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Amplifying Tutor Voices: A Qualitative Analysis for Improving Writing Center Tutoring Practices and Pedagogy

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AMPLIFYING TUTOR VOICES: A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS FOR IMPROVING

WRITING CENTER TUTORING PRACTICES AND PEDAGOGY

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Abstract

Within the walls of university writing centers, tutors and tutees collaborate. They discuss writing, but even more than that, they communicate about ideas and theories bigger than themselves, all while discovering their identities. Exploration of how tutors define their authority and agency, while also highlighting the importance of tutors' voices, is necessary for the continuation of writing center studies. Writing center tutors' roles may be understood by some, but the mental hurdles, the questioning natures, and the care-giver roles they are emersed into need to be further investigated. Through a study conducted at Kutztown University's Writing Center, tutors were surveyed and interviewed to better understand tutors' perceptions of their writing authorities and tutoring identities within the subsections of tutor training, tutoring sessions, and tutor stress. Additionally, this study discloses these tutors' voices through anecdotal qualitative data, thus highlighting tutoring challenges and moments of advocacy and agency within the writing center.

Keywords: collaboration, agency, writing authority, voice, confidence, tutoring styles, tutor identity, communication, advocacy, writing center tutor, care-giver

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Chapter 1: Writing Center Tutors and Their Roles

Section 1: Exploring Writing Center Tutors' Roles: Peers, Guides, and Care-Givers

When students walk through the writing center's doors, they may not know what to expect, other than some form of "help with writing" on a particular assignment. Whether they come back continuously or have a singular encounter, they are proving to their professors, and—more importantly—to themselves, that they care about how their writing sounds, how it appears to others, how their voice is threaded together within particular words and sentences. That is the specialty found in writing centers—placing a peer with another peer to illicit a genuine conversation about writing. The focus is not on what students are doing wrong. Rather, how students gain confidence, in both themselves and their writing, is the main goal of writing center tutoring. Once entering the relaxed atmosphere of the center, students' words leave the solitude of the page and become spoken and heard by others. This statement is not to say that students are alone once receiving their assignments or that professors leave their students to fend for themselves without any writing instruction; however, students come from a vast array of writing experiences—some feel comfortable engaging in conversations with professors and peers while in the classroom, while others do not. Still, others may be afraid of opening themselves up to others' criticism, thus hesitating to allow their professors or peers to view their writing. Constructive criticism should promote students' writing improvement and growth, not further hinder their relationship with writing. Criticism should give students the opportunity to improve their own writing while still securing that their voice—who they are as writers—is prominently displayed. Criticism presents the challenge of preserving one's voice while strengthening writing

ability. Comments from their professors and peers should not make students feel alone in their writing endeavors. They must explore who they are as writers, and fortunately for students, university writing centers exist.

Writing center tutors are on journeys with other students to find their writing voices, but tutors have their own stories to tell. Tutors are the ones who hear the awkward arrangements or the sweet cacophony of students' words melodically sewn together. They identify with the processes and the turbulence that students experience as they attempt "perfecting" a writing assignment. Most importantly, they understand, because they, too, are students. Tutors must establish rapport quickly and succinctly so that students feel comfortable discussing their writing. Tutors cannot force tutees to fall in love with writing, but they have an added hand in making students realize the power behind their words. As tutees and tutors journey together, tutors have many roles to fulfill in order for tutees to have memorable, yet educational and less stressful, writing center experiences. More writing center studies, like editors Max Orsini and Loren Kleinman's collaborative collection entitled *Student Writing Tutors in Their Own Words: Global Voices on Writing Centers and Beyond*, need to include tutors' anecdotal, qualitative data, which provides an exploration directly into the lives, challenges, and successes of writing center tutors. In this thesis, I plan to examine writing center tutors' unique voices—how stress, training, and sessions influence their decisions as tutors and how their views on writing authority impact their tutoring roles. Through an IRB-approved research study, I have incorporated the voices of current and former writing center tutors from Kutztown University with the intention to further pedagogical teaching and encourage more training tactics for tutors. Through the acknowledgement of tutors' stress, trainings, and sessions, more understanding will circulate about how to best take care of our writing center tutors, whose experiences matter.

Writing center tutors have many titles, all with different connotations. These names and titles may include *tutors*, *peer tutors*, *consultants*. *Tutor* is a generalized name of, typically, a student who has knowledge on a topic and can share this information with another student outside the classroom. *Peer tutor* implies that the tutor is on the same level (i.e., the same year, undergraduate or graduate level, etc.) as the student they are assisting. *Consultant* sounds formal—that the student has received further training to do the job of the *tutor* and the *peer tutor* yet can be used interchangeably with *tutor*. It is important to note that the *writing center tutor* uses all three names. *Writing center tutors* are *peers* who have increased training like *consultants* in order to tutor students in areas of writing, which can encompass a wide range of topics, such as but not limited to thesis construction, coherence of ideas, grammar explanations, and citation styles. Names like *consultant* may appear in research from other authors. For the remainder of this work, except for the study's results in chapter three*, student writers* will be referred to as *tutees* and *writing center tutors* will remain as *tutors*.

By hearing directly from tutors about their experiences, writing center scholars learn what does and does not work in the center. When tutors share their experiences, they share a piece of their own lives with the world. Learning to tutor does not come naturally for all tutors. Tutors are typically seen as: students who are good at school, students who get the "As," students who know how to write "good" papers. When students become tutors, they guide tutees through writing in ways that their professors may not. Tutors are thrown into different worlds of content and simply *handle* it. They have stories to tell that include how they are seen, how they feel, and what they go through in their daily writing center lives. Tutors' words can be examined and quantified, but their individual stories and advice are equally as important. The qualitative data surrounding writing center tutors needs to be further examined, as experiences make tutors who

they are. While anecdotal data from tutors is used within writing center studies, there tends to be a lack of focus on tutors. How tutors' words and decisions affect students is more widely acknowledged within the discipline. As this research unfolds, some sources that I have included note the importance of tutors' experiences, and I will continue to integrate their sentiments within this work. Noticing how tutors interact with tutees, fellow coworkers, professors, and directors establishes the writing center's environment. Understanding how tutors view their identities as tutors furthers discussions on tutors' authorities, agencies, and voices.

For the purpose of this writing, a focus is given primarily to tutors as students, who are figuring out their lives and future goals. All tutors handle situations differently due to their unique identities as humans and as tutors. In their chapter in *Unlimited Players*, authors Thomas "Buddy" Shay and Heather Shay believe that tutors' identities consist of three layers: their personal selves, their professional selves, and their personas (162-163). Whether or not they are in the writing center, these three selves exist for each tutor. The self which is surrounded by family and friends is different from the tutoring self and the student self, yet they still overlap as tutors take what they have learned in their tutoring experiences into other parts of their lives. Shay and Shay explain that the personal self is how the tutor defines their status characteristics, such as race, sexual identity, social class, etc., and that the tutors' personas "adopt and change as they work with different students" (163). Meanwhile, the professional self is how tutors present themselves while in the tutoring space. When tutors have a better understanding of who they are, and of each layer, they "can make some difficult sessions and conversations go much more smoothly" (162-163). New tutors might not distinguish between their various selves, while more seasoned tutors might be aware of how they appear in their roles. Returning tutors tend to possess more confidence and their sessions flow smoother due to their past experiences and

gained knowledge. At what point does a writing center tutor feel more confident in their identity as a tutor? When does the tutor assume their professional identity and call themselves, truly, a writing center tutor? Much research points to sessions, trainings, and observations as the factors that most influence the professional identity of the tutor.

Jo Mackiewicz and Isabelle Thompson, in their article "Motivational Scaffolding, Politeness, and Writing Center Tutoring," explore how tutors use different techniques for their tutoring styles, which are developed through training and observation. Mackiewicz and Thompson note that, "With direct instruction, tutors give students suggestions about their writing, explain those suggestions, or ask leading questions. With cognitive scaffolding, tutors list alternatives, prompt, paraphrase, or read aloud to help students arrive at their own answers" (40). Tutors assist students in reaching their own conclusions about their writing through specific questions and prompting, thus utilizing either direct instruction or cognitive scaffolding. These two tactics are distinct and offer tutees multiple ways of viewing their writing. Tutors typically know what needs editing or how tutees can reach their writing goals. Through their tutoring tactics, such as the ones Mackiewicz and Thompson list, tutors instruct, but they do not write for the tutees. New tutors might be unaware of how to lead a session in the types of cognitive scaffolding or direct instruction that these two authors note. As tutors experience more sessions and receive more training, the authors' techniques become second nature for tutors. Scenarios in which tutors explain paraphrasing or use different types of leading questions cannot be taught in one training session, nor can tutors be expected to get it right every time.

Tutors are in positions in which they need to work with others in a professional and positive way. Not only are they learning skills that affect their future career choices, but they are also learning how to take care of others' needs. In *The Everyday Writing* Center Anne Ellen

Geller et al. note that tutors are in care-giver type roles, ones that allow both tutors and tutees to learn and grow as students and writers together (44-45). Similarly, in their article "Is Tutoring Stressful?: Measuring Tutors' Cortisol Levels" authors Erik Simmons et al. note that "tutoring provides an opportunity to simultaneously perform meaningful work and reduce stress—perhaps because tutoring is a helping profession" (22). These authors refer to tutoring as a profession, thus placing much more responsibility onto tutors' shoulders. Both new and returning tutors are learning how to interact with others, how to word explanations that they have understood for quite some time, and how to remain calm when the situation seems overwhelming. Through the observation of their surroundings and coworkers, tutors will find what tutoring styles work best for them. Tutors learn how to establish themselves as care-givers, ones who guide tutees through multiple aspects of writing, while upholding tutoring responsibilities in professional ways.

Tutors must balance both writing and guiding. In the chapter "Establishing Agency: Laying the Groundwork for Strategic Partnership," Rebecca Hallam Martini examines ways in which writing centers can incorporate agency and empower tutors to use their own agencies. Martini refers to a technique called the "talking cure approach" in which "consultants ask questions to help guide students, rather than generating the ideas or materials themselves. The emphasis is on talk about writing, not on the writing itself" (58). Through this process, tutors enable tutees to take ownership of their writing, and they aid tutees in realizing the power of their own words. Martini acknowledges that first sessions can be challenging and that tutors might lack the confidence to engage tutees in guiding ways; however, once "consultants realize they can get through their challenging first sessions, they also learn that they can, ultimately, help writers, and that struggling in new writing scenarios is part of the ongoing work of tutoring" (51). As tutors learn to assist tutees with writing, they do so as guides, who must develop the

confidence to discuss writing in depth and across curriculums. Tutors become guides over time, after first undergoing trainings and observations and experiencing different types of tutoring sessions on a daily basis.

A large part of the tutors' roles come from directly overserving their coworkers and their sessions. In his book *Around the Texts of Writing Center Work: An Inquiry-Based Approach to Tutor Education*, Mark R. Hall acknowledges that there is not much research focused on how tutors learn, especially from one another ("Valued Practices" 20). Hall has discovered that there are "no common agreements about *what* to observe for—or *why*. Tutors simply noticed whatever interested them" ("Valued Practices" 16). As tutors observe their surroundings, they learn their roles and what not to do. Geller et al. note the critical necessity of observations made in the center when they write, "the sense that tutors are always teaching one another and learning from one another is something we want to instill" (61). Observing their coworkers will help tutors to establish their tutoring style, thus making them aware that there are multiple ways to tutor. As their roles become more known, tutors will feel experienced and comfortable working with wider ranges of tutees and situations. They may not hesitate as frequently to ask for assistance from their coworkers because they have seen their coworkers encountering similar scenarios. Tutor training that encourages observation and what to look for might further assist tutors in finding their personalized tutoring style. Opportunities to shadow their coworkers prior to starting their own tutoring sessions may benefit new tutors. As they learn to observe their surroundings and find what styles work best for them, tutors may discover more about themselves, thus forming their tutoring identity and solidifying their tutoring roles.

Tutors draw from their past writing experiences, their knowledge from previous classes, and the feedback they have received from professors or peers. Geller et al. note that, "Well, we

believe their identities as writers can, will, and should influence their tutoring" (73). Tutors

should be treated like writers by their directors and tutees. Geller et al. notes the importance that

writing center directors have in this approach by stating, "Tutors will work with writers in ways

they themselves have been taught; directors then must make certain to work with tutors in ways

tutors should work with writers" (30). When tutors feel welcomed in the center as both workers

and writers, their tutoring will be foundationally strong. It is important to remember, as Hall

does, that "peer tutors are likely to go on to further jobs in which they are frequently observed or

evaluated" ("Valued Practices" 25). Writing center tutors need to be reassured in their abilities to

do their jobs and be writers, so that they feel dually prepared for the world outside of the

university.

In their article entitled, "What They Take with Them: Findings from the Peer Writing

Tutor Alumni Research Project," authors Bradley Hughes et al. explore the effects tutoring has

after tutors have graduated, what they remember, and what they "take with them" as they

continue their careers. Concerning the roles of tutors, they share, "Tutors, through their

analytical abilities, nurture and empower learning, deepen and enrich it in meaningful way. This

is a purposeful, active kind of analysis we see in few other college situations" (27). This

statement applies to all types of tutors, not solely writing center tutors; however, when geared

towards writing, this analysis shows the complexity of writing center tutors' roles. Hughes et al.

note that tutors "discover how crucial it is to learning for writers to know that someone cares

about, listens to, respects, and empathizes with them" (37). Writing happens on a more personal

level, deeper than memorizing the correct mathematical formula or making connections with

plant life to further analyze specimens. Writing takes a different approach to education, as it

impacts how students share who they are, what they know, and how they convey their

knowledge to others. In essence, tutors work to make intricate connections, in addition to solving problems and doing so simultaneously as they speak with tutees and read their writing (26). Writing center tutors, then, have the difficult task of unraveling the individuals behind the written words and seeing how to best help tutees become the writers they are meant to be. Acknowledging the complexity of tutors' roles is vital to understanding their experiences.

With tutors' roles evolving as they encounter new situations and new tutees daily, the training of writing center tutors need to be kept in mind as their roles are analyzed. In his article, "Portrait of the Tutor as an Artist: Lessons No One Can Teach," Steve Sherwood acknowledges that, "A lot of the learning that goes into our development as writing tutors involves direct training, aimed at helping us handle specific situations and categories of writers, writing assignments, and rules of engagement" (53). This quote primarily focuses on the development of *how* the tutor is trained and what to handle during a session with a tutee, not necessarily how to handle the emotional or mental hardships of tutoring roles, which also need to be discussed during tutor training. As written in *Student Writing Tutors in Their Own Words*, Idée Edalathishams and Amanda A. Muhammad note that, "The question we must then pose is: How can writing centers better prepare and support their consultants, the tutors? This can take a range of forms, from equipment support to mental health resources. This is definitely a good time for writing centers to further survey and recognize their tutors' diverse needs and take practical steps to help tutors balance their lives better" (99). When all parts of tutors' lives are discussed within tutor training, tutors learn how much tutoring shapes them. They must be aware of how their roles affect their mental health and be able to initiate helpful coping techniques. Tutor training that adequately addresses mental health concerns enables healthy outcomes for tutors, who are already stressed enough, even prior to entering the center for work.

Sometimes tutors are faced with even more stressors as they work with tutees. Tutors must take control of new situations, like working with overly anxious or stressed tutees or answering questions that they, as tutors, might not immediately know when asked. Of which, Sherwood writes:

> Writers may interject, ask unanticipated questions for which the tutor has no definite answer, and express misunderstandings the tutor must attempt to address on the spot. And students are right to put tutors on the spot, to ask questions, to lead the conversation astray, to misunderstand points, and to resist advice, especially when doing so leads them to deeper understanding of their own ideas and writing processes. (57)

The mental demands of the job are hefty, especially for busy college students. Moments such as the ones Sherwood articulates may not be easy to explain during tutor training. Learning to impart their writing knowledge while not directing teaching tutees may be overwhelming to some tutors, who do not want to overstep boundaries. When tutors feel as if they have exhausted their tutoring authority and have no further pedagogical answers, they must be trained to connect their tutees with their professors or to additional campus services, so as to promote the best outcomes for tutees and their writing.

Tutors must learn to navigate sessions to best fit the needs and goals of their tutees. In their chapter within *The Center Will Hold*, Harvey Kail acknowledges that, "Tutors learn to listen and to question, to diagnose, and, as appropriate, to show and even to tell" and additionally, tutors become "acquainted with exotic domains of knowledge, such as cognitive psychology, therapy and counseling, and even cultural anthropology" (81). Tutors are doing so much more than helping with writing; they are guiding, listening, and counseling tutees on multiple aspects of their lives, all while empowering them and educating them on writing techniques and processes. They help tutees work through difficult ideas and personal conflicts within the writing sphere. As the tutor and tutee diagnose writing together, a bond forms between the two. Kail describes this bond, as follows:

> Because the tutor has not merely talked about the writing process to the student writer, but participated in that process with him, the dialogue between tutor and writer may prove sufficiently intense and productive that it will be internalized in some measure into the novice writer's own understanding and memory. The more the student writes, the more the encouraging but firm voice of the magic helper/coach will be sounded from within the writer himself. (82)

Despite being referred to as a "magic helper/coach," tutors are humans with a strong grasp on writing which can be extended to their tutees. The ways in which they speak about writing might seem magical to tutees who may not be used to thinking about writing in such positive manners. Tutors realize that not every tutee will listen to their guidance. Sometimes reiteration only goes so far during a session, and other times, breakthrough moments occur in which tutees and tutors are on the same page, both literally and figuratively. Tutors may never know the effect they have had on their tutees, unless tutees return or fill out surveys on their writing center experiences.

As tutors come to understand their roles, they will realize that moments like having their voices heard by tutees become the most rewarding. Kail, in hopeful tones, remarks, "In effect, the voice of the tutor will become intertwined with and a vital part of the student's writing process itself" (83). This statement does not mean that the tutors will write for tutees, but rather, tutees will remember the words of their tutors—their voices have grasped the tutees in earnest ways—perhaps even in magical ones—so that they remember the advice and follow it in the future. Tutors are then prepared for more sessions, in which new challenges will arise and new tutees are waiting for assistance. As tutors gain more experience in the center, they should be able to fulfill their roles and feel more comfortable in tutoring sessions.

Tutors must overcome many challenges when learning their roles within the writing center. Tutors' required roles enable them to enter the workforce in ways separate from the rest of the university. They encounter new situations daily and learn what works best for them through observation and tutor training sessions. They learn what it means to have their own

tutoring style and how best to handle different types of students and scenarios. When tutors are treated as writers and they are reminded that they, too, have vital information to share about the world of writing, their tutoring flourishes. Tutors learn to nurture their own writing so that they can assist other writers in a care-giver fashion, one that speaks to every part of the tutees' worries, anxieties, triumphs, and more.

Section 2: A Career Analogy: Nursing and Tutoring

When discussing writing center tutors, nurses probably do not come to mind. Like tutors, nurses have many stories, yet most nursing tales should not be shared around the dinner table as we so often like to joke. These stories have shaped us into the nurses we are today, having once been student nurses not knowing how to take a blood pressure to more seasoned nurses who absolutely know that their patient needs a diuretic so that their crackling lungs are relieved and their edema diminishes. Likewise, a student writer may hesitate to rewrite a draft in its entirety. Yet, once they are writing center tutors, they know that not every first draft will make the final cut and that writing takes time. This section aims to make an important connection—one between writing center tutors and nurses.

Having been both a nurse and a writing center tutor, I have realized that neither are ever truly *heard*. Nurses are in a constant state of trying to be heard by doctors, coworkers, patients, or patients' family members. I believe that the same happens to tutors, who may feel the need to prove themselves and be heard by their directors, coworkers, tutees, and professors. Both professions seem to be in constant states of making sure they are understood by others and feeling like their words and explanations need to be reinforced and consistently proven. I have been on the other end of a phone call with a doctor who is not listening to me explain that their patient feels suicidal. I have been in a cardiac arrest situation, pounding on a patient's chest,

while my coworkers scramble to do their parts, not hearing me yell for help or for the needed supplies. I have felt my own anxiety creep into my chest so powerfully that I could not willingly put myself in harm's way to assist with a procedure that can most definitely wait for improved safety protocols. I have failed to help tutees find the words they need to write, thus they left the center and never returned. I have felt rushed to see as many tutees as possible in only a few hours' time, hoping that my voice and advice will somehow reach each of them. I have felt downtrodden, knowing that the amount of time and effort I have given to a tutee has been useless, that I have not truly helped and that they were a product of a failed system.

Nurses and tutors both have strengths and weaknesses; each finds out who they are as people as they work and take care of others; and each has a voice that influences, has agency, and advocates for another. Nurses and writing center tutors' experiences tell us more about who they are and who they will be. Statistically speaking, most writing center researchers are probably not dually trained in nursing and writing center pedagogy. As someone dually trained, I have seen how authority, agency, and voice play roles in both jobs. Making this analogy and exploring its crevices will help to further the voices of writing center tutors, so that writing center practices can flourish. It will also shed light on the need for awareness—that people need to treat others with kindness and gentleness, no matter their role. It is a call for help among two very different professions—one that affects individuals just starting their careers and another that may have been in the trenches far longer than expected.

