**Webinar Transcript: Perspectives on Asynchronous Tutoring**

**with Mohsine Bensaid, Maura Grady, Laura Hardin Marshall, & Sarah-Jean Watt**

**[Bri, moderator]** All right. And we are recording. Hello, everyone. My name is Bri Lafond, and I'm the chair of OWCA's Virtual Events Committee. Welcome to today's Online Writing Centers Association webinar, "Perspectives on Asynchronous Tutoring." We're going to be hearing from a panel of presenters today, including Mohsine Bensaid, Maura Grady, Laura Hardin Marshall, and Sarah-Jean Watt. We're going to get started shortly. In the meantime, take a moment to introduce yourself in the chat. Let us know where you're joining us from today. And you might want to share what is your interest in the topic of asynchronous tutoring. Again, we're going to ask that you please mute yourself and turn off your camera until later on, if we have opportunity for q&a. If you experience any technical difficulties during the webinar today, please message the OWCA Events account in the chat. Or you can send an email. For those of you who are maybe joining us a little bit late, I apologize. There was an issue with the Zoom link. But I'm glad that you have found your way here. And I am glad that we are going to be able to hear these perspectives from the presenters today. Before we jump into things, I'd like to thank our presenters today. And I'd also like to thank our interpreters for Morr Interpreting, LLC. If at any point during the presentation today, you cannot see the sign language interpreters, please again, let us know they should be spotlighted the entire time. Some notes on the structure of today's webinar. Please note that we are recording: you should have heard a little warning about that already. If at any time, again, you can't see the interpreter, let us know. Please keep, again, your mic turned off until it's time for any kind of interactive q&a. Feel free, though, to post comments or questions in the chat at any time. You may not be immediately addressed, but we will try to get to them. And just a reminder about the Zoom interface that we should all be pretty familiar with by now. You can find the chat button at the bottom of the screen, and the chat window would appear either to the right of your screen or as a separate window on your computer. We're going to go ahead and get started with our first presentation which is from two presenters who are collaboratively presenting today. Mohsine Bensaid and Maura Grady. I'm going to introduce them as they're getting their presentation set up. So Dr. Maura Grady is currently the Director of Composition and the Accent on Writing Initiative at Ashland University in Ashland, Ohio, where she joined the faculty in 2011. She directed the Ashland University Writing Center from 2016 to 2018. She holds a PhD in English with a concentration in gender studies from UC Davis and was previously Assistant Director of Core Writing at the University of Nevada at Reno. Mohsine Bensaid is the Director of the Writing & Communication Center at Ashland University and a PhD candidate in Curriculum and Instruction at Kent State University. He also teaches English-to-speakers-of-other-languages and English composition courses. I'm going to go ahead and hand things over to them.

**[Mohsine, presenter]** Thank you very much. Hello, everyone. My name is Mohsine Bensaid and it is a great pleasure to be here today taking part in this wonderful webinar. Again, a little bit about me, I direct the Writing and Communication Center at Ashland University, or WCC for short, where we provide one on one support to all Ashland University students with any type of assignment that involves communication. The title of our presentation today is "Perspectives on Asynchronous Tutoring: The Case of the WCC eTutor Service for Correctional Education." And with me is Dr. Maura Grady.

