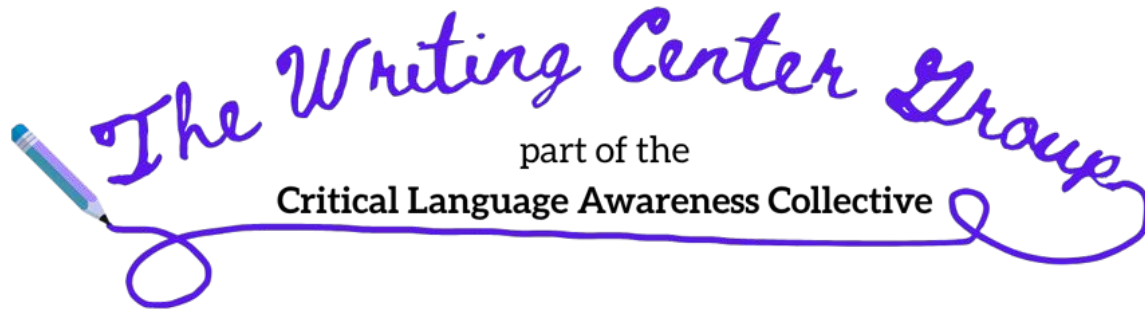


Supporting Reading Education During the “AI Literacy Crisis”



APRIL 17, 2026

Critical Language Awareness (CLAC) Writing Center Group (WCG)

- Special Interest Group focused on the intersections between CLA and WCs
- Inaugural year!
 - Fall accomplishments: creating a resource repository for the new website (coming soon!)
 - Spring goal: this workshop!

CLAC WCG Leadership



Angie Sommers

Writing Center Specialist
Madison Area Technical
College



Analeigh E. Horton

Assistant Professor, Rhetoric &
Composition
Fairleigh Dickinson University

CLAC WCG Workshop Planning Committee

- Susanne Treiber
- Karissa Wojcik
- Mark Shea
- Faith Sears
- Dawn An

What is Critical Language Awareness (CLA)?

CLA is a theoretical framework understood as a **mindset and skillset** that helps us understand the complex intersections among **language, identity, privilege,** and **power**, and communicate agentively at those intersections.

We use CLA pedagogy to cultivate students' **self-reflection** and **rhetorical agency**, and to promote **social justice** in our schools and in society more broadly. This approach is used to teach communication for **academic, professional,** and **civic purposes**, as well as for personal enrichment.

What is Critical Language Awareness (CLA)?

Six principles for CLA pedagogy:

1. Includes students from all language backgrounds
2. Uses language as a bridge into social justice learning
3. Engages minds, hearts, and bodies
4. Links awareness to action
5. Works with tensions around linguistic norms/standards
6. Builds on best practices for writing/literacy instruction

What is the “AI literacy crisis”?

Panic.

Some justified. Some not.

What is a micro-talk?

