**WDI Writing TA Training Session 1**

Please respond to the following questions and send a copy to Michael (Michael.kaler@utoronto.ca) **at least an hour before your training**. Please don’t worry too much about writing style (no one is grading this!), but please do answer in sentences and paragraphs.

Please budget around 90 minutes for this.

This is an example of a kind of “flipped classroom” approach questions are designed to get you thinking about the topics that we will be discussing in the training.

**1: Resources**

Q1: What do you do, or who or what do you turn to, if you have questions about assessing writing or teaching writing skills?

**2: Some Background**

Q1: Please define the following acronyms in your own words. It’s perfectly fine to do some googling (Wikipedia is allowed!), but please phrase things in your own words.

For LTW and WTL, here is a resource you might find useful: https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/asc/sites/files/asc/public/shared/pdf/wdi/ta\_training/TATM\_WritingInstruction\_WACWriteToLearn\_v2.pdf

1. WAC (Writing Across the Curriculum)
2. WID (Writing in the Disciplines)
3. LTW (Learn To Write)
4. WTL (Write to Learn)

Q2: What are the benefits to a WAC approach instead of, or in addition to, a stand-alone “First Year Composition” type of course such as one might typically find in the US? (This might be useful for background: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First-year_composition>)

Q3: Why do students find it hard to learn to write as insiders in their disciplines?

Q4: Why do we need both LTW and WTL approaches to teaching writing?

**3: The challenges of teaching about writing in your field**

Q1: In your view, what are the most common problems that students in your field have with academic writing?

Q2: To what degree are these problems also problems with their ability to read academic or research literature?

Q3: Can you suggest any reasons why they have these problems?

Q4: In your experience, what do students think are their most serious problems in writing or reading? Do you think they have a valid point?

Q5: What training do you have in dealing with students’ writing issues?

Q6: What sorts of writing/reading issues do you feel comfortable addressing? Are there any writing or reading issues that you don’t feel comfortable addressing?

Q7: What are your biggest worries in terms of working with student writing/reading?

Q8: What are the biggest obstacles or challenges to helping students develop as writers or readers?

Q9: What’s one tip that you have for working with student writing that you’d like to share with others

Q10: What can you do now to help prepare yourself to support your students’ writing?

**4: Writing Activities**

Please take a look at the Writing Activities handout and identify one activity that you would like to try, or that you have tried. Please write a paragraph discussing why you’d like to try it, or talking about how it worked (if you’ve already tried it).

**5: Ways of Teaching Writing**

Q1: Please discuss ways that you could **use a rubric** from the course as a tool in teaching writing skills to your students

Q2: Please imagine this scenario:

You are TAing in a second year course in your discipline, and the professor has asked you to develop a tutorial to help students get ready to write an annotated bibliography assignment

The assignment is scaffolded: This annotated bibliography assignment was preceded by an assignment where students developed a research question, and will be followed by submitting a policy brief (which the annotated bibliography will provide material for).

How would you set up the tutorial? What would you do in it, and why?

**6: Dealing with the little stuff: sentence level issues and errors**

*1: Some questions about your approach …*

* When you are grading, how important do you consider errors in grammar and syntax to be?
* How do you decide what kind of feedback to give with regard to errors of this sort?
* Do you include discussion of these sorts of errors in your tutorials, and if so, how do you do it?
* Do you feel comfortable perceiving, diagnosing, and explaining these sorts of errors?
* What training have you had in terms of English grammar and syntax?
* What advice or instructions have your instructors given you with regard to how they want these issues addressed?

*2: Some definitions—please look through the following questions. You don’t need to write out answers to them, but you should feel comfortable answering any of them. If some of them seem tough, that might be a sign to do some grammar homework.*

What is...

1. An article? What kinds of article are there? And when don’t we need an article?
2. A pronoun? How would you define one?
3. An antecedent? And what is antecedent ambiguity?
4. A common problem in student writing with regard to use of “this is …”/”that is”?
5. A dangling modifier?
6. A misplaced modifier?
7. Subject-verb agreement? And can you give an example of a sentence with subject/verb agreement problems?
8. A relative clause?
9. The difference between a restrictive and a non-restrictive relative clause? How are they signaled? Are there any relative pronouns that can only be used with one or the other of these?
10. A colon (the item of punctuation, not the body part), and how does it work?
11. A semi-colon, and what does it do?
12. A comma splice?
13. A coordinating conjunction, and what does it do, and what item of punctuation is it used with?
14. A split infinitive, and is it always a problem?
15. Gender-neutral phrasing, and how do you maintain it in cases of undetermined gender?
16. A run-on sentence?
17. A sentence fragment?
18. The present tense, and what are some appropriate uses of it in academic writing in your field? How about the present perfect? The past? In situations where there are more than one option in terms of tense, what do the different tenses express?

3: *Writing Sample*

First, please identify as many grammar/sentence level errors as you can in the following. Second, please answer the following question: If a student submitted this, and if you could give two sentences of feedback, what would your feedback be?

In a high-tech market such as a digital camera, a personal computer and a TV market, high-tech firms use product innovation to compete, for example, in the last two decades, TV firms have introduced new types of TV: a Projection TV, a Plasma TV, an LCD (Liquid Crystal Display) TV, a 3D TV, an Organic LED (Light Emitting Diode) TV, a Curved TV, an Ultra HD (High Definition) TV, and a Smart TV with an internet function. However, not all the new types of TV has made a success in a market. Successful category such as an LCD TV took a long time to take off in spite of dramatic price decrease. Due to such uncertainty and low demand in the introduction stage of a new high-tech market, which is very expensive and competitive on a global overall level and so must be carefully presented and developed, firms who launch new high-tech products early face a big business risk. But, firms may gain from adding new high-end products through spillovers to the rest of the product line, and given that most demand remains in old product categories until a new category takes off, such spillovers are likely to given substantial incentive for firms to add a new flagship model in their product line early in spite of a low demand within the new focal high-tech category. In this study, I investigate whether product innovation increases brand equity.