THE WRITING LAB NEWSLETTER

Volume 35, Number 7-8 Promoting the exchange of voices and ideas in one-to-one teaching of writing March/April, 2011

– FROM THE EDITOR –

Sometimes when I dip into the *WLN* queue of articles waiting to be published, the ones for the next issue seem to have a similar theme. Serendipity? Who knows, but such is the case here as all the articles focus on contrasting pairs: generalist vs. discipline-specific tutors; peer vs. faculty online tutorial responses; and the contexts of two different British writing centers.

Catherine Savini shares her approach to preparing generalist tutors to work with students writing for an unfamiliar discourse community. She also shares a list of questions her tutors can ask the writer when they aren't familiar with the writer's intended community. Next, Kelly Shea reports on her study of the differences between peer and faculty tutors in the online tutorial responses they offer students. Then, Bonnie Devet illustrates her point about how writing centers differ to fit their specific context by looking at two British writing centers.

In her Tutor's Column essay, Kim Nolt shares her approach when helping students overcome insecurity and over-dependence on the tutor.

Finally, the list of writing center conferences on the last page of every issue of *WLN* reminds us that many of us are off to regional conferences in March and April, in addition to CCCC. We invite presenters at those conferences to revise their presentations and consider submitting them to *WLN* so that those of us not at their conference can learn some of what we missed.

✦ *Muriel Harris, editor*

INSIDE

AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO BRIDGING DISCIPLINARY DIVIDES

✦ *Catherine Savini*
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I recently observed a session in which students from two different disciplines struggled to find their way: the writing tutor was an MFA student; the tutee was a senior revising a psychology lab report to use as a writing sample for an application to a Ph. D. program. Unfortunately, this high-stakes session never got off the ground. Throughout their forty-five minutes together, student and tutor circled issues of genre and discipline. The consultant asked the student: "The abstract is supposed to sum up results?" Later she pointed to a section and questioned the student about its function; the student explained, "it's a lit review." Clearly the student possessed some knowledge of the genre. She knew of the necessary sections—the lit review and the abstract—but when I later read her text next to a published psychology lab report, her status as a novice in the field was apparent. She knew of the different sections, but she did not know what these sections should accomplish. After the session, neither tutor nor student was aware that the writing sample would not satisfy the expectations of the field.

The writing consultant's session report makes it clear that issues of genre and discipline were not on her mind:

> S. brought in a copy of a research paper that she wants to submit as a sample for a gradu-

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Manuscripts: Before sending in submissions, please consult the guidelines on the *WLN* website. Recommended length for articles is approximately 2500-3000 words, 1500 words for reviews and Tutors' Column essays, in MLA format.

> ate school application. She was concerned with English issues, but in that sense the paper was very clear. Mostly it was a matter of clarifying some of the jargon and explaining the connections between her different data and ideas. We did a lot of talking where I asked her to explain things to me, and I took notes. I also encouraged her to write down some of the things she was saying (though not as much as I should have) and to make notes for herself about where she needed to clarify. Most of the session was spent on the abstract and the first few pages of the report. She seemed to leave with a better sense of how to make the connections, but she's not sure if she has to get it out ASAP or if she has time to work on it. Hopefully she has a little time. . . .

The consultant, an outsider to the discipline, oriented herself by relying on an approach that would have been successful with a student writing to a generalist audience: clarifying opaque sections of the paper, drawing connections, and eliding or explaining jargon. Unfortunately, this generic approach did not serve the student well. So how can writing tutors better help students working in unfamiliar disciplines? This is not a new question. Scenarios like this one have motivated writing centers to find new ways to offer discipline-specific rather than generalist tutoring.

Writing centers provide discipline-specific support to undergraduates in a variety of ways, including handouts, web pages, tutor training, writing groups, and workshops. Many writing centers create handouts or use their websites to post podcasts or guides for specific genres. When it comes to tutor training, directors often introduce tutors to specific genres either by collecting information from faculty or by inviting instructors to speak. In a recent *Writing Lab Newsletter* article, Julie L. Moore, Erin SanGregory, Sarah Matney, and Julie Morris share a model in which the director and tutors engage in conversation with faculty to design tutor guides that describe instructors' expectations for specific assignments, genres, and disciplines. In an issue of *WLN* from the 1980s, Edward Lotto describes a similar undertaking. Lotto's approach included interviewing instructors concerning "good" writing in their discipline, common problems in students' writing, and the instructors' specific feedback; examining student papers alongside the instructors' comments; and interviewing writing tutors about their work with these students. Lotto's goal was not to develop guides, but to "explain the differences between the disciplinary contexts for writing" to his tutors (14). Both Lotto and Moore et al. acknowledge the challenge of generalizing and codifying expectations that are context-specific and dynamic. While Lotto carefully avoids pinning down the "truth" about a discipline, Moore et al. emphasize the fact that the tutor guides reflect the expectations of a particular discipline at a particular university.

Workshops and writing groups are popular methods for teaching students to write particular genres. Personal statements are good candidates for workshops as this tricky, high-stakes genre is usually not taught in courses. In "More Science in the Writing Center: Training Tutors to Lead Group Tutorials on Biology Lab Reports," Karen Hollis demonstrates that group tutorials are productive when a number of sections are learning the same genre. Instead of going to the experts like Lotto and Moore et al., Hollis invites biology faculty to the writing center to meet with tutors. Tutors further develop their understanding of the genre by studying "in detail the contents and organization" of lab reports (260).

Writing centers have developed a number of approaches to meet the specific needs of graduate students, including collaborations, writing groups, and graduate student centers. Judith Powers offers a collaborative model, dubbed the "trialogue," that puts the tutor in contact with the thesis advisor. Sallyanne Fitzgerald, Peggy Mulvihill, and Ruth Dobson formed graduate writing groups with students from diverse disciplines led by a supervisor. Paula Gillespie's "Marquette Plan" involves training graduate students from different disciplines in a four-week intensive summer program, after which they return to their departments to serve as writing consultants. Some graduate schools, such as UCLA and Teachers College at Columbia University, met demand by opening their own writing centers.