Format

Miniature presentation: 5 minutes

Approach

Pedagogy focused with practical applications

Focus

Strategies we can translate into our own contexts

Goal

Participation and engagement

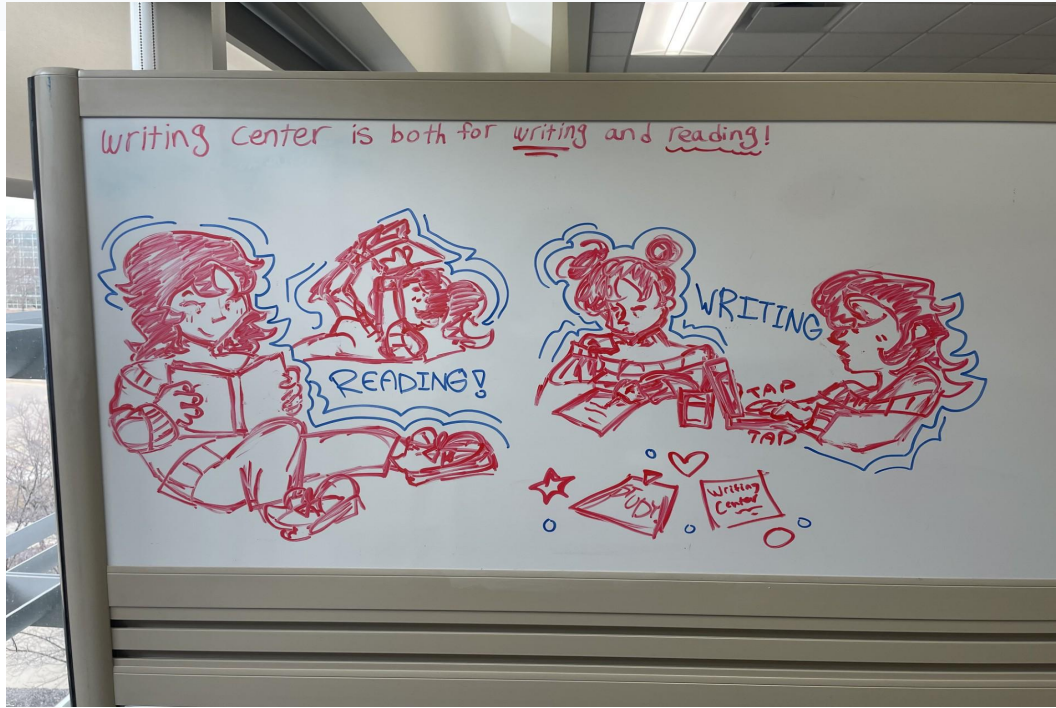
Workshop overview

1. Learning outcomes
2. Contextualizing Reading in the Writing Center
3. Activity: Quick-write Reflection
4. Micro-talks
 - a. “The Sloppy ‘AI Literacy Crisis’” - Grace Freeman (University of Maine at Augusta)
 - b. “Approaching College Reading - ”Mark Shea (Mount Holyoke College)
5. Q&A
6. Micro-talks
 - a. “Drawing Connections: Collaborative Visual Approaches to Reading” - Sara Osenton (Emily Carr University of Art and Design)
 - b. “Putting the Horse Before the Cart: Training Writing Tutors to Read Prompts” - Maggie Boyd (Boston University)
7. Q&A
8. Group Discussion
9. Activity: Taking the next steps

Workshop learning outcomes

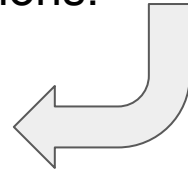
- Explain connections between CLA, AI, reading, and writing centers
- Train or implement new one-on-one reading tutoring strategies
- Consider ways to develop tutor professional development and tutoring strategies for reading that are unique to local writing center contexts

Reading? In the writing center?



Goal: Demystify the reading process and its connections to critical language awareness

Result: Our tutors began to recognize the importance of supporting reading strategies within sessions.



Alt text: A photograph of a white board on which a tutor has written "writing center is both for writing and reading" and drawn images of people reading and writing.

Needs and knowledge quick-write

- What do you know about CLA and how it connects to writing centers? What would you like to know?
- How confident are you tutoring reading in the age of AI?
- What needs does your writing center have around tutoring reading?
- What are your learning goals for today's workshop?

The Sloppy “AI Literacy Crisis”

Grace Freeman

University of Maine at Augusta



Approaching College Reading

Mark Shea

Mount Holyoke College



Academic Reading is *different* than reading for pleasure

- DON'T just start on the first page and go straight through.
- Build a framework or 'sketch' **first**. Skim the whole reading assignment, looking at headings, diagrams, and the beginnings of paragraphs.



Step 1: What do you already know?

Here is the title and the first sentence of the two intro paragraphs:

Fashioning the College Woman: Dress, Gender, and Sexuality at Smith College in the 1920s

1. On December 15, 1920, the student newspaper at Smith College—one of the largest and most prominent of the American women's colleges, located in the small town of Northampton, Massachusetts—reported that the class of 1923 had begun a “dress reform” movement “. . . with the especial aims of appropriateness, modesty and good taste’.
2. Scholars have documented that fashions of the 1920s, particularly as they related to changing gender roles, caused extensive debate in the media. But what meanings did women themselves ascribe to popular fashions and to what degree were those meanings contested?

Based on your own experience, what are some potential topics in a debate over how young women dress?

Q&A

Drawing Connections: Collaborative Visual Approaches in Reading Appointments

Sara Osenton

Emily Carr University of Art + Design





Alt text: A digital poster with a yellow background and books scattered around the border. It says “reading appointments” and mentions opportunities for support at a local writing center.