[**Maura, presenter]** Hi, everybody. I'm Maura Grady. And, as was already said, I currently direct the first year writing program, the composition program, and our writing across the curriculum program. But I still collaborate very closely with the WCC, and I'm happy to be here today to talk about e-tutoring which is our asynchronous online tutoring support for incarcerated students. Our first slide shows a little bit about who we are and who our students are. Specifically today we're looking at our correctional students. We have students--about 3000 of them--taking online classes through two learning management systems that are either kiosk synced or on laptops. Because generally our students who are living in prisons don't have access to web-based internet, so they can't use regular Blackboard or Canvas or any of the other learning management systems that we might be used to. The learning management systems look a lot like those other systems, but they have some restrictions due to the security constraints that students have to work with in their situation. We offer through Ashland Associates and Bachelor's degrees in several majors, and general education requirements are offered in aesthetics, humanities, science, math, logic, and composition. We serve 13 states and the District of Columbia in four time zones with this service. Why have we started writing and communication e-tutoring for these students? There was--prior to us developing this service--there was a math e-tutoring program, and it had a very positive response. It served as a good guideline for us, especially for content-based programs. The parity of services was a real concern for us: we wanted to make sure that our students in all platforms, whatever location they were taking their classes in, had access to the same kinds of supports that students on main campus have access to. Since the courses in English and communication really build those foundational skills and knowledge that prepare them for other classes and contexts, getting support in those classes with those basic writing skills was really essential. And it just provided another resource for students. The students have access to their professors through their courses, and students taking classes online have a site director who's a full time Ashland employee at their location, so they do have someone they can speak to face-to-face, but they don't have as many resources as students on main campus, so we wanted to make sure that they at least had access to this. We had a successful pilot of our four English classes, with more than 50 sections, starting in the spring of 2022. Based on that success, the service has just recently expanded to assist students with other types of assignments: writing assignments or communication assignments, like speeches, not just in English classes. The e-tutoring course is set up like a course so that our students have access to it through their tablet, and their learning management systems is organized by module and the students can submit questions or a writing sample of up to one paragraph via the assignment embedded in each module. The e-tutor responds to the student via the assignment, which will show up as assignment feedback. Tutors try to respond within 24 to 48 hours during the week with a guideline to be on duty four days a week. Many of our tutors are checking in every day. But as part of the requirement--the contract--we specify four days at least. The support is asynchronous with all communication conducted through the assignment in the learning management system that the student uses. These are the courses that students have access to through e-tutoring: English, communication, religion, history, and interdisciplinary studies courses. Any student taking courses in those programs are automatically enrolled in the e-tutoring course.

**[Mohsine, presenter]** In terms of the role of the e-tutor, our e-tutors are qualified instructors with graduate degrees. Their main role is to answer questions and give feedback and not really to give answers. One foundational principle that WCC is built on is the non-directive approach, where we focus more on skill transfer and learner autonomy. We try to focus on that as well working with incarcerated students, although that's a different population, different from our students on campus given their access to resources and what that entails, especially connecting with our on-campus resources. The tutor completes a client report form for every single interaction. And again, the tutor is not really a replacement for the instructor and in many cases e-tutors kind of redirect students to go and consult with their instructors, especially given the breadth of the service. Especially after this expansion, and the inclusion of so many other courses in sections. E-tutors are not editors or proofreaders: again, they clarify, support, and guide but don't really correct errors. And we're going to get into that in little bit once I talk about what kinds of help e-tutors provide. Again, they're not really expected to be content experts. Although the service began with e-tutors who are subject matter experts in those courses. In the spring of 2022, we launched the service as a pilot, and we hired three instructors who teach in the C program, teach English courses. But as we expanded, the service now includes other courses that are not only focused on writing proficiency, but also other forms of communication. Types of questions that students can submit: students can ask about the prompts, maybe submit queries about concepts in writing or communication, ask for help with formal issues like punctuation, and grammatical rules, seek help with outlining, organization, or even ask general questions. These are specific questions about a variety of topics that come up, either in written or spoken assignments. For instance, these questions can be about citations or how to avoid plagiarism or how to organize a speech, how to employ rhetorical devices. This is a request form, and how it looks like Lantern (the LMS). In our C classes, some students, depending on their facility, they might have access to Lantern or Blackboard. This form is embedded within each module. As you can see, there are 12 modules that are taught in a 15-week semester. This is what it looks like in Blackboard. As you can see, there's a request form. You can also submit the question directly from there, or, once you click on the actual form, it will give you the actual modules. Students can select what module they need help with. That helps also the tutors to pinpoint what kind of issues they're having and in what module we're seeing them.

**[Maura, presenter]** Can I just say before we move on: that last slide also shows the resources folder. Within each course for e-tutoring, there are a number of resources available for students. Things on writing thesis statements, things on writing introductions, conclusions, sentence-level grammar, citation issues. A whole host of resources that they can access because, again, those students aren't able to go to Purdue OWL or another online resource, so we need to collect the resources for them and make them available.

