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A Sociocultural Exploration of English Faculty Perceptions of American Design University in Qatar's Writing Center

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A SOCIOCULTURAL EXPLORATION OF ENGLISH FACULTY PERCEPTIONS OF AMERICAN DESIGN UNIVERSITY IN QATAR'S WRITING CENTER

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This study examines English faculty perceptions of the Writing Center at American Design University in Qatar (ADU-Q) through a sociocultural framework and social capitalist analysis. The current proliferation of American higher education branch campuses in the Arabian Gulf region make this a timely study, as the local context warrants an in-depth analysis of how writing centers are situated in this unique environment of language learners and dynamic social and cultural changes. Data triangulation in this qualitative study is informed by three sources: interviews with English faculty, interviews with the ADU-Q Writing Center Coordinator, and archival documents. Preliminary findings suggest that collaboration between the Writing Center and various stakeholders tends to improve positive perceptions of the Center. Furthermore, the changing nature of the local context contributes to changes in these perceptions and ways in which the participants' viewed their own role as faculty. This research unites the fields of Composition, TESOL, and writing center research; furthermore, it aims to inform an understanding of teaching and writing center practices in National Institution in Qatar.

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CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Introduction

In one of my first experiences as a writing center instructor in Qatar, a student came to me and confessed, "My professor told me not to come to the writing center. She won't know I'm here, will she?" I found it ironic that this student's professor was a Global English Learner (GEL)[1] herself, with limited English language proficiency. Furthermore, in Qatar, where most of the students studying at the branch campuses of American universities are second language speakers, I had anticipated the writing center to be flooded with students seeking assistance. I have not experienced this influx, however, and when this particular student revealed to me her concerns about a faculty member advising her against using writing center services, I began to ponder faculty perceptions of the center. I found the warning to her students rather bewildering, and it has remained a source of puzzlement that served as the impetus for this study.

Background

Although writing centers have been in existence since the early 1900s (or perhaps even earlier; see Boquet, 1999), writing center research has only substantially proliferated since the wake of open admissions in the 1960s, and it remains an emerging field of inquiry (Gillespie, Gillam, Brown, & Stay, 2002; N. M. Grimm, 1992, 2003; Pemberton, 2009; Rose & Weiser, 1999). One of the under-researched areas is the relationship between faculty and the writing center, and especially the faculty perceptions of the center (Boquet, 2002; Lerner, 2010; Masiello & Hayward, 1991; Pemberton, 2009; Thonus, 2001). Research suggests that the more positive the perceptions of faculty about writing

[1] See "Definitions of Terminology" section at the end of Chapter One for more details.

center work, the more effective writing centers can be in outreach to students (Boquet, 2002; Clark, 1985; Eodice, 2003; R. M. Hall, 2007). This relationship between perception and effectiveness suggests a collaborative model that lends itself to a social capitalist[2] data analysis, which this study adopted. For example, how does a closer relationship between faculty and the writing center influence the growth of social capital between the two? In what ways do faculty perceive themselves as an integral and collaborative component of affecting students' use of the writing center? This research investigated one particular institution, American Design University in Qatar (ADU-Q)[3], through a qualitative, sociocultural research approach in order to investigate English faculty perceptions of the writing center; the study's framework links writing center theory to TESOL practices within this particular Middle Eastern context. The primary method of data collection included interviews with English faculty at ADU-Q. Archival data, such as tutorial and statistical reports, were also collected and analyzed (see Data Sources section in Chapter Three). Methodological decisions were influenced by ADU-Q's writing center procedures, which I was intimately familiar with through my course of employment. Interview questions with English faculty explored the individual faculty members' cultural, linguistic, and educational backgrounds; for example, did they have experience with a writing center during their education? If so, what were those experiences? What types of experiences had they had with ADU-Q Writing Center? With an overwhelming majority of GEL undergraduates and colleagues, how does language play a role in their expectations of students, the Writing Center, and within their own classrooms? How does the need for discipline-specific writing play a role in their understanding of their teaching responsibilities vis-à-vis the role of the Writing Center? How do faculty perceive peer tutors, their role, and their effectiveness? Research inquiry was conducted

[2] See subsection in Chapter One for more on Social Capitalism. A key feature, however, is that it brings attention to relationships that are not financially based.

[3] All names and institutions are pseudonyms. To ensure confidentiality, any potentially identifying information has been modified or omitted in this document.

through a sociocultural framework, and data analysis was interpreted through a social capitalist viewpoint.

Purpose Statement

This research aims to inform writing center practices by privileging faculty in the English department as one of the key stakeholders in writing center work at a discipline-specific institution in a language environment that primarily serves GELs. As a result of the core curricular requirements, all ADU-Q students interact with the English faculty in their first semester of enrollment; therefore, they were an appropriate group of participants to provide insightful data to answer the research questions. Faculty perceptions are formed and developed by a wide variety of influences – anecdotal experiences from colleagues, experiences as clients, experiences of direct interaction with a particular writing center staff member, or even through complete lack of knowledge or awareness of the writing center (Boquet, 2002; Clark, 1985; R. M. Hall, 2007; Masiello & Hayward, 1991). This research sought to investigate these perceptions and attempts to identify how they were developed. Final data analysis also explored ways in which these perceptions may relate to a social capitalist perspective, which aimed to reveal sources that may influence the faculty-writing center relationship.

This particular site, an American higher education institution in the Middle East, also offers an important arena for exploring TESOL-related pedagogical challenges. Statistics reveal that English is the global language of many disciplines (Crystal, 2006; Hanauer & Englander, 2011; Jenkins, 2009b; Maher, 1986).[4] Therefore, the importance of English at ADU-Q is critical to the overall institutional mission of educating students for a global community in a place where the students and faculty often speak Arabic, Urdu, and a wide variety of other languages. Furthermore, the importance of writing across the curriculum in a variety of educational and international environments has become a recent

[4] While statistics reflect the pervasive dominance of English in these fields, the linguistic imperialism of English is not without controversy; Pennycook (1994, 2007) and others continue to problematize this linguistic imperialism.

focal point of scholarly attention and research inquiry (Bazerman et al., 2012; Thaiss, Brauer, Carlino, Ganobcsik-Williams, & Sinha, 2012). Finally, these GELs often utilize the services of peer consultants, which presents a unique consideration of faculty perceptions of the writing center because the concept of GEL peer tutors teaching other GEL learners is relatively new (Eleftheriou, 2011; Ronesi, 2009, 2011).

Ultimately, it is hoped that a deeper appreciation of these English faculty perceptions will also yield insights as to how those perceptions affect the writing center on a broader institutional level. Institutional status has been and continues to be an important aspect of writing center scholarship (Mauriello, Macauley, & Koch, 2011), and this research contributes to a greater understanding in this domain. The social capitalist perspective adopted for this study's data analysis guides this exploration of collaboration between faculty and the writing center even further.

Problem Statement

A plethora of influences shape the status of a writing center within an institution. One of these influences is the degree to which faculty are involved with the center (R. M. Hall, 2007; Harris, 2000; Masiello & Hayward, 1991; Mauriello et al., 2011). More importantly, however, as the anecdote in the above Introduction highlights, faculty can play an influential role in encouraging or discouraging student visits to the writing center. Research has also underscored the positive value of writing centers' collaborative work with faculty, and how these relationships can yield beneficial results for all stakeholders (R. M. Hall, 2007; Kinkead & Harris, 1993; Mauriello et al., 2011). When faculty support the writing center and encourage students to utilize its services, this support benefits students' writing success. In particular, student use of the writing center can positively affect academic success for ESL students.

> The frequency of writing center tutoring seemed to be especially valuable for ESL students, who outperform their domestic cohorts, receiving significantly higher grades in composition….it indicates that even students with minimal English proficiency are able, when appropriate help is available, to make significant progress toward mastering academic writing. (Williams & Takaku, 2011, p. 13)

In the current context at ADU-Q, where most students are GELs, the writing center seemed to be a valuable component in fostering student success.

This study focused on a particular subset of faculty at ADU-Q —the English faculty — with the hopes of revealing how faculty perceptions of the writing center are formed within an academic group that already, at least theoretically, values writing. Nonetheless, their diverse backgrounds indicated that they may envision the teaching of writing in different ways from each other. Although all English faculty at ADU-Q come from a variety of different educational backgrounds with varied academic interests and pursuits (ranging from creative writing, to literature, to ESL), they all teach core writing courses to the entire new student body. As a result of these curricular requirements, English faculty will interact with all of the students and be responsible for their initial writing development at ADU-Q; consequently, while it would be interesting to investigate faculty perceptions of the writing center from all disciplines, it is the English faculty that provide the most direct connection between ADU-Q students and writing support services such as the writing center. Specifically, this study focused on the English faculty perceptions of students as GELs, their need to adopt disciplinary-specific writing, and their use of peer consultants in the writing center.

While student success is critical in education and should arguably be the focal point of educators' concerns, a writing center's overall position within the institution is also a vital point to consider because it contributes to student success. Writing centers have always held rather untenable

positions; in the face of a budget crisis, writing centers are often one of the first lines to be cut (Harris, 2000; McHarg, 2011; Pemberton, 2009). If faculty play a pivotal role in supporting a writing center, then their perceptions are crucially instrumental in upholding support for the center. By extension, faculty support for the center is key to maintaining writing support for students and increasing their academic potential, especially in the face of budgetary or political challenges. Social capital theory offers a framework for investigating this faculty-writing center relationship because it focuses on the social and relational connections between these groups, rather than financial or economic relationships[5]. The social capitalist framework utilized in this study will seek to analyze this relationship through the lens of collaboration.

Research Questions

Data has been triangulated through three primary sources: interview transcripts with all six teaching English faculty, interview transcripts with the ADU-Q Coordinator, and archival artifacts, such as tutorial reports and institutional reports and statistics. As Eleftheriou (2011) points out, "Triangulation, using more than two methods of collecting data about human behavior…demonstrates 'concurrent validity, particularly in qualitative research'" (p. 53). Qualitative data collection methods and analysis were used throughout the study; as such, constant reflexivity and adaptation of procedures were adopted throughout the research. Data collection methods and analysis sought to answer the research questions below.

Primary Question

- What are English faculty perceptions of the ADU-Q Writing Center?

Ancillary Questions

[5] For a more detailed description, see Social Capitalism section later in Chapter One.

- What factors have influenced/are influencing these perceptions?
- What do English faculty believe the role of the Writing Center should be in providing support for students, faculty, and staff?
- How does the GEL's first language factor into the faculty member's perceived level and type of support needed?
- How does the type of writing required factor into the perceived level and type of support needed?
- How do peer tutors factor into the perceived role of the Writing Center?

Background

The Writing Center at ADU-Q provides English language support primarily for GELs — including students, faculty, and staff — within an American academic community. What factors are most influential in the development of English faculty perceptions of the Writing Center? Many of the faculty have experience as learners or instructors in U.S. higher education institutions – what were their experiences as learners or faculty in those environments? Has their understanding of a writing center's role changed since moving to the Qatari context? Are their perceptions based on experiences, anecdotes, or other influences? How do their perceptions of the Writing Center influence their student referrals, whether formal or informal? How do the English faculty interact with other faculty (in other departments), and how does the Writing Center play a role in those relationships? As the Introduction suggests, faculty can play a pivotal role in supporting or deterring students from visiting the writing center. Therefore, this study raises critical questions about the ways in which perceptions of the writing center are formed.

Context

The unique, rapidly evolving sociopolitical context of this research site lends itself to a rich investigation of faculty perceptions through a sociocultural framework. The socio-political background in Qatar influences education policies that are then incorporated into ADU-Q's institutional directives. These converging, and sometimes conflicting, policies between the local Qatari culture and the American higher education mandates have been, and continue to be, a source of challenge for institutions in Knowledge City[6]. This section will provide an overview of the key social, political, and cultural considerations that play a role in ADU-Q's instructional delivery, as well as some of the factors that may influence faculty perceptions of the Writing Center.

History

Qatar was a British protectorate from 1868 until 1971, during which time it remained primarily a nomadic society governed by tribes. After the discovery of oil, "the 1950s and 1960s marked a period of unprecedented prosperity, social development and an influx of immigration" (Kane, 2011, p. 55). The current generation of Qataris has witnessed unprecedented growth and development into a modern state. The increased wealth of the country, coupled with its independence from the British governance, has allowed the country to invest in developing the country's infrastructure.

The country's financial management continues to be directly decided by the country's tribal leadership.

Since Qatar's first encounters with the British, all rulers have descended from the Al-Thani family. Sheikh Khalifa ruled as Emir of Qatar from 1972-1995, when he was overthrown in a bloodless coup by the heir apparent Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani. Sheikh Hamad's progressive vision for

[6] Knowledge City is an area of Doha that houses the branch campuses of the imported American universities. For a more detailed description of the development of Knowledge City, see Kane (2011).

> Qatar's future is markedly different from that of his father's. He is striving to modernize [*sic*] the conservative Islamic society from the top down via royal decree. (Kane, 2011, p. 55)

Sheikh Hamad[7], Sheikh Khalifa's son, has instituted a number of changes that have radically changed the landscape of Qatar. For example, in 1998, he issued a decree to allow elections for a municipal authority; for the first time, females were allowed to vote and to run as candidates in the election (Kane, 2011, p. 57). A permanent constitution was signed in 2003, and, although the Emir still retains ultimate power, it appears that the country is moving toward a more democratic government system. For example, censorship was abolished in the late 90s and the state-financed television station, Al Jazeera, "represents the nation's commitment to freedom of information" (Kane, 2011, p. 58) . Although Qatar continues to make visible, concrete changes toward transitioning to a more Western and democratic style of government, the ruling family has also attempted to maintain and preserve a local, Islamic, and conservative identity (King, 2011). These socio-political dynamics of Qatar exemplify the importance of the sociocultural framework adopted by this study; politics, gender, nationality, and tribal allegiances all set the backdrop for the unique environment in which the current educational system has developed.

While Sheikh Hamad has overseen the country's broad-scale development, it is one of his wives, Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, who has overseen and promoted changes in the educational sphere. Sheikha Moza has played a significant role in promoting education equality for women, as well as developing programs for families, women, and children. Sheikha Moza's instrumental role in the development of education, particularly for women, has led her to become an icon and role model for women in the Gulf and around the globe ("Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser," (2013);"HHS Sheikha Moza bint Nasser," 2013; "Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser al-Missned," 2010).

[7] Sheikh Hamad was the Emir during the time of this study, but there was a transition of power during the completion of this project.

Although the educational opportunities for local Qataris has increased under Sheikha Moza's visionary leadership, Sheikh Hamad's overall style of governance has been received differently within the local Qatari community. While many Qataris likely appreciate the ways in which they have benefitted from the improved services and financial gains of oil wealth, others disapprove of the rapid changes and seeming loss of local and Islamic heritage that embrace a Western lifestyle. My own experience in the classroom and in the Writing Center has allowed me the opportunity to interact with many Qatari students who express disappointment in the country's direction toward rapid modernization. Kane also notes:

> The extent to which top-down decisions of a small circle of Westernised, liberal-minded elite apply to the broader population is difficult to ascertain. While I came to know a narrow stratum of students who were the direct beneficiaries of these neoliberal reforms, a colleague of mine stationed outside of Knowledge City assures me that many people had complained to him directly regarding the direction that the state was being taken, the vast sums of money that were being spent and their helplessness to do anything about it (Gardner 2011, pers. comm.) [*sic*]. (Kane, 2011, p. 58)

Anecdotal evidence suggests that opinions, attitudes, and reactions to the changing landscape in Qatar are highly varied. Some conservative families may avoid sending their daughters to coeducational higher education institutions, for example, or simply stay away from places that are frequented by expatriates to avoid any foreign influences. Rumors about attempted coups, tribal rivalries, and other internal conflicts are frequently circulated. One notable limitation of this study is my own inability to understand Arabic; one consistent message I hear is that reports and information conveyed in the local Qatar media are often considerably different in the English versus Arabic versions.

Regardless of the varying degrees of support for the government, Qataris remain the primary beneficiaries of the country's wealth. To become a citizen is incredibly difficult.

> Citizenship is primarily determined patrilineally. Non-Qatari females who marry Qatari nationals are bestowed citizenship for the duration of their marriage. Foreign residents are rarely conferred citizenship. The narrow definition of citizenship is closely bound up with tribal identity, but also reflects governmental obligations to nationals regarding the division and distribution of the country's wealth (US Library of Congress, 1994). Residence patterns are patrilocal where families have traditionally been surrounded by extended kin, though nuclear families are becoming more commonplace. Marriages can be monogamous or polygamous. Each family belongs to a clan comprising part of a larger tribe. People tend to marry within their tribe. (Kane, 2011, p. 61)

It is important to understand the challenges associated with obtaining citizenship, since Qatari passport holders are entitled to many other privileges as well – public health, education, and more. The present generation of Qatari youth in particular are benefitting from an intense focus on educational reforms from a global perspective. In other words, the country is making major strides toward providing global education that will develop the human capital of its citizens to be highly competitive in the world market. Qatar's leaders envision a society that is knowledge-based, with a long-range outlook that seeks to develop a solid human network that will long outlive the oil reserves. In addition to the financial benefits of being a Qatari, they are also being afforded new privileges through *Qatarization* – a government initiative that gives preference to Qatari citizens in education, training programs, and the workforce ("Qatarization: Your gateway to a career in the energy and industry sector," 2012).

The preference given to Qatari nationals has led to a highly-stratified society. According to Kane: "In Qatar guest workers, foreign expatriates who hold temporary residence status, account for as much as 80-85 percent of the nation's 1.5 million inhabitants (Kapiszewski 2001: 39-40)" (2011, p.

62). With the majority of the country's population being comprised of expatriate workers[8], myself included, the fact remains that the minority population, the Qatari citizens themselves, receive the overwhelming benefits. This stratified society in Qatar is critical to understanding the nature of education at ADU-Q from a sociocultural perspective. How, if at all, is this stratified society reflected in the Writing Center? How do faculty perceive the Writing Center's role in providing support services to students with different needs, both educationally and legally? The sociocultural framework of this study's investigation recognizes that these political and economic conditions in Qatar are critical for understanding the highly complex educational system at ADU-Q. On the surface, ADU-Q has simply replicated its main campus institution by branching into Qatar. The reality of such an educational transplantation, however, raises a number of questions about the nature and quality of services provided. One of these smaller units of service, the Writing Center at ADU-Q, will be viewed through this sociocultural lens.

Present Day Qatar

The past ten to fifteen years have witnessed an explosion of American higher education institutions in the Arabian Gulf (Hamdan, 2013, March 17; Kane, 2011; Mills, 2009). Qatar alone is currently home to seven American university branch campuses, with more being added each year. All of these university branches were established with the expectation of replicating the home campus in the United States in every aspect – in fact, one of the key features is that students who graduate from these branch campuses will receive an identical degree that is indistinguishable from the home campus (i.e., there is no identifying language that indicates a student ever spent time in Qatar) (Kane, 2011; Mills, 2009; Wildavsky, 2011; Zoepf, 2005). It is also notable that in Qatar, these universities have been established only through invitation from the Qatari government – in other words, the intent is to convey that their existence in the country should not be interpreted as the traditional hegemonic

[8] See http://www.qsa.gov.qa/eng/index.htm for the most current statistical and demographic breakdown of Qatar.

imperialism it is often interpreted to be. Nonetheless, there appears to be a contradiction between the invitation to offer identical education without compromising standards and the mandate to prioritize the local Qatari citizens. It is generally accepted that the local educational standards have not traditionally prepared students to enroll and succeed in the American university branch campuses in Qatar (Hamdan, 2013, March 17; Khatri, 2011). An evaluation report from Qatar's Supreme Education Council confirms that "performance levels are generally low" and "The longer term picture (examining the results from 2004 to 2008) is no brighter: there is some variability in performance for different grades, subject areas, and years, however, there are no clear-cut indications of improvement over time" (Institute, 2008, slide 7). This educational gap again indicates the need for specialized, individualized instruction that writing centers are meant to provide.

Each university in Knowledge City comes with its own services and departments, one of which is a writing or academic support center. Just as they do in the United States and around the globe, these writing centers vary widely in their goals and purposes for serving students. Nonetheless, writing centers in Qatar share a common theme: they all deal primarily with GELs, who comprise the overwhelming majority of the student population. Although there have been numerous publications about why writing centers are important for second language learners (Bruce & Rafoth, 2009; Fels, 2010; Harris, 1997; Jessica Williams, 2002, 2004; Jessica Williams & Severino, 2004), very little attention has been paid to faculty perceptions of writing centers for this population of learners. The purpose of this research is to gain a deeper understanding of faculty perceptions of the writing center, which is one of the many factors that influence student visits to the center. It is hoped that this research will give insight into what is surely a complex relationship among students, the Writing Center, the faculty, and the institution. The sociocultural framework adopted in this study provides an opportunity to understand the origins of the complex faculty perceptions, and perhaps determine an entry point for enhancing the social capital of the writing center.

Furthermore, my experience as a member of the Doha Writing Center Network[9] has illuminated that a phenomenon of ill-attended writing centers is representative of all schools in Knowledge City – writing and academic support center staff often lament that they spend more time marketing and advertising than in conducting tutoring sessions. Syed (2003) underscores this general challenge with motivation in the Arabian Gulf education when he notes:

> One does not have to talk for long with English language teachers in the Arabian Gulf to get a picture of the challenges they are constantly dealing with. EFL teachers in this region have identified student motivation, literacy, underachievement….These issues, coupled with outdated curricula and methodologies…paint a very unflattering picture of education in the region. (p. 337)

While the curriculum at ADU-Q mirrors that offered on the home campus in the United States, Syed's observation of "outdated curricula" aligns with the general challenges faced in the K-12 educational system in Qatar. Therefore, students entering the American branch campuses in Qatar are faced with an entirely new educational endeavor compared with what they experienced in their earlier years.

In contrast to Syed's commentary about lack of motivation for independent learning, Williams (2002), working within the U.S. writing center context, aptly notes that "second language writers are coming in increasing numbers [to the writing center] and there is no indication that this trend will end soon" (p. 74). Given that many U.S.-based writing centers conduct much of their work with second language writers who frequently visit, the infrequency of visits by GEL writers in Qatar is somewhat perplexing. Why do students who have a greater need for English language writing services avoid the writing center? How do English faculty shape students' visitation frequency to the writing center? This proposed study aims to uncover the English faculty perceptions of writing centers because,

[9] This is an informal network of writing center professionals in Doha.

undoubtedly, their support or lack of support for the Writing Center may influence students' writing center use. A thorough explanation of how and why ADU-Q was selected as the research site is provided in Chapter Three.

Writing Centers in Knowledge City

As previously noted, recent years have experienced an explosion of American higher education institutions in the Arabian Gulf. Each of Qatar's seven American universities represents a branch campus that was established to identically replicate the home campus. Each university in Knowledge City also houses a writing or academic resource center, and these centers vary widely in their goals and purposes[10]. Nonetheless, writing centers in Qatar all deal primarily with GELs, who comprise the overwhelming majority of the student, faculty, and staff populations. Within this group of GELs is a subpopulation of Qatari students who receive government benefits that provide them with a greatly privileged lifestyle. Social, cultural, and political pressures to service and benefit Qatari students remain a constant undercurrent at all institutions in Knowledge City and likely play a role in the construction and delivery of services such as the Writing Center. The purpose of this research is to gain a deeper understanding of one of the many factors that influence student visits to the Writing Center: namely, English faculty perceptions of the center. It is hoped that this research will give insight into what is surely a complex relationship among students, the writing center, the faculty, and the institution, and allow a framework for enhancing the social capital of the writing center.

ADU-Q Admissions and English Curriculum at ADU-Q

As this study highlights the importance of the writing center and English language learning support, it warrants an overview of the institutional English language requirements and curricular

[10] While it is not within the scope of this study to examine the differences between the various centers, it is notable that they do vary considerably and are constantly changing. Trimbur's (2000) work on the changing identity of global writing centers offers a clear indication of some of the changes that writing and academic centers in Knowledge City struggle with now.

framework. All of the universities in Knowledge City are contractually bound to maintain the same high admissions standards that they would on their home campuses (Hamdan, 2013, March 17; Wasserman, 2009). Therefore, theoretically, students applying to ADU-Q should be held to the same admissions criteria as the home campus. Nonetheless, attracting and recruiting students of the same high caliber becomes a bit of a political and logistical conundrum with the vastly different profile and demographics of applicants – in other words, thus far it has been challenging to find the same number of high-caliber applicants seeking admissions to the U.S. home campus counterparts. As explained in the "Context" section above, the policy of Qatarization prioritizes Qatari citizens in the country. Within Knowledge City, the contractual mandates also give preference to Qatari applicants at all of the universities. Here again it is notable that the sociocultural perspective offered by this study will seek to explore this treatment of Qatari versus non-Qatari students in the faculty perceptions of the Writing Center and students who are served.

At ADU-Q, all prospective students apply to the undergraduate program through the submission of high school transcripts, standardized test scores, a written essay, and a portfolio of artwork. The writing sample generally carries a small amount of weight in the admissions process; on occasion, if an essay appears suspiciously superior, an applicant may be invited to complete a controlled writing exercise. Otherwise, the other documents of the application dictate whether or not a student receives an acceptance letter. It is also notable that traditionally the vast majority of students accepted into ADU-Q's program are Qatari[11]. These students have typically graduated from the local schools, where education has undergone massive transformation in recent years. This transformation in education has experienced a number of reforms that have led to graduating students who are less academically prepared because of the unstable and ongoing changes. Therefore, although these Qatari

[11] Although enrollment was primarily by female Qatari students, admissions have become more internationally and gender-diverse in recent years. Notably, the newly admitted students in fall 2012 included only 53% Qatari nationals.

students receive preference in the admissions process, they are often less well-equipped academically than their international counterparts. A recent New York Times article highlights this phenomenon:

> One problem is that many local high school students are not qualified to immediately enter elite institutions like Northwestern or Georgetown, highly competitive schools that typically admit less than one in five applicants in the United States. There are no formal quotas on the number of local students admitted to the Gulf campuses.
>
> To bridge the gap, overseas campuses have resorted to using conditional admissions, bridge programs or foundation years to help local students catch up. In some cases, these extra courses are taught by professors from home campuses who are visiting the Middle East for the first time. (Hamdan, 2013, March 17, para 12-13)

This reality of underpreparation is one that emerged as a notable point during interviews conducted in this study and will be explored further in Chapters Four and Five. Finally, it should be acknowledged that ADU-Q also boasts a graduate program. However, this program is relatively new, has not integrally involved the English and Writing Center faculty, and has been ranked by Writing Center staff as a lower priority for Writing Center services compared to the undergraduate population. The growing graduate program may be a valuable site for future research.