Geller et al. note that healthcare or medicine should not be compared to English studies and writing center tutoring. They write of knowing "the ever-present danger of making comparisons between writing center work and the medical profession, but we are struck by this critique of doctors as learners, and we wonder if the pressure against any professional remaining

a learner [. . .] are simply the pressures we all work against" (65-66). The idea that each profession has gotten so far away from acknowledging that the person behind the professional role is human, too, plagues our society. If we are all working against similar work pressures, then we should be able to witness these struggles similarly across professions. Yes, writing is different from medicine. Writing occurs within medicine, but that is not the concern here. The similarity, then, is the constant state of learning that Geller et al. mention—that doctors are learners, writing center tutors are learners, nurses are learners—we are all learners to some degree, even when our professions are drastically different. The danger, then, is forgetting that an overlap does, in fact, exist—that we are all human.

Something else still plagues the statement from Geller et al. that is critical for this discussion. If we "all work against" the same pressures, then we need to address these pressures. Geller et al. describes their pressures as lacking time or inclination, lacking time or patience for coping with uncertain moments, and "administrative cost cutting and administrative rules" (66). The first involves working with other humans—understanding them, meeting them at their level, and helping them, in the ways they need and the ways we have been trained to help. The latter becomes the most difficult, as patients and tutees may reject solutions that may most benefit them. The second set of pressures address the need for coping mechanisms needed when skills may not have been perfected and situations become uncertain. For example, nurses practice cardiopulmonary resuscitation on mannikins, but until a patient undergoes a cardiac arrest, they have not performed the skill on a living being until then. For tutors, they must sometimes learn a new formatting and citation style, such as Chicago Manual of Style, and explain it to tutees, while having never had written in that style for their own assignments. Thirdly, there are pressures to keep the workplace flowing in a previously built and understood way, aiding the

most amount of patients or tutees in the shortest amount of time. Each of these challenges can be better understood by examining the parallels in the experiences of nurses and tutors.

Nurses and tutors must analyze situations and critically think about how to solve them. With a common goal to help others, they must interact with individuals in a collected manner. Each patient and tutee has specific needs that must be taken care of by the nurse and the tutor. The nurse and tutor must assess the situation, as well as the unknown—what is not mentioned during a nurse-patient interaction or a tutoring session. They also must hold an aura of authority when speaking about their respective fields. Unleashing doubt into the minds of patients and tutees will prevent them from returning for future care, which is not a solution to the professional pressures. Correctly analyzing the situation while displaying the correct amount of authority will help the relationships of both parties. Much of this conflict with authority is done silently by both nurse and tutor.

Silent assessment is a major part of nurses' jobs, much like the tutors who may quietly read papers. Most importantly, nurses need to prioritize their care so that the patients have the best outcomes. Nurses initiate this prioritization process by deconstructing a patient's chart, either before or after initially meeting the patient, all depending on the situation. They know their patients' histories, exams, labs, and testing more thoroughly than the patient might think. Nurses learn about patients from additional sources, like from family members or pharmacy medication compliance. Unless they are told explicitly by tutees, tutors do not have the ability to know tutees' grammar backgrounds, prior writing issues or successes, or learning disabilities. Tutors gain much of what they need by reading the assignments' guidelines and tutees' writing. Additionally, tutors learn what tutees might be missing when they read peers' or professors' feedback. Tutors must also learn to prioritize within a session, which is normally crammed into a

specific amount of time. For both professionals, assessment is the key to their assistance. Much

assessment occurs within speech, in which nurses and tutors may prompt the beginning of

conversations to get answers—to find the issue's roots.

When communicating, the voices of nurses and tutors must hold authority, which must

deflect any self-doubt. Whether it is with a doctor, a patient, a pharmacist, a family member, or a

supervisor, nurses must make their voices known and advocate for their patients. If nurses do not

acquire a voice of their own, then they risk incomplete patient care and cannot perform their jobs

appropriately. Each scenario encountered requires them to use their voices in specific ways with

the sole means of advocating for their patients. Through the combination of advocacy and voice,

nurses create their own agencies—how their voices are used to establish change or make an

impact. Meanwhile, writing center tutors are amid the search for their identity, as tutors,

students, and writers. They may have only just begun their professional careers. Having senses of

authority might not come easily for them, as tutoring may be the first time that they have been

allotted authority. Tutors must learn to wield authority in ways they understand, and that may

start by doing and observing. They meet tutees at their own levels, thus creating trust. By using

their voices as writers with their tutees, tutors impart that writers oversee their own writing,

which establishes their own agencies. Displaying confidence about writing knowledge and

strategies demonstrates to tutees that tutors are writing authorities. When tutees acknowledge

that their tutors have writing authority, tutors' confidence is also reinforced. Tutors become

advocates not only for themselves but for all types of writers, who may not always feel as if their

voice is important enough to be heard by others.

While tutees have the right to ask many questions and refuse the offered advice, tutors

must remain confident in their ability to assist tutees. Geller et al. establishes that, "We want our

tutors to learn with and from their work, both their triumphs and their mistakes" (49). Tutors must be aware that although they have the best interest of tutees in mind, their voices may not always reach them in the ways that tutors hope. Their authority as tutors may be questioned, communication may go awry, or tutees may simply not have the time to implement tutors' advice. It is vital that tutors be cognitive that "the student and tutor [agree] on a diagnosis of how to improve the writing" (Mackiewicz and Thompson 41). Similarly, a patient cannot negotiate their diagnosis with their doctor, hoping for a better one, but they do have the right to choose the care they receive from their nurses and doctors. Patients have the right to refuse care, just as tutees have a right to refuse writing advice. Since tutees have willingly chosen to enter the center, tutors must accept that not all of their advice will be utilized. Geller et al. share that, "tutors, especially, are students accustomed to 'getting it,' and they sometimes have little patience with themselves (and others) when success doesn't come as quickly or as easily as they would like" (62). Similarly, nurses may experience feelings such as the ones Geller et al. note, especially with patients who may be unaware of common health resolutions that they, as nurses, learned well before nursing school. In these situations, nurses must enact patience and educate their patients on what may be common knowledge without outward annoyance or negativity. Tutors must learn to do the same with their tutees, as patience is vital for tutees' understanding and education.

Both nurses and tutors must be aware of their patients' and tutees' voices. These voices might feel suffocated by the world around them, unsure of how to emerge and feel heard. Nurses must listen to their patients and hear what they must share. Similarly, tutors must do the same with tutees, who are trying to share their voices through writing. In these two scenarios, there are four voices involved. Each voice possesses different types of desires, ones full of authority and

concern. We want patients to advocate for their health and care. We want nurses to advocate for themselves in the workplace and for appropriate patient care. We want tutors to advocate for themselves as writers and for the successes of their tutees. We want tutees to advocate for their education and to understand writing as much as possible. These voices work in tandem with one another—nurse and patient and tutor and tutee. Each voice needs to be valued, appreciated, understood, and heard.

Without having been a writing center tutor, I may not be the nurse that I am today. It is within the writing center that I learned that what I had to say and write mattered. Knowing that, I can empower my patients like I did with my tutees. Likewise, without my time as a nurse, I might have been a very different writing center tutor. Fortunately for me, I was able to tutor while I was a nurse and put my ideas and words into practice. I see the importance in the overlap—the greatness in each, the frustration in each. Not every writing center tutor is going to make the same connections that I have with the world outside of the university as I have. As writing center tutors, or as nurses, we must remember that each person has an individualized story to share. Whether those stories happen through writing or speech, they matter. Making sure individuals know that their voices matter is important. Advocating for their stories to be heard, and showing them that they, too, have agency over what they have experienced has become part of both the nurses' and tutors' duties. Medicine and writing centers are separate and distinct, but their roles in patients' and tutees' wellbeing goes a lot further than what is visible to the naked eye. In the next few sections, I recommend recalling the analogy of nurses and writing center tutors, especially as tutors' experiences are further explored. While correlating nursing and tutoring was not a main goal of my research study, the tutees I surveyed and interviewed made connections with the medical field, which will be further explored in chapters three and four.

Chapter 2: Addressing the Need for Advocacy, Agency, and Voice in the Writing Center

Section 1: Authority Between Tutors and Tutees: Peers in the Center

When tutees enter their university writing centers, they may not know what to initially expect. Some may be there due to professors' requirements, others enter unsure of exactly what takes place there, and others arrive with specific agendas. No matter the type of tutee entering the room, writing center tutors meet them where they are. In other words, tutors should be flexible. While students themselves, tutors put aside their own worries, due dates, assignments, or days' anxieties to assist with their peers' writing. Most of the time, both groups have a similar goal: tutees leave the center having gained knowledge regarding their writing goals from working *alongside* tutors. However, a question remains: who has the authority in the room, and does it matter who possesses it? Exploring the authority between tutors and tutees is critical for how tutors perform their duties and how tutees respond to writing advice.

Tutors are seasoned writers, but the tutees have the full knowledge of their chosen topics, even if they both may seem hesitant in sessions. These hesitations reflect both tutors' and tutees' uncertainty for addressing that they each possess levels of writing authority. Writing is personal, and as tutees and tutors traverse writing journeys together, they must unite to find balance. Due to their training and experiences, tutors have achieved tutoring authority, meaning that they have the pedagogical tools to assist tutees. Tutors need not discuss tutoring authority with tutees, because this type of authority exists evidently, as tutees expect their tutors to have knowledge on how to tutor them. Writing authority is different, in that each tutor and tutee possess their own level of this authority type. What sets them apart, then, is tutors' further knowledge on writing that they can impart in conjunction with their tutoring authority. Together, tutors' tutoring and writing authorities combine to give tutees the awareness of their writing potentials. Therefore,

the writing center becomes a community space in which knowledge is shared and writing authority flourishes.

Tutors' and tutees' creation of community occurs when tutees walk through the doors of the center, expecting help from tutors. Authors Shay and Shay discuss the way that tutors present themselves so that they meet tutees halfway, thus creating an empathetic atmosphere (162). When tutors empathetically acknowledge tutees' writing as genuine, tutees become motivated to continue writing and to become invested in themselves as writers. Passing on this confidence requires tutors' awareness of how they interact with tutees. Through this community of knowledge, tutors encourage tutees to find their own writing agency, which establishes writing authority for both parties. With writing agency flowing, tutees become aware that their writing influences the world around them. Likewise, tutors notice that the use of their own agency directly affects how tutees engage with writing, thus building up their writing authority. Creating a space where authority and agency unite in a balanced way will beckon tutees towards the center and elevate tutors' morale as they mentor more tutees.

For their writing journeys to thrive, both tutors and tutees must feel comfortable in the writing center. The center becomes this collaborative space where knowledge is passed back and forth between tutors and tutees. In his chapter in *The Center Will Hold*, author Peter Carino shares that, "Both student and tutor share authority and engage in collaborative operations to improve the text" (104). Through collaboration, tutors have given tutees the opportunity to share their knowledge on content that is fresh in their minds. Additionally, tutees are shown that they, too, are authorities on content, all while discussing it with peers, who understand what it is like to write about new topics. This collaboration offers tutors the chance to show tutees that writing

is not as intimidating as they may have originally thought. Together, tutors and tutees discover how their authority on writing and content empowers each of them.

Situations like the following scenario happen daily in the writing center. Imagine a tutee arriving at the writing center for the first time, and they are completely engrossed in the content of their class. They may know how to get from point A to point B, but when it comes to writing all those points down, the tutee may hesitate to find the correct words to explain the content that they have been working hard to grasp. Tutors can typically gage how well their tutees understand content and can capably guide them towards deeper thinking involving the content. Sometimes, a writing breakthrough happens when tutors ask more questions about the content. The tutee is suddenly empowered with what needs to be said because they have explained it out loud to the tutor, who may have been asking a simple question. While the tutor may also know the content the tutee is writing about, sometimes the tutor and tutee relationship benefits the most when the tutor is unaware of the content. Authors Juliann Reineke et al. address these content concerns in their chapter of *Re/Writing the Center: Approaches to Supporting Graduate Students in the Writing Center*. Reineke et al. acknowledge that "lack of familiarity with content does not need to be a barrier in providing feedback on student writing" (170). As tutors encounter more students, they examine more writing, connect with experiences, and sift through various cultures. Tutors' thought-provoking questions enables tutees to find the answers they were searching for prior to the tutoring sessions. Although tutors may have self-doubt because of their lack of specific content knowledge, they are aiding tutees the most and not hindering their writing processes. Tutees are the authority on content, while tutors are the authority on writing.

Sometimes, the authority between levels of students affects the writing center session in a negative way. Undergraduate tutors may feel self-doubt when working with graduate level

tutees, as they do not feel like peers. These tutors may doubt their own writing abilities, and they may feel that their knowledge is inadequate compared to the graduate tutees'. Undergraduate tutees might regard graduate tutors as possessing authority similar to professors, perhaps due to age or type of degree. Meanwhile, graduate tutees may feel as if the undergraduate tutors are not experienced enough to assist them. Reineke et al. share that, "the relationship between graduate writers and tutors can be fraught with concerns about expertise, authority, and disciplinarity" (167). For graduate tutees, receiving help from undergraduate tutors may make them feel like they have less knowledge, despite being in a higher degree program. If a lack of communication occurs between these groups, then they are prevented from collaborating appropriately and discussing writing in universal ways.

When tutors and tutees communicate properly within sessions, the needs of both parties are adequately fulfilled, authority is balanced, and roles and expectations are known. In their article entitled "What a Writer Wants: Assessing Fulfillment of Student Goals in Writing Center Tutoring Sessions," authors Laurel Raymond and Zarah Quinn discuss that tutees typically want to focus on the assignment, rather than the writing (65). Meaning that, tutees may be unaware of the differences between the two. Raymond and Quinn note that tutors have the "difficult task of integrating tutor and writer goals; they must focus their sessions in ways that fulfill the students' requests for the paper at hand while maintaining an emphasis on facilitating the long-term development of the writer" (65). Tutors must acknowledge what tutees wish to focus on, regardless of whether the tutors believe the topics are important. By addressing tutees' needs, tutors show that the tutees' concerns are vital to their writing processes. A tutor may notice an issue such as paragraph coherence, while the tutee is concerned about comma placement. If the tutor performs a smaller explanation on commas, the tutee may be suffced and will move on to

other topics. Raymond and Quinn write, "Nonetheless, if we ignore goals that we deem shortsighted, we risk robbing students of their authority over their papers, isolating them further from their own writing processes and inhibiting our ability to connect with them" (65). Tutors must discuss the concerns of the tutees, so that they do not diminish the writing progress that tutees have already made.

Tutors must adapt to the process of individual tutees, even if that process recalls writing basics. For example, having a mini lesson on commas might aid a tutee who continually makes comma errors, and it might also heighten the tutee's awareness of the tutor's writing authority. Raymond and Quinn have discovered that grammar, clarity, and textual flow were the main concerns of tutees entering the center (72). Meanwhile, they found that tutors mainly focused on argument with an overlap of grammar and textual flow, showing that "very often writers receive more from sessions than they request" (72). When tutors gloss over tutees' concerns, they diminish tutees' writing authority. Raymond and Quinn write, "Ideally, the goal of tutoring is to guide students towards a greater awareness of their own personal writing processes, leading them to become better writers independently" (76). Tutors and tutees must collaborate to find a process that works best. When tutors give explanations that tutees remember far past the session's time restraints, tutees will have gained previously unknown knowledge and will hopefully apply it to future writing assignments. Working with individual tutees of all writing levels, tutors must accommodate how each learns and create a writing center atmosphere unique for each tutee who passes through its doors.

Tutors must establish rapport with their tutees, which can be a large task for tutors, especially if they are naturally more introverted. Creating trust from the beginning of sessions gives tutees reassurance that their tutors can accurately assist with their writing needs. Not only

are tutors creating trust, but they are also assessing tutees' anxieties concerning writing, their classes, their assignments, and their professors—which is a lot of anxiety to assess by one person, in this case—by one tutor. Mackiewicz and Thompson explain this situation in a way that includes tutors acknowledging tutees' anxiety levels, their motivation to be at the center, and their level of participation within a session (46). The authors write about the importance of having "tutors focus their full and caring attention on students, work to develop rapport and solidarity, and demonstrate their respect for them. Through reinforcing the students' ownership, tutors also emphasize students' responsibility for their writing" (67). By doing so, tutors pass writing authority onto their tutees. A tutor does not do these tasks immediately; however, over time, a tutor does them innately.

Conveying the necessary knowledge to tutees is challenging, as tutors must exude writing authority so that they are trusted by tutees. This authority is different from professors' writing authority, as tutors' writing authority adheres to peer-level assistance in which tutees feel a familiarity and sense of belonging. Establishing this authority in a setting outside of the classroom works best for both tutees and tutors, who are becoming professionals and learning how to cope in the university's environment. Raymond and Quinn write, "Undergraduate peer tutors are in a unique situation, for our position of 'authority' exists only in the setting of the tutorial itself, and even then the hierarchy is tenuous. It is therefore easier for us to step back and encourage the writer to take control, as the student is less likely to view us as 'experts' whose advice must be followed" (76). Outside of sessions, tutors resume their normal level of peer status. Within the center, tutors must encourage tutees to take control of their writing journeys and establish their own writing authorities. When tutees understand where their authority originates on the page, tutors have been successful in relaying their writing authority to the tutee.

This balance strengthens tutees' views on writing and lessens tutors' self-doubts about their job performances.

When authority is balanced between tutors and tutees, writing flourishes. Tutors use their voices to advocate for tutees, who are learning the crucial natures of their own writing authorities. Acknowledging that content and writing are separate entities that become fused during a writing center session advances the peer relationships between tutors and tutees. Both of their authorities are critical for the formation of a writing process specific to the tutee in need. Putting aside self-doubts, tutors will feel more comfortable working with all levels of students. When barriers, like age or degree level, are destroyed, tutors assist tutees the best because their confidence has blossomed. Feeling heard in the center encourages tutees to return, as they may desire discussing their writing with peers rather than with professors. Tutors will have learned how beneficial their authority is to the tutees they have assisted.

Section 2: Collaborative Authority: Observations, Tutoring Styles, and Tutoring Identity

As tutors navigate through writing center sessions, they develop who they are as tutors: how they tutor, what they say, and how they guide tutees. By observing their coworkers, tutors determine their own writing and tutoring styles, thus strengthening their tutoring identities and developing their authorities as valuable members of the writing center community. Tutors may interact with tutees' professors, who might not know the true scope of the writing center tutors' roles. Tutors feel the burden of not only performing their jobs well, but they may also wish to prove to their coworkers and professors that they are capable tutors. When collaboration exists between tutors and their coworkers and professors, tutors feel welcomed in the center and their writing authorities are foundationally strengthened. Tutors gain the confidence needed to guide

tutees, as they discover who they are as tutors and maintain the authority required to do their jobs.

Observations within the center become moments for tutors to be seen, heard, and understood. In their opening section of *Student Writing Tutors in Their Own Words: Global Voices on Writing Centers and Beyond*, editors Max Orsini and Loren Kleinman explain the immersion that tutors experience when they join a writing center. They write that tutors take on, "the valuable part of 'participant-observer' in a 'ritual' of linguistic, personal, and social growth. The tutor-host invites the tutee to the table where they will commence making sense of composed work, self-composition" (2). Not only are tutors in the writing center to assist peers with their writing, but they are also there to learn more about themselves as writers. They are on their own personal writing journeys, which presents as helping others. As they learn more about their professional and writing identities, tutors take on care-giver roles, which influences their actions and words. Thus, observations of coworkers are not tutors merely seeing sessions take place, they are truly opportunities for tutors to find themselves amid their work.

As tutors observe their coworkers, they realize the amount of listening that must occur between themselves and their tutees. Hughes et al. note that tutoring is a mix of both active and rhetorical listening (28). They write, "In the intimacy of the one-to-one setting, peer tutors must assume the responsibility for listening carefully to the writer" (28). Active listening is the action of taking in verbal and non-verbal information in preparation to give feedback, while rhetorical listening allots for the receiving of information that the listener may not align with but is willing to understand. Through these two forms of listening, tutors may assume "a better understanding of self" and acquire "empathy to patience to self-understanding" (30). Tutors are most likely not focused on improving their own writing techniques during sessions, as their main goal is to help

their tutees. Recall the nursing analogy, nurses fight—they advocate—for the correct patient care, and when they do, they become better nurses. They have shared their voices and fought for correct patient care. They do this out of empathy for their patients, all while mastering patience. They are not thinking about how these scenarios effects them, but they are considering the best outcomes for their patients. As tutors listen to their tutees' concerns, they continuously have the tutees' intentions in mind. Advocating for their tutees gives tutors the space to communicate effectively as they gain more experience.

Through observation and listening, tutors increase their senses of writing authority with the more tutees they assist. Hughes et al. note that tutors "acquire active listening skills because they find that, by demonstrating their ability to listen, they generate mutual trust and gain the kind of authority that they need in order to lead in a collaborative situation" (36). Listening to other tutors' sessions and their advice encourages tutors to actively listen to their own tutees and offer well-rounded writing assistance. Within their article "Student Perceptions of Intellectual Engagement in the Writing Center: Cognitive Challenge, Tutor Involvement, and Productive Sessions," authors Pamela Bromley et al. write, "Making tutors aware that students notice how engaged tutors are suggests that, while we should not necessarily promote 'performance' by tutors, we should explicitly encourage tutors to demonstrate more frequently and transparently their thinking processes and their personal engagement with every student-writer" (6). Tutors know that tutees notice their actions and listen to their words, so tutors must remain in a level of professionality, which promotes genuine reactions and engagement towards tutees. Tutees want their tutors to listen intently to their writing needs. When tutors show their tutees how engaged they are with their writing, tutees feel empowered to continue explaining their writing processes. If a tutor asks another tutor for assistance during a session, on a topic such as an obscure citation,

it reinforces to tutees that *even experienced writers ask for help*. When tutees witness this collaboration, they encounter writing as a dynamic process, in which communication and listening promote a healthy writing journey.