The multitude and diversity of programs testify to writing centers' unique ability to adapt to students' needs. Still, a number of pitfalls have been associated with our varied approaches to discipline-specific tutoring: tutors run the risk of appropriating students' texts, undermining students' agency, and/or finding themselves

in tense triangulations between faculty and peers.[1] Directors run the risk of oversimplifying disciplinary approaches and relying on dated information; disciplines are micro-cultures and guidelines for writing in a specific genre tend to age like travel books. Additionally, writing centers continue to struggle with the question of how much disciplinary knowledge is enough for tutors working with upper-level undergraduates or graduate students. Due to the pedagogical challenges that accompany discipline-specific tutoring, the time and money required for such programs, the sense that departments are best suited to provide such support, and/or in some cases a lack of demand for discipline-specific help, most writing centers maintain the traditional generalist approach. But as the session I described above demonstrates, the gulf created by a disciplinary divide can have detrimental consequences in a generalist writing center.

In light of the issues that accompany both generalist and discipline-specific tutoring, I posit an alternative approach: writing consultants, regardless of their disciplinary focus, can best serve their students by showing them how to gain access to new disciplines.[2] In other words, writing consultants can teach their peers how to find their own way into a discipline. This paper will identify three steps writing consultants can take when working with students writing in an unfamiliar discipline: 1. disclose their experience with a particular genre and discipline; 2. pose questions focused on genre and discipline; and 3. teach students to seek out and analyze model texts. This three-pronged approach enables writing consultants, who are also in the process of entering new discourse communities, to impart a strategy for accessing new disciplines.

The first step we can take is to make transparency part of our protocol. Consultants who share their experience with the genre and discipline at hand open the door to productive conversations. How can directors enable these conversations? Discussions about genre and discipline require that tutors reveal their lack of expertise. For many tutors this is a potentially uncomfortable scenario. To ease tutors into this mode, directors can emphasize the impossibility of mastering all disciplines and encourage tutors to be frank with students. Directors should provide writing consultants with model sentences to help them capitalize on their lack of expertise: "You are working on a lab report in psychology . . . this is a genre I am not really familiar with. Could you describe it to me?" It is worth noting that tutors often take this approach when they are unfamiliar with the texts students are writing about.

> *"[W]riting centers that teach tutors and students to actively investigate unfamiliar disciplines avoid the pitfalls that accompany generalist or discipline-specific approaches."*

After consultants have taken a minute to disclose their experience with the genre and discipline at hand, they are well positioned to begin a conversation concerning varying disciplinary expectations. While it would be impossible for tutors to know the expectations of every genre in every discipline, tutors may be able to help students assess their own genre awareness by asking the right kinds of questions. Anne Beaufort provides us with a useful model for approaching writing in the disciplines. In *College Writing and Beyond,* Beaufort breaks disciplinary expertise into five domains of knowledge: discourse community, writing process, rhetorical, genre, and subject matter knowledge. Most writing center sessions focus on process and rhetorical knowledge, but sessions with students writing in specific disciplines should attend to discourse community, genre, and subject matter knowledge as well.[3] Included here (see p. 4) is a chart of questions Columbia University's writing center developed collaboratively based on Beaufort's rubric.

Of course there is not enough time in single session for all of these questions, but an awareness of each domain will help tutors shift gears when working with upper-level undergraduates and graduate students. Simply introducing students to these knowledge domains prompts them to think meta-cognitively about their relationship to their discipline and note where they are in the process of developing expertise.

TAKE NOTE

MID-ATLANTIC WRITING CENTERS ASSOCIATION

April 16, 2011
West Chester University
West Chester, PA
"The Writing Center and the Campus Context"
Keynote speaker: John Trimbur

This year's conference theme "The Writing Center and the Campus Context" is intended to elicit conversation about the ways writing centers affect and are affected by their institutional context. Conference Chair: Margaret Ervin, Mervin@wcupa.edu. For information about the conference, see the website: <http://www.wcupa.edu/_academics/writingcenter/MAWCA/proposals.asp>.

MIDWEST WRITING CENTERS ASSOCIATION

October 20-22, 2011
Madison, WI
U. of Wisconsin-Madison,
Edgewood College, and
Madison College
Conference theme: *"On the Isthmus"*
Keynote speaker: Eric Darnell Pritchard

Conference formats: individual presentations, panel presentations, workshops, performance presentations, posters, lightning talks, SIGs. Conference chair: Katie Levin: 612-624-7720, kslevin@umn.edu.
.

Discourse Community Knowledge:
Do you know what is considered "common knowledge" in this community?
What are the different genres practiced in your discipline?
What have you figured out about your discourse community? What do you feel like you still need to know?

Writing process knowledge:
Have you discussed this assignment with a professor/advisor? What feedback have you received?
What research, reading, and writing have you done to get to this point? What's left to do? What do you need help with? What do you want to prioritize?

Rhetorical Knowledge:
What is the assignment? What occasion is motivating this writing task?
What is the goal of this text?
Who is the audience?

Genre Knowledge:
Do you have a model?
What is your experience with this genre?
What do you think are the expectations of this genre?
Have you written in this genre in another discipline?

Subject Matter Knowledge:
Why did you decide to write about this?
What is your experience with this subject? How new are you to the material/subject? What do you know about it? What do you still need to know?
What kind of research/work has already been done on this subject?
How are you framing your work in relation to other writers/scholars on this subject?

While all of these questions will give student and tutor a sense of where the student stands, "do you have a model?" is perhaps the most important question a tutor can ask. Writing consultants may not be experts in every discipline, but they are or can become expert readers of model texts. If the consultant in the story above was ready with a model, she would have realized quickly that the student was missing the mark. A more productive version of that session would have had student and consultant examining the introductions of several psychology lab reports. In this way, student and tutor can become co-investigators working together to develop what Alan Hirvela calls a "portrait of a particular discourse community's rhetorical and grammatical practices"(85). Writing centers can collect current models for writing in different disciplines. If a model is not on hand, writing consultant and student together can mine the student's bibliography for recently published articles in the same genre and discipline.

Granted, a departure from the writer's text might feel like a distraction to time-strapped students and tutors, but if our mission is to help students become better writers in the long run, then time devoted to teaching students how to read texts as models is worthwhile. Students in the habit of reading for content will benefit enormously from learning how to read texts to develop a sense of a genre's expectations. Students who learn to identify what John Swales and Christine B. Feak call "rhetorical moves" are more nimble as they move in and out of different discourse communities, a challenge all undergraduates face. This dexterity will serve students well as they pursue graduate degrees and encounter different forms of writing in the work world.

