

By Our WTS

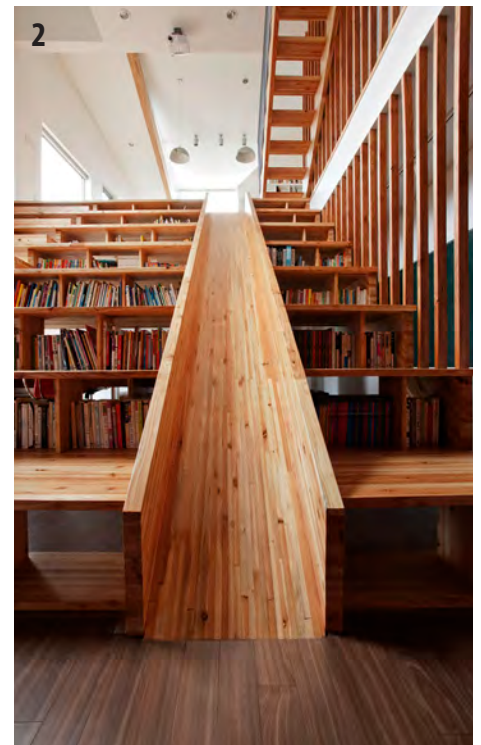
Issue 8.2, June 2014



THE IU WRITING TUTORIAL SERVICES ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

What is your WTS space wishlist?

Amber Hendricks re-imagines the WTS office space in the Herman B Wells Library



Amber commissions a desk for Anita that would have plenty of storage space!

BY AMBER HENDRICKS

Peer tutor Amber Hendricks lists her top needs/desires for the new Herman B Wells Library WTS space. The specifics of the new space are still undecided but are said to be implemented fall 2014.

Number ONE

At the top of this list is a door! We very much would like to lock our WHOLE space at night.

We would love for Anita to keep things on her desk without fear of

returning the next day to find gone.

People steal bobble heads desks. The danger is real. We like to ensure the safety and preservation of all our materials.

To protect our precious layout. To guard our glorious glossar. Please, universe. Give us a do

DOOR

continues on page 3

Glide into future WTS on a slide of books.

Photos courtesy of Amber Hendricks



Only a chair as magnificent as this one could be fit for our WTS Queen.

From zero to her-o-kay, tutor

Future peer tutor details his dark past with writing and its happy ending, proving that not every tutor loves writing, but that isn't what's important

BY ALEC STEINMETZ

I've felt out of place in the WTS practicum a few times now. The first time was during our first meeting when Jo Ann had us introduce ourselves by sharing our favorite books.

I don't read for pleasure much, and I don't have a favorite book.

At the beginning of the Jambo-ree, I felt out of place, as it was once again clear that I was in a room full of people who have always enjoyed reading and writing.

I didn't learn how to read until second grade, and I certainly haven't enjoyed writing until recently.

When I still couldn't read in second grade, my mom knew I was as smart as everyone else in my class, so she had me tested for learning disabilities. Sure enough, I have ADHD and am dyslexic.

So, starting in second grade, I was tutored under the Orton-Gillingham Approach. Despite the effectiveness of the tutoring, I still struggled with English classes.

It wasn't that the work was too difficult, but rather I felt that I couldn't compete with my classmates who had learned to read and write years before me.

The peak of my struggle with

English classes was when I received a D+ in Advanced Placement Language Composition my junior year of high school.

As a result of that D+, IU deferred me the first time I applied. Knowing my college options were limited, I worked harder than ever during my first semester senior year to ensure that I would get into IU. After reapplying, I got in.

With high school behind me, I decided to face my fear of writing by signing up for ENG-W170 Intro to Argumentative Writing the first

PAST

continues on page 5

What I feared as a soon-to-be writing tutor at WTS

BY HANNAH MURRAY

This article was written in March before the completion of the WTS practicum. Some of the concerns in this article are addressed in training.

To be completely honest, I am fairly nervous for when April 11 rolls around, and I will have my first tutoring session at WTS.