Actively acknowledging the needs of tutees is important in the writing center; however, it is equally as crucial to understand how tutoring effects tutors' writing. Hughes et al. relate the power tutoring has on establishing a connection between the "writer's self and the writer's words" so that tutors discern this dynamic in their own writing and in others' (25). Writing center tutors learn more about who they are as writers by working with peers. Vocalizing their own writing processes helps tutors to further grasp their writing knowledge and authority. As Hughes et al. note, "By working in a reflective and respectful way with others, [tutors] experience their own writing process from an entirely new perspective" (25). Working with diverse tutees enables tutors to consider different writing perspectives, whether that includes new ideas on culture, race, politics, religion, etc. In turn, they can then add these techniques to their various writing explanations when working in the center and to their own writing assignments. It is in the writing center in which "every student and tutor deserve feeling a sense of belonging while, at the same time, feeling safe to embrace and express their multidimensional identities" (Edalathishams & Muhammad 99). By writing, and talking about writing, tutors and tutees are encouraged to explore their identities and perspectives. Doing so allots tutors with a plethora of writing techniques, ones that can be utilized not only to help tutees but that can also be applied to tutors' own assignments. When these new tutoring techniques are used, tutors discover their various tutoring styles, which can be adjusted for each tutee and assignment.

Through various tutoring styles, tutors relay learned information in new ways to tutees, thus giving them fresh perspectives outside of the classroom. In his work, "Someone to Watch

Over Me: Reflection and Authority in the Writing Center," Michael Mattison notes that, "In the writing center, where every consultation is unique, I cannot claim a 'best method' approach to working with writers" (44). Every tutor will have a separate approach to working with tutees, and each assignment will differ due to the professor's guidelines and content. Tutors must be prepared to try new techniques, as every session varies.

Tutors use their voices and past experiences to connect with tutees and their writing needs. Bromley et al. refer to these techniques as such: "By promoting rhetorical awareness, tutors, like instructors, help challenge student-writers to draw conclusions from difficult and sometimes conflicting information" (3). Tutors attempt to achieve rhetorical awareness in a space that erases the stress of the classroom, and their authority stems from the fact that they understand and have had similar experiences with writing, professors, and assignments. Because they are not peers, professors are seen by students as having separate writing authority. Students may acknowledge their professors as the final judges of their writing, not as individuals who will aid them in the writing process, even though some professors may encourage students to reach out to them for writing help. Students may consider their professors to be at separate levels or even too busy to assist them, and they may regard professors as individuals they need to impress. A disconnection exists, as students believe that their professors cannot connect to them as writers in the same way as writing center tutors can. Tutors help tutees to discover writing processes in the center, where grades are not given and the expectations are more relaxed because they are peers with similar experiences.

As tutors develop the tutoring style that works best for them, they are additionally strengthening their writing authority. However, within the writing center, tutors and tutees are both increasing their writing authority; as tutors learn that their writing knowledge is credible,

tutees also learn that what they write truly does matter. According to Orsini and Kleinman, "the importance of both the writing center and the writing process itself as a space of personal and academic growth, where the development of authority over one's own writing is born" (5). Tutors and tutees are in a space where they can engage with writing on their own terms. Students may believe that professors only want to see finished products, and they hesitate to engage with their professors outside of the allotted classroom time. In the center, tutors and tutees disclose ideas through judgement-free conversations outside of the stress of the classroom, professors, and other peers. Orsini and Kleinman state that tutors actively listen to the vulnerabilities and anxieties of tutees (8-9). Not only do tutors listen to their tutees, but they are acknowledging writing in new ways. Orsini and Kleinman refer to writing center sessions as the following:

> we see the tutorial interaction [. . .] as a vessel through which tutors can gain new access to their own burgeoning writerly and human identities as global tutors and global citizens engaging in work that will allow the tutors themselves to discover and identify important nuances within themselves. The act of tutoring allows tutors to develop their own crafts, ideas, voices, visions, vocational aspirations, social and spiritual beliefs. (2)

Tutors discover their own senses of self, thus forging their tutoring identity during sessions. The writing center experience enables both writers—tutee and tutor—to develop their skills, their identities, and their writing, together.

Even when collaborating effectively, there are moments in which tutors must refer their tutees to their professors for further assistance. Tutors cannot be expected to answer every question that tutees may have, and they want tutees to discover the best writing practices. Encouraging tutees to meet with their professors shows tutees the importance of office hours and conversing with more than one person about their writing. Orsini and Kleinman write, "this writing space is also about acknowledging *how we can help* without diminishing one's authority, experience, or trauma" (5). While tutors want to assist, they also know that writing is ultimately in the hands of the tutees. Entering the writing center is, typically, optional for tutees, who can,

and should, engage with their professors about writing outside of the classroom. When tutors

recommend that tutees visit their professors for writing assistance, it fuses the collaboration of

both the writing center and professors. If writing is a journey, there needs to be multiple stops

along the way, which proves to tutees that writing is dynamic and not a solo operation. Tutors

must establish a balancing act: one of using their writing authority and knowing when the help

tutees need is more than what they can offer as tutors.

In the following research, a tutor assists a tutee who is simultaneously working with their

professor to improve their own writing. As part of a collaborative study, Elizabeth Maffetone and

Rachel McCabe write together as instructor and writing center tutor with a "mutual investment in

putting student learning and agency before personal authority" (53). Separately, they worked

with the same tutee. During office hours, McCabe conferenced with the student and asked them

about the direction of their writing in order to encourage the student to make writing goals (57).

Meanwhile, Maffetone would instruct him from a writing center tutor viewpoint, using different

tutoring strategies and reinforcing that the tutee's voice is the one that matters in his paper. The

tutee would alternate between Maffetone and McCabe, even asking for one's opinion on the

other's comments. At one point, "[Maffetone] would reinforce [McCabe's] authority and

expertise, noting that [McCabe], as the instructor, may have different priorities than [Maffetone]

did, and that the best course of action would be to speak further with her about such conflicts"

(58). Their goal was to place "the decision-making authority onto the student" (58). The tutee,

now aware of the difference between writing center, classroom, and office hours, still actively

arrived at all three locations, but the difference was that he was now aware of himself as a writer

(59). In this example, the professor and tutor have a common goal: help the tutee understand the

power of their own writing. Orsini and Kleinman note that "as educators our job is not only to

help but also to *listen* and *reflect* on voice and vulnerability" (5). This interaction from Maffetone and McCabe with their tutee/student should be sought out by professors in the classroom and during office hours and then additionally amplified by writing center tutors and directors within the writing center.

Furthermore, professors must be aware of writing center tutors' roles and what writing assistance they give to tutees. If professors are unaware of what happens in the writing center, then their students will be hesitant to utilize the center. When professors make assumptions about tutoring, like that tutors are proofreaders or a paper can be edited by a tutor and returned to the tutee without conversational engagement, it can negatively influence tutees. Additionally, if given only negative feedback about their tutoring abilities from tutees' professors, tutors doubt themselves as writers, students, and tutors. For example, imagine a tutee handing in a paper and getting a bad grade. Their professor inquires with the tutee which tutor they had in the writing center. This professor then contacts the center's director, complaining about the tutor and not asking questions about the tutoring process. The professor does not give the tutor the ability to explain their tutoring style and assumes that all of the center's tutors give advice similarly. This professor no longer recommends that their students go to the center and, perhaps, tells their class to avoid the center and only use classmates for writing help. Additionally, the director inquires with the tutor about the session, and the tutor explains how the tutee was not engaged or the tutee did not write down any recommendations and left the session. The tutor felt as if the tutee did not understand their advice, and they may have misunderstood the tutor's recommendations. If there are concerns with their students' assignments after they have visited the writing center, then professors should inquire directly with tutors and their director(s) about how sessions are performed. In the end, the communication between professor, director, tutee, and tutor fails to

exist in a collaborative way. If these negativities exist about the writing center, then tutors will lack the confidence to promote the center and feel as if their work does not actually matter.

When professors encounter tutors as their students, it is equally important that they regard the tutors as writers, who still have the capacity to learn more about the writing process. In Geller et al.'s work, they address the following: "When we think of our tutors as writers and talk about our tutors' writing lives, we're that much more likely to encourage them to work as writers in their writing center conferences" (73). The feedback that tutors receive from their professors as student writers influences their tutoring. If professors treat their tutor-students as insufficient writers, they then will believe that they are also poor tutors.

Open communication between professors and tutors establishes collaboration so that tutees are held accountable and tutors are understood. Both tutees and tutors need to be seen as writers and humans, ones capable of making mistakes and ones who seek reassurance than they are writers. It is vital that professors engage with tutors to "remind them that they do understand the choices writers make and they do need to (and are encouraged to) help their peers (and maybe their faculty) understand the choices writers make" (Geller et al. 73). By doing so, professors show tutors that they are aware that tutors are not "fix-it-all" or "one-stop-shops" for writing mistakes. Tutors need reminders that their tutoring actions are beneficial to tutees, so that they can improve their tutoring styles if needed. If professors are offered opportunities to sit in on faculty-only information sessions, then it might help them to understand writing center tutoring better. These sessions would provide moments for tutors to interact with professors and explain their roles, knowledge, and tutoring styles. When collaboration exists with professors, tutors will feel more confident in their tutoring roles and writing authorities.

Because a tutor's authority is also reflective of their own confidence, professors must avoid removing writing authority from tutors. If professors speak negatively of the writing center, dismiss a tutor's advice, or grade a tutee based off a tutor's suggestions, then the tutor loses authority. Carino notes the danger of depriving the tutor of authority, as it becomes unethical in certain situations (98). Even though they are not professors and are not giving their tutees grades, tutors still possess writing authority at the tutorial level. Their advice and suggestions are strictly advice and suggestions. Without the tutor's authority, the center would fail to meet tutees where they are, as peers guiding peers. As Carino points out, "Writing centers can ill afford to pretend power and authority do not exist, given the important responsibility they have for helping students achieve their own authority as writers in a power laden environment such as the university" (115). When professors speak positively of the writing center, the center establishes its place within the university as a vital resource for students. Tutors must be seen as writers with authority, so that their jobs are secured and that tutees continue to receive assistance from a functioning and funded writing center.

Tutors must blossom as tutors, students, and writers. Their writing authority strengthens as they become better writers and as they experience more tutoring sessions. When they observe their writing center coworkers, tutors discover their own tutoring styles, which influences their tutoring identities. Tutoring is closely intertwined with the tutor's sense of self and the way they write, so they must be offered reassurance that they are writers who are also capable tutors by both their directors and professors. Through active and rhetorical listening, communication, and collaboration, tutors prove, not only to their coworkers and professors but also to themselves, that they have the skill sets that define their tutoring roles. By establishing good communication with the writing center, professors must work actively to understand the goals and techniques of

writing center tutors. Tutors and professors must collaborate to ensure that tutees have the most beneficial writing experiences. As tutors discover who they are as writers and tutors, they gain confidence and further promote writing's dynamic journey.

Section 3: Emotional Labor in the Center: Tutors Discover Their Agencies

As they gain experience, writing center tutors know when their voices have left impressions on their tutees. With robust topics and content to read, tutors encounter sensitive material, whether personal narratives or scientific data. Reading tutees' work that challenges norms, morals, and ethics may weigh down the mental and emotional wellbeing of tutors, thus directly adding to tutors' emotional labor. Tutors must learn how their writing authority influences tutees, so that their agencies guide tutees toward successful writing outcomes and lessens the weight of tutors' emotional labor while on the job. Being aware of emotional wellness for tutors will enable directors to better communicate with them. An open atmosphere within the writing center encourages a sense of wellbeing and the recognition that tutors need to voice their experiences and how they are affected by their sessions. Emotional labor affects writing center tutors as they are expected to take on their many roles, all while being college students. Tutors must use their agency, or one's sense of control or power about writing, to discuss challenging topics. They advocate for tutees to find their writing voices and to feel more confident engaging with critical thoughts and ideas. Tutors must define their writing voices on their own terms, as they discover their tutoring identities and styles. Using rhetorical approaches, tutors further develop their agency, so that they can encourage tutees to discover their own.

Start scenes. Imagine sitting down with a tutee who has started sobbing uncontrollably. The tutor cannot get a word through in between the tutee's sobs. Eventually, the sobs end. The tutee shares that a parent has recently died, and they have chosen to write about their death.

Change the scene. Imagine a tutor explaining how to form a thesis statement when suddenly the tutee gets mad at the tutor, exclaiming, "My professor didn't mention a thesis. I don't need one. How do I fix the rest of this?" The tutee refuses to listen to what the tutor has to say, which mainly revolves around a thesis, as the paper has no clear direction.

Change the scene. Imagine a female tutor is listening to a male tutee explain their paper's content. The tutor shares that she has experience with the content. The tutee ignores her and does what is called "mansplaining" to her about the content they both understand. The tutor attempts to reign in the conversation to no avail.

Change the scene. Imagine picking up as many hours as possible at the writing center. The tutor is paid minimum wage and lives off campus. The tutor has limited support from family and needs to buy their own groceries. The tutor is undergoing their hardest semester yet and is taking the most credits needed so that they graduate on time. The tutor has not been able to eat yet today because they need to save their money for bills.

Change the scene. Imagine that the tutor has arrived for their shift, having just failed an exam that is most of their grade. Their cat is sick at home, and they have limited funds for vet bills. The center is busy. One tutee after another comes in looking for assistance. The tutor can barely focus on reading because they are so overwhelmed at the thoughts of their ailing pet and failed exam.

Change the scene. Imagine that a tutee arrives at the center and demands that the tutor write their paper for them. "Isn't that what this place is? A *writing* center?" the tutee gripes, as the tutors on duty attempt to explain what the writing center is for and what they do not do. The tutee storms out of the center instead.

Change the scene. Imagine that a professor is emailing the center, claiming that the tutors have enabled a tutee to plagiarize. The tutee has returned to the center, and the tutors realize that most of the paper is word-for-word plagiarized from multiple websites. The tutee is struggling to understand what is wrong. They are worried about being kicked out of the university, and they keep stressing this fear to the tutor, who is trying to come up with a plan for the tutee. The tutee continues to state how they cannot fail this paper. The tutor has run out of feasible options to give the tutee, who is too anxious to listen to the tutor's words.

End the scenes. Imagine being the tutors in these fictional, yet very plausible, scenes from above—how are the situations solved? How does the tutor push aside their own anxieties? How does the tutor continue their job during these stressful moments? Each scene is very different, and the answers to these scenarios all depend on the type of tutor experiencing each situation. Each tutor will handle moments like these differently, but it is safe to assume that the tutor's emotional wellbeing would be jolted if they were encountering these scenarios.

Being aware of the emotional strain that tutors may experience will better equip writing center directors to discuss these situations during tutor training and in future tutoring sessions. Simmons et al. note that, "Although experienced tutors know their work can be emotionally draining and stressful, current research does not fully investigate these experiences" (18). While not all situations can be prevented, tutors must not feel alone in experiencing mentally exhausting situations. Simmons et al. have found that tutors are most affected by the following: "self-imposed high performance expectations, weak papers, and 'problem' students (i.e., students who were demanding or rude)" (18). Therefore, emotional strain happens because of a mix of encounters, whether from tutees or from within the tutors' own lives. Reassuring tutors of their good performance and room for improvement may help tutors to feel less stressed. Reinforcing

that it is not the tutors' jobs to "fix" the tutees' writing completely additionally tells tutors that they are doing their job correctly. "Weak papers" and "problem students" are out of tutors' control. Knowing how to best handle these situations, whether by mock sessions or reflection, may encourage tutors rather than stress them more.

In "The Emotional Sponge: Perceived Reasons for Emotionally Laborious Sessions and Coping Strategies of Peer Writing Tutors" authors Hohjin Im et al. explore the roles that stress and emotional labor have on writing center tutors. They note that, "Tutors generally reported more negative emotions than positive ones" (203). While writing center tutors look to help fellow peers with their writing, their own emotions may prevent them from seeing the good they are adding to the university community, as well as the positive impact they have on tutees. Im et al. Write, "it is common for writers to visit writing centers asking for services that go beyond what is provided by the tutors, and these misconceptions can be sources of frustration for both writers and tutors" (205). These "services" may include tutees asking tutors to rewrite sentences and paragraphs for them, asking that their citations be written for them, or asking to interpret exactly what their professors' comments mean—none of which are legitimate services provided at university writing centers. Acknowledging sessions' positive results may be difficult for tutors, who may encounter negative emotions or requests for incompatible services daily. Frustrated tutees arrive, unload their emotions about classes, professors, assignments, and personal issues onto tutors, who want to focus on writing assistance. Commonly, Im et al. note that tutees tend to ask for editing and proofreading (205), which lead tutors to continually explain their roles to tutees, who may be frustrated at not receiving these services. Redirecting tutees to appropriate conversations and writing topics becomes repetitive, causing more stress for tutors.

In addition to their rising stress levels, tutors are expected to stay professional, much like nurses and teachers. They must adhere to writing-centered conversations with tutees and avoid veering off topic. Im et al. note that tutors must maintain their emotional displays in a professional manner (206). When told to hide their emotions behind walls, tutors no longer show their humanity. Tutors' roles become robotic: tell the tutee what areas to work on, make suggestions, send tutees on their way, start the next session. Recall the third workplace pressure mentioned in chapter one: continue the workplace's flow that has already been previously established. In order to keep the center functioning per the demands of the workplace pressures, personal writing journeys are put on hold, preventing tutors and tutees from having dynamic collaboration. Instead of tutees being adequately assisted and improving their writing processes, sessions become an assembly line—how many sessions can tutors get through to increase the number of tutees entering the center, rather than how many tutees are truly engaged in an influential and productive writing environment. The peer-level relationship is destroyed in such scenarios, as tutors do not have time to connect with their tutees emotionally or mentally. When tutors are stressed, the true meaning of their writing-centered jobs does not exist; their self-doubts about job performance surfaces, and they believe that their work truly does not matter.

When tutors are overcome with self-doubt, they have a difficult time fulfilling their work duties. Their performance may falter, causing them to feel even worse about their ability to tutor. Finding the small successes of writing center work may be hard for them. These successes may be as small as sending positive emails to tutees' professors or giving tutees resources for better visualizations of tutors' explanations. Hall notes that, "While some tutors are vocal about their successes, others beat themselves up. When that happens, I point out what seemed effective to me. Rather than list defects in tutoring, I tend to ask consultants to reflect on their performance:

'Tell me your reasoning for…'" ("Valued Practices" 28). When tutors are asked to reflect on their sessions and their actions, they become more aware of what they have done correctly, what went wrong, or how they can improve in the future. Hall remarks that even when tutors appear to have authority in a session, they still tend to reflect on their sessions with self-doubt ("An Activity Theory" 53). Self-doubt cannot be resolved in one conversation, so tutors should reflect often and discuss difficult sessions with their directors and each other when possible and appropriate. Additionally, having collaborative relationships with their coworkers will have a positive effect on tutors' self-doubt and their perceptions of their own tutoring abilities.

Stressors such as confidence levels and perceptions of their roles directly affect tutors. Simmons et al. point out that, "It is also possible that a tutor's perception of a session's effectiveness influences their stress levels" (23). While not every tutor may think twice about a finished session, some tutors may reflect on the times in which they felt like they never helped tutees. They begin to worry about how to avoid being "bad tutors" in the next session without realizing that every session is a fresh start. They need to remember that they do, in fact, know their roles as writing center tutors. Shay and Shay establish that "tutors need to present themselves as a player, someone who knows the rules of the game (in this case the policies and directives of the writing center) and someone who is able to apply those rules to a variety of workplace situations" (166-167). If tutors remember their roles and the importance of their work, they should recall that each tutee will have different needs and perceptions of writing center sessions. With writing being so personal, each writing center session is a fresh start for both tutees and tutors. Within sessions, tutors have opportunities to improve themselves as tutors and integrate new tutoring styles to their repertoires. Tutors' perceptions have major effects on their emotional wellbeing, which needs to be at the forefront of tutor wellness.

Tutors may not always divulge to their writing center directors when they encounter stressful sessions. Helping tutors realize that there are multiple types of challenges faced during daily writing center sessions will help communication grow between tutors and directors. Directors must be aware that, "tutors may face difficult tutoring situations they struggle to let go of emotionally before the next tutee arrives or they leave for the day" (Shay & Shay 177). Having multiple tutors available during timeslots will aid in the stress of back-to-back sessions, whenever possible. However, some sessions may leave tutors drained, causing them to heavily focus on their feelings of emotional toil. Encouraging stress-relief moments, like giving tutors breaks to stretch their legs or walk away from the center for a little bit, may help them to decompress. By helping one tutor overcome some of their challenges, directors will have better tactics for future and fellow tutors. Tutors must be aware of potential stressors and might be able to combat the stressors early-on rather than letting stress fester. As tutors understand their stressors and strengthen their communication skills, they will have better control over their sessions as seasoned tutors, ones who uses their agencies to engage with their tutees.

