

PEDAGOGICAL ATTITUDES/PERCEPTIONS OF COLLEGE WRITING CENTER
PEER TUTORS TOWARDS THE PROCESS OF TUTORING

by

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B.A., Marymount College, Salina, Kansas, 1978
M.S., Fort Hays State University, 2001

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Secondary Education
College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

2007

Abstract

This study poses questions about the nature of tutoring processes in college level writing centers. As tutors engage student writers, they are presented with complex rhetorical and interpersonal decisions. This researcher seeks to understand deliberate strategies and thought processes applied by tutors to encourage critical thinking abilities in students. How do writing center tutors decide which strategies are needed for different tutoring situations? How do they perceive the reasons why they themselves apply particular strategies? In order to explore these and other questions, the researcher observes tutorial sessions conducted by ten college-level writing center tutors. Triangulated research methodologies are applied, including observation/video-taping, audio-taped think-aloud protocols, transcribed text analysis, a group exit interview, and external collaborator analysis. Immediately following each video-taped tutorial session, the researcher views the video-tape with each respective tutor. Following instruction in think-aloud protocol process, tutors are asked to reflect orally on the process and decision-making strategies applied throughout the tutorial session. Each of these think-aloud sessions is audio-taped. All ten of the video-taped and audio-taped tutorial sessions are then transcribed and coded for thematic patterns. Two credible outside co-raters are asked to analyze the texts, as well, providing interater reliability. Conclusions and implications about how writing center peer tutor perceive individual strategies applied in tutorial sessions are considered. How do tutors decide what types of questions and comments to ask? How do they facilitate the process of fostering student learning and critical thinking? What are the perceived barriers to success in each session?

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Acknowledgements

Individual triumphs seldom occur without tremendous community effort. Sincere expressions of gratitude are extended to members of my doctoral committee in Kansas State University's College of education, including Dr. F. Todd Goodson, Dr. Marjorie Hancock, Dr. David Griffith, and Dr. Jackie Spears. Colleagues in the International Writing Center Association who were instrumental in the success of my research were Dr. Neal Lerner, Dr. Michelle Euodice, and Ellen Mohr. Over the past five years, presenters at the annual conferences of the College Conference on Composition and Communication, the National Writing Project, the National Conference on the Teaching of English, and the Midwest Writing Center Association have also served as inspiration for my research. Special thanks to my friends in the Flint Hills Writing Project and to my co-raters Alysia Starkey and Brian Weber. And loving thanks to my family for encouraging me throughout my academic journey.

Dedication

This academic journey is
dedicated to my husband, Don,
to my children Chelsea and Dylan,
and to my extended family
whose love and support
lights the road ahead.

CHAPTER 1

Writing in academic curricula has undergone dynamic changes in philosophy and pedagogical paradigm over the past one hundred and fifty years. (Adler-Kassner & Glau, 2005). Until Harvard introduced English courses into its curriculum in 1873, and after the Committee of Ten convened, English was not taught as a separate subject (North, 1987). Early scholars in the field of English upheld the current traditional philosophy of English as an empirical subject, reducing opportunities for research on studies of grammar and sentence structure. Writing centers in this era were viewed as storehouses designed to help students comply with predetermined rules of engagement (North, 1984). In the 1960's and 1970's the pendulum shifted dramatically to a minimalist or expressive philosophy. Greater emphasis on student voices and writing process began to emerge (Freedman, Warshauer, Dyson, Flower, & Chafe, 2001; Yood, 2003). In this non-directive environment, writing centers discouraged "correcting" student papers with red marks, encouraging instead formative comments and individual student conferences (Britton, Burgess, Martin, McLeod, & Rosen, 1975; Butler, 1980; Calkins, 1994; Fassler, 1978; Myers, 2003; North, 1987). In the late twentieth century, scholars of English and composition responded to the call for more measurable scholarship and research in the fields of education, exploring a more cognitive phase of research. Formalist models of writing process were designed in an attempt to measure student development (Hays & Flower, 1983). Writing centers became centers of consultation, facilitating students in the process of making critical decisions about their own ideas, as well as the writing process (Bartholomae & Petrosky, 2002; North, 1987). More recently, the writing process has been framed within a social constructivist philosophy. Writing, facilitated by dialogue, occurred in a larger social context for individual

students (Banks & Banks, 2001; Kates, 1977; Perl, 1979). Writing centers facilitated this dialogue by providing supportive, socially constructed environments. “Writing centers are one manifestation – polished and highly visible – of a dialogue about writing that is central to higher education” (Fitzgerald, 2004; Hemmeter, 1990; Lunsford, 1991; McKinney, 2005; North, 1984; Simpson, 1985; Wallace & Simpson, 1991; Welch, 1999). As the canon of academic research on writing centers expanded, documented research into the complexities of writing center tutorial dialogue became increasingly important. Understanding how peer tutors guided students in the construction of knowledge and understanding during one-on-one tutorial sessions became vital to the evolution of writing centers as viable centers of academic learning.

Background to the Study

Writing center research has evolved through the lens of philosophical shifts in theories of composition studies. Research in the area of college writing centers has been well documented over the past one hundred and fifty years (Boquet, 2003; North, 1984; Carino, 1995, 1996, 2002). Much of this research has been qualitative in nature (Basso, 1974; Flower, 1997; Gillespie, 2002; Grimm, 1992, 1996, 1999; Heath, 1982; Pemberton & Kincaid, 2003). In spite of rapid growth in the body of research since 1980, a tone of defensiveness continued to ring throughout the academic literature. Labels such as “grammar barns” and “fix it shops” appeared as constant frustrations across twenty-five years of literature (Boquet, 2001; Bushman, 1991; Carino, 1995, 1996; Gardner & Ramsey, 2005; Hobson, 1992; Kail & Trumbur, 1995; Lerner, 2001b; North 1984). Professional peer tutor training manuals and highly developed peer tutor

programs appeared on hundreds of international college campuses (Brooks, 1995; Bruce & Rafoth, 2004; Burow et al., 1996; Bruffee, 1980; Gillespie & Lerner, 2003; Murphy & Sherwood, 1996, 2003; Ryan 2002). Across training strategies, peer tutors were encouraged to facilitate dialogue with students aimed at developing higher order thinking skills (Carino, 2002; Gillespie & Lerner, 2003; Murphy & Sherwood, 2003; Ryan, 2002; Taylor, 2002; Trimbur, 1987). At the International Writing Center Association conference held in Minneapolis, Minnesota in 2006, writing center administrators, staff, and tutors presented an array of papers reporting the progressive and cognitive work taking place in college writing centers. Many of these presenters preceded their comments with qualifying language about the marginalized perception of writing center work in academic environments. There appeared to be minimal acknowledgement by the academy that writing centers had become places of learning, rather than simply sites of student service.

In preparation for this study, research in the areas of composition theory, writing center theory, cognitive development, and tutor training were considered in an attempt to identify a thread of meaning in the ways that peer tutors facilitated complex learning through strategic dialogue with college students in the socially constructed setting of a writing center. The researcher sought to identify whether or not the strategies and methods designed in peer tutoring programs followed through to the perceptual level. Were peer tutors aware of the ways in which they facilitated student learning? What strategies did writing center peer tutors implement to facilitate higher-order thinking in college-aged students? And were tutors able to identify these strategies, as well as their reasons for implementation their own tutoring practice? Similar studies have been conducted (Lerner, 2001; Cook-Gumperz, 1993; Davis, Hayward, Hunter &

Wallace, 1988; Runcimen, 1990; Severino, 1992) in which researchers used tutorial transcripts, audiotapes, and videotapes to assess the dynamic processes of writing center conferences. Most focused on the researcher's role in assessing the tutoring process. For example, through follow-up interviews using tutor-recorded audio-tapes, Lerner (2001) applied stimulated recall to determine writing center tutors perceptions of why tutors were doing what they were doing. The problems with this method included latency between the sessions and the interviews, and the fact that the audio-tapes were recorded by the tutors themselves. Of further concern were the meaningful nonverbal behaviors that may not have been accounted for in the transcripts. In addition, Lerner was assessing tutors in the writing center where he actually worked; hiring and evaluating tutors complicated the relationship bias of the researcher as observer (2001). True to the nature of qualitative research, studies such as this raised additional questions, establishing a foundation for further examination of the ways that student learning was facilitated through writing center tutorial discourse.

The Problem

Competition for resources at all levels of education demands increasing methods of accountability. College writing centers require resources of space, programming, and manpower. In addition to providing a convenient service for students, writing centers must demonstrate academic rigor and student learning (Carino, 2001; Conrad-Salvo et al., 2005). While writing center faculty may observe the benefits of strong peer tutoring programs on a daily basis, this way of knowing does not guarantee administrative or academic accountability (Harris, 2001). How has knowledge-making occurred in writing center tutorials? If learning has been constructed in this setting, did it occur as a result of deliberate action, or by chance occurrence?

Are writing center tutors able to identify deliberate strategies used to facilitate student learning and why? Could reflective analysis of one's own tutorial practice, examined through think-aloud methods, result in higher levels of awareness and skill on the part of writing center tutors?

In their landmark challenge to higher education Barr and Tagg (1995) identified a paradigm shift occurring in American Higher Education, from the traditional, dominant "instruction paradigm" to a more complex and subtle "learning paradigm." Production of "learning" could not be documented in the same manner as "instruction." Writing center discourse was a dynamic example of interactive engagement. At a time when the U.S. Department of Education's Commission of the Future of Higher Education had called for increased accountability of student learning (USDE 2005), research describing and assessing the methods and strategies applied to implement student learning across higher education was called for (Association of American Colleges, 1991; Kuh, 2001; Rutherford, 2000). Student learning in higher education was no longer limited to traditional classrooms. In fact, Peter Elbow (1998) challenged the necessity of teachers filling traditional roles in writing curriculums. Concurrent with student assessment in college writing centers, research was needed into the perceived strategies and methods applied by peer tutors during the process of facilitating student learning.

The Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative study was to observe and describe in rich detail the perceived pedagogical strategies of college writing center peer tutors about the process they facilitated in scheduled tutorial sessions. The researcher selected think-aloud protocols, as the appropriate methodology for gathering data from this socially constructed environment. In order to describe and assess how college writing center peer tutors perceived the tutoring process.

What strategies and methodologies did tutors facilitate during peer tutoring sessions, as viewed through the lens of retrospective think-aloud protocols?

To examine this process, ten individual tutoring sessions, conducted by ten different peer tutors, were observed and analyzed for thematic patterns. This study examined the tutorial sessions themselves, as well as each individual tutor's perception of what took place.

The Research Questions

The Central Question:

- 1) How did college writing center peer tutors perceive their own behaviors and strategies during tutorial sessions with college-aged student writers?

Sub Questions:

- a) How did trained college level peer tutors describe the process through which they guided students in peer tutoring sessions?
- b) What cognitive decisions did writing center tutors make during the course of a writing center tutorial session? What role did setting play in the types of decisions made?
- c) How did the dialogue in college writing center tutorial sessions reflect higher/lower order decision-making strategies in peer tutors? What meaningful themes emerged?
- d) How effective were think-aloud protocols in researching reflective analysis of peer-tutoring?

Description of the Study

The study was conducted with eleven college writing center peer tutors who had been trained in an established community college writing center. There was no sample selection

process, as all ten tutors trained in this particular program agreed to participate in the study. This particular site was selected based on its long-standing history and reputation in the college writing center profession, as well as its accessibility to the researcher. This writing center had been operational since 1986, and run by the same director. The director has been actively involved in regional, national, and international writing center associations and has developed a highly respected peer tutor training program. All ten of the participating tutors were trained in peer-tutor theory and methodology. The researcher had no professional connection to the center.

The study commenced during the spring semester of 2006. The first phase of the study involved video-taping one tutorial session conducted by each of the ten peer tutors. All of the peer tutor participants were over the age of 18 years old. All of the tutee participants involved in this study were also over the age of 18 years old. Each tutorial session lasted approximately 30-45 minutes in length. Tutorial sessions at this college were not limited to students from strictly English courses or writing courses, rather the students arrived at the center from across academic disciplines and included English language learners.

During the second phase of the study, each of the tutors met with the researcher one-on-one outside of the writing center to participate in a reflective analysis of his or her own tutorial session. Their video-taped tutorial session were played back for the tutor. An audio-cassette recorder was operated during this reflective session. Tutors were advised that the video tape would be stopped periodically at which times they would be invited to comment on the process taking place on the video-tape. They were asked to describe, in as much detail as possible, what was taking place, why they responded to the student tutees as they did, and their reasons for all questions, comments, and unspoken behaviors. A group exit interview was then conducted.

During the third phase, the researcher transcribed the texts of both the video-taped tutorials and the audio-taped think-aloud sessions. Transcripts were then analyzed and coded for thematic patterns. Two external co-rater, knowledgeable in the field of composition studies, were asked to analyze and code additional sets of identical data, to establish corater reliability. All three sets of coded transcripts were analyzed for patterns and answers to the guiding question of how writing center tutors perceived the strategies implemented during tutorial sessions.

Definition of Terms

Writing center – Center for student learning providing one-on-one tutorial dialogue with students over the recursive process of composing papers for college-level courses.

Peer tutor – College student trained to facilitate process-oriented dialogue over writing assignments from across academic disciplines.

Higher order thinking – application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (Bloom et. Al., 1956) of knowledge.

Concurrent protocol analysis – The systematic coding and analysis of thought processes during particular tasks or problem-solving activities (Newell & Simon, 1972).

Reflective protocol analysis – The systematic coding and analysis of thought processes following completion of a particular task or problems-solving activity (Newell & Simon, 1972).

Think-aloud protocols – Method of qualitative research analysis involving vocalization of thought processes during or after engagement in a particular task (Smagorinsky, 1994).

Limitations of the Study

Qualitative studies are not empirical or quantitative in nature. Ways of knowing revealed through qualitative research are inductive, rather than deductive. Qualitative research does not set out to prove a particular hypothesis, instead the results of qualitative research often generate hypotheses and further questions for consideration. For these reasons, it was necessary for the researcher to compile detailed and voluminous amounts of data. This data was triangulated, documented, and preserved throughout the course of the study. Further limitations to be considered included collecting data from single tutorial sessions, with only ten tutors who had been trained in a single program.

Further limitations involved controversies over whether the writing is a problem-solving (cognitive) activity. Prior research and evidence in composition studies and cognitive learning was gathered for discussion in Chapter 2.

And finally, think-aloud protocol analysis as a viable research methodology has elicited its own form of skepticism. Dissenters have questioned the validity of data, methodological antecedents, and inferred processes (Smagorinsky, 1991). In the socially constructed environment of a college writing center, think-aloud protocols presented a viable method for analyzing the intangible process of tutor-tutee discourse, as discussed in Chapter 3.

In addition to limitations inherent in qualitative research design, this particular study carried specific limitations of its own. Conducting the study in a single writing center environment, with a tutoring program designed by a single director may have restricted the perspective of the tutors being studied. The limited number of tutorial sessions might have been viewed as a restriction. However, all of the tutors working in this writing center agreed to

participate in the study, reducing the possibility of selection bias. Every effort was made to conduct a study that was both random and representative of the population being studied.

Significance of the Study

This study sought to provide evidence and insight into the ways that writing center peer tutors perceived the ways in which they facilitated critical thinking abilities in college-aged students engaged in the process of writing. More than a mere “grammar barn,” this college writing center encouraged higher order thinking and learning in college-aged students. This study sought to examine the ways that trained student peer tutors applied critical thinking strategies and dialogue to guide college student writers towards complex analysis of their own thinking and writing processes. The study would also investigate the effectiveness of think-aloud protocols as viable methods of qualitative research in writing center settings. Examination of this process would supplement growing evidence in support of the complex roles that writing centers play in college student learning, further dispelling perpetual myths that writing centers were simply sites of service where students brought their papers to be “fixed.” In addition, this research was consistent with trends supporting a paradigm shift in higher education, emphasizing student “learning” over “teaching.”

Overview of the Study

Chapter One introduced the study under consideration. Examining writing centers through the historical lens of composition studies, which identified a need for more focused research on writing center pedagogy. This chapter stated the intended purpose of the study, along with the central research question and subsidiary questions. Key terms used throughout

The study were defined for purposes of understanding this research. Limitations of the study were introduced and potential significance was considered.

Chapter Two presented a broad theoretical framework upon which the study was based. Theoretical assumptions assumed premises regarding social constructivism, epistemological assumptions regarding writing and cognition, and theories of writing centers, and tutor training.

Chapter Three discussed the qualitative research methodology proposed for this research study. The design of the study, population, and sample selection were reviewed. In addition, data-collection strategies and analysis were also reviewed. Limitations of the study, including researcher credibility, think-aloud protocol analysis, and sample size were discussed.

Chapter Four contained a complete and detailed description of the qualitative data collected throughout the course of the study. This data included coded transcripts of video-taped tutorial sessions, audio-taped think-aloud protocols, and supporting documents. Coded transcripts were analyzed for thematic threads of meaning, examining consistencies and inconsistencies in the types of strategies perceived by peer tutors in their individual tutorial sessions.

Chapter Five extrapolated meaning from the research data presented in Chapter Four. Implications for future study of writing center discourse were examined, including think-aloud protocol applications.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Related Literature

Theoretical Framework

This chapter reviews literature related to the type of knowledge-making that occurs in college writing center tutorials. For purposes of this study, the researcher has viewed knowledge as a socially constructed phenomenon. Epistemologically, the study assumed that writing was a complex cognitive process, capable of producing higher order thinking in student learners. Further, the study assumed that the complex cognitive learning constructed in college composition courses carried over into the socially constructed environments of college writing centers. And finally, the study assumed that higher order student learning could be facilitated through purposeful peer tutor discourse.

Social Construction of Knowledge

With the growth of the social constructivist movement in the 1970's, new modes of researcher inquiry began to evolve. Recognizing that learning and knowledge did not occur in a vacuum, academic researchers began to examine positionality and relative placement from a cultural perspective on student ways of knowing (North, 1984). Kroll (1984) asserted that knowledge in constructivist theory was not objective, because it was constructed internally, being subjected to social and cultural intervention in the construction process. Social constructivism asserted that all knowledge was a social construction. Knowledge was not as simple as a collection of subjects to be packaged and transported from teacher to learner.

In a knowledge community each member contributed to the learning process. Both teachers and students brought their own particular knowledge base, life experience, race, gender, socio-economic class, and exceptionality into the classroom. And from this diversity, knowledge was constructed. Truths were discovered. Education was recognized as a social system with its own unique culture. Within this culture, power relationships evolved, curriculums developed, attitudes and beliefs formed. Student behavior and learning was influenced by the dominant social system executed in any educational setting. (Banks & Banks, 2001).

Closely associated with social constructivism, feminist theory evolved out of the 1960's civil rights movement. Recently, Banks and Banks (2001) presented their feminist phase theory as a theoretical framework from which to further examine Feminist Theory. Feminist Phase Theory constructed a framework from which to "rethink" these social systems, along with potential consequences for curriculum and pedagogy. In the movement toward diversity curriculums, feminist researchers and scholars challenged male-dominated philosophies of education. Banks and Banks designed a structure from which to examine the differences in perspective. Their five dominant perspectives included: (a) male-defined curriculum; (b) contribution curriculum; (c) bifocal curriculum; (d) women's curriculum; and (e) gender-balanced curriculum. In a gender-balanced curriculum, truth was viewed from a broad perspective of multiple possibilities. Banks and Banks (2001) examined the relational character of human diversity by considering multiple perspectives and ways of knowing. In order for broader ways of knowing to be considered, traditional paradigms regarding the understanding of complex truths needed to change. Education and knowledge needed to remain open for examination through multiple perspectives or ways of knowing.

So, what did social constructivist theories and the feminist phase theory mean for education? For studies in the field of composition? For writing center research? In order to understand what students knew to be true in a gender balanced curriculum, educators first needed to understand students' positionality in the context of their worlds. Methods of teaching had to be re-evaluated, along with classroom knowledge. If all knowledge was a social construction, as feminist scholarship asserted, traditional methods of teaching had to be re-evaluated, along with classroom knowledge. Textbooks would need to be re-written with attention to cultural, ethnic, gender, and class perspectives and knowledge. The entire classroom (including students) would become producers of knowledge. In turn, these knowledge relationships would transform student learning. The teacher no longer remained the only expert. Course content became more flexible and subjective. Teaching methods facilitating diversity learning opportunities would be constructed. Students were acknowledged as capable of mastering new information through their own unique voices and positionality in the universe. Because of individual ways of knowing, students would be recognized as authorities in some subjects. Gender-balanced curriculums empowered students to become responsible for one another's learning. Teachers constructed teaching pedagogy designed to illuminate what was unique and what was common between members of individual learning communities. In this way, positionality shaped learning (Banks & Banks, 2001).

“In the final analysis, the challenge of college is empowering individuals to know that the world is far more complex than it first appears, and that they must make interpretive arguments and decisions – judgments that entail real consequences for which they must take responsibility

and from which they may not flee by disclaiming expertise.” (Association of American Colleges, 2003, pp. 16-17).

Studies in the communication field have assumed that language processes must be examined within in the context in which they occur. (Basso, 1974; Heath, 1982; Szwed, 1981). “Writing, like speaking, is a social activity” (McCarthy 1987). Some recent practical and theoretical work in writing studies have emphasized that writers’ processes and products must be understood in terms of their contexts, contexts which were created as participants and settings interacted (Bizzell, 1982; Cooper, 1986; Faigley, Cherry, Jolliffe, & Skinner, 1985)

Reflection over what a gender-balanced curriculum meant for the teaching of composition studies and the operation of college level writing centers served as an affirmation. The social constructivist model of learning has pervaded both research and pedagogy in the academic writing arena. Boquet’s *Noise from the Writing Center* (2002) clearly illustrated the ways in which writing centers have invited diverse voices into academic conversations.

Tom Dean’s outlined the diverse ways in which composition curriculums should engaged students in conversation with communities larger than themselves (Deans 2000). Composition classrooms should no longer remain teacher centered. Peer review workshops have enabled students to read and respond to one another’s work, allowing them to peek inside the minds of students they might never have spoken to outside of the classroom. The challenge remained discovering pedagogical methods which engaged students and opened the minds of students to the possibility that truths existed outside of what was known from their personal perspectives.

From a writing center research perspective, qualitative methods have often been the mode of choice. Neal Lerner (2001a) began applying qualitative methods in the 1980's, challenging new researchers in the writing center field to explore this method of inquiry. In designing a research study to "assess the pedagogical strategies employed by writing center tutors to encourage students to make both higher order and lower order decisions" a qualitative research design could elicit insight. Triangulated data from recorded and transcribed tutorial sessions and reflective think-aloud protocols could generate sufficient data to infer conclusions, or larger questions, about the process of tutorial discourse. A well-designed qualitative study might reinforce theories about writing process posed by researchers such as Hayes and Flower (1983).

Cognitive Development and Composition Studies

Mary Louise Pratt's idea of writing as "social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power" (Pratt, 1993, 34) has appealed to writing center researchers. With the growth of the social constructivist movement, a new mode of researcher inquiry began to evolve in the 1970's. Along with this, recognition that learning and knowledge did not occur in a vacuum allowed positionality and relative placement from a cultural perspective to impact ways of knowing in academic research.

The cognitive revolution in the 1960's renewed interest in higher-level cognitive processes and the ways that thinking allowed individuals to generate solutions to novel tasks. One of the principal methods of the information processing approach was task analysis. Task analysis specified the range of alternative procedures that people could use, in light of their prior knowledge of facts and procedures, to generate correct answers to a task.

Stephen North's (1987) seminal book, *The Making of Knowledge in Composition: Portrait of an Emerging Field* outlined the process that composition studies encountered on their journey to academic recognition. From 1873 when Harvard first approved "English Composition" as part of an academic curriculum through more recent social constructivist approaches to research in the field, change has remained an abiding constant in this dynamic branch of academia. Initially, composition studies were accepted as useful for providing service to the academy. Current traditionalists justified their place in the empiricist research world by generating quantifiable data about the basic components of composition; sentences and grammar rules. This type of research dominated the field until the 1960's, when progressive thinking emerged with researchers like Peter Elbow (1998) who emphasized "writing as a process." In 1969, Janet Emig released her groundbreaking clinical case study on "the Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders," opening the door for new and innovative glimpses into the possibilities for composition research. These positivist approaches to research held to their belief that all ways of knowing occurred as part of a logical order in the universe.

North (1987) introduced practitioners as "knowledge-makers." In composition studies, the roots of research evolved through teaching practice. Practitioners were prescriptive in their inquiry about how to teach better. Some practitioners went on to become scholars or researchers,

like Elbow and Shaughnessy. But North claimed these folks to be the minority. Practitioner research was steeped in lore, or teacher knowledge of what worked based on methods that had been applied over time. If it worked, it could become part of teacher lore. Nothing was ever removed from the body of lore. And all practitioner research dealt with “how to” questions. Once a problem was identified the practitioner searched for a cause and possible solutions. When a solution had been tried successfully, it was disseminated as “new knowledge.” According to scholars and researchers, “practice” seldom generated “true knowledge.” Historically, composition studies were viewed as mere practice.

North moved on to describe three distinct types of scholarly researchers, including historians, philosophers, and critics. Their individual research involved different types of texts. Scholarly research was descriptive in nature and followed a humanist tradition. The historians’ subjects of study were events, or seeking knowledge about how something had been understood in the past (not unlike Stephen North). Philosophers of composition studied history as a means of understanding why something occurred. In composition studies, philosophers investigated the theory behind rhetoric and composition. The third type of scholarly researchers identified by North were the critics who examined the relationship between historical text and research. How did researchers decide which texts to examine? And to what end?

Finally, North described four types of researchers in the field of English and composition studies; experimental, clinical, formalist, and ethnographic. Researchers adopted a more analytical approach to academic inquiry than practitioners or scholars. For purposes of this research, three of North’s methods of research inquiry, experimental, clinical, and ethnography

were explored . The final method, formalist research, was examined in greater detail, enhancing the foundation for this author's particular research interests.

With the rise in expressivist philosophies in education, new avenues of research began to develop in the 1960's. While traditional empirical ways of knowing maintained a strong hold in academic research, evidence began to suggest that there might be other ways of knowing, yet to be explored. Experimentalists in education continued the scientific tradition of designing studies, which were quantifiable, measurable, and replicable to appease traditional research pressures. Like scientists, they would identify the problem, design and conduct an experiment, analyze the data, and draw conclusions. The problem in composition studies occurred because not all variables in the writing process could be controlled. The further away from basic components of grammar and sentences the research moved, the more difficult it became to manage the research. Larger questions about ways of knowing in composition studies were difficult to research in an experimentalist mode.

Emig (1969) published her groundbreaking new study entitled *The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders*. This case study followed a clinical design, introducing a new way of "knowing" how students experienced the writing process. This shift in emphasis from writing product to writing process dramatically changed the way that composition research was approached. Not taken seriously by scholars at first, the possibilities for this type of research took hold rapidly. Credibility increased as the numbers of clinical studies in composition research increased over the next thirty years by researchers such as Emig, Perl, Hays & Flower. Like experimentalism, the researchers identified a problem, designed a study, and collected data. But the means of data collection and analysis was approached differently. And conclusions

suggested implications for the practice and teaching of writing. While progressive, this mode of inquiry maintained the positivist view shared by experimentalists that there remained a describable orderliness to universal ways of knowing. People functioned according to similar patterns and tendencies, which were assessable to research and knowing. What appeared different was the means of accessing knowledge about these patterns. The experimentalists' goal was to answer hypothetical questions, while clinicians sought to raise questions.

Emig's foray into clinical research in composition studies paved the way for two new forms of researcher inquiry: ethnography and formalism. While these two methods were relatively new to English studies, they were quickly evolving as viable research methods in both the composition and writing center fields. While experimentalists wanted to quantify and calculate the probability that certain phenomenon would occur, formalists sought to qualify the how and why of knowing. Of the four modes, this may be the simplest to understand. While they still shared the positivist perspective of experimental and clinical modes, formalists described the order of the universe in a different manner. Formalists built models or structural representations of certain theories or ways of knowing (Hayes & Flower, 1983; Hayes, 1996). These models were then held up as simulations to be compared and contrasted to situations in the real world. Formalist models in composition studies examined the processes of writing through development of a visual model. The rules of this model related to the empirical world. The researcher interpreted the model through examination of corresponding phenomena under investigation. This analogous situation explored the ways in which the model was both similar and different to particular phenomenon. There had to be more similarities than differences for

the analogy to generate strong inferences about what was known.

King (2000) asserted that one important element underlying expectations about the teaching and learning process was the assumption a person held about knowledge and how it was gained; these were termed epistemological assumptions because they were based on the area of philosophy called epistemology, the study of the nature and origin of knowledge. (Hofer & Pintrich, 1997). Many students have reported that they learn “how to think” in college; cognitive psychologists and higher education researchers (Pascarella & Ternezinei, 1991; Hofer & Pintrich, 1997; Tsui, 1999) have conducted studies confirming that many students show gains in critical thinking abilities during college. King documents development in reasoning during the college years based on changes in epistemological assumptions, using a “reflective judgement” model (King & Kitchener, 1994). This model of late adolescent and adult intellectual development was grounded in John Dewey’s work (1933, 1938) on reflective thinking. Reflective thinking was necessary when a person wanted to come to a judgment about a problematic or vexing issue that could not be answered by formal logic alone. This model showed how people’s epistemological assumptions were related to the ways they reasoned about controversial issues. Educational level was strongly associated with reflective thinking: a clear developmental progression could be observed in the reflective judgment scores from high school to college. The finding of significant differences between the scores of college freshmen and seniors suggested important shifts in epistemological assumptions occurring during the college years. Kroll (1992) termed this type of developmental progression as the abandonment of “ignorant certainty” in favor of “intelligent confusion.”

Through respectful but challenging interactions, which took into account students' epistemological assumptions, tutors could promote reflective thinking. Both the social and the cognitive consequences of written language depended on the specific nature of the written language events within which that language was used, including the goals and the cognitive processes those events entailed. In other words, it was not writing per se, but the sorts of social situations in which writing was embedded that determined its ultimate human effects (Scribner & Cole, 1981). "Both reading and writing are complex cognitive activities requiring a set of processes and strategies. Strategies are a deliberate cognitive action" (Carrell & Connor, 1991). When elicited for a conscious report, strategies could be of interest for what they reveal about the way readers have processed written texts and the way writers have produced texts. Readers and writers who were aware of the strategies they used could also distinguish between strategies that were appropriate or inappropriate for specific reading/writing situations, and may thus be able to monitor their own reading and writing (Paris, Lipson & Wixson, 1983). This conscious knowledge and control of cognitive processes constituted the reader's and writer's metacognition (Baker & Brown, 1984). The use and regulation of strategies could be viewed as a function of individual reader characteristics (Flavell, 1979).

To obtain information on individual variation in the use of strategies, there seems to be an obvious need to gain insight into the learner's thoughts, i.e., their cognition and metacognition. These involve thinking about the process, planning for it, monitoring it, and self-evaluating after the completion of the process" (O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzares, Kupper, & Russo, 1985, 28).

Among the most well known formalist models in the field of Composition Studies was a study conducted by Linda Flower and John Hayes (1983). This three part cognitive model examined “the task environment, the writing process, and the long term memories of writers.” Since the 1980’s the model has been tested by numerous researchers in classroom, tutorial, and conferencing studies. Writing Center researchers have also applied this model to examine the writing processes taking place in writing center tutorial sessions. In his book *The Making of Knowledge in Composition*, Stephen North (1987) critiqued the Flower & Hayes model, claiming that it needed further testing and revision. As a result of successive approximation, John Hayes revised the model in 1997, in response to North and numerous successive research studies, which have applied the model over the past twenty-five years. In the revised version of the model, Hayes expanded his categories and placed considerable emphasis on the decision-making processes that occurred in composition and writing.

As with any method of research, formalism demonstrated both strengths and weaknesses. Among its strengths was the simplicity of application when studying unobservable phenomenon like “learning,” or “progress,” or “decision-making.” The analogy process could be tested against multiple empirical situations. It was easier to visualize phenomenon when the visual aid of the model organized the data into a predetermined manner. There were fewer variables to manage and account for than in experimental research.

While a formalist model may have been internally complete, there was a price to be paid for such tidiness. Not all research situations were as concise as the model. Other variables or factors could arise, which might encourage ambitious researchers to over simplify or interpret

data to fit the model, consequently altering truth-value. The knowledge that was “made” might not be as reliable. The process of identifying a problem and a model, and applying the model to a situation resulted in valuable perspective, which could provide useful information. But, as Hayes discovered in the writing processes model (1996), the successive approximation model had to be continually tested and refined as knowledge perspectives shifted. Credible knowledge-making in this formalist mode demanded corroborative evidence in the form of triangulated data (eg. interviews, surveys, protocols).

In recent years, these types of data collection techniques have gained wide support from cognitive psychologists, as well as language researchers (Ericsson & Simon, 1993; Cavalcanti, 1982; Cohen, 1986, 1987; Hayes & Flower, 1983; Poulisse, N. et al., 1986; & Smagorinsky, 1989). They have used these methods to obtain direct evidence about processes which otherwise might be inaccessible. These methods’ effectiveness were contingent upon the subjects’ abilities to reflect on their own cognitive behavior (Cavanaugh & Perlmutter, 1982) and the truth value of the reports (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977).

Applying Bloom’s Taxonomy, higher-order thinking has been defined as application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (Bloom et al., 1956). Since thinking at these levels remained necessary to learning processes, as well as every day life, presenting students with opportunities to engage in higher order thinking became increasingly important. These opportunities were not limited to classroom learning, but could take place in other learning environments, such as writing centers. The need to have students graduate with a demonstrated capacity to think at the higher levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy became more urgent than ever (Newcomb, 1995). Recently, a concern has been expressed that college and university students were not learning to their full

potential. According to Whittington and Newcomb (1991), several major national reports expressed the view that undergraduate education in general has become incoherent and ineffective. The apparent foundation for these accusations has been failure on the part of educators to challenge students to think (Whittington et al. 1991). This could carry-over in to academic services provided to college students, eg. writing center tutorial services. Using Bloom's Taxonomy (1956) as a basis for examining cognitive levels of thought, it might be possible to study peer writing tutors to determine how successfully this process has been taking place in college-level writing tutorial sessions.

Writing Centers and Learning

Writing center theory has been most heavily influenced by theories guiding composition studies. Theoretical foundations of composition can be examined from three angles of vision:

- 1) The literary view – and its focus on a deeply mysterious process;
- 2) The cognitive view – and its primary assumptions that the goal of composing is to communicate, that writing abilities follow a developmental sequence, that composing is an orderly process from which general principles can be abstracted and that these general principles can be used to teach writing;
- 3) The social view and its belief in the writer as a member of a larger literate community and that each act of composing is a socially determined action.

(Gillespie & Lerner, 2003).

Most writing center theorists have aligned themselves with the social view (Bruffee, 1984; Ede, 1989). Underlying assumptions were that learning and writing were essentially social acts and

that conversation and collaboration were essential elements to promote critical thinking and good writing.” (Gillespie & Lerner 2003).

Writing center research, in context, has developed a relatively young academic field, which has grown in response to a perceived literacy crisis in the 1970’s. With open admissions, increased numbers of under prepared students began arriving on college campuses across the nation. Writing centers were called upon to remediate their skills. However, writing centers in various forms have been around as long as composition studies have been required courses (over 100 years). (Boquet, 2003; Carino, 1996). This remedial perception of writing centers has generated a negative stigma in the academic world, reflected directly on students, facilities, and the faculty who worked there. However, over the course of the past twenty-five years, professional research and programmatic changes have dramatically changed the writing center profession. The discipline has grown to claim two academic journals, an affiliated publisher, an international professional association, and a network of regional associations (Gillespie & Lerner, 2003).

Theory and practice have been impossible to separate in a writing center setting. Writing center work has been characterized as praxis (convergence of theory and practice). Literacy theorist Ira Shor describes praxis as “action relating theory to practice, in a specific context that challenges limiting situations.” (Shor, 2000, 111). From theories of composition studies to family systems theory, socially constructed environments have continued to produce knowledge in human beings. Multiple phenomena have contributed to these ways of knowing, including peer collaboration, composition strategies, institutional politics, academic acculturation, and

instructional technology. Of these methods, peer collaboration have contributed most to the learning that occurs in college writing centers.