Directors can provide tutors with the opportunity to practice this type of reading by bringing in texts from different disciplines and working together to identify essential rhetorical moves. Consultants need not feel pressure to memorize the expectations of every genre, and directors need not take on the impossible task of providing coverage of all genres. Instead, tutors should be given the opportunity to practice identifying moves in a variety of genres. This practice will prepare tutors to teach students how to select and read model texts. Even when a tutor is familiar with a particular genre, this analysis can prove enlightening. Recently, when working with a graduate student writing a course synopsis as part of a job application, I asked her to show me samples. I've read and written plenty of course synopses, but an examination of four synopses allowed us to discern a pattern neither of us was aware of: each one identified a larger intellectual conversation, presented a problem, and raised several questions. Developing the habit of mind to seek out and analyze models benefits both tutor and tutee.

When consultant and tutee work together to investigate disciplinary expectations, the tutee learns actively, and the consultant avoids either misguiding the tutee or enforcing generic conventions. In fact, this three-pronged approach cultivates students' awareness of disciplines as social constructs, opening the door to conversations critical of academic discourse. In other words, tutors and students who recognize disciplines as products of a particular culture are ready to consider how academic discourse reinforces the status quo and resists accommodating marginalized voices.

In sum, writing centers that teach tutors and students to actively investigate unfamiliar disciplines avoid the pitfalls that accompany generalist or discipline-specific approaches. Writing center directors can prepare tutors to lead such investigations by introducing the five knowledge domains and asking tutors to develop questions related specifically to genre and discipline, by providing tutors the opportunity to practice analyzing different genres in different discourse communities, and by introducing tutors to critiques of academic writing.[4] Ultimately, by heightening awareness of the knowledge necessary to participate in a discourse community, we prepare tutors and students to contribute their ideas effectively inside and outside of academia and to think critically about their various discourse communities. ✦

Endnote

[1]See Harris, Hubbuch, Kiedaisch and Dinitz, and Leverenz.

[2] Kristin Walker suggests writing tutors should serve as "guides" to students as they become "initiated into a particular discourse community"(32). Whereas Walker suggests that tutors learn about different disciplines and pass their knowledge on, I advocate for tutors as guides insofar as they lead students toward accessing new discourse communities independently.

[3] In "Addressing Genre in the Writing Center," Irene L. Clark argues for heightened genre-awareness in the writing center. Clark does not focus on tutoring students in unfamiliar disciplines, but her article is worth mentioning here as she makes a convincing case for discussing genre in all sessions.

[4] Virginia Pryor's "Writing in Academia: The Politics of 'Style'" is an excellent article to use because it is accessible and engaging.

✦

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NEWS

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF THE WRITING CENTER AND COORDINATOR SECOND LANGUAGE WRITING CARLETON COLLEGE

See: <http://jobs.carleton.edu:80/postings/516>

- Provide one-to-one writing support for 8-12 second language students each term. This includes work on class papers, portfolios, application essays, comps, and reading strategies.
- Help select, train, assign, and supervise peer tutors, some of whom work as one-to-one second language writing tutors.
- Conduct writing workshops for second language students, International Student Orientation, faculty, and in other contexts, as needed.
- Provide support for faculty in their work with second language students by acting as a consultant, participating in faculty writing workshops, and meeting with academic departments.
- Assess the effectiveness of Academic Support Center's (ASC) one-to-one second language-writing tutoring program.
- Assist the director of the ASC with new writing consultant training and mentoring new and experienced writing consultants.
- Assist the director of the ASC in developing and performing outreach activities, including workshops, information fairs, New Student Week.
- Assist the director of the ASC in an ongoing assessment of student needs, including the development and implementation of Writing Center programs to meet identified needs, and the assessment of program outcomes with a focus on the continuous improvement of content and customer service.

THROUGH THE EYES OF THE OWL: ASSESSING FACULTY VS. PEER TUTORING IN AN ONLINE SETTING

✦ *Kelly A. Shea*
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For more than thirty years, Seton Hall University's Writing Center served predominantly first-year writers. Then, in 2000, we launched an online writing lab (OWL) as an e-mail-based system in which upper-class and graduate students could send essays as attachments to a central account, and undergraduate and faculty OWL tutors would read and respond via e-mail. After several years of working with the OWL, we wondered about the efficacy of the program in general and about the effectiveness of faculty tutors' responses in particular. We know that tutoring pedagogy is student-centered, based on Kenneth Bruffee's work in "disrupting . . . traditional teacher-centered activities" and validating "collaborative learning practices" (qtd. in Gillam 39). And while the work of student tutors (both face-to-face and online) has been scrutinized by writing center scholars and professionals (and summarized especially well by Hewett & Ehmann 33-37), the value and work of faculty tutors, who still exist, has not been as closely analyzed. David Coogan did report his work on e-mail-based tutoring with his own tutees and graduate student tutors, but he did not focus particularly on faculty as tutors (32). So, as we continued our work with faculty and student tutors, we wondered whether there is, indeed, a significant difference between faculty tutors and student tutors in our online setting.

In 2006, we undertook a study, funded by our internal University Research Council, to determine the efficacy of OWL tutoring and its faculty component. We sought answers to the following questions: Do faculty tutors and peer tutors respond differently to student writing in e-mail sessions? In particular, does either group provide predominantly content-based or mechanics-based comments? One of the goals of the study was to determine if different training might be necessary for OWL tutors. At that time we offered no formal OWL tutor training beyond what occurred in face-to-face tutor training; furthermore, faculty tutors (full-time writing instructors and graduate students) are not formally trained as tutors. This lack of training is due to the perhaps questionable underlying assumption that faculty tutors (composition instructors) can transfer their classroom pedagogies to their tutoring.

The methodology of the study included analysis of OWL tutoring e-mails and the comments on student essays, examination of session information from writing center files and completed conference summaries, and analysis of anonymous online surveys completed by tutors and tutees involved in OWL sessions. This was a small study; there were thirteen tutors (four were faculty; nine were student tutors) who had worked as OWL tutors and eleven tutees (three graduate students and eight undergrads) who had used the OWL services. Eight out of thirteen tutors responded to the survey and three out of eleven tutees responded, for a total of eleven study subjects. There were two faculty respondents and six student tutors who responded; of the three tutees who responded, one was a graduate student and two were undergraduate students. The tutee response rate was too small to be helpful, but there were some interesting comments. After the survey data and the session data were collected, my research assistant (a senior tutor) and I analyzed it for common threads, patterns, and inconsistencies. We agreed that notes from tutors that were content-oriented focused primarily on an essay's subject matter, tone, thesis, organization, and language; mechanics-oriented comments focused on grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