Finding and using one's agency does not happen suddenly; it is molded over time and throughout each tutoring session. Since every tutor has a different cultural background, tutors may have different perspectives on how to utilize their agencies. In *Writing Centers and the New Racism*, authors Laura Greenfield and Karen Rowan delve into the complexities of writing centers, racism, and the political nature of the two. They write that "our job as students and as educators is to recognize our agency within the power dynamics that shape our institutions and societies and to critically and actively resist injustices" (125). In this research, tutors' agencies are directly connected to their ability to speak up against injustices, whether in writing or within the university. The authors continue, "In short, we approach writing center work with the

conviction that our efforts, individually and collectively, can and should change the world"
(125). Tutors discover that *how* they choose to respond within sessions directly influences how
they tutor writing. By encountering individuals of various backgrounds, cultures, languages,
races, etc., tutors become aware of the world around them and how writing affects other
individuals and society. Reading tutees' words and offering them different perspectives allows
tutors to actively speak against injustices and correct wrongs within written discourse. This type
of confidence with writing does not emerge from every tutor, but critical conversations within
the center will promote further discussion and change outside the walls of the university.

As challenging conversations take place between tutees and tutors, writing bonds them
together. Through writing, tutors have developed their agencies and have learned that their words
have meaning. By showing tutees the power behind their words, tutors' agencies become
evident, and they pass this confidence onto their tutees. Greenfield and Rowan note that by doing
so, a collaboration forms so that both tutors and tutees have impacts on the world, and in the
moment—within the writing center (127). Greenfield and Rowan call for educational, rather than
training, courses for tutors in order to empower them (126-127). They note that by "Drawing on
critical pedagogy, we answer by saying that we seek to empower tutors with critical lenses
through which to interrogate their world and to explore and understand their own agency;
understanding their own agency is critical to their ability to help writers do the same" (127). The
more writing tutors read, the more they question their stances on larger issues within society, like
issues of gender, race, religion, etc. Tutors then must put their own views aside to converse with
tutees, who need to consider the audience(s) that their writing might affect. When tutees question
their writing's large purpose, tutors have shown them the importance of their writing voices.

They have demonstrated to their tutees that they need to take a stance, have a voice on critical topics, and utilize their agencies in confident ways through writing.

Conversations concerning critical topics can be challenging, as tutors never know how tutees will respond. In their chapter within *CounterStories from the Writing Center*, Nicole Caswell focuses on the power and privileges noted in the writing center from a white, patriarchal viewpoint—that "writing centers are cozy for *some*. Welcoming for *some*. Supportive for *some* . . . that *some* is the white, middle-class, heteronormative writer" (109). Not every tutee who walks through the doors of the writing center feels comfortable. They may not feel as if they belong within the halls of the university, nor may they like writing about topics that challenge others' ideas and perspectives. When conversations incorporate race, ethnicity, gender, etc., tutors use their voices to establish the importance of recognizing these groups. Unaware of tutees' writing prior to them arriving at the writing center, tutors can never be completely ready to have these types of discussions with tutees. They do not have time to prepare the conversations, nor do they necessarily know the tutees on personal levels, which may prevent tutors from saying all that they believe should be said. Being aware of their individual agency enables tutors to gage their own comfortability with incorporating these discussions within their tutoring sessions. While not every tutee will take their advice or want to hear an opposing viewpoint, tutors must try to be prepared to venture into more sensitive topics.

Due to the wide range of conversations that can happen in tutoring sessions, some scholars have identified the writing center with that of a Burkean parlor. In the article, "Kairotic Situations: A Spatial Rethinking of the Burkean Parlor in the Writing Center," Elizabeth Buskerus explains that the Burkean parlor is where conversation takes place as others enter the center, listen to the conversations, and then also engage with the discourses (15). Additionally,

Busekrus describes the parlor as such: "definition of identity for the writer, expansion of knowledge in a discipline, and sharing of thoughts within a discourse community" (15). When tutors and tutees converse on writing within the center, the Burkean parlor takes hold, as many conversations about writing have occurred and will continue to occur. Knowledge is passed back and forth, learning takes place, and thoughts are shared in a communal space.

Yet, these moments within the parlor—or the center—depend on the *kairos*, or opportune moment of it all (Busekrus 15). Using the rhetorical concept of *kairos*, tutors have the ability to look at the entire tutoring scenario and know how to proceed. Sherwood writes, "A tutor who has developed a keen sensitivity to *kairos* is more likely than those without this sensitivity to read a situation well enough to determine the most appropriate response to a particular student writer's work" (58). By using *kairos* within a collaborative environment, tutors enable their agencies and conduct difficult discussions with tutees. There might be moments when more than one tutor is needed to intervene in a challenging conversation so as to truly get to the core of the writing concern. Other times, tutors may need to unveil other tutoring styles to reach tutees where they are. Busekrus notes the following, "Tutors must identify what to say and when (and sometimes not to say anything). This knowledge comes from paying attention to the student's verbal and nonverbal language and level of engagement. Tutors are taught flexibility, but *Kairos* invokes more awareness to reach the 'light bulb' moment" (15). Reaching the "light bulb moment" may occur when tutors speak directly to tutees about the personal nature of their writing; by emphasizing tutees' voices in their writing, tutors unveil the larger purpose of the writing overall (16). These breakthrough moments reinforce tutors' agencies, and they become aware of the impact of their words. Sometimes the light bulb moment does not happen, and in those

situations, tutors should not feel unfulfilled. They have gained experiences that they can use with other tutees, because they now know that their wording and explanations are valuable tools.

Prior to tutoring sessions, writing center tutors may not have needed to guide another student towards a writing breakthrough. Impacting another student's writing has most likely been reserved for teachers and professors to have done thus far in their educational experiences. Now in the realm of tutoring, tutors are expected to give feedback to peers that they are not necessarily used to receiving themselves. Hughes et al. believe that:

> . . . peer tutors take on an agency that's often lacking in their own classroom learning and in peer-review activities. Peer tutors are entrusted, often for one of the first times in their many years as students, with responsibility for guiding someone else's development and even learning, and they face a wide variety of writers and challenging writing situations, situations involving real writing with real consequences, over sustained periods of time. (36-37)

Entrusted with such responsibility, tutors must utilize their agencies to further prove their writing authorities to themselves and to their tutees. These situations may cause tutors' emotional and mental wellbeing to be disrupted. Caswell writes that, "our experiences of emotional labor are entangled with our identities" (115). Tutors are faced with defending their identities, all while maintaining their writing authority and advocating for their beliefs. When their identities are questioned by tutees' writing, tutors must stay reserved but also use their authority to politely challenge tutees to think about their topics and ideas in different ways.

Tutors must gain confidence in their individual tutoring identities, as they encounter emotional labor daily and in most sessions. They must put aside their own emotions and enter the tutee's world through their writing, thus learning multiple facets of tutees' lives in a short amount of time. Not only are they hearing about papers, assignments, and classes, but tutors are also introduced to tutees' writing habits, their likes and dislikes, their opinions on classes and professors, and their challenges and successes. Tutors may analyze writing, but they are truly

assessing the tutees in front of them. If tutors are in the center for several hours, then they must reset each time with each tutee and go through the process over and over. Working in the writing center becomes more than a job, it becomes a profession. From the technical aspects to the emotional labor, writing center tutors are molded into complex individuals with a unique set of skills, ones that make them capable writers and confident adults, who are learning to utilize their voices in a challenging world.

Writing center tutors work in an emotionally laborious field. Learning how to handle tough situations cannot be easily taught, nor will all tutors admit to being stressed by their writing center roles. Preparing tutors for the possibilities of being stressed or having self-doubt will make them conscious of these moments. Group discussion could be a beneficial tactic for helping tutors maneuver highly stressful or uncomfortable situations. Encouraging tutors to reflect on their sessions and their personal perceptions aids them to see the importance of their roles. The emotional and mental wellbeing of tutors must be maintained so that the writer, human, and student within each tutor is nourished and reminded of their importance within the writing center. Through a mix of awareness, *kairos*, and confidence, tutors' voices encourage tutees to use their writing agencies. By doing so, tutors develop their own agencies to discuss the writing's challenges. Tutors must have the willpower to confront ideas and thoughts within the classroom and in society, all while preserving their own emotional and mental wellbeing and staying professional. While tutoring can initiate some uncomfortable conversations, tutors learn how their writing authority molds them into critically thinking adults, who have the agency to empower others. The success and continuation of the university writing center ultimately depends on the wellbeing of its tutors.

Chapter 3: Hearing Directly from Current and Former Writing Center Tutors

Section 1: Purpose of Study

Writing center scholars, such as Geller et al. and Orsini and Kleinman, have focused on tutees' wellbeing and outcomes for the advancement of writing center practices. Geller et al.'s book, *The Everyday Writing Center*, from 2007 consists of opportunities tutors have to create a community of practice in which they learn together and overcome challenges. As writing center scholars, these five authors have discussed their personal experiences working with tutors and how they have witnessed dynamic tutors at work. In 2022, editors Orsini and Kleinman compiled stories from international writing center tutors in *Student Writing Tutors in Their Own Words: Global Voices on Writing Centers and Beyond*. Broken into three acts, the editors have provided tutors' personal narratives consisting of how tutors help, their voices, and the creation of writing center communities. While these two scholarly pieces are fifteen years apart, the authors and editors have displayed the ongoing need for community and collaboration to be established within writing centers and amongst tutors. Hearing directly from tutors about their experiences will ultimately guide writing center studies toward beneficial practices. Speaking with tutors, surveying them, and questioning their experiences helps advance and focus tutor training, teaches tutors destressing tools, and promotes helpful tutoring session tactics. Each tutor encounters different situations which mold them into the person, the tutor, and the writer they are. As tutors observe their coworkers, they discover new ways to handle their writing authority and how to define and shape their tutoring identities. In order to strengthen tutor pedagogy and promote healthy tutor wellbeing, writing center scholars must examine tutors' experiences with tutees, professors, and themselves.

Sharing anecdotal data gives tutors the opportunity to explain the complexity of their roles, attitudes, and viewpoints. In the article entitled, "Can We Change Their Minds? Investigating an Embedded Tutor's Influence on Students' Mindsets and Writing," Laura K. Miller addresses that, "Several writing center scholars who have studied tutees' attitudes and behaviors have used questionnaires and surveys as their primary research methods, establishing precedence in the literature for using self-reported data" (108). When this type of data is gathered, tutors' words can reach other writing center tutors, thus leaving impressions on those who may be experiencing self-doubt, lack of confidence, etc. in their tutoring roles. Miller notes that "tutors can promote growth-minded views of writing by asking students about their writing beliefs and inviting them to reflect on moments of growth in their lives" (120). Yet, these questions also apply to tutors' relationships with their own writing and the ways in which they tutor. Engaging with tutors through their experiences allows for reflection to occur. When tutors know that other tutors face similar circumstances and emotions, they realize that they are not alone in their experiences.

With this research, the Principal Investigator's main goal is to explore the development of writing center tutors' voices, their understanding of how their voices are heard, and their experiences within the center. In the Fall semester of 2022, current and former tutors were surveyed and interviewed about their experiences as writing center tutors. By investigating tutor roles, their senses of authority, and any tutoring challenges or helpful anecdotes, the researcher hopes to bring awareness to the experiences and voices of writing center tutors. Additionally, the researcher would like to answer the following questions through qualitative data: How do writing center tutors advocate for their voices to be heard when they question their own writing authorities? How can writing center tutor training practices acknowledge tutors' wellbeing so

that tutors incorporate advocacy, agency, and voice in their tutoring identities and practices? How have former and current writing center tutors dealt with challenges and are their solutions similar? Answering these questions will promote further discussion on best writing center practices and pedagogy.

Section 2: Methodology

An individual Principal Investigator conducted this research at Kutztown University (KU), in rural Kutztown, Pennsylvania. KU is a four-year university, consisting of undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral programs. At KU, both undergraduates and graduate assistants are eligible to tutor at the Kutztown Writing Center (KUWC). The KUWC offers in-person and online tutoring sessions in which a tutee meets one-on-one with a tutor for either fifteen- or thirty-minute conferences. The KUWC is not a proofreading center. The tutors are trained to encourage conversation, explore tutees' writing concerns, and offer engaging feedback. Typically, there are four graduate assistants, one of whom is the writing center manager, and several undergraduate tutors available to work in the center. These tutors come from a variety of majors, not solely English or Writing programs, and all of them are at different points within their degree requirements.

During the Fall semester of 2022, sixteen tutors who currently work or have worked at the KUWC were contacted to participate in the study. Of the sixteen tutors, five were former tutors (FT), and the other eleven were current tutors (CT). The Principal Investigator wished to gage how tutors have dealt with tutoring challenges and to see if former and current tutors' experiences aligned with each other. Hearing from both groups would highlight tutors' voices of the past while acknowledging the current nature of the writing center. Of these sixteen tutors,

their pronouns range from she, him, and they, so for the purpose of this study, all tutors will be referred to with they/them pronouns to ensure anonymity.

To begin the study, an Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was needed as human subjects were being analyzed. An application with all materials needed for the study was sent to the Kutztown IRB. Materials included IRB application, informed consent, introduction email, current tutors survey and interview, former tutors survey and interview, and Collaborative Institutional Training Initiate Certifications for both the Principal Investigator and the Thesis Advisor. All materials can be found in the appendix. This research has been approved by the Kutztown University IRB – approval #05092022. In total, CT data has been collected from six and a half surveys and five interviews. The "half" survey only completed the Likert scale section, as detailed below. For FT, three tutors fully answered their surveys and went through the interview process. From both current and former tutors, nine and a half surveys and eight interviews were collected in total.

To begin the data collection, the sixteen tutors were emailed in October 2022 with the introduction email. If they replied, they then received informed consents, which could be digitally signed or printed out, signed, and re-uploaded and sent back to the Principal Investigator. Within the informed consents, tutors were told the purpose of the study, how the study would be performed, and that the study would remain confidential. There was no compensation for the study, and all participation would be voluntary. Once informed consent was received, the tutors were then sent either the Current Tutors Survey or the Former Tutors Survey. Emails were sent to check in with the tutors if they needed more time, had questions, or needed a deadline for the return of the survey. In December 2022, the Principal Investigator did attend one KUWC tutoring meeting via Zoom. The Thesis Advisor left the Zoom so that the

Principal Investigator could inquire with the tutors if they had any questions or concerns about the survey and/or interview. All information was kept confidential.

Surveys consisted of two parts: a Likert scale section and an essay section. At the end of each of the surveys, the tutor would mark "yes" or "no" to being interviewed. Upon receiving their surveys, the Principal Investigator would check this question and then set up a meeting time and date for interviews with the tutor. Interviews were either conducted at the Kutztown University Library in an enclosed and secluded study room or online via Zoom. Tutors were reminded that their interviews were to be kept confidential and that if completing via Zoom, they should be alone and not around other individuals. The differences in both current and former tutors' surveys and interviews were mainly the questions' verbiage and wording.

Interviews for current and former tutors consisted of fourteen questions. Per materials sent to the Kutztown IRB, interviews had the possibility of additional conversational questions which could happen naturally. None of the interviews went beyond forty minutes. Interviews were recorded via the Principal Investigator's cell phone audio recording and Zoom recording. Interviews were transcribed by the Principal Investigator. The Principal Investigator would remind the tutors during the interviews that only the Principal Investigator was aware of their answers. For ethical purposes, each tutor would receive pseudonyms, only known to the Principal Investigator. Within the Results section, the Principal Investigator has kept the original wording from the tutors, except for any bracketed areas which aide in comprehension and grammar of the tutors' statements. Previously, student writers were referred to as tutees, but during the results of the study, tutees will be referred to as students.

At the completion of this study, all materials and files gathered from surveys and interviews will have been destroyed by the Principal Investigator, per the conditions of the

Kutztown IRB. Analyzation of this qualitative data will consist of the Principal Investigator identifying trends or deviations in the stories of the tutors. Their experiences may be the same or different and may directly or indirectly affect the research questions stated in the above section, Purpose of the Study. Results will be differentiated between current and former tutors. To avoid research bias, the Principal Investigator's written work is to be analyzed by the Thesis Advisor and two Thesis Readers prior to the completed version of this study.

Section 3: Results

The results of the study are divided into the following sections: Survey – Likert Scale Results, Survey – Essay Results, and Interview Results. The results are a mixture of indirect and direct quotations from current and former tutors. Each section has been subdivided into Tutor Training, Tutoring Sessions, and Tutor Stress to better outline the results. Tutor Training sections will primarily focus on tutors' thoughts on their training experiences or other trainings they would like available to them in the writing center. Tutoring Sessions focuses on authority, tutors' voices, and how they have dealt with challenges during sessions. Tutor Stress sections cover emotional labor within the writing center and how tutors view their roles and themselves. Commentary is provided from the Principal Investigator throughout the results with more available in chapter four.

Survey – Likert Scale Results

Within the Current and Former Tutors Surveys, the tutors were asked a total of forty-one questions across three sections. Their answers could be chosen as: Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Undecided (3), Agree (4), and Strongly Agree (5). Within the survey's written essay section, both groups of tutors, current tutors (CT) and former tutors (FT) were asked to explain their Undecided (3) answers to any of the Likert scale questions.

Tutor Training

Within the Current and Former Tutors Surveys, the Tutor Training section consisted of sixteen questions involving writing center tutor training, resources, director and coworker relationships, tutoring styles, and writing center information. Of the seven current tutors' surveys, most tutors agreed that they received adequate writing center tutoring training, while two disagreed with this question. Yet, all CT agreed that they would be interested in more tutor training options. Except for one disagreement and one undecided vote, most CT concurred that more could be learned about their roles as writing center tutors. The CT were aware that different tutoring styles and approaches exist, and all except one undecided tutor felt comfortable trying out new tutoring styles and approaches. With one exception, the CT felt that they were provided with tutoring resources at the KUWC. Meanwhile, the three former tutors who turned in their surveys agreed that they felt adequately trained as KUWC tutors. Two FT were strongly aware that other tutoring styles and approaches existed, while the third tutor did not answer this question. These results indicate that former tutors recall a positive experience with training at the KUWC, while current tutors are aware of their training options and approaches, but they feel like more training could be incorporated into each semester.

Both current and former tutors have experienced tutor monthly meetings, which are meant to address any tutor concerns, projects within or outside the center, or new ideas that the center can incorporate that affects tutors and tutees. During these meetings, all seven CT either agreed or strongly agreed that their voices were heard. Asked if they gained access to more tutoring information during monthly meetings, CT felt undecided. Jordan disclosed that they felt that monthly meetings were "helpful for housecleaning, but not really on *how* to tutor." Two FT agreed that staff meetings were beneficial for more tutoring information, while one tutor

disagreed. All three FT felt that their voices were heard during these meetings. Monthly meetings offer all tutors the chance to share tutoring concerns, and while tutors have felt heard during these meetings, they have found that meetings do not necessarily aid them in learning more about their tutoring roles.

As for working with their director, tutors' answers were relatively the same but with a few exceptions. The FT all strongly agreed that their concerns were heard by their director and that their director was aware of the type of tutors they were. Except for one tutor, CT felt that their concerns are heard by their director, and more than half agreed that their director is aware of the type of tutor they are. For question 6. Your Director offers you directions on how to improve tutoring skills, the answers from CT were split, ranging from one to five. Jordan revealed that they know their director is busy and implied that their director and them would have the conversation, if necessary. For FT, answers consisted of two agreeing and one disagreeing with this same question. FT indicated positive interactions with their director, of whom is the same director for the CT. It is important to note that unlike other writing centers, the KUWC's Director has other roles at KU, including student-teaching observations and lecturing in two specialties, English and English Education. Other writing center directors may solely have the director's role without other university commitments.

Tutors were asked about their comfort with tutoring a variety of students while also being aware of writing center theory and practices. All three FT agreed that they were trained to handle all types of students—those with disabilities, emergent bilinguals, etc.—and they all felt comfortable working with these students. The three FT had felt prepared to start semesters of tutoring sessions and were aware of information about writing center practices and theory. All but one CT agreed that they are trained to handle all types of students and that they know

information about writing center practices and theory. Two CT remained undecided if they felt comfortable working with all types of the students mentioned. With more undecided CT feeling undecided working with all types of students, these results may be indicative of experience levels outside of the KUWC, especially for former tutors who may be stationed in teaching roles.

For two questions, the CT were split with answers ranging from one to five. These questions were the following: 12. Most of your coworkers know more about tutoring than you do and 14. You always feel prepared to start a semester of tutoring sessions. With question twelve, Sophie wrote the following: "I tend to compare myself to others, and we have amazing tutors at our center, so I find it difficult to believe in myself. However, I know I'm good enough at writing to get good grades and get hired at the center." Sophie's response reflects the need for self-care to be a conversation had between coworkers and with their director. Having such conversations may aid more tutors in recognizing their importance within the center and that they are fulfilling their roles, even if they see themselves differently from their coworkers. With question fourteen, Harper shared, "I feel as if I'm not sometimes prepared to begin tutoring, but I wouldn't say [it's] due to the job or lack of training[. It's] due to personal things like mental health." Sophie also commented that, "I get anxious before starting a new semester of tutoring because I haven't done it for a while and get nervous about social interaction. I chose undecided because I don't feel unprepared in terms of resources, just confidence in my abilities." Likewise for Harper and Sophie, group reflections on mental health and emotional labor within the center may benefit the CT. Acknowledging that outside factors contribute to tutors' stress, in addition to session stressors, may help the tutors to discuss ways to cope and acknowledge any mental strain that affects them during tutoring.