The uniqueness of each writing center has prevented monolithic definition of the work taking place. However, despite varied institutional settings and distinct contexts, virtually every college writing center has been driven by North's now famous axiom "our job is to produce better writers, not better writing (1984, 433)." North's idealistic objective is not without obstacles. Lerner (2001b) raised the question as to how educators could assess this improvement. He asserted that writing centers should broaden their search for impact not just on students' writings but on their larger sense of "fit" with a college or university. In this process of evolutionary growth, writing centers continued to engage students in conversation about their own thinking and decision-making. In this process writing centers have also played a role in student validation and discernment, resulting in socially constructed knowledge and student empowerment. Writing center tutors have become agents of both knowledge and change.

Researchers of communication have considered how the activity of writing is socially organized within the ongoing life of particular groups (Basso, 1974; Szwed, 1981). According to Smagorinsky (1994, 465), "the motivating theory for research is tied to the theoretical grounds for choosing a methodology. A researcher must fully understand a methodology's power and its limitations. What lens does it provide for this problem? What range of methodologies for the investigation of writing." Research should be driven by problems rather than methods. Similar to the rhetorical process of writing, in order to understand the complexities of the process of tutoring, multiple perspectives had to be considered. Writing

center researchers have previously examined student learning and tutor dynamics through survey and questionnaire analysis (Lerner, 2001b). To explore the intentional process through which writing center tutors guide student writers, it was necessary to examine the process through the minds of the tutors themselves. Entering into the tutor's perceived role required that the researcher collect data on-site during the writing center tutorial process. For this reason, a qualitative study appeared to be a reasonable vehicle through which to explore the complex cognitive processes present in writing center tutorial sessions. If the myths presenting writing centers as mere service facilities were to be exposed, the generative nature of language had to become an integral part of this qualitative research. According to North (1984, 434) in a "writing center the object is to make sure that writers and not necessarily their texts are what get changed by instruction."

In a review of literature on Writing Center Research, the formalist model served as a grounded place to begin. Numerous credible researchers in the field of writing center inquiry have applied the Hayes & Flower (1983) model to how the writing process has worked in guiding tutorial sessions. Neal Lerner, Beth Boquet, and Ben Rafoth were but a few who referenced Flower and Hayes. No significant studies have surfaced which apply Hayes' 1996 revised version of the model. Only preliminary research was found which examined the cognitive processes surrounding the types of decisions that occur during the process of writing center tutorials. Critical thinking was a key component of Hayes' revised Writing Process model and proved insightful for a study about the perceptions of writing center tutors regarding process.

Student dissatisfaction with teaching methods by means of comments written in the margins of student papers (Butler, 1980) has led many writing programs to develop writing

conferences as a practical format for the effective delivery of individualized instruction (Fisher & Murray, 1971; Garrison, 1974; Carnicelli, 1980; Fassler, 1978; Clairborn & Dixon, 1982), contributing to the development of independence in student writers (Graves, 1976; Harris, 1978). Because of its format, the conference has been viewed a teaching method capable of fostering active participation by the student, while allowing the teacher to see exactly what the student does not understand. As one-one conferences have become a popular format for the teaching of writing, researchers have begun to focus more attention on them. Several recent studies have suggested that writing conferences can provide particularly effective settings for the development of students' abilities to reflect critically on their own work, it's content, and the cognitive process involved in producing writing (Freedman, 1981; Freedman & Calfee, 1984; Scardamalia, & Bereiter, 1985). Freedman (1980b) found that the dialogic nature of the conference allowed students to express their own concerns and thereby participate more actively in the evaluative process. Other studies have shown that by focusing on their own work and writing processes, students developed their meta-awareness of language as a generative system for thinking and for formulating knowledge (Applebee, 1978; Bereiter, 1980), Britton, Burgess, Martin, McLeod & Rosen, 1975). In further studies Kates (1977) found that students who received feedback via conferencing had higher course grades than did students in a control group receiving only written feedback. Tomlinson (1975) found that attitudes about writing instruction were more favorable among tutorial students.

Many college environments have provided more developmental challenges than supports for students navigating the transition to self-authorship. It has become increasingly important for effective institutions to insure that adequate support is provided. Kegan (1994, 62) asserts that.

educators must build developmental bridges that are meaningful to students' current meaning-making and facilitative of a more complex way

Tutor Training Methods and Strategies

Peer tutoring in writing conferences has been documented as early as 1901 (Boquet, 2001; Carino, 1996). Over the past twenty-five years, the roles and climate surrounding writing centers has changed significantly. Tutors have become vital links between content and critical thought. Tutors are trained in the importance of tutoring, the writing process, the tutoring process, expectations, observation, developing a tutoring practice, working with ESL, reading, and research (Gillespie & Lerner, 2003; Murphy & Sherwood, 1996; Ryan, 2002). Numerous studies have been conducted more recently in an attempt to identify the changing roles and responsibilities evolving through writing center tutorial discourse (Campana, 2004; Deacon, 2002; Lutes, 2001; Mackiewicz, 2002; Maxwell, 2000; McDonald, 2005) Muriel Harris (1986) spoke strongly in support of the need for collaborative conversation amongst peer groups. Peer relationships carry the potential to improve student writing and promote collaborative learning, not only about writing, but about human relationships (Dyson, 1989; Gere 1987; Daiute, 1993). While this growth in research has been exciting, it may be just the tip of a proverbial ice berg. What can tutor training teach educators about writing instruction? What can peer tutor perceptions reveal about ways of knowing and cognition in collaborative discourse? How do tutors deconstruct and process student knowledge-making? This study hopes to contribute to the dynamic and growing conversation taking place in college writing center scholarship.

Think-Aloud Protocols

Further cause for consideration in this study evolved from the need to justify think-aloud protocols as a viable research methodology for the field of education. Protocol analysis, or more literally, the think-aloud protocol approach, aims to elicit the inner thoughts or cognitive processes, illuminating what occurs in a person's mind during the performance of a task, in this case peer tutoring (Boren, 2000; Bowen, 1994; Christiansen, 2001). One challenge of this methodology is to undertake interviewing as closely as possible to the task being performed. While an individual engages in a particular activity, the interviewer encourages him/her to talk about what he/she is thinking as he/she performs the task. The basic strategy of think-aloud interviewing involves getting people who are doing something to verbalize their thoughts and feelings as they progress through a particular task (Fonteyn et al., 1993; Patton, 2002; Smagorinsky, 1994; Whittington et al., 2001). The literature on think-aloud protocols in usability testing describes both concurrent and retrospective (reflective) think-aloud protocols as equal alternatives (van den Haak & de Jong, 2003; Kucan & Beck, 1997; Smagorinsky, 1994). In an attempt to eliminate distractions during the process of tutorial sessions, a reflective think-aloud protocol analysis was applied in this qualitative research study.

Social scientists pioneered the use of "think aloud methods," in the early twentieth century (Smagorinsky, 1994). In the 1930's, Otto Selz used the think aloud method to study the creative reasoning processes (Van Someran, Barnard & Sandberg, 1994). Verbal think-aloud protocols as data were first proposed by Ericsson and Simon in 1980 and have since been in used in cognitive psychology research (Simon & Kaplan, 1989). According to Ericsson & Simon (1993) three assumptions must be made when applying the methodology of protocol analysis:

1. Only the output of the cognitive processes is available to the consciousness and is verbalizable.
2. Performance on any given task can be conceptualized as a set of sequential processes with intermediate products that are available to working memory. The intermediate products are conceptualized as being directly associated with observable indicators, in this case, verbal protocols.
3. The total time to generate a response is equal to the sum of the individual cognitive processes.

Concurrent verbal reports do not appear to change cognitive processes although concurrent verbalization may increase the total time to perform select tasks. While theoretical and methodological controversies about verbal reports persist, there is credible research to support a person's ability to recall their own thought sequences (Green & Higgins, 1994). These controversies center around efforts to go beyond the sequence of thoughts, toward detailed structural analysis through introspection, inferring the processes controlling generation of new thought (Ericsson & Simon, 1993; Smagorinsky, 1994).

Concurrent think aloud has been used extensively in cognitive psychology to examine how individuals process information while performing complex tasks. In relation to usability testing, concurrent think aloud refers to users verbalizing thoughts while interacting with a system (Dumas & Redish, 1999; Ericsson & Simon, 1993; Halpern, 1989; Nielsen, 1993; Wickens & Hollands, 2000; Stratman & Hamp-Lyons, 1994). During this process, users discuss their actions, perceptions, and expectations at the same time that they are performing a particular task. The central assumption of protocol analysis is that it is possible to instruct subjects to

verbalize their thoughts in a manner that does not alter the sequence of thoughts mediating the completion of a task. (Berry & Broadbent, 1984; Birns et al., 2001). In some disciplines this information has been accepted as valid data on thinking. (Ericsson & Simon, 1993; Smagorinsky, 1994) Further, protocol analysis has been acknowledged as a rigorous methodology for eliciting verbal reports of thought sequences as a valid source of data on thinking (Crutcher, 1994). The goal is to understand an individual's cognitive processes while performing a particular task under investigation by researchers.

In addition to concurrent protocol analysis, another useful variation includes retrospective protocols, stimulated by video-tapes recording a person's interaction with a subject or object. (Wilson, 1994; Green & Higgins, 1994; DiPardo, 1994; Smagorinsky, 1994). Retrospective verbalized thoughts are triangulated with intermediate results generated by different strategies, which are specified in a task analysis (Ericsson & Simon, 1993). The validity of retrospective thought sequences depends on the time interval between the occurrence of a thought and its verbal reports. While the highest validity is observed for concurrent think-aloud verbalizations, for tasks with relatively short response latencies, subjects are able to recall their sequences of thought accurately and immediately after the completion of the task, resulting in higher levels of validity (Smagorinsky, 1994). However, for cognition processes of longer duration, the problems of accurate recall of prior thoughts increases, with a corresponding decrease in validity of the verbal reports. Verbalizing perceptions and observations causes users to process information on multiple levels (eg visual and auditory) (Seamon, 1980). Several interesting adaptations of verbal-report methodology have emerged in the study of text comprehension (Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995; Witte & Cherry, 1994) and education (Renkl, 1977).

Think-aloud protocols as viable forms of research are not without challenges. As with earlier forms of qualitative research, qualitative data may not be viewed as credibly as data collected by empirical researchers applying the scientific method. However, this method examines knowledge that cannot be accessed by scientific methodologies. Think-aloud protocols, like other forms of research, have distinct advantages and disadvantages. Some advantages include an ability to provide direct evidence about mental processes, yielding rich data, which may not be accessible through other methods. They reveal a relatively unobstructed view of a subject's actual cognitive experiences. Concurrent or immediate reflective analysis prevents influence by subsequent experiences with the subject at hand. And think-aloud protocols explore initial, candid reactions and understanding of meaning, rather than processed and formulated ideas. Obvious disadvantages include individual differences in ability to verbalize thoughts and ideas. Individual subjects might also modify the ways a task is being performed/perceived to suit researcher expectations. The act of verbalizing thoughts may potentially impact the thought process itself. More recently, and more specifically related to the application of think-aloud protocols in the study of writing, are studies conducted by Hays & Flower (1983), Smagorinsky (1991), Stein (1990), and Hayes (1996).

For purposes of this research, a retrospective think-aloud protocol was applied, rather than a concurrent methodology. Dewey (1933, 1938) established the relation of reflective thinking to the educative process during the early development of qualitative research methodologies. Retrospective probing involves asking users a series of questions about their experiences with a system immediately after they have completed a task or series of tasks

(Dumas & Redish, 1999; Ericsson & Simon, 1993; Nielsen, 1993; Poulisse et al. 1896; Wickens & Hollands, 2000) Following instruction in the think-aloud process, tutors viewed their own video-taped tutorial sessions, prompting free expression of their perceptions of the process. Open-ended questions were posed only if tutors became stalled or unable to vocalize a response to the stimulated recall of the video-tape. One possible weakness of this method might have occurred if, when reflecting upon their experiences, tutors began surmising theories and rationalizations for their behavior. These conceptions and misconceptions would not be accurate descriptions of their experiences. Some exhibited a tendency to focus solely on their theories and rationalizations, rather than sharing their actual experiences and thoughts about the process. Despite limitations, retrospective analysis was preferable to concurrent think-aloud methodology in this tutorial setting because it prevented disruption of the tutoring dialogue (Green & Higgins, 1994). According to Birns et al. (2001) retrospective think-aloud protocols are the best methodology for collecting usability test data that can be easily classified and compared across tasks. It was particularly adept at revealing overall perceptions of the tutoring task, making it a logical methodology for purposes of this qualitative study.

Conclusion of the Literature Review

The struggle for college writing center validation has evolved in part to “higher education’s longtime unease with and sometimes outright prejudice against students who come to college under prepared” (Gillespie & Lerner, 2003). Despite recent progress, this stigma of remediation continues to shape the identity of contemporary writing centers.

Contrary to popular mythology, college writing centers have evolved as social settings, which influence the emotional and cognitive development of student writers. Just as student lives are complicated and nontraditional, so too are the types of responses needed to assist students in writing down and analyzing facts and events in their lives, constructing new types of knowledge. In social constructivism, learning becomes a mental struggle between the learner's preconceived perceptions of the world and exploration of new possibilities. This struggle results in the construction of a new epistemologies (or ways of knowing). The conflict between what tutors believe they already know about their tutoring and new evidence revealed through reflective analysis can result in newly constructed knowledge. The process of self reflection facilitated through reflective think-aloud protocol analyses has the potential to increase tutor awareness of the social construction of knowledge. The best tutors facilitate, collaborate, and affirm student voices. Proactive tutoring can empower college students to shape their own learning and successes. Writing center research has the potential to provide similar support and feedback to the tutors themselves. Tutors bring knowledge regarding the conventions of discourse and knowledge of standard written English to the tutorial setting (Bruffee, 1980). The theoretical ideal tutor is unrealistic in practice; in order to effectively stimulate critical thinking tutors must adapt their methodology to the tutee's needs rather than "articles of faith that serve to validate a tutoring approach which "feels right." (Shamoon & Burns, 1995). Tutor training should blend a canon of writing center literature with newer, more flexible theory (North, 1987). The process of observing and reflecting is a viable training tool (Bruffee, 1984) for tutors, which can also provide insightful research data for scholarly intentions. Tutor observation can become the context for theory.

Rather than maintaining their defensive “marginalized” posture, college writing center professionals must work more closely with the academy to produce tutors and students who are thoughtful, mentally agile, and capable of processing and evaluating information. In order to demonstrate that writing centers and tutor training programs are producing desired learning outcomes, peer tutors engaged in tutorial sessions must be examined on a perceptual level, through intentional discourse and reflective analysis. Research and documentation are vital first steps towards documented student learning and stronger academic partnerships.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

This chapter will describe the research methodology being considered for the proposed study. Explanation of the intended research design and rationale for this decision will be included. The selection of the population and the sample, the collection of data, and the methods of data analysis are outlined here. Issues relating to professional credibility will also be addressed.

Design of the Study

The proposed research approach will be naturalistic, taking place in an writing center setting where tutorial sessions actually take place. There will be no hypothesis to test, nor will there be a specially devised and structured interview. Writing tutorial sessions that are actually scheduled at the time of the video-taping will be studied, in an attempt to understand and describe how the process of each tutorial progresses and what each of the tutors believes they are doing throughout the process. Using a triangulated approach (Denzin, 1978; Creswell, 1998) I will examine the tutorial process through multiple lenses, gaining broad perspective and insight. The purpose of this study will be to collect and analyze detailed descriptive data regarding the perceived cognitive processes of college-level peer student tutors as they apply their training in a writing center tutorial session. The data will be collected in two parts. Video-taped tutorial sessions will be conducted with each of the participating tutors. The second form of data will be collected through talk-aloud protocol sessions with each of the tutors, immediately following

their tutorial session. They will be instructed to reflect aloud about what is taking place in the tutorial session as they observe their own video-taped tutorial session. These talk-aloud sessions will be audio-taped. Transcripts from both video-tapes and audio-tapes will be analyzed in an attempt to identify thematic threads of perceived strategies applied throughout each session.

Naturalist techniques for establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research are outlined by (Creswell 1998):

Credibility – prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation (sources, methods, investigators), peer debriefing/response, referential adequacy (archive data), member checks (in process and terminal/coding and analysis).

Transferability – sufficient thick rich description.

Dependability- Overlapping methods, triangulation, inquiry audit.

Confirmability – reflexive journal, audit trail, raw data, data reconstruction, process notes, materials, instrument development.

In keeping with these recommendations this researcher will persist in prolonged engagement over the course of eleven peer tutor training sessions in the same writing center. Triangulated methods of data collection will include video-taped tutorial sessions, audio-taped reflective think-aloud protocols, a group exit interview, and co-rater reliability coding conducted by two outside investigators. All data (video-tapes, audio-tapes, transcripts, and field notes) will be collected and archived in a fire-proof safe throughout the course of the study. Coding strategies will be determined upon further review of the data collected as recommended by credible qualitative researchers who have applied think-aloud protocols in the field of education (Smagorinsky, 1994).

In addition to these data collection methods, the researcher will keep a detailed reflective journal, recording in thick rich detail a record of procedures, records, and information regarding researcher positionality, methodology, decisions, schedules, logistics, reflective analysis, personal values, speculation, and insights.

Sample Population

Eleven students, tutoring in the second semester of a Midwestern community college, will participate in the study during the spring semester of 2006. All eleven students have completed the same level of training from on-site writing center staff (Appendix A). Each of the tutors has at least one full semester of tutoring experience. Students being tutored in each of the sessions will be selected at random, based on who arrives in the writing center at the scheduled tutorial time and each student's willingness to participate. Tutors represent different academic disciplines and will be tutoring for cross-curricular writing assignments. All of the participating tutors and tutees will be over the age of 18 years (Appendix B).

Data Collection

Effective qualitative research demands that researchers collect detailed examples and thick, description for future analysis (Cresswell, 1998). A combination of methods will provide optimal angles of vision from which to view the process under investigation. In this study, video-recording, think-aloud protocols, audio-recording, a group exit interview, and dual-coded transcripts will provide representative data (Levy & Ransdall, 1996).

Part 1: Video-taped tutorial sessions

The first step in the data collection process involves video-taping one-on-one student tutorial sessions with each of the eleven tutors. These recorded sessions will take place in an isolated corner of the college writing center (Appendix C). A small, digital video camera will be placed on a tri-pod approximately five feet from the dialogue taking place between the tutor and the tutee. Both the student and the tutor will be apprised of the purpose and use of the data collection process in advance. Both will be asked to sign an approved consent form (Appendix D). The entire session will be recorded without interruption from either the researcher or writing center staff. The researcher will be seated out of sight, just around the corner.

The advantages of this method include reliability of events being recorded for later review, nonintrusive position of the researcher, and ability to capture external events in their natural environment. The video camera will also record any unspoken behaviors and gestures. Disadvantages include a lack of direct information about mental processes of participants, as well as the huge volume of data being generated. This qualitative method might also result in difficulties with segmentation, description, and interpretation of protocols and recorded data.

Part 2: Retrospective Analysis: Think-aloud Protocols

The second methodological approach applied in this study will be think-aloud protocol analyses. The complex processes of composition are difficult to examine on a cognitive level. Think-aloud, or concurrent verbal protocol, methodology developed by cognitive psychologists

(Ericsson and Simon, 1993) attempt to collect detailed, descriptive data of complex cognitive processes. Retrospective think-aloud protocol analysis is often recommended after the task to avoid interruptions of task flow. Tutors participating in this study will receive instruction in the think-aloud protocol process prior to viewing the video-tape of the tutoring session. They will be asked to explain how they performed their tutoring task while viewing the tape immediately after each session. Through this stimulated recall method, they will be asked to observe themselves conducting the video-taped student tutorial session and explain both what is happening and why they chose to act as they did. The video-tape will be stopped every fifteen seconds, allowing each tutor to comment on the process and decisions they are making at that point in the tutorial session. The reflective analysis will be complete when the video-tape ends and each tutor determines that he/she has explained all possible behaviors and strategies applied in the session.

The primary advantage of retrospective analysis is minimal disturbance for both the tutor and the student tutee during tutorial session. Stimulated recall can reveal the tutors' motives and decisions when solving problems in their tutoring session (Greene & Higgins, 1994). Recording this reflective analysis adds additional detailed information about how tutors perform and perceive particular tasks during the process of tutoring college student writers. Limitations of this type of retrospective analysis can include subjects forgetting low-level goals after achieving them. They might fill in with general knowledge when they do not recollect their experience. In an attempt to avoid this problem, tutors will be asked to reflect on their sessions through stimulated recall immediately following the actual tutoring session. A further limitation may occur if subjects attempt to answer questions in ways intended to please the researcher.

To minimize this type of response, the researcher will not conduct a pre-survey, nor communicate what types of responses may or may not be acceptable, in order to prevent providing tutors with desired language or preconceived expectations.

Instruction in the think-aloud protocol method will be provided to each tutor prior to viewing tutorials, in an attempt to establish and communicate both purpose & process. Subjects will be instructed that while viewing the video-taped tutorial session, they should think out loud about their experience as they go. Individually, tutors will be encouraged to describe what is taking place in each segment of their video-taped tutorial session and why they chose to act as they did in response to their assigned student's writing, behavior, and stated needs.

Throughout the data collection process, the researcher will clarify to both tutors and tutees that the learning system, not the participants, is being studied. Participants will be encouraged to talk freely while the researcher listens attentively. Intervention will take place only in cases of extreme duress or if participants need reminders to think-aloud after periods of ten seconds or more. After the think-aloud process has ended, a few moments of completion will take place, where the tutors will be asked to summarize his/her difficulties with the think-aloud protocol task and provide any additional comments regarding the process. Their closing remarks will be recorded on the audio-tape for future reference and analysis.

Analysis of the Data

Part 3: Transcription of Video and Audio-taped Sessions

The video-taped tutorial sessions and audio-taped protocol analyses sessions will be transcribed and consistently formatted by the researcher.

Part 4: Coding

Classifying statements in the transcripts according to which mental process the subject is engaged in depends on the particular question to be answered and the types of data that are actually collected.

Researchers do not develop coding systems in isolation, nor do they develop them whole and intact prior to their application to the data. The complete development of a coding system is recursive: A researcher first develops a rough system, then applies it, then revises the system, then applies it again, and so on (Smagorinsky, 1991, 465).

However, in determining a meaningful coding strategy the researcher will return to the stated central research question. How do college writing center peer tutors perceive their own behaviors and strategies during tutorial sessions with college-aged student workers? In addition, are there patterns in the types of questions tutors ask? Do the percentages of decisions regarding grammar and mechanics exceed other types of decisions? Does the age or gender of the tutor influence either the perception or types of strategies applied? Does the type of interaction vary based on tutee demographics or discipline of the writing assignment?

Related sub questions may guide decisions about how transcribed texts are coded and interpreted. In addition to the ways that tutors perceive the process of tutoring, the researcher may infer meaning in the language that tutors use to describe this process. Are there patterns in the types of questions asked? What cognitive decisions are tutors aware of making throughout the course of a tutorial session? And how do they justify their own decisions? Considerable research has been conducted in the field of rhetoric and composition regarding the

cognitive decision making made by student writers during the process of writing. However, research on writing center peer tutor cognition is limited (Lerner, 2001a).

In addition to questions related to the tutoring process, the researcher will also analyze texts for possible clues regarding the effectiveness of think-aloud protocols in academic settings. Can reflective think-aloud protocols provide meaningful data for research on writing centers? Do these possibilities carry over into discourse on composition studies? And what are the possibilities for applying think-aloud protocol analysis to other educational subjects or settings?

While the exact coding strategy will not be determined until the actual data has been collected, there are several potential models which the researcher will consult throughout the process. Bloom's taxonomy could illuminate perceptions about lower/higher order decision-making strategies (1956). Whittington et. al. (2001) recently applied Bloom's taxonomy, comparing cognitive levels of students and professors in college classrooms. Hays' (1996) revised framework for understanding cognition and affect in writing could serve as a jumping off point for analysis. Lynch & Wolcott (2001) categorize task prompts in their Steps for Better Thinking, which could also be applied to verbal analysis. And Perry's (1970) rating cues for dualism, early multiplicity, late multiplicity, and contextual relativism offers an additional framework from which to infer meaning through verbal protocol analysis. Ultimately, the data will guide the decision about how to derive meaning from these detailed, transcribed texts.

Verification

Qualitative studies have greater value if their findings can be verified. Validity is often difficult to achieve in qualitative research. Verification increases the probability of a strong

argument. Authenticity and credibility are strengthened through multiple verification procedures or triangulation (Creswell, 1998).

To provide a reliability measure for the coding system ultimately developed for this particular study, two external co-raters will be asked to apply the same system. Co-raters will be selected based on their knowledge of and experience with college-level writing process. This co-rater process should also facilitate discussion about the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed coding system. Reliability will be determined by the researcher and co-rater's success at independently coding identical documents with consistent results.

Personal Characteristics of the Sample

Table 1: Personal Characteristics of Sample

Pseudonym	Education	Year in school/At W.C.	Major	Yrs. Age, Gender
I.				
II.				
III.				
IV.				
V.				
VI.				
VII.				
VIII.				
IX.				
X.				

Individual demographics of the tutor sample will be examined for possible influencing factors. The researcher will consider whether diversity and life experience impact the types of responses documented during the talk-aloud protocol sessions. The college writing center environment presents a reasonable scope in which tutors can portray individual strengths and capabilities.

Protection of Human Subjects

Prior to collecting any data from participants, a meeting will be held with all participating tutors, apprising them fully of the study, its purpose, procedures to be followed, and their individual roles in the process. Consent for participation will be requested and they will be informed that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Tutors will be assured that their participation in this study will in no way impact their positions with the college writing center, nor in any way with their academic standing. They should, however, benefit through professional development and reflective analysis of their own tutorial practices. They will also be assured that their privacy will be respected and their identities will not be made public anywhere in the report or in any other forum without their prior permission. In addition to explaining this directly to participants, each of the eleven tutors will be asked to sign an approved consent form (Appendix __), consistent with the research policies of this University. Each of the tutees will be asked for their permission to be video-taped as a part of this study. Tutees will also be asked to sign an informed consent document prior to taping (Appendix __).

Overview of the Issues

Professional Credibility

In addition to issues regarding the viability of writing centers as sites of academic learning, the researcher must also consider matters of professional credibility. The nature of qualitative research demands that researchers maintain constant awareness of their role in the data collection process. Background research clearly produces one type of researcher bias (Hillskemper, 2003). As a novice to the writing center profession, this researcher has not personally experienced all of the different types of marginalization perceived by colleagues and predecessors. But the fact that such claims and implications recur across the literature indicates some measure of credibility (Boquet, 2003; Carino, 2002; Gillespie, 2002; Lerner, 2001b; North, 1987). The researcher will be influenced in some manner by these preliminary perceptions.

Of the studies that have been examined to date, nearly all involve researchers examining the writing centers where they are employed, creating interpersonal and management issues. In an attempt to minimize researcher bias in this ethnographic study, a writing center has been selected in which the researcher has never worked. It is located 150 miles from the researcher's place of employment, and is easily accessible.

Lerner (2001b) claims that a high turnover rate in writing center staffing (administrators & tutors) creates problems with consistent research. The center selected for this study has been operational and has been directed by the same individual for the past twenty-one years. This administrator is actively involved in regional, national, and international writing center

Collaboratives (Mohr, 2006). In addition to longevity and credibility, the director of this center has developed a highly-respected and complex system of training peer tutors from multiple academic disciplines (Appendix B).

All eleven of the tutors currently trained in this program have been asked to participate in this research study during the Spring of 2006. All eleven have verbally agreed to participate, expressing enthusiastic response to this opportunity to examine their own tutoring practices from a more critical perspective. Selection of particular tutoring sessions will be determined at random, as allowed by schedules of both tutors and the researcher (Appendix E). Scheduling will also be contingent upon individual tutees' willingness to participate in the research study.

CHAPTER 4

Evidentiary Findings

Identification of Themes

Within the microcosm of a college writing center, a dynamic set of variables must work together effectively in order to influence successful student learning. These variables include the environment, leadership, tutor training, student engagement, and peer tutors themselves. In a successful college writing center, characteristics common to all of these variables can be examined through observation, examination of policy and procedure, and tutorial discourse. The commonly held perception that writing centers exist simply to facilitate student writing skills and curricular content presents a limited angle of vision. Successful college writing centers must also become skillful at building relationships on multiple levels; relationships involving student needs, faculty expectations, administrative pressures, and curricular content. This interplay of relationships comes full circle when a tutor and a student engage in dynamic tutorial discourse. Throughout the course of this study, evidence of this important third variable of relationships, was examined through environment, leadership, tutor training, tutorial discourse, and most importantly, through the perceptions of writing center tutors themselves. How did writing center tutors perceive the process of tutorial discourse? Did they perceive their role to be more than editors of skill and content? What intentional strategies did they employ to negotiate successful learning relationships with students in the socially constructed environment of a writing center? Data collected in this study resulted in a coded transcript analysis, comparing the percentage of tutorial dialogue devoted to writing skills, content, and tutoring relationships, along with tutor perceptions regarding these same coded criteria.

Evidence of Themes in the Writing Center Setting

Environment plays a critical role in successful writing center process. The dynamic interplay of student, tutor, and faculty discourse are woven into a tapestry of negotiated learning. The setting in which this study took place reflected qualities necessary to a successful writing center environment; it was located conveniently within the campus community (Appendix F), the space was well-organized and user-friendly (Appendix C), a documented and credible history was supported by strong leadership and institutional support (Appendix G), and peer tutors participated in an ongoing, comprehensive training program (Appendix A). In addition to content and mechanics, environment helped to establish positive academic relationships.

Evidence of Themes in the Writing Center Location

A Midwestern community college with an FTE enrollment in excess of 19,000 undergraduate students was selected as the site for this study. The location was determined in part because of its accessibility to the researcher (within 150 miles). The location was also chosen in an attempt to reduce researcher bias, addressing limitations reported in previous studies regarding researchers who elected to conduct writing center research in their place of employment (Lernerb).

The campus writing center was centrally located on the second floor of the library building. The center was accessible to all students via multiple stair routes and an elevator (Appendix F). Clear directional signage was strategically placed at hallway intersections, guiding students toward the center. The Writing Center reported to conduct frequent class tours,

helping students and faculty become more aware of the services and location of the center. “The Writing Center is also given high visibility through community brochures (Appendix H) and instructor support (Mohr, 2006).”

Evidence of Themes in the Writing Center Physical Space

Upon reaching the wing of the library that houses the Writing Center, students were first greeted by a large bulletin board, showcasing the center’s services. In addition to posted services and hours, this board provided writing center brochures (Appendix H), a writing center newsletter (Appendix I), informative articles, inspirational quotes about writing, and announcements about publication opportunities for students. Across the hall from the bulletin board was the Writing Center Director’s office. To the right of the bulletin board was the entrance to the Writing Center.

Students entering the door to the Writing Center were immediately greeted by a knowledgeable and friendly receptionist. She called many of the students by name as they walked through the door. After being greeted, students were asked to sign in on a clip board and check in electronically with their student I.D. cards. If they had visited the center before, the receptionist retrieved a folder of their past writing center activities and discussed their current needs. If they were a new student, forms were filled out and a new folder was generated. If a student was there for an individual tutoring session, the receptionist then asked one of the available tutors to work with them. If all of the tutors were occupied, the student was asked to take a seat at an available round table or computer station. While waiting, students worked on drafts, navigated online computer modules, looked through notebooks filled with model papers, or studied one of the many writing handbooks or resources housed in the center. Copies of the

Writing Center newsletter was strategically placed throughout the center. While some students who entered the writing center had appointments, others arrived on a drop-in basis. All students appeared to feel both comfortable and familiar with the check-in process.

This Writing Center was housed in a large L-shaped room (Appendix A). Bookshelves and bulletin boards lined the walls on all sides. Bookshelves held writing handbooks, tutoring manuals, and paper. One shelf was filled with notebooks containing sample papers from courses taught throughout the college. Each notebook was clearly labeled with the name of the course and the instructor. Courses represented a variety of disciplines and departments within the college, including English, History, Health, Judicial, Social Sciences, Physical Sciences, and Humanities. A sign on the wall clearly stated that the notebooks could not be removed from the center. Bulletin boards also provided a range of instructional materials, guidelines, and writing trivia. Directly behind the receptionist's desk stood a bank of file cabinets, containing student records and textbooks from campus courses, which could be checked out for use in the center. Behind these filing cabinets, six round tables were arranged across one arm of the L-shaped room (Appendix A). Individual tutoring sessions were conducted at these tables. Table #4 served as a gathering place for peer tutors and faculty when they were not working with students. This was where the receptionist went first when looking for a tutor to assign to incoming students. While sitting at this table, tutors conversed quietly or worked independently. During this research, tutors were also observed working collectively on an in-house newsletter publication, produced entirely by the tutors. Table #3 was selected collaboratively by the director and the researcher as the site for filming tutorial sessions. This table was selected because it allowed for unobtrusive placement of the camera and tripod. It also

allowed the camera to film a full view of writing center activities, which normally took place in the background during tutoring sessions. In the far corner, beyond the six tutoring tables, a coffee/microwave station was set up behind five foot high dividers. Three individual study carrels were placed along one wall of this section, for students waiting to meet with tutors.

The remaining section of the L-shaped room was identified as “The Quiet Zone” by prominently displayed signage. Thirteen computer stations were arranged down the center of this section of the room (Appendix A). Printed resources were easily accessible on the shelves along the outside walls. On one wall of this area, there was a door leading into a small classroom and computer lab. This room was used by the college to hold classes and programs from other departments. It had a separate entrance, aside from the one leading through the Writing Center. Very little social interaction was observed in the Quiet Zone during research. All discourse was conducted in whispered, respectful tones.

Between the reception area and the Quiet Zone stood a counter with a telephone placed prominently in the center. Above the phone was a sign saying “Grammar Hotline.” On a nearby clipboard lay a log sheet, documenting hotline calls taken by writing center tutors. The log included spaces for caller names, questions being asked, dates and times, as well as the names of the tutors taking each call. The phone was connected to an answering machine, which recorded calls and questions after hours. Several tutors were observed taking calls on this line.

The entire Writing Center space was well lit by evenly spaced fluorescent lighting and maintained at a comfortable temperature. Comfortable, padded chairs were provided, at an appropriate height for both tables and computer stations. Faculty, staff, and tutors were observed

as friendly and eager to help all students seeking services in the center. Students were not allowed to have food or drink at the computer stations. However, they were observed to have coffee and soft drinks at the tutoring tables, in a very relaxed and personable atmosphere.

During the research process, the director was observed moving silently around the room. She noted where students sat unattended, checked in with students working at computers, greeted students who had just checked in, and consulted with the receptionist. A constant and positive presence, her interactions with tutors were observed as pleasant and to-the-point. At no time did she allow a student to enter the writing center without being acknowledged or directed to the appropriate service. Throughout the course of this research, not a single student exhibited evidence of embarrassment or fear in requesting assistance. From the time students checked in until the time they signed out, each one was treated with dignity and respect.

The environmental structure of this particular writing center appeared to be intentionally designed to foster student writing skills, to insure access to relevant information, and to establish positive academic relationships.

Evidence of Themes in Writing Center History & Leadership

Instructors at this particular Midwestern community college first assessed a need for a writing center in 1977. Initially, the service was established to assist students in English courses. The current director was hired on a part time basis in 1980. Since that time, services have expanded across academic disciplines to include assistance to faculty, as well as students. The director's position became full-time in 1983. In addition to managing the center, the director assumed the responsibility of recruiting, hiring, training, and evaluating peer tutors. In 1987, the

center was awarded an Excellence in Education Program designation by the Kansas Board of Education (Mohr, 2006). Recognizing the need to carry this program to higher academic levels, the director conducted a study of peer tutor programs at community colleges in 1989. The results of this study were published by the League for Innovation in Community Colleges and ERIC (Doc. ED332777). The results derived from this study were put into practice in this particular community college writing center in 1990 (Mohr, 2006). This director has since served as an active participant in the Midwest Writing Center Association, the National Writing Center Association, and the International Writing Center Association, advocating the growth and autonomy of college writing centers as vital services to students and faculty. In addition to in-house research projects published in ERIC documents, this writing center has been featured in several publications: *Writing Centers in Context* (NCTE, 1993) and *Writing the Writing Center* (University of Southern Utah Press, 1998). The National Writing Center Association newsletter has also published four separate articles about the tutoring program in this particular center.