The survey asked several questions regarding the advantages and disadvantages of faculty vs. peer tutoring; the responses were based on actual OWL experiences. (The respondents typically knew whether their tutor was faculty or peer because SHU e-mail addresses indicate such status.) These questions were designed to gather information on the perceived differences between the effectiveness of faculty versus undergraduate tutors online. In general, tutees said that faculty tutors seem to know more about what other professors want, and both tutees and tutors said it's better for graduate tutees to have faculty tutors. The survey also asked open-ended questions that focused on the perceived differences between mechanics- and content-oriented feedback; the questions asked for the percentage of feedback given and received that would be characterized as either "proofreading, editing, correcting" or "comments, suggestions, questions, a second opinion." There was some variability in terms of how much OWL tutoring was focused on mechanics versus content, especially among the tutors. For example, in answer to a question regarding the time spent on content vs. mechanics in the OWL session, four out of eight

tutors (not all faculty tutors) said OWL tutoring is mostly mechanics-based: Faculty Tutor 1 said it's mostly proofreading; Student Tutor 3 said it's "mostly editing"; Student Tutor 5 said it's "66% proofreading"; and Student Tutor 8 said it's "75% proofreading." One of the other four didn't answer the question, but Faculty Tutor 2 said it's "70% content." Student Tutor 6 said it's "70% content"; and Student Tutor 7 said s/he does "very little proofreading" in the OWL.

Clearly there were varying perceptions as to how much OWL tutoring was (and should be) focused on mechanics and how much was focused on content. As discussed below, this may have to do with semantics – what do the words "proofreading" or "editing" really mean to tutors and tutees? It could also be a training issue, as it is, of course, very different providing asynchronous feedback via e-mail compared with immediate feedback in the f2f setting. In addition, no matter who the tutor was, it appears that the tutees perceive the majority of OWL feedback as focused on mechanics. One said that 99% of the feedback received was "on proofreading"; another said that 66% is proofreading, and a third said, "I think most of the paper is filled with editing because grammar is a weakness that I have." According to OWL intake forms and texts of OWL e-mails, tutees asked primarily for mechanics help. Of the eleven tutees' records examined, ten requested predominantly mechanics help, while one asked for predominantly content-based help. Analysis of the essays returned—specifically both their in-text and end-of-text responses—showed that while six of eleven tutees received mostly mechanics help, five of the eleven received either equal amounts of mechanic and content help or mostly content help.

We examined 41 sessions overall, and there was an average of 11 comments per session. Of the 440 total comments counted, 338 (77%) were mechanics comments. In the 22 undergraduate OWL sessions, 223 comments were comments about mechanics (81% out of 274 total), while there were 115 mechanics comments (69% out of 166 total) in the 19 graduate OWL sessions. Both groups were most often tutored by faculty tutors (32 sessions out of 41). On the other hand, there were 51 content-oriented comments throughout the texts of the OWL submissions in each of the 22 undergraduate and the 19 graduate OWL sessions. And while both types of tutors appeared to provide predominantly comments about mechanics, faculty tutors' comments actually leaned far less heavily toward the mechanics, with 64% mechanics- and 36% content-based, while undergraduate tutors' comments were 96% mechanics- and 4% content-based. This disparity clearly represents an area of concern, especially regarding training.

Despite their focus on mechanics, the peer tutors offered more informal correspondence than the two faculty tutors. Consider the personal, yet problematic, endnote of an undergraduate tutor to an ESL graduate student: "I made the corrections to your paper, though nothing will be evident unless you compare the papers side by side! I hope I was able to help out! ☺." This same tutor also wrote to an undergrad tutee:

> You always have such interesting papers to do (and for myself and other tutors to read!) ☺ The paper looked very good on the whole—I made suggestions/corrections for the grammar and phrasing using track changes. Also, I adjusted the margins to be 1-inch, the standard for most undergrad/grad papers. E-mail me back if you have any questions, comments.

Perhaps it is not surprising that peer tutors tend to be more informal and more "peer-centered," as it were. As Leigh Ryan explains, student tutors may be inclined to play "the ally" role: "a friend who . . . [is] . . . sympathetic, empathetic, encouraging . . . supportive and helpful . . . [who] explain[s] things in terms the writer can understand" (23). In contrast to faculty tutors, student tutors may be more interested in being friendly with their tutees and thus may be interested in making sure they are immediately comfortable in the OWL session, letting the tutees know that they're just trying to help out. This may be less easy to do in the asynchronous e-mail setting. On the other hand, for faculty tutors, this setting may encourage them to be more formal, and thus less "tutor-ly."

In fact, while student tutors devoted more time to "immediacy cues" (that is, informal language, emoticons, exclamation points) than faculty tutors, the faculty did provide more content-oriented comments. In response to a graduate student's paper, one faculty tutor wrote:

> For the final draft of your paper, work on supporting your own ideas more thoroughly. Anticipate some of Skinner's (and his followers') arguments, and argue against these points. Your overview of Skinner's theory is good and well-explained, and you bring up some very interesting points in your paper.

The faculty tutor's comments are more formal and measured than the undergraduate tutor's comments cited above and while they could be more helpful, are more focused on content. In contrast to peer tutors, who might see themselves more as

friends and the writing center as a place where they receive validation and form collegial relationships, faculty tutors may see themselves more in the coach or faculty role, even though not engaged in classroom teaching when they are tutoring. (N.B. In neither setting do faculty tutors work with students they are teaching.)

Also, at our institution, all students and faculty receive laptops, so faculty tutors have more experience working online with student writing than peer tutors do. Perhaps faculty tutors are less concerned with being friendly and more concerned with helping students improve their writing. Still, this difference in response is clearly a training issue for the undergraduate tutors; somehow training on minimizing editing in f2f tutoring does not translate well to the OWL. Some tutees contend that the tutoring they received was basically proofreading. But are we considering semantics? What does "proofreading" or "editing" mean to a tutee as compared to a tutor? Those definitions will certainly affect session outcomes.

Ultimately, while the discrepancy between the way that "trained" undergraduate tutors and so-called "untrained" faculty tutors work vis-a-vis the mechanics vs. content question is puzzling, it is perhaps not so odd when considering the type of experience that writing faculty have. Teachers are more accustomed to providing students with content-oriented feedback; it may be more difficult for peer tutors—even those who are trained not to focus on mechanics—not to take the OWL tutees' requests literally; that is, when asked for help with mechanics, the undergraduate tutor gives it, whereas the faculty tutors who regularly comment on student papers may not. They might be more inclined to deal with tutees' writing in the same way they deal with their students' writing—even though they are not the tutees' actual professors. The bottom line is that, despite the type of tutor, more mechanics-oriented tutoring was taking place in the OWL than we would expect. Yet the faculty tutors, despite their lack of explicit writing center training, are inclined to give more content-oriented feedback than undergraduate tutors do, while for the undergraduate tutors, despite explicit tutor training on content-focused (not mechanics) tutoring, proofreading may be for some their default online approach.