As for the FT, their answers for the following two questions consisted of two tutors agreeing and one disagreeing. Those questions were 7. You felt like more could have been learned about your role as a WC tutor and 8. You were provided with tutoring resources. The same tutor disagreed with both statements, whereas the other two either agreed or strongly agreed with them. The three tutors' answers were scattered when asked if they felt comfortable trying out new tutoring styles and approaches. The undecided tutor, Riley, divulged that, "I was not formally trained in tutoring styles, but I was also comfortable with my own and did not feel a need to seek out others. If I observed another tutor doing something I found interesting, I kept it in mind for the future." Here, Riley displays being comfortable with their tutoring style while still being aware that other styles exist and could be utilized in the future. Similar scattered results also occurred when the FT were asked if they would have been interested in more training options to have become tutors. Addison, the undecided vote, wrote, "By the time I knew enough to know that other types of training was available, I was too aware of the budgetary and time constraints when it came to running the KUWC." Tutors may be unaware of the financial aspects of running a writing center and how that relates to the amount of training they receive. A more seasoned tutor, like Addison, began to recognize the funding and time needed for writing centers to run smoothly with available resources. While they noted that more options could be available, they became aware that additional training may not always be possible depending on multiple factors within the university.

Lastly, two FT disagreed when asked if they believed that most of their coworkers knew more about tutoring than they did. Undecided, Addison recalled that, "I worked with a number of tutors and GAs [(graduate assistants)] at differing levels over the three years I was there. I was never the expert." FT recalled their experiences while applying what they know in their current

ventures, whether that consists of more schooling or within their own classrooms. As tutors

interact with each other, they observe various tutoring styles that can be applied outside of the

writing center and within their future careers.

Tutoring Sessions

In the Tutoring Sessions section, there were thirteen questions concerning how tutors saw

themselves perform within tutoring sessions, how they felt their voices heard by students, and

how they view their own authority levels. For three questions, all seven CT either agreed or

strongly agreed that they do the following: adequately help students with their papers, adequately

help students with their concerns, and have the resources needed to have a productive session.

All three FT felt like they adequately helped students with their papers and concerns and that

their feedback was heard and utilized by students. Overall, tutors found their tutoring sessions

adequate for helping students.

Current tutors were torn between disagreement and undecided answers concerning

whether they find that their feedback is heard and utilized by students. Most CT determined that

it is easy to initiate conversation with students, yet one disagreed and one remain undecided.

Regarding these two questions, Harper shared, "I think it depends on the student. Sometimes I

feel as most students listen to my feedback and don't mind conversation, but some are difficult to

give feedback to and initiate conversation with." Different strategies for speaking with students

might be helpful for tutors to discuss with each another, especially when students such as the

ones Harper recalls arrive in the center. Learning how to best advocate for students while giving

them advice that is both helpful and directive would benefit tutors.

When asked if they were insulted when students did not listen to their feedback, six out

of seven CT disagreed, but they did agree that they have a sense of fulfillment when students do

listen to their feedback. Sense of fulfillment is directly related to tutors' understanding of their emotional wellbeing. If tutors are not fulfilled in their positions, then they will find tutoring work tormenting, rather than beneficial or uplifting. The three FT were not insulted when students ignored their feedback. Two of the FT strongly agreed that they found it fulfilling when students listened to their feedback. Addison wrote, "A lot of times you don't know whether students will take your advice or not. I always found it fulfilling when they saw their writing in a new, positive light." Two FT found it easy to initiate conversations with students. Undecided, Riley found it easier to do so as they tutored more. One tutor did not answer whether they had many productive sessions, but the other two agreed that they did. FT, like CT, enjoyed receptive feedback from students, but as Addison noted, the fulfilling part of a tutoring session depends on how the students see their own writing.

As for their voices being heard during sessions, five CT agreed, while one tutor left the question blank, and one was undecided. Except for one CT, they agreed that they have each had many productive sessions. The three FT believed that their voices were heard during sessions, and they recalled having the resources necessary to have productive sessions, despite one of these tutors disagreeing in the previous section about being provided with tutoring resources.

The CT had split results concerning the following two questions: 11. Your expectations differ greatly compared to the students' and 12. Your role is known by the student from the beginning of the session. Jordan commented that, "I don't know what the student knows. [. . .] We're all just peers in the end, though." Ivy shared that they think that their role is known to the student "only if they've been there [at the writing center] before." One FT strongly disagreed that their role was known by students from the beginning of sessions. Two FT disagreed that their expectations as tutors differed greatly compared to the students'. Riley shared, "I'm not sure if I

can speak for most students' expectations of a session. Some professors made going to the Writing Center a requirement." Here, tutors hesitate to step over boundaries, ones created by the dynamic of the classroom that students bring into the center with them. Some students are required to go to the center for certain papers or even for extra credit, depending upon their professors. In these situations, a tutor may have difficulty reaching out to a student, who may appear uninterested in the tutoring session. Other times, a tutor recognizes that the student and themselves are both peers, navigating college and writing journeys together. The unique peer interaction that takes place initiates the balance of the tutor and student's individual writing authorities within the writing center.

Concerning authority, the CT had scattered answers. For the question: 10. You feel you have authority to influence students' mindsets, most tutors agreed, one was undecided, and one disagreed. When answering question 13. You are the authority figure in the room, answers ranged from one to five. As a current tutor, Harper stated, "I think that most students understand I am an authority figure, but depending on what tutors are there [in the writing center], sometimes they will chime in when I am speaking with a student who comes in with a question. That confuses the authority dynamic to the student." In this scenario, tutors might benefit from coworker roleplay, in which tutors act out and discuss similar situations to reflect on how students view the authorities of multiple tutors speaking to them at one time.

Former tutor Addison was undecided about whether they had their authority to influence other students' mindsets, while the other two FT agreed that they did. Addison recalled, "When it came to changing their mindset over whether or not they could write, whether they were allowed to use their voice, I had no authority to influence them – I had a privilege to show them what they were already doing." Addison acknowledged that an age difference played a role in them

having what they referred to as "built in authority" between themselves and students. Tutors

must have an awareness of their authorities within the center, from both levels: undergraduates

and graduate assistant tutors. Although all peers, each type of tutor will present differently to

students. Tutors must be reminded that they have authority on writing, but sometimes outside

forces, like ages or majors, affect students' perceptions of sessions' outcomes.

Tutor Stress

In the Tutor Stress section, tutors addressed twelve questions regarding their overall tutor

wellbeing and stress levels during sessions, with coworkers, and about their roles. For current

tutors, their answers were half in agreement and half in disagreement concerning whether

working in the KUWC causes them additional stress and if they leave the center feeling more

stress than when they arrived. Tutors' answers had been scattered in the Tutoring Session section

regarding whether students know the tutors' role at the beginning of the session; however, in this

section, most CT agreed that their roles are not adequately known by students. One FT strongly

agreed with the following four questions, while the other two tutors disagreed. These questions

included: 1. Working in the KUWC caused you additional stress; 2. You left work feeling more

stressed than when you arrived; 4. You felt that your role was not adequately known by students;

6. You felt emotionally drained after a session, or after KUWC work. The ranges of answers here

reflect the ebbs and flows of each individual tutor's emotional wellbeing while in the center.

Further conversation needs to occur between tutors regarding how best to explain their roles to

students, especially ones arriving for their first sessions.

Additionally, ideas for coping mechanisms should be explored so that tutors acknowledge

their stress levels with each other, themselves, and their director. Two of the seven CT do not

believe that they have adequate coping skills after difficult sessions, while three tutors agreed

that they do feel emotionally drained either after a session or after working at the KUWC. Ivy reported feelings of inadequacy, especially when students ignored them or continually came back to the center without making progress. Two FT agreed that they had adequate coping skills after difficult sessions, while the third tutor left this question blank. Tutors should be reminded that not all students will take their advice. If students come back continually without making progress, not every tutor will feel comfortable asserting that a change needs to be made, especially on the student's part. Tutors can recommend the student go with a different tutor if they feel that a particular student continually ignores their suggestions. Asking the student to come back once changes have been made might cause grief on both sides. Tutors may benefit from examples of wording for such suggestions. Roleplay might be useful in this scenario, too, as tutors may consider possible answers they would give to students if they were experiencing these types of situations.

Sometimes, tutors may find it helpful to ask their coworkers for assistance during a stressful moment. All CT disagreed with finding it difficult to ask their coworkers for advice during sessions. They also disagreed with finding their coworkers difficult to approach, except for one tutor who agreed with the statement. Two FT strongly disagreed, while one strongly agreed, that it was difficult to ask their coworkers for advice during sessions or finding their coworkers difficult to approach. The coworker dynamic happening within the center depends on the tutors that are together during shifts and their personalities. It is important to remember that not all tutors will get along. Changing of schedules or the number of tutors present in the center may help to make tutors feel comfortable and less stressed by their coworkers and surroundings. Team building exercises that encourage coworker interactions may be beneficial.

As for training causing stress, the CT disagreed, except for one undecided vote. Sophie commented that, "I actually think it might be helpful if new tutors completed half the training, sat in on a session, finished the rest of the training, then sat in on a second session. That way the training can be split into more manageable chunks and the new tutors can observe how their training applies to what they will be doing during sessions." Currently, KUWC tutors can take their time completing training modules prior to start of the semester. Sophie's recommendation offers observation as a type of training, followed by more implementation of theory to reinforce what had been observed. One FT agreed while the other two strongly disagreed that their tutor training produced more stress. To note, most of these tutors, both current and some former, were trained during the COVID-19 pandemic, which required more online training to be completed. This situation not only distanced tutors but presented trainings in more secluded ways. Hands-on training was difficult to perform until the semester began and happened less frequently due to the number of students on campus. During such times, these tutors did the best that they could with the resources available to them.

As for whether tutors feel like teachers, three CT felt undecided, while three agreed that they do feel like teachers more than tutors. Sophie commented, "Sometimes it feels like students just use my examples of changes instead of trying to create their own solutions based on my advice. It can be hard to tell if a student doesn't want to make an effort to find unique solutions or if they are just regarding me as the 'expert' and think they have to do everything exactly as I explain it." Tutors must keep in mind that students are regarding them with writing authority. They must reinforce with students that their writing is their own, no matter the advice they receive. Answers from the FT were scattered with this question, with one agreeing, one

disagreeing, and one undecided. Addison noted that they were not sure what it felt like to be a teacher at the time.

All three FT disagreed with finding it difficult to be the voice heard during their time tutoring, while most CT also disagreed with this question. One CT had not answered it and one had remained undecided. All FT and all but one CT disagreed that they had/have too much responsibility as writing center tutors. While tutors have felt heard during their sessions, there still seems to be confliction concerning whether tutors are meant to be "teaching" during sessions, which adds more to tutors' emotional labor. They wish to help students to the best of their abilities, but they may feel overwhelmed by what a student does or does not know about writing. Tutors must know their roles, so conversations about tutoring identities and styles would benefit tutors so that they are aware of differentiates between teaching, mentoring, and tutoring.

CT mainly concurred that students expect them to have more knowledge of concepts like styles or of content, etc. One tutor, Sophie, was undecided and wrote, "It seems like most students understand that we cannot usually help with content, though there can be some confusion when a professor tells them to visit us with content-based questions. Other than that, students definitely expect me to have more citation style knowledge than I actually have, but that's on me to fix." Here, Sophie notes that they need more experience with a tutoring topic they may find challenging: citation styles. This situation implies that tutors may need to refresh their understanding with writing topics outside of work. Sophie might also be displaying increased self-doubt as a tutor.

Meanwhile, a FT agreed that students expected them to have more knowledge of topics like styles and content, while the other two tutors remained undecided. Riley wrote, "If students expected me to know more, they didn't express it." Addison noted that resources may not have

been available if students were asking about styles, and in terms of content, it was important that students knew that "clarity was key and me *not knowing* their content would actually be a big help." When tutors stress about the content of a student's writing, the student may doubt the tutor's writing authority. Typically, it is rather helpful when tutors are unaware of content, as that benefits the student's ability to explain concepts in their own words and to have their words questioned by tutors. Tutors may encourage students to write with their own agencies, thus advocating for original theories and ideas to be written by students. Discussions with tutors on the benefits of not knowing a student's content would be crucial for helping to alleviate some parts of tutors' stressors, thus aiding in a balance of their emotional labor.

Survey – Essay Results

Within the Essay Section of the surveys, the tutors were asked ten questions in essay format. Six current tutors and three former tutors filled out their answers to the essay questions. The tutors were asked to provide a few sentences to explain their answers. Their responses regarding any Undecided (3) answers recorded in the above section, Survey – Likert Scale Results. The rest of the questions and the tutors' answers are discussed here and are divided into Tutor Training, Tutoring Sessions, and Tutor Stress sections. Much of their written responses are recorded so as to preserve their voices and hear their thoughts on writing centers and tutoring.

Tutor Training

All tutors addressed additional ways for tutors to be trained or what could be focused on in future trainings. From the current tutors, Naomi regarded this question with the following answer, "I think continued education is always beneficial, especially when doing a job like tutoring. I think more training geared towards tackling larger works would be helpful." Mason believed that training needs to focus on tasks within the center itself, like answering emails or

checking messages. Here, Mason looks toward the technical parts of their job, which will help them to focus on larger areas of concern once the smaller concerns are covered. Harper mentioned trainings involving ESL students and how to refer students to other departments. They additionally mentioned the need to learn "how to properly collaborate with [professors] and their [students'] needs." Without proper collaboration across the university, writing center tutors may worry about the students they have assisted post-session, whether that involves their personal lives or how they are doing in the classroom. Sophie asked for more seasoned tutors to share their experiences so that new tutors feel more prepared, which the KUWC has been starting to incorporate at the beginning of semester trainings. Ivy stated, "I think there's a lack of training for ourselves. By that, I mean, it's hard to help people one after the [other,] and at times, people come to us with sensitive material. I think there's a lack of acknowledgement and training on how hard that can be." With this statement, Ivy brings emotional labor back into the conversation, pointing out that professors and other students may not know the full impact that being a writing center tutor has on its tutors.

As for former tutors, Riley suggested more methods for working with ESL students and students who are differently abled. They also suggested that software training, including Microsoft Word and Google Docs, would be helpful. Like Mason noted above, Riley mentioned the need for more technical training, showing that tutors have a wide range of roles in which they are expected to be fully trained in before meeting with students. Noah recommended "training in positive tutor/tutoring relationships" so that tutors avoid judging their coworkers and instead learn how to give substantial feedback to each other. Taking a different approach, Addison stated, "I think there are good arguments for having a course either concurrently or previously to an undergraduate tutor starting in the writing center, but logistically that could put undue

pressure on faculty/staff that are probably overburdened." The KUWC does not have a tutoring education course, so new tutors are trained with online modules and through observation and shadowing. Addison's recommendation comes with the knowledge that such a course requires time, funding, and staff, as they noted earlier in their Survey – Likert Scale Results. They also recommended reviewing theory, training specifically for working with multilingual students, and role-playing situations during meetings.

Tutoring Sessions

With the essay questions, tutors were asked to describe situations in which they felt their voices were not being heard. Mason recalled, "I was working with a student who refused to accept the information I was providing them and instead insisted that they were right. So, I calmly explained to them that it was their assignment and they should do what they feel most comfortable doing." Tutors need to be able to pause a session to not only ensure that they have the student on the right track but also to provide themselves with coping mechanisms for tricky situations. Sophie mentioned students consistently interrupting them or not listening to what they were saying. They continued the sessions without confronting the students. Jordan shared, "They did not care what I had to say and talked over me the whole time. I didn't mention anything to the student, but they were rude and a little condescending." They noted that, post session, a graduate assistant got involved to address the situation, but Jordan was unaware of the outcome.

Decompressing post sessions, whether with a fellow coworker or director, may aid tutors in learning how to reflect on their roles and tutoring actions. Ivy stated that, "There are too many times to count where I have felt like a student was not listening to me," and that "It can be incredibly demoralizing" when students expected more from the writing tutors than what their roles allowed of them. Similarly, FT Riley wrote the following: "there were occasionally

students who would dismiss my advice as a tutor. By dismiss, I mean that when I said that their

content was unorganized or included irrelevant information, they would try to explain why they

wrote it that way instead of listening to my advice. A student should certainly feel free to defend

their writing." Here, Riley noted the importance of recognizing that the writing is the student's

work. While a tutor can attempt to appease students, it remains up to the student to either accept

or reject a tutor's recommendations and advice.

When giving advice to new tutors, the current and former tutors had a range of

suggestions. Ivy wrote, "Find what works best for you." Jordan noted that all students are

different, but that respect for each student goes a long way. They also recommended learning

citation styles, which is part of initial KUWC training. Sophie shared the following, "You are

probably a better writer and teacher than you think you are. [. . .] It's difficult knowing whether

you really made a difference for a student when you never see their grade or their improvements

in future writing, but you have to believe that you did something for them even if you can't see

the results." Harper, Naomi, and Mason all recommended practicing patience. Additionally,

Mason noted that "Reading the room" is an important tool of a writing center tutor. Naomi

mentioned, "be willing to shift your perspective and find the best way to help the tutee." FT

Addison wrote, "Make sure they know that they have a *right* to *write*!" Noah noted that, "You

are there to help students become self-actualized writers." Riley recommended using positive

and negative feedback so as to compliment and critique tutees. If given the opportunity, these

tutors probably could have listed countless more suggestions. The role of tutor is dynamic, as

each tutor must incorporate patience and respect with their listening and communication skills

with every student encountered.

Tutor Stress

Stress presents in multiple forms for tutors, who might analyze themselves and the ways they have handled tutoring sessions. Current tutors were asked to identify their strengths and weakness as writing center tutors. For strengths, the tutors described themselves as the following: "very patient," "approachable, and able to meet students at their level," having "patience, active listening, empathy, boundary setting," being "personable and willing to let the student speak," and "approachable and friendly" while also willing to "listen fairly well and try to be empathetic with the student." Note here, that tutors do not mention their writing strengths, but instead focus on personality traits and attitudes. For weaknesses, tutors reported: difficulties with "skimming long pieces," "working toward finding ways to reach students" more effectively, and "understanding students' mindsets." CT also listed weaknesses as: having more experiences with various types of students, learning citations styles, sounding more confident, not comparing self to coworkers, and doubting themselves because of terminology and their own explanations. With their weaknesses, tutors focused primarily on technical skills and confidence levels.

When former tutors highlighted their strengths, they included motivating students, using enthusiasm, and learning conferencing strategies. Addison wrote, "Students need different things from the writing center and while having a central mission is necessary, flexibility in how you handle each situation (and the agency to make that call) is key to your tutors having confidence in their work." Both Addison and Riley remembered their personal tutoring struggles while at the KUWC. Addison mentioned being impatient, while Riley reported having difficulty with tutoring's social aspect, whether that involved speaking with tutors or coworkers. Noah recalled students who felt like they wanted someone to tell them what to do rather than being tutored and

assisted with their writing processes. These examples highlight the range of experiences tutors have, whether that includes personal triumphs or struggles.

When asked about challenging tutoring sessions, several of the CT reported working with students who were not paying attention or were overwhelmed. The tutors recorded guiding these types of students back towards the material in front of them. Sophie described a situation with a student who continually interrupted them, making it difficult for them to get their advice across to the student. CT may benefit from training which recommends how to get a session back on track. Mason recalled a student who insisted they were correct and that they, the tutor, was wrong. Ivy recommended the following: "When I encounter a problem, I either inquire with the tutors around me, slow down the pace of the session, and refer the student to make another appointment if they are still struggling." FT Riley recalled an insecure student who wanted help with every aspect of their writing. Noah found this scenario "very draining mentally." Addison also mentioned similar situations with students who wanted the work done for them or students who were looking solely for the extra credit given to them by their professor if they scheduled with the writing center. The emotional labor tutors deal with is evident in these examples. As tutors encounter students who fail to listen to them, interrupt them, or make sessions increasingly difficult, tutors become drained and their stress levels may increase. Tutors must advocate for their emotional and mental wellbeing within the center, which may consist of pausing a session or asking a student to come back at another time.

Additionally, students, professors, parents, etc. might not be aware of some of the challenges tutors face. Sophie noted that, "All should be aware that we do not help with content. Unfortunately, many students are sent to us instead of the tutoring center because students and staff get confused as to what we do." Better communication across university departments may

be needed, whether that means the center invites the departments for informational sessions or sends out a flyer describing the roles of writing center tutors. Harper noted a lack of support from both professors and faculty. In these situations, education might be needed. While the KUWC offers informational sessions, in which tutors enter the classroom to discuss what the writing center is and what tutors do, not every professor takes advantage of these sessions. From a former tutor perspective, Addison reported that writing centers need more funding. They noted that because of faculties' misconceptions of the writing center, Addison believed that students regarded it as a proofreading center. These answers reflect a need for tutoring roles to be more clearly stated and shared with professors, faculty, and students.