Evidence of Themes in Institutional Support

While many college writing centers function as extensions of academic achievement centers or learning centers, the director of this particular center felt strongly that writing centers have a separate, important mission. “College writing centers need the support in the literature to help them move beyond developmental learning centers (Mohr, 2005).” The administration at this college has demonstrated continued financial and academic support for the growth of the Writing Center. The director provided monthly, semester, and year-end reports to

administrators. These reports have included quantitative data reflecting student numbers and services provided, as well as anecdotal evidence from students and faculty.

Regarding this particular research study, both college administration and the Writing Center Director approved this researcher's proposal in advance of any data collection (Appendix J). All eleven of the peer tutors trained in the center also expressed verbal agreement and enthusiasm about participating in the study prior to implementation.

The history and leadership of this writing center evolved through a process of understanding the needs of student writing, broadening accessibility to various content curriculums, and building positive relationships throughout the college community.

Evidence of Themes in Writing Center Philosophy and Services

Based in the college English Department's educational philosophy, this Writing Center has operated under the assumptions that "writing is a process, that through writing we discover more about ourselves and others, that writing is a means to learning, and that writing is an important lifelong communication skill, which can be learned (Mohr, 2006)." The center's mission statement read that faculty and staff would "promote the college's mission of lifelong learning and service to the community by providing an environment for nurturing independent writing; valuing progress, not perfection; emphasizing process, not product (Appendix G)."

The primary service offered by the Writing Center involved tutors working with students to design individualized learning programs. This could begin as a single tutoring conference, regarding a specific paper or assignment. However, in consultation with the student, a tutor might suggest a combined approach to learning, including self-instructional learning modules,

practice exercises, mini-dialogues, reviews of reference materials, examination of model assignments, or follow-up conferences (Appendix H).

Students arrived in the writing center as a result of varying actions. For some, their request for assistance came from the direct referral of an academic instructor. These students carried a written referral checklist from their teacher to the writing center. The receptionist attached this referral to the tutor evaluation form when the student checked in. Over the years, as the Writing Center's reputation has grown, many faculty members began requiring visits to the Writing Center as part of individual assignment guidelines. Other students dropped in at random, either for immediate assistance with a paper or to ask short questions over topic development, grammar, or mechanics (Mohr, 2006).

In addition, this Writing Center offered self-study courses designed to help students review their skills in constructing sentences, revising and proofreading, composing paragraphs, and writing research papers. The college testing center implemented Compass exams before placing students into college English courses. A separate English for Academic Purposes program worked with English Language Learners prior to their placement in English classrooms. Students testing into two out of three developmental English modules are then required to enroll in for-credit self-study courses through the writing center before being allowed to enroll in other English courses. Some instructors required self-study modules as lab courses, along with individual students' English courses. According to the Director, these models may also "be interim courses where a student has finished Intro to Writing, and maybe got a C out of it, but really isn't ready for Comp I. And so that interim course in the Writing Center individualizes and really works on that student's particular needs (Mohr)." Self-paced individualized credit

modules were also available to online students from other cities and states. Peer tutors were instrumental in constructing individualized instruction, tailored to particular student needs.

As part of a community college, Writing Center services were also extended beyond the campus into the community. Students and citizens were welcome to use the center's resources, including dictionaries, thesauruses, style sheets, writing handbooks, texts, writing samples, computer programs, and self instructional units. Tutors were available to help with the writing of paragraphs, essays, research papers, journals, lab reports, and book reports. In addition to the telephone "Grammar Hotline," the Writing Center Grammar Hotline could also be accessed through email correspondence. According to the director, members of the community had come to the writing center requesting assistance with the writing of speeches, sermons, and professional publications. Businesses and corporations had also referred their employees to the writing center to enroll in the self-directed computer modules. The Center has provided readers for public school writing contests, edited publications for nonprofit organizations, assisted corporate employees in writing resumes for transitional employment, and providing expert grammatical advice in a court trial (Mohr, 2006).

Just as the teaching of writing has evolved through academic research and practice of rhetoric and composition studies, this writing center has operated in partnership with a theoretically-based academic writing program. Relationship plays a critical role in the teaching of writing as a rhetorical process; relationship between the writer and his subject, as well as relationship between the writer and his audience. Emphasis on writing skills and content alone, without the rhetorical element of relationship, would limit students' opportunities for learning.

Higher order learning strategies and critical thinking demand careful attention to decision-making and the management of complex relationships.

Evidence of Themes in Writing Center Tutorial Training

Training of peer tutors in this writing center has evolved over the past twenty years. Tutors serve as the audience for student writing and facilitate the process through individualized response and instruction. “Instruction is geared toward helping students improve actual pieces of writing (Mohr, 2006).” During this research study, tutors avoided proofreading, attempting to guide students through alternative solutions to writing problems. “A writing center is a microcosm of not only the larger institution but also the community in which it is located. Tutors must learn a variety of strategies for working with a diverse clientele (Mohr, 2006).”

In order to qualify for a writing center peer tutor position, students must have completed both Composition I and II at this particular institution. They must also have been recommended by a composition instructor and have demonstrated competence in both writing and interpersonal communication skills.

Tutor training was initiated with the receipt of a large tutor handbook (Appendix A), in a three-ring binder. The handbook was intended to provide an overview of center policies and procedures. It included detailed articles and references for effective tutoring strategies. Dividers separated the handbook into logical segments titled History/Philosophy, Promotional Materials, General Procedures, Tutor Qualities Defined, Demographic Info/Student Services, Strategies for Tutoring, Tutor Training/CRLA, Resources, and Evaluation Forms. Each tutor was asked to study this handbook prior to orientation. However, the handbook was not intended to serve as

a substitute for tutor training, which the director maintained as an ongoing process. Tutors were also expected to familiarize themselves with the resources available in the Writing Center, including software programs, handouts, and reference materials. Tutors-in-training were asked to review the different types of writing assignments archived in the center, along with models of acceptable papers (Mohr, 2006).

Following the initial orientation and training, all tutors were required to participate in weekly tutor training sessions, held each Friday afternoon at 2:30 p.m. These training sessions were diverse and often held in response to previously identified problems or concerns. The session content ranged from guest speakers trained in the most effective methods of teaching English Language Learners to methods of evaluating and accessing electronic databases available through the library. Other guest speakers have addressed such topics as learning styles, learning disabilities, listening skills, and body language. Very often, weekly sessions involved discussion, practice readings, and responses to student papers (Mohr, 2006). Because of a nearby educational facility for hearing impaired students, writing center tutors have also been trained to work with a sign language interpreter, “using strategies and materials designed to serve this unique population (Mohr, 2006).”

Since 1995, this particular tutoring program has been certified through the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA). Tutors working a minimum of twenty-five hours in the writing center, who have completed at least ten hours of training (twenty were actually required of this school’s tutors) qualified for Level One certification. Some tutors who continued tutoring for successive years achieved Level Two status by assuming leadership and mentoring roles in the tutoring program (Mohr, 2006).

Individually, tutors were evaluated on a semester-by-semester basis. Prior to the director's evaluation, each tutor completed a self evaluation (Appendix K). The director then sat silently in on individual tutoring sessions, completed a tutor evaluation form, and met individually with tutors to discuss their performance at the end of each semester. The writing center itself continues to be evaluated annually by the college's research department through surveys, which are distributed to all students visiting the Writing Center for a period of two weeks (Appendix L). Data collected from this survey has been shared with the Writing Center Director, faculty, administration, and peer tutors each year.

Peer tutors were expected to possess high levels of understanding about composition skills prior to being accepted as a writing center peer tutor. This expectation was evident in the requirement that each tutor had completed Comp I and II at this institution, as well receiving acceptable scores on the English Compass Test. Tutors were encouraged to further their understanding of writing skills through initial and weekly training sessions. The tutors' knowledge regarding the variety of curriculum content addressed in student papers was impacted by their own area of specialization. Tutors also prepared for diverse content through examination of faculty assignment guidelines and weekly facilitated training. While peer tutors had been provided with training in some areas of relationship building, it appeared that there was need for some inherent level of comfort working with people in order to establish tutorial relationships effectively. Evidence from the following transcripts of tutorial discourse and talk-aloud protocol reflections revealed that tutors employed a variety of strategies to foster both student learning and effective relationships with the students seeking assistance in this college writing center.

Data Collection Process To Assess Themes in Tutorial Discourse and Tutor Perceptions

Advanced Preparation

Tutor Orientation

In preparation for data collection, the researcher met collectively with all of the peer tutors. While eleven tutors were initially proposed for this study, only ten actually participated. The eleventh tutor elected to leave school and the Writing Center prior to the start of data collection. The ten remaining tutors represented the entire population of trained peer tutors in this particular writing center. During the orientation meeting, the researcher explained the purpose of the study and the questions being researched. The process for implementing the study was clearly outlined, including how tutoring sessions would be selected, the process for filming tutorial sessions, and the think-aloud protocol sessions to follow. Tutors were given the opportunity to express questions or concerns about the study. They were reminded that participation was completely voluntary and that choosing not to participate would in no way affect their standing in the Writing Center. Their overall response was positive. They appeared pleased to be invited to participate. There were some nervous expressions about being filmed while in the process of tutoring (cautious smiles, eye rolling). The Writing Center Director reinforced the fact that each tutor's decision to participate was completely optional. But all ten tutors agreed that this could be an interesting and worthwhile exercise. A discussion was held about which days of the week were feasible for data collection, in light of tutors' individual work schedules and the researchers' availability. As a result of this discussion, a predetermined filming and think-aloud schedule was outlined (Appendix E). Data collection would

take place on Monday, April 24, 2006 and Monday, May 5, 2006 (including evening session for those tutors who only work in the evenings). A copy of this schedule was typed up the following day and emailed to each of the tutors, as well as to the Writing Center Director and Receptionist. It was agreed that the regularly scheduled tutor training session, scheduled for Friday, May 12, 2006 would be used as a debriefing and reflection meeting for all of the tutors, the Director, and the researcher, over the research and filming process. Tutors would be invited to openly share their reactions, comments, and concerns about the data collection process at this meeting. The Writing Center routinely closed from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. each Friday, allowing for focused tutor training and discussion, preventing distractions and limited participation.

During the orientation meeting it was further discussed that the selection of student tutoring sessions to be filmed would be conducted randomly. Whichever students arrived in the center for services during each tutor's assigned filming time would be asked by the researcher to participate in the study, after checking in with the receptionist. If a student declined to participate, then the next student to arrive would be asked. At this point, tutors expressed some concern about not knowing what situation they might find themselves facing, in advance of filming. The researcher emphasized the importance of a naturalistic setting and how important a random sampling of student tutoring sessions was to the credibility of the study. No further concerns were expressed.

Collection of Materials and Equipment

Prior to the collection of any data, the researcher gathered all of the equipment necessary to conducting the study. A Sony high 8 video camera, power cord and tripod were purchased by the researcher, along with ten individual high 8 video tapes. In addition, the researcher purchased a portable audio cassette recorder with power cord and eleven individual high resolution audio tapes (an extra one for the debriefing session). Twenty copies of Informed Consent Forms were printed in advance, for both tutors and students (Appendix D). Arrangements for a television on a portable cart, equipped to plug and play the video recorder were made through the Writing Center Director. The Writing Center and the Director's office were surveyed for adequate space and sound requirements, as well as equipment placement.

Preparation Prior to Individual Filming of Tutorial Sessions

On each of the days scheduled for filming, the researcher arrived at the Writing Center one hour before the first scheduled session. During this hour, Table #3 was cleared and a "Reserved" sign was placed on the table, preventing possible interruption of the scheduled data collection times (Appendix C). The camera was set up in the corner behind the bank of file cabinets, facing the center of the room. Two chairs were strategically placed across the table from the camera, slightly facing one another. Copies of informed consent forms and a pen were laid at each place reserved for both the tutor and the student.

Across the hall from the Writing Center, in the Director's office, the researcher set up the audio cassette recorder with a new, blank tape. A large comfortable chair was placed on one side of the desk for the peer tutors. A smaller, straight-backed chair was placed across the desk for

the researcher. A rolling technology cart was wheeled into the room and placed strategically so that both the tutor and researcher could view the playback of the tutorial session for each think-aloud protocol session. Each of the tutors scheduled to participate on that particular day were then greeted and reminded of the procedure that would followed. The receptionist was reminded of the process so that she could refer incoming students to the researcher for each of the scheduled filming sessions. She would also see that the think-aloud sessions were not interrupted in the Director's office.

Sample Selection of Students to be Tutored and Filmed

Each student who arrived at the predetermined recording times was first greeted by the receptionist. They checked in, in accordance with procedure and were asked for their particular assignment needs. After filling out the required paperwork and retrieving their folder, the receptionist asked each of these students to visit with the researcher for a moment. The researcher introduced herself, explained the purpose of her study, and invited students individually to participate. Two of the students, who were obviously English Language Learners, expressed confusion at first. They each asked several questions about the process, and then agreed to participate. A third ELL student declined to be filmed, unable to make sense out of how the data would be used. She was thanked for her willingness to listen and referred to a tutor who was not scheduled for filming that day. The next student to enter then agreed to participate. The remaining seven students participating in the study all expressed their willingness to participate immediately upon being asked. All ten of the students, along with all ten of the peer tutors, signed prepared Informed Consent Forms, prior to the filming of each

session (Appendix D). Students were then asked to join the tutor assigned to be filmed for that particular session at Table #3.

Once the Informed Consent Forms were signed and collected, the researcher thanked both the tutor and the student for agreeing to participate. Each tutoring team was reminded that the filming was being conducted for research purposes only, and that neither the video-tapes nor their content would be shared with faculty, administration, or the public. The researcher further instructed that once the camera was turned on, the tutoring session should resume as usual. Each tutor and student was asked if they had any questions or concerns about the filming. Once questions were answered, the camera was turned on and the researcher left the area, going around the bank of filing cabinets to sit in the adjoining reception area until the session adjourned. The researcher did not observe the actual tutoring sessions in order to reduce any nervousness on the part of the student or the tutor. The camera could be viewed from an area near the receptionist's desk, in the event of technical difficulties. No problems occurred.

Data Analysis Procedures

Transcription of Video and Audio Recordings

Following data collection, the researcher personally transcribed each of the ten video tapes from the tutorial sessions, the ten audio tapes from think-aloud protocols, and the audio taped recording of the debriefing session held with tutors and staff following data collection. These tapes have been secured in locked storage since their transcription. Typed transcripts have been archived on the researcher's personal computer, as well as a portable storage device.

In order to triangulate the data and increase levels of objectivity, hard copies of the transcripts were temporarily presented to two external co-raters for coding. Co-Rater #1 was a doctoral student in Curriculum & Instruction who had completed all of her coursework and was currently writing her dissertation proposal in the information literacy field. Her course studies had included both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Co-rater #2 was a trained peer tutor in a university writing center (separate from the institution being researched). He was a senior level undergraduate student who had completed three college-level writing courses and been recommended as a tutor by English faculty. This was his third semester as a writing center peer tutor. All three sets of coded transcripts were placed on file in the researcher's office.

Thematic Coding Criteria

After reviewing previous studies for potential coding strategies, this researcher elected to design a coding strategy which examined the elements monitored in traditional writing programs. Student writing assignments in this college were typically graded in response to writing rubrics, which assessed specific areas of writing skill, along with matters of content management (Appendix M). In light of the themes identified through examination of the writing center's history, leadership, and training, a third category, dealing with relationships was incorporated into the analysis of data. These coding criteria were designed to illuminate the actual percentage of dialogue in each tutorial session, which was devoted to skills, content, and relationship. The researcher, along with each of the two external co-raters, was supplied with a complete set of tutorial session transcripts and three colored hi-lighter pens (pink, yellow, and blue). Co-raters were instructed to carefully read each line of transcript text, hi-lighting sections of dialogue,

based on the following coding criteria:

1. Writing Skills - PINK

Dialogue between the tutor and the student concerning HOW the paper was written, including, but not limited to, organizational method, transitions, fluency, paragraphs, introduction, conclusion, tone, vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure, verb agreement, passive verbs, word choice, point-of-view, punctuation, spelling, capitalization, indentations, MLA/APA citation formats, and proofreading errors.

2. Content – YELLOW

Dialogue between the tutor and the student concerning WHAT the paper was written about. Subject matter, including but not limited to, focus, clarity of claim/thesis, strong reasoning, relevant evidence, credibility, specific detail, insight, originality, audience analysis, definitions, and sources of external evidence.

3. Tutoring Relationship – BLUE

This category included behavioral descriptions and dialogue, which communicated expectations and establish relationship within the tutorial process. This included, but was not limited to, discussion about the assignment sheet, classroom instructor expectations, student needs and concerns, tutoring process, praise, use of writing center resources, student/tutor personal comments, and filming for the research project.

Upon receiving the two sets of coded transcripts back from the external co-raters, the researcher began the process of analyzing the data. Within each transcript, the number of lines of pink, yellow, and blue coded text were counted and recorded at the bottom of each page. Lines of text

that extended only half or one-third of the way across the page were not counted as complete lines of text, but were added in with other partial lines of text. The numbers at the bottom of each page were totaled together on the last page of the transcript. These numbers were then divided by the total lines of text in the document, calculating the percentage of dialogue dedicated to each of the three thematic areas.

This process was conducted for each of the three sets of ten coded transcripts. Total percentages from each of the three analyses were then averaged together. Variations and total percentages for each rater were recorded in (Appendix 0). Average percentages and evidence of thematic dialogue was derived from the following tutorial and think-aloud protocol sessions:

Day #1 of Data Collection

Monday, April 24, 2006

Set up was completed as previously described. No problems or complications were encountered.

Tutorial Session #1 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Setting

Tutor was seated on the right, student on the left at Table #3. Normal writing center activity took place in the background.

Tutor #1

White, Female, Traditional Student Tutor. She graduated in December 2005 from a nearby University with a Bachelors Degree in Creative Writing. She continued to enroll in this college each semester so that she could work in the Writing Center until she decided where

to attend graduate school. She has been tutoring in this writing center for the past four years.

She participated actively in all training sessions and has received a CRLA certification.

Student #1

White male, who appeared to be a nontraditional student.

Assignment #1

This student hoped to have two separate assignments read during the tutorial session. For the first, he presented an assignment sheet for a biology paper, which asked him to write an analysis of a journal article about a biology topic of his choice. He has chosen an article about the tentacles of giant squids. The second paper, for a Psychology class, was titled “Personality Theory” and dealt with “genetics and a theory related to childhood parental psychopathology.”

Thematic Findings in Tutorial Session #1

54.17% of this sessions tutorial dialogue focused on the student’s writing skills.

13.88% of the dialogue revolved around content and subject matter.

31.95% of the session involved dialogue/actions establishing the tutorial relationship.

Thematic Evidence of Skills Dialogue (54.17%)

The student set the direction of this tutorial session right away by presenting his first assignment sheet, an abstract of the journal article, and a directive from his biology teacher that credit would be given for visiting the Writing Center. Specifically, “the thing he is looking for is how the paper flows.” As the tutor read, she pointed out initial problems with sentence structure and word choice. The student responded “these are the things I’m not good at, so this helps.” At

that point, the student began reading the paper with the tutor and nodded as she pointed out concerns about word choice and redundancy. They discussed the organization of the essay and how one particular paragraph might work better if it were placed earlier in the paper. They also discussed comma placement and rules for comma usage. They closed their discussion over this particular paper with a conversation about APA format and appropriate page headers.

Moving on to the Psychology paper, the tutor established early on that the paper was to be written in APA format. In light of this, she pointed out problems with contextual citations. Again the student had minor issues with comma usage. The tutor also asked the student about technical terms used in the essay and whether he needed to “define these terms briefly for your audience?” He shook his head and said, “no, they will understand.” The tutor discussed the different formats for quotations, specifically “when you inset the quote, you are saying ‘I am quoting’ so you don’t need quotation marks here.” She pointed out a section that appeared choppy and the student asked “You’re saying to find more transitions to put in there?” She affirmed, “Exactly.” Continuing to read, the tutor cautioned the student to watch his “style for unnecessary filler words.” At this point, she began reading the passage aloud, glancing over to see if he could hear the extra words. He smiled, nodded, and wrote on his paper. When explaining a problem with two sentences needing a coordinating conjunction, the tutor brought her hands together and linked her fingers, watching to see if the student was following her example.

Thematic Evidence of Content Dialogue (13.88%)

Even though the topic of the biology paper lay outside of the tutor's area of expertise, she engaged the student in dialogue about his topic by asking open-ended questions, like "so, you are analyzing an article about squids?" This led the student into an explanation of how "the study records where the suckers are in relation to the tentacles in comparison to other types of squids." Because of the student's expressed need, very little of this paper's content was discussed. There were occasional references back to the assignment sheet, to see if the student was meeting the instructor's expectations. The student commented that he had very few concerns about the content of this paper "because I understand the subject, that wasn't too hard." The tutor responded "Well, I'm not good with science, and you made that understandable."

The dialogue about the Psychology paper opened with the tutor commenting "I'm worried about this one because I've read it myself and I don't understand. What I'm hoping for is that my instructor understands what I'm trying to say. I really want to get my point across." The tutor then asked if there was anything specific she should be reading for. The student responded "I want to know if what I was thinking in my mind comes across clearly to the reader. It's very difficult because what was in my mind was definitely not clear to me." As a result of this directive, the tutor began by trying to identify the student's claim. She asked him to explain the reasons why the truth of his claim should be considered. They discussed more effective ways of tying "parenting and psychopathology in with behavioral genetics." The student explained to the tutor that "even though they are different, they are related. There are a lot of studies showing them together." It was that relationship that he was trying to establish in his paper. The tutor suggested that he explain why he thought this theory "would influence

eugenics” because “it’s good whenever you make a claim to back it up. Even though you know in your head why, your reader may not.” He was cautioned to clarify which of the supporting ideas were his and which came from external sources. They briefly discussed the need for credible evidence in support of claims of fact.

Thematic Evidence of Tutorial Relationship Dialogue (31.95%)

The tutor actively engaged the student within the first thirty seconds of the session, allowing him to determine the focus of the tutorial session. She asked which paper he would like to start on and he responded “why don’t we start off with some light reading about tentacle morphology?” This brought a smile to both of their faces. When asked what he wanted the tutor to look for, the student pulled out his assignment sheet and explained the biology instructor’s expectations. When the tutor noticed that the student was not reading along, she began reading aloud, following the text with her finger. This focused the student’s attention toward his paper. When the student commented on his problems with grammar, she encouraged him by saying “trust me, this (*laying her hand calmly on his paper*) is better than the average paper. So don’t cut yourself short (*smiling sincerely*). Both tutor and student read together through the draft of the second paper. There was considerable evidence of humor and laughter throughout the session. The session ended with both tutor and student recalling the camera’s presence and commenting on how they were “not supposed to remember that it exists.”

Think Aloud Protocol Session #1

Protocol Instructions to the Tutor

Immediately following the tutoring session, the researcher invited Tutor #1 to adjourn to the Writing Center Director's office, directly across the hall. The video camera was carried to the office and plugged into the television, already in position. The tutor was invited to sit in a comfortable chair behind the Director's desk. The researcher sat directly across the desk, within easy reach of both the audio and video-cassette recorders. Both individuals were positioned within easy viewing distance of the television and one another. Prior to viewing the video-tape, the tutor was asked to briefly introduce her self on the audio-cassette recorder, stating her name, her year in school, and her major area of study. She was also asked to comment on her experiences in this particular writing center, including years of service, training experience, and motivation for tutoring. The tutor was then instructed to view her own video-taped tutorial session along with the researcher. She was informed that the video-tape would be stopped at logical breaking points (pauses) throughout the tutorial dialogue and that the audio-tape recorder would be turned on during each of these pauses. She was invited to speak freely about what she saw happening in each segment of the video-tape and why she chose to say and what she did.

Think-Aloud Protocol Findings

In an attempt to maintain consistency in the data analysis process, the researcher applied the same thematic coding criteria to audio-taped think-aloud protocol Session #1 that was applied in the tutorial Session #1. The coding criteria of Skills, Content, and Tutorial Relationship were applied by the researcher, as well as the same two external

co-raters asked to analyze previously reported tutorial discourse. The average findings from three separate analyses, along with thematic evidence from Think-Aloud Session #1 were as follows:

Thematic Findings in Think-Aloud Protocol Session #1

17.68% of this think-aloud protocol session reflected on the student's writing skills.

18.23% this think-aloud protocol session reflected on the student's content or ideas.

64.09% this think-aloud protocol session reflected on the tutorial relationship.

Evidence of Themes in Think-Aloud Protocol Session #1

After viewing the first segment of her tutorial session, this tutor observed her deliberate silence early in the session, "I like to get students to talk first." "I want him to set the direction." She also established direction by asking the student to provide her with his assignment guidelines. Her assessment that this student had a clear understanding of his content area, guided her into a discussion about writing style. Listening to the student, she assessed that he was not confident in his writing abilities. She repeatedly assured him that his writing was "better than average." She spoke of her own particular discomfort with negative student habits. While some of this tutor's reflection examines matters of content (giant squids) and writing skill (commas between two independent clauses), the majority of her analyses involved discussion about the ways in which she managed her relationship with the student and his assignment expectations.

"If you see in the session, I have the paper placed between us. And sometimes I'll have a student just shove it over on my side and I have to be assertive and push it back. I think

this is important because it is their words and their thoughts. And whether they want to claim it or not, they have to. Responses vary. Some students don't want to claim anything...they push the paper over, I push it back...it becomes a silent battle.”

She claimed to give the student power over the session and over his own work, reflecting that some students had elected not to meet with her because “I'm not going to fix everything.”

As she observed herself recapping the session at the end, the tutor noted that this particular student was “verbalizing well at the end...all that he needed to do. Generally, I have to do this.”

When reflecting on the experience of observing herself in the tutoring process the tutor was surprised that she appeared so “physically expressive.” “I tend to use gestures a lot, to help them visualize key points. Because I am a visual learner and this helps, particularly non-native English speakers, see how things all work together.”

She admitted that in her mind she often had to remind herself “don't take control, don't take control.” But observing this behavior in the video, she said “I can see that I look a little hyper-passive. I didn't know this was a consistent type of behavior.” She claimed that this behavior was a deliberate attempt “to lead them into it, instead of giving it to them.” She contemplated her actions by saying “My passive approach is intentional, but I wonder if they see it as ineffective. I don't feel like the students learn as much if they are not involved in the process of making decisions.” She referred back to the writing center training where they discussed “pulling things out of people and making them take an active role in their learning.” She acknowledged that the training had made her more aware and confident. She had also learned to be patient, after four years of tutoring she had learned to wait students out, while

thinking to herself “I don’t care if I have to sit there and wait fifteen minutes while you figure it out, I’m doing it for you.”

Tutorial Session #2 – 10:00 a.m. - Noon

Setting

The tutor seated on the left, and student on the right at Table #3. Normal Writing Center activity took place in the background. Prior to the start of tutorial discourse the student shuffled through a large three-ring binder, looking for papers. The tutor sat silently observing this process. Then the student began randomly pulling papers out of her book bag, looking up occasionally at the tutor, who remained silent. This continued for approximately five minutes.

Tutor

White, Female, Traditional Tutor. She recently switched from studying as an education major for the past three years, so she had received educational training. She had been a tutor in this writing center for the past three years, participating regularly in weekly tutor training sessions.

Student

African American, Female Traditional Student.

Assignment

The student presented a profile paper, which she had brought into the writing center earlier. She now wanted help with her conclusion and works cited page. The paper was due the next day.

Thematic Findings in Tutorial Session #2

61.98% of this sessions tutorial dialogue focused on the student's writing skills.

1.40% of the dialogue revolved around content and subject matter.

36.62% of the session involved dialogue/actions establishing the tutorial relationship.

Thematic Evidence of Skills Dialogue (61.98%)

At the student's request, this session opened with dialogue about MLA format. The student acknowledged that she had received the writing center's MLA packet early on and the tutor used this as a reference during the session. The tutor posed questions such as "Do you know how to cite that in your paper? And "Do you have the date that this interview was conducted?" At no time did the tutor write on the student's paper or the works cited page, instead she guided the student through corrections by asking questions and referring her to the MLA packet. They discussed punctuation, appropriate abbreviations, and correct alphabetical order. The tutor pointed out some confusion on the third source, which was cited as a website, but actually appeared to be an encyclopedia. Through dialogue, they discovered that the student had confused two different sources. She had also misplaced the citation information for the encyclopedia reference. The tutor recommended that she go back to the computer and relocate this particular source, if she intended to use it in her paper. The student asked if she could look this up immediately on the Writing Center computers. After agreeing that this would be a good idea, the session ended and the student relocated her materials to one of the nearby computer modules. The tutor did not offer to accompany her or assist her in her search.

Thematic Evidence of Content Dialogue(1.40%)

Because of the student's request to focus on MLA format, very little of the dialogue in this tutorial session revolved around content or subject matter. Early on in the session, the student explained that she had acquired information about her subject through a personal interview, "This is where I learned about the economy, which is the intermittent discipline." However, this was the only reference to subject matter throughout the entire dialogue.

Thematic Evidence of Tutorial Relationship Dialogue (36.62%)

Approximately one third of this tutorial session dealt with establishing relationship and expectations between the tutor and the student. Silence played a critical role in the tutorial discourse. Upon the student's arrival, the tutor sat patiently, waiting for the student to locate her assignment sheet, paper, and MLA guidelines. After finding these documents, the student remained sitting silently, shuffling through her papers and notebook. The tutor finally asked open-ended questions regarding the student's needs and expectations, such as, "Are you still working on that profile paper you brought in earlier?" The student informed her that the assignment was due the next day and that she needed to finish her citations. This particular student seemed to remain aware of the camera's presence throughout the session, repeatedly looking up in the direction of the camera. Throughout the session, the student's attention wandered from her paper as she repeatedly dug through her book bag for documentation, paper, pencils, and MLA guidelines. On three separate occasions, the tutor asked about particular sources of information and the student responded by sitting silently, staring at her paper. The tutor looked on silently, waiting for the student to respond. As the session closed, the student

relocated her materials to a nearby computer module, while the tutor informed her that she was “going to write the teacher a note that we worked primarily on MLA format.” To which the student simply replied, “Thanks.”

Think Aloud Protocol Session #2

Protocol Instructions to the Tutor

Immediately following the tutoring session, the researcher invited the tutor to adjourn to the Writing Center Director’s office, directly across the hall. The video camera was carried to the office and plugged into the television, already in position. The tutor was invited to sit in a comfortable chair behind the Director’s desk. The researcher sat directly across the desk, within easy reach of both the audio and video-cassette recorders. Both individuals were positioned within easy viewing distance of the television and one another. Prior to viewing the video-tape, the tutor was asked to briefly introduce her self on the audio-cassette recorder, stating her name, her year in school, and her major area of study. She was also asked to comment on her experiences in this particular writing center, including years of service, training experience, and motivation for tutoring. The tutor was instructed to view her own video-taped tutorial session along with the researcher. She was informed that the video-tape would be stopped at logical breaking points (pauses) throughout the tutorial dialogue and that the audio-tape recorder would be turned on during each of these pauses. She was invited to speak freely about what she saw happening in each segment of the video-tape and why she chose to say and what she did.

Think-Aloud Protocol Findings

In an attempt to maintain consistency in the data analysis process, the researcher applied the same coding criteria to audio-taped think-aloud protocol Session #2 that was applied in the tutorial Session #2. The coding criteria of Skills, Content, and Tutorial Relationship were applied by the researcher, as well as the same two external co-raters asked to analyze previously reported tutorial discourse. The average findings from three separate analyses, along with thematic evidence from Think-Aloud Session #2 were as follows:

Thematic Findings in Think-Aloud Protocol Session #2

15.29% of this think-aloud protocol session reflected on the student's writing skills.

0% this think-aloud protocol session reflected on the student's content or ideas.

84.71% this think-aloud protocol session reflected on the tutorial relationship.

Evidence of Themes in Think-Aloud Protocol Session #2

The tutor began her reflection by clarifying that she had met with this particular student on many occasions. She claimed that "she is one of those tutees who is difficult. She acts like she doesn't want to be here, but she is here all of the time." In light of her difficult behavior, the student had "gained kind of a reputation" in the Writing Center. "There are some students you like working with and others whom you have to work with, and she has become the latter." She pointed out that the student had come to the center unprepared, without a complete draft or assignment sheet. She commented that the student reacted to dialogue very slowly, "and if you try to hurry her or question her, she becomes very irritated." Knowing this, the tutor had decided

that even though the student did not appear prepared for the tutoring session, she would work with whatever information she had. As a Comp I student, the tutor felt that the student should be more “independent on citations and knowing what information to obtain.” She also expressed frustration that the student was in the Writing Center without a pen or pencil. Nor would she ask for one, waiting for the tutor to offer assistance. At one point, the tutor observed that maybe the camera was playing a role in the student’s silence. When the student sat staring at her paper, the tutor commented that some tutors might feel tempted to “take the pen and start doing things for her, but I think the only way to keep her involved is to make her write everything out by hand.” She again commented on how unprepared this student appeared to be for her tutoring session, considering that she sometimes came into the center several times each day. “This was a whole different challenge for me.” She observed that after being unable to find all of her citation information, the student appeared to “distance herself.” At this point, “I always try to lean towards them, because leaning back is like a huge thing that disengages them.” She pointed out how she repeated key points about MLA format to the student several times. “I mean I can do that, but it gets to the point where she’s going to have to do it herself and make decisions.”

Finally, patience paid off and the tutor proclaimed “I think here I’ve finally engaged her.” As the student appeared to lean forward and become more engaged in the process, the tutor commented:

I was leaving blanks that she had to fill in. Those long periods of silence were important.

In teaching they always say you need to have five seconds of silence before you answer a student. And this is difficult because you may think that they don’t know...but I’ve

worked with her before and we will sit sometimes, just staring at her paper. And as long as they are looking at their paper, I try to look like I am thinking.”

She contemplated how badly a student might feel if they were trying to come up with the answers and a teacher just kept speaking for them. Instead, this tutor believed she needed to “get her motivated enough to do it herself.”

In reflecting over the process of observing herself in the tutoring session, Tutor #2 expressed surprise at how much she leaned in and fidgeted with her clothing. She wondered aloud if this was because of the camera. She expressed considerable surprise at the amount of noise taking place in the background during the filming of the tutoring session, exclaiming that “even though you are in this really busy environment with people talking and stuff, for that twenty minutes you and that student are in a bubble looking at their paper. And that is all.” She went on to say that “it is really interesting to see how it works. I was amazed that she was actually sitting in as much as I was. It was almost like she was mimicking what I was doing.” Other things she noticed included the way that she “allows the student to control the session.” She expressed amazement at “how silent I really was. I’ll sit there for a long time, waiting for her to do something.” She considered herself a more non-directive than directive tutor, having faith that the students did know the answers. While the camera bothered her at first, she soon forgot about it. In closing, she noted that while it was easier to “get into higher order learning” with “certain students that you get along well with,” she surmised that the fact that the receptionist had referred this student to her during a filming session implied that she had confidence in her tutoring abilities.

Tutorial Session #3 – 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Setting

Tutor seated on the right, student on the left. Normal writing center activity took place in the background.

Tutor

White, Male Traditional Tutor. He has been a tutor in this writing center since August 2005, for the past two semesters. He has participated regularly in ongoing training sessions. He claimed to have learned through experience, observation of other tutors, and by asking frequent questions.

Student

White, Male, Traditional Student.

Assignment

This student was working on an assignment for biology. It was to be a summary analysis of a journal article, which was due the day after tomorrow. No assignment sheet was presented. He did not bring the article he was analyzing to the session, only “an abstract with an introduction to methods and all that.”

Thematic Findings

0% of this sessions tutorial dialogue focused on the student’s writing skills.

55% of the dialogue revolved around content and subject matter.

45% of the session involved dialogue/actions establishing the tutorial relationship.

