FALL 2017 UASP Writing Training
LESSON PLAN

Name of Session: Writing Center Framework
Audience: Writing Tutors and GWCs
Day, Date, Time, and Location: Saturday, August 26, 2017
Presenter(s): Everyone!

Learning Outcomes:
- Writing Tutors and GWCs will explore and develop their philosophies about writing tutoring
- Writing Tutors and GWCS will learn about the ASU Writing Centers' core values, core beliefs, and mission statement.

Materials Needed: Projector/computer, Writing Center Framework infographic

TOPIC: Writing Tutors' and GWCs' Current Beliefs about Writing Tutoring　　TIME: 10 minutes

- Welcome and quick words to prep them for this "framework" lesson
- Individual writing prompt: What are your personal beliefs/philosophies about writing centers or writing tutoring? (2-3 minutes) (Darby)
- Small group work (Molly)
  - Each group compiles a list of common core beliefs/philosophies (2 minutes)
  - Groups choose 2-3 to write on white board at front of room (3 minutes)
  - Discuss/debrief using student responses as a guide (2 minutes)

TOPIC: ASU Writing Centers' Core Values, Core Beliefs, and Mission Statement　　TIME: 15 minutes

- Display infographic in PowerPoint form & give overview of core values and beliefs (1-2 minutes)
- Embed the core values into the core beliefs
  - Each pro staff reads through a core belief (1 minute each). As each pro staff member is speaking, pro staff can star or check items written on whiteboard that reiterate values and beliefs
    - *Peer-to-peer collaboration is an effective learning method.*
      - When students explain their ideas to others and participate in activities in which they can learn from their peers, they engage more effectively in learning.
      - We employ tutors from a range of majors because tutors are trained to be expert readers and relate to students from all disciplines and backgrounds

- o Collaborative learning is a significant experience for tutors as well: PWTARP findings
  - o Habits of Mind: Reflexivity
- *We help at any stage of the writing process.*
  - o Writing is a challenging, recursive process that requires constant revision and rewriting. Tutors help students unpack assignment expectations and guidelines, plan projects, and brainstorm content for projects. They also provide readerly feedback on works in progress, focusing on both local and global concerns.
  - o Habits of Mind: Responsibility
- *Each writer's individual needs are the focus of the session.*
  - o "No two sessions are alike because every writer is different. The starting point of every session is to find out what that particular student needs or wants. To set the agenda for the session, tutors assess the student's present situation, class requirements, past writing history, general composing habits and approaches to learning, attitudes, motivation, and whatever else is needed to determine how the tutor and student should proceed. Students are encouraged to participate actively in setting the agenda for how the tutor and student will spend their time together" (Harris, 2014).
  - o Habits of Mind: Openness
- *We are coaches and collaborators, not teachers.*
  - o "Tutors do not evaluate their students in any way because the tutor's role is to help students, not to lecture at them or repeat information available from the teacher or textbook" ("Writing Center Concept"). Additionally, tutors should not assess what grade a student might receive on a writing assignment & tutors should avoid generic evaluative phrases (for example, "this is good") because these statements can cause misunderstandings. Students may infer from these statements that they're going to receive a good grade. Perhaps more importantly, when tutors say generic evaluative statements like "this is good," (1) students infer that good writers are born with talent, when the truth is that good writers practice their craft and develop skill through hard work like everyone else; and (2) students don't specifically know what good behaviors or skills to continue practicing in future writing projects.
  - o "Instead, tutors collaborate with writers in ways that facilitate the process of writers finding their own answers. To accomplish this, tutors may engage writers in discussions of their topics so that writers can develop their ideas and practice the phrasing and vocabulary of the kinds of discourses they will be writing. Tutors may also offer reader feedback on developing drafts of papers, suggest writing strategies, diagnose writing problems, ask questions, review misunderstood or missing information, listen to writers, help them gain a perspective on their writing, and encourage continued independent revision" (Harris, 2014).

- The function of the tutor is to provide non evaluative, immediate feedback, to attend to that student's questions and offer additional information and suggestions for revision, and to engage with the student in some active planning, drafting, or revising. "The tutor's goal in working on a specific paper with a student is to help that student develop general writing skills. Tutors often rely on asking questions that help students find their own answers, thereby keeping the session an interactive situation in which the student is encouraged to do as much or more talking than the tutor. Numerous studies indicate not only that session instruction benefits writers but also that it enhances their motivation and attitudes. Anxieties about writing are reduced by helpful coaching, positive reinforcement, and the friendly listening ear of the tutor" (Harris, 2014).
  - Habits of Mind: Leadership
- *We collaborate with writers at all levels of writing proficiency.*
  - "In the writing center, the writer joins a community of writers. Writers are assisted in discarding the antiquated view of the lonely writer secluded from the world as she struggles to communicate with an unknown, unseen audience" (Harris, 2014).
  - Tutors work with students, staff, *and* faculty. No matter how experienced we are, we all benefit from sharing works in progress and revising based on constructive criticism. It's a common professional practice. We all do it. The Writing Center is one space on campus and online to do it.
  - Habits of Mind: Flexibility
- *We help writers identify and understand how writing varies by audience, context, and genre.*
  - Discourse communities have different sets of expectations when it comes to writing and communication. "The Academy," and academic writing by extension, is one discourse community that tutors help writers understand.
  - Tutors and consultants can help with a variety of types of writing and assignments such as essays, presentations, case studies, literature reviews, etc.
  - Habits of Mind: Inquisitiveness
- *We experiment and practice.*
  - Because learning to write involves practice, risk taking, and revising, writing centers are places where students are encouraged to try out new writing strategies and to experiment *and* to get feedback. "Removed from the evaluative setting of a classroom, writers are free to engage in trial runs of ideas and approaches, to fail and move on to another attempt, and to receive encouragement for their efforts. Names of various facilities, such as writing center, writing lab, writing place, or writing room, are meant to encourage this view of the writing center as an informal, experimental, active place. This trying-out can be either in the form of talk, as writers practice formulating ideas aloud, or in writing" (Harris, 2014).

- - o Habits of Mind: Creativity
  - *We engage in professional development and utilize resources*
    - o Tutors participate in training at the beginning of each semester, take part in ongoing tutor education, facilitate writing workshops and grammar review sessions, engage with writing center scholarship, and are encouraged to seek out additional opportunities for professional development.
    - o Tutors should use available resources (colleagues, books, internet, etc.) in the writing centers and online to research information and ideas in sessions. This practice not only encourages experimentation but also models curiosity, openness, engagement, and persistence.
    - o Habits of Mind: Persistent Engagement
- Mission Statement and Q&A (5 min)
  - o Read through mission statement
  - o Discuss how the mission statement showcases our beliefs/values.
  - o Quick note to help the tutors/GWCs transition to the rest of the day: Think about the Habits of Mind that we discussed today and apply that in today's sessions; let the information inform the questions you ask today during training and throughout the semester/year.