A Review of Writing Centre Tutor Training Materials in the GCC

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Introduction

Long-held writing centre (WC) theory and praxis describes the work that is done between tutor and student as similar across institutions. However, the notion that WC theory and praxis can be implemented with equity from one institution to the next is an oversimplification of WC theory and an underestimation of the impact the environment in which a WC exists has on the WC. While WCs do share similar concepts of theory and praxis, how that praxis is carried out is greatly influenced not only by the environment in which the WC exists, but also by the population serving and being served within its walls; there is an ecology to each WC (Johnstone, 1989).

All WCs have different ecologies which are influenced by their institutional settings, yet the principles on which WCs run are similar. Consider two different farmers: one plants corn in Middle America; the other plants rice in a paddy in Korea. While there are underlying principles governing the growing of crops (fields must be prepared, seeds or seedlings must be sown, crops must be tended and harvested), each farmer has different tools to do the work, different seasons which

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produce optimum crop output, and different environmental parameters in which their crops will produce the highest yield. In a similar way, we can say that the work a tutor in one WC does with a student is very similar to what another tutor does in a different WC, that is, it is similar in theory, but the praxis and tools implanting that praxis vary by location.

What the ecology of a WC looks like and how it is influenced by the larger institutional environment in which it exists can be initially explored by looking at the work tutors are trained to do across the contexts in which they work. Johnstone's (1989) concept of ecology in the WC can be extended to the ecology of tutor training, which allows for a greater understanding of the training tutors receive regardless of the settings in which they work.

Tutoring strategies (Barnett & Blumner, 2007; Bruce & Rafoth, 2016; Mackiewicz & Thompson, 2015) offer views of what happens or what should happen in WC tutor sessions. All of these above-mentioned studies exist to describe the work tutors do with students in the North American context, yet little research exists regarding the work tutors and students do together in contexts outside of North America.

WCs in Arabian Gulf countries (AGCs) have been growing in numbers since universities from the West, specifically the United States, began opening branch campuses in the region (McHarg, 2013). Moreover, in opening the branch campuses, the importing universities have had to adapt the concepts of a WC to the needs of each local university (Ronesi, 2009). However, little research exists which investigates the tutor–student interaction in WCs in AGCs (Lefort, 2008; McHarg, 2013).

Similar to WCs elsewhere in the world, WCs in AGCs follow either the peer tutor model, where older or more experienced students tutor younger or less experienced students, or WCs employ professional tutors, who may or may not have a background in education or teaching. Whether a WC in the AGC region follows the peer tutor or the professional tutor model, like WCs' directors in the West, WCs' directors in AGCs have to contend with training their tutors in conducting a WC tutoring session (Lefort, 2008). But what does the tutor training material contain? What does it explain to tutors? What does it expect tutors to do with students?

As a metaphor, ecology works well for WC practice (Johnstone, 1989) and the learning that occurs in the interaction between the tutor, the student, and the location where they meet. Kramsch (2004) noted, "the 'ecology' metaphor is a convenient shorthand for the poststructuralist

realisation that learning is a nonlinear, relational human activity co-constructed between humans and their environment, contingent upon their position in space and history" (p. 5). The investigative lens of ecology has been used in WC studies for years (Devet, 2011, 2014; Gillam, 1991; Johnstone, 1989). This chapter extends the ecological concept already in place in WC study to a review of WC tutor training manuals in order to better understand how WCs in AGCs train their tutors.

DEFINITIONS

Tutor training material from participating WCs in this review use a variety of terms to describe their tutors. These terms include peer tutor, writing tutor, tutor, writing centre tutor, and consultant. To avoid confusion when discussing what each training manual covers, I will use the general term "tutor" to describe a person who tutors another person in writing. Similarly, the tutor training material uses the terms student, learner, and client to describe the person who receives tutoring from a tutor. When referencing the person working with a tutor, I use the term "student."