This data may reflect peer tutors' desire to be their tutees' friends. Making mechanics suggestions about a student's writing may feel easier, less critical—indeed, friendlier—than commenting on ideas or the expression of those ideas. In contrast, for the faculty tutors, who are also writing instructors, it is their daily work to make comments on students' ideas and their written expression. This data corroborates the tutors' survey responses, as the undergraduate tutors surveyed say they offer more mechanics-based help in general and less content-based help. Three of the six undergraduate tutors made comments such as, "a large portion of my OWL feedback went to editing and correcting minor details rather than looking at the overall end product." And even other undergraduate tutors and graduate tutors admit to doing as much as 30% proofreading.

In addition to issues of training, comfort level with the medium, and experience, other issues may be at play here, not the least of which are language and terminology. As Leigh Ryan points out, when a tutee writes that s/he needs help "editing," "proofreading," or "correcting," it might not mean what tutors think it means (16). Perhaps students are really saying, "Please read my paper for coherence, logic, strong and well-stated ideas, and organization." And yet, despite training to the contrary, peer OWL tutors might take the written requests literally and therefore provide more proofreading, while faculty tutors might be more inclined to revert to content-oriented comments, despite the request, because they have more experience working with student writing in the online setting as teachers.

In his study of online tutoring and OWL discourse at the University of Central Florida (UCF), Rusty Carpenter indicates that "feedback in online consultations appears to be more directive than the global peer-to-peer feedback that we discuss so often for f2f consultations" (13). In our study, peer tutors do seem more directive in online tutoring sessions, yet still try to be personal and "smiley" rather than formal and businesslike. Peer tutors may also be trying to deliver the verbal cues of a f2f session in an online form; faculty members may just be too uncomfortable typing a smiley face or exclamation points!!!! ☺

Faculty tutors, with no more training than on-the-job training and their work as composition instructors, still may tend to be less inclined to focus on mechanics exclusively. And trained undergraduate tutors seem inclined to focus on mechanics when all else fails—or when confronted with an online text and no tutee. Yet both groups, according to their own statements, need more focused OWL tutor training that addresses how to respond, how not to respond, how to engage students in give-and-take after the session, and how to guide but not make grammatical fixes. Most surveyed tutors, when asked for ideas about OWL

tutor training, suggested looking at sample OWL papers and considering common OWL comments. One, a faculty tutor, said, "Perhaps the solution is to train OWL tutors as face-to-face tutors. The more an OWL session resembles a face-to-face session, the more effective and educational an OWL session will become."

At the beginning of this study, we wondered about the usefulness of OWL tutoring in general and of the work of faculty OWL tutors in particular. We have seen that faculty tutors might actually be more effective at conducting traditional writing center tutoring on-line. Yet the writing center community values peer tutoring. And while, in our setting, we might be able to make a case for relying less on faculty tutors, even if we were told we could, we might not. Tutees seem to prefer faculty tutors, possibly because the students are more inclined to respect their opinions as teachers. And according to this glance, they may be better tutors in our OWL.

The immediate result of this study is that, until a more comprehensive OWL training program is designed and implemented, only faculty tutors are being sent OWL submissions. What would be best is to replicate for faculty tutors the kind of time-intensive training that occurs for undergraduate tutors, but that is not possible in our model. However, our two most recent OWL faculty tutors were also undergraduate and graduate writing center tutors in our university. When the first left for a full-time teaching job, he reflected on the tutor survey questions, and he said he appreciated the amount of time he had to think about and comment on the OWL submissions. In addition, he was extremely sensitive to the OWL tutees' needs:

> I tend to write for a general, fictional tutee who is less patient with "Socratic" kinds of questions, while conversely very interested in clear explanations of why certain rhetorical moves, for example, are more effective. So I tend to latch on to certain organizational or rhetorical patterns in OWL papers, comment on them as I go and then try to clearly explain what [might be] happening at the end. I feel I wouldn't be able to get my hands dirty in this manner in a face-to-face session because it requires quiet thinking time.

Perhaps this response indicates that faculty tutors do not have to be judgmental and overly "teacherly." Perhaps if we (that is, faculty tutors) truly consider that we are not tutoring our own students but a "random" student who just wants feedback on his/her writing, we can keep our teacher hats off during that work. Perhaps.

In any case, the benefit of this research for SHU's OWL tutoring has been the implementation of more formal f2f and OWL tutor training, the consideration of "tutee training," and, hopefully, the improvement of writing center services. It is clear that, given the current economic and other pressures evident at our institutions, OWL tutoring is garnering a great deal of interest ; so this study, and others, should prove as helpful models as schools consider their own OWL tutoring. ✦

Endnote

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A TALE OF TWO UK WRITING CENTRES

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Across the globe, from Europe to Asia to Australia, universities and colleges are establishing writing centers as vital, useful forces in education. However, even as centers spread worldwide and face similar struggles, they often arrive at different solutions for problems, solutions that reflect local contexts. Just as no one plant grows in every type of soil, so, too, will a center vary, based on its country's educational culture as well as on local conditions within an institution. This point is illustrated by two writing centres in the United Kingdom: the Centre for Academic Writing at Coventry University (17,000 students) and The Writing Centre at London Metropolitan University (34,000 students). Examining these centres' services, research, staffing, and use of Writing fellows/Writing in the Disciplines (WID) reveals important insights for all writing centers/centres as they consider their own local contexts.

BACKGROUND—THE TEACHING OF WRITING IN UK HE

For us to understand the roles these two British centres play in teaching writing, some background on UK Higher Education (HE) may be useful. According to Peter O'Neill, Lecturer in Academic Writing and Director of London Metropolitan University's The Writing Centre, there has been a "reluctance [in UK HE] to assume responsibility for improving student writing" ("Using"). Various reasons account for this reluctance. It had always been assumed that students learned how to write before entering university, so there was no need for formal writing instruction. Also, undergraduates did relatively little formal writing; even the famous weekly essays at Oxford and Cambridge were delivered orally, not handed in for graded reading (O'Neill "Using"). In fact, the only major writing students did for assessment occurred at the end of terms when they wrote their exams. As O'Neill, explains, "So long as students could perform adequately in a three-hour examination and get their ideas onto papers, no one was likely to worry too much about the niceties of academic writing or prevent a weak student writer from gaining a degree" ("Using").