**[Mohsine, presenter]** Very good observation. Thank you, Dr. Grady. Yeah, we encourage students to actually consult the resources first before they submit their request. Again, there is also a fillable PDF form that students can complete and then submit with their question or maybe request. Actually students can submit up to one paragraph in text from their writing sample seeking general feedback. As we mentioned earlier, it depends on the specific question or concept either in writing or communication, or both. This is what the request form looks like. That's the information that we try to collect: the course number. If applicable, you could also tell us the citation style that they're required to use. And then more detail on what they need help with. Once the tutor receives the request, they move on to transfer that request to WCOnline. By the way, we just received funds for this service, and began using it this past semester. It's been very, very helpful in capturing different types of data that we'd like to look at as we grow and improve the program.

**[Maura, presenter]** We were already using WCOnline for main campus students, but just recently started using it for our correction students as well.

**[Mohsine, presenter]** Right. This is a sample plan report form from the tutor. As you can see, there is that focus, again, on skill transfer. We're not only looking at giving feedback that would help the student with that specific assignment, but also to give students skills and strategies that you can use beyond the assignment and even beyond the course. Dr. Grady?

**[Maura, presenter]** I was distracted by answering the chat, so I'll come back to the chat questions later. Here's a sample of some of the student feedback that we got from this. I will just address one of these questions somebody asked: Can students submit a full draft? Unfortunately, no: the system that we work with doesn't have that capacity for submitting full drafts from students. We also don't have the ability to turn them back in a timely manner because of the nature of the communication because the communication is not instantaneous. The students have tablets and access their course materials and videos and assignments through those tablets. But then, generally, they don't have the opportunity to necessarily sync their tablets up to the internet on a continual basis, so they may not have access to the local area network or the kiosk for syncing for several days. We want to be very timely with the messages. If students send a whole draft and then are expecting feedback, it may take too long to return it for it to be useful. We determined that the shorter questions would work in a better way. That's something we can address later on in the Q & A portion. Here's a sample of some of the feedback. Students were really appreciative of this resource and felt like the tutors were giving very good feedback. Again, this has been only an operation for a short time. We're still gathering a lot of feedback from students, but this is a sample. And some more feedback. We got good feedback from people who didn't even use the service who said, "I didn't have to use it, but I was really glad to know it was there as a resource." Or, "I didn't use it for this course, but I hope it will be available for the next course." And that's it. That's all we had. We wanted to leave time for questions. I will say, though, because I don't think we said at the beginning: this service really is an extension of the principles and the philosophy of the main campus writing and communication center. All of our goals to help students with student-centered communication, help students who are trying to do inquiry-driven work, and that we're really trying to support students wherever they might be, whatever writing level they might be at, to help them, as Mohsine said, not just with one assignment, but with transferring those skills to all other contexts that they might encounter.

**[Mohsine, presenter]** Yeah, I'd also like to add that when we began thinking about this project, we pictured designing something completely similar to what we have on campus, where we have actual trained coaches who help students in small groups or one on one. But because of COVID, and all the issues that followed, we were not able to provide that service. Instead we thought of employing something similar to what we do with graduate students, where they can actually submit requests and then we would provide asynchronous feedback. But we haven't given up on that idea of providing that one on one or maybe small group feedback, where we train coaches, and they would be on site to help students. Hopefully that can be how this program evolves in the future. And we'll leave some some time for questions.

**[Bri, moderator]** Yeah, we'll wait until the end to go into questions for the whole panel. But thanks very much to to Maura and Mohsine. Let's go ahead and move on to our next presenter. As she's getting set up, I'll give her an introduction. Laura Hardin Marshall, PhD is the Writing Support Coordinator at Webster University. Her research focuses on response and feedback, revision, and composition pedagogy in writing centers and programs. So Laura...