The phrase "training document" is used as a blanket description to describe the various documents submitted for the purposes of this review, all of which are produced in-house in each WC. Each WC titled its training documents, and for the most part, I have kept the title intact unless using the full title identified by the WC or university where the WC is situated. In these cases, I eliminated the name of the WC or university from the title and used a shortened version of the document name.

PARTICIPANTS

As of this writing, there are 24 WCs (K. Wilson, personal correspondence, 24 March 2016) in the Middle East–North Africa Writing Centres Association (MENAWCA), which is an affiliate of the International Writing Centres Association (Affiliate Organisations, 2015). Of the 24 WCs in the MENAWCA, six are defunct or no longer have a web presence. Of the remaining 18, six (n = 6) or 0.33% are from AGCs and responded to the call for submitting training documents for the purposes of this review. These six WCs submitted a total of eight in-house produced documents (see Table 13.1) used to train their tutors in WC practice.

Table 13.1   Participating writing centres' (WC) locations, university model, and contribution

WC	Location	University model	Contribution
WC1	United Arab Emirates	American branch campus	"Course Syllabus"
WC2	Qatar	American branch campus	*Writing Tutor Training Modules*
WC3	Oman	National university	*Writing Centre Tutor Guide* and a frequently asked questions (FAQ) list
WC4	United Arab Emirates	National university	*Writing Centre Staff Handbook* and *Peer Tutor Handbook*
WC5	Qatar	American branch campus	*Peer Tutor Handbook* and *Policy Guidelines for Peer Tutors*
WC6	Saudi Arabia	National university	A list of chapters for writing tutors to read

Data Sources

The WCs agreeing to participate in this review did so with the understanding that the investigator would keep them and their universities anonymous. The participating WCs in this review fall into two categories (see Table 13.1): national universities ($n = 3$) operating under the guise of a local government within a single country, or American universities ($n = 3$) with branch campuses that have established universities in AGCs.

Methodology

This review of in-house produced WC tutor training material seeks to describe the ways in which tutors are trained at various WCs in AGCs. What follows is a word count analysis of the training documents and a summary of the documents, containing the main points in each. Through the analysis and the summary that follows, the values placed upon the tutor training process at the participating WCs can be explored across the various contexts from which they come. Exploring the pan-contextuality of training allows a better understanding of the ecological nature of WCs, in general, and how each participating WC approaches its training, which is influenced by the interaction of place, people, and goals.

Word Count Analysis

A total of eight WC training documents were run through the AntConc (Anthony, 2014) software. These documents come from WC1, WC2,

WC3, WC4, and WC5 (see Table 13.1). WC6 was not included in the Antconc analysis because it relies on commercially produced WC-focused texts and chapters to train their tutors. Among the documents submitted, the AntConc (Anthony, 2014) revealed the following.

A total of 33,879 words are represented across all eight documents. "Writing" is the most frequently occurring word across all documents submitted for review. Table 13.2 lists the most frequently occurring content words (word count), their frequency, and the overall rank of how often the words are used. While "writing" is used 566 times, with an overall rank of the ninth most used word, ranked words from first to seventh are as follows: (1) the, (2) to, (3) x, (4) and, (5) a, (6) of, (7) in, *and* (8) you. Table 13.2 shows the eight highest overall content words in the word rank, word count, and number of times each word appears (word frequency) in specific training documents.

Both word frequency and ranking show that, across tutor training documents, WCs share common words that help in the training of tutors.

