WR 598: Tutoring ESL Students in Writing  
Fall 2015

WR 598 A1: Wed. 4-5:30 pm, CSS 322  
Instructor: Maria Zlateva  
Office: 100 Bay State Rd. room 342  
Tel. (617)358-1564  
E-mail: mariazl@bu.edu  
Office hours: M 1-2, Th 11-12, and by appointment

Course description: This course is designed to prepare Writing Center tutors to work effectively with ESL students and is meant for undergraduate and graduate-student writing tutors. No previous familiarity with linguistics or ESL language teaching is required or assumed. The modules address the unique needs of ESL students and provide research-based principles for working with them at different proficiency levels. Upon completion of the course, tutors will have explicit knowledge about aspects of the language that pose challenges for ESL learners, as well as pedagogical knowledge to help ESL students become independent self-monitoring writers.

Requirements:
- Attendance of all sessions and active participation
- Timely completion of readings and assignments
- ESL class or tutorial observation
- End-of-semester service learning reflection (portfolio)

Class Format: The course strikes a balance between theory and practice. Most sessions will include discussions of important theoretical issues bearing on tutoring ESL students. We will be working with assigned readings on current ESL research and best writing center practices. There will also be a practicum component consisting of observations by tutors of a WR 097/WR 098 class or of an entry-level ESL tutoring session. The observations will be used as a basis for case studies that will allow us to take up some aspect of practical tutoring and share insights about specific concerns or interests.

Texts:
Rafoth, Multilingual Writers and Writing Centers, Utah State UP, 2015 (MWWC)  
Bedford Guide for Tutors, 5th ed. 2010 (BGT)  
Bruce/Rafoth, ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors, Boynton/Cook, Heinemann, 2009 (ESLWR)

Additional Readings: These are listed in order of class presentation and posted to Blackboard (BB):  

NB: The course has a Blackboard website where assigned readings and ancillary materials will be posted.

**Class Schedule**

(Readings are identified by text abbreviations or bibliography numbers.)

**W 9/2: Course Introduction:** The specifics of ESL tutoring and its place in the Writing Center; expectations and assumptions of the parties involved; starting a tutor-tutee partnership: bridging languages and cultures; tutor-instructor collaboration. *Reading*: 1; BGT 65-69; ESLWR 1-17.

**W 9/9: Metacognitive Assessment of the Tutee:** Overview of contrastive rhetoric and educational conventions; features of ESL writing, argumentation patterns, and academic roles; clarifying the stages of ESL competence—the balance of language skills; diagnosing student needs and setting a tutoring agenda. *Reading*: 2, 3, 4; BGT 58-63 (see BB for details).

**W 9/16: Reading Comprehension and Its ESL Challenges—Connections to L2 Writing:** Specifics of the second-language reading process; academic writing and genre awareness; mental outlining and mapping techniques; helping students review their writing using heuristic techniques. *Reading*: 5, 6 (see BB for details).

**W 9/23: Structuring the Tutorial Session:** Setting priorities—higher-order and lower-order concerns; grammar and usage: recognizing the “remediable” vs. the “fossilized” aspects; deciding on a level of intervention; cultivating the skill of “grammaring” vs. prescriptive grammar knowledge. *Reading*: 7, 8, 9; ESLWR 33-50 (see BB for details).

**W 9/30: Approaching Grammar:** Language challenges posed by L1 and L2 linguistic patterns of structure and usage; trouble spots and diagnostic exercises; working with ESL materials and WC resources. *Reading*: 10, 11 (see BB for details).

**W 10/7: Error Analysis and Treatment of Errors:** Reference guidelines on types of errors; predicting and understanding the problem; productive tutoring techniques tailored to the problem. *Reading*: ESLWR ch.17 (see BB for details).
W 10/14: Error correction—Pedagogical Strategies: Self-monitoring and editing for language issues; types of feedback and follow-up; use of handbooks and reference materials. Reading: ESLWR ch.10 (see BB for details).

W 10/21: Observations and Conferences

W 10/28: Conversation with Sources: Applying the “acknowledgment/response” model in tutoring; integrating source material with appropriate diction and grammar; avoiding plagiarism. Reading: 12; ESLWR ch.13 (see BB for details).

W 11/4: Observations and conferences

W 11/11: Case Studies. Targeting specific issues of cultural and linguistic nature. Reading: 13; BGT 99-110 (see BB for details)

W 11/18: Grammar & Style—Who Owns This Paper? Minimalist vs. proofreading approach; negotiated integration; identifying patterns of errors, or “tics”; guiding students in developing self-editing strategies. Reading: 14, ESLWR ch.18 (see BB for details).

11/25 – 11/29: Fall Recess

W 12/2: Case Study Consultations; Observations and Conferences (Second Round)

W 12/9: Case Studies—Debriefing: Setting individual goals for the tutee to achieve a balance of skills; follow-up agenda and tracking progress; course conclusion and course evaluations.

WR 598 Final Project

Due Dec. 9th

For the final project, you will have to compile a portfolio presenting your experience tutoring in the WP. You will relate that experience to our ESL training course and the discussions on the theoretical materials covered in class.

There are two options for the core of your portfolio:

1. a case study based on your own tutoring experience or the observation of a WR 097/098 class
2. a reflective letter (up to 5 pages) that summarizes your WP tutoring experience

In both cases, you will have to make pertinent references (in end notes or an appendix) to our course texts. You will also include selected assignments from the weekly class homework that you have found relevant.

I will make myself available to assist you at any stage of the process during my office hours, or by appointment.