

2025 WTCS Faculty Summit

November 12 & 14, 2025

Wednesday, November 12

6pm Sessions

6 – 6:50p	Beyond Traditional Simulations: Using AI to Engage Students in Realistic Scenarios <i>Renee' Pierpont Hable</i> Blackhawk Technical College <i>Kelly Steidinger</i> Mid-State Technical College	Cricket in the Classroom?: Empowering Engagement & Belonging Through Metacognitive Reflection <i>Iolanda Oliva</i> Moraine Park Technical College	Learn Where You Work: A Distance Learning Approach to Solve the MLT Shortage <i>Cory Sullivan & Valerie Natzke</i> Northcentral Technical College	Students' Experiences of an Exam Retake Policy in a Community College - A Pilot Action Research Study <i>Amanda Captain</i> Madison College
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7pm Sessions

7 – 7:25p	Professional Communication, Life Skills, and Choice: My New Approach to Communication for Tech Students <i>John Wilcox</i> Northwood Technical College	S'More Than Academics - Blending Learning Across Campus <i>Diana Rickert & Ali Pichowski</i> Nicolet College	Co-Creation and Critical Thinking: Empowering Students with Generative AI Tools <i>Dr. Nancy Chapko & Dr. Meg Hunter</i> Gateway Technical College
7:30 – 7:55p	Joining Forces for Joy: Creative Ways to Build a Meaningful ELL Community <i>Alyssa Hedenstrom & Ana-Ramona Gregerson</i> Chippewa Valley Technical College		

2025 WTCS Faculty Summit

November 12 & 14, 2025

Friday, November 14

9am Sessions

9 – 9:50a	How People Learn a Language (and why it matters) <i>Alyssa Hedenstrom & Lindsey Himanga</i> Chippewa Valley Technical College	Teaching Writing in the Age of AI: Lessons from a Faculty- Led Innovation Grant <i>Jenny Heinritz, Becky Stilen, Jennifer Riske & Kelly Wilhelm</i> Fox Valley Technical College	The Strengths Seminar – Reflections in a First Year Seminar Course at an Open- Access College <i>Michelle Blum, Stephanie Gauger & Pamela Arneson</i> Western Technical College	Restorative Practices in the Co- requisite English Classroom <i>Stephanie Beckman & Antonella Pappolla</i> Madison College
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10am Sessions

10 – 10:25a	Padawans - Training the Next Generation of Instructors before they are Needed <i>Ryan Huser</i> Mid-State Technical College	Curating Professional Development Experiences: The Value of PRO POINTS in Student Engagement and Success <i>Morgan Vanderhei</i> Mid-State Technical College	A Classroom to Prepare Students for the World of Work <i>Christopher Lewis</i> Madison College
10:30 – 10:55a	Building MPTC's First Z-Degree: Early Childhood Education and the Power of Collaboration <i>Kelly Carpenter, Anne Schrankler & Jennifer Irish</i> Moraine Park Technical College	Internationally Trained Professionals: How International Career Transition Programming Builds Belonging, Skills, and Workforce Connections <i>Lindsay Ryan</i> Waukesha County Technical College	

11am Sessions

11 – 11:25a		Redefining Teaching: Updates on AI Integration in College Courses <i>Bruce Forciea</i> Moraine Park Technical College	Engaging with Virtual and Online Students <i>William Walsh & Mitchell Ziolkowski</i> Blackhawk Technical College
11:30 – 11:55a	All In on AI: Faculty, Students, and Artificial Intelligence at NTC <i>Reggie Smith & Brooke Schindler</i> Northcentral Technical College		

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Wednesday, November 12

6:00 – 7:00p

Beyond Traditional Simulations: Using AI to Engage Students in Realistic Scenarios

Renee' Pierpont Hable, Blackhawk Technical College & **Kelly Steidinger**, Mid-State Technical College

Discover how two WTCS instructors – one in Hospitality Management and one in Behavioral Science – collaborated across colleges and disciplines to integrate AI-driven role-play into their courses. Using chatbots, students engage with realistic characters to practice real-world conversations in areas such as customer service, employee relations, and patient assessments. These no-cost, scalable tools enhance communication, problem-solving, and applied learning across programs. Presenters will share practical examples, lessons learned, and strategies for fostering collaboration between full- and part-time faculty.