Participant Profiles

As of February 2013, there were approximately 131 full-time faculty and staff at ADU-Q. Seven of the faculty members were in the field of English (six teaching English courses and one Writing Center Coordinator); the rest were in other disciplinary fields. It is these English faculty members, all from North America, who were targeted as primary participants in the study.

The English faculty at ADU-Q represent the strongest language support between students and their career trajectories. All students are required to take core courses from English faculty, so if these faculty members support the Writing Center services and refer students to the center in the early stages of their higher education, the students may be more likely to utilize the services throughout their academic careers (Robinson, 2009). The English faculty also play a unique role in the institutional framework of ADU-Q, since they are not content experts in the other disciplines. Therefore, they themselves often need to promote their critical function of supporting language learners at a discipline-specific university in the Middle East because they are seen as peripheral to the needs of a design education. Furthermore, the English faculty not only provide the strongest bridge between students and the Writing Center but also to other design faculty. For example, English faculty often find themselves involved in collaborative research with faculty in other disciplines. An English faculty member may work with a design class to have the students write a book, and the design faculty member would collaborate by facilitating the illustrative aspects of the book production. These types of collaborations are also paramount to the social capital of the writing center and the English department because, as their contributions are recognized as distinctly valuable, therefore, their capital may increase.

On the other hand, it is important to consider what role the writing center plays in the institution from a sociocultural standpoint. For example, Arabic is the official language in Qatar and the vast majority of students at ADU-Q come from an Arabic-speaking background. Does the existence of the writing center, which provides only English language support, further promote the hegemony of English and the negative associations with it? Are English faculty concerned with these issues? If so, how are their concerns reflected in their teaching? Language debates with regard to English-only, Arabic-only, and bilingual models of education continue to be a focal point of concern for policy makers and educators in Qatar (Khatri, 2012a, b).

Another sociocultural issue to consider is the policy of Qatarization, which gives priority services to Qatari nationals. Do these top-down, government policies influence student interactions at ADU-Q, whether in the classroom or in the writing center? This study acknowledges the social and political complexities in Qatar by noting that these current controversies and undercurrents may contribute to perceptions of the English language, English faculty experiences, and perceptions of the writing center.

Research Approach

The faculty at ADU-Q represent a relatively diverse group. Many of the design faculty are English language learners that come from geographic areas where English is not the primary language of communication. Therefore, a sociocultural framework is appropriate for investigating their perceptions. This study will take a sociocultural perspective in gathering, analyzing, and triangulating data. According to Johnson (2009):

> a sociocultural perspective defines human learning as a dynamic social activity that is situated in physical and social contexts, and is distributed across persons, tools, and activities (Rogoff, 2003; Salomon, 1993; Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1991). This is significant because, unlike behavioral or cognitive theories of human learning, a sociocultural perspective argues that higher-level human cognition in the individual has its origins in social life….Ultimately, a sociocultural perspective seeks 'to explicate the relationship between human mental functioning, on the one hand, and the cultural, institutional, and historical situations in which this functioning occurs, on the other' (Wertsch, 1995, p. 3). (p. 1)

This sociocultural perspective is a key and distinctive feature in this research study because it provides a framework for exploring the multiple converging, and sometimes conflicting, elements of society that impact a faculty member's perception of the writing center. For example, have faculty perceptions

been initially formed in one context (perhaps as a student interacting with a writing center), then changed in another context (e.g., as a faculty member in a large, majority monolingual student population), then changed again during their time in Qatar (in a relatively small environment serving primarily GEL undergraduates)? How do sociocultural factors play a role in English faculty perceptions of GELs, disciplinary writing, and the employment of peer tutors in the writing center? The benefits of adopting this sociocultural perspective will be highlighted and reiterated throughout this study.

In addition to the sociocultural framework of investigation, a theoretical, social capitalist analysis is utilized. Social capitalism is an appropriate conceptual framework for this research because it seeks to situate the writing center in a non-monetary framework that is appropriate for writing center research. In other words, in many ways there is not much attention paid to writing centers in the Middle East because funding is often seemingly endless (McHarg, 2011). Whether or not there is always unlimited funding available remains to be seen; however, at present, writing centers in the Middle East do not face the types of strict budgetary restrictions as their U.S. counterparts. Many might consider writing centers to be an inherent part of the academic framework at Knowledge City institutions because of this bottomless funding. However, a writing center's status cannot and should not be solely based on finances. Rather, it should also be based on a solid, collaborative model of education that unites all stakeholders through a common mission and purpose. Social capitalism provides a durable, lasting framework of networking and collaboration that can advance writing center theory and establish a lasting institutional profile regardless of funding. It is through this interpretive framework that data analysis will be reviewed. Within a sociocultural framework, this study will employ a variety of qualitative methods such as interviewing and reviewing archival documents to triangulate the findings. Details of data collection and analysis are discussed in Chapter Three.

Theoretical Framework

Introduction

As the study title indicates, this project adopts a sociocultural framework of inquiry for data collection. This sociocultural theory provides a lens through which the researcher may identify the multiple and often conflicting viewpoints that a faculty member may have in developing perceptions of the writing center. What factors have influenced a faculty member's understanding of the role of the writing center? Have faculty generally understood writing centers to be facilitators and coaches in writing instruction in the United States higher education context, but then developed a greater sense of need for editing and proofreading services for the largely multilingual student population at ADU-Q? Have their experiences and interactions with students, other faculty, or the writing center influenced what they perceive to be the writing center's role? What other societal factors in the Qatari context have shaped faculty ideas about the writing center's role? Sociocultural theory is explained in further detail below.

Next, a social capitalist perspective will be utilized as an analytical lens from which to analyze the data after collection. This social capitalist view provides a structure for data analysis that connects faculty perceptions with the writing center from a collaborative viewpoint. The historical background and rationale for these two theoretical perspectives will now be discussed.

Sociocultural Theory

This study takes a sociocultural approach to data collection and analysis. Sociocultural theory has its origins with Vygotsky (1986), who introduced the notion that children are not individuals brought up in isolation, but rather formed as a result of the plethora of external influences in society. Although his research focused on child development and socially mediated learning, it laid the foundation for further inquiry into and development of sociocultural theory. Wertsch (1985), who

coined the term "sociocultural", is credited with "capturing the notion that human mental functioning results from participation in, and appropriation of, the forms of cultural mediation integrated into social activities" (Lantolf & Beckett, 2009, p. 459). Given the complex nature of the historical background and cultural context of this research project, a Vygotskyan sociocultural theoretical framework is appropriate. Framing this study through a sociocultural lens takes into consideration the many variables that come into play – this study considers gender, age, nationality, cultural and educational background, history, language, social interactions, and more (Johnson, 2009; J. R. Lantolf, 2000):

> a sociocultural perspective also emphasizes the role of human agency…It recognizes that learning is not the straightforward appropriation of skills or knowledge from the outside in, but the *progressive movement from external, socially mediated activity to internal meditational control by individual learners*, which results in the transformation of both the self and the activity. Thus, cognitive development is not simply a matter of enculturation or even appropriation of existing sociocultural resources and practices, but *the reconstruction and transformation of those resources and practices in ways that are responsive to both individual and local needs.*[emphasis added] (Johnson, 2009, p. 2)

Johnson's description of a sociocultural perspective offers a useful framework for this current writing center study because it allows for the possibility of fluid and dynamic perspectives. For example, has a faculty member always had a particular perspective about the writing center? Or has this perspective been reconstructed and transformed in response to changes at the ADU-Q Writing Center? Do the sociocultural dynamics of the Qatari context play a role in a faculty's expectations and understanding of the writing center's role? How do peer tutors factor into faculty perceptions of the center? How do these perceptions and faculty referrals influence student use of the writing center? The unique cultural context of this particular study lends itself to a rich description of the participants' experiences, how

those experiences intersect with their writing center interactions, and how those experiences are framed within their overall social framework.

Kim's (2006a, 2006b, 2007, 2011) recent work on sociocultural theory provides a particularly useful model of research inquiry. Kim's work has primarily focused on Sociocultural Theory (SCT) as it relates to motivation in second language learners. Specifically, he has investigated how Korean immigrants in Canada have undergone changes in their motivations and attitudes regarding language learning. His work reveals the numerous influences that contribute to language learning successes and failures. Kim uses SCT to analyze language learning motivation; however, I will be using it to analyze English faculty perceptions of and relationships with the writing center. Kim's work is particularly relevant for my proposed study because I will incorporate the multitude of social influences he identifies, such as motivations for living in a foreign environment, length of time in the country, etc., that may similarly play a role in how faculty perceptions are formed and developed in the unique context of ADU-Q.

Within a social constructivist paradigm, I aim to take a sociocultural perspective to look at the many influential factors that affect faculty perceptions of the writing center. An important stance in my research relates to Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba's (2011) recognition that constructivist "researchers must understand the social context and the culture in which the data are produced to accurately reflect what the data actually mean to the study" (p.113). Additionally, Syed (2003) notes the importance of sociocultural context in English language teaching in the Arabian Gulf to teachers: "The sociocultural context is important not only for the learner but also for the teacher" (p. 337). Syed's call to understand the faculty's personal situation underscores the value of eliciting perspectives from English faculty, as this study will do. The status of education reform in Qatar raises critical questions about the linguistic imperialism of English in a country where Arabic is the official language. It brings to the

surface pedagogical and professional issues such as the role of faculty vis-à-vis the writing center. It is imperative to explore and reveal the underlying origins and perceptions of these issues in order to strengthen the relationships between the faculty, writing center, and other stakeholders. The notion of the importance of social context is paramount in my study of the writing center at ADU-Q because all dimensions of the site are unique; it was chosen because it is distinctive, yet representative of the Middle East, qualities that make it an ideal location for new writing center research in the Middle East context.

Social Capitalism

While sociocultural considerations will be an important component of data collection and analysis, this study will primarily take a social capitalist perspective in analyzing data. Social capital theory has its origins with Bourdieu (1986), who based his theories on economics and global social conditions in France at the time. He identified social capital as one type of capital whereby "social capital is the sum of resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 119). In the present study, I will explore the possibilities of social capitalism between English faculty and the writing center at ADU-Q. This research investigates some of the ways in which the origins of faculty perceptions of the writing center affect the relationship between the two.

Bourdieu's theories focused on socioeconomics and class privilege, which is one relevant component of the Qatari context. For example, Qatari students are granted significant privileges – e.g., free education, stipends for attending school, and often guaranteed employment upon graduation. In this scenario, Qatari students do not need to invest in the development of social capital to supplement their economic wealth. On the other hand, non-Qatari students typically find themselves having to

borrow money or prove themselves worthy of financial assistance from the Qatari government. These international students must demonstrate and develop a higher level of social capital.

In contrast to Bourdieu, whose theories have often been considered deterministic, other scholars developed social capital theory in different ways. For example, Coleman (1988), an American sociologist who wrote during approximately the same time as Bourdieu, placed more emphasis on the value of social capital for the marginalized and powerless. Non-Qatari students enrolled in higher education institutions in Knowledge City parallel Coleman's idea of "marginalized and powerless", because they are not entitled to the financial privileges that Qatari students receive. Coleman brought together the fields of sociology and economics and suggested that people had the ability to use the resources available to them in order to become more successful. "Social capital is productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that in its absence would not be possible"; furthermore, "social capital inheres in the structure of relations between actors and among actors" (Coleman, 1988, p. S98). More recently, Putnam (1995) made a passionate call for the reinstatement of social capitalism with his publication *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. He argues that the changing society in America is leading to greater individualism, with less emphasis placed on the importance of social connections and social capital. Although Putman writes from an American framework, his theories are useful to consider in the Qatari society where social connections are paramount (Zaharna, 1995). Putnam's theory that social connections should increase social capital raise questions about the Qatari context – is the ADU-Q writing center, a focal point of collaboration and social networking, thriving because of the local context? If it is not thriving, why not? Furthermore, ADU-Q is an American institution that embraces many of the American values Putnam discusses, such as greater individualism. Does the sense of greater individualism and personal responsibility conflict with the local Qatari context? Do English faculty expect students to invest a greater amount of personal dedication to their writing and academic development? Is there a

disconnect between students' expectations of themselves and the writing center staff's expectations of them?

From my own experience as a writing center instructor, I have perceived student expectations to be considerably different than my own understanding of the writing center's role. For example, Qatari students, who are often entitled to many benefits and services free of charge, come into the writing center with an expectation of services rendered immediately. Not only do they expect rapid assistance, they expect a different type of service that more typically aligns with an editorial-type service rather than an engaged, interactive tutorial session. While I hesitate to make sweeping generalizations, I believe my experience of over eight years in various writing centers in Knowledge City permits me to categorize this kind of expectation as common in the local social and cultural framework. Consequently, a sociocultural investigation into the relationship between faculty and the writing center fits neatly within this framework because how faculty perceive the writing center then results in actions that directly affect student visits to the writing center (as the introductory anecdote clearly demonstrates). This study takes a social capitalist perspective to privilege English faculty perceptions and how these influence and intersect with the writing center's institutional profile.

Social capitalism and its relevance to writing center work is particularly noted in *The Writing Center Resource Book*:

> As we conceptualize 'The Idea of the Writing Center' for this new century, one of our greatest ethical challenges will be to define and actualize the writing center as a form of social capital that can produce aggregate growth within academic and social communities…we should also recognize the transformative power of writing center work and seek to envision the writing center as a locus of significant social capital for both the academy and the community. (Murphy & Stay, 2006, p. 278)

In 2007, Hall repeated this call to view writing centers through a social capitalist framework in his description of a successful Writing-Across-the-Curriculum initiative (R. M. Hall, 2007). Both Murphy & Stay and Hall cite Putnam's recent contributions to the field of social capital, whereby "social capital is found in social connections, from which emerge the most significant types of networking and interpersonal relations that are the basis of community formation" (Murphy & Stay, 2006, p. 278).

These frameworks of sociocultural theory and social capitalism are key and distinctive features in this research study, because they allow a framework for exploring the multiple converging, and sometimes conflicting, elements of perceptions that impact the use of the writing center and the resulting institutional profile of the center. The benefits of adopting this social capitalist perspective will be highlighted and reiterated throughout this research.

Rationale/Significance/Contributions

This study asks questions about writing centers in Qatar (where most learners are GELs), the role of a writing center in a disciplinary school, and perceptions of peer tutors in such a context. The study investigates these issues through an exploration of English faculty perceptions by examining prior and present faculty experiences as learners and educators.

With a writing center situated in a Global English Learner context, this study aims to unite the fields of writing center theory and TESOL scholarship; however, this study is also relevant to the fields of education, composition, and design education, among others. Writing center scholarship suggests that more research needs to be conducted in the area of faculty perceptions (Boquet, 2002; Eleftheriou, 2011; Fallon, 2010; Farkas, 2006; Masiello & Hayward, 1991; Walker, 1991). This call for research is often a result of budget crunches and a survival response of the writing center. These low institutional profiles tend to be highlighted in budgetary crises – but writing centers in the Middle East have an opportunity to define and position themselves securely in this formative stage of development. This

research, therefore, may contribute to the field in a number of ways by revealing faculty perceptions of writing centers in the Middle East during a time of their development and before any financial crisis has emerged.

Furthermore, a review of dissertations on writing centers indicates that there are very few studies that have tackled the issue of faculty perceptions; moreover, few writing center-related dissertations have focused on places outside of the U.S. (Lerner, 2010). This combined dearth of research, coupled with the increasing number of American universities located outside of the geographical U.S. boundaries, makes this study a timely research project (Mills, 2009; Wasserman, 2009; Wildavsky, 2011). Additionally, in a context such as ADU-Q, where English is not the primary language for most stakeholders, it is imperative that students graduate with strong English skills. Communication is key to being successful in the increasingly globalized world, and one of the ways students can receive support in strengthening their language skills is through the writing center (Bruce & Rafoth, 2009; Harris, 1986, 1995; Harris & Silva, 1993; Jessica Williams, 2002, 2004; Jessica Williams & Severino, 2004). The growing demand for a stronger connection between English language learner needs and writing center support is further evidenced in the recent establishment of a column in a TESOL Second Language Writing Interest Section (SLWIS) publication entitled "Writing Centers and SLWIS: A New Column" (H. Hall & Wald, 2013, March). This column hopes to more formally acknowledge and unite the fields of TESOL and writing centers, which this present study also aims to achieve.

An added, complex feature of this study is the employment of multilingual peer tutors in the ADU-Q writing center; writing centers alone are relatively new to the Middle East-North Africa (MENA) region, and peer tutors add another unfamiliar element to this newly established field in the region (Eleftheriou, 2011; Ronesi, 2009). Faculty perceptions of the writing center and its use of peer

tutors may affect the resulting referrals. For example, if faculty members do not believe there is a positive value of peer tutors, they may not send their students to the writing center.

Barnett and Blumner focus on the importance of Writing Across the Curriculum programs, and in particular they note the necessity of positive, collaborative, and responsive writing centers within the institution:

> A Writing Center on a campus with no WAC Program becomes the lightening [*sic*] rod for faculty questions about using writing in their classes or faculty complaints or faculty interest in helping particular students. And a Writing Center, if it is working well, draws students who have heard from other students how valuable their tutoring experience was. Part of the success of a Center is the campus-wide perception of it as being responsive to users and by users, I mean faculty and students. Writing Centers that draw boundaries around what they can and cannot do, and that carefully limit the policies and conserve resources, that train tutors to confine their assistance only to what is possible or required of them are soon known to be just that – not responsive. Campus perceptions are important to the health of a Writing Center… (Barnett & Blumner, 2008, pp. 94-95)

Faculty support of writing centers has proven to be a key aspect of maintaining a thriving writing center, and, based on this assumption, this study seeks to explore the development of faculty perceptions of the center.

The sociocultural and social capitalist approach to researching the English faculty-writing center relationship will hopefully yield outcomes that allow for the tailoring of appropriate writing center pedagogy and outreach in specific contexts. Sociocultural theory, as defined by Johnson (2009), allows for changing perspectives based on societal experiences – for example, have faculty members' perceptions of writing centers changed as a result of their experiences at ADU-Q? Have their previous

education or pedagogical beliefs played a role? How have these experiences shaped their perceptions of GELs, writing in the disciplines, and peer consultants in the writing center? By bringing together the fields of TESOL and writing centers, this study's findings will provide an opportunity for writing centers to develop appropriate practices and outreach in Qatar and perhaps throughout the Gulf region.

Definitions of Terminology

This section will provide some of the key terminology used in this document. All of these terms are critical in that they may have varying definitions and interpretations; my stance as a researcher is reflected in the definitions I articulate below.

Global English Learner (GEL) refers to the individuals referenced in this study as learners, regardless of their mother tongue. Although the primary "learners" in this study are understood to be undergraduate students at ADU-Q, many faculty and staff will also be considered GELs. In this sense, I regard all individuals living in Qatar as GELs because of the unique definition of this term and the context – most notably, that everyone is learning this constantly shifting and dynamic Global English. As the reader will come to understand, Qatar offers a particularly unique context for this research investigation, as it cannot be classified according to the traditional ESL/EFL dichotomy. The local, official language is Arabic, and yet the high percentage (roughly 85%) of expatriate workers requires the country to function through the *lingua franca* of English.

Choosing and defining GEL has been one of the most challenging elements of this study because terms in the fields of World Englishes and TESOL are particularly dynamic and fluid. Park (2011) cites awareness as one of these factors when she discusses her study participants and notes:

> …as World English speakers, their narratives point to the ways in which learners and teachers need to raise one another's awareness of different dialects and varieties of English spoken

around the world, specifically in their home and school contexts (Jenkins, 2009; Kachru, 1997). (Park, 2011, p. 169)

Park goes on to advocate, "It is the responsibility of teachers, school administrators, and teacher education programs to discuss the spread of Englishes occurring in global contexts and within the communities in which they live" (p. 169). Through this study, faculty participants may begin a deeper reflection with regard to language use and terminology, and this elicitation has been reflected in some of the sample interview questions in Appendix F.

Global English is a term that has been used widely by a variety of scholars with a variety of definitions (Al-Issa & Dahan, 2011; Grzega, 2005; Jenkins, 2002, 2006, 2009a, 2009b; Pennycook, 1994, 2007). Pennycook (2007) utilizes "the term *global Englishes* to locate the spread and use of English within critical theories of globalization" (p. 5). Pennycook's arguments focus on the sociocultural and political aspects of language and its development. Others, such as Jenkins (2002), emphasize the pragmatic nature of language in the global context and how linguistic features are reflected in language use by its users. Cook (2005; n.d.; 2005) contributes to the pragmatics of how Global Englishes are positioned in theory by focusing on "multicompetent users". Cook's work focuses on eliminating the deficit model of language acquisition by highlighting the strengths and benefits that multilingual users are equipped with. While Cook's terminology is attractive because of its positive perspective on multilingualism, it is not appropriate for this study because some of the GELs are, in fact, monolinguals. For example, some students coming from India may only know the Indian variety of English, and, therefore, are not generally considered native speakers despite the fact that it is their only language. In other words, it is still Inner Circle[12] countries that dominate the

[12] Inner Circle countries are generally classified as those from the first British diaspora – the USA, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Outer Circle countries are considered to be a product of the second diaspora during the 18th and 19th centuries – South Africa, South/Southeast Asia, and colonial Africa. Expanding Circle countries are outside of these

general understanding of what it is to be a native speaker. My use of the term GEL in this study attempts to synthesize the scholarship of global English in its existence as a political, social, and pragmatic tool for speakers in a very global and international context. Finally, perhaps most importantly, in March 2008, the TESOL International Board of Directors approved a "Position Statement on English as a Global Language," supporting the wide variety of Englishes around the world and promoting the use of each within particular contexts.

The plethora of other related acronyms in the TESOL field also warrant a brief explanation and discussion as to why they have not been chosen for this particular study.

English as a Second Language (ESL) learners are most typically defined as those who learn English as a second language in the context of a country which primarily used English for "country-internal functions" (Jenkins, 2009b, p. 4; U.S. Department of State, 2012). This term has also developed into the ESOL acronym (English for Speakers of Other Languages) that strives to highlight the fact that many learners often learn English as their third, fourth, or additional language (Brown University, 2012). Due to the fact that English is not the primary language for "country-internal functions" in Qatar, *ESL* did not seem appropriate for this study. Furthermore, sometimes English is the first language in different households in Qatar, such as is the case with many Western expatriates.

Similarly, the term *English as a Foreign Language* (EFL) is not appropriate for this study. EFL learners are traditionally understood to be learning English in a context where English is not the dominant language in society (Jenkins, 2009b, p. 4). English is, in fact, the *lingua franca* of Qatar due to the societal structure and influx of expatriates (State of Qatar Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012; U.S. Department of State, 2012). Although estimates range widely, it is generally accepted that approximately 80% of Qatar's population is comprised of expatriate workers from around the world

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categories. See (Jenkins, 2009b; Kachru, 1992; A. Matsuda, 2012) for a complete description of Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circle countries.

(Hyslop, 2010, July 19; U.S. Department of State, 2012). Therefore, English is the language used in most daily affairs (yet is still not the official language).

English Language Learner (ELL) was also considered, but its historical roots suggest a rather political bent. The term ELL has developed from the notion of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students, as characterized by the United States government in the 1960s. In the process of striving to achieve more civil rights for LEPs, rights activists and educators adopted the term ELL with an aim to move away from the deficit model of classification (McKay & Bokhorst-Heng, 2008; U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2012, p. 31).

Although this study is situated in the Arab world and, therefore, many learners come from native Arabic-speaking backgrounds, the students themselves hail from a wide variety of linguistic backgrounds. For example, a learner might have two native Arabic-speaking parents, been raised by an Indian or Philippine nanny who speaks a certain variety of English, and subsequently educated in a British English school. Therefore, the terms *native* and *non-native* speakers also present problems[13].

GEL reflects my intentions to be inclusive, unbiased, and representative of the pluralistic and diverse nature of the learners (which include all stakeholders who are learners – not just undergraduate students). Therefore, I have found GEL to be the most appropriate term for this group. The reader will notice that I have used alternate terminology, such as *English Language Learner* or *non-native speaker*, but these terms are used only when referencing an author that has chosen that specific terminology. Because language has such significant political underpinning, I felt that it was important to preserve the original author's choice in the selection of terminology.

Peer consultant and *peer tutor* are used interchangeably in this document.

[13] While I do not use this vocabulary in my writing, I have purposefully selected it for interviewing questions (see Appendix F). In the context of the present study, where the participants do not have a TESOL background, I believe it would be tangential to spend lengthy time discussing the politics of terminology.

CHAPTER TWO

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The present research seeks to investigate how English faculty perceptions of the writing center at ADU-Q were formed and, subsequently, how these perceptions influence student use of the center. While much writing center literature focuses on the importance of the tutor and tutee, there is a growing body of literature on the "third voice", or the implied faculty presence, in these tutorials (Auten & Pasterkiewicz, 2007; Effinger Wilson & Fitzgerald, 2012; Eodice, 2003; Harris, 1995, 2006). The current literature on this third voice, however, focuses primarily on practical methods for interpreting instructors' comments, or maintaining an unbiased, neutral stance while working with a student who has questions or complaints about an instructor (Auten & Pasterkiewicz, 2007; Ryan & Zimmerelli, 2010). Ultimately, much writing center work and successes or failures hinge on faculty perceptions. For example, if a faculty member views the center favorably, and subsequently refers students for assistance, then the center thrives, students benefit, and all stakeholders are satisfied. On the other hand, if a faculty member perceives the center to be ineffective and cautions students against utilizing the writing services, the center would likely see a decline in usage and overall institutional status and effectiveness. This connection between faculty support and student visits is undoubtedly common sense, but it has also been supported by survey research into students' perceptions (see next section for further details). What are some of the causes for why faculty members would support or deter student visits to the writing center? Is it a result of their own experiences? Is it a result of political, social, or institutional expectations? This study, seeks to explore and privilege faculty voices through qualitative research methods using a sociocultural and social capitalist framework to reveal some of the influences that shape their perceptions of the writing center.