The other tutors' responses focused on more generalized challenges. CT Jordan shared, "I think other people aren't aware how draining work can be. [. . .] You always have to be on your A-game if you want to help the student the best you can. It's sometimes hard to always listen and help students over and over." Ivy had similar remarks. Mason also mentioned the difficulty of back-to-back sessions. They wrote, "To be able to look at a paper for the first time, understand what the student is saying, what they want to say, and suggest multiple routes to get there takes a lot of thought and energy. Not everyone understands what the role entails." As a former tutor, Riley noted that, "Many of the women and feminine-presenting people at the Center experienced at least one uncomfortable interaction with a male student." Noah focused on the pay for tutors, sharing that it does not "match the rigor of work that we are expected to do." From uncomfortable situations to lack of funding, tutors need to be respected by the university community. While not everyone can fulfil writing center tutor roles, the students who do deserve respect, patience, and appropriate pay.

Finally, the tutors were asked to write a few words about what the writing center has taught them. Current tutors' answers ranged from patience to finding new ways to learn how to best help students. Sophie called it "another steppingstone in my journey to gain more confidence in my abilities and compare myself to others less." FT Noah noted that they gained valuable experiences and learned methods for motivating students. Riley recalled that they learned to work one-on-one with students while also learning to "talk to students about their work in a way that is conversational rather than authoritative, which has made me a favorable source for students to rely on." Addison wrote, "Working at the Kutztown University Writing Center taught me that I had value, that my skills could be valuable to others, that my encouragement and motivation could turn someone from tearful in the first week of the semester to an A-student at the end. I discovered that I loved teaching and writing and teaching writing. KUWC showed me the path to myself." Here, the tutors' words speak for themselves.

Interview Results

Interviews occurred with five current tutors and three former tutors. In no particular order during each interview, they were asked fourteen questions. Natural questions within the interview were also allotted. The tutors' answers and experiences are as follows.

Tutor Training

All tutors were asked to recall, if possible, their tutor training. Current tutor Harper learned how to tutor "by just doing it." They have found the added trainings specific to students with disabilities and safe space trainings to be beneficial. Similarly, Isabel regarded learning to tutor as something that happened more as they did the job. Jordan noted that learning more about citation styles in tutor training helped them the most. Sophie and Ivy and FT Riley found it difficult to recall initial tutor training. However, Riley remembered that training had been

important for "creating a positive environment for people." Addison noted listening to other sessions during their shifts in the center. They found it necessary to ask lots of questions from more seasoned tutors. Noah recalled training consisting of asynchronous theory, which they personally found not completely beneficial. While not all trainings will mesh with each tutor, different approaches are necessary so that tutors know the tutoring styles that they can utilize. Through observations and further experiences, tutors develop their tutoring identities and should become more confident in their tutoring abilities.

All tutors were asked how they felt working with types of students, by level— undergraduate, graduate, doctoral—and by type—students with disabilities, emergent bilinguals, etc. In regard to their comfort levels with these types of students, Harper noted that "sometimes students just want you to listen to them." Sophie stated that they have worried if they are "under qualified" for working with different levels of students. Likewise, Isabel also does not believe they are qualified, but they shared that they are comfortable working with various types of students, due to the additional personal development trainings the CT have received. Jordan noted that they are willing to work with all types and levels of students, but they would need more sessions with them to say that they are comfortable working with them all. They would like more "real world experience" for working with various students. Ivy disclosed that they do not feel comfortable with the entire range of students, especially with graduate students as they shared that, "it never feels . . . it never feels like they want me."

As a former tutor, Riley had felt comfortable working with almost all students. Yet, like CT Ivy, their one exception was also with graduate students, of whom Riley found that graduate students expected them to be an expert in all realms of writing knowledge. Addison regarded types of students as influencing how they tutored. In other words, Addison would adjust how

they tutored depending on the student in front of them. Noah had been confident in their ability to tutor other types and levels of students. They felt more confident working with students of higher levels when the student's major was similar to their own. Writing centers which have tutors in a variety of majors, like the KUWC, will aide both tutors and tutees in supporting one another. To note in this section, the tutors with hesitations towards graduate students had been undergraduate tutors. In these situations, tutors would benefit from more training scenarios or observations with different levels of students. Discussions between tutors and director(s) may help alleviate the existing qualms and hesitations so that undergraduate tutors can increase their confidence levels when working with graduate students.

Tutoring Sessions

At the beginning of each interview, the Principal Investigator inquired each tutor to recall a typical KUWC tutoring session. All five current tutors, at some point in their answers, mentioned filling out the form that records data for the KUWC. Ivy described their steps to tutoring as taking an assessment of the tutee's project. They also shared that, "I never read the papers the same way every time." Sophie noted that the direction they take with their sessions depends on how long the paper is, but no matter what they make sure that, "I'm understanding them correctly, and they're understanding me correctly." Likewise, Isabel mentioned that sessions run a certain way for them depending on the tutees' assignments. They like to ask their tutees to pick out a few aspects that they really love from their writing and a few sections they want to work on while in the center. Jordan and Harper had similar suggestions, noting that they like to ask or assess their tutees' strengths and weaknesses. Harper also noted that, "it depends if they are visual learners or auditory learners." Incorporating other tutoring styles means that tutors must be flexible to the different types of learners that students are. The typical tutoring

session depends on the student and their assignment, allowing the tutor to adjust their tutoring style according to the needs of the student.

As for the former tutors, Riley remembered inquiring with students to share their writing goals with them so that they knew what the student wanted prioritized. They also mentioned discussing issues and giving feedback, while also offering to work through example problem with students. Addison noted that the time limits of thirty minutes or up to an hour did not give tutors enough time to cover everything, so they would ask students "specifically what their concerns were." They remembered motivating and counseling students, because the students tended to have more negative views of their writing. Noah recalled asking students what they wanted assistance with so that they could identify patterns and then model corrections for students. Tutors have placed students at the forefront of their sessions, noting that their writing concerns take precedence. Examples like Noah's modelling and patterns aids tutors in finding new ways to talk to students about writing, thus expanding their tutoring style repertoires.

When asked about their authority levels, the tutors shared various conditions. CT Harper believed that in most sessions they have had authority, depending on the student. Similarly, Isabel stated, "I almost feel like it depends on authority the student gives me." They also disclosed that there is an authority shift when male students refuse to listen to their writing advice, but they were also thankful for having an understanding boss for difficult situations. A majority of KUWC tutors are female-presenting, and Isabel was not the only tutor to mention a gender-related incident amongst tutors and tutees. More research would be needed to accurately depict gender in relation to authority levels within writing centers.

Current tutors also related their authority levels with their confidence levels. Sophie shared that they "associate authority with confidence and I'm not sure how much confidence I

have." Both Sophie and Isabel noted that it is difficult to see the effects that their tutoring has on

tutees. If students do not return to the center, then tutors do not know the outcome of students'

assignments or writing journeys. Jordan stated that, "I do feel like I have a sense of authority, but

I don't like thinking of myself as the authority figure." Ivy associated them having authority with

how receptive the student is to what they have to say during a session, but that they still feel like

they can maintain a sense of authority, overall, in sessions. They noted that if the student is not

receptive to them, then that student is most likely looking for "somebody else who they see as

more of a tutor." Here, Ivy notes a power-dynamic that students may create towards their

professors, who they may regard as the older individual with more authority given expertise and

age. When tutors believe that they are not wanted by tutees, self-doubt, lack of confidence, and

feelings of inadequacy may surface. In these situations, reflective writing may be necessary so

that tutors combat some of this inner turmoil.

When asked to recall their authority, FT Riley felt that the did not "necessarily have an

authority. I just felt like I was the one with another perspective, and most of the time, I felt like

that was respected enough." Riley liked to use their voice to give students additional

perspectives, which is another way tutors can balance their writing authority with students.

Addison felt overly comfortable with having authority. They said, "I help guide the student. I'm

not the authority about the writing, though. It's the students' writing. I'm not the authority about

their voice. It's their voice." Addison felt that their voice enables students to know that they

"have a right to do what they are doing." Noah wanted their sessions to be collaborative. They

believed that "a student would not go to the writing center if they thought there was no level of

authority there." In this case, the center exists as an institution where authority must be found.

Tutors must be the ones who hold authority or else the center would cease to exist. Noah found

that their voice reached students because they were not a professor, but they were a peer. In these responses from both current and former tutors, writing authority and a tutor's voice are interconnected with the writing center tutoring experience.

The tutors then addressed how their voices have impacted students and their writing abilities. Harper shared, "Not everyone reasons with the same doctor, like not everyone reasons with the same kind of therapist. And I think it's the same for tutors. Like sometimes they might have to work with another tutor." They noted that their voice has impacted students who continually come back to work with them. According to Ivy, "you don't want to force what you think is right onto [the student's] paper, because, very well, it could not be." Sophie noted that their voice comes across to students as a positive one. Jordan mentioned that writing center tutors are peer tutors and that their advice consists of purely suggestions that are not meant to be intimidating. They stated that their voice is meant to be a guiding, helping type of voice. Isabel said, "I'm just kind of like a guiding force" in reference to their own voice. The current tutors' responses display the tutor's need to be outside voices—ones that guides in the background while remaining at a peer status so that their authority does not overbear the student.

The former tutors also discussed their influence on students' writing abilities and how they handled tougher tutoring situations. Riley found that their tutoring impacted some students, especially ESL students and students with disabilities. They have discovered that explaining a situation three times is more than enough attempts. If a student does not listen to those three instances, the tutor, or teacher, may need to move on from the scenario or situation. Addison hoped that their tutoring had effects on students' writing confidence levels. Addison shared, "I think it's important to create an atmosphere where you give some agency to tutors to do the best that they can do… I want students to leave feeling a little bit better than when they walked in.

Part of tutoring is counseling." Here, Addison notes the collaborative aspect that tutoring creates

within the center. A tutor, meant to guide a student towards their writing goals, may also take on

different roles, ones that counsel or encourage students in additional areas. Noah believed that

due to time constraints, they did not have a significant impact on students' writing abilities. They

regarded tutoring as a "kind of triage where the most important, most impactful issues are [. . .]

[and we as tutors] try to remedy them." When tutors prioritize their student's writing concerns,

they are working not only to be productive, but they are assisting students with their most

complicated writing areas. As the tutors have mentioned, sessions can be draining, so tutors must

advocate for their students' writing goals in a short amount of time.

When asked what aspect of the writing center makes it important for college campuses,

both former and current tutors used similar terminology. CT Ivy referred to the center as a safe

place where students can go if they need someone to talk to and are struggling with their studies.

Sophie called it an important resource specific to writing, while Isabel shared that the comfort of

the center made it a space that reassures students. Similarly, Harper referred to the KUWC as a

support system where students get reassurance, not only about their writing but about their

studies. With these responses, the tutors have created their writing center community, as they

refer to the center as a resource, comfort, and safe space where peers can discuss writing freely.

The tutors' answers solidified the writing center as an atmosphere which provides

students and tutors space away from their professors, which seem to be regarded with high

authorities. According to CT Jordan, the range of tutors in the center—undergraduates and

graduate students—aids in creating a peer level for students to feel less judgement. They

mentioned that students do not want to have their writing or ideas judged too harshly by their

professors, so the writing center creates a gentler option. The former tutors then brought the

conversation full circle, calling the center an environment and community. Riley shared that, "the environment we try to create is one where we are kind of like peers that are just talking about writing together." Addison addressed that the writing center is a community of tutors that exist in a "liminal space between teaching and peer review where you have a little bit of authority." Noah regarded the center as a place where students can talk to other students about writing in a less formal space and less scary place than a professor's office. The informality of the center allows students and tutors to collaborate without feeling added pressure from their professors and any impending grade(s).

Tutor Stress

The tutors were asked about any existing stress levels. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, CT Harper has noticed that tutoring stress levels have increased, because students seem to be struggling more. Sophie noted that their own stress is from having work and homework at the same time. Ivy mentioned that tutoring has been stressful for them due to needing to interact with people. Because writing is so personal, Ivy additionally shared that reading students' more sensitive writing can be difficult and adds more stress to their life as a tutor. For Isabel, their stress levels have depended more on "what's going on in the center." Here, Isabel could be referring to how busy the center is at one point in time, which directly affects the tutors' stressors. Looking back, FT Riley became tired after tutoring but had not been stressed. When they had been a new tutor, Riley had felt that their confidence levels were lower but had increased over time. Addison regarded the KUWC as their "happy place." Noah reported working with their coworkers as being the most stressful part. Thus, in their interview, Noah promoted training that regulates how tutors interact and give feedback to one another.

The tutors were asked what students and professors each need to know about writing center tutors. For students, Jordan made it clear that tutors cannot write for them and that tutors are not meant to write with them, meaning that the one-on-one time in the center is used differently to best help students. Here, Jordan means that a tutor may guide a student towards how to rewrite a sentence or how to change or expand a paragraph, but the time within the center is not meant for writing the entire contents of one's assignment. CT Isabel thought it was important for students to know that tutors have different specialties, while similarly, FT Riley believed that it is important that students know "that not all of us are experts in every single thing." While all KUWC tutors receive the same training, it should be noted that, like medical specialties, tutors sometimes feel more confident in certain areas, such as thesis building or punctuation rules. Of the current tutors, Ivy noted that it has felt like some students think tutors know all the answers, and Harper wanted students to know that tutors are also students who write papers. Tutors understand the pressures of writing and can meet fellow students where they are in their writing process because they, too, are having similar experiences. FT Addison shared that students must understand that tutors are "partners, not teachers." Likewise, CT Sophie also stated that students need to remember that tutors are people, too. The takeaway here is that tutors wants to be seen as peers, ones who are knowledgeable but not all-knowing.

As for what professors need to know about tutors, the responses were mixed. CT Isabel believed that professors should not blame tutors for their students doing assignments incorrectly. How often this situation occurs, Isabel did not share. Sometimes, professors send their entire class to the center for the same assignment, so Jordan noted that if professors were to do this, then they must know that not all of their students will have the same experience. Ivy acknowledged that "a lot of professors get it right," and it must be remembered that tutoring

takes a lot of time and deserves effort, especially when sessions happen back-to-back. Here, Ivy incorporates the awareness of emotional labor tutors experience. They do not wish to speak poorly against professors, but they are asking that professors acknowledge that tutoring can be challenging.

Meanwhile, CT Harper wished to remind professors that tutors cannot make students have better work ethics. As tutors must know that their advice might not always be taken, professors must be aware that tutors cannot force students to perform better within a class. According to FT Riley, professors must understand that students' work will still not be perfect even after they attend the writing center, especially if they do not take a tutor's advice. Addison stated that professors must, "Be aware of the staffing challenges that the writing center and understand that every single English paper is probably due at the same time." Addison's statement reflects both Ivy's and Jordan's earlier concerns, but Addison went on to claim that it is important for professors to know that the writing center is not a "one stop shop" or a "proofreading service." To tie these thoughts together, Noah noted that students and professors must know that tutors are also students and that tutors cannot guarantee any specific grades. Here, a balance of writing authorities must exist from all three entities—tutors, students, and professors—so that proper collaboration ensues.

The current tutors were inquired to discuss their tutoring identities. CT Isabel believed that they have become less nervous and have gained more confidence, especially with speaking to tutees and guiding sessions. Ivy claimed that they do not identify as a tutor, because it has been more difficult for them to visualize themselves teaching others. Harper shared that they like making students feel comfortable, having an open mindset, and being empathetic with all students. Sophie also mentioned being friendly and making students feel comfortable, while

being open to being corrected when needed. Jordan noted that they have become a more guiding type of tutor with the more experiences and sessions they have had, thus establishing a smoother tutoring process. They shared, "I think watching sessions is really helpful and learning other people's techniques. But I think the best thing you can do is doing it yourself, and finding your own style, what works for you." Each tutor's style defines them as individuals and directly affects who they are outside of the writing center and within their professional lives.

Former tutors addressed the tutoring experiences that shaped them into professional individuals post-graduation. Riley noted that working as a tutor helped them to fine-tune their abilities to work with students. They also learned to limit their use of jargon so that students felt like they were having a conversation, rather than the tutor solely suggesting what students should do. Additionally, Riley found that tutoring solidified their decision to go into teaching. They discovered the importance of approaching "every student as if they need some special way to be helped, because at the end of the day they're all individuals, and they probably do all need different ways to be helped, even if they aren't like labeled that way." Addison referred to their time as a KUWC tutor as transformative for how they thought about themselves in a more confident way. Noah regarded tutoring as "beneficial for experience."

As for their coworker interactions, Harper has noticed a disconnect between graduates and undergraduates, feeling like age might play a role in their relationships. Sophie would enjoy having tutoring events in which tutors meet up under different circumstances, not just at work or during monthly meetings. Jordan would like to experience bonding exercises with their coworkers, and they noted that having coffee while discussing their tutoring strengths and weaknesses would be beneficial and fun. They also remarked that they have not seen all of their coworkers tutor. Likewise, Ivy mentioned that they do not know all of their coworkers, and they

have not met all of them. Isabel recalled that it has been nice for them to work in an environment in which they can ask their coworkers how they have handled similar situations. It is vital that tutors feel welcomed within the center, as it is the tutors who create the writing center community. If tutors do not get along, then the atmosphere is different and unwelcoming to both tutors and students alike. Bonding activities might be an integral part of tutor training, which will aide in tutors' communication and listening skills and lessen stressors.

The current and former tutors then shared advice for students who may be considering writing center tutor positions. Their comments ranged from personal advice to generalized recommendations. Harper asserted that tutors must learn how to balance their work lives and their student lives. Sophie shared that it is important to remember that "I think everyone judges their own writing more harshly than other people do." Jordan recommended giving every student respect and not judging them by their abilities to write. Similarly, Isabel noted that tutors must treat students with respect and that tutors are in jobs in which they need to have a service personality because they are working with people. Ivy shared that tutoring is, "like any other job where you're helping other people, and you know this more so as a nurse, you have to take care of yourself because you're just interacting with so many different people and you don't know what they're bringing into the conversation." FT Riley shared that "you can't fix them all." Addition said, "Make them feel like what they're doing matters, because it does." Noah called for higher pay—if tutors are to be expected to do the work that they do, then they need to be paid appropriately.

In their answers, current and former tutors covered many aspects about writing center tutoring. Their words highlight the importance of hearing tutors' experiences. Hearing from former tutors lays a foundation, one that has existed for them in the past and that is then

continually built upon by current tutors. The experiences and opinions of these KUWC can help

balance the needs within their writing center community, making it an environment in which

tutors are listened to and collaborate to further develop professional livelihoods.

Section 4: Limitations

The limitations for the study include the number of tutors who have participated. The

KUWC is a smaller writing center for a four-year university, so the number of current tutors

were limited to the tutors working during Fall 2022. The Principal Investigator wanted robust

voices from tutors they had not encountered while a tutor themselves at the KUWC when

contacting former tutors, but this scenario was not always possible due to the availability of

former tutors. Another limitation presented as the Principal Investigator has personally worked

alongside many of the tutors surveyed and interviewed, both current and former.

In terms of the survey and interview questions, more balance could have been utilized.

For instance, in the Current and Form Tutor Surveys, the Principal Investigator posed the

question: "Please recall a situation in which you felt like your voice was not being heard. This

situation can be between tutors, student and tutor, tutor and Director, etc. How was the situation

resolved, if it was?" The alternative question should have also been asked to ensure that tutors

could recall a situation in which their voices were being heard. Thus, a limitation was created,

causing the question to be one-sided for the tutors. Additionally, it was brought to the Principal

Investigator's attention that the Tutor Stress section of both surveys lack neutral angles, which

may have skewed results. In a future study, the Principal Investigator would need to verify the

balance of such questions so that participants offered answers that could reflect their experiences

in robust, neutral ways.

Chapter 4: Discussion and Recommendations for Collaborative Writing Centers

Each tutor has an individualized approach to their writing center work. They all have different levels of confidence, have harder or easier sessions, and see their impacts as tutors in various ways. Recall the three research questions stated in the Purpose of the Study: How do writing center tutors advocate for their voices to be heard when they question their own writing authorities? How can writing center tutor training practices acknowledge tutors' wellbeing so that tutors incorporate advocacy, agency, and voice in their tutoring identities and practices? How have former and current writing center tutors dealt with challenges and are their solutions similar? These KUWC tutors know their boundaries with authority, and most have found that their level of authority is dependent on the tutees in front of them. Within their tutoring roles, these tutors' voices encourage a variety of writing perspectives for students to either listen to or ignore. Tutees may or may not take their writing advice, and that is known to these KUWC tutors. As for tutor practices, the tutors have highlighted some options that acknowledge their wellbeing as well as appropriate tactics for tutoring training. Current and former tutors can recall similar situations and provide advice that aligns with each other. Despite some limitations, this study has highlighted the importance of writing center tutors' voices and authority levels, which are discoverable through their experiences and daily tutoring lives.