Thematic Evidence of Skills Dialogue (0%)

The student set the direction for this tutorial session early on by pointing out that “the teacher required us to bring our paper by the Writing Center.” He asked the tutor to look at his summary and tell him “how it works.” He indicated that he had no specific concerns about his writing, he was just there to fulfill an assignment.

Thematic Evidence of Content Dialogue (55%)

A significant portion of this tutorial session revolved around content. The student was writing a summary analysis of a journal article for his biology class, but he did not bring the article with him. So the tutor had to open the session by posing questions about the topic. “Not having read your article, what do you mean here, ‘the impact’ of what? Is it a meteorite? If you specify more here, it keeps the idea fresh in the reader’s mind.” The student simply nodded. The tutor read the entire paper and suggested more clarification at another point. The student began to elaborate on his topic at this point, “the lightening coincides with the charged atmosphere. Like if there is lightening in the days and hours after the meteor impact, then the atmosphere would be charged enough or heated enough to cause vegetation to ignite.” The tutor seized this opportunity to engage the student in dialogue by asking if the article explained more about how this happened. The student went on to discuss the limitations of the article and problems with how “the theory disrupts a lot of what’s been thought before.” “They’re trying to explain that these two theories can still coincide with findings. There are two possible theories, global warming and this lightning theory.” The tutor worked to clarify the student’s claim by asking “So, the main focus of the report is not a new theory, but mainly focusing on problems

with the old one?” The student enthusiastically affirmed this observation and a discussion ensued about how important it would be for the final draft of his summary to explain this point clearly.

Thematic Evidence of Tutorial Relationship Dialogue (45%)

The tutor seemed immediately challenged by the student leaning back in his chair, claiming to be there only because his “teacher required us to bring our paper by the Writing Center.” Since the student did not express a specific need, the tutor had to establish a starting point. He did this by posing questions about assignment expectations and the topic under discussion. This led the student into dialogue about his understanding of the assignment and what he had written so far. He eventually set further direction by asking for feedback about his summary and “how it works.” The tutor kept the student engaged by placing the paper centrally between the two of them and reading the paper aloud, while following the text with his finger. The student moved up to the table and read along at this point. Periodically, the student interjected to explain assignment expectations (eg. “she didn’t want us to get too technical in our summaries”). When the tutor expressed a need for clarification, the student picked up a pencil and made notes directly on his draft. At no time did the tutor write on the student’s paper. As the session closed, the tutor exclaimed that with the added clarification, this summary “sounds great so far!” He then made notes on the evaluation form, shook the student’s hand, and offered him a copy of the form to place in his assignment folder.

Think Aloud Protocol Session #3

Protocol Instructions to the Tutor

Immediately following the tutoring session, the researcher invited the tutor to adjourn to the Writing Center Director's office, directly across the hall. The video camera was carried to the office and plugged into the television, already in position. The tutor was invited to sit in a comfortable chair behind the Director's desk. The researcher sat directly across the desk, within easy reach of both the audio and video-cassette recorders. Both individuals were positioned within easy viewing distance of the television and one another. Prior to viewing the video-tape, the tutor was asked to briefly introduce himself on the audio-cassette recorder, stating his name, his year in school, and his major area of study. He was also asked to comment on his experiences in this particular writing center, including years of service, training experience, and motivation for tutoring. The tutor was instructed to view his own video-taped tutorial session along with the researcher. He was informed that the video-tape would be stopped at logical breaking points (pauses) throughout the tutorial dialogue and that the audio-tape recorder would be turned on during each of these pauses. He was invited to speak freely about what he saw happening in each segment of the video-tape and why he chose to say and do what he did.

Think-Aloud Protocol Findings

In an attempt to maintain consistency in the data analysis process, the researcher applied the same coding criteria to audio-taped think-aloud protocol Session #3 that was applied in the tutorial Session #3. The coding criteria of Skills, Content, and Tutorial Relationship were

applied by the researcher, as well as the same two external co-raters asked to analyze previously reported tutorial discourse. The average findings from three separate analyses, along with thematic evidence from Think-Aloud Session #3 were as follows:

Thematic Findings in Think-Aloud Protocol Session #3

0% of this think-aloud protocol session reflected on the student's writing skills.

5.17% this think-aloud protocol session reflected on the student's content or ideas.

94.83% this think-aloud protocol session reflected on the tutorial relationship.

Evidence of Themes in Think-Aloud Protocol Session #3

The tutor identifies that his first order of business in the video-taped tutorial session was to “figure out what they want.” He did this by inquiring about the students expectations and needs for assistance. He noted that this particular student claimed to be here only for the credit his instructor was offering, without specific needs or concerns. Intending to engage an indifferent student, the tutor began by posing questions about the assignment guidelines and teacher expectations. “Had I had the assignment guidelines in front of me, I might have asked him questions about format,” instead the tutor elected to focus “on content and ideas.” The tutor reflected half way through the video that this was “a pretty atypical session,” noting that students who bring in papers from disciplines other than English “are often more to-the-point.” The drafts they bring in are more developed.” The tutor believed that the focus of this student's paper and his reason for being in the Writing Center resulted in a much shorter session than usual.

When reflecting over how it felt to observe himself in the tutoring process, the tutor first commented on his physical gestures. “I’m always bringing my hand up to my chin. Lots of nodding. I think I must be trying to affirm, but I need to make sure that I don’t over do it.” He also pointed out that on several occasions he interrupted the student, because he figured out “very quickly where he is going and what he is doing.” He recalled occasions when he has done this with other students and made a mental note to be careful about that. His training had taught him that he needed to work more on “drawing them out and letting them explain in their own words.” He also commented that he needed to ask more questions, stop and listen for the answers. “Watching myself definitely has value for my own practice, even in a short session like this.” While reflecting on his training Tutor #3 said, “I’m supposed to focus on ideas of higher order like organization and thesis. But sometimes I get lured away from that because fixing grammar is so much easier.” I needed to remember to ask “more basic motivation questions” and from the student’s answers “know what cues to focus on.”

Day #2 - Monday, May 1, 2006

Set up was completed as previously described. No problems or complications were encountered.

Tutorial Session #4 – 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Setting

Tutor seated on the left, student on the right. Normal writing center activity took place in the background.

Tutor

White, Male, Non Traditional Tutor. This tutor returned to college after retiring from owning/operating his own business for thirty years. He attended classes part-time and hopes eventually to earn a Bachelor's Degree in English. His goal was to become an Adult Basic Education Instructor. He has been working in the writing center for the past four years, has participated actively in all training, and holds a CRLA Certificate. He also tutored in the campus reading program, for a total of twenty-five tutoring hours each week.

Student

African American, Male Traditional Student.

Assignment

This student was working on the conclusion of a paper he had brought to the Writing Center on more than one previous occasion. It was a process paper, describing how to get involved in the sport of skateboarding.

Thematic Findings

65.85% of this sessions tutorial dialogue focused on the student's writing skills.

24.39% of the dialogue revolved around content and subject matter.

9.76% of the session involved dialogue/actions establishing the tutorial relationship.

Thematic Evidence of Skills Dialogue (65.85%)

The student, who was clearly familiar with the Writing Center process, established direction for this session as soon as he sat down by asking for help with his conclusion. The

tutor asked him to read the conclusion aloud and the student started right in. This led to dialogue about the need for transitions, organization, and precise word choice. Several times, words that the student read aloud were not consistent with what he had written on the paper. At these times, the tutor reminded him to “read what you have actually written here.” The tutor also pointed out problems with perspective shift, when the student began to insert the pronoun “you” towards the end of a paper previously written in first person.

Thematic Evidence of Content Dialogue (24.39%)

While leading up to the student’s conclusion of this process paper, the tutor asked numerous questions regarding the subject at hand, which was skateboarding. The student seemed to waffle between writing a process paper and writing an informative paper. The tutor asked numerous questions about his intent. At one point the tutor pointed out problems with the organization, asking the student to look at “the order of your essay.” When the student expressed confusion, the tutor asked him to “tell me in your own words what you think you’re wanting to say here.” The student responded “I wanted to say first you buy the skateboard, then you learn a few simple tricks, and then you meet new friends.” Okay, let’s work on doing that. Regarding the conclusion, the student was reminded to “keep it inline with what you have said up here” rather than changing the focus of the paper in his closing remarks. The student asked if he needed “to add more sentences.” The tutor responded by saying “Oh, you could add more, but make sure you know exactly what it is you want to say.”

Thematic Evidence of Tutorial Relationship Dialogue (9.76%)

The tutor and student in this session appeared to have a prior level of comfort and familiarity with one another. Very little time was spent with introductory comments. The student immediately looked at the tutor and told him what he wanted to work on. The tutor seemed familiar with both the student and that particular piece of writing. He did not ask for a copy of the assignment sheet nor explanation from the student about what he was working on. When the tutor asked the student to read his paper aloud, the student complied immediately, with no apparent discomfort. At no time did the tutor write on the student's paper, but the student held a pencil and made notes on his paper throughout the dialogue. When the tutor talked, the student looked directly at him and nodded his head as if understanding. When the student was writing, he talked aloud, to himself and to the tutor. When the student appeared to be reading his paper strictly from memory, the tutor calmly reminded him to read the words that were actually on the page, and the tutor smiled, knowingly. The session ended abruptly, as soon as the tutor summed up their dialogue, the student picked up his papers and said "I have a 9:00 class" and left.

Think Aloud Protocol Session #4

Protocol Instructions to the Tutor

Immediately following the tutoring session, the researcher invited the tutor to adjourn to the Writing Center Director's office, directly across the hall. The video camera was carried to the office and plugged into the television, already in position. The tutor was invited to sit in a comfortable chair behind the Director's desk. The researcher sat directly across the desk, within

easy reach of both the audio and video-cassette recorders. Both individuals were positioned within easy viewing distance of the television and one another. Prior to viewing the video-tape, the tutor was asked to briefly introduce himself on the audio-cassette recorder, stating his name, his year in school, and his major area of study. He was also asked to comment on his experiences in this particular writing center, including years of service, training experience, and motivation for tutoring. The tutor was instructed to view his own video-taped tutorial session along with the researcher. He was informed that the video-tape would be stopped at logical breaking points (pauses) throughout the tutorial dialogue and that the audio-tape recorder would be turned on during each of these pauses. He was invited to speak freely about what he saw happening in each segment of the video-tape and why he chose to say and do what he did.

Think-Aloud Protocol Findings

In an attempt to maintain consistency in the data analysis process, the researcher applied the same coding criteria to audio-taped think-aloud protocol Session #4 that was applied in the tutorial Session #4. The coding criteria of Skills, Content, and Tutorial Relationship were applied by the researcher, as well as the same two external co-raters asked to analyze previously reported tutorial discourse. The average findings from three separate analyses, along with thematic evidence from Think-Aloud Session #4 were as follows:

Thematic Findings

17.24% of this think-aloud protocol session reflected on the student's writing skills.

3.45% this think-aloud protocol session reflected on the student's content or ideas.

79.31% this think-aloud protocol session reflected on the tutorial relationship.

Evidence of Themes in Think-Aloud Protocol Session #4

Immediately identifying himself as “kind of a professional tutor” this individual spoke first of his relationship with the student in question. Having tutored the student many times before, he claimed to “be really pleased with his progress.” He also had a repeat level of familiarity with the particular assignment that the student was working on. Consequently, their session moved quickly into matters of grammar, mechanics, and content. He observed that the student had become more confident with his writing, comparing today's session to earlier ones when the student would “literally fall asleep while we were talking to him.” He noted that whenever this happened, he “would just sit and wait on him.” Because of his understanding of this student's developmental needs, the tutor commented that he would “go to a different level of grammar than I might with other students. I would be more specific with grammar rules.” He claimed to be an “improvisational” tutor, deciding where to go as the session progressed. He pointed out places where the student was “listening to me, waiting for the cues about where to go. He knows I'm not going to give them to him, but he is anticipating some guidance. The look on his face is really telling.” Regarding this interaction “I don't know if I knew this when it was happening, but I can see it here.” He explained why he did not always follow the directive to have students read their own work aloud, “because with many of the second language

students, I can't understand what they are saying." With this particular student he was working hard just to get him to pay attention throughout the entire session. "I think he has a really good memory, because he's putting words in her he hasn't even written."

Tutor #4 spent some time reflecting on preconceived notions of students and faculty that the Writing Center was "a college proofreading service." "I think students come in here with the mindset of wanting us to fix their papers. When it doesn't happen some of them are offended. Not all of our faculty and staff understand what we do in the Writing Center and how we do it." "If faculty were to ask me what I do, I would say that we are in the teaching business." He reiterated that "the goal for everyone who comes in here is to leave a better writer, which is a more important goal than leaving with a better paper."

When asked to reflect over the process of observing himself while tutoring, he reinforced his claim about being an improvisational tutor. "I don't sit down at the table with a student with any preconceived ideas about what I'm going to do...I just kind of roll with it and try to do what's going to work in that particular case." He spoke of disinterested students who have come into the writing center, opened their books, and said "let me know when you are through." And his response to them has been "I'm through when you're through, here's your paper." I gave them what they were here for.

Tutorial Session #5 – 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Setting

Tutor seated on the left, student on the right. Normal writing center activity took place in the background.

Tutor

White, Female, Non Traditional Tutor. This tutor was a social work major at a nearby University, who enrolled part-time in this college so that she could work in the Writing Center. This was her second full year of tutoring in the writing center, and she participated regularly in weekly training sessions.

Student

Hispanic, Female, Traditional Student. English Language Learner

Assignment

A descriptive paragraph assigned in English for Academic Purposes class.

Thematic Findings

67.57% of this sessions tutorial dialogue focused on the student's writing skills.

9.46% of the dialogue revolved around content and subject matter.

22.97% of the session involved dialogue/actions establishing the tutorial relationship.

Thematic Evidence of Skills Dialogue (67.57%)

The student set the direction of the tutorial session by asking the tutor to look at her descriptive paragraph and tell her if she had “done it correctly.” As they read the draft together, the tutor pointed out problems with numbers and sentence structure. In most cases, she told the student how to correct the grammatical errors, for example “There needs to be a comma here” and reword “got” because it is kind of a slang expression.” She also pointed out particular problems with verb tense, “not only did you spend most of your time here in the past, but you still do, right?” This tutor appeared to have a very hands on, directive tutoring style, instructing

the student “here, take these parenthesis out.” No explanation as to the reason for this correction was offered. The tutor also spelled out words for the student, rather than referring her to dictionaries or Writing Center resources. At one point, the tutor seemed frustrated about how to explain a particular use of the word “waters.” The student took some initiative in the session by asking questions like “is this a sentence fragment the way I have this written here?” She also inquired about the effectiveness of her introductory paragraph.

Thematic Evidence of Content Dialogue (9.46%)

The student’s expressed concerns were about the correctness of her descriptive paragraph, rather than her subject matter. There was limited discussion about the setting in which the paragraph’s action took place, “because you are not saying just any peaceful countryside, it’s a specific one that is within the City of Olathe.” The tutor also suggested that the student attend to details about who is included in her story. The student continually referred to “I” when the content of the story suggested that it was actually “we” or she and her husband who were involved.

Thematic Evidence of Tutorial Relationship Dialogue (22.97%)

The tutor allowed the student to establish the direction of this tutorial session by posing questions about her assignment and tutoring needs. After these points were established, the tutor scooted her chair closer to the student and held the paper between them. They both began reading the paper silently together, but occasionally the tutor asked the student to “read this section out loud to me.” Both the tutor and the student held pencils throughout the session. The

tutor used her pencil to point out problems in the text of the paper. The student periodically made notes directly on the draft. Very little dialogue took place that did not deal with either the writing or the specific content of the paper. The tutor did address the student directly in closing the session by commenting that she “noticed that on a lot of things, when I would catch a mistake, you would know the answer.” She praised the student for her progress with the English language and thanked her for visiting the Writing Center.

Think Aloud Protocol Session #5

Protocol Instructions to the Tutor

Immediately following the tutoring session, the researcher invited the tutor to adjourn to the Writing Center Director’s office, directly across the hall. The video camera was carried to the office and plugged into the television, already in position. The tutor was invited to sit in a comfortable chair behind the Director’s desk. The researcher sat directly across the desk, within easy reach of both the audio and video-cassette recorders. Both individuals were positioned within easy viewing distance of the television and one another. Prior to viewing the video-tape, the tutor was asked to briefly introduce her self on the audio-cassette recorder, stating her name, her year in school, and her major area of study. She was also asked to comment on her experiences in this particular writing center, including years of service, training experience, and motivation for tutoring. The tutor was instructed to view her own video-taped tutorial session along with the researcher. She was informed that the video-tape would be stopped at logical breaking points (pauses) throughout the tutorial dialogue and that the audio-tape recorder would be turned on during each of these pauses. She was invited to speak freely about what she saw

happening in each segment of the video-tape and why she chose to say and do what she did.

Think-Aloud Protocol Findings

In an attempt to maintain consistency in the data analysis process, the researcher applied the same coding criteria to audio-taped think-aloud protocol Session #5 that was applied in the tutorial Session #5. The coding criteria of Skills, Content, and Tutorial Relationship were applied by the researcher, as well as the same two external co-raters asked to analyze previously reported tutorial discourse. The average findings from three separate analyses, along with thematic evidence from Think-Aloud Session #5 were as follows:

Thematic Findings

40.25% of this think-aloud protocol session reflected on the student's writing skills.

7.80% this think-aloud protocol session reflected on the student's content or ideas.

51.95% this think-aloud protocol session reflected on the tutorial relationship.

Evidence of Themes in Think-Aloud Protocol Session #5

Tutor #5 explained the absence of introductions leading into this session by pointing out that she had worked with this particular student "at least a half a dozen times so far this semester." As a Developmental English student, the tutor recognized the need to reinforce grammar and content development. On several occasions, the student did not appear to understand the reasons for the suggested grammar changes, and the tutor would slow down and

repeat the grammar rule, along with similar examples. When the student was asked to read her own work aloud, she began “catching her mistakes as she goes along.” The tutor commented that this was a sign of definite progress in the student’s learning, compared to when she first arrived on campus. When the student’s sentence structure did not read fluently, the tutor waited, “I don’t really like to change their sentence structure. I like to let the student’s writing stay their writing.” At the close of the session, the tutor pointed out several positive aspects of the student’s descriptive paragraph stating, “I believe that if people come to us we must always say something positive to them; give them positive reinforcement, no matter what.” She admitted that on occasion she has “had to look for something positive to say, but I always try to do this and ask the student before they leave if they have any other questions.” She also pointed out in the tutorial session and in her practice that she always “calls people by their names and makes good eye contact.” Her focus was clearly on making sure the student felt comfortable.

When asked to reflect on how it felt to observe herself in the tutoring process, this tutor admitted to being very self-conscious of the camera’s presence. “Without the camera there I might have gone with the student over to the computers to look up the difference between using the words “specially” and “especially.” She also observed that she herself seemed to “talk really, really loud!” She assumed that this might have been, in part, because of the camera’s presence. Overall, she “felt like the session went well.”

Tutorial Session #6 – 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Setting

Tutor seated on the right, student on the left. Normal writing center activity took place in the background.

Tutor

White, Female, Traditional Tutor. This tutor was in the process of changing her major from music education to nursing. She had been working in the Writing Center since August of 2005, for the past two semesters. She participated regularly in weekly tutor training sessions.

Student

White, Female, Nontraditional Student.

Assignment

The student was writing a persuasive paragraph about commitment and was working on her second draft. She wanted help with punctuation, quotations, fluency, and persuasiveness.

Thematic Findings

21.16% of this sessions tutorial dialogue focused on the student's writing skills.

39.42% of the dialogue revolved around content and subject matter.

39.42% of the session involved dialogue/actions establishing the tutorial relationship.

Thematic Evidence of Skills Dialogue (21.16%)

As the session opened, this student expressed her needs immediately. "This is kind of my second draft and I just want to see how to do the punctuation, what I need to put in quotes, to see

that it flows, makes sense, and is it persuasive.” As the tutor began reading the paragraph she pointed out potential problems with vague word choice and awkward sentence structure. When she identified a problem with “verb agreement” the student replied “that’s exactly where I have problems.” Each of the tutor’s comments was redirected toward the student, as in “you might want to check on this sentence” and “here the only problem with using the word ‘your’ is you have not addressed me in person as the reader yet in your essay.” This led to further discussion about sentence fragments and perspective shifts. Each time the tutor posed a question, the student made notes on her draft. At one point, the tutor asked if a particular sentence was actually a direct quote or a paraphrase. They discussed the differences and rules for each. When the student revised one sentence, she read it aloud to the tutor, asking “does that sound stronger?” The tutor nodded.

Thematic Evidence of Content Dialogue (39.42%)

In keeping with the student’s previously stated concerns about seeing if her paper “flows, makes sense, and is persuasive,” a significant portion of this session revolved around the subject at hand, commitment. When encountering awkward sentence structure, the tutor asked “what do you mean by that,” which followed into the student explaining that this was “something she feels strongly about.” “People who cannot make commitment” might “lose the opportunity, for example, to go to college.” They discussed some points in the paragraph that appeared vague to the tutor and the student asked questions about possible ways to clarify her intent. The tutor also praised ideas which were clearly communicated, as in “Okay, this passage about conviction is good.” The student later expressed concern about whether her ideas were persuasive enough,

reporting that her instructor said that in order “to sound persuasive we need to have examples. And I really do want this more in line with persuasive than informative.” The tutor commended the student on her examples, saying that they were very clear and easy for readers to relate to. She also pointed out a long passage that was primarily informative. Together, they discussed ways that the student could link her examples to her persuasive claims about commitment. One of the strategies they discussed involved presenting the student’s examples as potential rewards for commitment. The student appeared excited about pursuing this line of reasoning. As she left the session, she said “I think for right now, I’ll just work on this and then transition into the examples. Cos this is my weak point, this is what needs work.” The tutor nodded in agreement. As the session ends, the tutor affirmed the student’s efforts by saying “I’m really glad that you decided to define commitment in your own words, because that makes it more personable and interesting. Dictionary definitions are great, but boring.”

Thematic Evidence of Tutorial Relationship Dialogue (39.42%)

The direction for this tutorial session was clearly established by the student upon her arrival. She identified four primary areas of concern for her writing, two related to her writing skills, and two dealing with her content area. The student also directed the tutor to “go ahead and make little notes on that copy because I have to redo it” and she hands her pen directly to the tutor. Apparently unnoticed by the student, the tutor gently laid the pen down on the table, in front of the student. As they began reading the draft together, the student picked up the pen and continued to make notes on her draft throughout the entire session. While reading the draft, the tutor followed along in the text with her finger. The student appeared to be reading along with

her. At no point did the tutor pick up a pen or write on the student's draft. There was a break in the middle of the session where the tutor recognized that the student was studying nursing. She acknowledged her own interest in the nursing field and they engaged in a friendly dialogue for a few moments. When their tutorial session returned to the draft, the student began reading silently and making notes for several minutes. The tutor sat silently, observing this process. Then the student showed the tutor what she had written, both nodded in agreement. The second half of the session involved considerable thinking and writing time on the student's part, while the tutor looked on. At the close of the session, the tutor asked "are you going to have someone else read this again a little later?" The student responded, "Yes, you gave me some good thoughts and ideas. Even simple writing is a process. I mean, I do a rough draft, then I usually end up changing it." The tutor smiled and said, "That's a very good idea."

Think Aloud Protocol Session #6

Protocol Instructions to the Tutor

Immediately following the tutoring session, the researcher invited the tutor to adjourn to the Writing Center Director's office, directly across the hall. The video camera was carried to the office and plugged into the television, already in position. The tutor was invited to sit in a comfortable chair behind the Director's desk. The researcher sat directly across the desk, within easy reach of both the audio and video-cassette recorders. Both individuals were positioned within easy viewing distance of the television and one another. Prior to viewing the video-tape, the tutor was asked to briefly introduce her self on the audio-cassette recorder, stating her name, her year in school, and her major area of study. She was also asked to comment on her

experiences in this particular writing center, including years of service, training experience, and motivation for tutoring. The tutor was instructed to view her own video-taped tutorial session along with the researcher. She was informed that the video-tape would be stopped at logical breaking points (pauses) throughout the tutorial dialogue and that the audio-tape recorder would be turned on during each of these pauses. She was invited to speak freely about what she saw happening in each segment of the video-tape and why she chose to say and do what she did.

Think-Aloud Protocol Findings

In an attempt to maintain consistency in the data analysis process, the researcher applied the same coding criteria to audio-taped think-aloud protocol Session #6 that was applied in the tutorial Session #6. The coding criteria of Skills, Content, and Tutorial Relationship were applied by the researcher, as well as the same two external co-raters asked to analyze previously reported tutorial discourse. The average findings from three separate analyses, along with thematic evidence from Think-Aloud Session #6 were as follows:

Thematic Findings

21.57% of this think-aloud protocol session reflected on the student's writing skills.

4.90% this think-aloud protocol session reflected on the student's content or ideas.

73.53% this think-aloud protocol session reflected on the tutorial relationship.

Evidence of Themes in Think-Aloud Protocol Session #6

After viewing the introductory segment of the tutorial session, this tutor pointed out that the draft the student brought in to be read had not been typed. “I very seldom get hand-written drafts like this.” Aside from being illegible, this matter complicated the tutoring process by allowing very little room on the page for editing comments. She pointed out that at the same time she becomes frustrated with the untyped paper, the “noise level in the room was starting to bother me.” In spite of the noise, she and the student continued to work and the tutor had “a feeling that the student did not appear to notice the noise because we were working in our own little world.” The tutor enjoyed the brief personal interaction she and the student had about the Nursing Profession and felt that it helped to “establish some common ground.” This was especially true since she had “never worked with this student before today.” She explained her reasoning for reading this student’s paper out loud to her, “if I read it they may be better able to hear their own mistakes, as well as other things they need or intended to say.”

This tutor admitted to occasionally marking on a student’s paper herself, specifically minor edits regarding spelling and word choice. However, most of the time she claimed not to “bring a pen to the tutoring sessions “because I am a perfectionist and if I see something wrong, I like to fix it.” Not bringing a pencil seemed to be her intentional strategy for empowering students do their own work. She also discussed the importance of the paper being placed centrally during the tutorial session.

At one point in the session, “the focus changes from fluency and word choice to issues about persuasion.” The tutor pointed out that the student prompted this discussion and she decided “to follow her lead.” The tutor pointed out how she encouraged the student to develop

her examples, which were “familiar to many people and readers may be better able to relate.” Later, the tutor pointed out another occasion when the student shifted the focus of the dialogue. “She identified the problem” and the tutor followed her lead. At one point when the discussion lagged, the tutor made an analogy to the student’s claims about commitment. She used the analogy to “move us forward.” In closing the session, the tutor reviewed problem areas and asked the student to explain her immediate plan of action. She also encouraged a return visit to the Writing Center.

When asked to reflect on the process of observing herself in a tutorial session, Tutor #6 observed her own tendency to mumble. “I can feel myself doing it, but I don’t know what it sounds like to other people.” She also noticed the amount of eye contact she maintained with the student, “This way they know I am listening and that I am focused.” She joked that if she were to participate in future filming she would brush her hair and wear make-up. She noted that the fact that the student agreed to return for a follow-up session was evidence of her comfort level.

Tutorial Session #7 – 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Setting

Tutor seated on the right, student on the left. Normal writing center activity took place in the background.

Tutor

White, Male, Traditional Tutor. This tutor was working on a Bachelor’s Degree at a nearby university, but also enrolled in class on this campus so that he could continue to work in the Writing Center. His career goals included teaching on a collegiate level. He had participated

weekly in Writing Center training sessions and had earned his CRLA Certification Levels One and Two.

Student

Asian, Female, Nontraditional Student.

Assignment

This student returned from a previous writing center session with a second draft of a descriptive paragraph due in English for Academic Purposes. She wanted help with descriptive language, sentence structure, and punctuation.

Thematic Findings

79.29% of this sessions tutorial dialogue focuseed on the student’s writing skills.

0% of the dialogue revolved around content and subject matter.

20.71% of the session involved dialogue/actions establishing the tutorial relationship.

Thematic Evidence of Skills Dialogue (79.29%)

Early in the tutorial session, the tutor established that this student was an English Language Learner and she had brought in a second draft to be reviewed by a Writing Center tutor. She did have her assignment sheet with her, but stated that “we are supposed to be writing a descriptive paragraph. And that the instructor wants them to “use descriptive words that show about senses.” The tutor replied, “She wants you to use adjectives?” “Yes.” He then asked if there were other things she needed to work on and she acknowledged that sentence structure

continued to be a problem for her. They discussed sentence fragments, comma splices, and run-on sentences. He referred her to several handouts and resources available in the Writing Center. While reading the student's paper aloud to her, the tutor paused periodically to point out problems with spelling and word choice. She expressed some confusion about word choice, especially related to articles. The need for subject/verb agreement came up in the discussion several times. The tutor read passages aloud exactly as they were written, and then again with the corrections in place, asking the student in each case if this made sense to her. Sometimes, the student nodded in agreement and wrote on her paper. At other times, she looked puzzled, but wrote on her paper anyway. The tutor pointed out problems with shifts in verb tense and point of view. When a word appeared to be used incorrectly, he stopped and asked her "now here, you say 'compete,' what do you mean by that?" On several of these occasions, she simply looked back at him, obviously confused. But in some cases she replied with clarification, as in "I want to say that the plants and trees are blooming." They identified several instances of comma splices, which the student corrected herself. The language barrier caused considerable confusion when the tutor tried to point out errors in spelling. For example, the student intended to say "ten months" but had written "ten mothers." After lengthy dialogue about her intent and what she had actually written, the student finally reached a moment of understanding. At that point, both the student and the tutor were able to laugh at the unintended meaning her mistake had communicated. The session closed with discussion about the student's strengths and weaknesses with the English language.

Thematic Evidence of Content Dialogue – (0%)

Because of the language barrier and the students expressed needs, this tutorial session did not allow time for discussion of content. Aside from issues relating to word choice and intended meaning, the subject matter was never addressed.

Thematic Evidence of Tutorial Relationship Dialogue (20.71%)

The tutor in this session worked very hard to discern meaning through both the student's text and interactive dialogue. Rather than having the student read this paper in her pronounced Chinese accent, the tutor read the paper aloud himself. At no point in this lengthy tutorial session did the tutor appear frustrated or impatient. He calmly walked the student through the draft of her paragraph, pausing to discuss problems with punctuation, word choice, sentence structure, spelling, and format. While the student appeared confused on more than one occasion, the tutor waited for her responses to each of his comments. His interest was clearly focused on student learning and understanding. When she appeared confused, he used gestures and questions to elicit understanding and participation. He did not correct her paper for her, but waits for her to mark on the paper. He then waited for her to study the changes and ask questions. As they read the draft together, he followed the text with his finger. She appeared to be reading along with him the entire time. At one point in the session, when the student seemed frustrated and embarrassed by not understanding, she looked up at the camera for a moment. But the tutor immediately drew her attention back to the paper by holding it out and reading aloud in a calm voice. Her eyes moved back to the paper. When the student appeared confused, the tutor would wait for her to think about his comments, then begin to question her for understanding.

There was one moment of humor when the student reached a point of understanding about how she had misspelled the word “months” as “mother.” Their laughter appeared to reduce some of the tension created by her lack of understanding. When the student laughed, she covered her face. Both the tutor and the student appeared noticeably tired at the end of this session, but they thanked one another and smiled as the tutor reviewed the main points of the tutoring session.

Think Aloud Protocol Session #7

Protocol Instructions to the Tutor

Immediately following the tutoring session, the researcher invited the tutor to adjourn to the Writing Center Director’s office, directly across the hall. The video camera was carried to the office and plugged into the television, already in position. The tutor was invited to sit in a comfortable chair behind the Director’s desk. The researcher sat directly across the desk, within easy reach of both the audio and video-cassette recorders. Both individuals were positioned within easy viewing distance of the television and one another. Prior to viewing the video-tape, the tutor was asked to briefly introduce him self on the audio-cassette recorder, stating his name, his year in school, and his major area of study. He was also asked to comment on his experiences in this particular writing center, including years of service, training experience, and motivation for tutoring. The tutor was instructed to view his own video-taped tutorial session along with the researcher. He was informed that the video-tape would be stopped at logical breaking points (pauses) throughout the tutorial dialogue and that the audio-tape recorder would be turned on during each of these pauses. He was invited to speak freely about what he saw

happening in each segment of the video-tape and why he chose to say and do what he did.

Think-Aloud Protocol Findings

In an attempt to maintain consistency in the data analysis process, the researcher applied the same coding criteria to audio-taped think-aloud protocol Session #7 that was applied in the tutorial Session #7. The coding criteria of Skills, Content, and Tutorial Relationship were applied by the researcher, as well as the same two external co-raters asked to analyze previously reported tutorial discourse. The average findings from three separate analyses, along with thematic evidence from Think-Aloud Session #7 were as follows:

Thematic Findings

26.27% of this think-aloud protocol session reflected on the student's writing skills.

0% this think-aloud protocol session reflected on the student's content or ideas.

73.73% this think-aloud protocol session reflected on the tutorial relationship.

Evidence of Themes in Think-Aloud Protocol Session #7

After watching the first segment, the tutor observed that they had first taken care of formalities, regarding format and assignment expectations. He acknowledged being a bit nervous that he did not recognize the instructor's name on the assignment guidelines. He assessed early in the session that the student was a second language learner who "mimics very well and she is very quiet, so she's not going to set direction right away. That's her culture." He

explained that he deliberately chose to read her paper aloud to her, “because I absorb better if I am reading and there are some problems here with understanding.” In this situation “I always wonder how much I should talk about, it must be maddening for them.” He pointed out several occasions where he was thinking silently, trying to decide how far to go with explanations about grammar. “With some students you go to the minute level, but with other students, it is too much information. Watching it now, I know it was too much.” He noted that there were bigger things coming up later in the paper. It soon became apparent to the tutor as he observed the tutorial process that the student “has no idea what I’m talking about. I can see me thinking ‘okay, that’s attempt #1, and then attempt #2, and now #3.’” He acknowledged that in her native language of Chinese, the images she was trying to describe are “probably awesome.”

As the session progressed the tutor pointed out “we are both frustrated here. Something was missing and I really wanted to pull it out of her.” The awkwardness of the tutorial session escalated and the tutor watched intently, with a furrowed brow. “It wasn’t clear and I couldn’t explain to her why. It’s funny that the tougher the question, the more complex the problem, the easier it is to communicate. The simple stuff is hard to communicate.” He pointed out that with some ESL students reading aloud to them helps them “hear that there is something wrong.” But that was not the case for this student. On some occasions, the tutor observed that he was suggesting changes and she was just making them, with no apparent understanding of why. “By now we are both getting tired. At that point I know that this has been going on for a long time and I probably shouldn’t be stopping on all of the little things. But if you don’t address them, they may think they are right.” At this point, I began picking and choosing what to discuss. As

the session closed, he wished that he had not “focused so much on little things, because it was tiring for both of us.

When asked to reflect on the process of observing himself in a tutorial session this tutor noted that many of the details he attempted to explain to this student he had never bothered to explain to any student before. He wondered about the reasons for this. He acknowledged the beauty of ideas that ESL students write about, which do not always translate well into English. He did not admit to any discomfort with the camera, other than recognizing a need to “take control of this session” wanting to be “more intentional.” Watching the session reminded him of how much time the session had taken, because he never looks at a clock while tutoring. He observed how fatiguing it was to remain focused for such a long period of time and vows to be more sensitive to the student’s needs in this area. He pointed out the difficulties of not having the opportunity to review the student’s paper before the tutoring session, which forced him to “figure this stuff out as we are saying it.” But, he concluded, “we were both engaged with the paper in the session, even if she didn’t always understand what I was trying to say.”

Thursday, May 11, 2006

Set up is completed as previously described. No problems or complications are encountered.

Tutorial Session #8 – 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Setting

Tutor was seated on the left, student on the right. Normal writing center activity took place in the background.

Tutor

White, Male, Traditional Tutor. This tutor has been tutoring in the Writing Center for the past two years (four semesters) while a student at this college. He plans to transfer to a nearby university next semester, pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Information Systems. He also plans to enroll in one course at this college so that he can continue to work in the writing center. He attends writing center training sessions on a regular basis and has earned his CRLA certification.