Writing Centers: Missing Faculty Voices

Boquet opens *Noise from the Writing Center* by sharing an email communication from another faculty member who felt it was "inappropriate and discourteous to make such a racket as I heard coming from the Writing Center this evening" (Boquet, 2002, p. xiii). Boquet goes on to explain that the writing center, in fact, had been holding a meeting where they were discussing and working on various professional development initiatives. Throughout the book, which touches on many aspects of writing center work, history, and theory, Boquet continues to discuss the sheer and clear lack of understanding from the faculty about the nature of writing center work. While she offers intermittent anecdotes of interactions with faculty, the work stops short of offering an in-depth investigation of the faculty perceptions and how these perceptions were shaped.

Clark (1985) initially paved the way for research into faculty perceptions when she conducted a survey with 329 students about mandatory visits to the writing center for their composition courses. The survey she administered was designed "to assess whether the students' attitudes toward the Writing Center were influenced by their having been required to go and to calculate the effect such a requirement had on actual student visits" (Clark, 1985, p. 32). The findings yielded interesting results – specifically, although most students felt that the Writing Center offered beneficial services and helped them improve their writing skills, they often did not visit the center unless it was a course requirement. Clark concluded with "a recommendation that a Writing Center requirement be instituted as a department-wide policy" (p. 34). Although Clark focused on student perceptions, her research touched upon faculty perceptions by asking about required visits, and her research indirectly noted the connection between faculty and their relationship with the writing center.

Bishop (1990) conducted similar research just a few years later by administering a survey to students asking why they had or had not visited the writing center. Results indicated that 89% of the

visits were a "result of the direct intervention of instructors" (1990, p. 34). While Bishop did not interview faculty about their perceptions, the results further promote the value of a social capital perspective for the present research – i.e., if faculty maintain a strong influence over student visits to the writing center, then the faculty and writing center must develop a strong social capital connection to continue this beneficial service to the students. At Bishop's institution, the University of Alaska Fairbanks, the evident connection between faculty support of the writing center and student visits to the writing center is undeniable.

Perdue (1991) discusses the contentious and problematic nature of English faculty perceptions of writing center directors in her article "Writing-Center Faculty in Academia: Another Look at Our Institutional Status." Perdue underscores the continuous battle for writing center directors to appropriately and effectively demonstrate and legitimize the work they do to upper administration. She notes that writing center directors

> have ignored our own rhetorical expertise and have tried to speak one register of an administrative language without checking first to see whether other registers are available to us and what we want to communicate, perhaps because we have not been exactly sure of how we want to be heard. (p. 19)

Perdue's work offers a valuable framework for the present study by investigating the ways in which the former and new writing center director position and construct the writing center identity through their own rhetoric.

Other research into faculty perceptions of writing centers has been scant and has typically revolved around quantitative data collection and analysis. Most information about faculty perceptions has been conducted through satisfaction surveys at the end of each term, as indicated by the WCENTER listserv, an electronic forum for writing center professionals across the globe. Masiello

and Hayward's (1991) research took survey data collection one step further. Their work attempted to "identify and discuss shared pedagogical beliefs about writing instruction," as well as with the goal for faculty "to be accurately informed about the content and process of tutorial sessions" (p. 73). Based on the survey results, the researchers were able to develop and offer appropriate programming, such as in-house workshops, that were strategically developed to meet the needs of the students based on faculty responses and writing center goals. While their study offered valuable feedback and insight about faculty perceptions, it was only through limited survey results at certain points in time. Notably, the authors acknowledge that they "do not know at this time how these workshops have affected instructors' overall view of the writing center" (p. 77). This acknowledgement emphasizes the importance of continuous, ongoing research into faculty perceptions in each unique context. The present study will accommodate this need by adopting the sociocultural perspective, which takes into account the variety of influences and dynamic nature of perspectives.

Furthermore, results of Masiello & Hayward's study were limited to the information on the survey instrument — no follow-up questions or interaction occurred between the researchers and participants. To date, there have been no in-depth, qualitative studies to reveal faculty perceptions about writing centers. Most faculty at higher education institutions in the U.S. tend to have overloaded schedules and great demands placed upon them; a similar scenario exists at ADU-Q. Given this framework, it was helpful to be an insider. My own positionality as a colleague of these ADU-Q English faculty, located in the same building, lent itself to a greater likelihood that they would participate in interviews. However, it is notable that even given my amicable relationship with the English faculty, it remained a challenge to schedule yet another time-consuming activity, an interview, with each participant. Nonetheless, it is my belief that the potential benefits of understanding faculty perceptions of writing centers far outweigh the slight inconvenience of scheduling and time. The ADU-Q context will be further discussed in Chapter Three.

Pemberton's (1995) brief article, "Writing Center Ethics: Sharers and Seclusionists," looks at the faculty-writing center relationship from the other side; he sets a rudimentary framework for how writing center staff typically perceive their own relationships with faculty. Based on his experience at a National Writing Centers Association conference, he felt that most writing center staff fell on one side or another of a dichotomy – "sharers" or "seclusionists". On one side, the sharers felt very collaborative and open about their services and work with students, faculty, and the overall institution. They felt that all stakeholders (students, faculty, and writing center staff) would benefit from increased communication, and they often cited positive, collaborative relationships with faculty. On the other hand, the seclusionists felt that their work should remain more private and confidential, and that deviating from this approach would violate the trust of the students and the overall mission and work of the writing center.

Bizzaro and Toler (1986) offer a unique insight as to why writing center staff might fall into the categories of sharer or seclusionist. In their research on how writing apprehension of tutors influences their teaching practices in the writing center, the authors revealed a strong correlation between writing apprehension and tutoring strategies. For example, "Tutors who avoid writing, primarily because they have difficulty organizing material, tend to focus on sentence- and word-level errors in their students' writings" (1986, p. 42). These findings offer a critical perspective in the present study from multiple viewpoints. First, tutoring strategies may vary widely within ADU-Q's writing center as a result of the different tutors' writing apprehensions. Furthermore, the faculty's own writing apprehensions may play a key role in how and why they refer students to the writing center. For example, if a faculty member does not feel that she can successfully teach a student about particular grammar issues, does she then refer the student to the writing center? Or does she avoid this aspect of writing altogether? How do these issues of writing apprehension affect the faculty-writing center relationship?

Both Pemberton's and Bizzaro and Toler's works are useful launch points for this present study for a number of reasons. First, Pemberton reminds us to look not only at how faculty perceive the writing center but also how the writing center staff perceive faculty. While this present investigation seeks to reveal faculty perceptions, those perceptions are likely shaped by the Writing Center Coordinator's approach, and data is triangulated by analyzing data from the Coordinator, as well. At ADU-Q, the Writing Center Coordinator is very clearly an introverted seclusionist. Similarly, it is also important for me as the researcher to engage in reflexivity and acknowledge my own research bias. My researcher positionality is activist – i.e., part of the impetus for this study lies in my own desire to disseminate information about writing center work. Therefore, my own stance as a sharer is important to disclose at the outset; more of my positionality is discussed in Chapter Three.

Following in the vein of sharers, there are also many vignettes on WCENTER and in writing center literature that encourage writing center staff to work collaboratively, conduct outreach, and develop meaningful bonds with faculty (Corbett, 2002; Eodice, 2003; Harris, 2000; Mauriello et al., 2011). The response to this literature has been varied – while some support it, others view it as maintaining the writing center's status quo as a service center that only responds to needy requests, as opposed to a legitimate, independent center with its own purpose and mission. Grimm (1996) articulates this phenomenon of becoming a subservient entity and suggests:

> The tradition of responding to local conditions creates a pattern that keeps writing centers from dealing with some of their most significant issues. Lerner argues that 'change occurs only as we begin thinking about and working on the self-rather than staying focused on and reactive to the other' (Intimacy 86). (p. 534)

Regarding writing centers, Grimm (1996) further recommends:

> to legitimate themselves as academic units rather than as service units, writing centers need to undertake an ongoing effort to justify their practice theoretically rather than numerically. In order for writing centers to better clarify their function in higher education and improve their relationship with composition, they need to define their own priorities and beliefs in a context that exceeds yet respects the local context. (p. 534)

Grimm's work provides a solid theoretical framework that is shaped by feminist principles to demonstrate how writing center work has been subordinated in the academy. She outlines transformative measures to enact broader goals of literacy and social awareness within the writing center – not simply as a place for writers to get help on assignments (Grimm, 1996, p. 544). Her explanation of the historical underpinning and theoretical position of writing centers provides a gateway to this current research because while Grimm's article offers possibilities, it stops short of investigating the ways in which these possibilities can be realized. Namely, while she proposes an end to the subservient position of writing centers to faculty, she does not investigate how or why the faculty may have developed such perceptions or how these perceptions could be transformed.

Bizzaro and Toler (1986) also offer an insightful and unique perspective about perceptions of teaching writing in their research about writing apprehension. Through the use of two different survey instruments, they gathered data about twenty graduate students and their writing apprehension and teaching methods. The analysis of these writing center tutors' responses revealed a strong correlation between these two issues. Namely, tutors with greater apprehension due to fear of evaluation of their own writing were less likely to search for errors in students' writing and subsequently failed to give students opportunities to discover their own errors. Tutors who were apprehensive about writing because of their inability to organize information were more likely to focus on local, sentence-level errors. Lastly, tutors who simply did not enjoy writing did not write with their students – one of the

tutoring practices encouraged at Bizzaro and Toler's writing center. Bizzaro and Toler's article offers particularly relevant and insightful possibilities for data collection in this present study. Some of the English faculty come from backgrounds of creative writing or literature – not TESOL or writing. How do these faculty perceive their own writing skills? How do these perceptions affect their teaching? These are some of the areas to be explored during the interview process.

While research has been limited, some relevant scholarship in the area of faculty perceptions of writing centers does exist. For example, Cogie (1998) surveyed faculty at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale from a variety of different disciplines that had students who utilized the writing center. She asked questions about faculty perceptions of the written summaries that were sent out by the Writing Center after conferences. Out of 60 respondents, only two "reflect the stereotype of writing center tutor as subservient to the teacher" (Cogie, 1998, p. 55).

> One of these instructors stated that the most useful aspect of the summaries was that they allowed her "to evaluate if I felt the best use of the tutor's time was being made." The other replied that "it was very helpful to know that my specific suggestions for improvement were being addressed." While both remarks suggest a concern for the "unified educational experience for students," valued by the sharers Pemberton cites (13), they also suggest a chain of command-or the sort of power-based "triangulated relationship" Grimm complains of in discussing writing center politics ("Rearticulating" 527)….(Cogie, 1998, p. 55)

Cogie (1998) also notes the positive value faculty see in conference summaries:

> For instance, 28% of the survey's respondents reported using perspectives gained on the writing problems and processes of students in their own one-to-one sessions with them; 10% said they referred to the summaries in their comments on student papers. For these teachers, writing center talk helped shape teacher-student talk. (p. 55)

Cogie goes on to cite a number of responses from faculty about how they specifically integrate writing center feedback into their classroom activities and notes, "The perception that power travels only from teacher to tutor, sometimes taken as a given in writing center politics, is undermined by these examples" (p. 56). She goes on to explain some mixed, yet overall positive, feedback from both tutors and tutees with regard to the conference summaries and concludes, "If nothing else, this testimony by teachers, tutors, and students should problematize the notion that to sustain a productive, trusting relationship with tutees, writing centers must limit the flow of information to faculty as much as possible" (Cogie, 1998, p. 61). Cogie's survey suggests that there may be a meaningful place for faculty and writing center collaboration.

Thonus (2001), in "Triangulation in the Writing Center: Tutor, Tutee, and Instructor Perceptions of the Tutor's Role," also contributed to the scholarship on faculty perceptions by looking at perceptions of the three primary stakeholders involved in writing center tutorials – the tutor, tutee, and instructor – through qualitative research methods and data analysis. Thonus reviewed four data sets from seven different instructors, their students, and the tutors who worked with them. Thonus interweaves textual excerpts from the interviews and tutorials to highlight the different perceptions and expectations that help construct a tutor's role. Specifically, she notes that even though all seven instructors have received the same introduction to a writing center's role, philosophy, and practices, "each has acquired a different concept of the role of the writing center tutor in the development of their students' work" (p. 65). She concludes that "little unanimity exists in perceptions of the tutor role by the members of the tutorial 'triangle'" (p. 77). This research relates to my study because it offers insight into how different perceptions of stakeholders in the writing center context can change and shape roles. This background in how varied perceptions can be will provide a useful framework for developing interview questions through a sociocultural approach. For example, do English faculty have a certain perception of their own role that conflicts with the Writing Center Coordinator's

understanding of the faculty role? Do faculty hear anecdotes from students about experiences at the writing center that do not match their own expectations? While Thonus's study looked at perceptions of a tutor's role in writing center tutorials, this study will investigate how the English faculty's overall perceptions of the writing center were shaped. Furthermore, Thonus interviewed seven faculty who were participants in a "Campuswide Writing Program because they have received summer fellowships to revamp their courses to include more writing and requested course-specific tutors and/or a class visit by a tutor" (Thonus, 2001, p. 62). Clearly, Thonus's study involved participants who were invested in the notion of writing as an important element of the curriculum and academic development for their students; arguably, ADU-Q participants will share this interest in writing since they will be from the English department. ADU-Q participants are also not part of an institutional WAC program, another notable difference between Thonus's participants and those in the present study. Moreover, ADU-Q's different student demographic, which is largely comprised of GELs, may provoke unique elements of consideration with regard to faculty perceptions. For example, are English faculty who specialize in British literature expected to assist students with ESL-related needs? Do they feel it is their responsibility, even if it is outside their scope of expertise? How do these understandings relate to their understanding of the writing center's role? It is these sociocultural considerations that this present study aims to address that will further Thonus's work. Finally, Thonus offers suggestions for future research in individual writing center contexts, and notes

> that more communication between course instructors and writing centre [*sic*] personnel is desirable and in the tutees' best interest. The primary role of writing programs and writing centers, therefore, should not be only to mediate between faculty and tutees but also to educate both faculty and tutees in their complementary role of writing tutors in the pursuit of excellence in academic writing. (p. 77)

Thonus's article provides a basis for this current proposal for many reasons. First, she underscores the value of contextualized, institution-specific research, which aligns with my proposed sociocultural framework that will explore the unique nature of ADU-Q's writing center. Furthermore, Thonus alludes to the need for collaborative engagement between all stakeholders, which connects to the social capitalist framework for data analysis proposed here and is described in further detail below.

In addition to Thonus's qualitative research, other scholarship on writing centers offers practical tips on how to effectively enhance the relationship between faculty, writing centers, and the overall administration. For example, in the early 1990s, Kinkead and Harris highlighted twelve case studies of writing centers (Kinkead & Harris, 1993). Within each chapter, mention is made to enhancing the collaborative relationships between the center and faculty or the institution. In particular, Neff's chapter about the University of Puget Sound highlights "Strategic Campus Alliances," where she claims the writing center's success is due "in part, because its director has built strategic alliances within the campus community that have affected everything from the acquisition of new space to the recruitment and training of writing advisors" (Neff, 1993, pp. 134-135). These types of collaborations are espoused in other writing center literature (Bennett, 2004; Carino, Floyd, & Lightle, 1991; Cogie, 1998; Impson, Self, Dorsey, Hudson, & Johnson, 1991; Schendel, 2010; Walker, 1991; Wisecup, 2005). While these studies and reflections offer concrete, practical ideas for how to enhance collaborative efforts, they ultimately fail to examine and articulate the underlying perceptions of faculty (Devet, 2010). They do, however, highlight the importance of investigating each center within its own contextual framework.

More recently, Mauriello, Macauley, and Koch (2011) have provided an entire edited collection, *Before and After the Tutorial: Writing Centers and Institutional Relationships,* which includes various types of institutional relationships shared with writing centers; the volume, however,

is curiously silent about faculty perceptions. Doe's (2011) chapter "Toward a Visible Alliance Between Writing Centers and Contingent Faculty: A Social Materialist Perspective" comes closest to this current research proposal by offering a theoretical framework for how writing centers and contingent faculty can more effectively collaborate. Doe's work, however, focuses on the idea that marginalized (i.e., contingent) faculty and writing centers (also traditionally marginalized) would mutually benefit by strengthening their ties. While Doe offers a convincing argument in the U.S. context, her premises are less relevant in the present Qatari context because the status of faculty and writing centers is arguably more permanent (while contracts are typically on a term basis, they are more reliable than the semester-to-semester contracts given to adjunct faculty). Therefore, the premise of her essay does not match my study's present context. Nonetheless, Doe's call to "construct local directions for shared discussions and negotiated agendas" is one that should be heeded in all contexts (2011, p. 31). The contextually salient aspects of the ADU-Q site will be revisited and highlighted throughout the present study.

Farkas (2006) made a notable contribution to the field in her examination of the conflicting perceptions of the writing center amongst writing center staff, teaching faculty, and students. She interviewed first year composition students about their perceived roles of the writing center and faculty. She compared the students' feedback with conversations she had with faculty, as well as her own classroom practice, and she found surprising disparities in the expectations and perceptions of all groups. In particular, while she acknowledged the good intentions of all stakeholders, she revealed a number of blatant misunderstandings amongst the groups related to expectations and outcomes of tutorial sessions. She emphasized the need to connect and articulate each others' positions and goals. Farkas's essay is particularly relevant to my present research proposal for two reasons: first, it took place within a discipline-specific institution, which shares a similar dimension with my current

research site. Second, although it is not explicitly stated, her essay alludes to the importance of social capital in the writing center. For example, she notes that faculty

> tend to assume that their students (should) understand their assignments – given orally or on paper – well enough to explain the [assignment] criteria succinctly to the tutors….[faculty] also assume that the tutors will give the students the same kind of advice about writing, revision…. (p. 3)

Farkas reiterates the fact that writing center staff, faculty, and students should not continue to make assumptions about one another, but rather "make sure that the only assumption we operate on is that taking things for granted is no substitute for taking action" (p. 5). My study will respond to Farkas's call for action, particularly the unveiling of assumptions through a more systematic research approach. How do English faculty perceptions of ADU-Q's writing center influence student use of the center? This study seeks to uncover these issues by privileging the voices of English faculty at ADU-Q.

The establishment of Writing Program Administrators (WPAs) and Writing-Across-the-Curriculum (WAC) initiatives have further increased the popularity of looking into faculty perceptions of writing programs (Balester & McDonald, 2001). However, these programs do not fit within the ADU-Q context; the writing center at ADU-Q reflects a small-scale educational environment with its stand-alone writing center. Furthermore, the demographic population of GELs at ADU-Q is distinctly different from that of the home campus in the United States, where the student population is predominantly comprised of speakers for whom English is the mother tongue.

Perhaps the most notable indication of the need for more research into faculty perceptions is the continuous call from Muriel Harris, one of the leading scholars in the writing center field, for more research in this area. In addition to her vast scholarship about the importance of faculty support and an institutional framework of collaboration, a review of WCENTER listserv postings, as well as personal

communication, highlights Harris's belief that this area of writing center scholarship should remain a top priority for writing center scholars and researchers (personal communication, 2011). This study aims to broaden the base of knowledge into these faculty perceptions at ADU-Q.

This review of the literature has provided the background, framework, and entry point for my current research. Writing center research and scholarship around the world is missing the voice of key stakeholders – faculty – who are also key players in the establishment of social capital with writing centers. In the Middle East, where the development of writing centers is relatively new and their services are often underutilized, it is imperative that writing center scholarship begins to understand faculty perceptions of the writing center. A systematic, sociocultural investigation will allow for a more complex understanding of how perceptions were developed and, therefore, provide knowledge for improved outreach initiatives, collaborative projects, and more.

Writing Centers and English Language Learners

Research relating to composition studies and English language learners typically has its roots in contrastive rhetoric, as introduced by Kaplan (1966). Contrastive rhetoric focuses on the idea that different cultures have different rhetorical patterns, and, therefore, explicit teaching about these differences is imperative to developing successful writers in new academic contexts. Recent years, however, have witnessed considerable growth in research more specific to ELLs within U.S.-based writing centers; this scholarship has tended to maintain a focus on contrastive rhetoric, in addition to concerns of effective pedagogical practices, linguistic differences, and cultural considerations (Al-Issa & Dahan, 2011; Bruce & Rafoth, 2009; Thompson-Panos & Thomas-Ruzie, 1983; Jessica Williams, 2004; Jessica Williams & Severino, 2004). Other studies have investigated students' and tutors' perceptions of effective tutorials (Eleftheriou, 2011; Thonus, 2001, 2002; Weigle & Nelson, 2004). This section will review some of the most pertinent studies related to English language learners in the

writing center and in doing so will reveal the importance of the present research – that faculty support is critical in supporting these learners in the writing center.

In the 1980s, Muriel Harris began writing about the growing numbers of ESL students using writing center services. In "Teaching One-to-One: The Writing Conference," Harris writes extensively about the overall benefits of one-to-one instruction for all students. She highlights the possibilities of stimulating more independent learning, developing a sense of audience awareness, developing ideas and critical thinking skills, developing particular strategies for individual students, and providing better feedback. Harris also acknowledges some of the drawbacks and challenges, such as the time-consuming nature of individualized instruction. In her discussion of overall teaching and tutoring strategies in a writing lab, Harris intermittently refers to some of the unique considerations often attributed to working with international students. For example, she cites how compliments given by an American may "not always convey the intended message, especially with foreign students" (Harris, 1986, p. 72). This misunderstanding in cultural exchanges has relevant implications at ADU-Q, where most of the English faculty are Americans, while the student population is almost entirely Qatari or international.

Finally, Harris provides a brief description of Kaplan's contrastive rhetoric and notes how these ideas may be identified through different cultural patterns of writing, such as with Arabic and Asian students[14]. For example, if ADU-Q students have been exposed to traditional ways of thought and styles of writing in Arabic throughout their education, how does this affect their writing in English? While Harris's book offered a solid contribution to writing center pedagogy, it only provided an initial base with regard to working with ESL students in the writing center and is grounded in practices within the U.S. context. Harris's work sets a clear framework for exploring the sociocultural

[14] Although Kaplan's theories have become more controversial in recent years, his fundamental notion of Contrastive Rhetoric, which acknowledges a basic cultural awareness in writing, remains a foundational theory to which current scholars in TESOL still refer.

implications for working with GELs, because she acknowledges that the myriad backgrounds from which the students hail plays a key role in their interactions with the writing center. Nonetheless, "Teaching One-to-One" stops short of an in-depth investigation into faculty perceptions of how these GELs interact with the writing center.

Despite the growing numbers of ELLs visiting writing centers, nearly twenty years passed from Harris's 1986 publication to the first handbook solely dedicated to working with ESL students. Bruce and Rafoth (2004) made a significant contribution to scholarship on ESL students in the writing center with *ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors*. A second edition of this book, published in 2009, continues to be the sole book of its type specifically designed to guide tutors in working with ESL students. Divided into three parts, this book covers a wide range of topics from the general characteristics of second language learners, to specific strategies for working with ELLs, to taking an outside perspective by looking at the countries from which many of these students originate. The book is limited in scope, as it takes the position that native speakers will be tutoring second language learners; furthermore, the authors and editors have ignored the political nuances of their chosen terminology (e.g., "Second Language Learners", which fails to recognize that students often learn English as a third, fourth, or additional language). Despite some of the book's shortcomings, Chapter 15, "The Role of Writing in Higher Education in Germany," offers the most compelling evidence for the need of the present research (Brauer, 2009). Brauer writes about the different experiences tutors may face in an international context, such as at ADU-Q. He cites three major problems: the role of writing in higher education, varying rhetorical traditions across cultures, and faculty understandings of writing. He writes "In Germany and perhaps in a number of other educational cultures, many faculty have little knowledge about writing pedagogy" (2009, p. 190). He further argues "most of the faculty at universities in Germany, for example, don't share with their students their lives as writers…. They don't encourage students to come forward with their writing problems" (2009, p. 191). Brauer

concludes with recommendations about possible collaborations with and outreach to faculty. This chapter highlights the importance of faculty engagement with the writing center to promote student use of the writing center. Brauer's chapter also underscores the sociocultural importance of research, especially in the present day in writing centers outside the U.S. context. In Brauer's context, academia provides a hierarchical structure whereby students and faculty are not encouraged to collaborate and interact. This structure plays out in the classroom with writing instruction because students are not encouraged to come forth with writing challenges. The present study seeks to explore the possible impediments in the Qatari context. For example, what are the dynamics between English faculty and students? What type of language or other academic support do they give their students? How does support, or lack thereof, affect the relationship between the faculty, students, and writing center? Does gender play a role in how a faculty member interacts with a student? Nationality? What other factors influence a faculty member's work with students and the writing center?

While the above literature focuses on ELL students' experiences in the writing center, it is also critical to look at one of the most controversial, recurring, and still unresolved themes in writing center scholarship regarding English language learners: the debate between directive versus non-directive tutoring strategies. Current writing center pedagogy tends to purport a very indirect, Socratic method of tutorial teaching (Ryan & Zimmerelli, 2010); yet this model has been primarily based on work with native English speakers. Critics have argued that language learners may benefit from a much more direct style of instruction (Ferris, 1999), while others suggest that these direct strategies are relatively futile (Truscott, 2007). Lefort (2010) summarizes the debate concisely and appropriately concludes that neither one is correct nor incorrect, but rather writing center professionals need to use appropriate instructional strategies that reflect their context. This clear gap in research lends itself well to my research questions: What are faculty perceptions of the ADU-Q writing center? Specifically, what types of practices do faculty perceive *are* or *should be* taking place during writing center tutorials?