With the current tutors, most of them know that they have access to resources and learn different styles of tutoring. If monthly meetings continue to occur, or even happen more frequently, then these tutors would still benefit from interacting more with their coworkers. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most meetings and trainings have been completed online, thus limiting the interaction of the current tutors. Many of the tutors would want to have more interactions with their coworkers outside the walls of the writing center. Not only would that

increase morale, but they would also most likely feel more comfortable approaching each other with questions, concerns, and discussions during tutoring sessions. For the most part, the former tutors had felt comfortable around their coworkers, which illustrates how each semester's collection of tutors is different and their interactions vary.

Tutors would additionally benefit from knowing how best to initially explain their roles to tutees. Not only would this information be crucial for tutors, but the use of these explanations could also benefit professors who may be unsure of writing center tutors' exact roles. These situations might help to alleviate some of the stressors the tutors reported in their surveys and interviews. Tutors also need time to reflect and understand the emotions that they feel from reading others' writings. KUWC tutors typically have free time to step out of the center when needed when sessions are not back-to-back. Yet, additional coping strategies, like pausing a session and allowing a tutee to free write or rewrite a problem sentence while tutors are given time or consultation space to plan out the rest of their tutoring session, should be implemented or suggested so that tutors do not feel isolated in their emotions or convictions. If tutors are given the opportunity to clear their minds during sessions without feeling stressed to immediately have the answers the tutees may be looking for, then their stress levels may be lessened. When tutors feel less stressed, they feel more confident in their ability to help. Both current and former tutors noted that they are working on their confidence levels or that tutoring has helped them find their confidence.

When asked about their strengths and weaknesses, the current tutors introduced a whole range of answers. For strengths, they saw themselves in such wholesome and helpful ways. However, they regarded not knowing the answers to technical questions, like citation styles, as them having weaknesses. Their technical skills seemed to be the focus of what they considered

weaknesses. Their recorded weaknesses are abilities that tutors learn as they continue tutoring and gain more experience. They are not a reflection of poor tutoring or tutors who are incapable of fulfilling their roles. Tutors may benefit from additional conversations and reflections regarding their ideas of weaknesses.

Three tutors referenced medical scenarios or terminology when speaking with the Principal Investigator. Harper mentioned meshing with doctors or therapists in reference to tutees working better with other tutors. Noah referred to the discovery of a tutee's writing concerns as a tutor's way of "triaging" those issues. Ivy spoke specifically to the Principal Investigator, noting that, like nurses, tutors must take care of themselves as they take care of others. These skills and observations come with time and experience, much like they do in the medical field. The tutors' agencies were all at various levels, and their knowledge of how their suggestions affected tutees differed. Yet, they were still capable of assessing and reflecting on their past tutoring scenarios, much like how nurses can recall past patient interactions to give better patient care.

Without hearing from tutors like the current and former KUWC tutors, writing center studies would be at a disadvantage. These tutors have shared with the writing center community their feelings and encounters openly and without hesitation. Knowing that they share some of the same concerns, even years after having tutoring, illustrates the common experiences of writing center tutors. Communication and learning how to communicate are large parts of tutoring. For tutors who lack confidence in themselves, communication may come as a struggle. However, when they are surrounded by supportive coworkers, tutors find themselves in a community that encourages guidance and agency. Tutors become more aware of their authority levels as they

have more sessions, and their tutoring voices become grounded in the knowledge that continuously circulates within the writing center community.

After having heard from the eleven tutors in chapter three, it has become evident that more work needs to be done so that tutors' jobs are as collaborative as possible. When collaboration exists, better emotional outcomes occur for tutors, who need reassurance so that they can establish better confidence levels in themselves as tutors, students, and writers. Incorporating training that caters to potential scenarios enlightens tutors on how to use their voices and agencies to empower tutees and themselves. When tutors are aware of their authorities and feel comfortable in their roles, they have a better sense of their tutoring identities and styles. Collaboration within the writing center through different training techniques enables tutors to communicate more effectively with those around them, including tutees, coworkers, professors, and directors.

As the semester begins, trainings can be integrated into set meetings and specific training hours. The inclusion of both returning and new tutors in initial meetings could initiate discussions on what to expect or potential tutoring scenarios. Authors Bonnie Devet and Alison Barberio, in their article "Dear Labby: Stressing Interpersonal Relationships in a Writing Center," recall the use of letters during trainings. They write, "the director asked each consultant to write an anonymous Dear Labby letter, describing any interpersonal problems we had faced with clients. Then, she put these Dear Labby letters in a box and brought them to a training session where they were drawn from the collection and read to the consultants" (11). By writing these letters, tutors learned how to deal with situations if similar ones were to arise and how to explore other tutorial techniques (12). Devet and Barberio note that sometimes tutors may become stagnant in how they handle tutees and situations, and with letters like "Dear Labby," the

hope is to for tutors to face their own insecurities while also advancing their tutoring practices (12). Using these letters promotes the "gaining [of] a fresh perspective" (13). While new tutors may not have situations to draw from, they can be asked to write letters on their worries about tutoring for the first time. These letters will stimulate conversations between returning and new tutors on how to best handle situations or what to expect, from both awkward scenarios to rewarding ones. The writing center director can then ask tutors to write letters specific to the current semester.

Additionally, writing center directors must be aware of tutors' abilities and job performances. They must "have a window into how individual consultants are viewing themselves as consultants, to hear how their sessions go so that we are best able to prompt them towards any necessary reconsideration" (Mattison 31-32). Directors should encourage tutors' reflections on their tutoring sessions, as noted in chapter one. Mattison encourages self-assessment, which includes reflecting not only on one's self, but on one's interactions with students, coworkers, and directors (35). Self-assessment can be completed by both directors and tutors. Directors should reflect on their approaches to working with tutors and organizing tutor training; tutors should reflect on what types of tutoring styles and trainings have worked best for them. Both directors and tutors must perform self-assessments so that together they can build more collaborative writing centers. Mattison also promotes open communication, especially in reference to observations of others in the center (34). In these ways, directors can oversee how tutors' tutoring styles take fruition and where any hesitations might exist.

When tutors are encouraged to write and reflect on tutoring, directors can gain further perspectives about their writing center tutors. In "Twenty-First Century Writing Center Staff Education: Teaching and Learning towards Inclusive and Productive Everyday Practice," Sarah

Blazer explains the use a private staff blog, in which staff had a "space for us to continue informal and staff education conversations that always felt cut short by time constraints" (33). Therefore, the blog was used when tutors had availability to do so, working it into their own schedules, rather than feeling rushed to cover too many topics at once during meetings or staff get-togethers. Additionally, Blazer promotes the practices of "talking to one another in large and small groups, reading scholarship, blogging in our private, shared digital space, and developing resources that require collaborative inquire, decision-making, and writing" (47). Martini also brought forth reading group as a way for tutors to connect with each other through conversations other than through professional development meetings or in-services (53). Reading group can be utilized in a way that asks tutors to read articles or chapters focused on tutoring practices or theories, and then they come together to discuss what they have learned or would like to see implemented in their centers. When tutors collaborate and inquire with one another how to best handle tutoring questions, they display a respect for each other's knowledge.

From surveying and interviewing the KUWC tutors, this researcher believes that tutors would benefit from former tutors speaking with current tutors. Bonnie Devet notes the importance of former and current tutors interacting in the article, "Untapped Resource: Former Tutors Training Current Writing Center Tutors." Devet writes that, "When workers who are doing or who have completed the same jobs meet, they often exchange strategies" (11). Devet finds that the utilization of former tutors in tutor training has great value, especially because former tutors possess an "unimpeachable authority" (11, 13). This authority stems from the former tutors' places in the "real world" after having been in the same positions as current tutors. According to Devet, "From listening to the veterans, current tutors learning one part of this [identity as a writing tutor] is being able to deal with both pleasant and not-so-pleasant situations.

While thoughtful clients will return to tell tutors how the papers turned out, there will also be those students who refuse to listen to advice" (12). Former tutors may reinforce that tutors must do their best with each tutee, even if they do not know the results of their advice. Tutors must realize that each session is its own learning experience. When tutors are given the time and space to interact with other tutors, they learn more about their roles. If they interact and hear from former tutors or observe and read the writing of current tutors, then writing center tutors will learn to tutor in ways that work best for them individually.

As noted in chapter three, some of the KUWC tutors could not recall their initial training, and many learned to tutor as they performed more sessions. Others requested more specific trainings that were not solely focused on theory. Yet, some tutors recommended alternatives to trainings which included topics like role-playing, software information, and how to handle working with longer written works. Some of these suggestions have theory built into them, as writing center theory is foundational for tutors fulfilling their roles. If tutors only learn by observing, then they risk not learning multiple parts of their roles. Likewise, if tutors solely experience mock tutorials, then they may not see the whole tutoring picture. Hall notes that, "The problem with mock tutorials, however, is that they are not authentic representations of the complex, unpredictable, and endlessly variable activities of tutoring" ("Valued Practices" 23). When tutors are oriented to their roles in an educational setting like the classroom, they make connections with theory and real-life situations. According to Hall, "In the tutor-education course, in particular, I could see that tutors often become adept at talking about writing center research and theory in ways that make them appear as confident and effective tutors" ("Valued Practices" 37). Tutor education courses which balance theory with hands-on learning and observing establish well-rounded writing center tutors. These classes could be incorporated the

semester prior to tutors starting work in the center, much like former tutor Addison mentioned. Through such courses, tutors are given additional time to learn their roles and gain more knowledge about how to interact and guide tutees. Tutors would be better prepared with resources and would have the time to develop their tutoring styles in preparation for when they are face-to-face with tutees.

Each writing center has a specific amount of funding and time in which tutors can be trained, so trainings must be both beneficial to tutors and appropriate for university requirements. Tutors should not be expected to arrive at the university prior to the start of semester for training, unless paid appropriately, so training must be implemented efficiently. If tutoring education courses are not possible at the university, then other tactics need to be encouraged. By making sure that tutors are aware of tutoring strategies and in the proper mindsets, Lisa Cahill et al., in "Developing Core Principles for Tutor Education," believe that tutors should be provided "with language for thinking more critically about their work performance in terms of the questions they use to engage writers, the types of resources they share, and the suggestions they offer" (10-11). The authors recommend that tutors get involved more within the center itself and that each group of tutors have a core set of principles to follow. They suggest "building rapport with colleagues and students, understanding the center's mission and articulating its application to their tutoring, taking a lead role in group projects within the center, and suggesting new projects for the benefit of the center" (12). These suggestions promote the collaborative agenda writing centers need to embody; however, the issue is that tutors and writing center directors need the time, funding, and dedication for projects within the center that occur in addition to tutoring sessions.

While most meetings are mandatory, tutors may not have the time or energy to participate in additional trainings. Some may simply be unwillingly to participate. For the trainings that are

mandatory, time must be utilized so that tutors recall the training tactics presented to them. Cahill et al. offer some solutions to these issues, like using reflective writing, group activities, and educational workshops, as well as self-evaluations for tutors to reflect on their own tutoring strategies and performance (13). These options could be incorporated into meeting times, especially if a tutoring education class is not already implemented. Additionally, promoting the need for the increasement of writing center tutors' wages would be important. Tutors need incentive for putting more work and time into jobs that they will no longer have once their time at university ends. Tutors should want to arrive at the writing center, ready for work, and excited for the advancement of their professional lives; however, they need to be treated fairly and be paid appropriately for the effort that is expected of them.

Because of the amount of time needed to develop and oversee a writing center, centers like the KUWC might benefit from an Assistant Director of the Writing Center. Currently, one, or two, graduate assistants act as the KUWC Manager(s), but they still receive the same stipend as the other graduate assistants, despite completing more work, like creating the tutoring schedule. If there were to be an Assistant Director, this role could be taken on by an additional graduate student, who potentially has part-time classes and is looking to further their studies with writing center research and operations. This role, then, would not be a graduate assistantship. In coordination with the Director, the Assistant Director could be the adjunct educator, or graduate teaching assistants, for a tutoring education course, thus taking some of the stress off the Director. The person in this assistive role could additionally oversee more one-on-one trainings or training groups that could happen throughout any given day, especially if it would be difficult to incorporate more frequent meetings outside of the tutoring schedule. Having an Assistant

Director would be most beneficial for expanding tutor training, lowering tutors' stress levels, and increasing tutor interactions, all in positive ways.

Like the tutees they assist, writing center tutors are on a journey. They are finding their voices, locating their authority, and learning who they are as people. They are students, who have unique agencies and individualized stories and emotions. As tutors, they have individualized tutoring styles and tutoring identities which establish their professional roles within the writing center and the university. Each writing center director must adjust their center to the needs of their tutors. Trainings geared towards writing and reflection encourage tutors to practice what they preach, thus placing themselves in tutees' shoes. When trainings are not tailored to cover multiple aspects of tutors' lives, such as their mental and emotion wellbeing, a disservice is done to the writing center tutors, who are students and people, too. If tutors feel appreciated within the center by their coworkers, directors, professors, and tutees, then their confidence in themselves elevates and they feel reassured in their job performances and tutoring abilities. Creating a collaborative community within the writing center reinforces the need for peer-level writing assistance and strengthens the need to learn more about the voices within the center. To know what will work best for tutors, it is best to ask them.

APPENDIX

Appendix A. Kutztown University IRB Application

Kutztown University
Institutional Review Board

Application for IRB Initial Review

Date Submitted: 9/26/2022

Title of Study: Amplifying Tutor Voices: A Qualitative Analysis for Improving Writing Center Tutoring Practices and Pedagogy

> **RESEARCHERS' INFORMATION** – All student applications and applications submitted by non-university personnel must have a Kutztown University advisor or sponsor.

Principal Investigator

Name of Investigator: Leah Washko

Please check one:
___Faculty   ___Administration/Staff
___Undergraduate student   _X_Graduate student
___Affiliation other than KU _____

Department/Program/Affiliation: English Department
E-mail: lwash232@live.kutztown.edu
Phone: 570-762-6098
Fax: n/a
Mailing Address: 139 Normal Avenue Apt F6 Kutztown, PA 19530

Date of when the IRB training was completed:_ 7/20/2022 _ Submit a copy of the certificate with this application. Applications will not be reviewed until training is verified.

Co-investigator(s) or Sponsor/Advisor (if applicable) (copy and paste this section as needed)

1. Name: Dr. Patricia Pytleski – Thesis Advisor

Please check one:
_X_Faculty   ___Administration/Staff
___Undergraduate student   ___Graduate student
___Affiliation other than KU_____

Department/Program/Affiliation: English Department
E-mail: pytleski@kutztown.edu

Phone: 484-646-4361
Mailing Address: 163 Lytle Hall

Date of when the IRB training was completed: 9/14/22   Submit a copy of the certificate with this application. Applications will not be reviewed until training is verified.
Will there be Research Assistants (RA) involved in this project who will have direct contact with participants and/or identifiable data? RA must complete IRB training program.
___Yes   _X_No

List any other individuals who will assist or view data:
Dr. Amanda Morris
Dr. Amy Lynch-Biniek

PROJECT TYPE AND FUNDING

Type of project:

___ Faculty/Staff project to be submitted for external funding
         -Funding institution or agency:
         -Date of grant submission:
     Include copies of grant applications with this application.
___ Faculty/Staff project NOT to be submitted for external funding
_X_ Master's thesis
___ Class project (provide course name and number:_____)
___ Other_____

How will this research be funded?

_X_ Non-funded research
___ Internally funded (department, college, university)
___ Externally funded (state, federal, private)
___ Corporate sponsor
___ Other, please describe_____

RESEARCH PROJECT DESCRIPTION

You must give the IRB enough information to enable them to make judgments regarding the status, approval or disapproval of your research. So it is very important that you answer each question and section carefully and completely. If a section or subpart does not apply to your research, please indicate this by putting "N/A" in that space. Use as much space as you need. If the IRB doesn't have enough information to make an adequate judgment, it will table your submission and request additional information. This can cause significant delays in the process.

Please use language and terminology that is understandable by people who are unfamiliar with your area of research

A. Purpose and Significance of the Research Study
   1. Clearly explain the goals and/or hypotheses of this study, including their significance.

This thesis's research will explore the role of Writing Center tutors at both the graduate and undergraduate level and tutors' peer role with students during tutoring sessions. I will engage with Writing Center theory and pedagogy that involves tutor authority in addition to research regarding tutoring practices. Through an original qualitative approach, data will be gathered from Kutztown University Writing Center tutors, both past and present, in order to gage how tutors have met challenges with tutoring students. I will consider how tutors' voices, through their prior writing sessions, have affected their tutoring practices and how best to improve those practices moving forward. Lastly, I will focus on how the voices of tutors influence their authority in the student-tutor relationship and the effects tutoring writing has on Writing Center tutors.

   2. Give a brief description of the most recent relevant research in this area *(cite sources)* and how your goals relate.

Much of my research will include articles and book chapters from the last ten years. Some research may be older due to availability of studies, but most recent will be current. As I continue researching and reading, these sources will expand. Many sources will come from The *Writing Center Journal* and *WLN: A Journal of Writing Center Scholarship*. A few of my sources will include:

Hall, R. Mark. *Around the Texts of Writing Center Work: An Inquiry-Based Approach to Tutor Education*. University Press of Colorado, 2017.

Im, Hohjin et al. "The Emotional Sponge: Perceived Reasons for Emotionally Laborious Sessions and Coping Strategies of Peer Writing Tutors." *The Writing Center Journal*, vol. 38, no. 1/2, 2020, pp. 203-230, https://www.jstor.org/stable/27031268.

Lawrence, Susan and Terry Myers Zawacki, editors. *Re/Writing the Center: Approaches to Supporting Graduate Students in the Writing Center*. Utah State University Press, 2019.

Orsini, Max, and Loren Kleinman, editors. *Student Writing Tutors in Their Own Words: Global Voices on Writing Centers and Beyond*. Routledge, 2022.

B. Participants in this Study

   1. Identify all participant groups (e.g. undergraduate students, teachers, elementary school students, administrators, other groups). Describe the basic characteristics of each group (including anticipated number of participants from each group, age range).

I would like to interview past and present Kutztown University Writing Center tutors from the last five years. Current students will include both undergraduate and graduate tutors. These students will receive a survey, and some of these tutors will be interviewed on a voluntary basis. Past tutors will include graduate or undergraduate tutors from the Kutztown University Writing Center. These previous students will receive a different survey and will be interviewed, also on a

voluntary basis. Currently, there are seven undergraduate and four graduate tutors at the KUWC. As for former tutors, I would like to survey and interview at least two former undergraduates and two former graduates. At most, I would anticipate no more than six former tutors to be surveyed and interviewed. All tutors, former and current, are above the age of 18.

2. Describe any specific requirements for including or excluding individuals from participation (e.g. particular gender or racial/ethnic background) and the rationale for the exclusion.

Surveys for both present and past tutors will be voluntary. Both groups can volunteer for further interview questions. Individuals will be provided with pseudonyms, but they will still be identified as former/present and undergraduate/graduate students.

3. If this research involves vulnerable populations (e.g. minors, the persons with mental disability, persons whose competency might be questioned, prisoners, pregnant women, or any others whose ability to give a fully informed consent might be questioned), justify their inclusion.

N/A

4. Describe any relationship(s) between <u>any</u> researchers involved with this study and potential participants (e.g. professor-student, resident assistant-resident, supervisor-employee). Please note that existing relationships between a researcher and potential research participants create special concerns related to recruitment, informed consent and confidentiality of research data that must be addressed in subsequent sections of this protocol.

From Fall 2020-Spring 2022, I was a graduate tutor at Kutztown University's Writing Center. Many of the participants will have been my previous coworkers and fellow students.

C. Identification and Recruitment of Potential Participants
   Attach copies of ALL materials that will be used to recruit participants (e.g. letters, advertisements, flyers, posters, email scripts)

1. Describe how you will gain access to potential participants, how participants will be contacted, and what information will be given during the recruitment process.

Participants will be primarily contacted through email, especially if they are former students. Current student tutors will also be emailed. Interviews can either happen via Zoom or in person on location at Kutztown University, most likely at Rohrbach Library. Surveys can be emailed back directly to me. Students can print and scan their survey to email back to me if they prefer answering in a handwritten format.

2. If participants will receive compensation in any way for their participation (e.g. money, course credit), indicate the type and the amount, the method of distribution of compensation and identify the source(s) of funds used for the compensation.

No compensation.

3. Will participants and/or data be accessed from a cooperating institution (e.g., school, university, business, agency)? If yes, a permission letter signed by an appropriate official (on the cooperating institution's letterhead) granting access to participants and/or data must be provided to the IRB committee.

N/A

D. Interventions, Assessment Procedures and Other Sources of Data
Attach copies of everything that is being used for the purposes of this study (e.g. tests, surveys, observation recording sheets, interview questions, laboratory reporting sheets, debriefing materials).

1. Describe your procedure, including all testing, observations, interviewing, interventions, educational programs or laboratory procedures. Describe how data will be recorded (e.g. survey, online, video or audiotape, notes). Give approximate amount of time needed from subjects.

Surveys will be primarily used for gathering data. These surveys will request that the former and current undergraduate and graduate tutors to share their tutoring encounters, voices, and tutoring practices. Additionally, voluntary interviews will take place. I will acquire data via the surveys which will be emailed back to me. I will also interview the tutors, whether that be through Zoom or in person. Via Zoom, video recording would take place, while in person audio recording would suffice. Surveys can be completed on their own time, and interviews should take no longer than an hour. Prior to the interview, the tutors will be provided with the interview questions in order to prepare their answers.