Learn Where You Work: A Distance Learning Approach to Solve the MLT Shortage

Cory Sullivan & Valerie Natzke, Northcentral Technical College

Discover how our Medical Laboratory Technician (MLT) Program is addressing the national MLT shortage, particularly in rural and underserved areas, through an innovative distance learning model that empowers phlebotomists, lab assistants, and specimen processors to become MLTs without leaving their workplaces. By combining online coursework with hands-on competencies in students' own clinical settings, this approach expands access, builds the workforce, and maintains high educational standards.

Crickets in the Classroom?: Empowering Engagement & Belonging Through Metacognitive Reflection

Iolanda Oliva, Moraine Park Technical College

Five years after COVID reshaped education, the classroom continues to look and feel very different. In this discussion-based workshop, we will learn and share ways to strengthen authentic participation and dialogue, particularly in face-to-face classrooms. Active learning strategies are the key, but students also need accountability and ownership of their participatory learning. Best practices of student engagement in my own research will be shared, with opportunities to reflect, exchange ideas, and leave with practical tools to reinvigorate participation in your own courses.

Students' Experiences of an Exam Retake Policy in a Community College Introductory Chemistry Course - A Pilot Action Research Study

Amanda Captain, Madison College

Although research has often focused on the quantitative benefits of exam retake policies with regard to student test scores and overall grades, fewer studies have explored the qualitative benefits and lived experiences of students enrolled in a course with such a policy. This presentation is a discussion of the qualitative benefits and challenges experienced by students and their instructor when an exam retake policy was implemented in an introductory general chemistry course at a technical college. Students reported they greatly benefited from the retake policy with regard to the policy's impact on their stress and anxiety levels, study habits, persistence in the course, and ability to learn course content. This presentation offers ideas on implementing an exam retake policy and the qualitative benefits of exam retakes to students' overall learning experiences.

2025 WTCS Faculty Summit

November 12 & 14, 2025

7:00 – 8:00p

Co-Creation and Critical Thinking: Empowering Students with Generative AI Tools

Dr. Nancy Chapko & Dr. Meg Hunter, Gateway Technical College

Join us for an interactive session on how generative AI tools can strategically support student learning through co-creation of content. We'll explore practical strategies for using AI to actively engage students, foster critical thinking, and enhance the learning process. Participants will have the opportunity to experiment, share their ideas, and discover new ways to integrate AI as both a teaching partner and a creative collaborator. Bring your ideas, curiosity, and a willingness to dive in. We'll share valuable resources, best practices, and positive, real-world examples to help you implement these strategies with confidence.

S'More Than Academics - Blending Learning Across Campus

Diana Rickert & Ali Pichowski, Nicolet College

This session introduces the "s'mores" concept as a way to explore the natural connections between curricular and co-curricular learning. Using a simple, memorable metaphor, we'll consider how these different experiences complement one another to create a richer, more complete student journey. Participants will leave with a shared language and a fresh perspective to spark future collaboration across campus.

Professional Communication, Life Skills, and Choice: My New Approach to Communication for Tech Students (7:00 – 7:25p)

John Wilcox, Northwood Technical College

I have always struggled teaching our Communications class to our technical students at Northwood Tech, and I never felt a personal connection to the material of the class. I often struggled with a deep sense of "impostor syndrome" because I was teaching skills I feel I lacked; my students turned to AI to replace their voices in almost every assignment, and to my great shame, I sometimes struggled to find a good answer when students asked me "why do we have to take this class?" This summer, I redesigned my class to address each of these issues. My new Applied Communication class focuses on integrating communication skills with basic life skills that I wish I knew when I was in my students' position, gives my students the choice to design their own learning path through the semester, and I am moving towards assessing student learning in oral exams, which I call "unit exit interviews." This is my first semester with the class, but so far, the students have reacted with enthusiasm, and I have a feeling of a large amount of "buy-in" from the class. I will share the story of how I developed the class, and the outline of the new class including unit descriptions and oral exam prompts.

Joining Forces for Joy: Creative Ways to Build a Meaningful ELL Community (7:30 – 7:55p)

Alyssa Hedenstrom & Ana-Ramona Gregerson, Chippewa Valley Technical College

Adult English learner success often hinges on how comfortable and welcomed a student feels in their learning community. However, this doesn't need to be confined to classroom reading and listening activities. Join CVTC ELL College Navigator, Ana-Ramona, and ELL Instructor, Alyssa as they

2025 WTCS Faculty Summit

November 12 & 14, 2025

share their out-of-the box events, workshops, and collaborations between students, program instructors, staff, and local community members that have contributed to a thriving ELL community that focuses on belonging and confidence building.