Such is not the case today. To meet the demands of a global marketplace, UK HE has expanded by elevating former polytechnical schools (offering vocational courses in industrial and applied sciences) to university status in order to establish a system of mass HE, with the British government's aiming for 50% of the population attending university (O'Neill "Using"). In addition to more students getting degrees, the coursework has been altered to include modules (courses) where students are expected to be assessed on their writing. As a result, writing plays a greater role in UK HE. So, who teaches writing to the increased number of students seeking degrees? Faculty usually see this teaching as the job of study skills or "learning development units." O'Neill argues that "[a]cademic staff [faculty] tend to avoid getting their hands dirty, although they are often happy enough to lament the state of student writing" ("Using"). The work of teaching writing seems marginalized, a concept not unfamiliar to many U.S. writing centers.

To counter this view, UK HE has fostered a different approach to writing, stressing what is called "Academic Literacies." Instead of writing being viewed in termd of skills and deficit, the Academic Literacies model "consider[s] the complexity of writing practices that are taking place at degree level universities" (Mary R. Lea and Brian V. Street, qtd. in O'Neill "Using") and examines writing as social practices reflecting the thinking of various disciplines. Academic Literacies and emphasizes writing to learn about a discipline and about one's self as a writer. Shifting the concept of writing from sentence-level correction to writing as epistemology is a key feature in UK HE (O'Neill, "Using").

BACKGROUND—CAW AND THE WRITING CENTRE

In the cultural contexts of UK HE, two writing centres have adjusted, adapted, and thrived: The Centre for Academic Writing (CAW) at Coventry University and The Writing Centre at London Metropolitan University. In Coventry, only eighteen miles from Shakespeare's Stratford-upon-Avon, is Coventry University, which changed its status from being a polytechnic school to a university in 1992. Today, its students are primarily the first generation to attend college, including traditional students,

the non-traditional (defined in the UK as being over 23 years old), and English as a Second Language students ("Coventry University History"). Coventry University's CAW was founded in 2004. As its Coordinator Lisa Ganobcsik-Williams explains, it is the UK's first successful writing center, it is the only one permanently funded by its university, and it has become a model for other British centers ("Interview").

London Metropolitan University was formed under its current name in 2002 by combining two much older institutions—the London Guildhall University (tracing its roots back to 1848) and the University of North London (founded in 1896), both of which were polytechnic schools. London Met, located in the east end of London not far from where Jack the Ripper roamed, serves a campus that is the single largest university in London, with almost 8,000 of its 34,000 students being overseas students from 155 different countries ("London Metropolitan Facts and Figures"). Begun in 2006, London Met's Writing Centre receives its funding not from its university, as does CAW, but from the *Write* Now[1] portion of the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL), which is a British government initiative supporting better teaching in HE. Demand for services is there. CAW offered 1,942, one-to-one tutorials in 2008-2009. London Met's Centre has seen an increase; in 2006, when The Writing Centre first opened, 675 one-hour sessions were conducted while in 2008-2009, the number increased to 930.

SERVICES (AVOIDING THE REMEDIAL STIGMA)

With many UK HE faculty seeing the teaching of writing as marginal work, UK centres are not immune to the label of remediation. In fact, the first UK writing centre, started in 1979 at what is now Northumbria University in Newcastle in northeast England, did not survive because faculty viewed it as offering only remedial assistance. It was subsumed into a study skills center (Hebron qtd. in Ganobcsik-Williams "Report" 29). CAW and The Writing Centre, though, have combated the stigma that centres handle only remedial students and that the teaching of writing is marginal work for study skills specialists because both UK centres emphasize their assistance to faculty. With a directive from Coventry University to offer faculty development, CAW conducts workshops to show professors how to use more writing in their courses, creating what Ganobcsik-Williams calls a "cascade effect of improving student writing by teaching the teachers" ("Interview"). CAW's workshop "Peer Review," for example, explains how to employ this process with large groups of students, and its workshop "Formative Assessment of Student Writing" shows faculty teaching first-year physiotherapy how their students can write essays at both the beginning and end of the term to help the faculty determine students' development. Along with this work, CAW is deeply involved with the faculty's professional growth and development by presenting workshops especially designed to help faculty write grant proposals and scholarly articles and by sponsoring retreats to help new and experienced researchers in their writing. Like CAW, The Writing Centre at London Met also assists faculty: it encourages professors to secure grants and to get published by conducting writing groups where professors bring in their professional writing to receive help. In addition to fostering professional growth and development, The Writing Centre supports the faculty's teaching by holding mandatory workshops for new lecturers to show them how to use writing in their courses and by meeting four times a year with faculty to help them analyze student essays. By assisting faculty, the centres have forestalled being seen as performing only marginal work for developmental students.

CAW has another method for avoiding the remedial label. Its staff dons the mantles of teachers to offer mini-courses called "Add +Vantage Modules" with topics like "Introduction to Writing at University," "Developing Skills in Writing," and "Academic Writing: Your Dissertation [research paper] and Your Career." During each year at college, Coventry University students take an Add +Vantage Module. Although all divisions of Coventry University teach these modules, CAW is distinctive as a writing centre that handles required classroom instruction, a valuable opportunity other centres/centers might consider as well.

RESEARCH

While CAW and The Writing Centre staff present at conferences and contribute book chapters to various studies, they have moved a step further to become centers for writing excellence, conducting research on writing development. For instance, Eric Borg and Mary Deane, both Senior Lecturers at CAW, have examined student papers for organization, sentence-level information, and lexical choices to see how the drafts reflect students' improvement. This work fits well with Coventry University's emphasis on pedagogical research. The Writing Centre has also jumped into research, producing a book for its

students: *Writing Essays @ University: A Guide for Students by Students*, which explains the testing system and the pitfalls students may encounter. As mandated by its *Write* Now grant, The Writing Centre is also researching a wide range of topics: "Lecturers' perceptions of assessment, marking and feedback; effectiveness of peer-led writing tutorials on student learning, achievement and retention; [the use] of wikis and blogs to support writing development; international students' experiences of academic writing in the UK" (*Write* Now). Research between centres is also taking place, with O'Neill of London Metropolitan University co-writing with Mary Deane of CAW a book on writing in the disciplines. For both CAW and The Writing Centre at London Metropolitan University, research appears to be central to their missions, and that, in turn, elevates the two UK centres in the eyes of their faculty, establishing them as mainstream academic units.

STAFFING —PEERS OR NO PEERS?