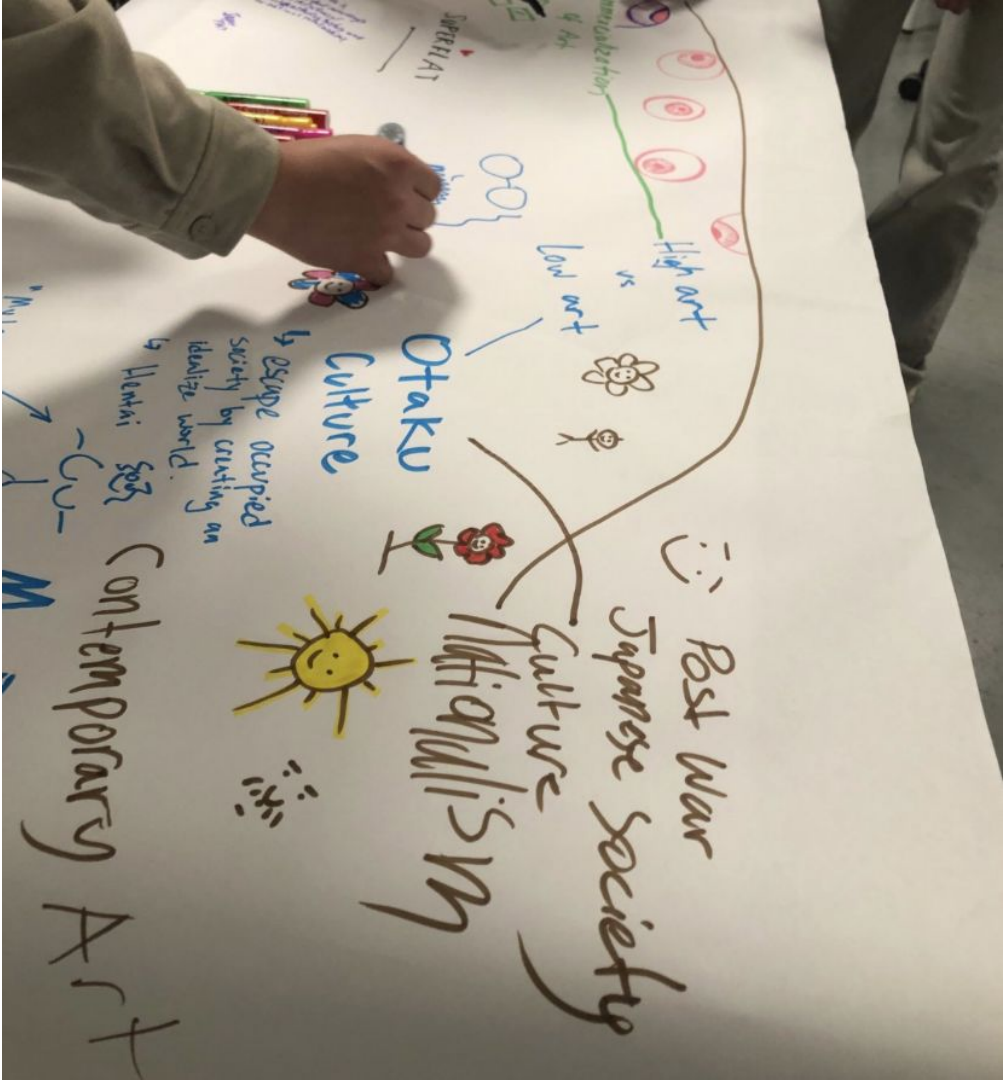
Tutor Training

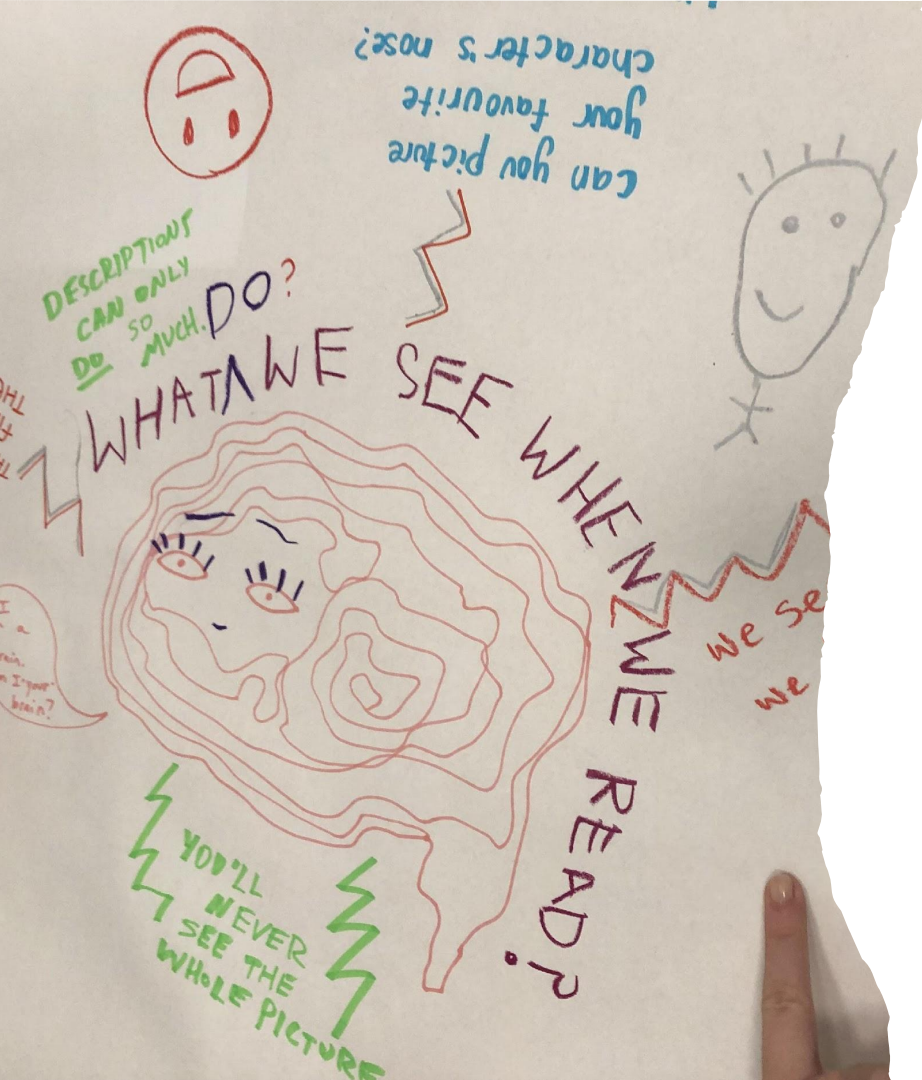
Tactile approaches to sophisticated reading practices.

Shown here: diving and reading actively



More than mind
maps:
sketch note
strategies for
reading





Drawing as a
reading process

(not drawing after
reading)

9 STEPS TO read course materials strategically



1. Know your purpose

Knowing why you are reading helps you focus your time. Ask yourself: What do you need to get out of this reading? Why do you think your instructor assigned it? What is the topic of the syllabus for this week? How does the reading fit with the goals of the course?



2. Situate yourself

What do you know about this idea already? What have you learned in class already about this? Look at the bibliography and see if any of the sources are familiar. Do you already have an opinion or are these new ideas to you?



3. Skim with purpose

Read the intro & conclusion. Scan for words/phrases that identify the central argument. "I argue," "I examine," "This book examines," etc. Mark ideas you might want to return to (but don't read them yet!)



4. Dive

Read strategically. Spend more time on sections that look interesting and match your goals. Don't be afraid to jump around, and move forward and back as needed.



5. Read actively

Take notes or mark up the text as you go. Write down questions or connections. Get in the practice of writing a summary after useful ideas.



6. Set time limits

Decide how much time you have for a reading (or a section) then prioritize where to spend it. It's ok to not read, or value, every word of a text.



7. Use your time strategically

When reading for a class, spend time with the ideas in the text that match your learning goals. Move quickly through those that don't.



8. Reflect

Consider if the text met your goals, and if not, why not? Did it provide you with any other ideas or avenues?



9. Connect

Reading together is more fun, and more productive. Read together with a classmate or book an appointment with a tutor to support your reading.