Friday, November 14

9:00 – 10:00a

How People Learn a Language (and why it matters)

Alyssa Hedenstrom & Lindsey Himanga, Chippewa Valley Technical College

As more English learning adults are attending our programs, obtaining certificates, and exploring our campuses, it's vital for faculty to understand the unique challenges these students face. Join Alyssa and Lindsey, adult ELL instructors from CVTC, as they take you on a journey to understand how the brain learns a language, the struggles English learners must navigate, and how your informed instruction can revitalize a learner's success. You'll walk away with practical tools to support your teaching, and even learn a little Indonesian, too!

Teaching Writing in the Age of AI: Lessons from a Faculty-Led Innovation Grant

Jenny Heinritz, Becky Stilen, Jennifer Riske & Kelly Wilhelm, Fox Valley Technical College

Teaching Writing in the Age of AI: Lessons from a Faculty-Led Innovation Grant

In 2024–2025, Fox Valley Technical College's Communication Skills Department launched a faculty-led Completion Grant project to integrate generative AI into writing instruction. With support from division leadership and the Center for Instructional Excellence (CIE), the team redesigned curriculum, instruction, activities, and assessments to support responsible AI use. The project positioned FVTC as an early adopter in technical education by emphasizing academic integrity, equity, and accessibility. This session will share strategies, tools, and lessons learned to help educators confidently and effectively incorporate AI into their teaching.

The Strengths Seminar – Reflections in a First Year Seminar Course at an Open-Access College

Michelle Blum, Stephanie Gauger & Pamela Arneson, Western Technical College

The first-year seminar has long been recognized as a high-impact pedagogical practice. This presentation explores the unique implementation of a first-year seminar model at Western Technical College – an institution that has fully embraced open access education by discontinuing placement testing into developmental coursework. In this context, Western's first-year seminar provides a critical starting point for a broad diversity of students, while seamlessly linking struggling learners to concurrent adult education and tutoring on a just-in-time basis. This presentation offers an overview of our guided pathways enrollment strategy that allows faculty to contextualize the learning, integrate goal-setting strategies, and foster peer-to-support relationships. It also explores the course's pedagogical emphasis on reflection and metacognition as the primary framework for all learning. Finally – and most importantly – the presentation outlines our strengths-based approach to open-access learning that gives the course its title: The Strengths Seminar.

2025 WTCS Faculty Summit

November 12 & 14, 2025

Restorative Practices in the Co-requisite English Classroom

Stephanie Beckman & Antonella Pappolla, Madison College

This session will highlight the ways in which linguistic justice and academic excellence can be promoted in a co-requisite English class (English 1 ALP). Drawing from a qualitative study and hands on teaching experience, the presenters share applied examples, including a course-based undergraduate research experience (CURE), of ways to restore missed educational opportunities, engage diverse populations of learners, and leverage students' strengths and linguistic repertoires. The session would be beneficial for educators and practitioners interested in the co-requisite model and beyond.

10:00 – 11:00a

A Classroom to Prepare Students for the World of Work

Christopher Lewis, Madison College

Applying research from Benjamin Bloom and Roland Fryer to define classroom behaviors, teaching and grading methods to better prepare students for the world of work than is common in traditional classrooms. This focuses on mastery learning (ability to submit assignments multiple times and get feedback from the instructor to improve subsequent submissions), engaging AI appropriately as a tutor (how to discuss topics and learn with AI), making the classroom activity based, helping students focus on the content not points, building responsibility and accountability into student actions.

Padawans - Training the Next Generation of Instructors before they are Needed (10-10:25a)

Ryan Huser, Mid-State Technical College

Have you ever been promoted and just handed the toolbox with no idea what is inside or how the tools are supposed to work? All too often, Instructors assume their new position with no idea what comes next. Succession training allows members of departments to identify the next generation of leaders and provide them with on-the-job training to assume the next level before taking over their new position.

Over the past school year, Mid-State Technical College Paramedic Program has developed an Instructor Fellowship Program to take our next generation of instructors and provide them with the tools they need to be successful in the classroom. This education for the educators goes beyond the typical institutional orientation and the instructor classes they have taken in the past. Our Instructor Fellowship Program uses preset goals to guide our next generation of instructors into becoming effective educators in the classroom. This process also allows the instructors to follow experienced educators on a regular basis and puts them in a position of leadership in the classroom from the first day. As students meet their preset goals, their knowledge and confidence in the classroom will grow.