I can't decide what is more nerve-racking: having back-to-back sessions for every shift I work or not having a single appointment.

The former makes me concerned I will not be tutoring my best without a break in between.

The latter makes me think I will not get enough practice as a tutor in order to improve.

Fortunately, Jo Ann has provided wonderful encouragement.

One of my initial tutoring fears was receiving a draft of a business memo or lab report and not knowing a single thing about the subject matter since I am majoring in English and religious studies.

But Jo Ann reminded all of us trainees that we don't have to know everything, that our ignorance of a particular subject could actually be beneficial for the students because

our questions of clarification can aid them in developing their drafts.

My lack of knowledge regarding the steps of ionization or the structure of a business memo should not be considered a hindrance, but helpful to the students.

Another fear of mine is the possibility of being handed a paper that seems to fulfill all the criteria perfectly. It would make me think I read the prompt incorrectly.

But Jo Ann reminded us that

FEARS

continues on page 5

DOOR

from page 1

Number Two

The comfort of our tutees and employees is of utmost importance. Therefore, let us invest in some marvelous seating.

Some sleek, cushy swivel chairs for our break area and center desk. Some punchy, polished conference chairs for our tutorial tables (see image 4). I like the squares. Let's keep the square tables.

Some lovely, plum armchairs for the waiting area. Throw in a layered, glass coffee table to open the space!

Number Three

Speaking of coffee, let's splurge on a Keurig. If employees are willing to share, we could invite tutees to partake for a dollar a cup (so we could replenish supplies).

We could also keep this gem to ourselves, tucked away in our private break area. Tutoring is exhausting work. Let's keep the caffeine coming with humans' best invention!

Number Four

In terms of storage, we definitely want to give Anita, Jo Ann, and the desk staff ample workspace at their desks, but WTS also requires room for its piles of files and books.

WTS would benefit greatly from some gorgeous IKEA desks that allow for both, like the ones featured here—see image 1 on Page 1.

If additional storage is needed (and of course it will be), IKEA also offers stupendous shelving units.

Number Five

LOOK AT THIS CHAIR MADE OF BOOKS (see image 3 on Page 1).



We at WTS just really want a door. We have been reaching for it for so long, even individual peer tutors like Jordan Riley are wishing for one.

This would make a fabulous replacement for Jo Ann's throne. A throne of dictionaries and thesauruses and citation manuals.

Only a chair as magnificent as this could be fit for our WTS Queen.

Number Six

Our space, as it is, is very drab in terms of décor. Of course this is the nature of an open layout. The area doesn't belong exclusively to WTS, so it can't have our charm.

But if it could, obviously it should feature picture collages capturing the adventures of our employees, comics about teaching, some of those ridiculous inspirational posters, etc.

Are we allowed to be artsy? If we're allowed to be artsy, we should really feature local artists because we care about that. Bring us your art, Bloomington!

Number Seven

This is definitely the most outlandish option, but I can't let it go. I want this slide (see image 2 on Page 1). I want our tutees to glide into WTS on this slide.

4



Tutees could be just as comfortable in their chairs as they are with our friendly and helpful tutors!

But only after they've walked through our newly installed door, of course. Then they can climb back up the shelves upon shelves of books, satisfied with our excellent services, eager to slide back down into our space again for their next tutorial.

Number Eight

Mostly we just want the door, though.

WTS peer tutor speaks at ECWCA Conference on tutoring non-native English-speaking students

BY BELLE KIM

On the day of my presentation, I slipped into my bright pink panda flats and marched down the brick pavement that covered the campus of Miami University.

I adjusted the straps of my East Central Writing Centers Association badge and, flicking off the beads of rain that had gathered on my coat, pushed open the door to the conference room where I would be giving my presentation.

I pulled the PowerPoint onto the screen and met the expectant gaze of the assembled conference goers, who sat in their seats with notebooks and pens laid out for assiduous note taking.

My boss, after giving a quick introduction of WTS, looked back at me with a reassuring smile. My cue. I began by providing a brief overview of the international student population at IU.