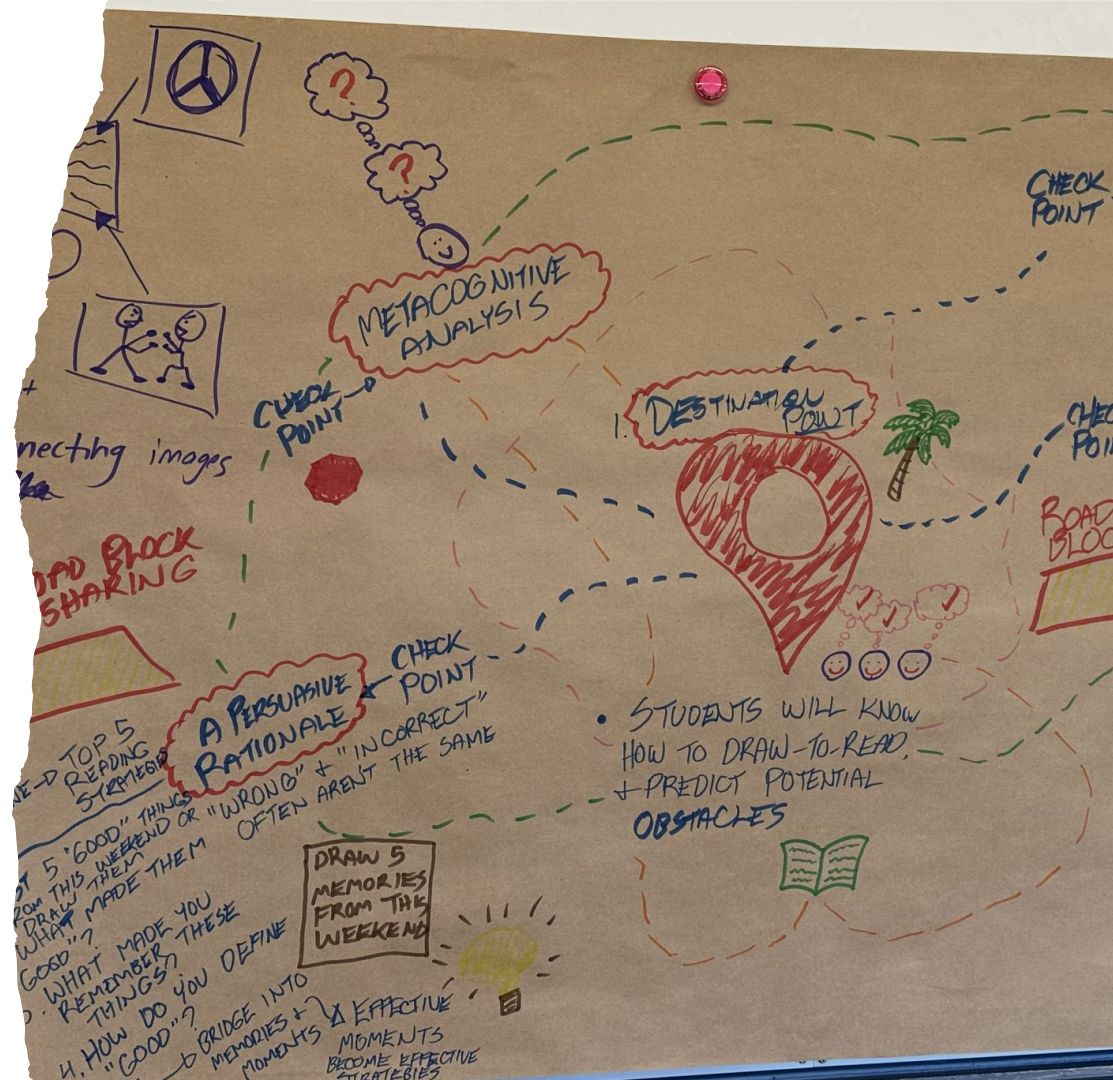


Book a reading appointment



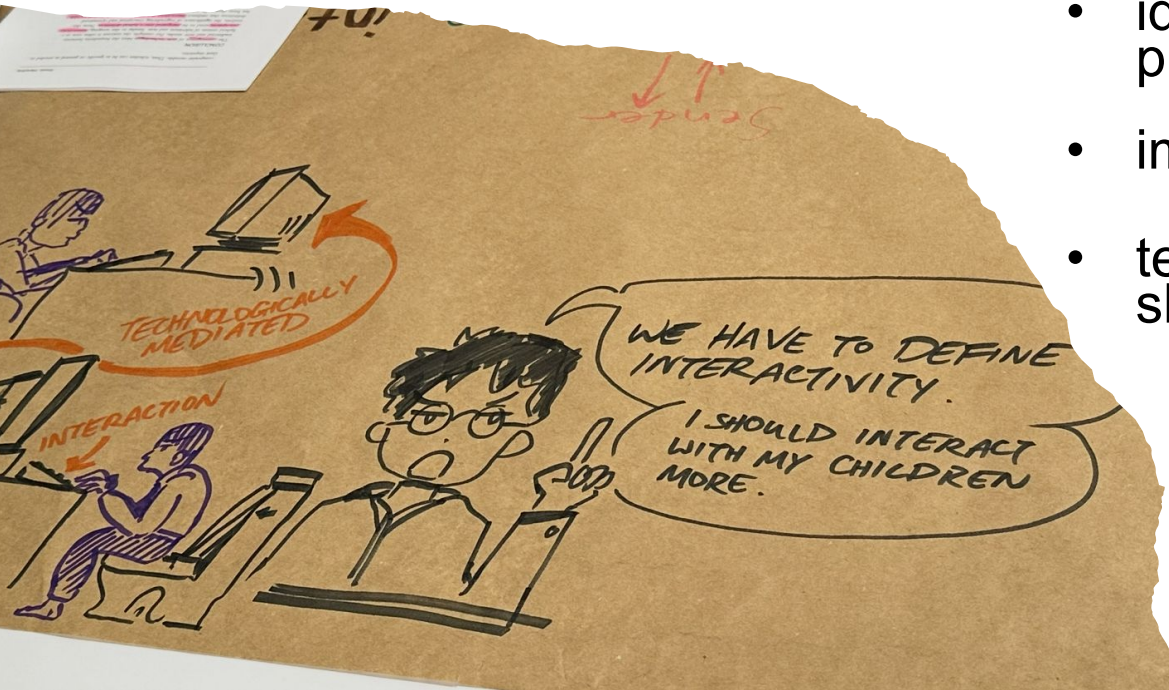
Explicit strategic reading objectives

1. Predict your destination (Preview)
2. Find the stops along the way (headings/figures)
3. Stop into a place that is important (dive)
4. Find a landmark (a supporting example)
5. Identify construction zones/roadblocks (new terms, difficult ideas etc.)
6. Revisit/revise your destination



Goals:

- moving students through readings in non-linear ways,
- identifying their reading priorities,
- improving working memory,
- teaching academic reading skills



Putting the Horse Before the Cart: Training Writing Tutors to Read Prompts

Maggie Boyd

Boston University