Table 13.2 Overall word rank, count, and document appearance

	Writing	*Students*	*Student*	*Tutoring*	*Tutor*	*Tutors*	*Writers*	*Writer*
Word								
Word rank	9	12	14	23	25	46	102	166
Word count	566	362	356	197	170	102	45	29
Training documents								
WC1: "Course Syllabus"	89	51	22	15	12	9	7	4
WC2: *Tutor Training Modules*	160	11	11	75	50	26	21	5
WC3: *Tutor Training Manual*	58	29	60	2	20	5	3	5
WC3: FAQ list	28	4	0	0	3	3	0	2
WC4: *Staff Handbook*	58	52	33	5	11	8	3	3
WC4: *Peer Tutor Handbook*	154	94	63	8	9	20	11	10
WC5: *Peer Tutor Training Book*	3	82	86	64	46	16	0	0
WC5: *Policy Guidelines for Peer Tutors*	16	39	81	28	19	15	0	0

A closer analysis of the material submitted[1] for review reveals the following: "Writing" appears 566 times across the eight analysed documents. While 566 is a large number, it is important to know that the phrase "writing centre" figures prominently in the submitted documents because many inclusions of the phrase indicate the institution for which tutors are training or as the title of the document itself.

The word "student" appears 362 times, and "students" appears 356 times for a total of 708 instances across all documents. The word "writer" appears 29 times, and "writers" appears 45 times for a total of 74 times in eight of the ten documents. Taken together, the words student, students, writer, and writers appear a grand total of 783 times. Meanwhile, the related word "tutor" appears 170 times, and "tutors" appears 102 times for a total of 272 instances.

Of note, the synonymised words "student" and "writer" and their plural counterparts appear across the training documents more than twice the rate of "tutor" and "tutors." When considering the summary of the documents above and the total word counts of student, students, tutor, and tutors, a strong argument can be made that the training of WC tutors in universities in AGCs is focused more on the students receiving the tutoring than the tutors who provide the tutoring.

Summary of WC Documents

Writing Centre 1

A writing centre based at an American branch campus in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, Writing Centre 1 (WC1), submitted a "Course Syllabus" for the class Peer Tutoring in Writing. "This course is used to train talented writers for roles as Writing Centre Tutors or Writing Fellows from a pool of undergraduate students who demonstrate high levels of writing ability, interest, and interpersonal skills." To help students think critically about writing and the teaching and tutoring of writing, this course uses an experiential model where students observe WC sessions, teach one another through class discussions, and comment on sample papers.

In addition to the experiential nature of the course, with a focus on "addressing issues and theories of writing and peer-collaboration relating to peer tutoring in writing," students read and discuss several canonical pieces on WC practice: Brufee's (2001) "Conversation of Mankind," Trimbur's (1987) "Peer Tutoring: A Contradiction in Terms?," Reid's (1994) "Responding to ESL Students' Texts: The Myths of Appropriation,"

Bouman's (2004) "Raising Questions about Plagiarism," Harbord's (2003) "Minimalist Tutoring: An Exportable Model?," Sherwood's (1999) "Censoring Students, Censoring Ourselves: Constraining Conversations in the Writing Centre," Bahrainwala's (2013) "Should I Take Notes as You Brainstorm: Examining Consultants' In-Session Notes," Moore's (2013) "Revising Trimbur's Dichotomy: Tutors and Clients Sharing Knowledge, Sharing Power," Ronesi's (2011) "Striking While the Iron Is Hot: A Writing Fellows Program Supporting Lower-Division Courses at an American University in the UAE," and Kaplan's (1966) "Cultural Thought Patterns in Inter-cultural Education."

The articles listed above are covered in class via student-led class discussion. Students are divided into pairs, and they share the duties of leading class discussions on the topics within the articles. Students are expected to lead the class in discussion of the implicit and explicit aspects of the article through a variety of stimulating ways described by the course instructor. Through the discussions, WC observation, and practice on marking sample papers, students completing the course are eligible, for students come to "consider how such issues and theories may or may not apply in the" context of WC1.

Another aim of the course includes students developing an awareness of English grammar in writing, specifically coming

> to understand that a writing tutor's support with grammar is less important than support with organisation, idea development, cohesion, and coherence; however, weak grammar that hinders clarity is a common problem among students. As such, it is important for WRI 221 students to be able to identify and explain some of the most common grammar problems, particularly problems with tenses and run-on sentences.