There are more than 6,000 international students at this University. About 40 to 50 percent of the students we help at the writing center, in fact, are international students.

These statistics show how important it is for us to have conversations about tutoring non-native speakers and the special challenges they may pose.

Part of my qualifications for discussing such a topic, I explained, is the fact that I myself am an international student who didn't speak a word of English upon arrival into

the United States.

I asked the gathered peer tutors and writing center employees what some of their concerns were when it came to working with non-native speakers.

Many were worried that when they spoke with international students, they would not be able to communicate effectively.

They also said they felt many non-native speakers insisted on focusing on grammatical mistakes as opposed to higher-level concerns and that they did not really know how to help them with grammatical errors.

This discussion provided a useful segue way into a conversation about the importance of body language and strategies such as writing down key points from the tutorial so the student can refer to them later, using the dictionary when explaining parts of speech and prepositions, and urging students to come in for brainstorming sessions.

We also talked about issues with plagiarism and what kind of resources to offer students who are seeking help with improving their English skills.

Afterward, an enlightening question and answer session alerted me to the fact that many peer tutors from various universities receive little training before they are unleashed upon the student body.

One of the peer tutors asked,

“What should I do when an international student comes in and wants to just discuss grammar? I obviously can't go through every single mistake on the paper and fix them, so what is an effective strategy?”

I told her to pick out the most glaring errors that impede meaning, and address repeating patterns of mistakes rather than attempt to address each little problem.

Later, she told me that she had only received training for two weeks and that the instruction she had received upon being hired had not focused much on how to tutor international students.

She asked me for my PowerPoint and told me the information had been really helpful, which assuaged my fears that everything I'd told them had been obvious and simple.

On the three-hour drive back, for much of which I was blissfully asleep in the back seat, I mused upon how lucky we are here at WTS to have been provided a semester-long training on how to tutor effectively.

We were even paid to learn how to be good tutors. As I drifted in and out of consciousness, I mused upon how grateful I felt to have been given the opportunity to present at a conference as a puny undergraduate tutor and to have been part of such an amazing writing center over the past year.

PAST

from page 2

semester of my freshman year.

W170 is an alternative to ENG-W131 Elementary Composition, the basic composition course.

After receiving C's on the first few assignments and no constructive feedback, I dropped the class.

I had to earn my required writing credit eventually, so I signed up to take W131 in the fall of my sophomore year.

I knew what I needed to do if I was going to pass W131, so I worked tirelessly on the first major paper.

I won't deny that I cried on the stairs in Ballantine Hall after class

the day I got my paper back. I got an A+! Still crying, I called my mom to tell her.

For some reason, I figured my first A+ would be the peak of my writing career. But then on Essay 2 I got an A, and on Essay 3 I got another A+, giving me an A in W131.

Toward the end of that semester, I got an email saying I had been recommended to apply for WTS. So I applied, interviewed and got hired.

I've realized that the key to my writing success was my shift in confidence, so I am thrilled to have the opportunity to help students increase their confidence in writing.

One of the most powerful

things I've learned in the practicum is that everyone learns pieces of the writing process at different times and rates.

This gives me clarity on my previous struggle with writing and will help me help students understand their writing struggles.

At the Jamboree, it was clear to me that a lifelong passion for English is not what being a writing tutor is about.

Being a writing tutor is about helping students realize their potential. My WTS experience has changed my life, as it has been pivotal to my realizing my potential.

And I haven't even started tutoring yet.

FEARS

from page 2

perfect papers do not exist, and there is always something to work on, even if it is as miniscule as finding patterns of grammatical errors and showing the student how a certain grammar rule works.

I think what has provided me with the most comfort is the mock-tutoring exercise in class when we took turns being the tutor and the tutee with a partner trainee.

All of us had to write our own essay and have it looked over by another tutor trainee. Given that all of us are strong writers, it was a

challenge to find anything wrong with my partner's paper.

This was good practice for focusing on the lower level concerns of writing, such as grammatical errors and tweaking sentences.

