SAMPLE PROPOSAL

*Attendees at the informational session requested a sample of a successful proposal, so we’re offering this example from last year’s conference. Note that parts of this proposal have been edited for the sake of privacy.*

In February 2022, two colleagues and I delivered online workshops as part of a World Bank initiative for Sri Lankan academics interested in creating English language writing centers at their universities. As World Bank initiatives have, at times, not considered contextual variables of the local culture (Rappleye & Un, 2018), it was crucial to us that we presented information in such a way that participants could adapt to their context rather than simply instructing them on what to do and continuing the pressure to adapt to Western educational approaches (see Chang, 2013; Mahjanovich, 2014; & Nguyen et al., 2009). Because of the ongoing challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, I shared with the attendees the synchronous and asynchronous peer tutoring being offered at the University Writing Center. Synchronous text sessions and asynchronous feedback have been useful when Southern Californians have faced rolling blackouts related wildfires, and recording synchronous video sessions provided a supervision aspect for center administrators. I believed these methods might serve useful given the infrastructure challenges that the workshop organizers had mentioned.

Since returning to in-person instruction following the COVID-19 outbreak, Dr. REDACTED, who both helped organize and participated in the workshops, introduced in-person peer tutoring to the faculty in her department, as this allowed them to supervise the sessions and seemed to be a sustainable support mechanism for their English medium degree program (see Parakrama et al., 2021). Supervision was necessary due to certain cultural and sub-cultural practices such as ragging--upperclassmen harassing underclassmen through verbal, mental, emotional, and physical means—which is a serious issue in the Sri Lankan state university system. However, after a few weeks, universities closed because of the economic crisis and political turmoil in the country. As Dr. REDACTED’s faculty did not wish to end the program, she introduced synchronous and asynchronous support using screen sharing, comments, and video feedback. Students were comfortable sharing documents, sharing their screen, and receiving feedback in this way despite being unable to come to campus. Lecturers also found it effective because the technology allowed them to observe the process via the comments and recorded video sessions. Surprisingly, Dr. REDACTED found that online support reduced ragging and helped both students and tutors participate comfortably. As her university is in a rural area and frequently faces challenges related to access to basic necessities and reliable transportation, she hopes that her adaptations to online writing support will help to others in remote areas of the world who may not have considered this to continue supporting students under difficult circumstances.

In our presentation, I will begin by briefly sharing how I introduced online feedback to the Sri Lankan academics in the Zoom workshop. Then, Dr. REDACTED will share an overview of her context, how online tutoring was introduced to her faculty, and how the approach she used allowed tutoring to continue despite severe challenges in her region. She will end her portion by sharing her observations of how online feedback reduced the harassment tutors faced.