Between the reading and discussion of WC-related articles and the grammar lessons, by the end of the course, students will be able to

- critically analyse course content via personal and real-world experience and understanding;
- engage with their classmates in substantive discussions on course content;
- explain discrete points of grammar and punctuation using an interactive, inductive approach (by engaging the class in an exercise where the class examines authentic language and generates grammar rules inductively);

- analyse the success of their tutorials in view of class content; and
- demonstrate knowledge of the issues and theories related to peer tutoring in writing.

Writing Centre 2

An American university branch in Doha, Qatar, submitted *Writing Tutor Training Modules* used to train students to become tutors. This training takes place over the course of the first semester while working as a peer tutor at the WC. To become a full-fledged tutor, or "Very Important Tutors in Training," candidates are required to attend weekly peer tutor training meetings, weekly writing peer tutor training meetings, and complete a set of 10 modules, composed of five parts: an objective part, readings, a writing and reflection part, an application part, and a focus on WC scholarship part. Pertinent to the discussion here are the goals of each module as well as the WC scholarship trainees read.

According to the training document, the goals of Module 1 are to introduce trainees to WC work and practice, to critical thinking and reflection on writing skills, and to how one-on-one tutoring fits into the goals and mission of the larger university. The goals of Module 2 ask for the tutors in training to become familiar with the taxonomy needed to talk to writers about their writing and to consider the recursive nature of the writing process. Module 3 begins the basic approach to learning about and understanding what happens in this WC's 50-minute face-to-face appointment and asks trainees to consider what process makes up an effective tutoring session. Module 4 asks trainees to apply their new learning to tutoring sessions in the WC and to focus on the best practices to meet the needs of their student population. Module 5 encourages trainees to build an awareness of their clients' needs, how to best help them, and how to build a rapport that fosters a relationship of work and trust. Module 6 introduces trainees to this WC's budding online tutoring practice and services. Module 7 asks trainees to consider how different writing assignments have different genres and audiences. Module 8 covers unusual or challenging tutoring situations and helps trainees learn about the potential difficulties that can occur while tutoring and the skills needed to get through difficult sessions. Module 9 is a review covering WC theory and practice and making connections to the local context in which the trainees work. Module 10 asks tutors to continue their practice in tutoring, welcomes trainees to the field of tutoring, and encourages trainees to develop enquiry into their tutoring to further the research in the field.

Through the course of the study, trainees read all nine chapters of Ryan and Zimmerelli's (2010) The Bedford's Guide for Writing Tutors and a number of chapters from Barnett and Blumner's (2007) *The Longman Guide to Writing Center Theory and Practice,* including North's "The Idea of a Writing Centre" and "Revising 'The Idea of a Writing Centre,'" Bruffee's "Peer Tutoring and the 'Conversation for Mankind,'" Brooks' "Minimalist Tutoring: Making the Student Do All the Work," Harris' "Collaboration Is Not Collaboration Is Not Collaboration: Writing Centre Tutorials vs. Peer-Response Groups," Trimbur's "Peer Tutoring: A Contradiction in Terms?," Coogan's "Towards a Rhetoric of On-Line Tutoring," Posey's "An Ongoing Tutor-Training Program," Wallace's "The Writing Centre's Role in the Writing across the Curriculum Program: Theory and Practice," and Newkirk's "The First Five Minutes: Setting the Agenda in a Writing Conference."

Writing Centre 3

WC3, situated within the foundation programme (FP)[2] of a national university in Oman, hired professional WC tutors living in the area where the campus is located. These professional tutors were all degree-holding adults. The training material WC3 submitted included a *Writing Centre Tutor Guide* and a list of frequently asked questions (FAQ).

WC3 used the *Writing Centre Tutor Guide* to train the professional tutors hired to tutor English-language students in the university's FP. The tutor guide serves to describe for tutors the function of the WC within the larger FP and to introduce them to the mission of WCs, including methodology, serving Arabic-speaking students, and a conference protocol.