On the one hand, I don't really know everything to expect as a tutor, and maybe it is the unknown of tutoring that makes me the most anxious.

It makes me think of when I go up to present in front of a class of thirty-plus students, shaking with the fear of stumbling over my words, or worse: not remembering a single thing.

In those first few minutes prior

to the actual presentation, I am the most anxious, wondering and fearing exactly how the presentation will go.

But everything always ends up being fine once I actually start the presentation and focus on what I am saying rather than the fear of how many ways I could mess up.

I see tutoring panning out the same way.

My fear will lead up until the very start of my first session, and then I will be too busy helping the student by either asking open-ended questions or brainstorming possible essay topics to even remember being afraid.

Interact with
WTS!



WTS Alumni



@IUB_WTS_Help



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Peer tutors reveal their worst tutoring experiences

Peer tutors tell their “horror” tutoring stories, demonstrating that even during the rare rough tutorials, there is always something to be learned...or at least laughed at!

Continue reading below to discover five tutors’ personal accounts of their stand-out experience and how they pulled through.

Farmers and Christians

KIMBERLY SMITH

My not-so-horrifying “WTS Horror Story” happened at Briscoe one evening.

The student had a psychology paper but had decided to write it in a business memo format, saying that he wanted to transition to a more “professional” form of writing.

The paper was incredibly confusing. Whenever I asked for clarification, he would respond by simply reading what he had written or by saying something to the effect of, “Isn’t that obvious?” with a judgmental glance at me.

After a few of these inquiries,

he declared, “I’m not writing this paper for farmers and Christians! I’m writing it for academics and professionals.”

Apparently, in this student’s mind farmers and Christians are the epitome of stupidity.

The student continued to explain away all of my questions and pieces of advice throughout the tutorial. And by the end, I don’t believe I had offered a single suggestion that he actually planned to implement.

It was a rough hour, but it makes for an amusing story now!

I REALLY want to study public policy

INGRID FEUSTEL

I think my worst WTS tutorial was actually my first. I was meeting with a student who was working on an application to the School of Public and Environmental Affairs.

The essay she brought was full of personal anecdotes about her childhood, and I couldn’t tell whether it was a personal statement or a response to a specific prompt.

I asked if I could read the prompt, and I discovered that she should have been answering the question, “Why do you want to be a public policy major?”

After talking with the student for a while about her thoughts on this question, I realized that she didn’t actually know what people who study public policy do.

The student was a little distraught, and I was more than a little distraught on her behalf.

However, we managed to end the tutorial on a reasonable note after writing down some questions she could ask a SPEA advisor to learn more about public policy.

Can you write it for me?

ANJONA GHOSH

“I don’t know where to start,” the student told me as we sat down to a 50-minute tutorial session at the Teter Academic Support Center.

SMILE

continues on page 7

**By Our WTS is produced for the peer tutor alumni of
Writing Tutorial Services, Indiana University’s writing center.**

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Please read, think and write back to us. Any comments on this issue or updates you wish to be included in upcoming issues may be directed to:
byourwts@indiana.edu

SMILE

from page 6

His concern seemed like a fairly straightforward problem, and I started to ask him about what ideas he had for his argument. If we could come up with a thesis statement together, I thought, he would have a better idea of how to write his introduction.

We talked in depth about the class readings, about how to put them in conversation with each other, and he seemed on the cusp of developing a thesis statement.

Then it began again. “I don’t know how to start it,” he said when I suggested that he draft a thesis statement right then and there.

I tried telling him that if he just wrote something down on paper, we could edit it together. “I don’t know how to start it,” he repeated to me.

So I suggested, more specifically, that he write inferences about the patterns we had noted for nearly a half hour together. Still he wouldn’t budge.

Finally, when I started to make a suggestion, I noticed he grabbed his pencil, writing down every word that I said verbatim.

I stopped myself immediately and asked him to just take two minutes and write down what came to his head. We were back to square one.

As much as I tried to help him help himself that night, he fought me every step of the way.