While U.S. centers often honor and even celebrate the peer experience (Harris; Bruffee), many UK writing centres hire professional staff rather than student tutors. For example, CAW employs *only* professionals called "lecturers" (like a Ph.D. in the U.S.) and "Academic Writing Tutors" (Masters degree). Indeed, in much of the UK HE system, three groups usually deliver individual tutorial assistance: Learning Development Tutors, who are professionals trained to help students with specific needs; professional writers who are poets, playwrights, novelists, biographers, translators, and technical writers hired by the British government through the Royal Literary Fund Fellowship Scheme to work in schools for a year or two; and Writing Specialists or Lecturers like those at CAW. Though acknowledging peer tutors offer some advantages, many UK HE institutions are reluctant to use students in centres. One objection is that peer tutors could be too limited to provide assistance because they lack what Learning Development Tutors Susan Orr, Margo Blythman, and Celia Bishop call "life experience" or the maturity of professional tutors (Devet et al., 209). Class differences could also arise: working class students, for example, might feel uncomfortable with peer tutors who may be from the middle class. And, student tutors could affect staffing, eliminating positions held by professionals (Devet et al.). A professional staff establishes CAW's credibility and, possibly, equality with the Coventry University faculty.

London Met's Writing Centre, on the other hand, has professional tutors but also employs seventeen peer writing "mentors," both undergraduate and graduate students. They are hired because of the *Write* Now mission to provide "training for *peer-led* writing tutorials" (*Write* Now, emphasis added). Peer tutors are an integral component of the *Write* Now program. How do the peer tutors ("mentors") feel about working with their fellow students at London Metropolitan University? The collaborative spirit —the joy and rewards of helping others —is the same across cultures. Here is how the peer mentor Paul Warren describes his work: "Most students are quite happy just to find someone who will listen to them, even if initially they attempt to treat the [m]entor as a kind of living encyclopaedia [sic] who will solve all their problems at the clap of a hand" (7). Another peer mentor, Anna-Marie St. Juste, provides insight into her appointments with fellow students: "Our goal is to get into that creative space which facilitates confidence and independence by any means necessary" (9). One-to-one work between students is as inspiring to UK student tutors as it is to peer tutors around the globe. Since only a handful of UK centres, such as London Met, University Bath Spa University, Liverpool Hope University, and St. Mary's College in Belfast, use students, will more peer mentors appear in UK HE? O'Neill predicted that there will be a role for them but a limited one:

> The future of UK HE will likely focus more on helping faculty through Writing in the Disciplines [WID], with peer mentors probably being used to supplement this WID work. Writing centres could also be attached to individual departments, and peer mentors would staff these centres. (Interview)

While collaborative experiences of peer tutors may be cross-cultural, it appears such staffing in the UK HE will probably be more restricted.

WRITING FELLOWS AND WRITING IN THE DISCIPLINES

Peer tutors play another important role at London Met, as part of the Centre's work with WID. The Writing Centre uses the Writing Fellows Scheme ("program"). Peer tutors in their second or third years are attached to courses such as film studies, psychology, or design. These fellows meet with the course's lecturer to learn about the assignments; then, the fellows discuss essay topics with students in order to help with the course throughout the term. Combining peer mentors with peer fellows attaches the centre more closely to particular faculty and disciplines, a key idea any center could borrow to validate itself.

Given the nature of the UK educational system, The Writing Centre's focusing on WID is a logical, natural choice. Even before British students reach university, they have started to specialize in disciplines, unlike U.S. students, who rarely take courses in their majors until their third or junior year in college. By developing a WID program, The Writing Centre identifies itself with the essence of UK education. In addition, using fellows allows The Writing Centre to demonstrate that it helps all students, not merely the weak ones, thus, again, avoiding being labeled a remedial service. O'Neill explains the valuable effect of WID for The Writing Centre and the students:

> For real change to be made in the UK, we will need to show that attention to writing helps the learning experience of all students and

that we are not simply asking Lecturers to deal with the 'problem' of weak writers, whom some academic staff would doubtless prefer not to have to teach. We need to persuade our institutions that Writing in the Disciplines raises standards for all students. ("Using")

It is ironic, though, that part of the success of London Met's Writing Centre comes from WID. As most readers recall, the intellectual roots of WID/WAC can be found in the British system, based on the theories of James Britton, who was at the London School of Education from 1966 to 1976 but whose theories were not applied to the UK system until the concepts had crossed the pond, had been installed in U.S. schools, and then had returned to the UK for use at the university level (Ganobcsik-Williams, "Introduction" 52). So, The Writing Centre is fostering the very program that was originally a UK concept.

CONCLUSION

Both CAW and The Writing Centre are useful models for centers in other parts of the world. Although both are young organizations (with one having a mere half-decade in existence and the other being only three years old), they have woven themselves into their universities by involving their faculty early and extensively in the centres' work. Through workshops for faculty, the teaching of courses, the conducting of research, and the implementing of WID, they have, for all intents and purposes, assumed the roles of Writing Program Administrators, developing and coordinating writing programs for their schools, thereby filling a vacuum in UK HE. Another way to plant roots is for centers (as did CAW and The Writing Centre) to support whatever is special and vital to HE in their institutions—in this case, writing in the disciplines—in order to dispel any remedial association erroneously but all-too-often applied to writing centers. Doing so establishes them quickly in their cultural contexts. With their many activities that develop and foster writing across the curriculum, these UK centres are driving research on both pedagogy and writing to lead their schools to better student writing, an important role for writing centers to adopt, anywhere. ✦

Endnote

[1] *Write* Now is a consortium of three schools (London Metropolitan University, Aston University located in Birmingham, and Liverpool Hope University) receiving funding from CETL to develop the writing of UK students.

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TUTOR'S COLUMN

CAN I SAY THAT?

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"Can I say that?" It seemed like those were the first words out of Angie's mouth in our first tutoring session. I was stunned momentarily as I gathered my own thoughts in response. "Of course," I heard myself say. Was Angie clueless about writing or lacking in self confidence, or was she expecting me to do her work? Tutors often face students with one of those mindsets, but the tutor needs to remember the goal of tutoring is to empower and enable students to be successful. Shifting the reliance on a tutor to a student's own self takes skillful questioning techniques and a conscious effort on the tutor's part.