Curating Professional Development Experiences: The Value of PRO POINTS in Student Engagement and Success (10:00 – 10:25a)

Morgan Vanderhei, Mid-State Technical College

This session highlights PRO POINTS, an innovative framework designed to create a cultural shift in how students approach professional development. By curating meaningful opportunities such as guest speaker series and business tours and highlighting the value of existing college

2025 WTCS Faculty Summit

November 12 & 14, 2025

events and community partnerships. PRO POINTS encourages students to adopt a lifelong learning mindset, transforming their perspective from “I have to” into “I get to learn.” Attendees will see how this model builds engaging learning environments, fosters connections with business leaders, and opens doors for student success. Participants will also gain strategies for adapting elements of PRO POINTS into their own classrooms to cultivate a culture of engagement and growth.

Building MPTC’s First Z-Degree: Early Childhood Education and the Power of Collaboration (10:30-10:55a)

Kelly Carpenter, Anne Schrankler & Jennifer Irish, Moraine Park Technical College

By fall 2026, all courses in Moraine Park Technical College’s (MPTC) Early Childhood Education (ECE) program will use OER—launching the college’s first zero-textbook-cost degree pathway and expanding access and affordability for students.

This session explores why ECE was the right program to pioneer this effort, highlighting both the unique needs of students entering the profession and the opportunities the field provides for OER integration. Faculty leads Anne and Jennifer will share their experience creating and adapting open educational resources, including building partnerships with other WTCS colleges, navigating challenges, and reflecting on what worked well—and what they would approach differently in the future. Instructional Designer and OER Champion Kelly Carpenter will add perspective on how cross-campus collaboration between content experts and instructional design was essential to the project’s success. Together, the presenters will emphasize the value of strong faculty-ID partnerships, lessons learned, and key considerations for others interested in pursuing a Z-Degree. Attendees will leave with practical insights and strategies for initiating, developing, supporting, and sustaining OER and Z-Degree initiatives in their own programs.

Internationally Trained Professionals: How International Career Transition Programming Builds Belonging, Skills, and Workforce Connections (10:30-10:55a)

Lindsay Ryan, Waukesha County Technical College

Internationally trained professionals bring valuable education and experience to our communities yet often face barriers when entering the U.S. workforce. This session highlights WCTC’s International Career Transition course, an innovative program that combines career advising, credential evaluation, embedded professional English instruction, and a unique mentorship model. Participants will explore practical strategies to help students leverage their global skills, build belonging, and transition successfully into local careers.

11:00a – 12:00p

Redefining Teaching: Updates on AI Integration in College Courses

Bruce Forciea, Moraine Park Technical College

Faculty and students now have access to a new generation of powerful AI tools that are reshaping teaching and learning. This session highlights some of the recent updates in AI and provides strategies for integrating AI into college classrooms. We will cover strategies for using and optimizing AI to promote learning and student engagement based on experience over the past 2 years. Participants will explore AI tools from OpenAI, Google, and POE, including custom chatbots that act as personal tutors, AI-generated videos, audio, images, stories, games, and interactive activities. All



2025 WTCS Faculty Summit

November 12 & 14, 2025



featured tools are freely available, making them accessible for use by faculty and students. A free copy of the presenter's book will be available for download along with a link to a free course on AI integration for educators.

Engaging with Virtual and Online Students

William Walsh & Mitchell Ziolkowski, Blackhawk Technical College

The pandemic may have sparked a surge in remote and online learning, but for many colleges these options remain a permanent part of the educational landscape. How do we keep students engaged when they're logging in from home—whether through live platforms like Teams or Zoom, or fully online courses? In the Criminal Justice Studies Program at Blackhawk Technical College, we've been exploring, experimenting, and refining strategies to connect meaningfully with students outside the traditional classroom. In this session, we'll share practical tools, techniques, and lessons learned so that you can adapt to your own courses and programs to foster deeper engagement with virtual and online learners.

All In on AI: Faculty, Students, and Artificial Intelligence at NTC

Reggie Smith & Brooke Schindler, Northcentral Technical College

At Northcentral Technical College (NTC), artificial intelligence isn't an experiment, it's a commitment embedded in every program, across every discipline, for every student. By going "all in" on AI, NTC is preparing graduates with the skills and confidence to thrive in industries being reshaped by technology. This approach is as much about teaching and learning as it is about innovation. Early signs show strong faculty engagement, student curiosity, and alignment with workforce needs, and the work is still emerging and evolving.

This interactive session will share NTC's journey, highlighting locally developed frameworks and showcasing faculty-led examples of how AI is being embedded into curriculum and instruction. Through discussion and Q&A, participants will explore how AI can strengthen teaching practices, engage students, and align curriculum with industry trends.