“I don’t think it can really be shortened,” he told me as I recommended he revise his three-sentence thesis statement down to one.

But at the end of the tutorial, I was simply proud the words on the page were his and not mine.

Comma splices make people cry

EMILY MCKNIGHT

My very first tutorial was my very worst tutorial. I was working in Briscoe, and a girl came in with a short paper about her experience at IU thus far (she was a sophomore).

Believing that I was following the tutoring script and, therefore, nothing could go wrong, I asked her what she had written about.

Well, in the span of five minutes she was bawling and telling me how few friends she had on campus and how difficult she found IU. This was definitely not covered in training.

I comforted her as best I could, and then steered the conversation back to comma splices and the like because I have no counseling skills. Truthfully, though, I was able to recommend a few counseling centers that I hope she visited.

And that is the story of why a girl broke down in tears during my very first tutorial!

That is all

DANA KOGLIN

I think I’ve had a couple painful tutorials, but this is the one that sticks out in my mind.

I was tutoring an international student, and as is the case a lot of times in my experience, all she wanted was someone to edit her grammar.

I spent at least a good five minutes right off explaining to her that my fixing her grammar was only to her grade’s benefit on this

assignment.

And since my job is to, as Jo Ann always says, put ourselves out of business by teaching applicable skills, I could not do what she asked—no matter how much she felt she needed it.

Offering some constructive criticism, I explained that she was using participles in the place of verbs, basically using “i-n-g” words incorrectly. I pointed out a couple examples of this and explained that that was all I could do for her.

The tutorial ended, and I went to enter my record. Then, the ASC desk person came in, saying that my tutee had another question. I was apprehensive, but I went back out. Mistake!

She had her paper open on her laptop and had done a Ctrl-F search on “i-n-g.” She then proceeded to go through each instance in which “i-n-g” appeared and ask me if it was correct.

I continued with my earlier speech, but it was not to her satisfaction. I finally just told her I would get fired if I edited her paper.

She told me she didn’t think so. I continued to refuse, so she quickly said “that is all” and turned away from me. I had been dismissed.

Worst of all, this was when the Forest ASC was in Willkie Quad. In that setup, the writing tutoring tables were also our “bull pen” of sorts. And the girl wouldn’t leave.

I spent the next hour and a half hiding behind the ASC front desk. I was scared then, but it makes me laugh looking back.

Plus, how can you appreciate the amazing tutorials without a few rough ones?

WTS says goodbye to Seniors



Katherine Swintz

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Indianapolis, IN

After I finish up with classes this summer, I'll be moving back to Indianapolis to take a gap year before entering graduate school for a master's in speech pathology.

I'm hoping to get into the program at Ball State University, but I won't be starting the application process until the end of the summer.

WTS was actually a big factor in my decision to enter into speech pathology. I'm an English and comparative literature major, and I always thought I would go into publishing.

Working with students at WTS, especially those who study English as a second language, helped me realize that I want to help people communicate and not necessarily from behind a desk or through writing.

I'm ridiculously grateful for all of the opportunities this job has afforded me.

Katie Beasley

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Madrid, Spain

After graduation I plan to teach English in Madrid, Spain, for a year or more.

Eventually, I'd like to attend graduate school for either international relations or peace and conflict resolution in Israel or Europe.

Although, as a School of Public and Environmental Affairs student my studies have centered mainly on government, working at WTS throughout these four years has been a valuable opportunity for pursuing, improving and sharing my love of language with others.

It has improved my interpersonal skills, made me more patient and empathetic, and revealed to me my passion for working with English language learners.

Through WTS I've formed friendships and learned so much from so many different types of people: fellow peer tutors, graduate tutors, tutees and professional staff

Ingrid Feustel

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The Philippines

Working at WTS has been the most instructive, rewarding and fun part of my time at IU.

I learned about working with students of different levels, not to mention got a little taste of lots of interesting classes I never would have taken myself.



members.

I've been exposed to lab reports, sociological analyses, Ph.D. research proposals and a slew of other material I would have never been exposed to had I not been a tutor.

