

Assessing Agendas in EAL Written Feedback

To what extent are new UCWbL student tutors able to effectively set an agenda that guides their work with an English as an additional language (EAL) writer in a written feedback appointment?

Learning Outcome

- Students who participate in the UCWbL's programs and activities will be able to adapt their processes to specific literacy goals.

Methodology

- In Spring 2019, 32 new student tutors (80%) provided written feedback on an EAL text from which 24 tutors' (60%) feedback files were analyzed and assessed.
- An internally-created six-point rubric assessed three categories of setting the agenda: how the tutor collaboratively sets the agenda, how the agenda is explained, and how the agenda is carried through the marginal comments.
- The UCWbL Handbook and theory-established best practices were used to norm the rubric and establish a standardized processes for scoring the data.
- Students successfully demonstrated learning in a single category with a score of 4 or higher, and overall learning with a mean score of 3.5 or higher.

Demographics

- All 24 tutors (100%) were hired in Spring 2018 and begin working in Fall 2018.
- All tutors completed the UCWbL training course (WRD 395 or WRD 582) and additional training during Fall 2018.
- These tutors include both undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in a variety of colleges and programs.

Key Findings

- 21 of 24 new student tutors (87.5%) assessed successfully demonstrated learning.
- The "expand on agenda" category had 23 of 24 tutors (95%) successfully demonstrate learning.
- For explanation of the agenda, 21 of 24 student tutors (87.5%) successfully demonstrated learning.
- When collaboratively setting an agenda, 19 of 24 student tutors (79%) successfully demonstrated learning

Plan of Action

- Revise the "model tutoring" section on our EAL Tutoring Guide Digation portfolio to include samples from this assessment project.
- Revise the "theory-based best practices" section on our EAL Tutoring Guide Digation portfolio to include content with rationale for setting and explaining an agenda and how to do so effectively and consciously for an EAL writer.
- Conduct one-on-one check-ins with returning and new tutors, reiterating agenda setting best practices, and then look at a recent Written Feedback the tutor completed, talking through effective and ineffective aspects.
- Develop and facilitate a professional development workshop focused on avoiding assumed knowledge when providing feedback.

"I mainly thought your writing could benefit from being more focused and in-line with a clear thesis. After my first read-through of your paper, I felt lost because I was not sure what to expect in terms of supporting argument. That is why I suggest writing a clear thesis in your first paragraph that states your argument and how you will support it."