In placing the WC within the background of the larger FP, the tutor guide for WC3 noted that the FP served more than 4000 students and employed more than 200 instructors from 30 different countries. At the time of the writing of the tutor guide for WC3, the WC served upper-level students in the FP first and, then, based on space and tutor availability, students outside the FP in their courses of study. All the students served by the WC were English-language students.

WC3's mission is similar to the missions of other WCs: "It is our mission to improve students' written communication through ongoing support in the form of collaborative dialogue, explicit instruction in academic writing, and an encouraging environment to practice and develop as writers." To enact this mission, WC3 provides students with one-on-one conferencing with a tutor, supports writers of any proficiency with writ-

ing tasks in any course, aims to establish dialogue with students about the writing process to offer encouragement as well as support through improving revisions, and promotes critical thinking and responsible academic enquiry through careful study of citation practices.

The students using the services provided by WC3 typically possess low-intermediate to intermediate proficiency levels in English, with strong motivation to improve. WC3 solicits students via classroom visits to voluntarily attend WC tutoring sessions.

WC3 encourages a methodology that involves approaching students as writers who often face challenges of confidence as much as of ability. In making students feel welcome in the WC, tutors are trained to follow Pemberton's (1994) *The Three Laws of Tutorics*:

1. A WC tutor should teach students how to write and revise their own work, not do the writing or the revising for them.
2. A WC tutor should help students identify the most significant problems in their texts, so long as the help they provide does not violate the first law.
3. A WC tutor should follow a student's agenda for the writing conference, so long as the agenda does not violate the first or second law.

In enacting Pemberton's three laws of tutoring, tutors in WC3 are trained "to address higher order concerns (content, development, organisation) before lower order concerns (word choice, grammar and mechanics)." Tutors are directed to avoid addressing all errors but encouraged to use their expertise to provide direction to students on correct usage and to guide them in their own editing. The *Writing Centre Tutor Guide* asks that tutors use their own judgement whether to move into more direct tutoring, as opposed to minimalist tutoring, where students are more involved in session workings.

Because the majority of WC3's tutors were expatriates living in Oman who might not be familiar with Arabic learners of English, WC3's training manual provides a list of 11 tips for tutors regarding how the Arabic language is constructed, which may cause confusion when students write in English. Some of the tips in the tutor guide include information on basic word order of Classical Arabic, where the verb precedes the subject, the lack of the auxiliary verb *do*, and the absence of the verb *be* in the present tense.

WC3's *Writing Centre Tutor Guide* also includes a writing conference protocol which provides guidelines for how tutors are to conduct a WC session with students. Included in the protocol are sections that can be described as welcoming the student, opening the session, analysing the paper, and closing the session.

Prior to opening the session, the protocol asks tutors to make sure that the space where the conference is to take place has scratch paper and reference material. In the opening steps of the session, tutors are to welcome the student, invite the student to sit down, and ask if this is the first WC for the student. If it is the student's first visit, the tutor guide asks that tutors explain what the WC is and how it functions.

The next steps in the protocol touch on helping the student be engaged in the session by answering any questions the student may have about the WC or the session, asking about what goals and concerns the student has, and agreeing on what the tutor and the student will work on in the allotted time of the session. The tutor is then asked to become familiar with both the writing task and how the student understands it.

The protocol tasks the tutor to begin analysing the student paper by asking the student to read the paper aloud. This is done to help the student identify places that "don't sound right" and to ensure the student remains an active agent in the session, rather than expecting the tutor to identify and fix the errors in the paper. As a student reads, the tutor should listen and take notes on a separate piece of paper and avoid writing directly on a draft of student writing. Tutors are directed to look for global, over local, concerns in so far as the draft meets parameters of the assignment and has identifiable parts of an essay (introduction, thesis statement, body, and conclusion). As this process continues, the tutor is encouraged to ask questions about the writing and to offer choices on ways to repair areas of the paper in question, rather than being directive in how to fix problem parts. Overall, tutors are asked to allow time for the student to respond to questions a tutor might ask.