How does this type of instruction relate to the development of their perceptions of the writing center? For example, occasionally members of the Doha Writing Center Network have commented that faculty have suggested a student has received "too much" assistance in the center. Direct instruction can often be interpreted as too much help and, therefore, raises questions about academic integrity issues. The sociological approach to this study seeks to reveal some of these underlying issues that may raise concerns for faculty, especially with regard to peer tutors. For example, if a peer tutor is less skilled in explaining a grammatical concept, might he or she simply rewrite a passage of the writer's work? On the other hand, some faculty might expect the writing center to provide more editorial-type services, especially for GELs. While it is not the focus of this present study to directly investigate this particular phenomenon of direct versus indirect instruction, the results of the study may indicate that this key debate does influence faculty perceptions. For example, do faculty who expect direct, explicit instruction (perhaps even editing and proofreading) then get frustrated or confused when a student submits a paper full of errors? Do faculty feel that their students, as language learners or design students, need a particular type of writing instruction? As Bizzaro and Toler (1986) have suggested, do the tutors' and faculty's own writing apprehensions influence the nature of perceptions of the writing center? As Bauer (2009) aptly points out, many faculty are simply not engaged with writing at all; therefore, the directive versus non-directive debate may not even be at a conscious level for many faculty. This lack of engagement with writing was an unlikely scenario in the current research, since the participants were all ADU-Q English faculty and, therefore, were likely to be more engaged with writing. Nonetheless, this study aimed to unearth these varying levels of understanding of writing and viewpoints about teaching and tutoring writing to GELs in a design institution in Qatar.

Finally, it is worth reiterating that much of the current writing center literature stems from the use of ESL and international students' use of writing centers in the United States. This study offers a new contextual framework, since it is situated in an American university in the Middle East. This

setting is comprised of an entirely different population of multilingual learners, writing center tutors, and instructors. The social, economic, and political environment is also entirely different than anything in the United States. Therefore, this context lends itself well to the sociocultural lens proposed in this study. Donato and McCormick (1994) clearly articulate how a sociocultural perspective can be applied to language learning by arguing that although much of the traditional scholarship focuses on how to teach students appropriate academic strategies, these strategies are ultimately linked to the ways in which sociocultural factors have influenced their learning:

> Sociocultural theory maintains that emergence of strategies is a process directly connected to the practices of cultural groups through which novices develop into competent members of these communities. (p. 453)

While Donato and McCormick relate the sociocultural approach to students, it can also be applied to faculty perceptions. Faculty are members of the community at ADU-Q that is connected to practices of cultural groups, such as the American academic community, the global design community, the local Qatari community, and more. This sociocultural perspective will provide an entry point for a rich description and analysis of English faculty perceptions of ADU-Q's writing center.

Writing in the Disciplines and Writing Across the Curriculum

Writing in the disciplines (WID) and Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) are important components of this present study because English plays a role within the disciplinary field of the school. It is critical to foreground this section with a disclaimer that is it not the attempt of this section to merge or undervalue these two large fields of study, WID and WAC. What is most important, however, is that this study plays a valuable role in contributing to the scholarship in both WID and WAC, and, therefore, warrants a brief overview of the literature as it relates to the current research site in Qatar. In what follows, the acronym WAC is used to describe general writing that may be done for

a variety of different courses (in this case, examples would include Art History papers, Sociology reports, etc.), while WID is used to describe writing completed for a specific purpose within a specific discipline (e.g., a business proposal for an Interior Design client). Although WAC and WID offer distinct fields of scholarship, it is notable that ADU-Q does not have an institutionalized program of either type. Therefore, I argue that ADU-Q uses somewhat of a hybrid approach to writing instruction within the institution and can largely benefit from and contribute to both fields of study.

The connection between writing and the design field was made explicit in "The Process of Design is Almost Like Writing an Essay." In this article, Orr and Blythman (2002) argue that although art and design studies have typically been viewed as disciplines that reject or remain disconnected from writing principles and practices, in fact, the opposite is true. They conducted research at The London Institute – the largest art and design college in Europe -- where they interviewed design students about their reflections of design and writing processes. The interviews led the researchers to the following five focal areas: "the role of peers; conceptions of 3D and 2D; personal relationship with text and design; audience and relation to text; understanding of process" (Orr & Blythman, 2002, p. 44). Selections from the students' voices provide concrete evidence as to how, although unique in their own ways, students describe and view the acts of writing and design in a very similar manner. The authors also offer practical advice for teachers in these contexts:

> For example, it is not uncommon to work with students who do not want to commit words to paper unless they are fully formed. While design students may understand the creative thinking that precedes their designs, these students find it hard to brainstorm for a writing assignment. In this situation, we remind them about the role of the sketchbook in the design process. Sketchbooks offer a place where students can try out creative ideas, some of which will work and will be further developed. (2002, p. 49)

While Orr and Blythman offer a solid and explicit connection between studying in an art and design school and writing, their study was conducted in an entirely different context (England) with a different population of learners (students whose native language was English). This current study seeks to build on their research by further investigating writing in the disciplines in a unique language environment through the lens of the faculty and writing center.

A similarly unique perspective is offered in Yavarow's (2012) column "From the Interior Design Studio to the Writing Center: One Tutor's Unconventional Journey to Designing a Tutorial." In this brief article, Yavarow articulates many of the ways in which she views the process of design to be helpful in explaining writing concepts and processes to her peers in writing tutorials. This article reinforces the idea that writing can be appropriately adapted and situated in a discipline-specific context, such as at ADU-Q. It also highlights the positive and reflective nature that a peer tutor can offer when working with other peers in the design discipline. Nonetheless, it stops short of investigating faculty perceptions and connections more relevant to the unique language learning environment in Qatar.

With regard to disciplinary writing, a significant gap can exist between first year composition (FYC) courses and the rest of a student's undergraduate disciplinary field (Monroe, 2003). Monroe, former Director of the John S. Knight Institute for Writing in the Disciplines at Cornell University, is a staunch believer in beginning discipline-specific writing from the outset of students' undergraduate education.

> College-level work takes place within particular disciplines, and in all other areas of serious intellectual concern, students are not expected to wait until their sophomore year to immerse themselves in work at this level. The most philosophically consistent approach to teaching

> writing is thus to embed it from the outset as integrally as possible in the work of the disciplines. (Monroe, 2003, p. 5)

The importance of WID at ADU-Q will be an interesting and unique feature to consider in this exploration of English faculty perceptions of the writing center. For example, most of the English faculty come from English literature or creative writing backgrounds. They are not technical writers, they are not TESOL professionals, and they are not trained in the design field. Yet they come to the classroom with a mandate to develop and teach appropriate courses at an institution that requires disciplinary-specific writing. Do English faculty see these technical aspects of writing as their role, the role of the writing center, both, or neither? How do they situate themselves, as English faculty and writing instructors, on the spectrum of teaching writing in the disciplines? How do they position the writing center? Rienecker & Stray Jørgensen (2012) briefly addressed some of these issues in their book chapter "From Working with Students to Working *Through* Faculty: A Genre-Centered Focus to Writing Development". Although their research focused on writing for Danish masters and doctoral students, they stressed the importance of teaching writing in accordance with the disciplinary needs:

> Our best advice: align your activities with your institution's most important assessed writing: genres, formats, criteria of quality, inquiry, reading and writing processes. Work genre-based: Break down the genres you teach into their basic elements: text types, structures, argumentation, documentation, language features, etc. (2012, p. 169)

While it is admirable that these authors feel so passionate about their work so as to provide clear directives to other instructors with regard to genre instruction, the issue of genre-related pedagogy is just one of many aspects of writing that this study seeks to explore. The sociocultural approach taken by this study allows for the emergence of these issues in exploring the English faculty perceptions of

their own roles and that of the writing center's role by asking questions specifically related to disciplinary writing.

Finally, Matsuda and Jablonsky (2000) have wisely cautioned about some attempts to suggest that disciplinary writing is akin to writing in a second language. These authors clearly outline their goals from the outset:

> Our first goal in this paper, then, is to critically examine the "WID as a second language" metaphor and consider its implications for WAC programs. Specifically, we want to argue for a critical approach to the use of this metaphor because, as we will discuss, its broad and uncritical use can mask the complexity of second-language learning and can lead to the marginalization of second-language writers in WAC programs as well as in the professional discourse of composition studies in general. By critiquing the use of the L2 metaphor in composition studies, however, we do not mean to suggest that specialists in both WAC and English as a second language (ESL) have much to learn from one another. Our second goal, then, is to consider mutually beneficial ways of achieving interdisciplinary collaboration between WAC and ESL specialists. (p. 1)

Matsuda and Jablonsky's cautionary, yet optimistic, advice is particularly important and valuable for this present study which investigates language learners in the context of a disciplinary-specific institution.

English for Specific Purposes

As a subcategory of WID, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) also plays a role in this current study within the TESOL field. Much of the ESP literature revolves around the technical and grammatical nature of students' needs in particular disciplines (Ngozi Nwogu, 1997; Peacock, 2002;

Peng, 1987; Pettinari, 1982; Salager-Meyer, 1992; Salager, 1994; Wang & Bai, 2007). Belcher (2006) also writes about the political nature of ESP that is often glossed over by focusing on the needs of learners, rather than on the underlying power dynamics that shape the curriculum of ESP programs. The primary focus of this brief literature review highlights the nature and importance of ESP as it relates to the ADU-Q context.

Chia, Johnson, Chia, and Olive (1999) provided a unique and relevant contribution to the present study because they looked at student and faculty perceptions of English needs of the students at a medical college in Taiwan. Surveys were distributed to determine: "(1) the importance of English language use in students' studies and their future careers; (2) basic English skills needed in a freshman English course; and (3) suggestions for development of an English language curriculum" (Chia et al., 1999, p. Abstract). Results indicated that both students and faculty perceived English as important to their academic and professional success, and they sought to increase English language learning in the curriculum. While the study of Chia et al. sought faculty perceptions of non-native speaking students' needs in a context outside U.S. borders, it did not specifically focus on writing but rather English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Furthermore, only 20 of the 369 respondents to their survey were faculty members; the remainder were students. Finally, it was in a context where formal English instruction had declined in recent years in Taiwan. ADU-Q's context is radically different in that English is already the medium of instruction, and the focal point of this study will be the writing center rather than English for Specific Purposes. Nonetheless, it is anticipated that the writing center at ADU-Q is perceived primarily as a site for English language support, and the wide variety of sociocultural factors that influence the writing center's position at the institution will be revealed through this study.

Another interesting study with regard to ESP is that conducted by Ghobain (2010), who looked at students' perceptions of English at a medical school in Saudi Arabia. Specifically, Ghobain used

qualitative research methods (primarily interviews) to understand students' perceptions of different varieties of English from their own faculty and from their perceived future colleagues and patients. Interestingly, Ghobain found that while students strongly preferred to learn English from native speakers (i.e., from Inner Circle countries), they also anticipated that their future colleagues of nurses and doctors would likely hail from Outer or Expanding circle countries, and, therefore, English language usage would differ from what they had been taught. Furthermore, they expressed hope that they would interact with mainly Arabic-speaking clients and other professionals in the future. The sociocultural implications of these findings echo Canagarajah's (2002, 2012) work that highlights the ways in which knowledge continues to be constructed through a Western, Inner Circle, imperialistic framework. Despite the fact that nonnative speakers anticipate working and interacting with other nonnative speakers, they prefer to strive for native-like proficiency. While Ghobain explored this issue from the learner perspective in Saudi Arabia, the current study will explore these notions of linguistic hegemony through the faculty viewpoint. Ghobain's study provides a recent and particularly relevant insight regarding students in the Arabian Gulf region. Qatar is a neighbor to Saudi Arabia and shares many cultural similarities; therefore, it will be insightful to learn if faculty at ADU-Q share some of these student perceptions. While this present study will not address student perceptions, the faculty may likely share anecdotes or information from their students about these types of perceived needs in English.

This brief overview of WID and ESP in contexts abroad provides a useful framework of inquiry for the present study. It is clear that English language support is necessary and useful for students and faculty across the globe, and if ADU-Q's writing center is one source of support for this language development, then it is critical to understand the center's institutional role. One way to identify this role is through a sociocultural exploration of perceptions of the English faculty and their role in developing this social capital.

The Writing Center Role in Disciplinary Work

While the above literature provides a useful framework for understanding English and writing in higher education institutions abroad, very little scholarship exists about writing centers in these unique contexts. One of the unique features of ADU-Q as a research site for writing stems from the fact that it is a design school. This discipline-specific institution represents an often challenging atmosphere for writing professionals. Namely, there is an ongoing debate in research as to whether or not writing tutors also need disciplinary knowledge in order to effectively provide tutorial services to learners (Ashwell, 2000; Hubbuch, 1988; Kiedaisch & Dinitz, 1993). At present, the tendency is for writing center work to be espoused as writing-across-the-curriculum work, and, therefore, disciplinary knowledge is not an essential qualification to be an effective tutor. Nonetheless, there are clearly certain conventions of writing across the disciplines that can enhance effective tutorials.

Hubbuch (1988) offers a well-articulated argument about the pros and cons of tutors with specific content knowledge. She notes that a knowledgeable tutor may be able to focus more immediately on specific writing concerns, as opposed to an "ignorant" tutor who would likely slow down a session by asking for clarification about basic discipline-specific terms. She also offers a warning, however, that knowledgeable tutors may offer content instruction and teaching instead of focusing on the writing concerns. She summarizes the argument by noting that all tutors should, at the very least, be critically aware that different disciplines require different types of writing conventions. She emphatically concludes, "If I were asked to summarize in a word what I consider the best qualification for a tutor, I would respond by saying that he or she should be literate in a way that the ideal liberal arts education defines literacy" (Hubbuch, 1988, p. 30). In this way, Hubbuch positions herself in line with many writing professionals who believe tutors should focus on writing, regardless of their content knowledge in a particular field. To date, although there have been a variety of publications regarding the issue of generalist tutors versus content-knowledge tutors, there has been no

definitive conclusion in the writing center community as to which type is best for student writing development.

Kiedaisch and Dinitz (1993), intrigued but skeptical of Hubbuch's optimistic view of tutoring across the disciplines, conducted further research into this area. They videotaped and transcribed twelve tutorials and analyzed the differences between those who had a generalist versus knowledgeable tutor. Their findings revealed that knowledgeable peer tutors did, in fact, conduct more successful sessions *according to the faculty*. That is to say, after each session, the tutor and tutee rated the session through a satisfaction survey. All tutors and tutees reported high satisfaction with the sessions. However, when three faculty were selected to view and rate eight of the recorded tutorial sessions, "they did not find the sessions so uniformly good" (1993, p. 64). In fact, those sessions that faculty regarded as "excellent" tutorials were identified as having a content-expert tutor (i.e., another student majoring in the discipline), while faculty rated other tutorials as weaker when the tutor was a generalist tutor.

Kiedaisch and Dinitz's study has many ramifications with regard to the present study. First, it shows that faculty believe discipline-specific knowledge from tutors may, in fact, be beneficial. Some of the peer tutors are students at ADU-Q, while others are enrolled at other Knowledge City institutions. Furthermore, the English faculty themselves are not from the design disciplines. Do English faculty perceive disciplinary knowledge critical for writing instruction? How do they incorporate it themselves, and what do they expect from the writing center tutors? These are some of the questions that this study seeks to investigate.

Shamoon and Burns (1995) advanced the notion that instruction may be more appropriately conveyed through disciplinary-specific knowledge. They cite examples, such as Master classes in music, where a hierarchical and directive method of instruction is the *modus operandi*, and learners

appear to learn and benefit greatly from this practice (Shamoon & Burns, 1995, pp. 140-141). They argue that this form of instruction, anecdotally at least, has also often been used with graduate and doctoral students whose mentors simply took and rewrote their papers – quite contrary to contemporary composition theory but practices that learners expressed a great deal of satisfaction with and learning from. This teaching methodology not only relates to content knowledge, but provides more evidential support for the direct method of teaching writing (Ferris, 1999; Ferris & Roberts, 2001).

In "The Writing Center and Tutoring in WAC Programs," Harris continues the dialogue by questioning how much content tutors in WAC programs must know in order to be effective writing tutors (Harris, 1992). She provides a number of practical strategies for success, such as involving faculty members, providing appropriate tutor training, and incorporating ongoing professional development. Nonetheless, she ultimately confesses that when asking "Should directors seek out and train potential tutors from the disciplines intending to refer students, or should the director rely on traditional pools for tutors in writing centers such as English majors? Unfortunately, there is no quick answer to this…" (Harris, 1992, p. 116). It will be insightful to explore English faculty perceptions of how much content writing center staff and peer consultants should have in order to effectively deliver instructional writing services. A sociocultural approach aims to explore the origins of these perceptions through the complex elements that influence the teaching and learning environment at ADU-Q.

Writing Centers and Peer Tutors

Peer tutors have played a role in ADU-Q's writing center since the program began in 2011, and, therefore, it is essential to explore the historical background of peer tutoring in academia and how this is a focal point of the present study. The concept of peer tutoring has always been complex, and

remained a source of constant debate since its inception. In 1983, Harvey Kail wrote "Collaborative Learning in Context: The Problems with Peer Tutoring," which delineated some of the challenges that collaborative learning strategies, those typically used in writing center work, faced in the academic context. Specifically, he noted that the introduction of peer tutors is like opening a door to a faculty member's classroom – the faculty member is suddenly exposed to a wider audience (e.g., peer tutors who need to interpret assignments and convey writing concepts). These peer tutors may or may not share the same philosophies as the faculty member, and, therefore, may cause a rift between the center and the faculty. Most notably, Kail suggests that this faculty-writing center relationship is *not*, in fact, a breakdown in communication between the stakeholders, but rather a fundamental dissonance in the existence of a peer tutoring system. This backdrop provides an appropriate connection to the sociocultural framework adopted by this study, because the interview questions seek to reveal the origins of how and why faculty perceive the writing center in the ways they do. Therefore, this investigation will build on Kail's work by examining possible disconnects between faculty, the writing center, and peer tutors through the English faculty perceptions.

While Kail's work critically examined the value of peer tutoring in academia, Bruffee's work continued to espouse the benefits of collaborative learning. In "Peer Tutoring and the 'Conversation of Mankind,'" Bruffee articulates the foundations upon which collaborative learning was based:

> For American college teachers the roots of collaborative learning lie neither in radical politics nor in research. They lie in the nearly desperate response of harried colleges during the early 1970s to a pressing educational need. A decade ago, faculty and administrators in institutions throughout the country became aware that, increasingly, students entering college had difficulty doing as well in academic studies as their native ability suggested they should be able to do. Of course, some of these students were poorly prepared academically. Many more of them,

> however, had on paper excellent secondary preparation. The common denominator among both the poorly prepared and the seemingly well-prepared was that, for cultural reasons we may not yet fully understand, all these students seemed to have difficulty adapting to the traditional or 'normal' conventions of the college classroom…to provide that alternative some colleges turned to peer tutoring. (1984, p. 637)

This acknowledgment of poor academic preparation, as well as understanding "conventions of the college classroom" reflects the current status of many students at ADU-Q, who come from a very different and wide variety of educational backgrounds. Undoubtedly, this diversity reflects a wide variation in students' understandings of American academic expectations.

Writing center research about peer tutoring has proliferated in recent years (Boquet, 1999; Bruffee, 1984; Eleftheriou, 2011; Fallon, 2010; Fels, 2010; Geller, Eodice, Condon, Carroll, & Boquet, 2006; Kail & Trimbur, 1987; Ronesi, 2009, 2011). Much of the literature has promoted the positive value that peer tutors can bring to the writing center (Eleftheriou, 2011; Fallon, 2010; Fels, 2010; Kail, 1983; Kail & Trimbur, 1987; Ronesi, 2009, 2011); a great deal has also been written about the obstacles that peer tutors can face, such as issues related to gender, culture, and linguistic competence (Eleftheriou, 2011; Kail, 1983; Kail & Trimbur, 1987; Ronesi, 2009; Tsui & Ng, 2000). In addition to research about the pros and cons of utilizing peer tutors in the writing center, resources dedicated to peer tutor development have also witnessed an explosive development in recent years. For example, the Tutor's Column of *The Writing Lab Newsletter* offers a forum for writing center tutors to showcase their work with peers, and this website has become a valuable resource for other peers. *PeerCentered.org* is another bountiful resource for peer tutors to collaborate and share resources and information. The National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing, begun in 1984, also offers peer tutors opportunities for professional growth. The International Writing Centers Association (IWCA)

boasts bibliographies and numerous resources for starting and developing peer tutoring programs (International Writing Center Association 2012). The existence and development of such peer tutor initiatives displays the growing professionalism and solid foundation of peer tutoring in writing. Nonetheless, this development primarily stems from the U.S. context with Inner-Circle native speakers as tutors. The current study will explore the phenomenon of peer tutoring within an entirely new context, with a writing center that utilizes GELs to instruct other GELs in the Arabian Gulf, through the perceptions of English faculty at ADU-Q. Are faculty perceptions, in fact, a result of the linguistic diversity found in Qatar and on ADU-Q's campus? Do faculty experiences in more monolingual educational environments play a role in how they perceive the role of the writing center? Does the more intimate nature of small classes, as afforded by the socioeconomic situation in Knowledge City, play a role in how faculty perceive their own role and that of the writing center?

A more recent contribution to peer educators in a discipline-specific school context comes from the Medical University of South Carolina. In "Formal Peer-Teaching in Medical School Improves Academic Performance: The MUSC Supplemental Instructor Program," Wong, Waldrep, and Smith describe a study in which they examined the performance of Supplemental Instructors (SIs) who were assigned as peer mentors for particular classes. The study revealed that "SI leaders have said that their work improved their communication and presentation skills. They have also reported increased mastery of material they teach as well as higher grades in later courses" (Wong, Waldrep, & Smith, 2007, p. 219). Wong et al.'s study is insightful for the present investigation because it offers insight as to how peer tutoring initiatives can be most valuable for the educators themselves. Nonetheless, there are a number of variables that differ considerably from the ADU-Q context. First, at MUSC, "the emphasis that SI places on difficult courses, rather than on students with difficulty, is considered a crucial philosophical component of SI" (Wong et al., 2007, p. 217). This point of departure is radically different from the ADU-Q writing center, which seeks to develop writers and support in English

language needs, not with a variety of difficult disciplinary courses. However, Wong et al.'s study offers a valuable framework for future research into peer education, which the present study seeks to accomplish.

Despite the solid historical background and growing importance and awareness of peer tutoring across the globe, there remains a dearth of information about multilingual writers as tutors. Trimbur (2000) alludes to the possibility of a more multilingual approach to writing center pedagogy in his article about multiliteracies. However, this brief article only generally touches on the periphery of what might be possible, and is written from a more U.S.-centric standpoint. The next section is dedicated to a review of the limited research conducted with regard to peer writing center tutors in the Middle East.

Peer Tutors in the Middle East

Although there has been a considerable growth of writing centers in the Middle East in recent years, research and scholarship still lags behind that which is produced in the United States. Jodi Lefort, Past President of the Middle East-North Africa Writing Center Alliance (MENAWCA) plainly states, "There is virtually no literature about Writing Centers outside North America. Yet, people in this region are starting to contribute their knowledge to the literature" (Lefort, 2008). Perhaps the most valuable and foundational text on peer tutoring in the Middle East is "Multilingual Tutors Supporting Multilingual Peers: A Peer-Tutor Training Course in the Arabian Gulf," where Ronesi (2009) writes about the importance of multilingual peer tutors at the American University of Sharjah (AUS). Ronesi articulates how and why she developed a peer tutor program at AUS that utilized multilingual students as peer tutors who facilitated writing center tutorials with other second language learners. She notes some of the considerations and challenges involved in the development of such a program, such as the fact that most of the literature is based in the U.S. context. She considers this gap a strength, however,

because it has allowed a platform for the students themselves to fill in the tutor training needs based on their own experiences in the local context. Although Ronesi occasionally laments the fact that most writing center scholarship is US-centric, Ronesi also notes that "with my facilitation and guidance from relevant peer-tutoring scholarship, I could rely on the students' experiences – as students at AUS, as multilingual and multicultural individuals, as writers…to establish a body of local understanding that would serve our purposes" (2009, p. 79). This emphasis on the value of cultural and linguistic differences and how they can be capitalized on, rather than seen as a barrier to effective tutoring, is also of paramount importance to my present study because it underscores the value of a sociocultural perspective. While Ronesi's study offers valuable insight to the Arabian Gulf context, she focuses on the peer tutor training; this study aims to explore faculty perceptions of peer tutoring within the larger framework of English faculty perceptions of the writing center.

Another recent contribution to the writing center field investigates perceptions of the tutor and tutee in a Middle Eastern writing center (Eleftheriou, 2011). Eleftheriou's study provides a detailed contextual background and in-depth analysis of tutorial sessions between multilingual tutors and tutees; in fact, she writes from the same context (AUS) as Ronesi. Eleftheriou primarily emphasizes the perceptions of what constitutes an effective tutorial by focusing on the unique student population and dynamics between non-native speaking students in the writing center as both peer tutors and clients. She addresses the unique challenges and benefits that can be addressed with multilingual peer tutors; these challenges are also relevant in the ADU-Q context, where multilingual peers provide writing center support. While Eleftheriou's research extends previous scholarship (including the ongoing debate about directive versus non-directive instruction) on tutorial effectiveness by bringing it into the Arabian Gulf context, she stops short of exploring outside influences, such as faculty perceptions, and how those influences impact writing center tutorials. My study aims to build on her

research by looking at a writing center in the Middle East from a different perspective – the English faculty perceptions of the writing center at ADU-Q within the unique Qatari cultural context.