**[Laura, presenter]** Thank you. Thank you all for being here today. My segment today is on inclusive response practices. I'll be sharing key findings from a mixed method study that I conducted to learn more about asynchronous feedback and student revision. I'll start by sharing some details about the study, which was conducted at St. Louis University, which is a predominantly white, private Jesuit institution that's research-focused with relatively high-performing students. I focused the study on SLU's required first year composition course which has a loosely unified curriculum and a shared assignment that I could draw from. I collected students' rough drafts of that assignment, which is an eight page exploratory research paper. For inclusion in the study, the rough draft needed to contain comments from either their teacher or from a consultant in the writing center from asynchronous sessions only. They also needed to include a final draft for comparison. I also surveyed the teachers of that course and the consultants at the writing center about their pedagogical training. Since they were the key parties responding to student writing, I wanted to know a little bit more about them as well, which comes into play, as I'll show later. I collected all of this data because I wanted to know 1) what sorts of asynchronous comments were teachers and consultants making to what was going on with student revision? 2) what comments did students act on? And 3) was there any difference in how students acted on comments from teachers versus consultants? There's a lot of scholarship about directive versus facilitative feedback strategies. And there's theories about authority and effective feedback practices, which the other presenters just alluded to, as well. However, there's less data out there about whether those strategies actually work. So what I was wanting to know, was whether those strategies also worked differently if they were coming from commenters in specific roles, especially when teachers are perceived as the quote unquote, higher authority. For example, a prevailing assumption is that students will surely act on their teachers feedback, right? More than they would act on consultants since teachers control grades, right? But I wanted to see what data had to say about the situation. So the central question that I asked was: what comments or whose comments prompt revision? As I began collecting data, though, I found that teacher and consultant were actually a little too simplistic as categories. It turned out that the role that the person served in was not as significant as the pedagogical training they had. So I broke up teachers and consultants into three categories. 1) We had instructors, who were trained or worked as composition classroom teachers, only; they had no writing center experience. These were most often but not always, faculty members. 2) Consultants, trained or worked in writing centers only with no classroom experience. These were most often undergraduate students. And 3) cross-trained teachers; as the name suggests, they had training or experience in both. These were most often graduate students. And while these graduate students may have also worked in the writing center, most of the data that I received from this group or about this group, was in their role as a classroom teacher. So that brings us then to, at least in my opinion, what was the fun part. Right? What did all of the data that I collected reveal? Now please keep in mind, I'm glossing over a lot of details and other factors on that I'll be happy to talk more about in the Q & A, but I started by analyzing certain types of comments made by the three groups and what their function was. In other words, how they phrase their comments and what those comments were doing. Affirming comments offered praise or acknowledgement. Investigating comments asked open-ended questions that were a bit more genuine. "What do your sources add to this perspective?" Telling comments informed or gave commands, such as "MLA requires in-text citations," or "You need a topic sentence." Suggesting comments offered more hedged advice: "I recommend adding in-text citations," or "You might try a topic sentence here." Some less prominent themes that I also observed were disarming, session-setting, and minimal marking, which was a subcategory of suggesting. Disarming is a type of interaction that our center practices based on Bloom, Hutson, and He's Appreciative Advising model where we take a person-first approach to interacting with writers. We don't start an interaction by asking, "What are you working on today?" Or, in the case of asynchronous response, the first margin comments aren't immediately starting with advice or criticism. Instead, we introduce ourselves. We ask how the person is doing or we make a similar sort of interpersonal connection. While not all writers approach getting feedback from a defensive posture, enough do that we try to pay special attention to quote unquote, disarming those defenses, to show that we see them as people and not just walking, talking papers. Session setting comments are ones that orient the writer to the quote unquote, business of the feedback process. In some literature, I see these types of moves called agenda-setting, but the comments I collected didn't only set an agenda, something that happens in the opening phase. Session setting comments could happen at any point in the process, and they were marked by the responder or the person giving feedback explicitly informing the writer about what happens in the feedback process, or what they could expect the responder to say or do. For example, they may have said, "I've made comments through page eight, which is where I had to stop for time," or "Email me if you have any questions." Lastly, suggestions. Again, those offered writers recommendations about what they might or could do, but what made minimal marking suggestions stand out as a sub theme is that they offered recommendations, not in words, but in codes, primarily highlights. In a session setting comment, for example, the responder might have said, "I'll highlight phrases where I think you could be more concise." That comment informs the writer about what's going on in the session, and then the highlights themselves will later say, "You could be more precise here," without actually saying that in words. They call the writer's attention to a suggested move. But what's so important about these three functions in the other column? As I mentioned earlier, my goal was to compare the commenting practices of instructors, consultants and cross-trained teachers, and what I noticed was a marked difference in who used those those three comment types. Consultants predominantly used suggesting comments