Although many writing centers promote usage by having tutors available to help students, mine included, we face the dangerous trap of overindulging students and making them too dependent and reliant on our services. Writing center directors define "dependence and reliance" more as "we are here for you, so come visit us for help." They do not mean, "Come to us, and we will give you all the answers," but students often expect to be given the answers. Mission statements of writing centers state that we are "student centered" and "support student learning." We say we want students to develop strategies and skills for becoming better writers, and Kristin Walker, in a *Writing Lab Newsletter* article, suggests posting reminders throughout a writing center that clearly state the philosophy: "Writing center tutors are here to help you learn, not to do your work for you" (14). Yet tutors find job satisfaction in being needed, so they sometimes strengthen the reliance on tutoring services instead of helping students develop skills. There is a delicate balance between dependency on tutors and the independence of writers, and it requires a tutor's conscious effort to achieve that balance.

Students new to the idea of a writing center come with lots of questions. When Angie first asked, "Can I say that?" she was new to college and starting at pre-college level English. "Oftentimes, one reason why these clients are so dependent is that they are insecure about their writing and their ability to write," Walker explains (10). Angie was certainly insecure as she was returning to education a few years after high school graduation. She was enrolled in a writing workshop class, which required two hours each week working with a tutor on writing tasks. It was during these twice-weekly sessions that I first recognized her heavy dependence on tutor validation. While it is true that all writers seek some validation of their writing, I was concerned that Angie continually wanted direct assistance. Early in the sessions, I told her she had to choose the writing project for the day. Even though she always had some work, she was depending on me, the tutor, to tell her what to do. Once the project was decided, beginning or adding to Angie's work presented challenges. For example, I started reading what she had already written. Using positive reinforcement for what was done well, I then asked Angie what was missing. She responded with an idea; immediately she then asked, "Can I say that?" I said "yes" in our first sessions in an effort to encourage her confidence. She gradually became more comfortable with me, and although I believe she never did expect me to tell her the answers, she still said frequently, "Can I say that?" I realized she still wanted validation for her own ideas and, indirectly, approval for what she could or could not write in a college essay.

By mid-quarter, after I realized that I needed to be very conscious about how I tutored, I changed my tactics. Instead of responding "yes" to Angie's "Can I say that?" question, I started to respond with a question. I would say, "Is that what you want to say?" or "Is that how you want to say that?" By using questions in this manner, I began to shift reliance on me, a tutor, to self confidence in Angie, the student writer. When the quarter ended, Angie had stopped asking, "Can I say that?" and instead asked, "This passage doesn't seem quite right. I think I should change it. What do you suggest?" She had shifted her focus from basic ideas of writing to recognizing problem areas that involved more critical thinking in her essay writing, which opened the door for more discussion when I responded with a question. It was a small step from being totally dependent on what a tutor said to an acknowledgement that her ideas were acceptable in college writing even if they needed some refining to sound better. As we all know, questioning

techniques are central to typical tutoring sessions, and skillfully using questions, or even responding to questions with questions, can assist a tutor in shifting student reliance.

As reliance is shifted, students build self confidence, which improves their attitude towards writing. In her article "Writing Centers: Being Proactive in the Education Crisis," Melissa Turner suggests tutors need to begin with student attitude in order to influence success. She says, "If writers' attitudes improve through consultations, their experience with writing is less frustrating, if not greatly improved in content and quality" (45). Although multiple consultations often result in improved attitude toward writing as well as increased confidence, tutors still need to be on guard about dealing with dependent students. Walker also notes, "There is no panacea for overly dependent writers" (14). No matter how much effort tutors use, some students will still rely on writing center tutors for direction through each writing assignment they do, resisting efforts to become independent writers. Even though these students have improved their attitude and skills, they still seek the validation from tutors. Others, however, will progress towards confidence and independence, which leads them to believe they only need feedback on their completed essays. Walker, however, reminds us that total independence is a contradictory term, citing Andrea Lundsford, Peter Elbow, Ira Shor, Lisa Ede, Kenneth Bruffee, and others who promote "the importance of other writers at some point in the writing process" (11). Although tutors encourage students to visit at all stages of writing for feedback, when we see students less often, we believe and hope they are becoming stronger and more independent writers. When students return with thanks and reports of success in class, we are encouraged by their progress and the knowledge we had a role in that success.

The next quarter began, and Angie again enrolled in the writing workshop class. I still had concerns about dependency despite the noticeable gains previously, so I approached the sessions with deliberate purpose. During drafting of her first essay, she had sufficient independence when it came to expressing her own ideas, but still had grammar deficiencies. After dealing with the content concerns of the essay, I began focusing on grammar in our meetings, showing her an error and then explaining what it was (e.g. comma splice) and how to correct it. As we progressed through the essay, she began to spot the errors, and finally she was able to identify an error and fix it, all without any tutor intervention. I seldom mentioned comma splices after that session, and I observed Angie was more consistently applying that skill in her learning. Many tutors successfully use this method of tutor identifying and demonstrating, followed by student practice, to help students shift reliance from the tutor to their own, newly learned skills.

Writing center tutors balance issues of reliance and independence with each student who walks through our open doors. Dependent students pose a challenge to tutors that forces tutors to utilize multiple tools they have learned. Experienced tutors know that finding what works with one student to develop independence may not work with another; conscious effort in choosing from the myriad of tools at our disposal also aids us in being successful in weaning students from reliance on tutors and helping them become self confident college writers. Walker agrees, stating, "Clients will then leave the writing center with the sense that their efforts and feedback from others make a difference in their writing instead of leaving with the idea that the writing center exists to do their writing for them" (14). In addition, tutors also become independent and self confident as they skillfully apply their training to plan their escape from overly dependent students.

"Can I say that?" Absolutely, you can! ✦

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THE WRITING LAB
NEWSLETTER

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CALENDAR FOR WRITING CENTER ASSOCIATIONS

March 3-5, 2011: East Central Writing Centers Association, in Kalamazoo, MI
Contact: Kim Ballard: 269-387-4615; conference website: <http://www.ecwca.org>.

March 9, 2011: Japan Writing Center Symposium, in Tokyo, Japan
Contact: Scott Johnston: johnston@wilmina.ac.jp.

March 12-13, 2011: Northeast Writing Centers Association, in Hooksett, NH
Contact: Kerry Rourke: krourke@babson.edu; conference website: <http://www.northeastwca.org>.

April 16, 2011: Mid-Atlantic Writing Centers Association, in West Chester, PA
Contact: Margaret Ervin: Mervin@wcupa.edu; conference website: <http://www.wcupa.edu/_academics/writing center/MAWCA/proposals.asp>.

October 20-22, 2011: Midwest Writing Centers Association, in Madison, WI
Contact: Katie Levin: 612-624-7720, kslevin@umn.edu.