I will always love WTS and look back on these years with fondness and gratitude!

After graduation I will be moving to the Philippines to continue working with students and non-native speakers of English as a Literacy and Fluency teacher through the Peace Corps.

I know I am going to miss all of my brilliant WTS friends, but everything I learned from them will help me through this adventure!

After my service, I hope to attend graduate school in the United States.



Kimberly Smith

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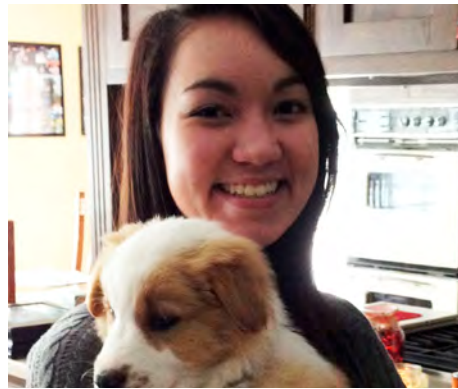
I have been applying for graduate schools and assistantship positions in student affairs.

WTS gave me a lot to talk about in my interviews: from my style of communication to how I deliver bad news and why I am interested in higher education.

I do not know for sure where I am going yet. One option is attending IUPUI for an M.A. in higher education and student affairs.

I would work as an academic advisor for University Division students with IUPUI's Academic and Career Support Services.

My other option is to attend Bowling Green State University. I would get an M.A. in college student personnel and work as a career adviser for undergraduates in the business college.



Kelly Miller

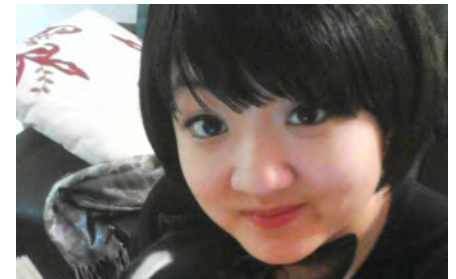
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I plan to attend Stanford for a M.S. in human and medical genetics to become a genetic counselor.

Although I will be focusing primarily on scientific research, I know the language and communication skills I have developed at WTS will be valuable as I continue my education.

Working at WTS has not only helped me refine my English skills and given me a more insightful look at my own and others' writing, but it has taught me how to engage with and relate to many students I would have never met outside of WTS.

I have made lifelong friendships and unforgettable memories over the past three years as part of WTS, and I am so grateful to have been given the opportunity to be part of such a spectacular group of people.



Belle Kim

Seattle, WA
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I will graduate with a dual degree in journalism and English. I plan on pursuing a master's and Ph.D. in English literature at the University of Washington. I hope to build upon my WTS experiences and skill sets at the writing and research center at UW.

I am confident that my ability to discuss academic papers, interact with students and communicate with others in a professional setting will prove useful as I dive further into the world of academia.

I will be moving with fellow WTS peer tutor Amber Hendricks. We have spent many an hour conspiring to take over Washington.

WTS has provided me with valuable skills, experiences and friendships with some truly remarkable, amazing people. I can't wait to see their successes as they plunge into the real world.



Amber Hendricks

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Seattle, WA

I will copyedit books for academic presses until I find full-time work in publishing, marketing or whatever it is English majors end up doing with their degrees, but not Starbucks. My

time spent at WTS has only furthered my love of language, and I plan to pursue an MFA in playwriting. WTS introduced me to brilliant students, challenging arguments, glorious taco bars and most importantly, my future roommate: fellow tutor, Belle.

My biggest post-graduation goal is to eventually move back to Germany.

Our WTS Alumni Directory

Updated June 6, 2014

Tutors listed by training year

1992-1996

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Jen DeRosa

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Melissa House

Over the years, we've lost contact with many of our friends from WTS as jobs have changed and moves have been made. If you know of a former tutor who's fallen out of touch, please forward this newsletter and have the alum email us at byourwts@indiana.edu.

Thanks!

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Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

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