Student

Asian, Female, Nontraditional Student.

Assignment

The assignment sheet was presented for a one page concept paper defining "structural power." The paper must include an original example defining this term.

Thematic Findings

0% of this sessions tutorial dialogue focused on the student's writing skills.

85.34% of the dialogue revolved around content and subject matter.

14.66% of the session involved dialogue/actions establishing the tutorial relationship.

Thematic Evidence of Skills Dialogue (0%)

As this session opened, the student established that she was still in the formative stages of this assignment. She presented an assignment sheet for a one page concept paper and asked for help with topic development. Since there was not draft yet to review, there was no discussion of writing skills.

Thematic Evidence of Content Dialogue (85.35%)

“My concept paper is about finding the definition of structural power. But I have to give an example to show what structural power means.” After looking at the assignment sheet and the chapter in the book that the student presented, the tutor began asking questions. “Do you understand that structural power isn’t exactly inside of an individual structure?” The student said that she did. “What types of examples can you think of to define structural power?” The student pointed to examples in the book, but the tutor wanted examples from life. When the tutor explained that this was her problem, the two of them began a brainstorming session. They discussed governmental and corporate power structures, as well as United States structures vs. other countries. The conversation moved into what types of structures influence peoples’ jobs. The student said “Like, U.S. companies go elsewhere for cheaper labor and create jobs.” At this point the tutor tried to build on the student’s idea by asking her to come up with examples. She immediately relayed an example of her husband, who had “a degree in science and he could not get a job in India.” The tutor seized this as an opportunity for the student to link her example to the teacher’s assignment defining “structural power.” A lively dialogue ensued about power structures and ways that the student might link to the example about her husband. “So like with my husband and science, right? That is a community that has power. So that is a type of structural power. It can have good and bad effects? Right?” “Yes, and can you think of anything else that it effects in India?” After further discussion, the student said “This is hard, but I can see the connection. So, how am I going to stop this essay, just summarizing how it affects the economy or the people?” They discussed possible methods of summary closure.

Thematic Evidence of Tutorial Relationship Dialogue (14.66%)

This tutor's background in business clearly enhanced the type of dialogue conducted in this tutorial session. The fact that the tutor obviously possessed some understanding of the term "structural power" seemed to guide the course of the dialogue. Early on, the tutor made sure that both parties understood the parameters of the assignment by reading the assignment sheet out loud to the student. Whenever the student looked puzzled, the tutor referred to the chapter in her text book, which outlined the principles of structural power. At one point in the dialogue, the student took out a blank sheet of paper and began to make notes about the connection between the term being defined and her example. The tutor looked at what she was writing and responded to her ideas affirmatively. The only time the tutor looked confused or surprised was at the close of the session when the student announced that this paper was "due today." He responded with "just try your best with that, I guess."

Think Aloud Protocol Session #8

Protocol Instructions to the Tutor

Immediately following the tutoring session, the researcher invited the tutor to adjourn to the Writing Center Director's office, directly across the hall. The video camera was carried to the office and plugged into the television, already in position. The tutor was invited to sit in a comfortable chair behind the Director's desk. The researcher sat directly across the desk, within easy reach of both the audio and video-cassette recorders. Both individuals were positioned within easy viewing distance of the television and one another. Prior to viewing the video-tape, the tutor was asked to briefly introduce him self on the audio-cassette recorder, stating his name,

his year in school, and his major area of study. He was also asked to comment on his experiences in this particular writing center, including years of service, training experience, and motivation for tutoring. The tutor was instructed to view his own video-taped tutorial session along with the researcher. He was informed that the video-tape would be stopped at logical breaking points (pauses) throughout the tutorial dialogue and that the audio-tape recorder will be turned on during each of these pauses. He was invited to speak freely about what he saw happening in each segment of the video-tape and why he chose to say and do what he did.

Think-Aloud Protocol Findings

In an attempt to maintain consistency in the data analysis process, the researcher applied the same coding criteria to audio-taped think-aloud protocol Session #8 that was applied in the tutorial Session #8. The coding criteria of Skills, Content, and Tutorial Relationship were applied by the researcher, as well as the same two external co-raters asked to analyze previously reported tutorial discourse. The average findings from three separate analyses, along with thematic evidence from Think-Aloud Session #8 were as follows:

Thematic Findings

0% of this think-aloud protocol session reflected on the student's writing skills.

12.82% this think-aloud protocol session reflected on the student's content or ideas.

87.18% this think-aloud protocol session reflected on the tutorial relationship.

Evidence of Themes in Think-Aloud Protocol Session #8

Initially, the tutor observed his own attempts to gather information about this student's assignment needs and concerns, "so I'm going to start probing her for ideas." He pointed out that not yet having started her draft, the student began presenting her sources of evidence, which he examined before asking her to explain her own "definition of structural power." As the session progressed, the tutor observed that he was listening to the student and posing questions, "basically working to a point where she can actually sit down and start working on her paper." As the dialogue continued, the tutor moved closer to the television monitor as the student began to recite her own original example of structural power. "Rather than waiting on me, she has become more active in the process. I'm trying to get her to talk more." When he appeared not to understand her ideas, he asked more questions. "So I'm using her thoughts to provide me with more information and try to direct or tutor me a little bit." He identified the point in the tutorial session when the student applied the term being defined to her own example. At that point, he asked her "if she could elaborate on that further and write a one page definition of what structural power is." After working through the process of invention, the tutor noted how he turned the discussion to matters of organization and a topic sentence, when the tutor observed that "she wants me to write her sentence for her. After taking ownership for her own ideas, she hands it back to me." But he passed it back to her, encouraging her to go ahead and start writing the paper to see "how far she can get." After viewing the entire session the tutor reinforced his decision to lead "the conversation until we actually make progress."

During reflection about observing himself in a tutorial session, the tutor commented that he believed it was "one of my better sessions" because of "the amount of progress we made on

developing her ideas.” He did not admit to any surprises about observing himself in the session, even though he noted that the camera was a minor factor in the early stages of the session, but that later he “forgot about it.”

Tutorial Session #9 – 10:00 a.m. - Noon

Setting

Tutor was seated on the left, student on the right. Normal writing center activity took place in the background.

Tutor

White, Female, Nontraditional Tutor. This tutor has been a part-time student and tutor in the writing center for the past five years. She was initially referred by an instructor because of high grammar scores on the Compass test. She has a family and a full-time job outside of school and the writing center. She is working towards an Associates of Arts degree. She has participated in writing center trainings and CRLA certification in the past, but does not attend trainings presently, due to scheduling demands.

Student

Hispanic, Female, Nontraditional Student.

Assignment

This student brought in a second draft of a paper she had read in the Writing Center the day before. The assignment was for a literary analysis essay and the student expressed concern about grammatical errors.

Thematic Findings

55.22% of this sessions tutorial dialogue focused on the student's writing skills.

25.38% of the dialogue revolved around content and subject matter.

19.40% of the session involved dialogue/actions establishing the tutorial relationship.

Thematic Evidence of Skills Dialogue (55.22%)

The student brought in a second draft of her analytical essay into the Writing Center. She communicated her expectations to the tutor up front. When the tutor asked "what kind of questions do you have for me," the student replied, "Any grammatical errors." As the tutor read through the draft, she stopped to explain that "when you are writing about literature, it is customary to write about it in the present tense, rather than past tense." She discouraged the student from jumping back and forth between tenses. The student made a note on her paper. There was further discussion about verb tense, as well as verb agreement. The tutor asked about the instructor's expectations about the use of contractions, which the student claimed was not a problem. Matters of sentence structure were discussed, particularly fragments and comma usage. The tutor also cautioned the student about using a literary character's exact words without enclosing them quotation marks and inserting contextual citations. As the session ended, the tutor reminded the student to read her work carefully for consistent verb tense.

Thematic Evidence of Content Dialogue (25.38%)

Early on, the tutor asked if the student was "happy with what kinds of things you are saying?" The student replied that she was, except for her conclusion. The tutor pointed out that

the essay appeared to be very informative, which seemed different than expectations for an analytical essay. The student pointed out that everyone in the class was responding to the same piece of literature, with different topics. “Some chose to write about division. Some chose to write about the confidence that the character had.” The tutor suggested that it might make sense to “introduce the name of the book or story earlier in the beginning” of the essay, to clue the reader in. While reading through the essay, the tutor stopped to ask questions about the piece of literature being reviewed, “was it because of the money that she arrived in Detroit?” When the student explained that the character, Jasmine, did not have any money, the tutor suggested that she clarify this point for the reader. She reminds the student of the analytical intent of the assignment and encourages her to develop the connection between the story and the fact that “people in the United States believe that money is really and truly within their reach.” She also suggested that the student might want to clarify earlier in the story which characters were of which race, “because that is going to be a factor later in how they judge each other and how they relate to each other.”

She also pointed out that the student makes a very interesting point by saying that the character is “surrounded by all of those people in this huge place and yet the opportunities are not really there.” She encouraged the student to elaborate more on this important idea.

Thematic Evidence of Tutorial Relationship Dialogue (19.40%)

When the student arrived, she made it very clear that she had brought this assignment to the writing center before and she was just here now to have her grammar “fixed.” The tutor responded to this by asking for copies of the evaluation from the previous tutorial session. She

began the dialogue by picking up with the previous tutor's comments. "How have you addressed these problems?" The tutor positioned the paper between herself and the student and they read it together, silently. At no point did the tutor mark on the student's paper. The student made numerous notes and editing marks on her draft throughout the session. When the student made notes on her paper, she pulled it towards her. Then the tutor gently moves the paper back into the center position. At one point, the student's primary language of Spanish became the topic of conversation as the use of the words "paid" and "paid for" were discussed. The tutor acknowledged that this had been a problem for her in her own studies of the Spanish language, as well. This discussion seemed to reinforce the rapport between tutor and student as they joked about second languages. The student laughed, "Yeah, my language is confusing, too."

Think Aloud Protocol Session #9

Protocol Instructions to the Tutor

Immediately following the tutoring session, the researcher invited the tutor to adjourn to the Writing Center Director's office, directly across the hall. The video camera was carried to the office and plugged into the television, already in position. The tutor was invited to sit in a comfortable chair behind the Director's desk. The researcher sat directly across the desk, within easy reach of both the audio and video-cassette recorders. Both individuals were positioned within easy viewing distance of the television and one another. Prior to viewing the video-tape, the tutor was asked to briefly introduce her self on the audio-cassette recorder, stating her name, her year in school, and her major area of study. She was also asked to comment on her experiences in this particular writing center, including years of service, training experience, and

motivation for tutoring. The tutor was instructed to view her own video-taped tutorial session along with the researcher. She was informed that the video-tape will be stopped at logical breaking points (pauses) throughout the tutorial dialogue and that the audio-tape recorder would be turned on during each of these pauses. She was invited to speak freely about what she saw happening in each segment of the video-tape and why she chose to say and do the things that she did.

Think-Aloud Protocol Findings

In an attempt to maintain consistency in the data analysis process, the researcher applies the same coding criteria to audio-taped talk-aloud protocol Session #9 that was applied in the tutorial Session #9. The coding criteria of Skills, Content, and Tutorial Relationship were applied by the researcher, as well as the same two external co-raters asked to analyze previously reported tutorial discourse. The average findings from three separate analyses, along with thematic evidence from Talk-Aloud Session #9 were as follows:

Thematic Findings

40.10% of this think-aloud protocol session reflected on the student's writing skills.

16.15% this think-aloud protocol session reflected on the student's content or ideas.

43.75% this think-aloud protocol session reflected on the tutorial relationship.

Evidence of Themes in Think-Aloud Protocol Session #9

A five year veteran in this writing center, Tutor #9 appeared very comfortable talking about her own tutoring strategies and practice. She pointed out the value of reviewing previous tutor comments early on in the session, when a student was there for a repeat visit. Asking questions related to these comments helped to establish a starting point in this tutorial session, carrying the past dialogue forward. As the session progressed and the tutor worked through matters of grammar with the student, she observed the manner in which she put all of the decisions for correcting the essay in the student's hands "I just wanted her to know that I wasn't going to make her do anything." Each time a suggestion was made, a compliment followed. "When I make a criticism...I try to turn it around and say, well, this is where you got it right." She admitted that another thing she had "worked on a lot is just being patient, especially with ESL students. Taking a little bit of time for them to sort of go through their mental files and ask hmmm, can I compare this to something?"

She did notice herself "moving my hands a lot when I'm describing syntax. That's how I keep my place in a sentence. I feel like if I make it a little more visual, with some hand motions, it helps. I move my hands from left to right, as if I'm reading. Maybe it's because I'm that kind of learner. I had no idea I was doing that." At one point in the session the tutor commented that:

"it looks like now that I was drowning her in choices. (laughter) But I never want to tell a student that there is only one right way to do it. I've gotten better at not shoving my first inclination down a student's throat. Because if they have an idea, it's going to be different from mine. It could very well be better. Sometimes what is obvious can be

undynamic, boring writing.” And she notes that she always tries not to take “the get-it-over-with approach.”

As she observed herself in the tutoring process, she asked, “Am I getting smaller?” She pointed out that she began leaning over more and more and “my head is kind of going over to one side.” Overall, she felt like this session was conducted well and she enjoyed observing the way she had structured “little mini lessons” throughout the session. She again recognized the importance of hand gestures to getting her point across to the student and reflected on how a student might perceive this over time.

Tutorial Session #10 – 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Setting

Tutor seated on the right, student on the left. Normal writing center activity took place in the background.

Tutor

White, Female, Traditional Tutor. She has been a student at this college for the past three years, tutoring in the writing center for the past two years (four semesters). She is majoring in both accounting and business administration. She attends approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of the trainings offered by the writing center. She will be graduating at the end of this semester and does not plan to continue tutoring.

Student

Hispanic, Male, Traditional Student. English Language Learner.

Assignment

This student immediately requests help with grammar as an ELL student. He brings an assignment sheet for a process essay, for which he has chosen the topic of golf tournaments.

Thematic Findings

73.88% of this sessions tutorial dialogue focused on the student's writing skills.

12.69% of the dialogue revolved around content and subject matter.

13.43% of the session involved dialogue/actions establishing the tutorial relationship.

Thematic Evidence of Skills Dialogue (73.88%)

Upon sitting down, this student established that English was his second language. After reading over the assignment sheet, the tutor began reading the student's draft. Without asking the student for particular areas of need, she first addressed problems with sentence structure. She complimented the opening sentence, then asked "what to you see wrong here" and "what do you think you might do differently with this sentence?" The student appeared to be guessing when he asked "Does it need to be a comma?" The tutor seemed to suspect his motivation and asked if he had the Writing Center's comma handout? When he acknowledged that he did, they began discussing comma rules. As they both continued reading the paper, the tutor asked what verb tense the student intended to write in? They discussed the need for consistency. With ongoing references to the comma handout, they discussed sentence structure and why a comma was needed when there was "a complete sentence on both sides with a subject and a verb." Coordinating conjunctions and precise word choice were also repeated themes throughout the

dialogue. About half way through the session, the tutor asked the student to begin reading aloud. After this, the student stopped periodically, without prompting, to make corrections on his paper. Problems with spelling out numbers and the accompanying rules were discussed. The student reflected that his spelling must have improved because very few comments were made about misspelled words.

Thematic Evidence of Content Dialogue (12.69%)

The student relayed a personal experience in the content of this essay about his journey to Japan for an international golf tournament, representing his home country of Puerto Rico. Throughout the course of the dialogue, the tutor asked questions about technical terms related to the sport and encouraged the student to consider who his audience would be for this paper. At the end of the tutoring session, they discussed his experience and ways that he might incorporate how important this experience had been for both himself and his country. She encouraged the student to work the idea of his dreams into the content of the narrative. When he stumbled over finding the word “representing” she helped him and he thanked her for understanding his language barrier.

Thematic Evidence of Tutorial Relationship Dialogue (13.43%)

Establishing his language barrier seemed of utmost importance to the student from the beginning of the session, “I need some help with grammar because English is my second language.” The tutor asked frequent questions about the student’s understanding as it related to grammar and content. She gestured and pointed to sections of the paper under discussion, but

never actually marked on the paper herself. She also made a strong personal connection with the student when she acknowledged her own difficulties learning the Spanish language. "I could never do what you are doing." This brought obvious pride into the student's face. A stronger rapport formed in the tutorial relationship from this point forward. Towards the end of the session, the student sat and wrote out ideas for his conclusion, while the tutor watched silently. When he is finished drafting a conclusion, the student pushed the paper over in front of the tutor and watched anxiously as she read what he had written. "So, are you keeping this conclusion about your dream of representing your country" and deleting the other one?" The student nodded. "Yes, that's good."

Think Aloud Protocol Session #10

Protocol Instructions to the Tutor

Immediately following the tutoring session, the researcher invited the tutor to adjourn to the Writing Center Director's office, directly across the hall. The video camera was carried to the office and plugged into the television, already in position. The tutor was invited to sit in a comfortable chair behind the Director's desk. The researcher sat directly across the desk, within easy reach of both the audio and video-cassette recorders. Both individuals were positioned within easy viewing distance of the television and one another. Prior to viewing the video-tape, the tutor was asked to briefly introduce her self on the audio-cassette recorder, stating her name, her year in school, and her major area of study. She was also asked to comment on her experiences in this particular writing center, including years of service, training experience, and motivation for tutoring. The tutor was instructed to view her own video-taped tutorial session

along with the researcher. She was informed that the video-tape would be stopped at logical breaking points (pauses) throughout the tutorial dialogue and that the audio-tape recorder would be turned on during each of these pauses. She was invited to speak freely about what she saw happening in each segment of the video-tape and why she chose to say and do the things that she did.

Think-Aloud Protocol Findings

In an attempt to maintain consistency in the data analysis process, the researcher applied the same coding criteria to audio-taped think-aloud protocol Session #10 that was applied in the tutorial Session #10. The coding criteria of Skills, Content, and Tutorial Relationship were applied by the researcher, as well as the same two external co-raters asked to analyze previously reported tutorial discourse. The average findings from three separate analyses, along with thematic evidence from Think-Aloud Session #10 were as follows:

Thematic Findings

74.13% of this think-aloud protocol session reflected on the student's writing skills.

6.29% this think-aloud protocol session reflected on the student's content or ideas.

19.58% this think-aloud protocol session reflected on the tutorial relationship.

Evidence of Themes in Think-Aloud Protocol Session #10

In keeping with the percentage findings, this tutor's observation of her tutorial process focused mainly on matters of grammar and mechanics. She observed the skill problems

identified in the session and the ways that she guided the student through corrections. She pointed out that this student had brought in two separate drafts of his paper, one for her to read and one that he kept for himself to read. She moved in closer, pointing to the text in order to encourage him to follow along with where she was reading. Eventually, he laid his copy of the draft down and read along with her, so that “he doesn’t always have to try and see exactly where I am at on a different copy.” This tutor claimed never to write on a student’s paper herself, because they would then “expect you to mark all of it.” She also emphasized each student’s need to write on their own papers because “you want them to be engaged in the session by doing it themselves.” She continued to comment on the types of grammatical errors identified and corrected throughout the tutorial session. She pointed out the manner in which she encouraged the student to develop a stronger conclusion by reiterating his topic sentence. “He ended up writing it up and bringing it all together by himself. He did not need me to fix any of his wording.”

During reflection of observing herself in the tutorial process, Tutor #10 referred to the self-evaluation she recently completed for the Writing Center Director. “One of the areas is about how much we help the student by letting them do their own work and not doing it for them. That’s one of the things that I probably do too much. I definitely see that when I watch the video.” She also noticed that when the tutorial session stalled, she had a habit of repositioning herself in her chair, “one place where we were stuck, I noticed I brought my leg up onto the chair.” She identified this as fidgeting behavior and observed how it might be distracting to students. Other observations included the noise level in the writing center and her tendencies to move in close to the student during the tutorial session.

Friday, May 12, 2006

Evidence of Themes in Group Exit Interview

A group exit interview was held at Table #4 in the Writing Center. In attendance were the researcher, the Writing Center Director, the Receptionist, and nine of the ten tutors who had participated in the study. Tutor #9 was unable to attend, due to an employment scheduling conflict. Tutors were thanked for their participation and informed that all of the video and audio-taped sessions had been conducted successfully. The mood was upbeat and positive. The researcher posed open-ended questions to initiate dialogue. The session lasted one hour and fifty minutes and tutors were informed that this group session would be audio-taped. Dialogue was initiated through the researcher posing open-ended questions regarding the tutoring process, the student sample, the environment, the data collection process, and perceived value of this particular research methodology. The resulting dialogue focused primarily on matters of tutorial relationships.

Group Reflection on the Tutoring Process

When asked to share with the group about their perceptions of watching themselves in the tutoring process, tutors were quick to address observations about their physical appearance and behaviors. Comments, ranging from “I didn’t know how much I diagrammed sentences with my hands” to being “surprised at how unattractive I was,” carried the conversation. More insightful observations included “my closing wasn’t the best I’ve ever done” and “I needed to introduce myself a little better to establish that relationship.” Most agreed that students probably did not

notice these behaviors during the tutoring sessions because the focus was typically directed toward student's paper early on in the session.

However, these reflections led to further discussion about the importance of body language on a tutoring session. In all ten sessions, the tutors sat right next to the student being tutored. The director comments that she "seldom saw tutors sitting across the table from students." Some of the tutors noted that they intentionally sat on the right or left side of the student, primarily so that they were "not tempted to pick up the pencil and correct the student's paper" themselves. But one tutor observed that "if you sit too close, usually the students pull back."

A lengthy discussion ensued about the proper positioning of a student's paper during a tutoring session. Tutor #9 was adamant that the paper needed to be "in front of me, where they can still see it." Most of the other tutors agreed that the paper needed to be positioned centrally between the tutor and the student, allowing easy reading and access to both parties. Some felt that it was acceptable for both the tutor and the student to be holding a pen or pencil. Others insisted that they "never pick up the pencil" during a tutoring session, to prevent themselves from making corrections on papers for the students. A discussion about active learning followed, along with the need for students to take ownership for their own work. Tutor #2 summarized the paper placement discussion as follows:

I think it depends on where they are at in the writing process. If students are brainstorming, it is different than if we are working on grammar. I mean, I was working on MLA and there was no way I was going to put that paper in front of me. It was all in front of her, or I would have been making all of the corrections.

In addition to positioning of the paper, tutors discussed the importance of eye contact with students during tutorial sessions. Collectively, tutors agreed that initial eye contact was important to establishing relationship, but several commented that the importance of eye contact declined as the focus of the session redirected toward the student's paper. Others insisted that they tried to maintain "a lot of eye contact when...talking directly to a student." These tutors insisted that eye contact enabled them to "see in their face that they understand what I am saying, that I am being clear, and that they are processing."

When asked about the extended periods of silence observed in several of the tutoring sessions, all ten tutors became very actively involved in the dialogue. Comments ranged from "a lot of it is just processing information," to "it's thinking time for me and the student," and "I may just be trying to think of the next step." When one tutor remarked that allowing for intentional silences was "probably one of the most difficult things for me to do...to give the student a chance to answer my questions" another affirmed with a personal analogy:

"For me, I think pretty fast and English is a subject I do well at, but if I was in math, I would have to sit there for awhile and think about the answer. If I were trying to come up with the answer and someone kept giving me the answer, then I would start to feel bad about myself. If someone were beating me to the answer every time, I would just give up. So I always wait and act like I'm thinking, too. I'll lean in and act like I'm looking at the paper. I think it helps them learn the process of what they need to go through to come up with the answers on their own. Things don't come to you automatically sometimes, you have to contemplate them. Hmmm, "is that where a comma goes there?"

When another tutor commented that “tutor training had taught her the value of patience,” the others quickly nodded in agreement. Tutor #4 reflected that “probably one of the most difficult things for me to do is to keep my mouth shut long enough to give the student a chance to answer a question. You know, the clock goes really slow when I’m not talking.”

Group Reflection on the Sample Selection Process

Immediately upon being asked to reflect on the students who were randomly selected for individual tutoring sessions, Tutor #7 volunteered:

“I could have thought of a thousand tutoring sessions I would rather have been video-taped in than the one I was in. But then I realized that it was better to have one that was kind of difficult so that I could really see, you know, the torturing minutia. I could get really involved with the process.”

For some of the tutors, being filmed while tutoring English Language Learners posed unique challenges with “the language skills affecting levels of understanding.” However, all agreed that these sessions reflected the reality of their writing center population, as the numbers of English Language Learners had increased on this particular campus.

Group Reflection on the Filming Environment

Tutors were then asked to reflect on Writing Center environment and any observations they had made while watching themselves in the video-taped tutorial sessions. A lively discussion ensued about being “amazed at how much goes on in the room” behind them. All agreed that they did not “hear anybody else in the room when working with the student,” but on

the tapes they were surprised to learn “who was working over at another table.” One student reported that he kept hearing conversations on the tape from Table #4, where the tutors met, and wondered if the researcher “had put a microphone over on that table” because they “hadn’t noticed that noise during the tutoring session.”

A further question evolved about whether or not the students being tutored might be aware of the noise level in the Writing Center. While one tutor commented that “it depends on how they are being tutored” and “how much trouble they have focusing,” the others agreed that most of the students being tutored were focused on the assignment in front of them. The Writing Center Director interjected at that point, stating that “this is our Writing Center environment; it is like a blanket of noise.” As tutors thought about this comment, they reflected on their own experiences and the “very vocal environment” of the Writing Center. One student commented that it was “very important that there is a lot of stuff going on in here.” As this line of dialogue progressed, the Director moved in closer to the table, obviously intrigued by the realization that appeared to be dawning collectively on all of the tutors. One tutor observed that she had noticed that when they personally were “trying to work alone in here, it is distracting. But when I am in a session and talking with the student, I become more focused. Working together, the noise is no longer a distraction.” Tutors continued to nod and furrow their brows while reflecting on the noise issue. Tutor #4 expanded on the conversation by agreeing “that mostly, when students are working alone, it may get too loud. But when they are actually being tutored, in my experience, students are tuned in to the task at hand.” Other tutors responded that the noise level may “reduce inhibitions” and that “students may be less self conscious in this louder environment; they might not be comfortable talking or reading their papers aloud if everyone else was silent.”

As they continued to reflect on the “blanket of noise,” tutors began to recall occasions when the noise level may have actually contributed to students’ thinking and learning. One tutor recalled examples when “students sometimes hear something in another tutoring session and it triggers something in them and they start writing.” Another tutor shared an occasion when she was working with a student and “another student from the same class came over and we all started working together on the same assignment...giving them an opening into a whole other relationship.” Yet another tutor recalled a student who was trying to explain their ideas to the tutor when “the student at the next table looks up and says ‘you know what, I have a situation similar to that’ and a dialogue of ideas began.” All of the tutors agreed that, while they may not have been completely aware of it before the filming, the noise in the writing center played an important role in the total learning environment. The Director interjected that she has always wondered “how aware the tutors are of the noise in their environment” and expressed appreciation at being able to hear the tutors’ perceptions. “I can always tell when sessions are a little off because that noise level is off. There is a certain rhythm to it all. It is a very organized chaos. You all know what you are doing and why you are doing it. So much of it is your intuitive ability to grow with the environment.”

At that point, the researcher asked the tutors how influential the video camera was during their individual tutoring sessions. Most agreed that the presence of the camera played a minimal role in each of their tutoring sessions. “I forgot it was there after a couple of minutes” and “I looked up once and remembered it” were the typical responses. One tutor commented that she remained acutely aware of the camera’s presence and kept thinking “gee, I hope I say everything perfectly.” Another student replied that the camera’s presence influenced the direction of her

tutoring, because she elected not to walk a student over to a computer module during their session, “I was trying to explain something to her about research that I needed to show her on the computer. We needed to look something up. But because of the camera, I just tried to explain it to her and I didn’t do as good a job as I might have by going to the computer.”

When asked if they thought the camera affected students during the tutoring sessions, the majority nodded in agreement with the comment that “mine was bothered slightly.” However, one tutor observed that her student “was affected because he was trying to project that he was a good student, when he obviously had not read the assignment and did not know what he was doing.” When it was pointed out that none of them actually discussed the camera with their students during the tutorial sessions, they replied that they knew the students were aware of the camera because of “their nervousness and looking up at the camera” and because of one student who “said something about the camera at the end of the session.”

Group Reflection on the Research Methodology

Dynamic interaction between tutors following think-aloud protocol sessions revealed a need for collective closure. A reflective dialogue session was scheduled, in which tutors were asked to focus on think-aloud protocol methodology and the process of observing themselves during tutorial sessions. When one tutor commented that she enjoyed the process but would not “want the whole group to watch my tutoring sessions” the others quickly agreed. Collectively, the sentiment seemed to be that they “learned a lot from watching my own sessions.” While they acknowledged that it might be helpful to “watch all ten different tapes” it would also be a “very uncomfortable situation.” Tutor #2 stated adamantly that “I definitely

would not have wanted to do this in the beginning of my tutor training. That would have been terrifying.” She added that if the taping had been conducted “by our director, I’m sure there would have been more hesitation.” “She is our boss and that would be a lot of pressure. It’s different watching the tapes with you, because you are an outsider.” Some discussion ensued about using the process as a self-evaluation tool, which ended in laughter after one student says “only if we could burn the tapes after; have a big bonfire.” A single tutor vocalized that he would feel comfortable being video-taped and reviewing videos with the Writing Center Director because he felt that he “could learn a lot from that dialogue.” Another student thought that it would have been more helpful to observe themselves in more than one tutorial session, with more than one student.

Tutors briefly reflected over a series of commercial tutor-training tapes they had watched together, where one tutor simulated several tutoring sessions with different students. It was agreed that these tapes held minimal training value as the tutoring situations were not realistic. The “room was too quiet” and the tutor’s questions seemed “too staged.” It was also observed that the tutor in these tapes “talked too much and appeared to be very in control the entire time.” Everyone agreed that the student should set the direction of a successful tutorial session. For a few minutes, the group explored the idea of producing their own tutorial training tapes in partnership with the broadcasting department located on their campus. Tutor #1 commented that such a series would need to be carefully edited to demonstrate both positive and negative tutoring strategies because “it would be hard to sit and watch entire tutoring sessions.” Both the tutors and the Director agreed to discuss the possibilities of such a project at a future meeting.

Finally, tutors were asked to consider the value of the think-aloud sessions to their own tutoring practices. How had their awareness of their own tutoring been affected? What might they like to change as a result of viewing themselves in the tutoring process? After some silence and careful thought, students began to respond. “I would not try to cover so much in one session, like if I see twenty problems, I don’t have to cover all twenty. It’s too overwhelming to the student.” Another responded “Yes, we should discern what is keeping us from understanding their paper the most and how can we help them say it better.” Nearly all of the tutors were nodding their heads at this point when Tutor #1 added:

Sometimes I focus on too many issues and try to cover a million and one things and we don’t really make any progress at all. The student walks away confused. But if I cover specific things, then I feel better about the tutoring sessions. I really noticed that in the video-taped session.

Tutors continued to dialogue about additional tutoring strategies they might like to change after viewing the tapes, such as “more eye contact,” “asking more questions,” and “listening more.” They were then asked how they personally determined whether or not a student had made progress as a result of their tutoring session. In most cases, the tutors agreed that they never actually saw the students’ finished papers, nor were they told what grades students received on individual assignments. In light of this, tutors shared their own gauges for success. “When they can explain back to you what they need to do. When they can say it” was the response that generated the most agreement from the group. Another tutor said that “when you can just point to something and they immediately know how to fix it, without you telling them. That’s how I know if they are making progress.” “Or, while you are both reading the paper, they grab it up

and go ‘Oh, I know!’ and they just start writing.’” The group discussion closed with acknowledgement from several of the tutors that the process of observing themselves while tutoring had raised awareness of their own particular strengths and weaknesses. The camera had provided a unique angle of vision and level of feedback from which to view their individual and collective tutoring practices.

Triangulation of Data Across Sources

The average percentages of all three sets of coded tutorial session transcripts included:

<u>Tutoring Session</u>	<u>Skills %</u>	<u>Content %</u>	<u>Relationship %</u>
#1	54.17%	13.88%	31.95%
#2	61.98%	1.40%	36.62%
#3	0%	55%	45%
#4	54.85%	24.39%	9.76%
#5	67.57%	9.46%	22.97%
#6	21.16%	39.42%	39.42%
#7	79.29%	0%	20.71%
#8	0%	85.34%	14.66%
#9	55.22%	25.38%	19.40%
#10	73.88%	12.69%	13.43%
Total #	479.12	266.96	253.92
Mean	48%	27%	25%

Mean Co-Rater Comparisons For Tutorial Transcripts

<u>Coding Source</u>	<u>Skills</u>	<u>Content</u>	<u>Relationship</u>
Primary Researcher	50%	23%	26%
Co-Rater #1	48%	29%	23%
Co-Rater #2	47%	28%	25%

Collective Findings of Think-Aloud Session Percentages

In an attempt to maintain consistency in the data analysis process, the researcher first applied the same coding criteria to the audio-taped think-aloud protocol sessions held with each of the tutors following their tutorial session. This coding strategy was applied to all ten think-aloud transcripts by the researcher and the same two external co-raters used to analyze tutorial session discourse. The cumulative findings were as follows.

Think-Aloud Protocol	Skills %	Content %	Relationship %
#1	17.68	18.23%	64.09%
#2	15.29%	0%	84.71%
#3	0%	5.17%	94.83%
#4	17.24%	3.45%	79.31%
#5	40.25%	7.80%	51.95%
#6	21.57%	4.90%	73.53%
#7	26.27%	0%	73.73%
#8	0%	12.82%	87.18%
#9	40.10%	16.15%	43.75%
#10	74.13%	6.29%	19.58%
Total #	252.53	74.81	672.66
Mean	25%	8%	67%

Mean Co-Rater Comparisons For Think-Aloud Transcripts

Coding Source	Skills	Content	Relationship
Primary Researcher	21%	10%	69%
Co-Rater #1	27%	7%	66%
Co-Rater #2	28%	8%	64%

Coding Comparisons

The following data compares the coded data analysis of the actual tutorial sessions compared to the tutor perceptions recorded in the think-aloud protocol sessions, averaged from all three sets of co-rated data.

	SKILLS		CONTENT		RELATIONSHIP	
	Tutoring Session	<i>Think-Aloud Protocol</i>	Tutoring Session	<i>Think-Aloud Protocol</i>	Tutoring Session	<i>Think-Aloud Protocol</i>
#1	54.17%	17.68%	13.88%	18.23%	31.95%	64.09%
#2	61.98%	15.29%	1.40%	0%	36.62%	84.71%
#3	0%	0%	55%	5.17%	45%	94.83%
#4	54.85%	17.24%	24.39%	3.45%	9.76%	79.31%
#5	67.57%	40.25%	9.46%	7.80%	22.97%	51.95%
#6	21.16%	21.57%	39.42%	4.90%	39.42%	73.53%
#7	79.29%	26.27%	0%	0%	20.71%	73.73%
#8	0%	0%	85.34%	12.82%	14.66%	87.18%
#9	55.22%	40.10%	25.38%	16.15%	19.40%	43.75%
#10	73.88%	74.13%	12.69%	6.29%	13.43%	19.58%
Total #		479.12		266.96		253.92
Mean		47.90%		26.70%		25.40%

Assignment Comparison Data

Session Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
50% Dev. English Class				x	x	x	x			x
10% Reg. English Class									x	
40% Non English Class		x	x					x		
60% Assignment Sheet					x	x	x	x		x
20% First Visit	x			x						
80% Repeat Visit		x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x

Conclusion of Chapter Four

Analysis of data collected from the environment, leadership documentation, tutor training, tutoring sessions, and tutor reflection revealed three prominent thematic threads evident in the success of this particular writing center. While writing skills and content were indeed critical to student learning, relationship played an equally important role in all levels of the writing center experience. Without effective relationship dynamics, successful tutoring could not have occurred. Tutors produced the cumulative results of writing center planning, leadership, and training. Their perceptions regarding the effectiveness of their own tutoring were vital to the collective success of writing center research and development. Think-aloud protocol results clearly indicated that this particular sampling of tutors was aware of the importance of relationship building and that they consciously employed tutoring strategies intended to engage students in productive tutoring relationships.