In closing the session, the protocol tasks tutors with ending on a positive or encouraging comment, reviewing the work that was done, and discussing the work the student will do after the session. The protocol then directs tutors to complete for and email to the student a form describing the work done in the session, and then the protocol asks the tutors to invite students to complete an anonymous feedback form on the session.

WC3 also submitted a FAQ list with questions (and answers), written in both Arabic and English, that potential users of the WC might have.

Created primarily for WC in-promotion, the FAQ list was also used in tutor training to introduce newly hired tutors to how the WC functioned. The FAQ list can be divided into factual and descriptive information about the WC. Questions and answers about WC hours, location, making an appointment, and information about who can use the services fall into the category of factual information. Questions about making an appointment, how the WC can help students, how to prepare for a conference, and what happens in a WC conference can be categorised as descriptive information about the WC.

Writing Centre 4

WC4, a national university based in the United Arab Emirates, submitted its *Writing Centre Staff Handbook* and its *Peer Tutor Handbook* for the purposes of this review. The *Writing Centre Staff Handbook* serves to acquaint both peer tutors and professional tutors with information surrounding the WC's mission statement, an introduction to the WC, the services of the WC, and the tutoring methodology.

The mission statement of WC4 is as follows:

> The Writing Centre strives to assist all members of the university community as they learn more about writing and become better writers. By offering resources for writers in English and Arabic, the centre encourages development of academic and creative writing skills across the curriculum.

The mission statement of WC4 provides guidance for its staff of teachers from the university's English, Arabic, and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) departments; the university's FP; and peer tutors of advanced abilities in English.

WC4 has two locations: one for female students and one for male students. However, teachers working as tutors in the WC serve in both locations regardless of their gender. The bulk of WC4's tutorial sessions are drawn from the university's FP and ESP programme; however, WC sessions are not the only service of WC4. It also provides workshops on various aspects of writing dictated on faculty's and students' need.

The tutoring methodology of WC4 articulates that a tutor is not a student's teacher, and that the WC session is collaborative and facilitative in style, which "helps students develop confidence and autonomy." Sessions and interactions with students are to be informal and non-judgmental, a

place where students feel free to explore ideas and discuss concerns in a one-on-one setting. WC4 lists several principles of tutoring, which include concepts such as collaborative consultation with dialogue and discussion, student-directed topic setting, and not writing on student's work.

Other guiding principles ask tutors to enact a positive approach and engage students in intellectual discussions about their topics to facilitate deeper thinking. Tutors are responsible for keeping track of the tutorial session timing of 25–50 minutes but not hurrying through the session, as "good writing takes time," which might mean asking repeated questions through non-directive techniques.

WC4's student population mostly comprises students of English as a Second Language. With this knowledge, the tutor manual mentions that students will enter the WC with varying abilities in writing as well as in speaking and may face serious challenges in written or spoken communication. To accommodate students of all levels and abilities, the *Staff Handbook* provides tutors with a general, four-step tutoring process. The tutoring process includes welcoming the student in a positive way to establish a comfortable relationship, asking the student to explain the assignment requirements and what he/she wants to do, setting an agenda in collaboration with the student, and working within the areas identified by the student.