While the overall aim of this research is not to fully investigate the peer tutor program, the existence of such a program may be one of the emerging themes in the results, and another outlet for further inquiry in future research. Furthermore, while this background in peer tutor initiatives provides a useful background for the present study, Ronesi (2009) aptly notes that the research stems "largely, if not entirely, from North America" (p. 75). My present proposal will build on Ronesi and Eleftheriou's work by further contributing to writing center scholarship specific to the Middle East.

Conclusion

This review of the literature has provided the background, framework, and entry point for my current research. Writing center research and scholarship around the world is missing the voice of key stakeholders – the faculty. Research conducted in the fields of writing centers, English language learning, and disciplinary-specific writing has helped form the basis for this current study; this research ties all the fields together through a sociocultural exploration of English faculty perceptions of these phenomena. In the Middle East, where the development of writing centers is relatively new and their services are often underutilized, it is imperative that writing center scholarship begins to privilege faculty perceptions and experiences in the writing center. A richer, deeper understanding will allow for a more complex engagement between writing centers and faculty, including outreach initiatives, tutor training, programming, and more.

CHAPTER THREE

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Introduction

This study takes a qualitative research approach to writing center scholarship by seeking a rich description of English faculty perceptions of the writing center at ADU-Q. This investigation takes a sociocultural perspective in data collection and a social capitalist analysis, with an effort to understand the nature of faculty perceptions and how those perceptions result in actions that subsequently affect the use of the writing center. This study is based on the assumption that positive faculty perceptions of writing centers are critical to maintaining a thriving center.

Overview of the Study

This investigation reviews one site, ADU-Q, by privileging English faculty perceptions of the writing center from sociocultural perspective. Interviews with all six, full-time English faculty members at the site were conducted, and data was triangulated through three primary sources: interview transcripts with all six teaching English faculty, interview transcripts with the ADU-Q Coordinator, and archival artifacts, such as tutorial reports and institutional reports and statistics. Qualitative data collection methods and analysis were used throughout the study, as were methods of constant reflexivity and adaptation of procedures.

Problem Statement

Writing center scholarship continues to repeat its mantra that writing center work is undervalued, underappreciated, and simply misunderstood. Nonetheless, there continues to be a scant body of in-depth research to address the source of this challenge. This study is based on the assumption in writing center literature that when faculty strongly support writing center work, the center is, and can be, much more effective in delivering its services (R. M. Hall, 2007; Kinkead &

Harris, 1993; Mauriello et al., 2011). Therefore, this study addresses critical issues to investigate the origins of how and why English faculty perceptions of the writing center are shaped. A sociocultural approach is appropriate for this investigation because writing centers in the Middle East offer a unique and under-researched demographic of students and faculty, and, therefore, this context-specific site provides a valuable source of data for the present study. A sociocultural framework seeks to reveal contextually relevant issues that may influence the English faculty perceptions of the writing center. ADU-Q represents a unique research site because it is a design institution. The strongest and most immediate connection that ADU-Q students have with the writing center is through the English faculty, because each student is required to take a core courses in English. This study focuses on English faculty perceptions as they relate to GELs, disciplinary writing, and peer tutors in the writing center.

Rationale/Significance/Contributions

A review of recent dissertations and theses on writing centers indicates that while some research has investigated tutorial perceptions, it is often about the clients and tutors' perceptions; none have tackled the issue of faculty perceptions (Lerner, 2010). Furthermore, few writing center-related dissertations have taken place outside of the U.S. context (Eleftheriou, 2011; Ronesi, 2009). As can be seen from the literature review in Chapter Two, these areas are particularly ripe for research. The increasing number of U.S. universities and writing centers located outside of the geographical U.S. boundaries make this a timely and important research project (Eleftheriou, 2011; Kane, 2011; Mills, 2009). The sociocultural perspective adopted by this study will take into account the social, political, and contextual factors in Qatar that influence English faculty perceptions of the writing center – what factors have influenced them to come to teach at ADU-Q in the first place? What are their perceptions about Qatari students? What do they think about peer tutoring in a multilingual environment? How have their interactions with the writing center influenced their opinions? The sociocultural framework

seeks to provide an opportunity for faculty to express new insights as to how their perceptions were formed.

Current theory suggests that writing centers are a site for collaborative learning and improving the individual writer. Furthermore, recent research has shown a link between students who seek writing center help and the students' subsequent academic success (J. Williams & Takaku, 2011). Clearly, research indicates that students benefit from writing center instruction (Harris, 1995), and, therefore, it would behoove faculty to espouse the value of the center's services to their students. This study's exploration of faculty perceptions will undoubtedly aid in informing writing center practices, which thereby will affect student services from the writing center at ADU-Q. Furthermore, the study will begin exploration of a uniquely situated writing center that primarily services and is served by GELs.

In addition to bringing together the fields of TESOL and writing centers, this study's findings will be particularly valuable to the Qatari and international educational community, where many institutions are staffed by GELs in faculty positions in a very diverse community of educators (Qatar Foundation, 2009). Results will provide insightful reflections directly from a range of English faculty about how their perceptions of the writing center developed, thereby providing the opportunity for writing centers to develop contextually appropriate pedagogical practices and outreach strategies. Additionally, the study design provides a useful template for writing center practitioners worldwide who seek to understand faculty perceptions. The sociocultural approach to researching the faculty-writing center relationship will allow for the tailoring of appropriate writing center pedagogy and outreach in different, specific contexts.

Research Questions

The following research questions have been explored in this study:

Primary Question

- What are English faculty perceptions of the ADU-Q writing center?

Ancillary Questions

- What factors have influenced/are influencing these perceptions?
- What do English faculty believe the role of the writing center should be in providing support for students, faculty, and staff?
- How does the GEL's first language factor into the faculty member's perceived level and type of support needed?
- How does the type of writing required factor into the perceived level and type of support needed?
- How do peer tutors factor into the perceived role of the writing center?

Design

This study takes a qualitative research approach to investigating English faculty perceptions of the writing center at ADU-Q. This research follows Troudi & Jendli's (2011) study in that it is "a sequential exploratory design" which relies on continued data analysis throughout the qualitative data collection process. Sections of the methodology decisions hinged on ADU-Q's writing center procedures, with which I was intimately familiar from my work there. The research also follows qualitative inquiry with the inclusion of all six English faculty and the ADU-Q Writing Center Coordinator as participants. More details of my positionality within ADU-Q, as well as a detailed description of each phase of the study and plan for data analysis, are delineated below.

Qualitative Research Methods

Various methodological approaches were used to triangulate the data. This variety of approaches is supported by Shohamy (2004), who notes:

> Researchers should not be forced to ask themselves whether they are doing critical ethnography or narrative research. They should not feel that they must define their research identity based on such modes. Rather, researchers should feel free to examine a variety of modes, to mix and blend different methods in the long journey toward answering research questions. (p. 729)

Eleftheriou further notes, "There is evidence that qualitative evaluation strategies may be better suited than quantitative ones for application in cross-cultural research environments" (Eleftheriou, 2011). Given the unique international and cross-cultural environment and atmosphere at ADU-Q, the qualitative methods adopted for this study are appropriate. Therefore, this study pursued an exploratory methodology, "which seeks to understand how individuals in a given social and educational context make meaning, draw conclusions and make suggestions about their own learning" (Troudi & Jendli, 2011, p. 30). This methodology aligns well with the sociocultural perspective that I take throughout the study because it allows for fluidity in participants' perspectives and an acknowledgment of participant agency.

The primary method of data collection involved interviews. Bogdan and Biklen note "the interview is used to gather descriptive data in the subjects' own words so that the researcher can develop insights on how subjects interpret some piece of the world" (2007, p. 103). In the present study, I have sought to explore how a range of English faculty (the subjects) interpret the position of the writing center in relation to their own work and world. Bogdan and Biklen articulate a useful framework for novice interviewers – starting with small talk to build rapport, finding a common ground, explaining the research purpose, and allowing for an open dialogue that provides opportunity

for subjects to convey their ideas. All of these interviewing techniques have been utilized during the research process.

Site Selection

This site, American Design University in Qatar, was chosen for a variety of reasons. First, my own researcher role has had an impact on choosing a location within Knowledge City. ADU-Q is an ideal research site because I have an intimate understanding of the context, as I have worked there intermittently over the years. While skeptics may pose criticism, literature abounds to indicate that this close relationship can be appropriate, even constructive and useful, to certain types of research (Kleinsasser, 2000; Labaree, 2002; Motha, 2009). Nonetheless, this relationship also posed potential limitations with eliciting detailed, honest responses from some of the participants who may have been hesitant to criticize a colleague. Furthermore, the site represents the unique nature of each American university in Knowledge City – the institution offers a discipline-specific degree to a population of undergraduate students who are primarily GELs taught by faculty who are primarily U.S.-educated. ADU-Q is also representative of universities in Knowledge City because the university is privileged with access to the deep pockets of the Qatari government. Nonetheless, limitless funding does not appear to change the traditionally low institutional profile of the writing center; in other words, faculty and staff from the institution tend to view the Writing Center as a support center staffed by less prestigious staff members, as opposed to their faculty counterparts (McHarg, 2011). Furthermore, due to changing institutional policies, gaining access to other institutions became an obstacle to conducting research.

This study aims to build on the idea that faculty perceptions influence the writing center's status within the overall institutional community, and this study seeks to reveal the impact of these influences through a social capitalist framework. This research will build on both writing center theory

and social capitalist theory by connecting the perceptions of faculty to their resulting actions and the resulting impact it has on the writing center itself. Because many of the stakeholders in the writing center are primarily GELs, TESOL scholarship is also pertinent to this study. The sociocultural perspective adopted for this study provides a useful framework that embraces this multidisciplinary approach.

Researcher's Positionality

I have many years of experience working at four of the American universities in Knowledge City in Qatar. For the purposes of this research, my goal was to foster and build upon the previously established relationships with my colleagues; as previously indicated, I had worked at ADU-Q. I believe my insider role as a Knowledge City community member within Qatar was beneficial in achieving the research goals, as it helped me establish a comfortable rapport and develop appropriate questions for the interviews. Insider research is supported by the research community (Bishop, 1990; Eleftheriou, 2011; Motha, 2009; Toma, 2000). As Toma (2000) states, "In short, what makes subjective data good is close involvement between researchers and subjects" (p. 177). Bishop (1990) specifically notes the value of insider research in writing centers: "I feel writing center coordinators and their staff will benefit from surveying their own constituencies….Writing center coordinators and tutors will find confirmation for hunches, will spot trends, and will, ultimately, discover ideas that help them develop a stronger program" (p. 40).

As a researcher, one of my goals in conducting this research at ADU-Q was to investigate the possible influences of the recently developed peer tutoring system in connection with how faculty perceive the program. Specifically, I had developed the peer tutor program in 2011, and this led to a degree of action, insider research at ADU-Q by providing me an opportunity to explain the peer tutor program to English faculty. The purpose of this revelation is simply to highlight the fuzzy boundaries

between researcher and participants that is often found in qualitative research studies, and that this close relationship can be appropriate, even constructive and useful, to certain types of research (Kleinsasser, 2000; Labaree, 2002; Motha, 2009). Bourdeau (March 2000), for example, notes "The most salient issue when looking at questionable relationships between researchers and participants is power" (par 6). In the present situation, all participants are in a higher position of power. The ADU-Q Coordinator holds a sponsored position at this university—I do not, as I only work in a part-time and "local hire" capacity. This means that my position is less permanent and stable.

Participant Selection and Recruitment

As the goal of this research is to understand English faculty perceptions of the writing center at ADU-Q, interviews with all six English teaching faculty members provided the primary data source for analysis. The ADU-Q Writing Center Coordinator is another faculty member, and she plays a critical role in providing data to triangulate the findings. It is notable that although this study refers to the Writing Center Coordinator, the position title does not, in fact, reflect any supervisory or management authority. This "coordinator" has been in the Writing Center since its organic inception, and, therefore, has been viewed as the *de facto* leader. The English Department is relatively small (currently six full-time faculty); therefore, it is appropriate and feasible to include all English faculty as study participants. Adjunct faculty, roughly number one or two per semester, were not included as participants in this study due to the transient nature of their experiences at ADU-Q; the full-time faculty had a longer experience with the institution, writing center, and students at ADU-Q, and, therefore, would have more insight into the nature of the relationship this study seeks to explore. Data is triangulated with information from the ADU-Q Writing Center Coordinator and archival documents.

Faculty were initially contacted via email (see Appendix C) to request their participation in the study. Next, I scheduled individual interviews with English faculty. As soon as possible after the

interview, I transcribed and began review of the data in NVivo 10 software. I used an open coding process to identify emerging themes or unique perspectives from each individual interview. Next, I reviewed existing codes that had been identified in previous interviews and reviewed and added coding to each new transcript. Finally, while determining the appropriate structure for presenting the findings in Chapter Four below, I developed specific codes that identified responses for each of the research questions pertinent to this study.

Data Collection Methods and Procedures

Data Sources

The following data sources were used:

- Interviews with all English faculty participants (see Appendices B and F for sample questions)
- Interview with the Writing Center Coordinator
- Tutorial session reports that had been sent to English faculty during the period of August 2011 through February 2013.
- Miscellaneous institutional artifacts (course syllabi, information from instructors, website information, publications);
- Researcher's log

Data Collection Procedures

After IRB approval from my doctorate institution and the site institution, I began by formally contacting the ADU-Q Writing Center Coordinator and English faculty to request their participation in conducting the research. All participants were invited to select their own pseudonyms.

The Writing Center Coordinator, who began working at ADU-Q in 2004 and oversees the center, had the best vantage point of the overall functioning of the writing center within the academic community at ADU-Q. She has been the only full-time, permanent staff member for the writing center, and is therefore the primary point of contact between the center and English faculty. Although it would add another interesting dimension to interview peer consultants and students, the main objective of this research project is to understand and privilege English faculty perceptions. Therefore, interviews with other stakeholders were not used in this study.

The Coordinator also likely has the best perspective of faculty perceptions, their interactions with the writing center, and how the writing center functions in the broader academic context. Although the primary data source was the English faculty participants' voices, it was also insightful for this study to consider the Coordinator's role in establishing an environment that collaborates with faculty. The interviews took place in a location most convenient for participants that allowed for confidential sharing of information.

Interviews with English faculty participants were semi-structured, guided by the questions in Appendix F. Interviews took approximately one to two hours each. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed as soon as possible after. Following a review of the transcription, I sent the participants a post-interview questionnaire or request a follow-up interview if deemed necessary and appropriate.

I also collected archival records of tutorial reports. Specifically, I reviewed reports of students who visited the center for the classes of the six teaching English faculty during a two-year time span. This two-year time period was selected for two primary reasons: first, the computerized database had only been in existence for that long, and, therefore, any earlier records were rather haphazardly recorded and incomplete; second, the peer tutor program had only been in existence for those two

years, and, therefore, there would be no correlation between faculty perceptions of the writing center related to peer tutoring prior to that time frame. Prior to the peer tutor program, only the Coordinator and occasional part-time, professional staff facilitated the tutorial sessions. The findings of these tutorial reports were compared with information reported by faculty. For example, did students themselves report that they were advised to visit the Writing Center? What kinds of information from the reports were influential in shaping faculty perceptions of the Center? This study triangulated data from interview transcripts from faculty, tutorial session reports, and interview transcripts with the Coordinator.

Throughout the research process I also maintained a research journal to record thoughts and observations of the research process and any developments or emerging themes, which was used final for data analysis. This constant comparative analysis is an appropriate research method for this qualitative study, as it provided flexibility and adaptability in light of emerging information and themes.

Data Analysis and Interpretation Tools

This study takes a qualitative approach to data analysis through constant reflexivity and review of the emergent data. Line-by-line analysis of the transcriptions, with an open coding method, was used for initial interview analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Data analysis was based on the crystallization, or triangulation, of different data sources noted above: interviews with English faculty participants, an interview with the Coordinator, and archival documents. The qualitative analysis methods described by Miles & Huberman (1994) were utilized. In other words, analysis began from the start of data collection and continued throughout the research project in an effort to observe emergent themes, categories, and use a reflexive process. A researcher's journal was also used to record and reflect on the research process as it proceeded. A visual representation of how each

research question was answered with appropriate data sources and analysis can be found in Appendix A.

This study takes an interpretive research approach (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 8). An interpretivist approach offers a unique and yet sometimes controversial approach to qualitative data analysis. Most notably, "few guidelines exist for conducting the inductive process central to interpretive research" (Rowlands, 2005, p. 81). Despite this challenge, an interpretive paradigm is appropriate for this study because it "allows for the interplay of numerous variables; moreover, it positions the researcher to receive and to respond to ideas about research findings that may not have been anticipated" (Eleftheriou, 2011, p. 48). Furthermore, "to interpretive researchers…[k]nowledge is thus seen to be comprised of multiple sets of interpretations that are part of the social and cultural context in which it occurs" (S. Kim, 2003, p. 13). Kim acknowledges that interpretive research can be an impediment due to its contextualized nature, which also often becomes costly and results in extended research time. Nonetheless, this approach is appropriate for this particular study which seeks to explore a very context-specific population through a bracketed approach and sociocultural theoretical lens (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Johnson, 2009). Finally, data analysis is conducted in accordance with applied linguistics criteria as outlined in *TESOL Quarterly* (Lazaraton, 2003). These criteria include data collection through an emic perspective, appropriate data collection strategies, data analysis through appropriate qualitative research methods, and data reports. All of these elements are appropriately addressed and referenced in the current study.

The primary data source includes interviews with English faculty; I used line-by-line analysis of the transcriptions, with an open coding method (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Throughout Chapters One, Two and Three, I have suggested some possible themes that may emerge in the course of researching – the peer consultant program, themes relating to the discipline-specific design school,

working with undergraduate GELs, etc. Through a sociocultural approach of line-by-line analysis of the interview transcripts, I most effectively reveal pertinent and emergent topics that answer the research questions.

Archival documents, primarily the tutorial session reports, were also used for data triangulation. Tutorial reports given to each of the six English faculty members were pulled from the database from fall 2011 through spring 2013. This study was conducted during the spring 2013 semester, and, therefore, reports were for only half of the semester. In sum, almost two years of tutorial session reports given to English faculty were included in this study. The rationale for this time frame was twofold. First, this internally-produced database was only developed in spring 2011. Therefore, records prior to the fall 2011 semester were incomplete and sporadic, as the Writing Center worked in a hybrid of paper and online reporting systems. Second, the peer tutor program began in the 2011-12 academic year. Therefore, since this study sought to incorporate information about and perceptions of the peer tutor program, it naturally follows that this would be an appropriate time frame for tutorial session reports.

Tutorial session reports were extracted from the database into an Excel spreadsheet. They were then separated into two files – one for academic year 2011-12, and another for 2012-13. Next, all tangential or irrelevant information was deleted. For example, a number of rows indicated "No show". Most often, the practice at ADU-Q's writing center was to keep this information internal and not report it to the faculty member. Therefore, the information was not connected to how English faculty would interact with or experience the writing center. I also removed all reports indicating it was a continuation of an earlier session. For example, "Session 2 of 3" might be reported. However, this information was not uniform or standardized by all writing center staff; in fact, generally this was a practice solely adopted by the Writing Center Coordinator. A peer tutor, for example, typically records

and reports each tutorial session with one report, and, therefore, would not record multiple reports for one meeting. Furthermore, it was not possible to discern who wrote the report. Some of the reports (as cited in Chapter Four) were signed by the peer tutor; otherwise, it was not possible to determine the author. Put simply, while some aspects of data entry were standardized, others were not, which initially yielded data irrelevant to the present study. For the purposes of this investigation, the session reports analyzed were those that included concrete and relevant data about what was covered during a tutorial session with each student.

Limitations

This study, as any other research, comes with a number of limitations. Many other possibilities for methodology were considered – surveys, focus groups, email questionnaires, etc. Each possibility was weighed carefully within the particular context of ADU-Q; most often, logistics and feasibility constraints led to a new methodological choice. The findings of the present study, however, will likely reveal strengths and weaknesses of this particular approach, which can then be modified for future studies.

Furthermore, various issues such as generalizability and reliability of participants' memories should be acknowledged. The particular, local, contextual nature of this study suggests that results may not be generalizable to a wider population. It is also important to recognize that the findings of this study will be based primarily on participants' perceptions and memories of their experiences. The review of archival data, such as tutorial reports, will support triangulation of faculty perceptions with tutorial sessions. These and other limitations are further explored in the concluding chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

This qualitative study explores English faculty perceptions of the ADU-Q Writing Center through the triangulation of three sources: interviews with English faculty, interviews with the ADU-Q Coordinator, and archival documents. Appendix A provides a representation of how each data source was used to answer the research questions. Qualitative research is uniquely presented because "'evidence' to support the findings is provided by using direct quotations from respondents" (Hancock, 2002, p. 22). Furthermore, Öhman & Löfgren (n.d.) provide guidelines for the presentation of data:

> Quotes are "raw data" and should be compiled and analyzed, not just listed. There is a tendency for authors to overuse quotes and manuscripts to be dominated by a series of long quotes with little analyses or discussion, this should be avoided. The quotes should support and enrich the researcher's summary of the patterns identified by systematic analysis. (para 5)

Therefore, NVivo software was used to compile, organize, and analyze data. A systematic presentation below allows the voices of participants and text from the archival documents to answer each of the study's research questions.

Primary Research Question: What are English faculty perceptions of the ADU-Q writing center?

Responses can best be captured through the voices of English faculty, the method which has been utilized here. Perceptions of the writing center were positive overall. English faculty expressed appreciation for the type of work that the Writing Center provided to students, as well as the Writing Center's strong support for assisting and supporting English faculty. The following excerpts from

interview transcripts provide the raw data to answer the primary research question. Time Struggler noted:

> Here, I have loved the writing center. I love that we have a writing center. I um…I think it has served me well and served my students well. It has...saved my students…many times. I always have a close connection with the writing center staff and faculty. Um, I consider them part of the….I've always considered them part of the English program really….I think that, um, there is a general regard and respect for the writing center. At least that's the impression I get.

Natasha Ma supported this view:

> I've loved the writing center here because I feel like the students cannot… they cannot really benefit from [series of basic English courses], especially those 3 courses without the benefit, the added benefit of the writing center. I think to rely just on their professor, you know, in the course, I think it's asking…it's just too much. They don't…they need other readers… and of course it helps when they, they…have their peer review in the class, but they often don't trust their classmates, so…uh, no matter how much we try to emphasize how helpful they can be to each other…um…so to have the writing center uh…tutors available um…I, yeah. It's, I just feel like it's most important…

Francis similarly commented:

> I always try to thank the writing center whenever they work with any of my students…and make more comments if I have time. So I want them to know, even if it's just thank you, I want them to be thanked.

When describing his experience at ADU-Q, Jerry compared the Writing Center with his prior institutional experiences:

> I wouldn't say that anywhere else that I've taught...has actually had, in my opinion, such a well-defined and developed writing center. And by that I mean, you know, here's a clear schedule, with available um, tutors, and, um, you know, mission statement, and all of that….which, which I actually think is fantastic….umm…at the [name of previous university where Jerry taught], we …if there was any such a thing it wasn't promoted, which is really a shame.

Jerry went on to note that he promoted use of the Center to his students, "I always encourage the writing center, basically with all my classes…."

In contrast, while Julia did not specifically convey a positive or negative attitude about the Writing Center-English faculty relationship, she did indicate a lack of strong ties:

> I feel like…often times I feel like the writing center gets forgotten in the minds of the English faculty or not forgotten…well yeah I would say it's put after…work for students … and it's not because I'm like "oh the writing center isn't important" but just in the scheme of things that are, you know, on my plate it's one of the last things that I think of…I feel like it could…there could be stronger ties between the two…

Julia also repeatedly suggested that her lack of collaboration was a result of trying to "mostly just to avoid confusion for you guys" because:

> there might be like a….I don't know…a disconnect in terms of understanding like maybe somebody's saying "I would love for you to help my student with this paper" but there's all this backstory that I'd have to give you about where we are in the classroom in order for you to help them, so maybe you should just help them with what they come in with and then see how that goes.

The ADU-Q Coordinator shared this perception of a lack of collaboration, and she added her own perception about how she believes the Writing Center is perceived and has shifted over time:

> Well it definitely has changed….when I first came….If a student needed help with writing…. then one of the English faculty, and I don't know how decisions were made, but one of the English faculty probably took that person under their wing and worked with them….the English faculty were accustomed to pitching in because one person could not manage the need that there was at that time. …. the English department considered the Writing Center instructors their liaisons, or their colleagues…we participated in their portfolio reviews, we collaborated with them, if there was a crunch time such as at the end of the semester they pitched in….um, it was just a very collaborative relationship. Then a few years ago the attitude changed, and I think it was with the hiring of a few newer people who were um…not [just] one but perhaps they had been teaching assistants…and they really didn't want to re-live that experience because they wanted to go do the "higher" work, if you will, of teaching in the classroom; in other words they wanted to build their repertoire and their career. Traditionally …the English department considers those who do the writing, you know the writing center people, to be the second-class citizens if you will. And…that attitude certainly emerged in full force. And we had some…notable disagreements and…priorities were made and um, the two departments were more clearly differentiated. So today, um, we're not accustomed to collaborating very much with them, although we do work with them as we do with other professors about the content of their courses. But the, the spirit of collaboration we once had really is not there.

The ramifications and implications of the Coordinator's perception of decreased collaboration are further explored in the Discussion section of Chapter Five.

Ancillary Question: What factors have influenced/are influencing these perceptions?

Participants' experiences with writing centers, receipt of tutorial session reports, and general experiences (personal friendships, hearing from students, having peer tutors in the classroom) are the strongest contributing factors to what influences English faculty perceptions of the Writing Center.

Participants' experiences with writing centers prior to ADU-Q were highly varied. The Coordinator had never heard of a writing center prior to coming to ADU-Q, whereas some of the English faculty had worked in them in the United States. Samantha explained that her understanding of a writing center was shaped by the training she received from her predecessor:

> I worked with [name], uh who was a faculty member who probably was devoting most time, probably close to 50-50 in the writing center as well as teaching English. So she's the one who trained me, and we worked together a year or two until she left.