Example Idioms

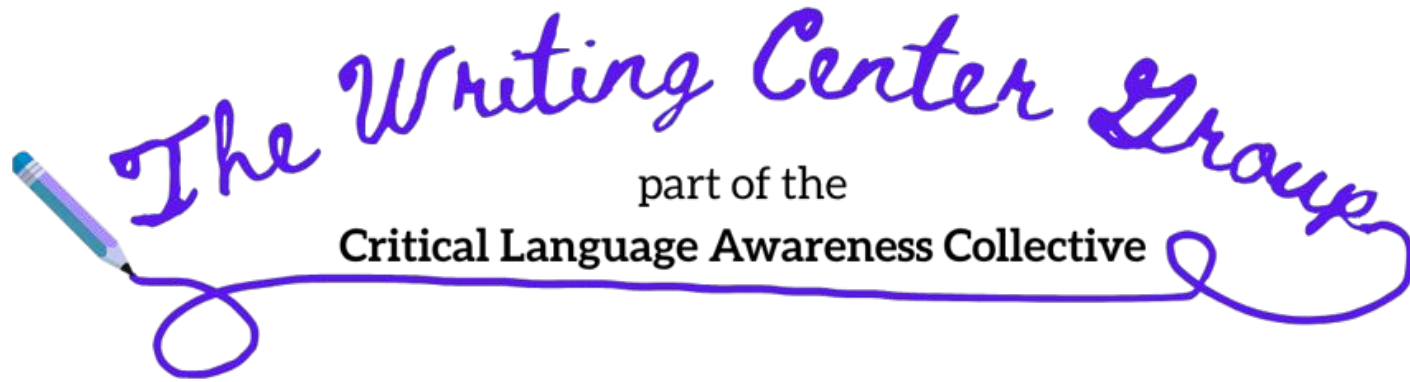
- pot calling the kettle black
- the grass is always greener
- strike while the iron is hot
- out of the frying pan and into the fire
- many hands make light work
- don't put the cart before the horse
- any port in a storm
- a journey of 1000 miles begins with a single step
- feed two birds with one scone

Q&A

Discussion

Takeaway quick-write

- What is one topic you could read more about today?
- What is one strategy you can apply at your next session?
- How might you support tutors in your center?



Join Us!!

Questions? Contact Analeigh E. Horton (aeh.phd@gmail.com) or Angie Sommers (AKSommers@madisoncollege.edu), co-chairs of the CLAC-WCG