However, comparative data analysis clearly identifies that student needs and expectations can influence the focus of tutorial discourse. Regardless of tutor awareness or intent regarding relationship and content, analysis of qualitative data collected in this study reveals that seventy percent of the tutorial sessions focused predominantly on writing skills. For the sake of critical analysis, the three remaining sessions, which focused primarily on content, could be removed from the data set. The original seven could then be analyzed for factors influencing the direction that tutorial discourse took during each session. One factor may have included the number of English language learners and nontraditional students represented in this subgroup. These demographics give rise to further questions regarding who seeks services in a college writing centers and why. Types of assignments and faculty expectations may also influence the direction that tutorial discourse takes in each session. Reflective data analysis in the think-aloud protocol sessions revealed that tutors were acutely aware of their need to establish positive academic relationships with students, in order for learning to occur with either content or writing skill. The process of negotiated learning that takes place in a college writing center depends on positive discourse relationships, as well as subject matter, grammar, and mechanics. Proactive decision-making on the part of peer tutors determines the success or failure of these relationships.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion and Conclusions

College level peer tutoring programs are shaped by the relationships of a socially constructed environment. Tutors must learn to negotiate relationships with individual students, diverse subject matter, assignment guidelines, peer expectations, and training methodologies. On a broader scale, college level peer tutors are influenced by relationships framed within institutional expectations, curricular content, faculty perceptions, and administrative accountability. Their roles as tutors of writing reach beyond simple matters of proofreading, editing, grammar, or mechanics. College writing center peer tutors must engage in discourse involving cognitive decisions, diverse content, and complex organization. More importantly, tutors must become adept at navigating dynamic relationships. Think-aloud protocol analysis is a viable methodology for researchers to examine the dynamic relationships that evolve during tutorial discourse over student writing. This methodology can also provide tutors with valuable insight into their own tutorial practice, and should be considered as a tutor training strategy.

Research Questions

Primary Question

How do college writing center peer tutors perceive their own intentions, behaviors, and pedagogical strategies while tutoring student writers in the socially constructed environment of a college level writing center?

Based on thematic analysis of tutorial transcripts and reflective think-aloud protocols conducted in an established college writing center, the work of peer tutors is much more complex than simply editing and revising student grammar. In fact, successful tutorials involve complex rhetorical processes of negotiated learning. In addition to individual students' expressed needs, decisions made by tutors must also consider dynamic expectations of particular assignments, classroom instructors, and writing center training. The writing center environment strongly influences the manner in which tutors elect to facilitate individual tutoring sessions. Their level of decision making must be adjusted in accordance with each student's personality and skill level in both written and oral communication. Peer pressure and each tutor's personal expectations also play critical roles in the types of decisions made during the dynamic interchange of a peer tutoring session. While a tutor is reading a student's paper, they must ask themselves questions like: What does this student want/need help with? What does the classroom instructor expect? What are the requirements of this particular assignment? Who is the intended audience for this paper and how will this audience perceive the writer's message? Is the writing center director observing my behavior? Are tutors working at adjacent tables listening to my exchange with this student? These questions are framed by logistical questions regarding positioning of the paper, who will hold the pencil, and how close to sit to a particular student?

Woven into this complex interchange is the student's paper. While tutorial discourse certainly includes matters of grammar, fluency, and content, this study offers evidence that establishing strong academic relationships is also an important part of the tutorial process. The perceived notion that "fixing" the student's paper is the primary focus of a college writing center tutorial is limited in scope. The tutorials examined in this study address much more complex

issues. Before learning can take place, tutors must earn each student's trust. They must encourage dialogue regarding academic subjects, which leads to deeper inquiry and introspection. The ability to develop positive human relationships is vital to the success of productive tutorial dialogue. Tutors must invest considerable time, thought, and energy into negotiating relationships with students, student assignments, and the academic environment. The descriptive data collected during the course of this study demonstrates that while student/tutee expectations revolve around grammar and editing, the tutors themselves facilitate a much more complex relationship of negotiated learning. This data reinforces the need for further research into the dynamics of writing center tutorial process.

Subsidiary Questions

How do trained college-level peer tutors describe the process through which they guide students in peer tutoring sessions? What are the cognitive decisions that writing center tutors make during the course of a tutorial session? Is there a thread of meaning in the ways that peer tutors facilitate complex learning strategies? What role does setting play in this process?

Through reflective think-aloud protocol analysis, this study has identified some of the ways in which college-level peer tutors describe the intentional process through which they guide students in peer tutoring sessions. Their primary strategy involves posing open-ended questions that allow students to reflect on their own work. These questions may focus on matters relating to how a paper is written, such as grammar, mechanics, or organization. In some instances, tutor questioning may focus on content or subject matter. But tutorial dialogue is not limited to

content and mechanics. In each of the sessions recorded in this study, a third important thread of questioning takes place; that of relationship. In order to accomplish successful tutorial dialogue, each of the tutors recognizes the need to establish a positive relationship with the tutee. This third level of thematic questioning plays a vital role in the success of each tutoring session. In order to engage a student in complex dialogue about content and mechanics, the tutor must strategically navigate matters of relationship. This is especially true when the student arrives expecting the tutor to fix or edit his/her paper. The tutor must negotiate desired outcomes, leading the student into a more productive situation, encouraging the student to think critically about the most effective ways to revise their own piece of writing. The socially constructed environment of a college writing center contributes to the types of decisions tutors make, as well.

How does the dialogue in college writing center tutorial sessions reflect higher/lower order decision making strategies in peer tutors? In college student writers?

Again, considerable research has been conducted in the field of rhetoric and composition regarding the cognitive decision-making processes of student writers. There are basic decisions regarding grammar, mechanics, and word choice that must be considered in college student writing. These choices reflect lower order decision making, where students practice applying the symbols of language they have been taught to whatever message they hope to convey. However, writing as a rhetorical process involves higher order thinking abilities. Students must consider the purpose of their writing and who their intended audience will be. College level writing

encourages students to process complex subjects and ideas. In addition, college writing assignments invite students to collect large amounts of information, sort and assimilate the contents, and apply this information to their own ideas. Original thought, rather than simply repeating the thoughts of others, becomes the focus.

Research on student writing carries over into research on writing center scholarship. However, the rhetorical element of audience is developed one step further in writing center tutorial discourse. Students are not always comfortable formulating their own thoughts and ideas, much less communicating them to specific audiences. Examining why they believe certain ideas to be true and presenting plausible reasons and credible evidence in support of their own ideas can be a complex and uncomfortable process for many students. The dialogue that takes place in writing center tutorials encourages students to step outside of their comfort zones and develop their own ideas, applying higher levels of reasoning. Thinking critically involves complex levels of decision making. Learning to communicate one's own ideas in a concise and reasonable manner remains one of the primary objectives of college writing curriculums. Writing centers recognize the difficulty that many students have with these skills and train tutors to apply intentional strategies for engaging students in dialogue, which encourages them to become active participants in their own learning. Data collected from this study confirms that tutors in this particular writing center are aware of the expectations and challenges facing college student writers. Reflective protocol analysis enables tutors to analyze and recognize the levels of negotiated learning necessary to building successful tutorial relationships.

How effective are think-aloud protocols as a tutor training strategy?

The positive response of the ten peer tutors participating in this particular study suggests that think-aloud protocol analysis has potential as a learning tool in college level writing centers. During the reflective think-aloud sessions, tutors were intrigued by and interested in observing themselves in the tutoring process. Their observations during the reflective analysis demonstrated that their actions in tutorial sessions are neither passive nor accidental. Each of the tutors pointed out deliberate actions and decisions they made during individual tutorial discourse. These decisions ranged from matters as simple as how to position a student's paper to more complex questions regarding the complex rhetorical purpose of a particular assignment. While these tutors admit that they had been resistant to the idea of being filmed when their director suggested it earlier, participation in the study allowed them to see potential value in such a practice. During the group exit interview, the tutors collectively agreed that this had been a valuable exercise, holding tremendous potential as a strategic training tool for writing center peer tutors. Further questions might be explored about ongoing one-on-one tutorial relationships.

What strategies do peer tutors implement in their attempts to facilitate higher-order levels of thinking in college-aged student writers?

Clearly, these tutors had been trained to assess student needs on an individual basis. None of them picked up a student's paper and began "fixing" it during their tutorial session, even when this was the obvious expectation of seven of ten students. Instead, the focus of each session

remained on the student and their relationship with their work. The strategies employed to facilitate positive human interaction varied. Intentional decisions about positioning of the paper being read, who would hold the pencil, and how close to sit to students had to be considered. Most of the tutors did not “tell” the student what to do, instead, they posed rhetorical questions intended to lead each student into discussion about their subject, their assignment, and their audience. Each of the tutors took time to listen carefully to the students, and allowed them time to review, and consider problems with their own paper. Students were encouraged to utilize other tools and services provided by the writing center to develop their own writing abilities outside of the tutorial session.

Are tutors able to identify these strategies, as well as their reasons for implementing them in their own tutoring practice? Deliberate actions? Chance occurrence?

The tutors participating in this study demonstrated high levels of awareness regarding the behaviors and decisions they made during tutorial discourse. Reflective protocol analyses provided consistent evidence that tutors made deliberate decisions regarding the types of questions they asked and how they responded to students throughout the course of each tutorial session. Not only were their actions deliberate, but tutors expressed constant awareness of how and why they implemented particular actions during tutorial sessions. Many related these actions directly to direction received from ongoing training and dialogue with their director and peers.

Do strategies and methods designed in peer tutoring programs follow through to the perceptual level? Are peer tutors aware of the ways in which they facilitate intentional or desired student learning?

Tutors participating in this study demonstrated high levels of awareness regarding the types of decisions they were making throughout the tutorial process. They were sensitive to the individual needs of students and adjusted their questions accordingly. Reflective protocol analysis clearly demonstrated the tutors' intentional behaviors and decisions made throughout each of the tutoring sessions. Once tutors had established the desired outcome for both the student and the assignment, they began the process of facilitating dialogue intended to lead students toward productive decisions about their writing. The types of decisions needing to be made about writing paralleled the thematic threads of decision being made during the tutorial process, revolving around content, mechanics, and relationship. Just as writing is taught as a rhetorical process involving the writer, the subject, and the audience, tutoring is also a complex rhetorical process involving relationships between the tutor, the tutee, and the written work. Tutors must make critical decisions throughout the tutorial process involving each level of engagement. The tutorial sessions analyzed in this study demonstrated high levels of tutor awareness regarding intentional strategies and decisions made in this complex rhetorical process.

Can reflective analysis of one's own tutorial practice, examined through think aloud methods, result in higher levels of awareness and skill on the part of writing center tutors?

The researcher and participants in this study concur that reflective analysis of one's own tutorial practice can lead to higher levels of awareness and consequently improved skill in tutoring. Both in individual reflective analysis and the group exit interview, tutors noted the value that this process had in raising their individual levels of awareness. For some, it was an affirmation that decisions they were making in tutorial sessions were effective. Others were able to identify behaviors and strategies that were less effective, or needed improvement. Each of the tutors identified particular behaviors that they would like to change in future tutorial sessions. The group exit interview facilitated further dialogue regarding the value of this particular methodology. Collectively, the tutors expressed enthusiasm and interest in pursuing this type of reflective analysis for future training and development.

Expectations of Negotiated Learning

The socially constructed environment of the college writing center places heavy demands on peer tutors as they negotiate the maze of multi-level expectations placed upon them. Of highest priority are the expectations of the students with whom they work. Students expect to be treated fairly. Many of them arrive expecting their paper to be "fixed" and may express frustration at not receiving that particular service. Directly connected to student expectations are the expectations of college faculty who may require or suggest that students visit the writing center. Some faculty are clearly misinformed, expecting the writing center to edit or "fix" student papers, as well. Of particular importance is the need for faculty to communicate expectations regarding their curriculum and assignments to the writing center in advance, in the event that students do not understand these expectations when they arrive for a tutoring session.

Aside from student/faculty/assignment expectations, tutors must consider institutional expectations. The writing center director has communicated a specific set of expectations throughout the course of tutor training. These expectations dovetail with the expectations of the college writing curriculum. In a much larger frame of reference, the success of students in the academic curriculum depends, in part, on the success of student services like the writing center. So tutors feel pressure to fulfill institutional expectations. On a more intimate level, tutors identify certain pressures attached to peer expectations and whether their performance is consistent with expectations of their colleagues.

Collectively, these varying levels of expectation influence the types of decisions writing center peer tutors make throughout the course of tutorial discourse with each student. In light of this complex social environment, it is illogical to assume that a tutor's role involves simply "fixing" student papers. While helping students develop both the content and mechanics of their writing to higher levels is important, tutors must also negotiate the vast sea of relationship in which they have been placed. This third thematic thread of relationship is critical to successful tutoring, as well as to increased levels of student learning.

Triangulation of Data

This research study attempts to establish credibility through triangulated data. The socially constructed environment of the writing center is observed within the context of institutional expectations. The writing center director is interviewed for perspective on theory and training methodologies. Writing Center tutorial sessions with each of the ten tutors trained in this particular program are video-taped. Each of the tutors then participates in reflective think-

aloud protocol sessions over their individual tutoring session. And finally, a group exit interview is conducted to assess tutor perception of the value of reflective protocol analysis to their tutoring practice. One common thematic thread presents itself throughout all of the data collected, the presence of and constant attention to relationship. Focusing on student writing and learning without regard to relationship devalues the process that takes place in college writing centers. Without examining relationship, the dance of negotiated learning that takes place in a college writing center can not be documented accurately. While content and mechanics are certainly important to the outcome of writing product, relationship must be present for the rhetorical process of writing to evolve.

Conclusions Regarding Think-Aloud Protocols

This study provides evidence that think-aloud protocol analysis is a manageable system of reflective assessment with college-level writing center peer tutors. The methodology provides a unique perspective from which tutors can observe and reflect on their own tutoring practice. It allows tutors to examine the effectiveness of specific strategies and behaviors they apply during tutorial practice. It also allows them to observe more objectively the ways in which students respond to particular behaviors and strategies. From this reflection, tutors can make deliberate decisions regarding their future practice as writing center tutors. This methodology also provides insight for writing center research, providing data about the intentional decisions and strategies applied during the course of tutorial discourse.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations Addressed from Previous Studies

Careful consideration has been given to limitations identified in previous studies, which have attempted to assess tutorial perceptions of individual tutoring practice. In response to the latency issue between tutorial sessions and tutor reflection, tutors in this study have been asked to observe and analyze their individually taped tutorial session immediately following the session itself. This reflection is conducted in a separate room, adjacent to the writing center, with limited access and opportunity for interruption. Regarding concerns expressed by Lerner (2001a) about tutors “self-recording” their own tutorial sessions, this researcher elects to personally conduct all of the recording sessions, both audio and video. Recording is conducted in a controlled and consistent manner, with each audio and video tape being personally recorded, transcribed, and stored by the researcher. A further concern regarding researcher bias is also addressed in this study. Rather than conducting the study in the college writing center where the researcher works, this study is conducted in an established college writing center located approximately 150 miles away from the investigator’s place of employment. This precaution is taken so that tutors may feel less pressure to perform than they might if the study were conducted by an individual holding a position of authority over their tutoring practice. This decision is reinforced when one of the tutors participating in the group exit interview specifically states that, “If it had been our Director, I’m sure there would have been more hesitation. I mean, she’s like our boss and that would have been a lot of pressure.” The group nods collectively in agreement. To minimize the possibility of subjects attempting to respond during reflective analysis in ways

intended to please the researcher, a pre-survey was not conducted, nor was any language used about acceptable responses applied to discourage preconceived expectations communicated. The limitation of subjects forgetting what their intentions were during tutorial sessions was addressed by conducting think-aloud protocol sessions immediately following each tutorial.

Limitations of a Single Research Site

There are obvious limitations of conducting this type of study in a single writing center setting. The primary limitation involves potential tutor bias developed as a result of one site-specific training program. However, the credibility of this particular writing center, director, and training program are well-documented. The center has evolved in partnership with an accredited higher education writing program over the past twenty years. The director is actively involved in professional organizations, dedicated to ongoing research and development of writing centers that operate within higher education. The tutor training program in this particular writing center is based in credible theory, built around specific student learning outcomes, and implemented consistently with all of the tutors working in the program. The tutor training program is dynamic and ongoing, responding to both student and tutor concerns. This qualitative study has been designed so that the methodology can easily be replicated in other writing center settings, adding cumulative data, in support of stated observations and conclusions.

Creswell's (1998) criterion for establishing trustworthiness in naturalistic and qualitative research settings has been applied. First, credibility is addressed by engaging complete tutorial sessions in reflective protocol analysis through persistent observation and triangulated methods.

Secondly, the study is transferable, communicating thick rich descriptive data. Third, the data is dependable, supported by overlapping methods and triangulation. And finally, the study can be confirmed through raw data, data reconstruction, a reflective research journal, and a trail of process notes and materials. The study is also replicable.

Limited Tutor Sample Size

As with the limitations of a single research site, the limited tutor sample size in this study poses certain restrictions. Obviously, data collected from ten tutorial sessions and ten reflective think-aloud protocols cannot be generalized to the experiences of peer tutors working in writing centers across the higher education spectrum. However, this population is representative in that the entire population of tutors trained within this particular writing center is included in the study. The selection process is not limited nor is it exclusive. All ten of the tutors have completed the same tutor orientation and training program. All ten of the tutors are invited and agree to participate fully in the study. The same methodology is applied consistently across all ten of the tutorial sessions and reflective think aloud protocol sessions. Each of the ten of the tutors is invited to participate in the closing group exit interview, with only one absent, due to an employment conflict. A broader perspective might have been gained by filming more than one tutorial session with each of the peer tutors, adding to the depth and breadth of data collected. However, expanding the data collection process to include twice as many sessions might require future researchers to consider a site that is closer to their base of operations. Limiting the study to one center, operating under a single tutor training program and philosophy can be viewed as a limitation, as well. However, the credibility of this program must be considered in this matter.

Limited Tutor Diversity

Of greater concern than the limited number of tutors participating in this study is the limited scope of diversity within the tutor population. All ten of the tutors are English speaking Caucasian, with seventy percent of these being female and only thirty percent being male. In future studies, it might be helpful to assess tutor demographic trends in writing centers at a variety of institutions of higher learning. The fact that thirty percent of these tutors represent non-traditional college students (over age 25, returning to higher education) adds a moderate degree of diversity. Non-traditional students bring unique experience and perspective to the writing center environment. However, this still leaves seventy percent of tutor participants as white, traditional, English speaking representatives of the population. Adding slightly to the group's diversity, only three of the tutors claim to be pursuing degrees in fields of either English or education. The knowledge and experience of peer tutors studying business, nursing, and international studies adds particular elements of diversity. This is clearly evident in the tutorial dialogue with Tutor # 8 who, because of his business training, is quickly able to relate to the student's topic regarding "structural power." This enables the tutor to facilitate advanced levels of critical dialogue in response to the student's stated needs regarding topic development. Again, recreating this study in other college writing centers and collecting data from larger sample populations with expanded diversity might add valuable perspective to the observations and conclusions drawn from this limited study.

Limited Student/Tutee Sample Size

Once again, the limited sample size carries over into the limited demographics of students being tutored in each of the recorded tutorial sessions. However, a surprisingly high degree of diversity reveals itself in the population of randomly selected students participating in the study. Fifty percent of the students are traditional (under age 25), with the remaining fifty percent representing non-traditional students (over age 25). Likewise, fifty percent of the participating students claim English to be their second language and fifty percent arrive as native English speakers. Sixty percent of the students are female, while forty percent are male. And seventy percent of the students filmed in the tutorial sessions represent non-white ethnic minorities, while the remaining thirty percent are Caucasian. It might be helpful to extrapolate these numbers further by comparing them to overall populations of minorities and second language learners at this particular institution of higher learning. Comparative studies across multiple writing centers regarding the percentage of non-traditional and minority students seeking out writing center services might also provide helpful data for the developing field of college writing centers. Once again, the sample of students selected to be tutored in this study has been selected randomly. Sessions with each of the participating tutors is scheduled (during their regular work time) weeks in advance. The students are randomly assigned to these tutoring sessions as they arrive in the center, during the scheduled filming times. In spite of the limited sample size, a surprising level of diversity reveals itself in the resulting student sample.

Limitations Posed by Pressure to Perform

As noted in several tutor think-aloud sessions, as well as in the group exit interview, pressure to perform as a result of the video-camera's presence presents nominal limitations in this study. For the most part, tutors claim to "forget the camera is there after the first few minutes." Only one tutor reflects that the camera influences decisions she makes during the tutorial process. Another tutor notes that the student she is tutoring "appears to remain aware of the camera's presence." Overall, most of the tutors agree that the tutorial process absorbs the complete attention of both student and tutor, blocking out external writing center noise and activity, as well as the camera's presence. Not having the researcher remain next to the camera during filming seems to have been a wise decision. Without a camera operator present in the tutoring circle, its presence becomes less obvious. There is some risk attached to this decision. Should the camera malfunction at any time, data might be lost or the session itself might be interrupted. Fortunately, these types of problems do not occur during the course of this study. Strategies to prevent technical failure include placing new, empty tapes in the camera, checking tripod settings, and power supply prior to each filming session. The camera is also strategically placed in a remote corner, reducing the risk of passing traffic interfering with equipment operation.

Implication for Stakeholders

Implications for this Particular Writing Center

In light of the descriptive data collected during the course of this study, this particular writing center might want to develop its tutor training program to higher perceptive levels by incorporating video-taped tutorials and think-aloud protocols into advanced levels of training.

Tutors acknowledge the value of observing themselves while tutoring students. During the think-aloud sessions, they vocalize observations about their own tutoring methods and strategies, enabling them to think more critically about their individual tutoring practice. While this type of procedure might prove valuable as a tool for tutor evaluation and assessment, it appears that peer tutors see the most value for this procedure as a training tool, used to facilitate personal introspection and professional development. While tutors express discomfort at the idea of viewing their own tutorial videos alongside the writing center director, they also acknowledge that observing “real” tutoring sessions as opposed to “simulated training tapes” provides them with more meaningful feedback. Again, all tutors concur that they “would not want to do this in the beginning of their tutor training, that would have been terrifying” to a novice tutor. As a result of the group exit interview, the tutors collectively agree to consider the idea of producing their own set of tutorial training videos during future tutor meetings. The director enthusiastically agrees to place this possibility on a list of discussion items for future weekly tutor training sessions.

Implications for College Writing Centers

The descriptive data and percentages of dialogue documented in this study affirm what writing center professionals have claimed over the past thirty years. While the expectations of student tutees may be to have their papers proofread and edited, the discourse that actually takes place in college writing centers involves more than grammar, mechanics, and proofreading. Writing Center tutorials are complex rhetorical processes of negotiated learning. While the data collected in this study clearly indicates what is known within writing center circles, the need to compile further data in support of these observations is important to the growing canon of

knowledge in rhetoric and composition. Writing, as well as discourse over writing, is an important tool in the development of higher order thinking abilities in college-aged students. Dialogue about writing encourages critical thinking and reasoning abilities. In many disciplines the focus of and need for writing remains on the written “product.” Language arts educators must continue to research and document the critical role that writing process plays in student learning and comprehension. Writing center professionals must consider the results of scholarly research on rhetoric and composition, taking it one step further into research specifically focused on writing center discourse. Think-aloud protocols should be considered as a viable tool for collecting data about the cognitive processes that take place during writing center discourse, for both student tutees and writing center peer tutors. Applying this method in multiple and diverse writing center settings can provide substantive data to confirm the levels of cognition and decision-making that occurs in writing center tutorials. Think aloud protocol methodology has considerable potential for collecting data which allows researchers to examine how tutors define their skills in the socially constructed environment of a college writing center.

The data collected in this study raises further questions about the ways in which students are being engaged in critical discourse during writing center tutorial sessions. Descriptive data documenting the ways in which student communication skills are stimulated through critical discourse about writing could be explored through further application of think-aloud methodology.

Implications for Tutors

After a student leaves the writing center, peer tutors are left with limited feedback regarding the success of individual tutorial sessions. They seldom see the final product or the

students' grades. They are left with whatever student reaction they received during the session, along with their own perceptions. It can be difficult to assess success or failure during the process of a tutorial session. Reflective think-aloud protocols are a viable method for tutors to examine their own tutoring practice more critically. Not only can they observe their own tutoring practice, but this method allows tutors to verbalize their own thoughts and concerns. In this way, they are becoming active participants in their own process of learning, just as they are encourage students to do through tutorial discourse.

Implications for Writing Center Research

College writing center professionals continue to express concerns regarding the marginalization and devalued perception of services offered to students. Rather than being viewed as centers of teaching and learning, writing centers are often perceived as “grammar barns” whose only job is to edit and “fix” college student papers. While research continues to evolve in attempts to dispel this myth, further publication and presentation needs to be conducted across higher education curriculums to reinforce the complex learning that takes place in college writing centers. This particular methodology provides a vehicle for collecting rich qualitative data, demonstrating the complex learning processes that take place in college writing centers. Future research in college writing centers needs to be conducted by professionals who are not employed by particular institutions. Think-aloud protocols can be applied to gather data from both student/tutees and writing center peer tutors. These reflective sessions should be conducted immediately following the tutoring sessions themselves and should not be self directed by either the student or the tutor. Video-taped tutorials are preferable to reflection over audio-taped

tutorial sessions because of the important nonverbal data that occurs during the tutorial relationship.

Implications for College Writing Programs

Rather than accepting a limited role in remedial services, college writing centers need to increase their participation in the development of college writing programs. This begins with awareness of the needs of writing programs, as well as the needs of writing centers. Writing-Across-the-Curriculum trends are a further reason why writing centers need to assume more active roles in the development of writing programs. Writing center professionals must continue to collect credible data, supporting the complex levels of learning that take place during tutorial discourse. Supporting claims of student learning with credible research is important to future levels of participation in higher education curriculums. Think-aloud protocol analysis is a viable method for collecting data in support of this type of research. The thick, rich qualitative data collected during reflective protocol analysis can provide insight into the cognitive processes that occur during the process of college student writing, as well as discourse over writing.

Questions regarding the value of one-on-one teaching relationships could also be examined through further application of think-aloud protocol methodology. What is the potential for ongoing, individualized relationships for college student writers?

Implications for Higher Education

Expressed concerns about students arriving in college unprepared for the academic rigors of higher education point to the need for highly developed academic student services, such as

writing centers. Rather than being labeled as mere support services for remedial students, college faculty and administrators must acknowledge the need for improved communication skills on all levels of academia. Writing centers provide learning opportunities to students of all abilities and in multiple disciplines. Faculty and administrators should encourage students to utilize these services on all levels of academic learning and development. Documentation of the increasing numbers of faculty who seek out assistance from writing center professionals must also be compiled and assessed. While writing centers need to present credible research in support of their theoretical and practical accomplishments, institutions of higher learning must acknowledge the history and evolution of college writing centers as key players in successful student learning. Institutions of higher learning must create an environment where it is acceptable for students to assess their own learning needs, seeking out whatever assistance is necessary to improve their levels of knowledge and communication skills. Employers in the Information Age expect college graduates who are literate, reasonable, and capable of making complex decisions. The dialogue that takes place in college writing centers encourages students to develop in all of these areas. It is incumbent on writing center professionals to provide the type of research that documents this complex learning, assuming a more active voice in higher education scholarship and research.

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Appendix A
Table of Contents-- Tutor Notebook

This tutor handbook intends to give Writing Center peer tutors an overview of policies and procedures and will provide a reference for tutor strategies. It is not a substitute for the tutor training, which is an on-going process.

- I. The Writing Center's Philosophy
 - A. Mission
 - B. History
 - C. Program Reviews (2000, 1995)
- II. Writing Center Promotional Materials/Marketing
 - A. Brochure, bookmark, flyer
 - B. Writing Center and JCCC
 - C. Writing Center and instructors
 - D. Writing Center and tutors
 - E. Courses (one-credit or non-credit modules)
 - F. Tour outline
- III. General Procedures
 - A. Sign-in sheets
 - B. Student folder contents
 - C. Referral forms
 - D. English Program Objectives and grid
 - E. Critique sheet
- IV. Tutor Qualities Defined
 - A. Job posting
 - B. Peer tutor checklist
 - C. Job description
- V. Demographic Information and Student Services
 - A. English as a second language students (non-native)
 - B. Hearing impaired
 - C. The adult learner
 - D. Learning disabilities
- VI. Strategies for Tutoring
 - A. Do's and Don't's of tutoring
 - B. Tutor code of ethics
 - C. Structured dialog
 - D. Hierarchy of concerns
 - E. The 6-trait analytical model
 - F. Reigstad model
 - G. Terminology for the writing process
- VII. Tutor Training
 - A. CRLA information
 - B. Outline for meetings
- VIII. Resources in the Writing Center
 - A. Tutors guides, a bibliography
 - B. Writing theory and practice, a bibliography
 - C. Software in the Writing Center
- IX. Evaluations
 - A. TSAT
 - B. Self-evaluation
 - C. Reflection questions

Appendix A
Writing Center Tour

- I. Welcome to the Writing Center!
 - A. **Introductions**
 1. Tutors (JCCC students)
 2. Instructors
 3. Secretary
 - B. **Visiting the Writing Center**
 1. First time
 - a. Sign in at front desk on computer (which teachers can access) and clipboard (for the Writing Center records).
 - b. Ask secretary for folder
 - (1) Purpose of folders
 - (a) Track student hours: It is the student's responsibility to check his/her own folder to see that correct times in & out have been recorded.
 - (b) Track student progress
 - i) Document student's questions and tutor's feedback.
 - ii) Record any computer test scores or software used.
 2. Subsequent visits
 - a. Sign in at front desk
 - b. Ask secretary for folder
 - c. Tell secretary why you are here: tutor session, use software, etc.
 - C. **Writing Center can be used by**
 1. JCCC students
 2. Kansas residents may use the Writing Center on a limited basis
 - D. **Writing Center Hours**
 1. Spring/Fall semesters
 - a. Monday-Thursday: 8:00--8:00
 - b. Friday: 8:00--2:00
 - c. Saturday: 9:00--3:00
 - d. Sunday: 12:00--4:00
 2. Summer semester
 - a. Monday--Thursday: 8:00--8:00
- II. Free services available in the Writing Center
 - A. **Tutoring sessions**
 1. Student's responsibility
 - a) Bring your assignment and your latest draft. Try to come in at least several days before the paper is due. Waiting until the last minute will limit your time to revise your paper.

Appendix A

- b) Expect to spend between 15--30 minutes with the tutor
 - c) Come prepared with questions and ideas
 - d) Take detailed notes during the session, so you'll know what you need to work on.
2. Tutor's responsibility
- a) Help student discover the answers to his/her specific questions
 - b) Take detailed notes in student folder about what is discussed.
 - c) Provide feedback, but CANNOT OFFER AN EVALUATION
 - d) Keeping the Hierarchy of Concerns in mind, tutors will offer suggestions to improve the paper.
 - (1) Hierarchy of Concerns
 - (a) Assignment Goals
 - (b) Clear Focus
 - (c) Organization
 - (d) Development
 - (e) Paragraphs
 - (f) Sentences
 - (g) Words
 - (h) Style
3. The Writing Center's Proofreading Policy: Because the Writing Center emphasizes the process of writing, not the product, **TUTORS DO NOT PROOFREAD**. Tutors will not find all of your errors for you; that's your job. We want students to become effective, independent writers. If you'll work hard and take advantage of all the Writing Center resources, your writing will improve.
- B. **Handouts**
- 1. Cover various areas such as using commas, proofreading tips, transitions
 - 2. Contain explanations, rules of usage, practice exercises
 - a) Answer keys available for many of the exercises
 - 3. Please feel free to take a handout with you today, or come back later and pick one up. Take as many different ones as you need.
- C. **Student sample papers**
- 1. Available for various classes
 - a) English: Intro to Writing, Comp I, and Comp II, etc.
 - b) WAC: Sociology, Marriage and Family, American History, etc.
 - 2. Students may look at and take notes from samples, but they may not remove samples from books or photocopy them.
- D. **Computers (16 PCs)**
- 1. MicroLab Grammar Software
 - a) Assessment Test--does this teacher require the assessment?
 - (1) 45-60 minutes for test
 - (2) 5-10 minutes for feedback/analysis

- Appendix A
Covers 14 areas of grammar
- b) Practice Modules to improve understanding of low-score areas
 - (1) Each practice module provides
 - (a) a review of rules with explanations
 - (b) 3 sets of practice in recognizing errors
 - (c) 3 sets of practice in repairing errors
 - (d) a Mastery Test of 15 questions
 2. Editor
 - a) Provides an analysis of a paper's mechanics
 - b) Paper must be saved in IBM-format as a .txt file
 3. Word Processors
 - a) Types
 - (1) IBM compatible--WordPerfect & Microsoft Word
 - b) Availability
 - (1) After a tutor session, students may revise their papers for up to 30 minutes in the Writing Center.
 - (2) Because **the Writing Center is not an open typing lab**, students must go to either LIB 357 or OCB 343 to compose at the keyboard and type papers.
- E. **Grammar Hotline**
1. For quick answers to your grammar questions, call 469-4413
 2. If you need to discuss your paper beyond simple grammar questions, please come in for a tutor session.
 3. Hotline is answered whenever Writing Center is open. If you leave a message on our voice mail, we'll call you back next time we're open.
- III. Classes available in the Writing Center (Not a free service)
- A. **General Information**
1. Currently, 1 credit hour costs \$58.00 for Kansas residents. Classes may also be taken as noncredit for same price.
 2. Student comes to the Writing Center every week at agreed-upon time(s).
 3. Minimum of 20 hours working in the Writing Center on assigned material.
 4. These courses provide structure, guidance, and feedback; however, they do not provide 20 hours of one-on-one tutoring. Teacher sets up course of study and guides student through it; student works independently under the teacher's supervision.
- B. **Eight classes available.** Pick up a list of the classes if you're interested.
- IV. Any Questions?
- V. Thanks for visiting the Writing Center. Please come back and see us soon.

1. **What are the Writing Center hours?**

Fall & Spring Semester:
 MTWR 8:00-8:00
 F: 8:00-2:00
 S: 9:00-3:00
 Su: 12:00-4:00

Appendix A
 Summer Semester:
 MTWR : 8:00-8:00

2. **What is the Grammar Hotline?**

The Grammar Hotline provides a service to the community. Community members may call the Hotline (913-469-4413) for questions about their own writing, such as spelling, punctuation, grammar, or usage. The Writing Center staff uses a variety of resources to research the answer and to give the caller an accurate reply.

3. **What is the procedure one follows when entering the Writing Center?**

Sign in at the front desk

Tell the secretary why you're here

The secretary will give you your folder (or create one for you on your first visit).

4. **What is the student's responsibility during a tutoring session?**

Bring your assignment and your latest draft. Try to come in at least several days before your paper is due. Waiting until the last minute will limit your revision time.

Come prepared with questions and ideas.

Plan to spend 15 to 30 minutes with the tutor. Tutors help with writing skills only, so keep focused on writing-related problems. After your tutoring session, you may stay in the Writing Center and work on your own.

You should take detailed notes during your tutoring session, especially noting any repeated errors the tutor points out. As you revise your paper, work to eliminate these errors.

If you need additional help with grammar or punctuation, ask about the helpful handouts and software available.

5. **What is the tutor's responsibility during a tutoring session?**

Using various Writing Center resources, tutors can help you discover the answers to your specific writing questions.

Keeping the Hierarchy of Concerns in mind, tutors will ask questions and offer suggestions to help the student improve his/her writing.

Although tutors can give constructive feedback on organizational and developmental problems in your writing, they cannot evaluate your paper. Only your teacher can grade your paper.

6. **Why won't the tutor proofread your paper?**

Because the Writing Center emphasizes the process of writing, not the product, TUTORS DO NOT PROOFREAD. Tutors will not produce an error-free paper for you. You are the writer, and PROOFREADING IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY.

We want you to become an effective, independent writer. By working hard and taking advantage of all the Writing Center resources (books, handouts, software, sample papers, as well as tutoring sessions), you can improve your writing.

7. What are the qualifications of the people who work in the Writing Center?

Instructors teach at JCCC

Appendix A

Tutors have had Comp I and Comp II. They pass a writing test. We have tutor training on Friday afternoons.

