Affordances and Challenges of International Writing Center Tutors and Strategies for their Work at Writing Centers

(Roundtable @Pavillion Ballroom C, 4:30 - 5:45 PM)

4:30-4:50 PM - Introductions and opening thoughts
4:50-5:35 PM - Roundtable Discussion
5:35-5:45 PM - Wrap up

Introduction
- Your name, pronoun, affiliation, country
- If there is one thing you could change or add to your writing center, what would it be?

Opening Thoughts
- **Rationale for this topic**
    - As international tutors, we have had a few sessions where students came with perceptions that we were not as qualified as tutors whose native language is English to help them with their writing.
    - Since scholarship on international Writing Center tutors is limited, we would like to learn about other tutors' experiences.
    - We hope to co-create possible strategies that can help international tutors recognize their assets and tools to deal with possible challenges they may encounter.

- **Definition of "affordance"**
    1. The "possibilities, or opportunities, for action that an agent perceives in a behavioral setting - what Heidegger (1962) calls a 'work-world'- in light of their aims and intentions and their capabilities" (Aspbury-Miyanishi, 2022, p. 3).
    2. "the perceived and actual properties of the thing, primarily those fundamental properties that determine just how the thing could possibly be used" (Norma, 1988, p.9).

- **Overview of the results**
    - We received four responses to our survey, and the perspectives were varied.
    - Some tutors felt that their consciousness that they were not native speakers of English affected their confidence.
        > *"Being a 'non-native speaker of English' makes me feel like I have to constantly prove in some way that I'm qualified to be a writing instructor."*

    - Some international tutors referred to the time constraints of the session
        > *"Sometimes it is difficult to foster a collaborative session, because our cultural codes might be different. It is difficult to build common collaborative conditions in 40 minutes or 1 hour."*

        > *"On the other hand, domestic tutors are usually experts in their language, so the challenges I've encountered have been more related to understanding texts with complex grammar and vocabulary in a short period and finding ways to help them elevate them."*

    - Some tutors felt that they needed more support with grammar instruction.
        > *"The grammatical support they [WC clients] sometimes expect (which I resonate with) is sometimes challenging for me to provide."*

Roundtable Discussion

- **Challenges and Strategies**

1. (A) For international tutors: What have been your experience working with American and international students (are those sessions different? Why? What (extra) skills do you think you need to work with domestic students?)

   (B) For non-international tutors: What have been your experiences working with international colleagues? (Any cultural differences that are challenging or you wish you understood better? What (extra) skills do you think you need to work with international students?)

2. What could be strategies for international tutors in dealing with challenges they may have?

- **Affordances of International Tutors**

   Please consider the two questions below and draft a sentence spotlighting international tutors' affordances in the Writing Center, to be incorporated on the WC website.

1. What affordances do you think international tutors bring to the Writing Center?

2. How can international tutors bring their cultural knowledge and competencies (that might be taken for granted) to the Writing Center?

- **Training/Orientation-Related**

1. What resources/activities do you think could be included in an orientation or training in responding to the challenges the international tutors have?

2. What kind of adjustments, accommodations can we make in a Writing Center for an international tutor (before or during the semester)?

3. What are the potential challenges around developing training intended for international tutors?

Wrap up

- Imagine you have to mentor an international tutor, what would be a resource or suggestion for them?