Transcription of Scene 1: Struggling to be an Ally as a Multilingual Tutor

VoiceOver: Scene 1: Struggling to be an Ally as a Multilingual Tutor. In “Struggling to be an Ally as a Multilingual Tutor,” we meet our tutor, Farzaneh, and Pin-Huei, a music therapy student from China. Pin-Huei has been coming to the writing center for awhile and has some assumptions about who makes a good writing tutor. Today, she’s working on the literature review of an assignment for her practicum class about providing music therapy to the elderly. She’s rather surprised to learn that her tutor is also an international, multilingual student. Initially, Pin-Huei is concerned that Farzaneh won’t be able to help her. Watch how Farzaneh acts as an ally by carefully responding to Pin-Huei’s assumptions—assumptions that directly challenge Farzaneh’s abilities as a tutor. How do they move past their initial assumptions and work together?

PH: [very quietly] Knock, knock

F: Hello

PH: Hello, I’m looking for my tutor. I only know my tutor’s name starts with F.

F: Yes, that’s me. My name’s Farzaneh. Nice to meet you.

PH: Nice to meet you.

F: Please have a seat.

PH: Uh, do you mind to tell me one more time your name?

F: Yes, sure. It’s Farzaneh. [shows table tag with name] I know it’s a hard name.

PH: Yeah.

F: Farzaneh.

PH: Far-zaneh. Is that right?

F: Yes, exactly, excellent.

PH: OK, you’re the teacher. So, it’s not a typical American name, right?

F: No, it’s not an American name because I’m from Iran.
PH: Iran?

F: Yes.

PH: I thought all tutors supposed to be American.

F: Yes, that’s true, but I’ve been living here for a few years, and have a few degrees from different schools in the US, so I ask you to trust me.

PH: OK, I will do my best. OK, nice to meet you.

F: You, too.

PH: Nice to meet you.

F: And how can I help you? And before that, where are you from?

PH: My name’s Pin-Huei; I’m from Taiwan.

F: Great.

PH: I’m here about 3 years, I guess. Yeah.

F: And what do you study?

PH: I study in music therapy.

F: Umhm. Interesting.

PH: I like music [makes musical gestures as if playing a piano and moves piano and moves body as if to a rhythm], so I study music therapy.

F: Okay. How can I help you today?

PH: Oh right. Yeah, uh, this my final paper for this semester. And this class is about practicum. So my professor asked me to do some research. It’s kind of literature review to talk about what kind of population I worked with this semester. And this semester I worked with the elderly with dementia so my literature review is about this topic and what kind of musical activity, especially for physical
activity, to help this population to improve their cognition. So this topic [uh], I will focus [um] on what happen about their brain and what kind of intervention I can bring to them. So, so [unclear] I should probably [unclear] bring some pages for you so maybe you can help me to focus on the grammar issue, probably. I’m not American so definitely grammar issue’s a focus and probably structure, so I think you can help me for the structure, even though you’re not an American, you’re probably better than mine.

F: Okay, so I’ll take a few minutes to read this, and then we can discuss anything that we need to. Okay?

PH: Sure. No problem.

F: [starts reading silently, then says] Um, I think that the topic is really interesting, so good job on that. [Pin Huei clasps her hands together, nods her head, and smiles.] And then you also did a good job with explaining all these different terminologies and um, these different related topics. One suggestion I have for you is um maybe work on this paragraph a little more on relating the topic of cognition in the people with dementia, with how music therapy and exercise would be helping them. So, maybe relating these two topics a little bit more here so that it gives your reader a better idea of how these two relate and how they can better follow you. Okay? Does that make sense?

PH: So, you saying I lost my reader? [Pin-Huei laughs nervously] [some unclear words] When I write, when I write this paper, I, actually I just try to give the is kind of key points, some terminology, so I try to bring structure actually, so I feel each paragraph and each sub-title, I feel that they are connect each other, so I try to make sure they—they—they can follow me, [F.: great] so it’s, so basically it’s—it’s not working right now?