at 34%, which is probably not surprising given writing center pedagogy's focus on facilitative and less-directive moves. Disarming and session-setting were much less common, only at 7% or 8%, respectively. However, those rates were a lot higher than those of instructors or cross-trained teachers: only around 2% of their comments were disarming or session setting prospectively. We see a similar disconnect with minimal marking where 27% of consultants' suggesting comments were highlights, or some form of minimal marking. In contrast, instructors and cross-trained teachers did not use any minimal marking: zero comments included those. There were, of course, some other differences in the ways that instructors, consultants, and cross-trained teachers commented, but those three in particular struck me as important. Those comments specifically provided interpersonal and logistical support for writers, which I believe served to cultivate an asynchronous environment of inclusion and accessibility. They were transparent about what was going on in the session, they offered guidance to writers who may have never been shown or told how to read or process feedback. These moves, I believe, assist writers in processing their feedback and their potential next steps. But even more importantly, I argue that these comments potentially influence writers to act on the feedback: to revise, which was the second phase of the analysis that I concluded for the data I received. I compared rough and final drafts to find out what changes students made between those two drafts. Because revision is a very complex problem all on its own. I tried to keep things simple. I coded comments simply as "attempt," where the writer made some change, versus "no attempt," where no relevant change was made. There were some other factors that I did code for, but they were minimal. I focused simply on "attempt" or "no attempt." What I found was that only 42% of instructors comments were attempted, and 48% were ignored or rejected. Consultants and cross-trained teachers--who are, again, trained in writing center pedagogy--they saw much more positive numbers with attempts in the 60s. These numbers are for revision at large, though: I looked at all these comments collectively, and whether they were attempted or not. Things get even more interesting when I looked at revision rates for specific comment trends, though. Let's look at what happened with consultants' comments when we break it down into some of those other sub-themes. Suggestions came in three types. I already mentioned minimal marking. Suggestions that were written in word form were either phrased as questions or statements. Suggesting questions were generally leading questions or rhetorical questions: "Add a topic sentence, question mark?" There were genuine questions as well, such as, "What do you think about reorganizing this paragraph?" On the telling side, those started with edits, where the teacher or consultant would use track changes or a handwritten note to make a change directly. Other telling comments were either explicit or implicit. Explicit comments were extremely clear about what the writer needed to do: "Add this," "delete that," so on. Implicit comments were ones where the writer was informed about something but not actually told what to do, or what that information was about, such as "MLA requires in-text citation." This tells the student a rule, but doesn't actually say that they need to add in-text citation or where. How did these specific types of comments play out when students revised? For consultants, minimal marking was really successful, surprisingly so, at least in my opinion. 92% of minimal marking comments were attempted. Questions were also fairly successful at 81% attempted. Statements only moderate at 50% attempted. In telling, there were only two edits in the entirety of the consultants' comments, so we'll ignore those other than, "Good job. We didn't do much editing." Explicit telling comments were only 52% attempted, whereas implicit comments were 68% attempted. What I think is worth stressing here is that the comments that were more successful for consultants--minimal marking, suggesting questions, and implicit telling--are all ones that are, for lack of a better word, subtle. They don't command, they don't direct, they offer. They provide information to the writer, but then leave what happens next up to them. They are facilitative. And that's really important, I think, for two reasons. 1) These subtle, facilitative strategies were successful, even when delivered asynchronously, which we may not expect since the consultant wasn't there in person to give just the right tone, or the right facial expression to get their message across. 2) These moves that were so successful for consultants, that resulted in some of the highest revision rates that I found in the study: they didn't work for teachers. Instructors didn't use minimal marking, as I mentioned, but their questions were 68% unattempted. A total flop, right? For telling, their explicit comments were successful at 72%, less so for their implicit comments, though. For teachers, those subtle sorts of facilitative moves, they took a backseat to the more explicit overt comments. Good teachers needed to be more blunt for their comments to take. The same mostly holds up for cross-trained teachers, too, though they had stronger attempt rates overall for them. Questions were okay. But statements were 74% attempted. In telling, there wasn't much difference between implicit and explicit comments. Both were fairly successful. But again, generally the more blunt, directive comments from teachers were generally revised more. What's going on there? Consultants' comments were often rather subtle, and they required more work from writers to process the message and figure out what to do with it. So why were they revised more often? That's where I think some of those inclusive response moves made a significant difference. Consultants took time to make connections with writers to explain certain aspects of how asynchronous response works, and to offer strategies about the session. And then the writers, the advice they gave, they backed off. They put critical thinking and decision-making on the writer. Writers, in turn, took more time to think about and act on those comments. Of course, there's a lot more going on here, and there are likely a lot of other factors that influenced these writers to revise as they did. But the moves that consultants made in these asynchronous sessions were certainly showing us that writing center pedagogy and writing center training can be quite effective in improving writers' understanding of feedback processes, and in turn, motivating writers to revise. Thank you.