8. What are the self-paced classes offered through the Writing Center? Name one.

We offer eight one-credit classes. Each class requires the student to work at least twenty hours in the writing center. Students work independently with the grammar software, handouts, and books.

ENGL 103 Practical Writing Skills

A course designed specifically for students whose English is their second language. Emphasis is on sentence and paragraph structures, word choice, idioms, and phrases.

ENGL 107 Sentence Pattern Skills

A course which reviews basic sentence structures, sentence combining with coordination, subordination, proper sentence punctuation, sentence variety, and sentence style.

ENGL 108 Composing Skills

A course which assists students in the organization and development of paragraphs, focusing on various modes and styles.

ENGL 109 Proofreading Skills

A course which helps students learn the rules of good writing, including punctuation, grammar, tense, agreement, and usage.

ENGL 112 Research Skills

A course which teaches the process of research and the appropriate documentation style and format for the discipline of the writing assignment.

ENGL 115 Revision Skills

A course which works on the writer's style, word choice, sentence structure, etc.

ENGL 120 Writing in the Disciplines

A course which models the various formats and styles used in a variety of disciplines.

9. Where are the writing handouts located? Take one. Write down the name of the handout you choose to take with you today.

In the wooden bins against the south wall. We have handouts on grammar, punctuation, documentation styles, resumes, and so on.

10. Are samples of student papers available in the Writing Center? For which classes are samples available?

Yes! Not only for writing classes--Intro, Comp I, Comp II--but for many other classes--marriage and family, history, sociology, criminal justice, etc. Samples may not be photocopied or removed from the Writing Center, but students may take notes.

11. What software programs are available that I can use to practice or sharpen my writing skills?

English MicroLab--assessment and modules

Editor--analyzes paper for mechanical usage. (Save paper on disk, IBM-compatible WordPerfect 6.1 or lower.)

Blue Pencil--learn to proofread

And many more!

12. Where can I word process my paper?

NOT in the Writing Center. OCB 304 is the main open lab.

13. Do you ever need an appointment to come to the Writing Center? NO! Just come in, sign in, get your folder, and tell the secretary what you would like to do. We do get busy at times, but you usually won't have to wait more than 15-20 minutes to talk with a tutor.

Appendix A
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Peer Tutor – The Writing Center

Posting No. 2003-347

Division

Academic – Liberal Arts – Writing, Literature, and Media Communications

Responsibilities

Assist students from all disciplines with grammar, writing, and various self-paced materials in the Writing Center. Answer Grammar Hotline phone calls and e-mails. Must be able to attend training sessions and scheduled meetings. If accepted for the position, may earn and receive CRLA certification for training and experience.

Qualifications

Completion of Comp I required (at JCCC preferred.) Completion of Comp II preferred (at JCCC preferred.) Prior experience tutoring writing preferred. Must be currently enrolled at JCCC. Position open to JCCC students only. Must be able to demonstrate composition and mechanical skills.

Salary/Benefits

\$8.27 per hour.

Position Status

Part-time, temporary, 10-20 hours per week, Fall 2003 semester.

Working days/hours: Various days and hours, Monday-Friday, weekends and evenings.

Review Date

Review of applications will begin May 14, 2003.



To apply for an open position, view the list of current openings and apply on-line at www.jccc.net/acad/hr, email jcccjobs@jccc.net, or contact the Office of Human Resources, JCCC, GEB 251, 12345 College Blvd., Overland Park, KS 66210-1299, (913) 469-3877.

Posted – April 29, 2003

Appendix A



How Does the Writing Center/Tutors Benefit the College?

- Leads to improvement of teaching and learning
 - Provides a non-stressful service for underprepared students returning adults
 - Provides an important part of the process of writing--draft feedback
 - Provides an audience other than teacher or class
 - Provides a community of writers/models of good writing
 - Provides resources for writing better
 - Provides a link to the community through the Grammar Hot-Line
- 
- Provides computer access
 - Provides assessment and evaluation of writing skills
- 

Writing Center

Tutors 247

T – Sweet. So that takes care of what you needed. Remember to get up a couple of those claims and remember to read for "when" and "where" ~~There is your response sheet and these are your copies.~~

COURSE NUMBER: ENGL 103

COURSE TITLE: Bill on. (smiles) Practical Writing Skills CREDIT: One

COURSE DESCRIPTION: A practical writing course in English for non-native speaking students

T – I know, but you're not supposed to be in the room with paired, this (course) focused on what is going

to see it except her (points to camera) patterns, techniques to expand and modify sentences, and practical methods for developing writing. Individualized instruction and practice

S – So what is she going to do, just writing about writing? in reading, writing, and speaking help students acquire skills needed in

T – She's writing her doctoral dissertation about writing center tutors. an English speaking and writing setting. This course is intended for

S – Wow. taken an English as a Second Language course. Students meet by arrangement in the Writing Center LIB 308.

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this study. I've enjoyed your perspective......

COURSE NUMBER: ENGL 107

COURSE TITLE: Sentence Pattern Skills CREDIT: One

END OF TUTORIAL SESSION #1
 COURSE DESCRIPTION: Working at their own pace, students will review parts of speech, elements of the sentence, and the basic sentence patterns. Emphasis will be on sentence building and sentence combining. Individualized tutoring and practice in writing. Class meets by arrangement in LIB 308.

COURSE NUMBER: ENGL 108

COURSE TITLE: Composing Skills CREDIT: One

COURSE DESCRIPTION: A review of the various aspects of composing, beginning with creating and outlining and moving to the development of a variety of paragraph and essay forms. Individualized tutoring and practice in writing. Class meets by arrangement in LIB 308.
This course is now, also, offered on-line. Check the college schedule of courses.

COURSE NUMBER: ENGL 109

COURSE TITLE: Proofreading Skills CREDIT: One

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Focusing on the major and minor errors as set forth in the English Program Objectives, students will learn to recognize and correct these errors, not only on exercise sheets, but also in their own writing. Class meets by arrangement in LIB 308.

COURSE NUMBER: ENGL 110

COURSE TITLE: English Grammar Review CREDIT: One

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Diagnostic tests determine the level of work. Students will use programmed materials dealing with parts of speech, sentence structure, verb forms, modifiers, pronoun choices, sentence fragments and run-ons, punctuation and capitalization. Meets by arrangement in LIB 308.

Writing Center

COURSE NUMBER: ENGL 112
 COURSE TITLE: Research Skills CREDIT: One
 COURSE DESCRIPTION: A review of the various aspects of the research process, beginning with limiting the subject and moving to revising the finished product. Emphasis is on the gathering of resource material and correctly documenting it. Class meets by arrangement in LIB 308. *This course is now, also, offered on-line. Check the college schedule of courses.*

.....

COURSE NUMBER: ENGL 115
 COURSE TITLE: Revision Skills CREDIT: One
 COURSE DESCRIPTION: Revision Skills is designed to instruct the practicing writer in skills needed to revise all writing, including business, college and personal. Student will use a variety of computer programs and self-paced materials. The course is individualized and will include instructor feedback. Class meets by arrangement in LIB 308.

.....

COURSE NUMBER: ENGL 120
 COURSE TITLE: Writing in the Disciplines CREDIT: One
 COURSE DESCRIPTION: Writing in the Disciplines is designed to provide students with a process for completing the variety of written assignments typically assigned in classes other than composition. Students will practice writing a variety of short papers using a prescribed process for each assignment. The course is individualized and will include instructor feedback and models for each assignment. Class meets by arrangement in LIB 308.

.....

All of these courses (except when taken on-line) are individualized. Students must come to the Writing Center (LIB 308) after enrolling to do initial assessment and paperwork. Writing Center instructors will meet with enrolled students on an individual basis to provide materials and a course schedule.

For information on enrolling as a credit student, call 469-3803
 (On-line courses have a 350 section number.)

For information on enrolling as a non-credit student, call 469-2323.
 (For non-credit enrollment in these classes, the prefix becomes XGW.)

After you register for a class, call _____ arrange a time for your class.

Appendix A

WHAT CAN THE WRITING CENTER DO FOR INSTRUCTORS?

Tours- Schedule your class to come to the Writing Center for a brief orientation. A videotape is also available. Call _____ for details.

Class Visits -A Writing Center instructor will come to your class to discuss a process for writing a writing assignment or to talk about the Writing Center.

Writing Assignments -Student samples of various writing assignments are available. Bring in any student samples you would like included. Also, an instructor will help you design a writing assignment or grading rubric.

Resource Center -Professional books covering

Interdisciplinary assignments

Research

Theory

Practical teaching and learning strategies

Word processing programs but not a word processing lab (that's in OCB 304)

Internet Research

Electronic Databases

WHAT CAN THE WRITING CENTER DO FOR STUDENTS?

Assessment/diagnostic tests

Critique papers for organization and development

Computerized instruction

Writing programs –

Prewriting

Revising

Editing

Proofreading

Drills -

Grammar

Mechanics Usage

Sentence combining/structure

Word processing

Internet Research

Electronic Databases (library)

Providing the above programs for use in the Writing Center allows for tutors to help in the recursive process of writing.

One-on-one or individualized instruction

Sample writings

Resource and reference books

Provide programs/courses for improvement of writing skills

HOW CAN THE WRITING CENTER HELP ME?

If you are a poor writer and need to develop your writing skills,
the Writing Center tutors can help you

- ☞ choose and focus topics ☞
- ☞ organize more effectively ☞
- ☞ write more specifically ☞
- ☞ learn to vary sentence length and structure ☞
- ☞ improve proofreading ☞
- ☞ use transitions correctly ☞

If you are a good writer but want to be better,
the Writing Center tutors can help you

- ☞ improve diction ☞
- ☞ create figurative language ☞
- ☞ experiment with tone ☞
- ☞ create concrete images ☞
- ☞ move from writer-based to reader-based prose ☞
- ☞ improve awareness of audience ☞
- ☞ encourage critical thinking ☞

Guidelines for Tutors

The goal for any tutor is to provide an encouraging environment that helps the student learn better. For example:

- Guide rather than teach.
- Show rather than tell.
- Praise rather than criticize.

- Let the student work rather than you do it.
- Use questions rather than lectures.
- Start with what the student knows rather than what he/she doesn't know.

- Understand one idea well rather than many ideas poorly.
- Advance in small steps rather than large ones.
- Use analogies, metaphors, and examples rather than jargon.

Appendix A

Tips for New Tutors

by Katie Martin

Do

- Realize you are not alone; there is always at least one instructor on duty at all times.
- Know what materials are available, and be able to find them quickly. Have an encouraging outlook on the tutoring process.
- Always be productive--ask if Susan needs any help and also walk around the room periodically, etc.
- Know procedures, such as what to do when a student does not want to stop the session after a reasonable amount of time.
- If a problem arises, talk to the returning tutors or Ellen or Susan.
- Handle responsibility well--follow through with grammar hotline or other such questions.

Do not

- Do not proofread.
- Do not take it personally if someone is upset and frustrated. Do not talk badly about any teacher.
- Do not chit chat about any students and their problems while in the Writing Center--that is part of what tutor meetings are for.
- Do not let a person monopolize your time--try to limit session to approximately 20 minutes.
- Do not allow "tutor hopping."
- Do not have a pen or pencil in your hand when looking at a student's paper.

Appendix A

TUTOR'S CODE OF ETHICS

(Adapted from the National Association of Tutorial Services Code of Ethics)

Subject proficiency and knowledgeability are top priorities in my task as a tutor.

My students deserve and will receive my total attention.

I will try to communicate with my students at a language level which is meaningful for us both.

I must be able to admit my own shortcomings and take appropriate steps to improve myself.

I will respect my students' uniqueness and personal dignity by accepting them without judgment.

My students will be constantly encouraged but never filled with false hope or flattery.

I will be open, honest and human to my students as I wish them to be with me.

I will not impose my personal value system or life style on my students; I will never use the tutoring situation to proselytize my personal beliefs.

Both the student and I understand my role does not include doing the student's work.

My goal is to teach the student to succeed without me.

Good tutors listen as much as they talk.

I will be sensitive to my student's feelings.

I will never gossip about my students; I will respect their privacy by keeping our relationship confidential.

I count on my student to also be my tutor and teach me ways to do a better job.

Punctuality and keeping appointments are essential on my part, not only out of courtesy but as an example for my student to follow.

Records and progress data will be maintained as expected and required.

I will do my best to stay abreast of the current literature about tutoring as it relates to me professionally.

Good tutoring enables students to transfer learning from one situation to another.

Tutoring means making learning real for the student.

I recognize that my student brings to the tutoring situation a lifetime of experiences and insights which can enrich my own perspectives.

Appendix A

AVOID "DOING" FOR THE STUDENT

1. Do not take ownership of the paper
 - do not tell students what to do; instead, guide, suggest, and model
2. Do not rewrite the paper
 - not your paper
 - not your words
 - not your grade
3. Do not tell students what to think; respond as a reader and ask questions
 - is there a thesis?
 - what is confusing?
 - are there gaps?
 - does it need support or development?
4. Do not try to find every problem in the paper:
 - point out major problem areas
 - give your overall response to content/structure
 - follow the hierarchy of concerns
5. Do not edit a paper for a student; it is a disservice as well as unethical.
6. When students ask specific questions, help them find the answers. Do not merely tell them the answers. Instead, open the grammar handbook, ask questions, and involve the students in finding/learning the answers for themselves.

*Remember, a tutorial should be a learning experience;
the student should be actively participating throughout the session.*

Appendix A
TUTORING STUDENT WRITERS

1. Introduce yourself and ask the student's name.
2. Confirm that the student is completely registered and logged in before proceeding with the tutorial.
3. Ask to see the assignment handout or the student's notes explaining what the instructor wants.
4. If the paper is already written, read through it quickly first, to determine if the assignment has been fulfilled.
5. Address the content of the paper in a positive way, emphasizing strengths before identifying the problems.
 - A. Discuss the important issues of the essay as a whole:
 - fulfilling the requirements of the assignments
 - having a focused thesis
 - sufficiently supporting thesis with details
 - organizing logically and coherently
 - using proper paragraph structure and transitions
 - B. Look at individual sentences and point out problems:
 - lack of clarity
 - examples of grammatical and mechanical errors
 - C. Discuss ways to correct and eliminate problems using models and examples.
6. If the paper is not yet started, discuss ways to begin:
 - brainstorming, free-writing, or listing
 - organizing thoughts and ideas by outlining
 - researching material if needed
 - writing as many drafts as are needed
7. LET STUDENTS CORRECT THEIR OWN ERRORS.
 - A. The student should keep a pen in hand.
 - B. The tutor should not keep a pen in hand.
 - C. Right-handed tutors should sit on student's left; left-handed tutors should sit on student's right. This will help keep tutors from correcting the student's paper.
8. Suggest return visits as needed, encouraging student/tutor dialogue and revising.

Appendix A



College Reading and Learning Association

Tutor certification

The International Tutor Certification Program

Tutor certification

Tutor awards

Mentor certification

Evaluators

History

Since March 1989, over 300 college and university tutorial programs in the United States and Canada have received tutor training certification through CRLA's International Tutor Certification Program (ITCP).

Purpose

The purpose of this program is twofold. First, it provides recognition and positive reinforcement for tutors' successful work from an international organization, CRLA. Second, its certification process sets a standard of skills and training for tutors.

Endorsements

CRLA's ITCP has been endorsed by the National Association for Developmental Education, Commission XVI of the American College Personnel Association, the American Council of Developmental Education Associations and the National Tutoring Association.

ITCP Certification Levels

There are three levels of certification:

- ◆ Regular
- ◆ Advanced
- ◆ Master

Each level requires an additional ten hours of training and 25 hours of experience. After meeting the requirements for an initial institutional certification for one year, CRLA offers a three-year renewal certification which can be followed by a five-year recertification.

Note: CRLA certifies programs, not individual tutors. In other words, CRLA certifies that a particular tutor training program is qualified to issue CRLA certificates to individual tutors at certain levels.

ITCP Publications

A Tutor Training Handbook has been compiled by ITCP which contains approximately two dozen "how to" essays from tutor training specialists. It can be ordered on the [Publications](#) section of this site.

Appendix A

Tutor Training Outline

- I. Orientation day- 8 hours
 - A. Morning session
 1. Orientation to college
 - a. Safety and security
 - b. Legal and professional issues
 - c. Customer service/college culture
 - d. College support services
 - e. Human resources/benefits
 2. Introduction to tutoring
 - a. Video-What is a Tutor?
 - b. Characteristics of a tutor
 - c. Responsibilities
 - d. Basic tutoring guidelines
 3. Learning styles
 - B. Afternoon session
 1. Work styles
 2. The tutee/student/client
 - a. Demographics/characteristics
 - b. Resources
 3. The referring instructor/the assignment
 4. The procedure
 - a. Records/student folders
 - b. Resources/materials
 - c. Computers and software
 - d. The modules
 - e. Grammar Hotline
 - f. Fax and copy machine
 - g. Tutor notebooks and resources
 - h. Basic tutoring do's and don't's

Appendix A

5. Climate
 - a. Attitudes
 - b. Work environment
 - c. Camaraderie
 - d. The newsletter (Write of Center)
 - e. Service learning project
 - f. Student workshops
 6. Schedules
 - a. Responsibility
 - b. Punctuality
 - c. Dependability
 7. Evaluation/conference
 8. Role playing
 - a. Types of students
 - b. Procedure-modeling and mentoring
 - c. The first day-Beginning and Ending sessions (video)
 9. Future meetings-the schedule for the year
- II. Tutor training sessions-2 ½ hours each
- A. Computer software
 1. Programs available
 2. When to use
 3. How to use
 4. Demonstrations
 - B. Writing Center theory
 - C. Critical thinking and problem solving
 - D. 6-Trait Analytical Model and the hierarchy of concerns
 - E. Tutor strategies for tutoring writing assignments (drafts)
 1. Dialoguing and questioning-Socratic method (Videotape)
 2. Reigstad's model (NCTE booklet)
 3. Bruffee's method of reading (article)
 4. Ryan's "facilitating" questions (Bedford Guide for Tutors)
 5. Rubrics/referrals/our conference sheets
 - F. Learning disabilities (speaker and videotape)

Appendix A

- G. Listening Skills/verbal and non-verbal communication (speaker)
- H. Strategies for working with ESL students (speaker and video)
- I. Writing across the curriculum assignments (panel of instructors)
- J. Documentation styles and plagiarism (speaker) (article)
- K. Ethics in the Writing Center (writing center listserve)
- L. Small group conferencing strategies
- M. Resources in the Writing Center

English Microlab Individual Progress Chart

Name: _____ Date of Assessment: _____

Instructor: _____ Class: _____

Attention Students:
Writing Center staff must record and initial all test scores.

	Topic Assessed	Assessment Test Score	Mastery Test Score	Mastery Test Date
1.	Assessment Percentage		NA	NA
2.	Complete Sentences (Sentence Fragments)			
3.	Distinct Sentences (Run-ons & Comma-Splices)			
4.	Orderly Sentences (Misplaced Modifiers)			
5.	Subject/Verb Agreement			
6.	Pronoun Choice			
			<small>*(Ask for pronoun info packet when taking the mastery test.)</small>	
7.	Commas			
8.	Apostrophes			
9a.	Semicolons			
9b.	Colons			
10a.	Parentheses			
10b.	Dashes			
11a.	Quotation Marks			
11b.	Italics			
12.	Capitalization			

All test scores must be recorded in pen, dated, and initialed by a member of the Writing Center staff.
 When students sign out at the front desk, they may ask for verification slips to give to their teachers.

White copy: Writing Center
 Yellow copy: student

Appendix A Writing Center Draft Critique Form

Attention Students: Please read the following information and instructions:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sessions average approximately 20-30 minutes. ➤ Writing tutors will not evaluate any student writing in terms of a numerical or letter grade. ➤ Additionally, tutors will not simply edit or proofread papers. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ After this tutoring session you need to ➤ Consider the tutor's comments (below) ➤ Make your revisions, and ➤ Proofread carefully before turning in your final draft. |
|--|---|

We want you to become an effective, independent writer. By working hard and taking advantage of all the Writing Center resources (books, handouts, software, sample papers, as well as tutoring sessions), you can improve your writing skills.

Please understand that you will never walk out of the Writing Center with a perfect paper unless you walked in with a perfect paper. However, you should leave each tutoring session with a greater understanding of how to improve your writing.

Attention Students: Please answer these questions before the tutoring session begins.

Your name: _____ Course name: _____

Instructor's name: _____ Essay Name: _____

Today's date: _____ Time: _____ First visit for this paper? 2nd? 3rd? 4th? 5th? 6th? 7th? 8th? 9th? 10th? 11th?

Assignment due date: _____ Do you have a copy of your assignment guidelines with you? YES NO

_____ I understand that Writing Center tutors will not edit or proofread my paper.
(student's initials)

TUTOR'S COMMENTS & SUGGESTIONS (TUTOR'S INITIALS: _____)

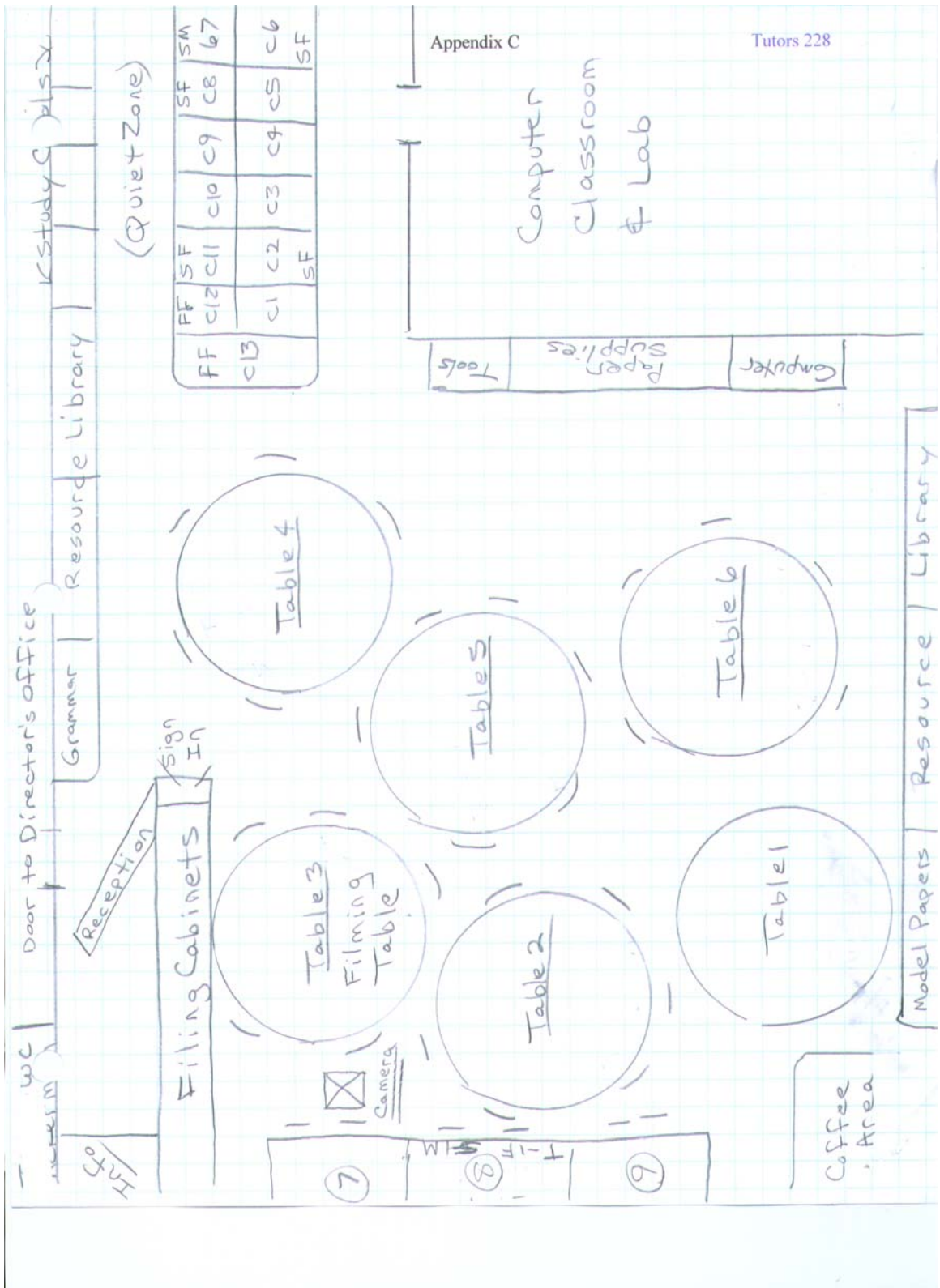
A READING OF YOUR PAPER HAS REVEALED PROBLEMS WITH THE FOLLOWING:

- Assignment Goals
- Clear Focus
- Organization
- Development
- Paragraphs
- Sentence Structure
- Words
- Style

STUDENT SHOULD ALSO CONSIDER THESE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REVISION:

GRAMMAR & PUNCTUATION

- Sentence Fragments
- Run-ons & Comma Splices
- Misplaced Modifiers
- Subject-Verb Agreement
- Pronoun Choice
- Commas
- Other:
- Recommended grammar software:
- Recommended handout:



WC

Door to Director's Office

Grammar

Resource Library

Study C

Study

Reception

Sign IN

Filing Cabinets

Sign OUT

Camera

7

8

9

Table 3
Filming Table

Table 2

Table 5

Table 4

Table 1

Table 6

Coffee Area

Model Papers | Resource Library | Library

Appendix C

Tutors 228

Tools

Paper Supplies

Computer

Computer
Classroom
& Lab

FF	SF	SF	SM
C12	C11	C10	C9
C8	C7	C6	C5
C4	C3	C2	C1
SF	SF	SF	SF

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
INFORMED CONSENT

PROJECT TITLE: Pedagogical Attitudes/Perceptions of College Writing Center Peer Tutors Towards the Process of Tutoring

APPROVAL DATE OF PROJECT: _____ EXPIRATION DATE OF PROJECT _____

CONTACT AND PHONE FOR ANY PROBLEMS/QUESTIONS: Patricia E. Ackerman 785-479-6060

IRB CHAIR CONTACT/PHONE INFORMATION: Dr. Rick Scheidt 785-532-3224

SPONSOR OF PROJECT: Dr. E. Todd Goodson 785-532-5898

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH: To Observe and Assess the Methods & Strategies That I Employ As a Peer Tutor in a College-Level Writing Center.

PROCEDURES OR METHODS TO BE USED: Video-taping of tutorial sessions, Audio-taped talk-aloud sessions, Transcript Analysis

ALTERNATE PROCEDURES OR TREATMENTS, IF ANY, THAT MIGHT BE ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE SUBJECT: None

LENGTH OF STUDY: Spring Semester 2006

RISKS ANTICIPATE: None

BENEFITS ANTICIPATED: Insight into the ways that I perceive the process and strategies of peer tutoring, as well as awareness of my own tutoring behaviors and perceptions.

EXTENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY: I understand that my name will be coded in the dissertation study, and that both audio and video tapes will be kept in a locked file cabinet and destroyed upon completion of the study.

IS COMPENSATION OR MEDICAL TREATMENT AVAILABLE IF INJURY OCCURS: I understand that both compensation and medical treatment are accessible and available on site to all participants.

PARENTAL APPROVAL FOR MINORS: I am over the age of 18 years.

TERMS OF PARTICIPATION: I understand this project is research, and that my participation is completely voluntary. I also understand that if I decide to participate in this study, I may withdraw my consent at any time, and stop participating at any time without explanation, penalty, or loss of benefits, or academic standing to which I may otherwise be entitled.

I verify that my signature below indicates that I have read and understand this consent form, and willingly agree to participate in this study under the terms described, and that my signature acknowledges that I have received a signed and dated copy of this consent form.

I understand that the Principle Investigator will maintain a signed and dated copy of this consent form.

PARTICIPANT NAME: _____

PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE: _____ Date: _____

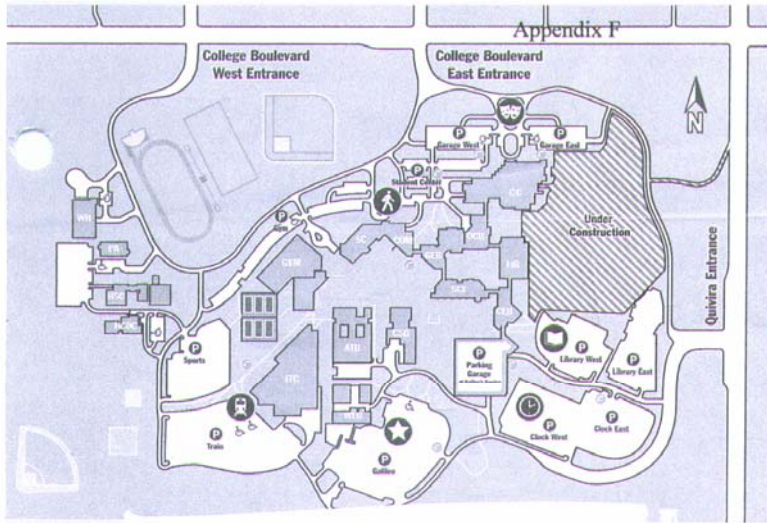
WITNESS TO SIGNATURE: (project staff) _____ Date: _____

	Monday, 4/24/06	Monday, 5/1/06	Thursday, 5/11/06	Friday, 5/12/06
Tutor #1	8 am – 10 am			2 pm – Group Interview
Tutor #2	10 am – Noon			2 pm – Group Interview
Tutor #3	1 pm – 3 pm			2 pm – Group Interview
Tutor #4		8 am – 10 am		2 pm – Group Interview
Tutor #5		1 pm – 3 pm		2 pm – Group Interview
Tutor #6		3 pm – 5 pm		2 pm – Group Interview
Tutor #7		5 pm – 7 pm		2 pm – Group Interview
Tutor #8		8 am – 10 am		2 pm – Group Interview
Tutor #9		10 am – 12 noon		2 pm – Group Interview
Tutor #10		2 pm – 4 pm		2 pm – Group Interview

Data Collection Schedule

Filming of all tutoring sessions will take place in the Writing Center

Immediately following each session, tutors will meet with the researcher in the Writing Center Director's office across the hall to process the session. The video-taped will be viewed and tutors will be invited to comment openly about their own tutorial methods and strategies. The protocol sessions will be audio-taped.



- ATB Arts and Technology Building
- CC Carlsen Center
- CLB Classroom Laboratory Building
- COM College Commons Building
- CSB Campus Services Building
- GEB General Education Building
- GYM Gymnasium
- Hiersteiner Child Development Center

- HSC Horticultural Science Center
- ITC Industrial Technical Center
- LIB Billington Library
- OCB Office and Classroom Building
- PA Police Academy
- PGGG Parking Garage at Galileo's Garden
- SC Student Center
- SCI Science Building
- WLB Welding Lab Building

Use these campus landmarks to find the lot in which you parked your car.

-  **Student Center**
-  **Clock**
-  **Galileo**
-  **Library**
-  **Train**

The Writing Center promotes the college's mission of lifelong learning and service to the community by providing an environment for nurturing independent writing; valuing progress, not perfection; emphasizing process, not product.



What the Writing Center Provides

The Writing Center offers personalized help with writing. A tutor will meet with you to discuss your writing and to design an individualized learning program.

Typically, the program is a combination of approaches, including self-instructional units, practice exercises, mini-dialogues, and follow-up conferences with tutors.

Workshops

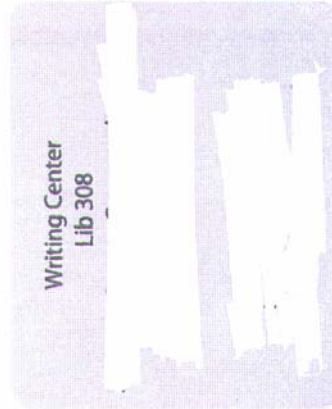
- ♦ Discovering and Correcting the Top Five Errors Students Make on Essays
- ♦ Providing Proofreading Pointers for Polishing Perfect Papers
- ♦ Understanding Research Techniques and Documentation (APA, MLA, Chicago)
- ♦ Revising with Style

Dates and times will be announced at the beginning of each semester.

The Writing Center



Appendix H



Tutors 233

Fall and Spring Hours
Monday - Thursday
8 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Friday
8 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Saturday
9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Sunday
12 p.m. - 4 p.m.
Summer Hours
Monday - Thursday
8 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Mission of the Writing Center

The JCCC Writing Center promotes the college's mission of lifelong learning and service to the community.

- The JCCC Writing Center
- Provides an environment for nurturing independent writing
- Values progress, not perfection
- Emphasizes process, not product



Grammar Hotline

Phone: _____

Writing Center Services

For the Instructor

1. The Writing Center provides samples of model student writing and writing assignments.
2. A professional library located in the Writing Center updates instructors on current writing pedagogies.
3. A Writing Center instructor will talk to any particular class about the Center's services or a specific writing assignment.
4. The Writing Center Staff will assess and work with any of your students who need to improve their writing skills.
5. The Writing Center instructors will answer questions and/or give you feedback on any professional writing you have accomplished.
6. The Writing Center provides special sessions or workshops about writing across the curriculum issues.

For the Student

Drop-in Service and One-Credit or Non-Credit Modules

Receive these benefits ...

1. Individualized instruction (computerized instruction and peer tutoring).
2. Handouts which describe writing projects, such as summaries, book reports, research essays, critiques, etc., and which suggest a process for writing these assignments.
3. Feedback by trained peer tutors on outlines, rough drafts, etc.
4. Assessments of students' writing skills and programs individualized to address the students' needs.
5. Various documentation style sheets (e.g., APA, MLA, CMS) to help with research projects.
6. One-credit courses to improve writing skills. These include the following:

- Practical Writing Skills
- Sentence Pattern Skills
- Composing Skills
- Proofreading Skills
- English Grammar Review
- Research Skills
- Revision Skills
- Writing in the Disciplines

Just Write of Center

Vol. 15 Issue 1

This semester's Writing Center newsletter, Just Write of Center, has as its focus visions of the future. In this rapidly changing world of technology, we find it hard to imagine what the next twenty-five years may bring. We do know that if we look back, we see a simpler world, but one less connected.

Now with the Internet, wireless settings, blogs, and PDA's, we can connect to anyone anywhere anytime. The downside is that these technical advances make our world faceless and autonomous. Imagine that the future brings more autonomy; does that equate to less empathy?

Is more technology always good? Does it make our lives easier or more complicated? Does it better connect us or separate us?

Visions of the future brought to you by:

Thinking about the role of the Writing Center in our academic community, how will it change technologically in the future? These are the questions we pondered for this newsletter; these are the basis for our imaginings.

The following pages have been taken from publications created at various times in the future.

Enjoy your futistory lesson.

Patricia Ackerman
Kansas State University-Salina
2310 Centennial
Salina, KS 67401

Appendix J

November 18, 2005

Dear Ms. Ackerman:

This letter is written in support of your proposal to conduct research in the Johnson County Community College Writing Center in Overland Park, KS. The premise that you propose, to observe the student tutor in tutoring sessions and analyze the tutor's perception about what is transpiring in the session through videotapes and interviews, will be beneficial. The results of the study should not only provide you a thoughtful study for your dissertation but will also be a valuable experience for our tutors and an opportunity for me to examine and possibly improve our training program. I am pleased that you have chosen our center for your study, and I will cooperate to the fullest of my ability.

Sincerely,

CHECKLIST FOR THE EVALUATION OF TUTORS

Name of Tutor _____

Date Hired _____ Date of Evaluation _____

	Good	Fair	Unsatisfactory
PERFORMANCE OF GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES			
Accuracy in maintaining records --Summary in student folders			
Discharge of routine tutorial duties --On-time --On-task			
Observation of tutorial regulations/guidelines --Grammar Hotline --E-mail --Newsletter			
KNOWLEDGE OF AREA OF SPECIALIZATION			
Knowledge of current information and materials			
Ability to locate and use various teaching strategies, materials, and resources			
Attendance at tutor meetings			
Knowledge of computer programs			
WORKING RELATIONSHIPS			
Relationships with peer tutors			
Relationships with students			
Relationships with professional staff			
PERSONAL TRAITS			
Dependability			
Initiative			
Judgment			
Patience			
Sensitivity			

Comments: _____

TUTOR EVALUATION AND SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

Use a plus sign (+) to indicate you have mastered this skill.