F: All I’m saying is that before you transition to discussing your um, um, other, the other two topics that are related to your main topic, maybe provide your readers with a more, clear big picture of how these two or three topics relate together. When you end here, when you’re saying “In summary, dementia is categorized by decline in memory and other issues,” so you did a good job here, but then maybe also add a few more sentences to this paragraph by saying how music therapy intervention would actually have an effect on cognition issues that people with dementia experience. So add a few more sentences to this before you end off your introductory paragraphs[?]? Does that make sense?

PH: [nodding her head] Yeah, that does make sense actually. Yeah.

F: And then another suggestion that I have for you is, as I read this first sentence in this paragraph, it’s an isolated single sentence that’s not a paragraph, so maybe work on this sentence a little bit, too,
by explaining how brain functions in people with dementia. Okay? So, maybe provide on the introductory sentences, add a few more sentences to this paragraph as well.

PH: To this one?

F: Yeah. Does that make sense?

PH: Yeah, little, yeah, yeah, yes, a little bit. Yeah, I feel, I got your point, so you mention you can bring something to more connect each other?

F: Yes, exactly.

PH: Okay. So...let me. Could I ask you one more question?

F: Sure.

PH: I think your idea is good, but I feel because my professor mentioned other things, so I want to make sure they didn’t conflict with each other, so my professor mentioned when I wrote, when I write this literature review, she asked me to think about bring the—bring the broader idea first [hands raised but apart in a symbol of broad], it’s like, then you can narrow it down [hands move in a gesture of narrowing], to your main topic [hands clasped together]. So [unclear] your reader will follow you because you got a broad idea. For me, I bring what kind of situation will happen to the dementia. So what kind of, what happened in their brain so it’s kind of broad idea, so I narrow it down to music therapy, what kind of music intervention of especially physical, some play instruments, some physical activity, some movement activity, how they can really help improve their cognition. So this my structure. Is that, is that right? I mean, I just want to make sure. It’s a little different from you mentioned before. I just want to make sure. Is the same thing?

F: [over Pin-Huei’s question about it being right] Yes. Yes. That’s a really good question, and I agree with your instructor on that. That’s one, a very important thing based on western academic writing, so you first provide your reader with a big picture of your topic, and then, so you make sure that your introduction actually lays out the broader context, and then the next few parts of your paper should build up on explaining the details related to it, so I think that’s a really good suggestion that your instructor is making.

PH: So, the structure’s good, just make, make more connections between the paragraphs. That’s your suggestion?

F: [over Pin-Huei] Exactly.
PH: Okay, I got your point. That’s good suggestion. I can try to focus on some connection.

F: Okay.

PH: Okay. Thank you for your help today.

F: Sure. That was a pleasure meeting with you.

PH: Thank you. So, may, I will, do, I can make you an appointment next week?

F: Sure, sure, that would be excellent.

PH: So you can help me check anything improvement for next week.

F: Okay. Sounds good!

PH: Nice to see you. [they shake hands]

F: You, too.

PH: See you next week.

VoiceOver: Now we’ll give Farzaneh and Pin-Huei a moment to reflect on their scene. Farzaneh shares how she negotiates the kinds of challenges to her authority that Pin-Huei acted out for us in this scene.

REFLECTIONS

Now we’ll give Farzaneh and Pin-Huei a moment to reflect on their scene. Farzaneh shares how she negotiates the kinds of challenges to her authority that Pin-Huei acted out for us in this scene.

F: Sometimes international students feel a little bit uncomfortable working with other international tutors, and that is quite understandable. When working with international students, they feel a little bit resistant working with non-American tutors. And, so the way I approach this is I usually address the experience that I have in this field, working with international students being their tutor, and then also that we are here to work together so we act to their writing as a reader rather than just a tutor, and that usually helps them to maybe be a little bit more cooperative and just being reassured that this will work, that we’ll help them with this process.
PH: Okay for me, I feel it’s a little difficult to being aggressive, and, especially it’s not really in my background, doesn’t look like that, being aggressive to the person. So I feel it’s really awkward from beginning but you, but teachers gave me a space to let me just, we can work on something together, so it give me some space to do something different, but we still, we still can work together. And I try to make sure everything is going okay. So I like your idea, your suggestion. It’s pretty good. I really appreciate to work with you. Thank you.