**[Bri, moderator]** Thanks very much, Laura. We're going to move on to our final presenter, Sarah-Jean Watt. Sarah-Jean is the coordinator of the Write Site at Athabasca University, an online university located in Alberta, Canada. They are also involved with the Alberta Writing Centres Association. Sarah-Jean, go ahead and get started.

**[Sarah-Jean, presenter]** Thanks, Bri. I thought I would just turn my camera on to say hello and then I'll turn it off to make sure that there aren't any bandwidth issues. But thanks so much for having me today. As Bri said, I'm the Write Site or writing center coordinator at Athabasca University. We're located physically in Athabasca, Alberta, Canada, and virtual throughout Canada and also many other countries. My topic in issues of asynchronous writing tutoring is challenges in commenting on student strengths. And now I'm going to stop my video and ask Bri to please move the slide forward. Thanks, Bri. A critical component of motivation for writers comes from receiving positive feedback on what they have done right or well. Dana R. Ferris, a well-known researcher on teacher written feedback, as well as the founding editor of Journal of Response to Writing states that effective responses to student writing, quote, "strive to identify and articulate what the student writer has done well before launching into a fix it list," unquote. Including a short section near the beginning of the asynchronous response template intended to house a positive comment is one way to ensure that a student can feel their efforts are being acknowledged. This should be followed up with in-text comments that illustrate the validity of the initial positive comment. One of Ferris and Hedgcock's guiding principles is therefore to quote, "provide both encouragement and constructive criticism through the feedback," unquote. And that's quoted in this other Ferris source that I have here. And next slide, please Bri. However, there are challenges both with learning to effectively comment on students strengths and encouraging the writing tutors in the center to take part. The most common challenge I've encountered is probably that commenting on students' strengths is perceived as difficult. This was a common concern raised when I worked as part of a consortium called eTutor Alberta, in which writing tutors from institutions across the province of Alberta all contributed hours to providing asynchronous written feedback on students assignments. I previously presented on this topic to give strategies to consortium members, unfortunately, after the consortium was dissolved, but during a transitional period before we created the Alberta Writing Centres Association. I'll talk about some of those strategies today to help make commenting on student strengths more manageable. Another concern I've come across now that I coordinate an online writing center staffed by faculty is that suggesting that all students have strengths can be misleading. In the template, we used at eTutor Alberta, the first section that writing tutors were to fill out was called "Strengths." It was pointed out to me that no matter what is written in the section, if it is called "Strengths," it could be misleading to students who are at a very low level of writing. My team came up with a solution that I will talk about. It was also pointed out to me that commenting on student strengths feels like evaluation. Clearly, evaluation of student writing is beyond the scope of a writing tutor's role. Some writing tutors may feel like making positive comments on a student's work should be left to the instructor. There may be a fear that the positive comment provided by the writing tutor may be contradicted by the instructor's feedback. It can take time to build a writing tutor's confidence to overcome this understandable concern, and I'll provide some strategies that can help change writing tutors' minds. A final challenge that I have encountered when encouraging staff to provide positive comments on a student's work is the assertion that to require them to do so violates the writing tutors' academic freedom. This was a tricky situation that I don't have an easy solution for, but I'll give a little more insight into my ideas of how to address it in the long term. Next slide, please, Bri. I'm just going to take a little drink here. Strategies for, "It's difficult." My first suggestion for a strategy to help a writing tutor increase their confidence in commenting on students' strengths is to understand that you can implement the strategies in a way that works for you, in your own voice that you're comfortable speaking from. When I try to close that distance and create that emotional safety and trust, by allowing my authentic voice to come through, I find the words flow more easily, and I can write directly to the student as though we're having a conversation. Through this, I can provide a genuine response, and positivity seems to come naturally with the authentic human to human connection, in which the student can be visualized as a direct participant. On the more practical side, I began compiling a list of sentence stems of possible comments for my team to make use of. I encourage my team to add to this list if they come up with something that works well for them. To help us choose the right comment for a submission, we split the list into subsections. The first is general comments on strengths, but we also have lists for students who are particularly struggling and students who are high achieving and may need a nudge to explore more self-reliance in their editing. Next slide, please. Here are some examples of sentence stems to help produce general comments on strengths: "Since last time, I noticed an improvement of..." "You have a strong grasp of..." "I enjoyed..." And this last one