Some English faculty had utilized writing center services as clients, while others explained that they felt their writing was at a high enough level that they often did not seek out support. Maryanne explained:

> When I was in the post-secondary education um I was at uh, it's called [Community College] and they have different branches. And the [omitted name] branch that I was at had a writing center. And I used it…. And then when I went to the [technical school] they had a writing center and I used that. Uh, when I went to [university], they had a writing center, I used that, and I used the writing center at [university] too. So I've used a writing center…the only place I haven't used a writing center is [graduate school university]. But I've been inside of it.

Continuing to explain his understanding of a writing center's role, Maryanne stated:

> …my understanding is that they were there…they were there to help without writing the paper. They were there to make suggestions, um, that could be very specific at times but could be very broad at others. Um, and they were just…generally helping me to improve everything that goes into writing, including the thought behind it….I mean I think why I stopped using them was that at, when I was at [university] I would bring my stuff to the writing center and they just wouldn't have anything to say. You know they would just say, "Wow this looks really good, I'm not sure, I think you're writing sort of 'above' my level". Because often they were you know, undergrad tutors, maybe some from the graduate school but even then they'd be in other disciplines and they would just say, you know, your… maybe a couple commas to point out of something like that, but they really stopped being sort of helpful at the level that I was at.

Despite the fact that Maryanne stopped using a writing center when he felt it stopped being helpful, his belief of the writing center's role did not solely encompass remedial-type work. He clearly stated, "I think the writing center's role is to help them think." Time Struggler also noted her own experience with writing centers:

> I first probably entered a writing center… at taking one of their upper level undergrad courses. And…pretty much how they handled it at that time was that you would read your paper aloud to them. And you would hold the paper, they would not hold the paper, um…and you would see things that you might want to change, as you read along. Sometimes they would ask questions, but it was…fairly, your reading of the paper to them. At least that's what my experience was because I came in with a draft. Now if I hadn't then they might have approached the whole thing differently. Um…I thought it was a wonderful experience, and I used the writing center…a number of times….probably, once I got started, it might have been

> for each paper, or at least probably at least each final paper…something like this….And then…umm…I was…it was a very positive experience.

Time Struggler discussed how she used this strategy of reading work out loud in all of her classes. Although she recalled specific and particular ways in which she was taught during her own experience in a writing center, she expressed ways in which the ADU-Q context lent itself to a different writing center model:

> …it's slightly different from perhaps on the home campus. Um, yes, generally I think that it's um a support at any stage to the student in their writing. And that can even be prewriting and coming, brainstorming ideas, talking about an assignment, um…but I think, too, that what's…an important component is working with students on grammar, and sentence construction, and punctuation, these sorts of things.

Time Struggler had been trained and educated as to the nature of writing center pedagogy in the U.S. context, but she also noted the ways in which it needed to be adapted for the GEL population at ADU-Q. Francis described how her experience working in a writing center shaped her high esteem for writing center staff:

> I found it much harder work than teaching actually in the classroom. Because we…you know provided the service for the entire university so you never knew what was going to come in the door, what kind of assignments…you really had to really think on your feet, and um…be able to respond immediately, right then, it was very demanding…and challenging but also very rewarding….I think I learned more about teaching writing from working in the writing center …than I did in any other context, in any practicum or classroom….ummm…I enjoyed it. I really enjoyed the writing center, although it was exhausting.

In addition to previous personal experiences with writing centers, English faculty understandings of the Writing Center were also influenced by the tutorial session reports they received. Maryanne stated, "I appreciate the reports, I read them carefully, I respond to ones that merit response…um I save them, I keep track of them…" Jerry further indicated:

> one thing that I truly appreciate is the level of depth in the feedback that I get from the email…um…for each visit. I think that's fantastic. Because, you know, despite the fact that we're somewhat spoiled in having relatively small classes, um, still to get to that level of…um…knowledge of your students' writing on a one-to-one basis is very time-consuming. So that we have a writing center where you or [name of Writing Center staff] or [name of Writing Center staff] or even some of the tutors now that you have the peer tutors can write up something and say I've seen this person, and this is what they were dealing with. It's just a tremendous help for me to understand that student, you know? And to help to support them. So it's another optic for me to say ok well….Really clearly for me, it's one team …

Francis indicated that she appreciated the reports, although simultaneously confessed that her grammar was at a far lower level than that of the Writing Center instructors, "It's just…I don't even understand when she writes some of the notes back about some of the things they did…you know, that they addressed in the writing center I'm like I don't know what those terms mean…dangling whatevers and…".

Julia also talked about how emailed reports could help her, not necessarily in understanding the Writing Center, but in working with her individual students:

> I do talk to students about their experience post [writing center tutorial session] – especially if I get an email about them going I talk about that with them and see, you know, how it went, mostly it stops in that way with me saying how it went and then encouraging them to keep

> going….but if they, if you guys have talked to them about a specific thing then that's something I'll be sure to bring up the next time I sit down and talk with them about their paper.

Samantha, the ADU-Q Coordinator, further validated the importance of session reports for faculty:

> in the case of a few professors I think we win them over when, you know, they receive the reports that we write from working with the students….and once they begin to read those reports and get those reports and they compare what those students are doing or they realize what those students are doing compared to some of the others…. they begin to realize, you know what, I don't have to read these half-written, poorly punctuated things, and it's going to make life easier for me if I send them. So I think that's an option as well.

Experience with writing centers and interaction with the writing center through the receipt of emailed reports emerged as the greatest influential factors in how English faculty perceptions of the Center had been shaped. Nonetheless, other factors undoubtedly influenced individual opinions, such as hearing back from students, the intimate work environment, and more. Time Struggler relayed the feedback she had gotten from her students:

> They love the writing center!...they said that it helps them improve their grades, it helps them understand things that were confusing, um…often I get a comment ….that the writing center was um, an important player in their development as a thinker and a writer for that semester and that class, so….some students have become addicted to the writing center and practically sleep there, you know.

Time Struggler also indicated that the small work environment allowed individuals to get to know each other professionally during personal time:

> some of us are personal friends…I mean [name omitted] is my neighbor, has been for years, and a personal friend of mine, and I know she's that way with [name omitted], she and [name omitted] came, started at the same time. Um…so, that's, you know, some of us are personal friends and then I think that, um, there is a general regard and respect for the writing center.

Ongoing experience and interaction with the Writing Center at ADU-Q are the overarching themes of how English faculty have formed their perceptions and understanding of the Writing Center. These insights offer possible critical implications for the disciplinary faculty who have far less experience with/interaction with the Writing Center.

Ancillary Question: What do English faculty believe the role of the writing center should be in providing support for students, faculty, and staff?

Responses were varied, but the overarching theme was that students should receive priority in receiving writing center support. As Jerry said, "I do feel that the first line of services...is…you know, basically, the students come first. And it has to be like that." Maryanne clearly expressed, "I think the only way it seems to me to go about it is to give the people the most support that need it." Francis went further by discussing ways in which the Writing Center should not assume responsibility for teaching subject matter that faculty might not be interested in teaching:

> The writing center is there to support the classrooms not do all the heavy lifting that you don't want to do in the classroom. And I think particularly at an art and design school it's very difficult for designers who are uncomfortable with writing not to just throw everything on the writing center.

There was also constant recognition that ADU-Q is a unique and entirely different context in the ways that it employs many GELs as faculty and staff. Consequently, participants seemed to be

searching for a model as a guide when it came to writing center support for faculty and staff. When discussing faculty and staff clients in the Writing Center, Francis stated:

> I wonder though if it unduly strains the writing center, particularly the types of writing that they're bringing in which tend to be like dissertations or, you know, articles for scholarly journals….these aren't like a couple of pages. Um…and I don't know of any other writing center that caters to professors, um…so it's a wonderful service…

Jerry reinforced this concern:

> …my concern…for the writing center, though, is whether or not those requests from faculty overtax the resources… something to think about is how, how are the work flows managed? Can those requests from people like me and other faculty members really be accommodated without sinking the ship?

Natasha Ma expressed similar concerns:

> I think it's a little tricky because I hate to think that they're….that they're taking up too much of the time, and that students then can't get in which happens so often toward the end of the semester…which of course, that's not the time for students to be waiting to go but, but I do worry that if faculty is taking up too much time then students….it's…not fair, yeah. So I don't know what the solution is there….

Maryanne indicated complete support of writing center assistance for all stakeholders:

> I think it's great. I think it's great if the writing center's willing to do it, I think it's fantastic, and I know colleagues that have used the writing center, and it has gotten them through their PhDs. And I think that's…that's a positive thing. Again I want writing to be both something that someone does and works on as an individual and something that is done in collaboration.

> All writers need feedback and peers and, you know, things like that. A community of learners and writers, and I think the writing center providing that is…is uh, above and beyond what I would expect them to do and I think it's great.

In contrast, Julia bluntly voiced her opposition to helping faculty and staff:

> I really don't like it. I feel like it takes away from time that you guys should be spending with students or could be spending with students or should be. I think that…this is something that I…struggling with from the Master's thesis point of view too, at what point do you cut somebody off from the service that's offered freely and what point does it become a professional or, you know, money exchange service?

While Julia expressed her dislike for time spent on working with faculty and staff as clients in the writing center, she offered advice for how this challenge might be overcome, such as offering workshops to a group of faculty. Julia's suggestions are explored further in the Chapter Five.

Samantha also noted the overwhelming demand placed on the Writing Center by faculty and staff clients:

> The problem, here, one thing needs to be noted, we're an atypical situation because so many of our faculty are second language speakers. And once they find out what the writing center can do, we have them as students. Uh, so we are at times, very overwhelmed in our responsibilities.

Surprisingly, despite the time and energy commitment that was regularly required of the ADU-Q Coordinator, she articulated contentment with serving faculty and staff clients:

> I like that. I…perhaps that's, well, it's certainly not our number one priority, uh, but I think everybody needs to be able to write well because, as I said, that means you're thinking clearly.

> And I, I like sharing what I do with people, and I like helping them understand better, whatever it is that they're needing to write for. So I, I would like to minister to them as well as, as the students. Um, it's a matter of resources, again.

English faculty and the Writing Center staff perceptions seem to align with regard to offering priority services to undergraduate students before assisting faculty and staff. Coincidentally, however, a review of the database appointment system during that same week indicated the ADU-Q Coordinator had appointments booked almost entirely for one faculty member and one graduate student. Further quantitative research may offer insight as to the depth of the problems with prioritization, as discussed in Chapter Five.

Ancillary Question: How does the GEL's first language factor into the faculty member's perceived level and type of support needed?

As expected, many of the English faculty expressed that one of the primary roles of the Writing Center was that of providing grammar-related English language assistance as a consequence of having so many GELs. Time Struggler noted how the role of ADU-Q's Writing Center was unique as a result of the local context and demographic composition of learners:

> …it's slightly different from perhaps on the home campus. Um, yes, generally I think that it's a support at any stage to the student in their writing. And that can even be prewriting and coming, brainstorming ideas, talking about an assignment, um…but I think, too, that what's…an important component is working with students on grammar, and sentence construction, and punctuation, these sorts of things. Because we don't have a lot of time to go over that in class. Um, we're teaching the same things that are taught on the home campus, and it's expected that the student has all these sorts of skills and…um, developed, and established before they get here. That's not really the case here.

Francis repeatedly expressed her own discomfort and lack of confidence in grammar-related teaching. Her personal concerns about grammar apprehension echo Bizzaro & Toler's (1986) work that indicates how instructors may avoid teaching skills with which they are uncomfortable themselves. Francis noted that, in addition to other skills, this was an appropriate role of the writing center. She also echoed Time Struggler's perspective that the curricular requirements assumed many of these skills were in place for students when they entered ADU-Q:

> …helping them build those critical skills…um…dealing with the ESL mechanical grammar issues…that's the biggest help to us because we don't have the ability or the time or both to do that as much as we can, and there's really no room in the curriculum for teaching grammar…all the [course] outcomes are based on other things that assume that those elements are already in place…

Julia also acknowledged the problem of underprepared students but, when asked if these weaker students should be required to visit the writing center, she offered a slightly more radical, yet pragmatic response:

> The student should be….I think it's something that should be headed off at the pass in Admissions if that's an issue. And I think that we really haven't addressed it enough here, but… if a student's not capable of writing at the university standards coming in, then…they should probably not have been admitted to the school…if there's a student who's being told they must always …they should not ever turn anything in before going to the writing center, they probably…I don't think that's fair to the student…and not that I don't think it's fair for them to seek help from the writing center but I don't think that it should…. it should be voluntary and something that works to…develop their writing not teach them [basic English] ….like teach them the most, the basics, the basics that they should have known coming in. So

> maybe that means a readjustment of expectations from the university and a changing of the curriculum of the lower level classes, or…um…restricting admission for students who aren't prepared…

Jerry went further in discussing what type of support the writing center should provide as a result of their GEL status. He acknowledged the possibility of other language support related to the sociopolitical conditions:

> You know, what are we really trying to achieve? I don't think that frank discussion has happened yet. Because if the leadership had said, well this is what we really want, um then there might be scope to provide more support for Arabic. You know, and it's like we want balanced bilingualism, that's what we're really after. Well, you're not getting balanced bilingualism at [home campus]. You're not. So the product is to be different, the delivery methods are going to be different…but if that's what you want, then we can make that happen….we've gotta work together to create something…hybrid,….and you know, relevant, pertinent to the conditions…

Julia further explained:

> …if there's a student who is collectively not getting a lot of things then I'll recommend that they come see me or that they…go to the writing center for help with this particular thing that…that issue…if it's grammar-related or if it's usage related…

Later, Julia also noted how she viewed her own support and that of the Writing Center as equivalent:

> I usually say that in tandem...either come to my office hours or go to the writing center because, um…you know, if it's super-busy here I don't want them to feel like they can't come to see me for the same problem, you know?

Time constraints were cited by all English faculty. Maryanne plainly stated:

> I think what it comes down to for me is a matter of time. So if I have a student that is…their writing…their, that they've got so many issues that it would just take so much time to be able to patiently explain each one sort of individually…umm…and giving them the patience and the time and the explanation that they would need to really learn…if I see that there is just a student that is struggling with writing on so many different levels, I will often send them to the writing center as well as continue to work with me because they need, obviously, a lot of um…one-to-one instruction and time.

Similarly, the ADU-Q Coordinator commented on the importance of basic English language support. She noted that this is one area in which the Writing Center and English faculty may diverge in their roles:

> Where we differ is I think we also have uh, the responsibility of the more elementary parts of writing such as the grammar and the punctuation and um…the clarity and…and conciseness and those things. While that may come up in an English class, I think we're the ones who really are stressing that and teaching it.

When discussing language issues related to writing, English faculty and the Coordinator often discussed the critical connection between thinking and writing. Samantha clearly stated:

> My motto is clear writing means clear thinking. In other words, you have to think clearly before you can write clearly, and the two work hand in hand. And, uh, the courses we have here are very much involved with teaching our students to think.

Maryanne articulated this as one of the roles of the Writing Center, "I think the writing center's role is to help them think. …they're there to give suggestions and help them think through things, and things

like that…". Natasha Ma echoed this challenge, "I think one of the biggest problems is the critical thinking." Time Struggler went on to note the value of thinking in a different language than their native tongue:

> … there are certain kinds of thinking that come around in English. The students tell me that English is a very practical language. I disagree with them to a degree, I can see what they're talking about…because they consider Arabic much more flowery language.…I remember what a Japanese, one of the Japanese winners of the Nobel Prize, and I think it was in science, recommended to his colleagues, Japanese colleagues that they write in English and publish in English, and he said it was because English is a goal-directed language, um, you have to come to a conclusion, he says, in English, more so that you have to do in Japanese, which he says is more circular, more illustrative, um…perhaps follows a more…um, of a labyrinth, in its thinking, and he said that they will, um, make more of an impact if they, if they do this. So I, I'm wondering if, I think it helps people you know, if you're used to thinking in certain patterns in your native language, to learn another language, you might find out that you're thinking in different patterns.

Samantha also referenced these different thought patterns with regard to her own inability to speak Arabic by commenting, "[T]hey think in certain ways that we don't know about if we don't know Arabic."

This recurring theme offers validation that while somewhat dated, Kaplan's (1966) discussion of contrastive rhetoric and cultural thought patterns remains a concern in the present day. In addition to the importance of understanding unique cultural thought patterns, Cummins (1984) has also contributed significant scholarship with regard to the importance of strengthening a student's first language (L1) in order for them to succeed in learning additional languages. His research suggests that

learners with a strong L1 background are much more likely to acquire new languages because of their experience with and understanding of language, in particular with higher level academic literacies. Nonetheless, Natasha felt the importance of learning in English was paramount:

> …like it or not, you know English is that universal language now, and so even if they do go back into an all-Arabic-speaking workplace or whatever… having the English, being able to express themselves better in a written, in written English …everything they've gotten from this university can benefit them back in that world …the way everything's changing constantly, I don't think it's really they're ever gonna end up in a totally Arabic-speaking situation in their lives probably in the future….um…yeah. I…it just…it seems to me this ….I can't imagine how this could hurt them, really.

Ancillary Question: How does the type of writing required factor into the perceived level and type of support needed?

Although English faculty recognized that they were in a design school, they felt no particular need to teach to or within the disciplines. They seemed to recognize that the issue of disciplinary writing may be part of their teaching context, but, as Jerry commented, "…to be honest with you, other than trying to ground my students more in I guess, academic um…register…um, I don't find a heavy onus on me…I don't feel that...heavy onus to sort of teach to the field of design."

Maryanne felt that connecting design with English was relatively natural in the ways that they share similar concepts:

> …most of the skills or tools or concepts or ideas that I articulate to them I will often try to, to re-articulate through the framework of art and design in some way. Because I think…the students struggle with making their education interconnected. Like actually seeing the

> relationships and some of the overlap and some of the similarities among these different disciplines that they're getting. So I do try to encourage it.

Despite his emphasis on encouraging the connections between writing and design, Maryanne also felt a unique ownership and identity of English teaching that he was not willing to sacrifice:

> …there are also moments when I feel like my discipline has something very specific and valuable to give. That may not be related to design and may actually go against design in some way…umm…and so like, for instance, um, their design curriculum is highly collaborative. And I do want them as writers to be collaborative, so I do share that value with design. But I sometimes feel as if writing and reading, these basic literacy activities, are sometimes, they become over-reliant on groupthink, groupwork, collaborative, and they don't learn how to cultivate themselves as individuals. And I feel like that is something that my discipline and my culture can maybe help them with. Become stronger individuals.

Another English faculty member, Time Struggler, offered specific examples of how the English department collaborated with the design faculty:

> We've for years now, have introduced students the first year to writing about a painting, and we've always either had a…either Foundation um, instructors come who are specifically painters or illustrators often. Sometimes we had Art historians do this but um, uh last time we had…we had people from the [name of department] come and talk.

Natasha Ma similarly commented on how the English faculty build on design studies to help shape their courses:

> For example…[course name]…what used to be that first essay whatever it was a personal essay or whatever, now it's the writing about a piece of artwork….um, actually I think it's, it's sort of

> nice to have…to have to kind of re-design…it's sort of fun to play with it and see how to, to redesign…so I don't….I'm…I don't resist that too much, I think it's kinda nice to…to take from their disciplines and try to….to make the class more appropriate to something they can get excited about in their own…in their own major.

The most common refrain from English faculty about how their work connects with a discipline-specific institution was that of the lack of transfer from English classes to other classes. Maryanne put it simply by saying, "the students struggle with making their education interconnected. Like actually seeing the relationships and some of the overlap and some of the similarities among these different disciplines that they're getting." Time Struggler also commented:

> I do wish they went to the writing center more for their design courses than I hear and can tell that they do….and not just think of it as something that I do when I'm taking an English class. Um, I think…for a number of years, we noticed that, and I would notice this because students would come to me with a paper for a design course, for me to talk with them about, and I noticed that the transfer of skills was not happening for them. And a lot…a lot of it had to do with their own motivation. Their idea was "Now I'm in a design course, I don't have to worry about English class-type requirements". And it might not be verbalized exactly that way, but that's what was going on in their thinking. And you could tell, um, that we were getting much better papers from them than their design faculty was getting. So, um, I do think…I have…I have thought that, at times that I wish that they would use the writing center for their other classes. More than they do.

In acknowledging the lack of transfer, Francis suggested that this might be an appropriate role for the Writing Center to further encourage:

> I've heard from all the disciplines that they have difficulty transferring all different kinds of skills back and forth….I don't know how the writing center can help that…other than the fact that you see…we see what they do in the English class but they come to you in other contexts too, so you can kind of remind them of things…um…I think that the writing center here is…uh, it's amazing really, the students use the writing center here, to such a huge degree. And…I don't really know what more you could do…honestly.

Natasha Ma also alluded to the idea that this disciplinary transfer of skills might be an appropriate role for the writing center:

> …the role of the writing center…I think it is to work with the students um…all the way through from freshman to…to their senior year so that there's a relationship that's developed…and that it goes across the curriculum…so it's not just, you know, in their English classes…

Effectively teaching the transfer of skills in first-year composition courses has been a key challenge in Composition studies for many years. Wardle (2007) laments the fact that there is such a dearth of scholarly research studies to investigate this challenge when she writes:

> Although there have been a few theoretical discussions of writing transfer and FYC (Foertsch), writing centers (Hagemann), and advanced writing courses (Kain and Wardle), nearly all research studies of writing-related transfer are confined to the field of professional communication. Composition researchers have conducted only three case studies (McCarthy; Walvoord and McCarthy; Carroll) that discuss FYC writing-related transfer problems—and these were not studies initially or primarily interested in transfer. (2007, p. 65)

Julia further commented that this lack of transfer also indicates a common misperception about the role of English faculty and the abilities of language learners in the classroom:

> I think sometimes there's a misunderstanding of the role of the English department and the role of the Writing Center in a discipline-specific school, that we're all seen as service in a way. Um…and there's not a lot of…well, I wouldn't say from everyone but I think in some cases there's not a lot of understanding in the way that service works. That you know, um, that English is a skill if you're a native speaker or if you're an ESL speaker that has to be…you know, developed…not just developed but practiced in order for it to stay strong um, and so they might be able to write really well…this is something that [name omitted] and I have talked about a lot because it seems like every, you know, every sometime of the year this comes up as a huge issue with our students not being able to write in the design classes and why can't they write but I think, um, I think there needs to be sort of an understanding that they spend a lot of time in design classes and they spend a fifth of that time in the writing class, so if they're not…getting good writing behavior modeled for them, they're probably not going to think it's that important. And I think that that…that's not the fault of the…the…the focus discipline school it's just…you know just falls out that situation so I think it's important for all of us to sort of work as a collective and try to explain…the importance of writing.

This theme of problems with transfer from English classes to disciplinary courses emerged from both English faculty and the Writing Center Coordinator. Samantha's voice reinforces the English faculty viewpoint:

> …possibly the problem is that the students separate these skills and identify them as English skills and they don't transfer them into writing a paper in the [name of department] or spelling

> things correctly in graphically designed posters. That's…that's probably the biggest problem that I see…

Transfer of skills is another key issue that could yield stronger social capital for the ADU-Q Writing Center within the entire institutional context. This issue is further explored in the Implications section of Chapter Five.

Ancillary Question: How do peer tutors factor into the perceived role of the writing center?

Cumulatively, English faculty perceived peer tutors as a positive addition to ADU-Q's writing center. Most suggested a general feeling of skepticism at the beginning; as Francis stated, "I think people were skeptical at first, um…but it has become a really strong program…". The ADU-Q Writing Center Coordinator, Samantha, further validated this sentiment when she voiced how her perspective had changed over time:

> Well, you have convinced me, actually, with the peer tutor program. You know [name omitted], who trained me, uh, when…when I first began talking with her she said "Don't even try peer tutors. The students will not use them because they don't trust their peers. They want the authentic thing. They're used to, you know, they have money, they're used to buying the very best, and they don't consider their peers the very best." …at some point between [name omitted] and now, uh, we really had a changing student body, and we really had enough demand that we needed peer tutors. …I'm tickled to see our students learning that these students who have training can help them. And I'm especially tickled to see them going to the guys. Because you know we started out here as a female institution and I think the idea that they can collaborate and learn to work with each other is, uh, a very necessary mental change for the betterment of Qatar.

Samantha's recognition of the changing social dynamics in Qatar further reinforces the value of the sociocultural perspective adopted by this study. This sociocultural perspective acknowledges how the dynamic society and online changes in participants' lives and their environment can play a pivotal role in their perspectives (T.-Y. Kim, 2011).

The English faculty voices indicate a positive perception of the peer tutor program; however, feedback tended to focus on more general ideals of peer tutoring – being a positive model or mentor, being closer in age to students, etc. – rather than any specific language and writing development. Jerry commented:

> Overall, I think it's a fantastic, really a fantastic, um, endeavor, and uh…very worthwhile because it feeds back into the whole idea of the culture of writing, and when you have peers that can model to, you know, a freshman or whatnot, like "one day maybe you will be a peer tutor" or you can be, you know, you'll move to that level of confidence…that sort of thing I think is…sends a really positive message, a hopeful message to our students…as writers.…but just by virtue of A) having more people available to work with them; B) having people…much closer, proximity I guess to their age group, umm, and who are typically also students, whether here or elsewhere, uh, I think just sends a really, really strong message to our writers that "you know what, you know, you can move in this direction", you know one day you can be a peer tutor here, you know.

Time Struggler also stated:

> I think it's a great program. I really do. Um, I think it's a wonderful idea. Again, we are helping to develop student leaders. And because they are responsible for helping other students with language, I imagine that this will make them more conscious of language, conscious about how to write well…I have a feeling it will help them develop in their, help them develop their

own ideas and also in their writing. So it will help them improve, as well as the students they're working with.

