

Reconceptualizing the Writing Center in the Wake of Local Admissions: Redefining Writing Centers in Qatar

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Abstract

The Open Admissions phenomenon in the 1970s at the City University of New York (CUNY) provides a historical example of how higher education institutions may handle vast numbers of underprepared students. This scenario is currently being replayed in the Middle East, specifically in Qatar, where elite American higher education institutions are flooded with underprepared students. The result is similar to what occurred at CUNY – students are directed to writing and academic support centers for remedial instruction, while both students and faculty at these institutions experience frustration. This article stems from a larger research project that took a sociocultural approach to exploring English faculty perceptions of a writing center at an American higher education institution in Qatar; this article examines the historical background of Open Admissions in the United States and the implications for language learners in Qatar and other international contexts.

Keywords: writing centers, ESL, international education, admissions, writing