Use a minus sign (-) to indicate you continue to work on mastering this skill.

Step 1

Greeting

- 1a. _____ Introduced self and learned name of tutee.
- 1b. _____ Displayed friendliness (smiled, gestured, etc.).
- 1c. _____ Provided efficient seating arrangements.
- 1d. _____ Encouraged tutee to initiate the first task: to open books, to write, to explain, etc. (e.g., tutor kept hands off tutee's work).

Step 2

Identification of Task

- 2a. _____ Provided opportunity for tutee to state focus for session.
- 2b. _____ Used questions to clarify tutees immediate concerns.
- 2c. _____ Restated tutee's problem to help tutee understand what was needed and to focus on the session's activity.
- 2d. _____ Used empathetic statements to help tutee clearly define the problem (e.g., "That can be really frustrating!" etc.)

Step 3

Breaking the Task into Parts

- 3a. _____ Encouraged independent work by asking tutee to break writing task into parts.
- 3b. _____ Restated parts mentioned and provided opportunity for tutee to understand the steps and time needed on each.
- 3c. _____ Asked tutee to repeat the steps to solve the problem to confirm understanding. (e.g., "Now, what do we have to do?")

Step 4

Identification of Rhetorical Problem

- 4a. _____ Asked tutee to explain his/her assignment and thesis for assignment (e.g., thought process, concept, etc.).
- 4b. _____ Helped tutee understand the basic format of the assignment.
- 4c. _____ Helped tutee understand the use of other sources of information (e.g., notes, handouts, workbooks, etc.) to support thesis and improve writing. Tutor was not the source of information.
- 4d. _____ Encouraged independence in learning/writing.

Step 5

Setting Agenda

- 5a. _____ Involved tutee in setting the agenda. (Used statements such as, "We have _____ minutes. How shall we use them?")

Step 6

Addressing the Task

- 6a. ___ Encouraged tutee to address task without overly directing him/her (e.g., "Where or how should we begin?")
- 6b. ___ Appropriately responded but did not interrupt tutee's thinking. Showed attention without taking control.
- 6c. ___ Evaluated tutee's work sparingly--tied comments to work performed, not to the tutee.
- 6d. ___ Encouraged tutee to do more talking/learning. Tutor did not over-explain or take control.
- 6e. ___ Waited for tutee to do, act, speak, learn. Tutor did not interrupt or dominate tutee's time to learn.

Step 7

Tutee Summary of Content

- 7a. ___ Encouraged or allowed tutee to summarize/explain what had been learned (e.g., "Let's review for a minute.")
- 7b. ___ Waited for explanation to run its course. Tutor did not interrupt or correct a misstatement. Gave tutee opportunity to correct him/herself or ask a question and pause.
- 7c. ___ Used tutee's explanation to evaluate his/her understanding.

Step 8

Confirmation

- 8a. ___ Confirming statements were tied to specific accomplishments, helping tutee know what to keep doing independent of tutoring.
- 8b. ___ Used sincere, sparing praise and encouragement.
- 8c. ___ Encouraged tutee to read his/her own work aloud.

Step 9

What Next?

- 9a. ___ Encouraged tutee to use other helpful resources in the Writing Center (e.g., software, handouts, sample books).
- 9b. ___ Helped tutee understand connections between resources and writing.
- 9c. ___ Asked questions such as, "What will you work on next and how will what we've done help you?"

Step 10

Arranging and Planning Next Session

- 10a. ___ Allowed tutee to make decision to return for another session ("Shall we meet again?" or "What can we do next time?")
- 10b. ___ If subsequent session not desired by tutee, tutor encouraged a revisit when necessary.

Step 11

Closing

- 11a. ___ Encouraged tutee to work on areas discussed and proofread carefully.
- 11b. ___ Ended session on a positive note.

Name _____

Peer-Tutor Checklist

Please complete this checklist by Friday, September 16.

We will go over these items at the tutor meeting scheduled for that day.

- ❖ **Do You Know The Proper Procedures For Keeping Student Records?**
 - Anyone who wants to use the Writing Center services, however briefly, must sign in and out on the log sheet.
 - In addition, all students registered for credit classes must log in and out on the computer.
 - Scan student ID card and choose class.
 - OR
 - Type in student ID number and choose class.
 - Students who do not know their ID # may still use our resources and services; advise them to bring their card or number next time.
 - File folders for drop-ins
 - *Record of Tutoring Session (Form)*
 - Fill in the following information:
 - ◆ Student name
 - ◆ Course name
 - ◆ Teacher name
 - ◆ (If not here for a JCCC class, write whatever is appropriate in place of course name and teacher name.)
 - Fill in the "Student Requested" information (Choose one or more. Be specific.)
 - ◆ Assessment
 - ◆ Modules
 - ◆ Other software (which one?)
 - ◆ Tutor session
 - ◆ Student samples
 - ◆ Work alone
 - ◆ Other (doing what?)
 - *Guidelines for Using the Writing Center (Form)*
 - *Draft Critique Form:*
 - Student reads the top part and fills in the middle part. If the student has not filled in the form, please ask the student the questions and fill it in yourself.
 - Be specific when filling in the tutor comments and suggestions
 - Student receives yellow copy; white copy stays in folder.
 - If student returns with the same paper, make your notes on the original critique form and indicate which visit this is.
 - *Proofreading Strategies (Handout)*
 - *Teacher Referral Forms*
- ❖ **Do You Understand How The Writing Center Classes Work?**
 - Could you briefly describe each module class to a prospective student?
 - Do you know the first two tasks, besides filling out paperwork, to be done by new ENGL module students or students here for extended review?
 - Assessment test on computer (Microlab)
 - Writing sample
 - What additional test must the ADMJ students take?
 - Do you know how to record information (test scores, activities) in Module Class Student folders?
 - Where are the syllabi kept?
 - Where are the course materials kept?
- ❖ **Do You Know How To Answer The Grammar Hotline Telephone?**
 - Do you know how to check the Grammar Hotline voicemail?
 - Do you know where and how to record the questions?
- ❖ **Are You Aware Of The Various Source Materials in the Writing Center** --Writing Across the Disciplines assignments, student sample books, reference books, grammar books, etc.?

- ❖ **Are You Familiar With The Writing Classes' Textbooks?**
 - *Building Sentences* 3rd ed.--Mackie & Rompf (ENGL 102: Writing Strategies)
 - *A Writer's Workshop*, 2nd ed - Bob Brannan (ENGL 106: Intro to Writing)
 - *St. Martin's Guide to Writing*, 6th ed. - Axelrod/Cooper (ENGL 121: Comp I rhetoric)
 - *The Writer's Way*, 5th ed. (ENGL 121: Comp I)
 - *A Writer's Repertoire* (Comp I telecourse)
 - *Blair Reader*, 4th ed. Kirszner & Mandell (Comp II default rhetoric/reader).
 - *Conscious Reader*, 7th ed. -- Shrodes, Finestone, Shugrue (Comp II reader/literature)
 - *Discovering Arguments*, Memering, Palmer. (Comp II rhetoric)
 - *Writing in the Disciplines* – Kennedy (Comp II)
 - *Writing from Readings* – Wilhoit (Comp II)
 - *Simon & Schuster Handbook for Writers*, 6th ed.-- Lynn Quitman Troyka (handbook for all ENGL classes)
- ❖ **Are You Familiar With The Handouts In The Writing Center?**
 - Can you name the major and minor errors?
 - Have you worked through the handouts that deal with the major errors?
 - Do you know where the handout answer keys are?
- ❖ **Do You Understand How The Microlab Assessment Works?**
 - Do you know how to set up the assessment and record the scores?
 - Do you know the criteria for entering the student name in Microlab?
 - Do you know how to find the scores?
 - Have you worked through the MicroLab assessment and any of the corresponding computer lessons and mastery tests?
 - Do you know how to explain the various grammar rules to students without giving them the answers to the Mastery Test questions?
- ❖ **Are You Familiar With The Writing Center Software?**
 - Do you know how to use *Microsoft Word*?
 - Do you know how to insert a header?
 - Do you know how to turn off hyperlinks?
 - Do you know how to use the Help resource in *Word*?
 - Do you know how to convert a *Works* or *WordPerfect* document into *Word*?
 - Do you know how to use the style/grammar checkers?
 - *Writer's Workbench*
 - *Editor* (DOS)--draft & analysis.
 - *Grammatik* -- style checker in word processors.
 - Do you know how to set up and use the grammar/writing software?
 - *Glencoe*
 - *Grammar 3D*
 - *Rosetta Stone*
 - *TOEFL Mastery* (CD-ROM)--simulates TOEFL exam--reading, writing, & listening.
 - *St. Martin's Guide to Writing*
 - *Blue Pencil* --editing & proofreading
 - *Perfect Copy*--proofreading practice
 - *Word Attack*
 - *Mastering English Grammar*
 - *Writer's Toolkit*
 - *Interactive Vocabulary*
 - Are you familiar with the software and able to recommend various programs to meet students' needs?
- ❖ **Are You Staying Abreast With The Teachers' Specific Assignments And The Model Essays We Have Available?**
 - Do You Know Where Instructor Requests Are Filed?
- ❖ **Do You Know The Hierarchy Of Concerns?**
 - Do you keep your copy of possible questions handy while you tutor?
- ❖ **Have You Thought About Or Begun Work On A Possible Newsletter Contribution?**
- ❖ **Are You Keeping A Journal Of Your Activities In The Writing Center?**
- ❖ **Do You Always Work With Your Head Up So You'll Know If A Student Needs Help Or If Susan Or Judy Needs Help At The Front Desk?**
- ❖ **What do you do when you are not working with a student?**

Essay _____ Name: _____

Date: _____

Trait Scoring:

5 = in control; 4 = maturing; 3 = developing; 2 = rudimentary; 1 = prewriting/ searching

Ideas and Content Development _____

The paper is clear, focused, and interesting. Relevant anecdotes and details develop a clear central theme. Ideas are fresh and original. The paper fills the requirements of the assignment.

Organization _____

The organization enhances the central idea or theme. The order is compelling and moves the reader through the text, giving information in the order the reader needs to know. The introduction is inviting and the conclusion leaves the reader with a sense of resolution. Pacing is controlled and transitions are smooth.

Voice _____

The writer speaks directly to the reader in a way that is individualistic, expressive, and engaging. Clearly, the writer is involved in the text and is writing to be read. The paper is honest and written from the heart.

Word Choice _____

The writing is full and rich, yet concise. Words are specific and accurate; they seem just right. Verbs are powerful and imagery is strong. Striking words and phrases catch the reader's eye, but the language is fresh, natural, and never overdone.

Sentence Fluency _____

The writing has an easy flow and rhythm. Sentences are well built, with consistently strong and varied structure that reflects logic and sense, helping show how ideas relate. The writing sounds natural and fluent, even musical.

Conventions _____

The writing demonstrates good use of standard writing conventions--grammar, capitalization, punctuation, usage, spelling, paragraphing. Errors tend to be few and minor. The paper has obviously been carefully proofread and edited, and only light editing would be required to polish the text for publication.

1. Writing Skills - PINK

Dialogue between the tutor and the student concerning HOW the paper was written, including, but not limited to, organizational method, transitions, fluency, paragraphs, introduction, conclusion, tone, vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure, verb agreement, passive verbs, word choice, point-of-view, punctuation, spelling, capitalization, indentations, MLA/APA citation formats, and proofreading errors.

4. Content – YELLOW

Dialogue between the tutor and the student concerning WHAT the paper was written about. Subject matter, including but not limited to, focus, clarity of claim/thesis, strong reasoning, relevant evidence, credibility, specific detail, insight, originality, audience analysis, definitions, and sources of external evidence.

5. Tutoring Relationship – BLUE

This category included behavioral descriptions and dialogue, which communicated expectations and establish relationship within the tutorial process. This included, but was not limited to, discussion about the assignment sheet, classroom instructor expectations, student needs and concerns, tutoring process, praise, use of writing center resources, student/tutor personal comments, and filming for the research project.

The following data compares the coded data analysis of the actual tutorial sessions compared to the tutor perceptions recorded in the think-aloud protocol sessions, averaged from all three sets of co-rated data.

	<u>SKILLS</u>		<u>CONTENT</u>		<u>RELATIONSHIP</u>	
	<u>Tutoring Session</u>	<u>Think-Aloud Protocol</u>	<u>Tutoring Session</u>	<u>Think-Aloud Protocol</u>	<u>Tutoring Session</u>	<u>Think-Aloud Protocol</u>
#1	54.17%	17.68%	13.88%	18.23%	31.95%	64.09%
#2	61.98%	15.29%	1.40%	0%	36.62%	84.71%
#3	0%	0%	55%	5.17%	45%	94.83%
#4	54.85%	17.24%	24.39%	3.45%	9.76%	79.31%
#5	67.57%	40.25%	9.46%	7.80%	22.97%	51.95%
#6	21.16%	21.57%	39.42%	4.90%	39.42%	73.53%
#7	79.29%	26.27%	0%	0%	20.71%	73.73%
#8	0%	0%	85.34%	12.82%	14.66%	87.18%
#9	55.22%	40.10%	25.38%	16.15%	19.40%	43.75%
#10	73.88%	74.13%	12.69%	6.29%	13.43%	19.58%
Total #		479.12		266.96		253.92
Mean		47.90%		26.70%		25.40%

Instruction – Please continue with your tutoring session as usual.

Tutor is sitting on the left, tutee on the right at a round table. Normal Writing Center activity is taking place in the background.

T – Okay, so are these papers for today?

S – Yes.

T – Sweet. Which one do you want to start on?

S – Why don't we start off with some light reading about tentacle morphology. *(smiles)*

T – Okay, so what do you want me to look for today?

S – Okay, basically it's very simple *(pulls out assignment sheet)*, I had to make sure that I had met all of these requirements on my paper. There is a photo copy of the article abstract on the back page. And pretty much, these are the things that she is looking for is that it flows, that it was read. That is why she is giving credit for visiting the Writing Center.

T – Okay. Let me look at this first. *(Tutor begins to read first page of paper. Student sits and watches her reading the paper)*. So you are pretty much quoting everything they did.

S – Basically.

T – So you are analyzing an article about squids for biology?

S – Yes, basically the article is over research done on the tentacles of a giant squid. And the study records where the suckers are in relation to the tentacles in comparison to other types of squids. So basically, it's a comparison of tentacles.

T – Okay, interesting stuff about squids. Here we go. *(Continues reading on second page)*. *(Paper lies between the tutor and the student. But the student is not reading)*. Okay, so this *(reads aloud from paper)* this sentence needs something. *(Student picks up a pencil and begins reading, he makes corrections to the sentence and the tutor continues reading)*. Very nice structure. It makes sense. Um, a couple times, instead of "were" you have "where." The spelling is really close, but can you find in this paragraph where you have confused the two? *(The student picks up the pencil, reads and makes corrections)*. That's minor, but can be confusing. *(Continues reading)*. And there's another one here. *(Student corrects)*. I'm learning a lot from your paper and it matches all of this *(points to assignment sheet)* so these types of corrections seem minor.

S – No, that's good. These are the things I am not good at, so this helps.

T – Oh, trust me (*lays hand on paper*) this is better than the average paper (*smiles*). So don't cut yourself short. Um, here where you say "the data that was collected" could just be "the data collected." It's just cutting out excess words and adding clarity. I was always told that words are dollars, don't throw them away. (*laughter*) It takes awhile to get into that mindset, but it does help. (*continues reading, running finger along each line and student is now reading along with her*). One other thing, too, and I'm only pointing these things out because the rest of your paper is pretty good. When you say something like "it is my belief that the journal article does make a significant contribution." If you are saying it, we know you are saying it. So, saying "it is my belief" is kind of redundant. Now, this is a summary analysis, but in persuasive writing, this type of wording gives the reader a little hint that you might be a bit too defensive. I don't know if you are ever going to use persuasive writing, but here "it is my belief" isn't necessary. It is more authoritative to say "the journal article makes a significant contribution." Does that make sense? Now that is just a picky thing, but it can help the reader see your conviction. (*The student writes on his paper*) And is there a statement you can add, like "the journal article makes a significant contribution through blah, blah, blah" so that the reader knows why you think this is true?

S – Yeah, I mean I could go into why it makes a significant contribution, but I could probably combine a couple of sentences here and show these contributions. Because that is pretty much in the list of contributions that I put in down here (*points down the page*).

T – Yes, just a little hint of that would thicken your topic sentence, so you are not just making a claim, but you are making a really good claim. (*Student begins to write on paper, then both student and tutor reread the segment*). When you are using phrases at the beginning of a sentence like "however" and "in addition" you need a comma after. (*Student puts in a comma*). And here again. (*Student writes and both continue to read*). (*Tutor refers back to assignment sheet*.) This part seems like "plunk" I put that down because it had to be there, but it doesn't really fit.

S – I know, because I knew I had to have that in there and I thought uh-oh, where do I put it.

T – What if you would move it to the top somewhere? You can integrate that in and use it kind of as an offset saying "this journal article was based on a study from blah, blah, blah, blah." (*Student makes notes in the margin*). That way your are squishing it in where it makes sense.

S – Yes, because it was really an afterthought. I just stuck that in there.

T – That's okay though. (*Both continue reading with tutor following each line with her finger*). Okay, one little thing (*reads aloud*) you have a compound sentence and you are hooking them together with your and (*couples both hands together*) but you have forgotten one thing...

S – Oh, the comma (*quickly marks on the paper*).

T – Does it make sense to you why this sentence needs a comma and this one does not?

S – Well, because I'm connecting two kind of words in a sentence compared to two separate sentences?

T – Exactly, see you know this. Okay, now let's look at your references. (*Reads*) Um ACPT, what's the name of this? (*Student looks up source in his notebook and makes corrections*). Other thing, did she want you to have your running head on the left side, or did she say to do it differently. Usually you do it just like this. (*Student makes notes*).

S – Is it all caps?

T – You do it the exact same way, just on the other side. (*They begin to stack up papers*) Do you have any other questions about this paper?

S – No, because I understand the subject, it wasn't too hard.

T – Well, you made it, I'm not good with science, and you made that understandable.

S – But I'm worried about this paper (*pulls out second paper*) because I've read it myself and I don't understand it. This one's dangerous (*laughs*).

T – Okay. Let me make some notes on the first paper here. And I would go back and double check for confusion with “were” and “where” again.

S – Okay.

T – Here is a copy for your instructor (*hands copy to student*).

S – (*Hands second paper to tutor*) This one is having to do with genetics and it also examines a theory related to childhood parental psychopathology. Um, I read through this material twice and it blew my mind. So, what I'm hoping for is that my instructor understands what I'm trying to say. I really want to get my point across.

T – Okay, title, Personality Theory. Okay. (*Places paper between them and begins to read*). This one is in APA format, right.

S – Yes. (*Both continue reading*)

T – Alright, anything specifically that you want me to look at while I'm reading?

S – I guess I just want to know if what I was thinking in my own mind is coming across clearly to the reader. It's very difficult because what was in my mind was definitely not clear to me.

T – Okay, we'll see if you faked it really well (*laughter while tutor makes notes on response sheet*). (*Continues reading and reads a short passage outloud. Student quickly reaches over and makes a note on the paper. Reading continues*). Okay, so here's your claim right here. At least

you have made a definite claim. Here's another example of those two sentences (*student adds comma*). And generally in APA your contextual citations look like this (*shows him a handout*) you go ahead and put comma and then the year. This is more like MLA style. Unless your professor gave you specific instructions to do it differently. (*Student reviews assignment sheet and makes corrections to paper*).

S – And I was wondering if I did this one right (*points*).

T – Is it a journal article or an online data base?

S – Online database.

T – Um, (*refers to handout*) yeah, they just have the year. (*Writes on response sheet, then continues reading*). Do you need to define these terms briefly for your audience?

S – No, they will understand.

T – Okay. (*Continues reading*). Does this section go with this?

S – Yes.

T – Then you may want to go ahead and put the period on the outside, so that is clear. (*Student marks on paper*). Is there an extra space here?

S – Yes, I need to correct that (*makes a note*).

T – And here, when you inset the quote, you are saying “I am quoting” so you don't need quotation marks. (*Continues reading*). Okay, so as I read through this, and maybe it's because I don't understand genetics, but it seems like you're doing a little bit of jumping and not really intertwining everything (*locks fingers together*). Is that because things aren't weavable?

S – Well, some things do get a little jumpy, especially towards the end. Especially when tying in parenting and psychopathology in with behavioral genetics. Even though they are different, they are related. There are a lot of studies showing them together. To be honest with you, the whole Freud thing (*points to assignment sheet*) I had to find something from Freud to throw in there. And I wasn't sure where was the best place to put it. Sooo....

T – Okay, so the only thing I would say is if you could come up with one sentence, or one chunk of sentence to go ahead and tie in what was before with what's next. That's not the correct way to say that, but does that make sense?

S – You're saying to find more transitions to put in there?

T – Exactly. Like here (*points to paper*) your are pulling in one idea and jumping into a comparison. There needs to be a hint of an idea of how you got there.

S – Okay. (*Both continue reading*).

T – Another thing, too is to watch your style for unnecessary words (*reads passage aloud*). See here you could whack out the “that” and say it better. There are a lot of times when you will find “that” and “which” (*especially “that”*) used in the sentence twice and you can whack one of them out. (*Reads*) Oh yeah, here, good pull-in! But here we have another question (*student looks closer and marks on the page*). So far, you’re doing pretty good. (*Pulls out APA handout*).

S – This paper would be a pretty tough sell because psychologists would not prescribe to behavioral genetics. They don’t like that at all.

T – I see.

S – Which is why you are about to get to a part about environmental issues, in a second. (*Both resume reading*).

T – These two sentences that you are connecting sound good together with no coordinating conjunction in between, but I would just slap in a semi-colon. (*Student does this*). So that way, you don’t have a comma splice and those are two definite statements. (*Reads on*). Um, (*points to a sentence*) so some people think that they will?

S – Yes, I listed Funder because he specifically made the statement.

T – Okay, I would probably go ahead and insert a little introductory phrase like “while so and so believes this, I personally do not believe....” just to set off your claim versus their claim.

S – Student makes a note. (*Both continue reading*).

T – Is it too sticky here to go in and briefly say why in a sentence? Like why would it influence eugenics?

S – You mean for me to explain why I think that?

T – Exactly.

S – I can do that.

T – It’s good whenever you make a claim to back it up. Even though you may know in your head why, your reader may not. And this citation, same thing with APA format. (*Student makes a note on the paper*). This looks good. Any other questions you have about this paper?

S – No.

T – Sweet. So that takes care of what you needed? Remember to beef up a couple of those claims and remember to read for “where” and “were.” Here is your response sheet and these are your copies.

S – The camera is still on. (*smiles*)

T – I know, but you’re not supposed to remember that it exists. (*laughter*) And nobody is going to see it except her (*points to camera*).

S – So what is she going to do, just write about us?

T – She’s writing her doctoral dissertation about writing center tutors.

S – Wow.

Thank-you for your willingness to participate in this study. I’ve enjoyed your perspective.

END OF TUTORIAL SESSION #1

Tutor #1
Talk-Aloud Session

Instruction – Please introduce yourself and speak about your education and experience in this writing center.

My name is _____ and I have been working here at the writing center for four years. I graduated from _____ last December with a Bachelor’s Degree in Creative Writing.

Instruction – As you view the video-taped tutorial session, speak freely about what was happening in each segment of the tape and why you behaved as you did.

Video-taped tutorial session begins playing.

Pause Tape.

I like to get students to talk first. I tend to be a little bit quiet. But um, I wanted him to explain to me what it is he wanted. I don’t like to jump into things and just go at it. From my perspective, especially since he was doing a really technical science paper about giant squids, I needed some sense of direction. And also I think that like, when I get a concrete request from a student I can at least write it down and be like “okay this is what we talk about, this is what he wants to talk about, so I feel like it keeps me in a safe place, too. That way, if a student comes back and says “well, she told me blah, blah, blah” I can have some sort of record of “this is what we talked about and this is what he asked me about.”

Tape resumes.

Pause Tape.

I was just looking over his assignment sheet to figure out what it was he was doing. Um, and I wanted him to explain to me what his assignment said and make sure he really understood it. And then obviously I got a little confused because I thought it was his research and then he clarified for me that it was the research of someone else that he was kind of analyzing an article about squids. So here were trying to figure out exactly what he was doing.

Tape resumes.

Pause Tape.

Right there, I read through his first page and it was a little...I’m used to reading English papers that have a different structure, so I went back and checked his assignment sheet to make sure what order she wanted everything to be in because it was a science paper and things can be a little bit different with that. And he did everything exactly the way he was supposed to. And I just pointed out in one area where he was using passive voice. And because I felt like he was writing pretty well compared to some of what I see, I thought that he was at a stage where I could say “here’s passive voice and we can make your writing flow a lot better and sound more confident by using active voice.”

Tape resumes.

Pause Tape.

Um, I just pointed out a couple of spots where he was getting *where* and *were* mixed up. Normally, I don't get into things like that with students, because we are usually dealing with more major issues, but like I told him, if I were going to compare him to the average writing center student, his writing is more up here (*gestures over her head*). But he didn't seem to know that, he was really very insecure. I think he was a little shy. When I sat down with him and he started talking to me I was worried, but when I read his writing I knew this would not be bad. I mean there were a couple of mechanical things that I pointed out, and he immediately caught them, too. He was an older, returning student and he might be considered a slightly more non-traditional student. But he was definitely aware of what he was doing and did exactly what his instructions called for.

In the writing center assignment guidelines are really important to the success of the session. If I read a narration paper, I mean, I know how to write a story. But anything that is science-based or psychology-based I want to have concrete details stating that this is what the student is supposed to do. That helps me a lot and I think it helps the students, too.

*Tape resumes.**Pause Tape.*

Um, one of the things that kind of annoys me a little bit is when a student says "I believe" or "I think," rather than just claiming that something is true. So when I see a student who writes something well and should be claiming something, I like to point out that it would be more effective to just hack out the "I believe" and hack out the "I think" and just take hold of the idea and claim it as their own. I don't know if students understand this all of the time, but I hope they do. Um, I think that it is one of those things that generally when I state it they look at me like "what?" Like no one has ever said that to them before. There is a tendency for younger students to do that as filler, extra words to fill up the page. But I hope they understand. Because from my perspective if you are going to claim something you appear more authoritative if you just state it like "this is mine." So....

*Tape Resumes.**Pause Tape.*

Um, his topic was kind of vague here. It just said that it "made a huge impact in the scientific world" and I don't remember the rest of it. But I felt like it didn't make enough of a claim for a topic sentence. It didn't say enough. And I think this happens like everyday. It's kind of an empty claim. I see that everyday. And I think part of it too, especially with him, he knew in his head what the claim was. But he didn't go ahead and just say what it was. And I find myself a lot of times working with students saying, okay, you have to make a real claim and the back it up. Give the reader reason to believe you. And it doesn't have to be super complex, but something concrete that I can look and know that hey, this is what you are saying. And this is how you are proving it. That's what I'm trying to say to him here is that he needs to provide specific examples, even just a hint. He didn't need to go into a four sentence long explanation or a full paragraph. But he needed a couple of words, a couple of descriptors to say that this is the kind of impact that this study has had.

Tape Resumes.

Pause Tape.

Um, right there he had just forgotten a comma between two independent clauses and I try really hard not to mark on the student's paper. I do this very little. So here I just marked on the sheet and then I explained what was going on to him, without telling him that he needed a comma. One of the things that I notice, with a traditional English speaker like this, that I leave physical cues, like locking my hands together to discuss connecting sentences, sometimes the visual clicks in their head better than me just talk, talk, talking. And then they can remember and make the connection. When I did this here, he knew and figured out for himself that there was a comma missing. I didn't even have to tell him. But the students who I do have to tell sometimes what I will do is draw little pictures of sentences to help them make the associations themselves. I mean, I can tell them that they need a comma there because they are connecting with a coordinating conjunction. But they just look at me. I'm really...let get on my soap box for a minute. I think that the student, whether they want to or not, it's their paper and they have to own it and they have to take responsibility for it. It's not my job to get in there and fix it and just let them sit there passively and watch. And I see them wanting this lot.

If you see in the session, I have the paper placed in between us. And sometimes I'll have a student just shove it over on my side and I have to be assertive and push it back. And I think this is important because it is their words and their thoughts. Whether they want to claim it or not, they have to. Students' responses vary. Some students don't want to claim anything. They just want to get it good and go. I think other students get into it more. I have had some students when they push the paper over to me and I push it back, then they will push it back to me. And I have to just keep...and it becomes a silent battle just shoving the paper back and forth. But generally, I think I'm probably more passive in that sense. I try to give more power to the students than some other tutors in the center. And students know that, so they might not want to come to me because they know that I'm not going to dictate and I'm not going to fix everything. I'm going to ask them questions and they say they just want me to fix it. Noooo....

*Tape Resumes.**Pause Tape.*

Here, I'm explaining to him the citations. He usually I try to tell students to follow the rules. Look, if you see it, put it in. If you don't, don't. They always tend to overthink everything and I think with citations I probably do get more direct, because students have some sort of mental block with citations. They get into this mode of trying to understand why. And if you sit there and try to figure it out, you get more confused. So here I was just trying to tell him to follow the rules.

*Tape Resumes.**Pause Tape.*

Here, I was telling the student that I thought he did a really good job on his paper. The paper was about the tentacles of the giant squid and it was really interesting. So we finished up with the science paper and then he has another paper that he wants to work on.

Tape Resumes.

Pause Tape.

Um, I was just reading through the assignment sheet for the second paper to figure out what it was he was supposed to be doing. And I wanted to make sure whether or not he had any specific questions about this one. He said that he was really confused about it. So we were trying to clear up the expectations of the assignment.

*Tape Resumes.**Pause Tape.*

Um, it was just a citation issue here. He was confusing APA with MLA and I was just pointing out the differences in contextual citations. I also pointed out a problem with a compound sentence, I guided him through this by reading the sentence, but I did not fix it for him. There is a point later on in the session where we get into content. But so far the student has fully explained everything in this paper, so I am focusing on minor mechanical issues to this point.

*Tape Resumes.**Pause Tape.*

I asked him if he was supposed to define some of the terms he was using in this paper. But he said that it was a psychology paper and the terminology was appropriate for the intended audience and did not need defining.

*Tape Resumes.**Pause Tape.*

I noticed that while I was reading through this one, things were just not relating. In that forward section he was talking about that things just were not relating. I kept wondering where did this come from? How is this relating to what you are talking about? So I asked him if the contents were weavable. Because I think it is important to see if the student has a sense for that. And he owned that there was a problem. He is a very atypical tutee. And then we went on and we talked about it and I showed him a place where he did pull down certain things down from a previous paragraph and tie things together. And we talked about how he needed to have those types of transitional sentences to weave everything together, even if ideas don't seem to go together, he needed to try and work it together.

*Tape Resumes.**Pause Tape.*

Um, here again, because his paper was more advanced than a lot of them I see, I got into conciseness. And one of my pet peeves is too many useless words. And I told him earlier "words are dollars, don't throw them away." And in that sentence he could whack out the "that" and say even more. Maybe it's because I have a journalism background. And I think too that one of my English professors was a total minimalist and she insisted that everything be precise and she would go in and mark out most of the words and say that what was left was my whole sentence. So I come at tutoring with that philosophy. I want to help students think about brevity in their writing, rather than just focusing on the length of the assignment.

*Tape Resumes.**Pause Tape.*

Here is just talking about what he is doing and I think he really enjoys what he is doing. He seemed a little concerned about his thesis, he was stating that people are equal parts of circumstance and genetics. And genetics isn't really accepted by the psychological community. So he is trying to assert himself a little bit. And I let him talk, it's important to let a student talk about their ideas. That's pretty much what we were doing there.

Tape Resumes.

Pause Tape.

Um, he just made a statement in the paper, towards the end of the conclusion, that he didn't think the research would further eugenics or human cloning. He's assuming that it was just there; poof, there it was. And I thought that somebody must be arguing the opposite side if he is saying this. So, I thought it was important that he acknowledge that, rather than assume that the reader knows this. Sometimes by the end the students just get tired of writing and don't realize that they might have to do what they might feel like is over explaining. And he was just in a hurry to get it out. And it was easy to fix by just adding a little introductory clause.

Tape Resumes.

Pause Tape.

Um, the same thing as in the other paper where he just said something kind of vague about how this research was not going to further this. And I asked him how and why this was true. And he seemed to get that.

Tape Resumes.

Pause Tape.

Here I was just recapping. I always ask people at the end if they have questions. I always worry about seeming like I have too much control of the session. I don't like feeling like I'm bossing them around. And he was really verbalizing well at the end, spitting it all back to me what he needed to do. Generally, I have to do this. And then I kind of reiterated the point about the topic sentence, which he did not mention. I thought that this was the most important thing we had discussed out of everything we had looked at, and I wrote it down on his paper. He was a good tutee.

End of Video Taped Tutorial.

Instructions – Please reflect for a moment over how it felt to observe yourself tutoring a student in the Writing Center.

I had no idea, I mean I've always known that I was physically expressive. But I had not idea that I used my hands that much. I'm like, flailing all over the place sometimes, which is fine I guess. Um, I am also surprised, well I know that when I work with students I try not to be directive. In my mind I'm always thinking "don't take control, don't take control." But I can see that I look a little hyper-passive and I'm always saying "don't worry, everything's going to be okay." I think that's interesting. I was aware that I did that before viewing the tape, but I didn't know it was a consistent kind of behavior. And it makes me wonder how more, um, well I've noticed how students who like things to be really structured and really expect us to tell them what to do, don't

like working with me. And I wonder if they look at me like “oh my God, she’s this namby-pamby little thing who never tells me anything I need to do.” I don’t know, I think it’s interesting. But I’m trying to lead them into it, instead of giving it to them. I guess I’m assuming that people respond to an authoritative tutor the way that I would. Cos I would be kind of resistant to that. I feel very confident in my tutoring, but I wonder if I come across that way to students, or if I come across as weak. My passive approach is intentional, but I wonder if they see it as ineffective. Or do they perceive my demeanor as someone they can walk all over, because I mean, it may be different with different students to. I notice that I have to say “no” a lot. When we get into that pushing of the paper battle, it’s a passive way of saying “no.” I don’t think always see them pushing the paper over intentionally, but I notice that it gets closer and closer to me. When we were reading this paper with it between us, the student was reading the paper along with me, even when I was being silent, which is what I wanted him to do. Obviously, different students respond to different tutorial styles in different ways. Because I’m nondirective, some students don’t like to come to me. I’m biased about this. But I am deliberately non-directive because I don’t feel like the students learn as much if they are not involved in the process of making decisions. They are just sitting there watching, or they are just doing whatever you tell them to do. Even with a directive style, and I am so biased against this, unless you get the student to repeat it back to you and explain it they’ll just be like “yeah, sure, whatever you say.” My style has evolved as nondirective over the past four years of tutoring. I’ve gotten a lot more certain that my self worth is not wrapped up in whether this student walks out of here with an “A” paper. If they came in with an “F” paper and they leave knowing one thing about writing that they didn’t when they came in, to me that is success.

In our training we talk about this a lot; you know pulling things out of people and making them take an active role in their learning. And I think that the training has definitely made me more aware. I think too that because I come from a creative writing background I’m always thinking “these are your words, this is you.” It sounds really corny but “there is life in your words and I’m not going to go in there and say you should say things this way.” This is the students voice and the students person and they are putting it out there, so I think that all of these things combined, the training, the experience are factors. When I first came in I was nervous, thinking “my God, what are you doing?” And I’m sure that I was probably walked all over. I have definitely gotten more willing to admit that I can’t do it for them, this is for them to do. And you get more patient too, the longer you do this. It’s like “I don’t care if I have to sit here and wait 15 minutes while you figure this out, I’m not doing it for you.” It doesn’t surprise me on the tape that I appear not to take things super-seriously, because I don’t. I tend to use gestures a lot to help them visualize key points. I think this is because I am a visual learner and this helps me. I think I got into this as I worked more with non-native English speakers, it helps them see how things all work together.

Thank-you for your willingness to participate in this study. I’ve enjoyed your perspective.

END OF TALK ALOUD SESSION #1