Francis also responded with a positive perception of the peer tutor program:

> I think it's fantastic! I think what you've done is amazing. Um…and I think people were skeptical at first, um…but that it has become a really strong program, I think a peer can impact a student in even a different way than an instructor can because the student feels like they can relate to this peer a little more, but it also gives them something to aspire to like "here's somebody like me who writes well…" and can teach others and help others, um…so I think it breaks down that idea that we can't be good writers because we're not native speakers or we're not…or because we're ESL…I think the peer tutors have been really professional and kind and they're really working hard to make the best…out of the student work and working with them I've not gotten any sense that there's been any like….sense of being appalled by what they see or judgmental or anything like that I think they've been really wonderful and they're proud of their roles in the writing center, and active and it's brought another vibe to it and its definitely made the immediate presence of the writing center more sophisticated…you know, these kids have skills with social media and video…so its brought a whole different spirit into the writing center. I think it's great. And I like having students from other universities come over…um, it helps them know what we do here and it just helps build bridges between campuses…and I like that a couple are male….we've never had a male writing center person… I think it's a fantastic program…

Julia offered a unique perspective, which likely stemmed from her own personal experience from being a graduate student working in a writing center with undergraduates:

> …at first they're…I was worried that maybe there would be a conflict of interest because they would be taking classes that they would also be tutoring for…you know? So they weren't like grad students teaching undergrads, they were undergrad teaching undergrads…but…um, since we don't really have grad students who are capable at this point of taking on that role and I think you guys have selected um…such a strong and sort of responsible and talented group of peer tutors, you know your selection process is pretty rigorous and I'm sure you talk a lot about the ways they should interact with their peers in the circumstance that doesn't seem like "I'm so much better than you"…I think it's great.

Julia further noted how the peer tutors and English department offer very similar methods of teaching:

> …and also it's something that we do in our own classrooms you know, at least for [course name] I can't constantly be…I mean I can model thesis writing but I also have to let them work in small groups a lot and so in some ways they are tutoring each other, even and helping each other through the process of writing even…without having the official peer tutor title so it's not that strange or…you know…or like beyond the scope of what they're already doing.

While these generally positive comments may be attributed to my own positionality in the institutional framework, some English faculty still freely expressed their reservations about the questionable competency of peer tutors. For example, despite Jerry's great enthusiasm for the program, he noted:

> …the only concern that I've had, and it's maybe crossed my desk once…? Once or twice…I don't think more than that…is the actual level of competence, writing competence, of some of the peer tutors. And why I say that is um…you know, you've been in…I think it was maybe one…one or two maybe, not more than that, but emails from the students…the peer tutors, after a visit from, with one of my students. And I've seen some grammatical errors in their email.

> Now I routinely have…make errors in my own email, I, you know, leave out the subject or leave out a verb, or whatever, it happens, I'm just writing fast without thinking….but they don't strike me to be that type of error, you know, of just sort of quick writing, it's more sort of verb accord, so to speak, and so that poses, for me, a slight concern about….but having said that, when you read the overall email, I mean it's so well-written compared to, probably the student that they are helping could ever write, then…I think you know, still that small con is far outweighed by the pro of having another student there who can write something coherent and can look for coherence in a piece and can help spot the, the larger grammatical issues, if you know what I mean.

Data triangulation of this study necessitates a review of the tutorial reports and yields insightful data about the reports English faculty received. Excerpts of three unedited peer tutor reports, all from the same tutor, sent to Jerry include the following:

1. Good Morning Mr. Jerry,Your student is very keen on preparing a good portfolio cover letter for you. She has all these ideas and is excited to write it all up, however there might be a slight distraction with the organization of the paper. i tried to advice her on reasoning some of the ideas she wrote down and also gave her a brief format on what might seem like a good flow for her paper. Her paper was not complete, so i helped on basically what I recieved from her. Regards,[name omitted]
2. [Client name omitted] was pleased to see her grades improve and seems so excited to visit the writing center now, which is great.We are here to help, and the feed back of the professor was helpful on how she could further improve her work. So, we worked more on the essay and then we worked on writing the cover letter for her work. We spent the session brain storming on ideas that she had. So, I made her have a conversation with me, and type out all what shes

telling me. It really made a difference and got her out of the writers bock phase. Regards,[name omitted]

3. Good Morning Profeesor.So sorry about the confusion I had earlier about the citation regarding the cover letter. [Client name omitted], unfortinately booked the appointment in the last ten minutes of the open slot, so I barely had the time to attend to her cover letter in detail. She requested for a quick look at her grammatical errors and organizational structure.There seems to be a decent flow, but not too sure about how many words is expected from the student.Thank you,Regards,[name omitted]

The evidence above clearly indicates that the peer tutor's reports are not polished or refined. While some attempt at formality is indicated with "Good morning" and "Regards", the reports contain many errors with spelling, punctuation, and more. While it is not within the scope of this study to analyze grammatical structures, these tutorial reports provide insight as to how faculty perceptions of the writing center develop.

Maryanne similarly expressed concerns about peer tutor competence:

> …there are some worries that they might not be as qualified as they could be, to help other students.…I'm a little bit concerned that um…that they may not be getting the same quality or level of instruction that is given from someone who has a lot of experience and someone who has been well-trained in it.

Maryanne received the following reports from a peer tutor:

1. Good Morning Professor,[client name omitted] came in with her 11 page essay on Mubarak. She showed me your advice in the email you sent her. I understood your point and tried to see how things could be fixed with her paper. I see how some of the information in her work drifts away from the question and i recommended that she keeps thinking about the relevance her

paragraph has with Mubarak. So, Im guessing she will mention him a little more in her paper. I could not spend much time with helping her see some of her grammatical errors because I tried to focus on how she could improve her main claim. Regards,[name omitted]

2. Good Afternoon Sir,[client name omitted] came to me with her lenthy paper and I noticed that she had problems with titling her chapters and having a good flow in her organization. She also tends to repeat herself. I tried to point out places where she did that, but half an hour is not enough to go through the entire paper.Sorry if i missed out anything in terms of her grammatical errors.Regards,[name omitted]

These reports are similar to those received by Jerry, and perhaps offer validating evidence as to why they may have reservations about peer tutor competence. The last report here is insightful from the perspective of the peer tutor, as she writes "Sorry if i missed out anything in terms of her grammatical errors." Here again is evidence of Bizzaro & Toler's (1986) work on writing apprehension, and how writers may avoid certain aspects of writing with which they themselves are not comfortable.

Time Struggler echoed Maryanne's concerns with her feedback about peer tutors:

> …I have a slight concern about maybe their um, level of achievement or their expertise because they are second language, uh, still in college, students, um, but I trust the writing center faculty to supervise and work with them on this. So it's a concern that's not really deep. It doesn't run deep, I just have wondered about it at times.

Time Struggler received the following report from a peer tutor:

1. [Client name omitted] requested for a quick reading check through her essay for "The Undertaking" Critical Analysis, and I was happy to help with that.From what I read, she seems to be sturggling with organizing her essay, which indirectly affects her introduction. I tried to explain the fact that the introduction briefly summarizes what is to come in the

> after parts of the Essay. She thought it would be risky to jumble everything up in one paragraph, and thus explained her point of view as per the story line. I told her it would be better to talk about one technique and finish talking about it, instead of bringing it up again after a few paragraphs, since it seemed disorganized.She does tend to repeat certain words, and I pointed that out to her.She is definitly coming by again to have another check through her work, sometime today.Regards,[name omitted]

Despite any reservations or hesitations, all English faculty returned to being strong supporters of the peer tutor program and perceived the tutors as a positive addition to the Writing Center. Additional research would be beneficial in order to determine if these perceptions are accurate or simply a response to my insider researcher role. Furthermore, these concerns may lead to positive change in writing center programming and outreach, particularly for peer tutor training. Perhaps it would be beneficial to administer a test or other examination for potential peer tutors to pass before training completion.

Ancillary Data: Emergent Themes

In accordance with qualitative research methodology, this study adopted Bogdan & Biklen's (2007) line-by-line analysis approach, with open coding. Initial coding revealed any and all emergent themes in interviewee responses, not necessarily targeted through the research questions. This section will explore these emergent themes.

The first, perhaps most salient theme was the emergence of unsolicited suggestions and recommendations for ADU-Q's writing center. Many of these stemmed from questions about the role of the Writing Center in assisting faculty and staff. English faculty indicated that although services for faculty might be valuable, necessary, and appreciated, they should only be offered only if writing center staff time permits. Jerry, for example, suggested:

> [M]y concern…for the writing center, though, is whether or not those requests from faculty overtax the resources…and so I do feel that the first line of services...is…you know, basically, the students come first. And it has to be like that. Um, so whether or not there's a…and I don't know, I have never asked…how are the work flows managed? Can those requests from people like me and other faculty members really be accommodated without sinking the ship? Because obviously that's not in anybody's interest…

English faculty also proposed the idea of offering workshops. Jerry stated:

> …that might be something, and it might be a kind of outreach in a sense that can be done, time permitting as always…resources and time permitting, but where, you know, small workshops could be done where it could be like writing, you know, or proper citation style, or whatever, that students could actually sign up for and get like a small, 4-5, in a session. Not that they're not doing that in their classes, but that could be something that's open…uh…to people beyond…or people that have finished with English and are doing other classes. But just something that you know, we will tackle this today, or we will tackle that today, or you know, how do you self-edit? You know. A workshop on that might be really valuable.

Time Struggler offered a similar recommendation:

> I think it would be really neat to see the writing center faculty do more workshops with the students.…I really do. I don't know how…we are such a busy school…I really don't…and the scheduling is…just…an octopus, so I don't know how that can be arranged. I know at times that the writing center instructors have offered workshops, but I would like to see that done more. And, um, but I…that's just kind of a wish right now.

Julia, in discussing her dissatisfaction with faculty and staff as clients in the writing center, also mentioned the possibility of workshop-type enrichment classes:

> …maybe I would be like interested in the idea of…of it being a course of a long-term like course-related thing where they're [faculty and staff] actually learning skills so if the writing center was to expand maybe it would expand to graduate like…you know…enrichment or faculty enrichment…

Julia also commented on how the English faculty-Writing Center relationship could be strengthened, "I feel like in that way we could work more closely but I feel like there needs to be maybe a forum for that or like a meeting time and place where that could be …formalized …." Julia and Francis both noted the lack of English writing competency by ADU-Q staff and design faculty, and suggested ways in which the upper administration might consider English language competency of incoming faculty. Julia noted:

> I mean obviously I, in the English searches that wouldn't be…wouldn't be like make sure they're good writers, obviously they're a good writer but is that coming up in other searches? Is that something they feel needs to be… in the forefront of the minds of people looking to hire…Or does it not really matter…and if it doesn't really matter…that's kind of…a shame, I think…. I feel like it's not the real…world, you know, I don't know if it serves the faculty very well to think of ever leaving this kind of circumstance, if they would get hired in another university if they weren't able to…express themselves clearly through writing.

Francis also noted the challenge of working in an institutional framework staffed by so many language learners when she bluntly stated, "We really do have professors who are seriously ESL." She further articulated the ways in which this taxed both the Writing Center staff and English faculty in assisting these GEL faculty:

> Particularly, I mean, that's a slot that a student is not able to get into then…or the writing center person is then taking this work home, which is even worse….um, you shouldn't be taking writing center work home. Yeah I don't know. Maybe should…there are copy editors all over Doha, maybe they should pay for those services.

Another emergent theme related to the purpose and existence of the American higher education institution within Qatar. Responses suggested almost an existential questioning of the governmental mandate in the region. Jerry questioned the purpose of his mission when discussing the use of English in an Arabic-speaking context:

> … it's really a philosophical slash ideological um…question. And it goes to the core of what the purpose of, you know, the Knowledge City campuses are. Is it Westernization slash modernization? Is it globalization? Um…or is it enhancement of local culture and local skills? I think…clarity is desirable…you know, in terms of what it is that we're trying to achieve… and then realize that um…culturally, um, and in terms of identity, uh the role of Arabic, and other languages, but primarily Arabic, is still…uh…you know, um very important and should not be kind of…erased. There is a clash there. And what people talk about is sort of the cultural erosion that you risk seeing um…Arabic relegated to the mosque only…So um, I would say that a frank discussion would be useful… You know, what are we really trying to achieve? I don't think that frank discussion has happened yet. Because if the leadership had said, well this is what we really want, um then there might be scope to provide more support for Arabic.

Maryanne said:

> …you know, ideally we would not be here. I mean that's sort of my opinion. Ideally they would not need us nor want us...the powers that be that have invited all of these branch

> campuses. I mean the upper levels of government, right, are the people that are spearheading this whole endeavor. I mean…it's so difficult because the system is set up in such a monolingual way. You know like myself for instance…I can't help them with their Arabic, that's just the reality of my position. I can help them enrich and strengthen their speaking, writing, thinking skills in English…um, but I can't help them with their Arabic and…ideally they would… have some kind of system that that would be multilingual or maybe focuses almost exclusively in Arabic with English as an option… but the political…it's so complicated, you know, the story of why we're here goes back hundreds and hundreds of years…

Julia also indicated the lack of clear purpose in the country and how that might affect the role of English and Arabic education:

> …it depends on the direction that the country…wants to go in I think…and the sorts of program [s] …because it would be I'm assuming it would be taught in English but…um…that's a political conversation too….and maybe there will be a shift to sort of embrace Arabic and I don't know, you know, how that will play out and…there already is a shift to embrace Arabic so…. It's all [National Institution] so it's their decision…their decision is what happens…

While English faculty tended to question their role in the country's scheme, Samantha felt the country's vision was somewhat clear:

> [W]e are here for…a particular reason, for a particular time, and they don't want us to have citizenship, they don't want us to stay, this is their country. So I have really mixed feelings about that in that they are offering this education to the world, basically, which I think is a good thing. The favoritism I think it's going to take a long time, but I think possibly that can be an irritant down the road. Don't know. But uh, I just…I think it just depends on the changing

> nature of the student body. Now, we do have a quota, you know we have to have so many Qatari….and maybe that will, maybe that's why….you know, they don't want the imbalance to have maybe 4 or 5 Qatari that the rest of the school hates because they are favorites. I don't know. It's a very complex thing, but um…I just, I don't know how the rest of the world is going to feel about that. I think if Human Rights become greater and the American ideal of uh, equality becomes greater, perhaps that's going to be a sore spot, an issue. But I just don't know. I think it will take awhile. I don't think anything in the immediate future. But I think down the road.

Undoubtedly, Qatar remains in a stage of rapid development that will continue to transform the spheres of education, society, and politics. Participants also discussed this phenomenon in relation to how they view Qatari and non-Qatari students. While Francis admitted "I don't even really know a lot of times which ones are Qatari and which ones are not….," most faculty indicated a clear distinction between the two groups. Jerry noted that despite the benefits and services prioritize for Qatari students, this may, in fact, be a drawback:

> I know this sounds funny to say this almost an at-risk population [Qatari students] when it comes to equal access to um, the job market and education. And why I say that is…basically inviting people to do something and having them actually do it are two different things… there's clearly the, the Qatari government's agenda, including, you know, the vision 2030[15], and the pillars of human development, one of them, and the idea that they want an educated and capable citizenry that can, you know, be productive in the workforce, so…how do we create that…can you, can you create that more for one segment of the population than the other? And when I say population I'm talking about you know, expats versus, or international students,

[15] See http://www.qatarchamber.com/about-qatar-2/qatar-national-vision-2030/ for details of the Qatar National Vision 2030.

> whatever if you wanna say that, versus the Qataris…and how does that play out in, in the classroom. You know, how does that impact on, you know, does that mean that so…I need to be calling on Qatari students more often to answer questions? Because I'm doing kind of Affirmative Action in the class?

Natasha Ma shared this concern of Qataris becoming an at-risk population:

> …because of the way their [Qatari] elementary and you know, all of that early learning was happening the way it took place, um…it has…it's penalized them a little…it's put them behind, so that when these other students from other places, other countries come shining through….it's….it's not fair, it's kind of sad…but I think….I think it's changing….I wanna say it's changing…but at the same time…if the country insists on… it could hold them back if they don't take advantage of….of some of the …people who have lived here…

Maryanne echoed similar concerns about Qatari students being "left behind".

> I feel like the Qatari students are kind of getting left behind somehow. And that the expat students because they're so…they seem to be so well-educated, motivated, and everything else to begin with, they're the ones who are getting the most out of this education. And the Qataris are somehow getting left out. Not intentionally…I think it's, it's, it's a sort of a product of the situation.

Notably, Maryanne also drew an unsolicited parallel from Qatarization to Affirmative Action programs in the West:

> Well Affirmative Action…we've got affirmative action...and so it's a type of affirmative action in a way….I think it's different it's not trying to compensate for you know historical trauma…right? It's, that's not what it's trying to compensate for, it's trying to insure that the

> Qataris continue to own their own country. That they are still in power. That it's making sure that they're still the powerful wealthy ones. And that the fruits of all of this oil and gas and everything else is going to the indigenous people…and, you know, on the one hand, well I don't know, I think of the Qatarization relationship to Native Americans because I grew up right on the edge of a big reservation and…gambling rights are given to the Native Americans so they are the only ones that can operate casinos and this and that. And I see the same kind of, for lack of a better word, damage being done to Native Americans that are kind of being done to the Qataris in the sense that they are being given all of these things. And it actually works as a disincentive to then strive. It really does. It would happen to me too! I don't think this has to do with race or ethnicity or anything. If I was put in…I sometimes have fantasies about being a Qatari! Seriously…

Another emergent theme related to questions of ethical responsibility related to helping students. The question of ethics related to writing was an issue for both English faculty and the Writing Center in terms of how much assistance students should receive. Maryanne explained his conflicted feelings:

> I think there is, there is an ongoing issue of how much help…and I think as a faculty member I struggle with that issue too. You know, when I'm going in to evaluate papers I think to myself, "How much specific advice, you know, should I give?" Should I do sort of these line-by-line scans and edits….is that really helping them to learn? Or is that just showing, are they then just going to go in and correct these sort of mechanical superficial things and then turn it back in to try to improve their grade but that haven't actually internalized any learning…so I think that's, that's a …you know, how much help? That's an issue that concerns the writing center and it

concerns faculty I think too. How much little help to give or what's too much, what's too little. I think that's…that's controversial...I think that's controversial.

Natasha Ma indicated that her position had changed throughout her years at ADU-Q:

…I've tried more and more through the years is to steer away from doing that line-by-line editing, proofreading and I try to emphasize with my students the 3 levels of, of revising. And focusing more…in class and with me on those first 2 levels….uh…where it's getting more into their critical thinking and organizational issues and all those kinds of things, and trying not to…to…do as much of the editing and proofreading…um…and I…I don't think I deal so much with, with what might be called more ESL issues…either because I feel like, um, I feel like you know, they're supposed to be coming to us with a certain level…if somehow a student had kind of slipped through the…. Come in under the radar or something…I just feel like somehow it's not fair to the other students…and also just time-wise we just don't have the time. …if I didn't have a life of my own, maybe I could address the ESL issues with a few of the students but I just feel like…we have to draw the line somewhere. And because this is the university where we have raised that bar and you know it's higher than ever, I feel like we can't slip back…we can't go back to, you know, to…to taking on too much of that responsibility to address those issues. Especially when there are other resources…for them to go…now we try to send them, well we try to catch it early enough so that they…they can utilize the other resources so, yeah, but at first I felt guilty if I didn't do it…I don't feel guilty anymore.

Jerry offered this question of levels of help as one of his reasons for referring students to the Writing Center:

I feel, ethically, a little bit better if they're able to sit in with somebody else and work with them on their writing and then bring it back to me. And I also know that the work that's done

> at the writing center is a training of sorts….so to get them to spot…issues in their writing, and I think that's really valuable for them

Time Struggler explained how she saw a shift in the level of help students had received:

> There was a period of time, when I thought perhaps the writing center was overhelping some of the students. And I can't even tell you what year or years that was….um, it was awhile ago….um, I thought they might be overhelping with polishing up sentences and…um…perfecting sentence construction. To the point where I couldn't tell whether the paper was the student's or the writing center instructor's, or even by the time I got through with all the feedback whether it was mine! You know. I think there's been a pullback from that. On all fronts.

Interestingly, Samantha also hinted that she did help too much at times, "I'm sure I earned a couple of Bachelor's degrees along with some of the students. I had repeat students who came in daily, essentially, because their language use was really….not up to par."

Finally, although English faculty questioned to what level and degree they should provide direct language assistance, they were also optimistic about their students' willingness to read feedback and incorporate suggestions into their writing. Francis recalls:

> They ask for feedback more than they did in [home campus]. They follow feedback more. Students here, and I've actually had to sort of limit this…they will revise until…the last second…and in [home campus], I would give a first draft back with C, and you know, of course like reams and reams of marginalia…and then the kid would look at the C and tuck it in the backpack and then the same paper would come in for the next 2 drafts. They were okay about the C. And alright, I can live with that. Um, "I'm not English major" or whatever. Students

> here, if you give them a C, they're going to revise until…they're not at a C anymore. So I've actually had to limit the number of drafts that you can hand in and how much you can go up from the first draft. So if you get a C in the first draft, the highest grade you can get, really, is a B. Um…you know, because otherwise they'll literally turn in 15 drafts, and at that point, you have given them so much instruction, that it doesn't really represent their work anymore.

Time Struggler repeated this sentiment:

> …they get tons of feedback and they appreciate it and they read it. I noticed these students read the feedback more closely than students in the States. And they really do…it really means something to them. So I make sure, I consider it an ethical responsibility for me to give them lots of feedback on their papers.

This particular issue of feedback suggests a need for future research in the local context. For example, Sommers (1982) authored a landmark essay in which she examined the relatively futile attempts at effective feedback. If feedback is so important and meaningful to students studying in Qatar, what methods of conveying that feedback are most useful and valuable? What kind of feedback is being given? These comments offer another avenue into future research that extends beyond the scope of the present study.

These shifting perspectives from the English faculty and Writing Center Coordinator underscore the value of the sociocultural approach taken in this study. As the student demographics and institutional demands have changed throughout the years, the participants' expectations and perspectives have similarly transformed with regard to their understanding of the ADU-Q Writing Center.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This study has explored English faculty perceptions of the Writing Center at American Design University in Qatar. In-depth interviews were conducted with the six full-time English faculty, and this data was triangulated with interview data from the ADU-Q Writing Center Coordinator and tutorial session reports. In accordance with qualitative methodology, data was collected and analyzed through constant comparison and reflexivity (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Line-by-line analysis of interview transcripts led to emerging themes that were then presented in the Results section above. This final chapter offers an interpretive discussion of these results through a sociocultural framework and social capitalist viewpoint in the Middle Eastern context.

Discussion

Sociocultural Framework for Research in Writing Center Studies

Results of this study reinforced the appropriate selection of a sociocultural framework. Almost all participants' responses related to notions of what it means to be teaching and working in the local Qatari context. Work and life are inextricably linked. As Julia noted, "[E]verything in my life is completely connected to this job, if I lost my job I would lose where I live." Consequently, experiences in the classroom are connected to the participants' lives in ways that may be unfamiliar to faculty teaching in the U.S. context. Emerging themes such as the question of "What is our purpose here?" pervade the institutional atmosphere. Furthermore, evidence of changing perspectives over time resulting from the dynamic social and cultural environment led to changing understandings of the relationship with and role of the ADU-Q Writing Center.

The fact that faculty found their lives inextricably linked to their work also played a critical component of sociocultural connections within the local Qatari community. For example, faculty worked within an atmosphere of heightened awareness that it was not just the U.S.-based institution that shaped their role, but the broader Qatari government scheme. As Chapter One indicates, Qatari society is rapidly developing and changing. Within the governmental structure, there have been constant changes and reforms to the educational system. These changes impact every aspect of Qatari society, including the American higher education institutions. This trickle-down effect means that English faculty at ADU-Q are keenly aware of and impacted by small changes enacted in Qatar. These changes often come swiftly and with little room for questioning or recourse. For example, during the time of this study, the Qatari government made a decision, with little warning, to change the language of instruction at Qatar University from English to Arabic (Khatri, 2012b). The possibility of such rapid changes looms constantly in the background of faculty in Knowledge City.

The local context also dictates that ADU-Q prioritizes local Qatari students. Interestingly, this need for prioritization does not seem to transfer into the classroom. Despite government requests and laws for developing Qatari nationals' human capital, preference is not given to Qatari students in the classroom. English faculty at ADU-Q maintain egalitarian principles in the classroom, and, therefore, do not seem to give additional time or attention to any particular group of students.

Another sociocultural dynamic could be interpreted through Time Struggler's comments and actions, namely regarding her experience using writing center service as a student. Her experiences indicate the sociocultural influences on English faculty perceptions. Specifically, her experience as a student defined her understanding and appreciation of the role of writing centers in developing students' critical thinking skills. However, her expectations of the writing center's role at ADU-Q had changed somewhat due to the local, contextual nature of working with so many English language

learners. This unique environment led her to the belief that more targeted, technical instruction in language use and grammar was needed from the ADU-Q Writing Center that was not typically needed on the home campus in the U.S.

Other critical implications for the ADU-Q faculty-Writing Center relationship lie in the social, cultural, and political trajectory of the country, which aligns well with the sociocultural perspective of this study. Participants' voices repeated a refrain of uncertainty with regard to their own positionality and that of the students. The current institutional mandate is for them all to teach solely through English medium, and yet recent political decrees and societal undercurrents suggest that the country may be moving towards a bilingual society. Furthermore, despite the prioritized services for Qatari citizens, these students seem to be falling behind the educational curve in the classroom. What implications do these changes have for faculty in all disciplines at National Institution? At ADU-Q? In the Writing Center and for other support services?

Faculty-Writing Center Relationships

Despite the lack of permanence and vivid sense of temporality, English faculty voiced their perceptions of their relationship with the ADU-Q Writing Center, which acknowledged and explored the contextual, sometimes limiting factors of their work. While the local context plays an important role, English faculty perceptions of the ADU-Q Writing Center are shaped in ways that typically shape perceptions everywhere – based on experience and interaction with the Writing Center. English faculty cited tutorial session reports as critical to enhancing their understanding of and appreciation for what writing center staff actually did during tutorial sessions. They expressed appreciation for being provided a written summary report of the material that was covered with each individual. This implication supports other studies that have emphasized the importance of reporting to build solid

relationships with faculty; it also warrants a review of tutorials that are produced by peer tutors, which is explained in further detail below.

