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Negotiating a Professional Identity as an International Tutor at the Writing Center

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Negotiating a professional identity as an international tutor at the writing center

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Studies in ITA (International Teaching Assistant)

Maintaining dual identities (L1/L2, culture)

Institutional identities and labels

NS-NNS dichotomy

World Englishes Model

English as an International Language

Self-perceptions, confidence, self-efficacy

(Kachru, 1992; Liu, 1999; Smith&Simpson, 1993)

Building a Professional Identity

Understanding the nature of tutorials

Developing Strategies

Collaborative engagement

Professional identity as creative endeavors

Understanding the nature of tutorials

Writing tutorials as institutional discourse (need to be structured, informal academic conversation)

Writing tutorials resemble academic advising sessions, academic counseling interviews, writing conferences (Thonus, 1999)

Tutorials as conversation, negotiation, collaborative engagement

Helping tutees to become a better writer

Developing Strategies

Taking auto-ethnographic notes

Profiling tutees, strategies used

Understanding institutional contexts

Understanding tutees (L1 status, class, major)

Using experiences as an L2 learner

Notes (example - profiling tutees)

My first resistant tutee:

“graduate student, male, L2 learner, business management, formatting of the resume, descriptions of the job he held, resistant to the way the tutorial was structured, he wanted quick feedback and correction of his words.

I took a step back --- let him talk, not taking it personal -- it just might have been a bad day for him --- polite, but firm about what I can offer, defending myself, and showing that I’m willing to help, but asking for his cooperation”

Notes (example -- institutional context)

“Communication class (COM000): giving a speech as a final project, involves research and writing, and presentation, adjust to speech

Engineering graduate class (EGNR000) : philosophy of engineering -- articulating interests and vision, content and organization

Art project (ART 000): introducing what's inside in the portfolio, (introductory statement), mainly looking for editing suggestions”

Using strategies as an L2 learner

Critical use of dictionary : explore vocabulary, contexts of use together with tutees

Use of corpora to understand the contexts of use, patterns of certain linguistic features

Metalinguistic explanations for syntactic structures

Critical use of L1

Collaborative Engagement

Putting an emphasis on collaboration
Asking for participation, cooperation
Asking questions (generating conversation)
Maintaining an equal status for tutee involvement
Not dominating the tutorial

Mentoring future I-tutors

Embracing institutional identities

Being less conscious about social stigma

Understanding the complexity of NS and NNS status

NS/NNS as a continuum (avoiding the simplistic views)

Professional ethics, Professionalism

Developing my own strategies

Professional Identity as Creative Endeavors

Finding creative ways to work with tutees with a variety of educational, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds
Global identity, Use of International English
Collaborative engagement

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Thank you!