WC4's second submission for this review, the *Peer Tutor Handbook*, provides some suggested tutoring techniques, which include understanding the assignment, brainstorming and planning, working with a rough draft, and working on a final draft. If students are unsure of what the assignment asks of them, tutors are instructed to have students check with their instructor. In generating ideas and planning, the *Peer Tutor Handbook* for WC4 directs tutors to consider questions such as "What do you know about the topic?" "Do you need to find out more about it?" "How can you find out more?" If students come to a tutorial session with a rough draft, the *Tutor Handbook* directs tutors to ask them questions that encourage reflection on the work that has been done: "What needs improving and why?" "What have you found difficult?" This section tasks tutors to provide feedback as a reader. If a student comes with a final draft, tutors are directed to make sure that he/she has already read the paper and checked the writing. Tutors are then asked to discuss with the student what mistakes are likely to be found in the writing and to supervise the student as he/she checks for that type of error. Because of the language level and ability of some students using the WC services in WC4, the *Peer*

Tutor Handbook advises tutors that if a student is unable to check the work himself or herself, the tutor is to point out and discuss two to three areas that need work but never to "proofread or correct the student's work."

Writing Centre 5

WC5 is a branch campus of an American university based in Qatar, and it submitted two documents for this review: a *Peer Tutor Training Handbook* (*PTTH*) and *Policy Guidelines for Peer Tutors* (*PGPT*). The *PTTH* provides tutors with a ten-unit training module introducing peer tutors to the art of tutoring and helping them become acquainted with how to address their tutoring when in a session with a student. WC5 also submitted the *PGPT*, which supports WC tutors by outlining WC and Student Services Centre policies and procedures.

There are ten sections in WC5's *PTTH*: Introduction, Ideal Peer Tutor, Conducting a Good Session, Communication, Listening Habits, Learning Styles, Learning Disabilities, Diversity, Group Tutoring, and Review. Each section has a brief definition of the topic, followed by informative reading that elucidates the importance of focusing on this topic.

In the first section, Introduction, tutoring is defined as helping "students help themselves, or to assist or guide them to the point at which they become an independent learner, and thus no longer need a tutor." Supporting this definition are discussions of a tutoring code of ethics and the benefits peer tutors receive from tutoring. The code of ethics in WC5's *PTTH* comes from the National Tutoring Association (2016) and is printed in its entirety. According to the Introduction, the benefits peer tutors receive from tutoring include increases in the following: motivation to learn, a sense of adequacy in adjusting to a new role, the ability to self-manage strategies in learning and studying, and content knowledge. The Introduction also explains that peer tutors will receive a heightened sense of ability to conform to a new role that encourages higher-level thinking, as well as learning, to empathise with students.

The second section of the *PTTH*, Ideal Peer Tutor, provides a list of guidelines that tutors are expected to follow. Tutors, according to the list, help students in the following ways: understand assignments, improve their writing and thinking skills through the writing process, identify strengths and weaknesses and build confidence in writing, and achieve a very high level of academic integrity. The guidelines also state that tutors

will assist in discussing the ideas the student brings to the session, not just the ideas of the tutor. Supporting this list of guidelines are descriptions of peer tutor behaviour expectations. Peer tutors are expected to be inspiring to their peers and tutees; professional towards other WC employees and students regardless of gender; confidential regarding details of who is tutored in the WC by maintaining the privacy of confidential information regarding student name, class, level of English ability, or other details; challenged to learn new skills and techniques to become a more effective tutor; and creative in developing new talents and interests in projects in and about the WC.

Section three of the *PTTH* is Conducting a Good Tutoring Session. In three steps, this section introduces tutors to a protocol for conducting a tutoring session. *Step one*, getting to know the tutee, mentions the tutee's psychological, academic, and social needs. *Step two* discusses the actions a tutor can use to lead to a good session with a student. These actions include being honest with the student, giving undivided attention to the student, and being empathetic towards the student. Tutors are directed to read ask what the student's concerns and goals are for the session. *Step three* discusses ending the tutorial session by assessing and recapping the work that was done in the session, providing extra assignments if needed, and offering to schedule a follow-up tutorial session. Through these actions, it is hoped that the tutor can improve the student's weak areas by working through his/her strengths.