has the optional phrase of, "For the most part..." at the beginning to help the writing tutor qualify their comment if they feel it cannot be said absolutely: "For the most part, I found..." Next slide. Comments for an independence nudge. I realize this won't be applicable to all students, and it can have a bit of an ableist flavor. I'm only recommending this for you specifically with students for whom greater self-reliance is a desirable option: "Your growth in blank shows me you might be ready to..." This is intended to show the student that they can be confident in their ability to work more on their own. And some comments for struggling students could begin with, "I see you've made a good effort to..." "You are starting to grasp the concept..." Next slide please, Bri. Strategies for, "It may be misleading." To help address the concern that the strength section label could be misleading to students, my team decided to change the label of the section to "Highlights." This actually fits well with one of the other strategies that I've used and suggested to my team, which is to follow up the initial positive comment in that section with some constructive criticism. This function is a little like the sentence stem that contained the optional phrase "for the most part" by tempering the positive comment through acknowledging the challenges of the submission. Relabeling the section "Highlights" allows the writing tutor to begin with a positive comment and then provide some insight into their perspective on the whole piece of writing. I'll give some examples. And you can see my handout that I gave to Bri and so that will maybe come somewhere along the line. For more examples based on Hewitt's strength-focused strategies. Next slide, please. So, in the first example, the first sentence is the positive comment: "You've done some excellent analysis where you introduce or explain evidence from your sources." The second sentence here is the qualifier, which also gives a little more context to the positive comment: "You can further strengthen your analysis and argument by tying the analysis to your thesis statement once you clarify it." In the second example, I encourage the student to take their strength from one area and apply it throughout the paper: "For the most part, your APA citations and formatting are looking quite good. For the few issues that do arise, you can actually use your other citations as a model." Next slide, please. Strategies for, "It feels like evaluation." One of the ways we were able to boost writing tutors' confidence in providing positive comments on students' work was to make a clear statement in our guidelines both that we do not evaluate students work, and that our comments may occasionally differ from instructors' comments. As a professional courtesy to our colleagues and to prevent confusion and students, we do also mention that the instructor has the final word. We also encourage students to consider the feedback they get from their writing coach--which is what we call writing tutors-- alongside the feedback they get from their instructor. Writing tutors may also be able to reduce the feeling of their comments competing with an instructors' comments by owning their comments through the use of first person. Using "I" allows the writing tutor to express their own feeling about the work without making an objective evaluation. It keeps the comment on the subjective side instead. A great side benefit is that the use of "I" strengthens the sense of conversation for dialogue between the writing tutor and student. Next slide, please, Bri. Here are some examples of owning the comment given by Karagianni, who notes that writing tutors quote "can show their understanding of the student's academic challenges by acknowledging the way they feel," end quote, using "I" expressions such as: "I think you should feel proud..." The writing tutor can also express their own feelings, as in, "I was really happy to see..." Other sentence stems stems that begin with "I" and can help you get started with a positive comment include: "I found..." "I feel..." "I believe..." "I noticed..." "I enjoyed..." I just noticed I put "I enjoyed" in here twice. I do use it quite a bit. But another one to give you a little freebie would be "I appreciated..." Next slide, please, Bri. Strategies for, "It violates my academic freedom." I haven't yet come up with any successful strategies for effectively countering the assertion that to require positive comments on students' work violates a writing tutor's academic freedom. Education based on the best practices found in the literature is an option. However, the significance of that evidence may not be fully appreciated. When the response pertains to an academic's rights. Education may need to be a long term project that focuses not on an individual, but on the academic culture. And that's an academic culture that privileges writing as the premier mode of communication and that prescribes a very particular form to what constitutes "good writing." If a student's writing does not meet those strict requirements, some may believe that to comment positively on something--anything--that the student does right or well, would be an affront to academic standards. This is an unfortunate stance that only works to harm students. However, I'm willing to keep engaging in this conversation over time. And I hope some academics--not only writing tutors, but instructors--will begin to change their minds. And I wanted to be part of this discussion today to share with you the challenges I've experienced to help prepare you in case you may face them one day, too. Next slide, please, Bri. Thank you so much for listening. It was great to hear the other presentations as well. And I'm looking forward to hearing your thoughts and questions.