With regard to specific content covered, English faculty had a difficult time articulating distinctions between their role as faculty and the Writing Center's role. The most oft-cited comment related to time commitments – namely, faculty were overburdened with other obligations that did not permit them to invest in the time that some of these language learners would need in order to succeed at the university. This finding suggests that the roles of English faculty and writing center staff are almost interchangeable. Would smaller class sizes alleviate the need for a writing center altogether? With most English classes at ADU-Q capped at ten to fifteen students, it seems unlikely that class sizes would be reduced. Nonetheless, English faculty spoke confidently about their abilities to work with students one-on-one, just as in a typical writing center session.

The sociocultural framework of this study also highlights the dynamic perspectives of the English faculty-Writing Center relationship. For example, many of the participants' responses were very personal; in fact, to ensure absolute anonymity, some responses have not been recorded here. When English faculty changed at ADU-Q, often the dynamic and relationship between English faculty and the Writing Center changed. The small size and close-knit environment of ADU-Q often contributed to the professional relationship of the two groups. Most of the American-based branch campuses in Qatar are similarly small in size; therefore, this finding of such close personal-professional connection offers ideas for future research possibilities.

Within this sociocultural framework, this study aimed to inform a social capitalist approach to data analysis. In other words, the results of this study seek to inform how the social capital of a writing center might be enhanced through faculty-writing center collaboration. Increased collaboration and contact, such as that through personal networking and receipt of tutorial reports or other

communicative exchanges, seemed to bolster the positive perception of the writing center by English faculty. Faculty perceptions suggest that although there is a positive framework and collaborative approach, more could be done to "formalize" and strengthen the connections. English faculty members and the Coordinator allude to this as an upper administrative function within the institutional framework. Nonetheless, this study itself yielded an initial positive, collaborative outlet for enhancing the English faculty-Writing Center relationship. Participants in this study, as well as other employees in the institution who learned about this research, frequently expressed optimism, hope, and appreciation for what results might result from this exploratory study.

Faculty Perceptions of the Writing Center in the Qatari Context

Another unique finding relates to the first research question: What are English faculty perceptions of the ADU-Q Writing Center? The participants' voices, both from the English faculty and Writing Center Coordinator, suggest that while English faculty perceptions of the Writing Center may be positive, they have changed over time. These voices also offer insight as to the possible sources of a changing dynamic and possible growing disconnect. In other words, while Julia suggested that she may not collaborate as much due to time constraints and not wanting to confuse the students or Writing Center staff, Samantha viewed this decrease in collaboration as a reflection of the traditional lower status that writing centers have within an institutional framework. She noted that ADU-Q's Writing Center was similar to most "typical" writing centers by its lesser prestige compared to other departments. Samantha also made comments that echoed Perdue's (1991) assertion that "Writing-center directors have another kind of powerful evidence at hand…the progress reports and case histories we and our tutors write…" (p. 18). ADU-Q English faculty perceptions related to conference summaries reinforce Cogie's (1998) findings that conference summaries do provide additional insight for faculty to understand and appreciate the value of writing center work. Cogie's survey "confirmed the value of the weekly reports for the responding instructors" (Cogie p. 55).

While English faculty tended to agree that students should receive priority in receiving writing center support services, there was also clear indication of the perceived need for writing instruction for faculty and staff. As Francis aptly stated, "We really do have professors who are seriously ESL". Furthermore, results indicated that faculty who had experiences as clients in a writing center had been influenced by those tutorial sessions. Therefore, there is an identified need and an identified possibility for improving the level of English writing proficiency for ADU-Q faculty and staff. This finding may have implications for the future of staffing at ADU-Q's Writing Center; the level of staffing remains low, but with a demonstrated need to fill, the administration may consider the Writing Center a more key component of the overall institutional success.

Another finding specific to the needs of Qatar is that most of the English faculty and the ADU-Q Writing Center Coordinator commented on the need for more basic grammar instruction within the writing center. There was a shared acknowledgment that the Writing Center, indeed, was an appropriate place to address the challenge of language development, in particular when students entered the institution less prepared than most of their peers. This finding tends to contrast with general writing center scholarship that recommends writing center work begins with higher order concerns. And while some English faculty embraced this type of teaching themselves, other English faculty participants saw it better-situated in the Writing Center. As Francis stated, "I'm like I don't know what those terms mean…dangling whatevers and…" English faculty and the ADU-Q Coordinator seem to agree that higher order concerns remain a priority in the Writing Center, but the technical, lower order concerns of grammar and mechanics also play a fundamental role in the work within ADU-Q's Writing Center – more so, perhaps, than in other contexts.

English faculty and the ADU-Q Coordinator shared the common stance that although the genre of writing at a design school was seemingly of no major concern, they all worked to support the design

faculty through the teaching of writing. Furthermore, there was agreement that transfer of knowledge between and across disciplines remained a concern while working with students. This shared concern was one that offered another avenue for future research. How can English faculty and the Writing Center at ADU-Q work collaboratively and effectively to support disciplinary-specific writing?

English faculty also raised concerns about the relative academic weaknesses with which many Qatari students enter into the classroom. This population of students, which receives preference and priority services according to government mandates, may, in fact, be "falling behind". These sentiments echo recent news reports that suggest a level of underpreparation the Qatari students face (Khatri, 2011). The ADU-Q Writing Center, a support service for university students, faculty, and staff, may be best positioned to provide the language and critical thinking support that English faculty indicate is needed. However, there remains uncertainty as to how the various levels of administration and hierarchy within ADU-Q and National Institution may implement such a prioritization. For example, American higher education institutions are bound by egalitarian principles and legal constraints for all stakeholders – how might this conflict with National Institution's vision to give preference to all Qatari citizens? Participants' voices echoed similar concerns with questions about the direction in which the country planned to proceed. While it was not the aim of this study to answer these types of questions, they do bring these challenges to the forefront of education in Qatar.

Francis asked the question about what English faculty might do for the Writing Center. Walker (1991), who writes about the importance of a solid faculty-writing center relationship, offers one way to enhance this collaboration: "A third way to involve faculty directly in the Writing Center is to invite them to make short presentations to the tutors in an area of their expertise" (p. 13). This suggestion is also worthy of further investigation. If English faculty such as Francis are offering expertise and others, such as Julia, are hinting that a more formalized faculty-writing center relationship be formed,

then Walker's invitation to make presentations may be a likely solution at ADU-Q. Another key findings of this study relates to the challenge that students face with regard to transferring skills across the disciplines. This perception related to the English faculty-Writing Center relationship because both groups expressed concern that students were not able to utilize the skills they learned in their English classes by transferring those to their design majors. This challenge has great implications for future research, in particular for enhancing the social capital of the Writing Center within the institution. The ADU-Q Writing Center is positioned in such a way that gives Center staff access to students throughout their entire university education – not just in particular courses or during particular years of their studies. Therefore, it may be a positive benefit for the ADU-Q Writing Center staff to focus on this opportunity to maintain continuous interaction with students. Would it be meaningful and relevant for each student to be assigned to a particular Writing Center instructor or tutor throughout their education at ADU-Q? What types of training strategies could be implemented in the Writing Center to ensure continuity of teaching for each individual learner?

Perceived Competence of Peer Tutors in the Qatari Context

Another issue, particularly relevant to the ADU-Q Writing Center, relates to questions about peer tutors and their competence. Faculty raised concerns about the level of ability peer tutors had to effectively improve the writing of their peers. This study involved elements of action research, because in the course of interviewing I was able to offer information about the training process for peer tutors[16]. Nonetheless, the perception of peer tutor competence raised certain questions that indicate a need for more research. For example, the primary concern was in relation to "competence" and based on written tutorial reports that a faculty member had received. How might this compare to perceptions of native speaker peer tutors in the writing center? Is their competence questioned based on written

[16] Tutor training at ADU-Q consists of participating in 8 hours of workshops, conducting 3-4 observations, reading *The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors*, and writing a reflective essay about the training experience.

reports? How and when is their competence put into question? At the time of this study, there were no native English speaking peer tutors at ADU-Q. This study's research questions were answered through the triangulation of faculty voices, the ADU-Q Coordinator's perspective, and tutorial session reports written by peer tutors. This exploration brought to light some considerations, such as level of competency, for future planning and programming that will enhance the social capital of the Writing Center. For example, at present, peer tutors provide a writing sample during the initial interview process, but perhaps they should also pass a written examination as part of the training completion process in order to become peer tutors. As discussed above, the written tutorial session reports that English faculty receive seem to play an important role in the development of their perceptions of the Writing Center. Therefore, it is crucial for ADU-Q's writing center to determine how the reports written by peer tutors can be effectively vetted or presented to faculty.

Another possibility to improve English faculty perceptions of the peer tutors would be for them to get to know the peer tutors better. The personal connections that English faculty had with writing center staff often made a positive impact on the faculty-writing center relationship at ADU-Q. Furthermore, the faculty who had experience with peer tutors in their own classrooms was positive. Increased interaction within this small institution suggests additional positive benefits. Future studies and collaboration with all ADU-Q faculty may yield further insights as to an appropriate approach.

Faculty as Writing Center Clients in the Qatari Context

This study began with the goals of exploring English faculty perceptions through the lens of social capitalism as a means of strengthening the bonds of these groups for the purposes of increasing *student* visits. One unanticipated outcome of the interviews was the overwhelmingly positive attitude English faculty had about *themselves*, or other faculty, as Writing Center clients. For example, in response to what Jerry thought about faculty use of the Writing Center, he noted,

> I think it is, it is excellent because first of all…if I can model for my students that I, too, seek out your help, then it boosts the stature of the writing center, and it also sends the message that everybody's learning how to write, at all stages of the game, and everybody needs help and support in their writing, at all stages of the game.

Time Struggler also talked about her use of Writing Center expertise:

> I, um, well, I certainly ask questions of writing center faculty, in fact today I ran I in there and caught Samantha…um, because a student needs to know how to cite um, a chapter from a book that has not been translated, and I have allowed her to use it as a source. And um, so we….together, Samantha and I, I kind of used her as a sound board on this and then together we figured out what needed to be included in the Works Cited citation. So it's things like that ….I've asked you questions, you know…you all are much better grammarians than all of us. And that's one thing I would have to say that I really appreciate about the writing center is that um, what I find about the writing center faculty is that they don't just give answers they actually teach in the writing center.

Interestingly, Francis concluded our interview by asking, "What would the writing center here want from the English program different than what we're doing now? Like in an ideal world, what could we be doing better for the writing center?" Her question began to indicate the importance of simply conducting research – by asking questions and involving English faculty, I was beginning a conversation that could extend to the future. Despite this sense of optimism, the recurring theme of time restrictions and limitations remained pervasive, and suggests that collaborative efforts between faculty and the Writing Center may need to be implemented, at least initially, by imposing a top-down approach.

English faculty beliefs about general use of Writing Center services by faculty across the disciplines varied. While participants seemed to recognize the Center as offering valuable service for all writers, they also tended to share similar concerns about overuse by faculty, particularly for those whom English is not the native language. This study's results indicate that there is a continued need for writing instruction for faculty and staff at ADU-Q, but that this need is not currently being adequately met.

Implications

One of the most salient results yielded from this study is a simple reaffirmation of what earlier writing center studies have suggested: the need for ongoing, qualitative, context-specific research is imperative to the forward progress and development of work in the field. There is a need to continue and develop relationships between faculty and the writing center. The ADU-Q English faculty are likely the most well-informed about the existence of and services provided by the writing center. As Samantha stated:

> I think a large thing is their [faculty] knowing us. Their having heard us talk about what we do…uh, if they don't know us, I think we have a weaker relationship with them and I think there's…less, um, likelihood that they're going to strongly recommend us.

Taking the time to simply schedule a formalized meeting time and getting feedback offered insight into English and Writing Center faculty perceptions. Participants felt actively engaged; furthermore, they all expressed interest in learning about the results. For example, Jerry ended our interview with the following sentiment:

> [J]ust to do this, to just have that focus on writing center uh…I mean…clearly you're using here specifically, but as a wider area, um…I think is really, really valuable…umm, you know,

> and for the same reason that I'm a believer in what the writing center does. So that anything you can do that, to enhance its role, and its effectiveness, I'm all for it.

Francis also concluded our interview with offers of assistance by asking, "What would the writing center here want from the English program different than what we're doing now? Like in an ideal world, what could we be doing better for the writing center?" Her question opened the door for increased dialogue between the Writing Center and English faculty.

Limitations

As with all research, this exploratory study had some limitations. One limitation, previously noted above, is my own inability to understand Arabic. This limitation did not cause any considerable challenges in data collection or analysis for the present study, although it is notable given the bilingual contextual environment. In other words, while it was not necessary to understand Arabic in order to delve into the English faculty perceptions of the writing center, this understanding would have yielded even more insight into the sociocultural framework within which this study took place.

One of the most surprising limitations was that of faculty time. Despite my insider position, as well as having a generally good rapport with all study participants, there was a constant, clear indication that time was particularly valuable. A number of participants, when reading through the Consent Form (Appendix E), explained at the outset that they could not offer more than one interview. Time Struggler explained the many burdens of English faculty when she noted:

> We are more administrative than staff heavy, and so that means that there are more administrative tasks for the…teachers to do …one of the things that is different than from how it operates on the home campus is that here um, we didn't have a lot of administrators or staff, and so we were the ones that made the school run.

Perhaps the greatest limitation of this study relates to the information provided in the tutorial reports. The original research plan aimed to investigate the content of tutorials as they related to faculty referrals. For example, what types of language issues (content, grammar, or both) were the focus of a required tutorial session versus those that were self-referrals? The ADU-Q Writing Center, however, does not systematically collect data about faculty referrals. Faculty members did discuss whether or not they required students to go to the Writing Center, but their interview responses were not tied to any particular student or course. Consequently, it was impossible to correlate any of the written tutorial reports to the individual faculty member's responses or to investigate how the contents of a required visit may have differed from that of a self-referral. Notwithstanding, the tutorial reports remained a valuable data source for answering the present research questions.

Similarly, it would add a unique angle to extend this study with a mixed-methods approach through quantitative data analysis of the tutorial sessions. For example, how many tutorial sessions were held for each particular professor? Does this number correlate to the English faculty support of the Center? Due to the current database programming, it was not possible to obtain this information for this study, but it may be an avenue to explore in future studies.

Future Research

Perhaps one of the most salient features of this study was a result of its exploratory nature – consequently, the exploration led to seemingly endless avenues for future research. The study remained limited to English faculty and the Writing Center Coordinator voices. While it would add an interesting dimension to include students, peer tutors, faculty from other disciplines, administrators, and other stakeholders, it was not within the scope of this present study.

As a further extension of interviewing students, investigating the differences between Qatari and non-Qatari students would yield unique perspectives and insight to this particular context.

Opportunities for quantitative data analysis are also ripe for research with regard to how the number of tutorial sessions for students correlates to each faculty member. Furthermore, an analysis of how much time is spent with faculty, staff, and graduate student clients as opposed to undergraduates would provide valuable statistics for programming and work management purposes. Finally, much attention was also given to the notion of now important feedback is to this particular population of learners. A future study may investigate the value and implications of different types, styles, and strategies of providing feedback, and how these findings could be most appropriately implemented in the classroom, in the ADU-Q Writing Center, and perhaps in other institutions within National Institution.

Conclusion

This study has examined English faculty perceptions of the Writing Center at American Design University in Qatar (ADU-Q) through a sociocultural framework and social capitalist analysis. Data triangulation in this qualitative study was informed by interviews with English faculty, the ADU-Q Writing Center Coordinator, and archival documents. While findings suggest that collaboration between the Writing Center and various stakeholders tends to improve positive perceptions of the Center, the changing nature of the local context poses evidence that additional research would be beneficial as the context continues to change. It is hoped that these preliminary findings will serve as a launch point for improved programming of the ADU-Q Writing Center, as well as serve as a basis for future research at American higher education institutions in National Institution and around the globe.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Data Collection & Analysis Chart

Research Question	Information needed to answer question/Why is this important?	Data Collection Method	Analytic Tool
***** Primary question:*** What are English faculty perceptions of the ADU-Q writing center?	Writing centers are situated to play a fundamental role in students' academic success – particularly with English language learners. Research has demonstrated that one-on-one conferences do improve student writing. Understanding students' experiences will provide richer insight into why students utilize writing center services, and, therefore, aid in developing appropriate programming and training to encourage writing center use.	Interviews with faculty participants Interview with Coordinator	Line by line analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007), Constant comparison, reflexivity (Miles & Huberman, 1994)
ANCILLARY QUESTIONS			
What factors have influenced/are influencing these perceptions?	See above.	Interviews with faculty participants	Line by line analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007), Constant comparison, reflexivity (Miles & Huberman, 1994)
What do English faculty believe the		Interviews with faculty	Line by line analysis (Bogdan &

role of the writing center should be in providing support for students, faculty, and staff?		participants	Biklen, 2007), Constant comparison, reflexivity (Miles & Huberman, 1994)
How does the GEL's first language factor into the faculty member's perceived level and type of support needed?		Interviews with faculty participants	Line by line analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007), Constant comparison, reflexivity (Miles & Huberman, 1994)
How does the type of writing required factor into the perceived level and type of support needed?		Interviews with faculty participants	
How do peer tutors factor into the perceived role of the writing center?		Interviews with faculty participants	

Appendix B

Sample Interview Questions for ADU-Q Coordinator

1. Tell me about your own educational and professional background.
2. How did you end up working at ADU-Q? Tell me about your experience at ADU-Q so far.
3. Tell me about the writing center – the history as you know it up until its current state.
4. What knowledge of or experience with writing centers did you have PRIOR to ADU-Q?
5. How does ADU-Q's writing center compare with that of your experience at other institutions?
6. Could you please talk about the relationship between the English faculty and the writing center? What kind of relationships do you have already and/or hope to have? How do your roles intersect and/or differ?
7. What, specifically, do you think is the role of the writing center?
8. A lot of faculty (generally speaking, not specifically ADU-Q faculty) have told me that students whose native language is not English should be required to go to the writing center for a quick grammar check and proofread. Can you tell me about your thoughts on that?
9. I have heard that sometimes faculty advise students not to visit the writing center. From your personal experience, and/or from anecdotal experience, can you talk about that?
10. What factors do you think have influenced English faculty perceptions of the WC?
11. How influential do you think faculty are in promoting the use of the Writing Center for students?

12. How does writing in the disciplines (WID) affect the Writing Center and the role of English faculty?

13. How do you feel about faculty and/or staff as WC clients?

14. How do you feel about yourself as a writer? (Do you like to write, do you feel you are a good writer, what kinds of things do you write, do you receive support while you are writing, etc.? What do you think your own strengths and weaknesses are as a writer?)

15. What do you know about peer tutors in the writing center? How do you feel about the use of peer consultants (generally speaking and/or specifically at ADU-Q)?

16. Obviously the mandate by NI is that English is the medium of instruction just as it is on the home campus. However, it is also clear that many of the students will ultimately use Arabic as their primary language in the workplace. What are your thoughts on this? What do you think about being trained in English and then using Arabic in the workplace? Is there a role for the writing center in this?

17. National Institution and the Qatari government have been very clear that Qataris should receive priority services and education. How do you see this playing out at ADU-Q? In the Writing Center?

18. Do you see differences between Qatari and non-Qatari students?

Appendix C

Sample Email Communication to Faculty Participants[17]

Dear (Faculty):

I hope this email finds you well. As you know, I work in the ADU-Q Writing Center. I am also a doctoral candidate at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, and I am interested in learning more about your perceptions of the Writing Center. In particular, I would like to ask you about your experiences with and understanding of the writing center.

My research project will primarily involve interviews; therefore, I'd like to sit down and talk with you about your interactions with and perceptions of the writing center.

If you are willing to participate, I would like to schedule a meeting as soon as possible, at your convenience. I realize you have a very, very busy schedule, and I will work with you to ensure our meetings do not conflict with your other obligations. Please let me know when you are available to meet. I can be reached via this email ([omitted] or mobile: [omitted]). Thank you for your consideration, and I hope to talk with you soon!

Best regards,

Molly McHarg

PhD candidate, Indiana University of Pennsylvania

[17] Since I already know the ADU-Q English faculty personally, some of these emails may be revised to a slightly more informal message format.

Appendix D

Protocol for Initial Meeting about Study

Guidelines for First Meeting with Participants

Procedures:

1. Explain my dissertation study, the purpose, and the procedures for data collection.
2. Go over Participant Consent Form.
3. Answer any questions the participant may have.
4. Be sure the participant has my contact information.
5. Ask the participant to sign the consent form and give a copy to him/her.

Appendix E

Participant Consent form

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Project Title: A Sociocultural Exploration of English Faculty Perceptions of American Design University in Qatar's Writing Center

You are invited to participate in a study conducted by Molly McHarg, a doctoral candidate in English Composition & TESOL at Indiana University of Pennsylvania in the United States. The purpose of this study is to investigate English faculty perceptions of the writing center at American Design University in Qatar (ADU-Q). I will interview the Writing Center Coordinator and English faculty who volunteer to participate in this study. I will also be collecting other related documents, such as tutorial session reports.

If you agree to be part of this study, I will audio record our interviews. I will be asking you about your personal academic and professional life in the past and present. It is expected that the interview will take approximately 1-2 hours, with the possibility of follow-up interviews.

There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this research. Some parts of the taped and transcribed interviews may be shared with other scholars, but your identity will remain anonymous. There will be no compensation for participating in this study and audio recordings will be destroyed after the study is completed.

You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with me, ADU-Q, or ADU-Q's writing center. If you decide to withdraw from the study, I will destroy any audio recordings from your interview(s). Your real name and any identifying information will be left out of reports of the findings of this study. You will be free to choose your own pseudonym.

If you would like further information about this project or if you have any questions, you may contact me or the project director, Dr. Patrick Bizzaro.

****

I have read and understand the information on the form and I consent to volunteer to be a subject in this study. I understand that my responses are completely confidential and that I have the right to withdraw at any time. I have received an unsigned copy of this Informed Consent Form to keep in my possession.

Name (please print)_____

Signature _____

Date _____ Phone where you can be reached_____

Pseudonym Chosen_____

****

I have explained to the above individual the nature and purpose, the potential benefits, and possible risks associated with participating in this research study, have answered any questions that have been raised, and have witnessed the above signature.

Date_____Primary Investigator's Signature_____

Primary Investigator: Molly McHarg, *PhD Candidate* at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Department of English Composition & TESOL, Indiana, PA, 15701, USA, (mobile) +974-5519-2967

Project Director: Dr. Patrick Bizzaro, *Professor* at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Department of English, Indiana, PA, 15701, USA, patrick.bizzaro@iup.edu.

This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, Phone: 001-724-357-7730.

This project has also been approved by the American Design University in Qatar's Office of Research.

Appendix F

Sample Interview Questions for Participants

1. Tell me about yourself — where were you born, where have you lived, what language(s) did your parents speak, etc.

2. Tell me about your educational background (where did you go to school – which country(ies), what was the language of instruction, public/private, etc.).

3. How long have you lived in Qatar?

4. How did you end up working at ADU-Q? Tell me about your experience at ADU-Q so far.

5. As you know, I'm interested in investigating your perceptions of the writing center. Therefore, I am interested in any experience you have with writing centers, either in the past or the present. When you were a student at other universities, did those institutions have a writing center? What was your perception of it and/or interactions with it? What about as a faculty member?

6. I've seen a wide range in the way faculty interact with their students, especially in the smaller, intimate environment at Knowledge City institutions. For example, some faculty are very close and friendly with their students, while others keep a greater distance because of cultural differences. What kind of relationship(s) do you typically have with your students?

7. What type of language or other academic support do you give your students? How does this affect the relationship between you, students, and writing center? Does gender play a role in

how you interact with a student? Nationality? What other factors influence your work with students and the writing center?

8. What do you think is the role of the writing center at ADU-Q?

9. A lot of faculty (generally speaking, not specifically ADU-Q faculty) have told me that students whose native language is not English should be required to go to the writing center for a quick grammar check and proofread. Can you tell me about your thoughts on that?

10. You're an expert in _____ (literature/English/other). Some people say that because you're in the English department, you should provide every type of English support. Since most students at ADU-Q are not native English speakers, they often need more language assistance. What do you think is your role in providing ESL support? The writing center's role?

11. Can you describe the relationship between the English faculty and the Writing Center? How do your roles intersect and/or differ?

12. Tell me about your experience with the writing center at ADU-Q (have you worked with the Coordinator, do you know students who have visited, have you referred students?)

13. How does writing in the disciplines (WID) affect your role as English faculty? The Writing Center's role?

14. Have you ever been a client yourself to the writing center? How do you feel about faculty and/or staff as WC clients?

15. How do you feel about yourself as a writer? (Do you like to write, do you feel you are a good writer, what kinds of things do you write, do you receive support while you are writing, etc.? What do you think your own strengths and weaknesses are as a writer?)

16. What do you know about peer tutors in the writing center? How do you feel about the use of peer consultants (generally speaking and/or specifically at ADU-Q)?

17. How does the location of the Writing Center have any impact on your use of/relationship with it? Please explain.

18. How do you think the writing center connects with students' overall academic experience at ADU-Q?

19. Obviously the mandate by NI is that English is the medium of instruction just as it is on the home campus. However, it is also clear that many of the students will ultimately use Arabic as their primary language in the workplace. What are your thoughts on this? What do you think about being trained in English and then using Arabic in the workplace? Is there a role for the writing center in this?

20. I have heard that sometimes faculty advise students not to visit the writing center. From your personal experience, and/or from anecdotal experience, can you talk about that?

21. The program is primarily aimed at attracting Qatari students. Furthermore, National Institution has clearly stated that Qatari students should be the primary recipients of services, including academic support. How do you see this playing out in admissions procedures, the classroom, and the institution?

22. Do you see differences in the classroom between Qatari and non-Qatari students? Please explain.