The fourth section of the *PTTH* is Communication, and the fifth is Listening Habits. Both sections help peer tutors in training to learn about effective speaking, questioning, and listening techniques to have a successful tutoring session with a student. In the fourth section, tutors are asked to take a communication-style quiz to help them discover their communication style and how this style can help establish rapport with a student. The fifth section asks tutors to consider a wide range of habits associated with good and bad listening techniques, which mean highlighting that speakers (students) discuss what is most important to them and that they listen to ideas with the mind, not with emotions.

Sections six and seven of the *PTTH* discuss learning styles and learning with disabilities, respectively. Section six particularly discusses identifying the learning style of tutors in training and knowing how to adapt to the learning styles of tutees. Section seven discusses how to tutor students with disabilities. As WC5 is an American university branch based in Qatar,

the *PTTH* explains, it is bound by the American Disability Act, which guarantees access and services to persons with disabilities. This section also mentions some common learning disabilities, suggestions for providing assistance to students with disabilities, and strategies that can be employed in tutoring sessions for students with disabilities.

Section eight of the *PTTH* explores the topic of diversity, particularly the ways to tutor "a diverse range of students, and dealing with ideological conflicts during a tutoring session." This section focuses on identifying the actions the tutor can take if a student comes to the centre upset or angry or writes about something which the tutor disagrees with. In cases such as these, the *PTTH* advises the tutor to remove the student from the tutoring centre and take him/her for a walk. If a student writes about something, either a topic or in a way the tutor disagrees with, the tutor is advised to gently challenge the ideas present in the writing with counterarguments or to focus on seeing the writing assignment from the student's point of view. Section eight ends with a discussion on tutoring students of diversity, as WC5 is part of an American branch university in Qatar and students using the WC here come from many different countries. It is possible, according to the *PTTH*, that writing tutors may have to work with students from different cultures.

Section nine of the *PTTH* focuses on group tutoring within the WC. According to the handbook, working with a small group has many benefits and challenges, but the largest benefit is the possibility of sharing multiple viewpoints and information. The handbook instructs tutors to keep an open mind, to allow students time to think when asking a question, and to encourage everyone to speak, particularly when there is one dominant person in the small group.

Section ten of the *PTTH* is a unit serving as a review of the previous nine units.

WC5 also submitted the *PGPT*. In this document, tutors are given a broad overview of the policies and procedures of working in the larger Student Services Centre, in which the WC is located, as well a focused section on the art of tutoring. This section provides the values of the university where WC5 is situated as well as suggestions on beginning a tutoring session, how to help build student confidence while lowering student stress, how to provide corrections and feedback, and how to develop and improve tutoring skills. The remaining sections of the *PGPT* contain information on policies within the WC.

Writing Centre 6

WC6 is a national university in Saudi Arabia. In training WC tutors at WC6, tutors independently study and then discuss at staff meetings a number of readings from WC scholarship. Read at a rate of one or two per week over the course of an academic year, tutors discuss the following: Chapters 1–6 from Gillespie and Lerner's (2008) *The Longman Guide to Peer Tutoring*, Chapters 1–6 from Barnett and Blumner's (2007) *The Longman Guide to Writing Center Theory and Practice The Longman Guide to Writing Center Theory and Practice*, Chapters 1–8 from Bruce and Rafoth's (2016) *ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Centre Tutors*, and Chapters 1–8 from Ryan and Zimmerelli's (2010) *The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors.*

Notes

1. While WC3's FAQ list is included in Table 13.2, it has very few associated words in common with the other tutor training documents. One reason for this is that the FAQ list is a one-page question-and-answer document designed for intra-university WC promotion. WC3's FAQ list is used in training, but is not the main training document from which tutors are trained.
2. A foundation program (FP), often called a bridge or gap program, serves to bolster the English-language skills of first-year university students in order to prepare them for academic studies entirely in English. At this university, students tested into a specific level of the FP and stayed in it for as short as a semester or as long as 18 months, depending on where they started in the FP. This WC was mandated to serve FP students, but also worked with students in their regular academic courses if space allowed.

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