**[Bri, moderator]** Thanks very much, Sarah-Jean. Our presentations ran a little bit long, but I think we might have time for one question. And I see that conversation is already starting in the chat. So do we maybe have one overarching question for the panel? You can feel free to raise your hand or at this point, you can just unmute yourself. Are we all too shy?

**[Laura, presenter]** If you'd like I do think it's maybe Lucia asked if I could talk more about how writing consultants didn't just edit but addressed higher order concerns. I think that's definitely worth exploring a little bit. Because it's not that the consultants didn't address lower order concerns. It's just that they didn't edit. They didn't take charge and make the changes for the students. But they still made a decent amount of comments that addressed correctness or style. Those were other things that I had coded the data for but didn't have time to talk about.

**[Bri, moderator]** And I just wanted to mention, so Dawn asked in the chat, if we can save the chat, because I think there were a lot of good conversations happening in that. I'll go ahead and make sure that we summarize that chat and include it with the recorded webinar and transcript information that will be posted on the OWCA website in approximately two weeks, once we revise and edit transcripts, caption, the video, that kind of thing. Any last questions, observations? I think this was a lot of really interesting information. I'm kind of still soaking it in myself. Because you're all talking about some very specific tutoring contexts, but I was still hearing resonances and things that I might be able to take back to my own local context. I'm going to go ahead and well, once again, thank all of our presenters for sharing with us today. I think it was wonderful to hear all these kinds of various approaches and again, these specific contexts that you are implementing asynchronous tutoring practices in. And for everybody: thank you for attending, as well: for attending today's webinar. All attendees are going to be receiving an email after the session today, asking for feedback on the experience. Please take a few minutes to respond to that. We are constantly trying to improve, trying to figure out how to get the correct Zoom links on the correct emails. We can always use feedback from our audiences about what you'd like to see. And again, check back on our website in about two weeks for the captioned recording of the webinar. Our next event that's coming up for OWCA is a Reading Club Event. That will be on Friday, June 23 at 2pm Eastern / 1pm Central / 12pm Mountain / and 11am Pacific. We'll be discussing a 2017 article by Mary Hedengrin and Martin Lockerd entitled “Tell Me What You Really Think: Lessons from Negative Student Feedback.” This was inspired by-- We saw some recent conversations going on on Wcenter about how to design exit surveys. I'm going to drop a link in the chat to this website link for you to find out more information. Again, thank you to our presenters. Thank you to our interpreters for Morr Interpreting, LLC. Have a lovely day, everybody.