2. What data or information will be collected?

Anecdotal experiences, responses, and encounters will be collected.

3. If this study is using archival data (data that has already been collected for other purposes than this study that has been on file), describe the nature of the data archive. Explain which data is to be accessed for this study and how it will be accessed. If data are publicly available, state this. If not, explain how you will get access to the data and attach documentation that you have authorization to do so.

N/A

4. Is the research involving the collection and/or use of health (physical or psychological) data from a healthcare provider (hospital, physician's office, health departments, etc.)? If

yes, you may need to follow the guidelines established by the Health Information
Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

N/A

5. If this study is a qualitative project that involves unstructured or semi-structured
   interviews or observations, provide a detailed description of the nature and scope of these
   procedures. Include the purpose of the interviews or observations, where they will take
   place, by whom they will be conducted, expected length of time, type of information and
   general areas of information to be covered and sample questions and/or behaviors to be
   observed.

Interviews will be voluntary. These interviews will be performed with the intention of gathering
anecdotal data from the tutors about their time as Writing Center tutors, their encounters with
students, and further information regarding tutoring practices. The purpose is to hear directly
from tutor and learn from their experiences. The interviews will be only conducted by me, the
Principal Investigator. They will take place either via Zoom or in person at Kutztown University.
Interviews should take no longer than one hour, depending on the students' anecdotes. Please
refer to the attachments of interview questions.

6. Where will the study take place? (please be specific)

Former and current KU Writing Center tutors will be emailed. Interviews for tutors can happen
via Zoom or in person, if possible. Surveys can be emailed to all participants and be returned via
email to me.

7. If deception is involved or if information will be withheld from participants, describe the
   type of deception or the information being withheld and explain why this is necessary.
   Describe your procedures for debriefing participants. Include a copy of the debriefing
   statement with this application.

N/A

E. **Potential Risks to Participants and Procedures to Minimize These Risks**

1. Discuss any physical, psychological, financial, social/economic or legal risks, or harm
   from breaches of confidentiality that might result from participation in this study and
   assess the likelihood and seriousness of these risks. Explain why it is necessary to expose
   participants to potential risks.

N/A

2. For each risk identified, describe actions that will be taken to minimize the risk.

N/A

F. Benefit/Risk Assessment

    1. What are the potential benefits of the research? (Please note – if participants will not benefit directly in any way from their participation, state this. Compensation, including course credit, is not considered a benefit.) Do benefits outweigh potential risks?

Potential benefits for this study may include the discovery of how tutors can impact tutoring education and practices within Writing Centers. Hearing from tutors may help to improve staff involvement, problem solve, and advance further research on Writing Center tutors and tutoring. Benefits outweigh risks for this study.

    2. If benefits do not outweigh risks, explain why this project is justified.

N/A

G. Procedures Used to Protect the Anonymity and/or Confidentiality of Participants and Records Management
Records (including consents) must be maintained for as long as applicable regulations require.

    1. Explain how data will be recorded (describe any coding procedure). Will anyone besides the principal investigator and co-investigators have access to the raw data or any other form of data (please describe)? How will data be reported if presented or published (particularly important – will identifying information be masked)?

Only the Principal Investigator will handle the data – the surveys and interview materials. The PI will be the only one with access to those materials. The PI will then apply pseudonyms to the tutors' recorded data for the written thesis. The data will be explained throughout the thesis, while the tutors are kept confidential and only pseudonyms will be recorded.

    2. Explain any limits to confidentiality (e.g. child abuse reporting laws, individuals besides the researchers who will have access to data).

Not applicable, as tutors will have their names changed and pseudonyms will be used for the study.

    3. If Internet or Web-based surveys are being used, describe procedures for ensuring that confidentiality is protected.

N/A

    4. How will records be stored during the study? What will happen to records at the conclusion of the study? (Please refer to the IRB website for policy and procedure on record retention.) What will happen to data at the conclusion of the study?

Records will stay with the Principal Investigator and not be shared with anyone else. As the Principal Investigator, I will destroy the records at the conclusion of the study. The only data recorded will be from the surveys and any anecdotal experiences from interviews.

5. If audiotaping or videotaping is conducted, describe how tapes will be stored and what will happen to them at the conclusion of the study?

Interviews will be recorded so as to accurately provide quotable material within the thesis. Recordings will be stored only with the Principal Investigator's electronics. After the conclusion of the study, the recordings will be deleted.

6. Describe how records (e.g. consents, survey, tapes, notes) will be destroyed. If records will not be destroyed, please explain why not. Until records are destroyed, they must be kept in a secure place, accessed only by the investigator, co-investigators or sponsor/advisor.

I will destroy the Informed Consent materials and mentioning of names.

7. Expected length of time for study to be completed (data collection and analysis)?

Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 for thesis completion

H. Informed consent - **Attach consent and assent forms and/or script for oral explanation (if any).**
More information about what is required and templates of informed consent / assent are provided on the IRB website. All forms should be readable and must be presented in age and developmentally appropriate language.

1. Describe the process involved in obtaining informed consent (e.g. when, where, who, and how).

I will ask the former and current KU Writing Center tutors, both undergraduates and graduates, to complete the Informed Consent.

2. If subjects include members of vulnerable populations or are vulnerable because of their relationship with the researcher, explain what special procedures will be followed to ensure informed and voluntary consent.

The majority of these tutors will have been former coworkers to the Principal Investigator and will remain as such. No special priority will be placed towards the tutors due to previous work relationships.

3. If potential participants are minors, describe procedures for obtaining their assent to research and procedures for obtaining parental or guardian consent.

Not applicable, as none of the participants are minors.

4. If you believe your project requires a waiver or alteration of informed consent, or a waiver of the requirement to obtain a signed consent, you must request a waiver. Complete the appropriate form provided on the IRB website and attach it to the end of this application.

N/A

** Addendum:
Additional questions for purpose of IRB Application, sent via Email to KU IRB, Jeffrey Werner:

How will you gain access to past tutors? It stated that emails will be sent but how will you have access to email addresses?

> For past tutors, the Writing Center Director, Dr. Patricia Pytleski, has past tutors' contact information, such as their phone numbers or email addresses, in order to contact them by email. The Director has remained in contact with many of these tutors past their graduation years, thus aiding in the recruitment and interest of the past tutors. Also, I do have access to the most recently graduated past tutors' contact information, more specifically from the past two years after having been their fellow co-worker.

How many years back will you look at when recruiting past tutors? Are you recruiting from the past 2 years, 3, year, 5 years?

> Past undergraduate tutors would be from the past two years, or if necessary, no more than four years since their graduation. Past graduate tutors would not be prior their graduation year of 2018, as to keep the range under the last five years since having tutored.

In the application it states that interviews will be recorded. Will these be recorded via Zoom? Will the recording be saved on Zoom? Will recording be deleted once you transcribe interviews?

> If the interviews take place via Zoom, they will be recorded via Zoom, which will then convert the file to a saved document folder on my computer. Once the transcription is completed, I will delete the saved files from my computer. If the interview takes place in person, I will delete the voice recordings from my personal cell phone once I have completed the transcription.

TYPES OF REVIEW

Please indicate which category you are applying for review. Please note that the IRB Committee will make the final determination for type of review. If applying for an exempt or expedited review, you must indicate the category number. The category numbers are located on the IRB website located at https://www.kutztown.edu/about-ku/administrative-offices/grants-and-sponsored-projects/institutional-review-board-(irb).html, under Types of Review.

__X__ Exempt Review (indicate category number 1 – 8) ___3___
_____ Expedited Review (indicate category number 1 – 8) _____
_____ Full Review

SIGNATURES - All student applications and applications submitted by non-university personnel must have a Kutztown University advisor or sponsor.

The principal investigator, co-investigators and the advisor/sponsor must sign the application. By signing and submitting the application to the IRB, all parties listed agree that they have read and agree to the following statements.

I understand that I have responsibility for the protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects and the ethical conduct of this research project.

I agree to comply with all Kutztown University policies and procedures, applicable federal, state and local laws, and the ethical principles of my profession.

I have completed the required IRB training within the last three years.

I understand that if any revisions/changes are made in the project I must obtain IRB review and approval prior to implementation of changes.

I understand that IRB approval is only for one year (except exempt applications). If my research will continue beyond one year, I will file the yearly review form with the IRB prior to the expiration date. I understand that failure to file may result in termination of the project and require resubmission as a new project.

I will immediately report any adverse events or unanticipated problems to the IRB.

I understand that no part of the proposed research described in this application may be carried out until I have received final approval from the IRB.

Additional statement for advisors/sponsors - I understand that I am the primary responsible party for legal and ethical performance of this project. I certify that I have read and approved this protocol and I agree to meet with the principal investigator(s) on a regular basis to review project progress and help resolve any problems which arise. I also certify that I will provide written approval of all revisions and additions to this protocol.

Principal investigator:

Leah Washko
Name (please print)

Leah Washko   9/23/22
Signature   Date

Co-investigators (if applicable) (copy and paste additional signatures lines as needed):

_____
Name (please print)

_____   _____
Signature   Date

_____
Name (please print)

_____   _____
Signature   Date

Advisor / Sponsor (if applicable):

Patricia D. Pytleski
Name (please print)

Patricia D Pytleski   9/23/22
Signature   Date

07.8.2019

Appendix B. Kutztown University IRB Approval Letter

KUTZTOWN
UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
110 Old Main, PO Box 730, Kutztown, PA 19530
(484)-646-4167

DATE: October 7, 2022

TO: Leah Washko, Graduate Studies
                               Dr. Patricia Pytleski, Department of English

FROM: Jeffrey Werner, Chairperson
                               Institutional Review Board

STUDY TITLE: Amplifying Tutor Voices: A Qualitative Analysis for
                               Improving Writing Center Tutoring Practices and Pedagogy

IRB NUMBER: IRB05092022

SUBMISSION TYPE: Initial Application

REVIEW TYPE: Exempt

EXEMPT CATEGORY: 2

ACTION: Approved

APPROVAL DATE: October 7, 2022

The Kutztown University IRB has approved the initial application for your research
study. Your research study has been assigned the IRB Number 05092022. This
number must be referred to in any future communications with the IRB.

In addition, the following language must be added to the consent form, "This research has
been approved by the Kutztown University IRB – approval #05092022."

Research approved as Exempt will have no expiration date. However, any
revisions/changes to the research protocol affecting human subjects may affect the
original determination of exemption and therefore must be submitted for review and
subsequent determination.

Research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission. You must seek approval from the IRB for changes and ensure that such changes will not be initiated without IRB review and approval, except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. You must submit the Application for Revisions / Changes form to the IRB, prior to making changes.

It is your responsibility to report all adverse events / unanticipated problems to the IRB. You must report adverse events that are unanticipated, regardless of seriousness, or report events that are more serious or more frequent than expected.

Records relating to the approved research (e.g., consent forms), must be retained for at least (3) three years after completion of the research. Refer to the IRB procedures regarding records.

Please go the IRB's website to review procedures and to obtain forms as needed. If you have any questions, please contact the IRB at 484-646-4167.

Appendix C. Principal Investigator and Thesis Advisor Certifications

CITI PROGRAM

Completion Date 20-Jul-2022
Expiration Date 19-Jul-2025
Record ID   50108940

This is to certify that:

Leah Washko

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Not valid for renewal of
certification through CME.

Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher
(Curriculum Group)
Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher
(Course Learner Group)
1 - Basic Course
(Stage)

Under requirements set by:

Kutztown University of Pennsylvania

CITI
Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?wcaa83de7-3e91-40f4-b231-915ee145065b-50108940

CITI PROGRAM

Completion Date 14-Sep-2022
Expiration Date 13-Sep-2025
Record ID   49888925

This is to certify that:

Patricia Pytleski

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Not valid for renewal of
certification through CME.

Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher
(Curriculum Group)
Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher
(Course Learner Group)
2 - Refresher Course
(Stage)

Under requirements set by:

Kutztown University of Pennsylvania

CITI
Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w6dd2547c-f74e-439a-8510-d1475b9ffd9c-49888925

Appendix D. Initial Email to Tutors

Hello,

You are receiving this email because you currently or formerly work/have worked at the Kutztown University Writing Center.

My name is Leah Washko, and I am actively working on my Master's level thesis as a KU graduate student in the English Department. I worked at the KUWC for two years as a graduate assistant from 2020-2022 and have additional writing center experience from 2015-2016 during my time as an undergraduate at Misericordia University.

I wish to focus my thesis on writing center work, theory, and practices. My major concern centers on the voices of tutors. By hearing from tutors and their experiences, writing center work can advance, knowledge can be gained, and student-tutor relationships can be better understood. The research that I am completing is overseen by KU's Institutional Review Board, as my study involves you, KUWC current/former tutors, as human subjects.

Today, I am asking if you would be interested in completing a survey concerning your time at the KUWC and your tutoring experiences. I would first ask you to fill out an Informed Consent, which will contain further key information regarding the study, as well as the procedure, risks, and benefits to the study overall. The survey should take around half an hour to complete to no more than an hour. Additionally, you could then proceed to an interview portion which would be no more than an hour in length. Both the survey and the interview are on a voluntary basis. Per the Informed Consent, interviews will be recorded and later deleted at the competition of the thesis. Your names will remain anonymous, and only I will be aware of your pseudonyms throughout my thesis.

If you are interested in completing a survey, or both the survey and interview, please reply to this email, and I will send you the Informed Consent to begin the process.

Thank you for time, and I look forward to hearing from you,

Leah Washko, BSN, RN
MA English with CRLS Concentration

Appendix E. Informed Consent

CONSENT FORM

You are invited to participate in a research study being conducted through Kutztown University. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before you decide whether or not you want to participate in the study. The University requires that you give your signed agreement if you choose to participate.

This study is being conducted by Kutztown University graduate student, Leah Washko, MA English with a Concentration in Composition, Rhetoric, and Literacy Studies.

Title of the Study:

Amplifying Tutor Voices: A Qualitative Analysis for Improving Writing Center Tutoring Practices and Pedagogy

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of this research study is to investigate the role of the tutor in Writing Center tutoring, the tutor's sense of authority, and how tutors face and overcome challenges within the tutoring atmosphere. I wish to explore anecdotes and past experiences that have shaped tutors from the past and present times, how they responded to these situations, and how they would answer them now, after more life experiences. Through surveys and interviews of former and current KU Writing Center tutors, I hope to gather additional information about the KUWC that may not have been previously known.

Procedures:

If you agree to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following: answer survey questions to the best of your ability. The survey should take a half of an hour to no more than an hour to complete. On a voluntary basis, you can also be confidentially interviewed, for no more than an hour, to further explore some of your survey answers and record additional interview questions.

If interviewed in person, the interview will be securely recorded via my personal cell phone and then deleted once a transcription of the interview is completed. If interviewed via Zoom, the interview will be recorded on Zoom, saved to a Documents folder on my personal laptop, and then deleted once a transcription of the interview is completed. The transcriptions will then also be deleted at the competition of the thesis.

Risks or Discomforts, and Benefits of Being in the Study:

The study has the following risks and/or discomforts. The Thesis Advisor, Dr. Pytleski, will not be aware of original names. Only Leah Washko, the researcher conducting this study, will be aware of original responses and will only use pseudonyms with the Thesis Advisor. An additional risk for the interviews is the possibility that information can be intercepted or hacked by others, but the risk is low. All recordings will be deleted personally by me, the Principal Investigator, after transcriptions have been completed, and then the transcriptions will be deleted after the completion of the thesis.

The benefits to participation are increasing awareness of tutors' experiences for the KUWC.

Confidentiality and Anonymity:

Records will be kept private and will be handled in a confidential manner to the extent provided by law. In any report or presentation, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a research study participant. You will remain anonymous. You will not be identified within the thesis, but rather, you will be supplied with a pseudonym to preserve confidentiality. As stated above, only Leah Washko, the researcher, will be aware of whose responses pertain to and/or came from whom, but all records will be destroyed at the end of the study.

Voluntary Participation:

Your participation is voluntary, refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled, and you may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is:

Leah Washko, Kutztown University graduate student, MA English with a Concentration in Composition, Rhetoric, and Literacy Studies

163 Lytle Hall/Kutztown University

[c] (570) 762-6098

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You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later regarding the research study, you may contact the researcher listed above. If you have any questions or concerns about the rights of research participants, please contact the IRB Committee at Kutztown University at 484-646-4167.

Compensation:

There is no compensation for participation in this study.

Future Research Studies:

Your information collected as part of the research, even if identifiers are removed, will not be used or distributed for future research studies.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the information described above and have received a copy of this information. I have asked questions I had regarding the research study and have received answers to my satisfaction. I am 18 years of age or older and voluntarily consent to participate in this study.

[If participants do not receive a copy of their consent, they should receive an informational sheet with the information provided on the consent.]

_____

      Signature of Participant   Date

Thank you for your participation.

This research has been approved by the Kutztown University IRB – approval #05092022.

Appendix F. Current Tutors Survey

Survey of Current Undergraduate and Graduate KUWC Tutors

_____Undergraduate _____ Graduate   **Preferred pronouns** _____

How many semesters have you tutored at the KUWC? _____

Is this your first Writing Center position? _____ Yes _____ No

Major(s)/Minor(s)

_____

Utilizing the following Likert scale, please answer the proceeding questions to the best of your ability:

Strongly Disagree (1)   *Disagree* (2)   *Undecided* (3)

Agree (4)   *Strongly Agree* (5)

Tutor Training	SD	D	U	A	SA
1. You received adequate training to become a Writing Center tutor.	1	2	3	4	5
2. You find monthly meetings to be beneficial for more tutoring information.	1	2	3	4	5
3. You feel that your voice is heard during meetings.	1	2	3	4	5
4. You feel that your concerns are heard by your Director.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Your Director is aware of the type of tutor you are.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Your Director offers you directions on how to improve tutoring skills.	1	2	3	4	5
7. You feel like more could be learned about your role as a WC tutor.	1	2	3	4	5
8. You are provided with tutoring resources.	1	2	3	4	5
9. You are trained to handle all types of students, which may include emergent bilinguals, students with disabilities, etc.	1	2	3	4	5
10. You feel comfortable working with the students mentioned in #9.	1	2	3	4	5
11. You are aware that there are different tutoring styles and approaches.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Most of your coworkers know more about tutoring than you do.	1	2	3	4	5
13. You feel comfortable trying out new tutoring styles and approaches.	1	2	3	4	5
14. You always feel prepared to start a semester of tutoring sessions.	1	2	3	4	5
15. You would be interested in more tutor training options.	1	2	3	4	5
16. You know information about Writing Center practices and theory.	1	2	3	4	5

Tutoring Sessions	SD	D	U	A	SA
1. You feel like you adequately help students with their papers.	1	2	3	4	5
2. You feel like you adequately help students with their concerns.	1	2	3	4	5
3. You feel as if your feedback is heard/utilized by the students.	1	2	3	4	5
4. You find it easy to initiate conversations with students.	1	2	3	4	5
5. You get insulted when students do not listen to your feedback.	1	2	3	4	5
6. You find it fulfilling when students do listen to your feedback.	1	2	3	4	5
7. You have the resources needed to have a productive session.	1	2	3	4	5
8. You feel that your voice is heard during a session.	1	2	3	4	5
9. You feel that you have had many productive sessions.	1	2	3	4	5
10. You feel you have authority to influence students' mindsets.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Your expectations differ greatly compared to the students'.	1	2	3	4	5

	SD D U A SA
12. Your role is known by the student from the beginning of the session.	1 2 3 4 5
13. You are the authority figure in the room.	1 2 3 4 5

Tutor Stress	**SD D U A SA**
1. Working in the KUWC causes you additional stress.	1 2 3 4 5
2. You leave work feeling more stressed than when you arrived.	1 2 3 4 5
3. Students expect you to have more knowledge (styles, of content, etc.).	1 2 3 4 5
4. You feel that your role is not adequately known by students.	1 2 3 4 5
5. You feel you have adequate coping skills after difficult sessions.	1 2 3 4 5
6. You feel emotionally drained after a session, or after KUWC work.	1 2 3 4 5
7. You feel more like a teacher than like a tutor.	1 2 3 4 5
8. The amount of training you go through produces more stress.	1 2 3 4 5
9. You find it difficult to be the voice heard during your time as tutor.	1 2 3 4 5
10. You have too much responsibility as a WC tutor.	1 2 3 4 5
11. You find it difficult to ask your coworkers for advice during sessions.	1 2 3 4 5
12. You find your coworkers difficult to approach.	1 2 3 4 5

In a few sentences or so, please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. Please answer truthfully, and, if more space is needed, you may expand on the back of the paper. Please write legibly.

[Please note: Tutors were given line spacing within the document. Lines were removed for conservation of space.]

1. **If applicable, discuss additional ways for tutors to be trained. Additionally, is there an aspect of tutor training that you think should be a requirement that currently is not? Are there parts of tutor training that you feel are missing or need more time to be expanded on?**

2. **Please describe a situation in which you felt like your voice was not being heard. This situation can be between tutors, student and tutor, tutor and Director, etc. How was the situation resolved, if it was?**

3. **What advice would you give to new tutors, or to students who may be interested in becoming Writing Center tutors?**

4. **Please identify some of your strengths as a Writing Center tutor.**

5. **Please identify weaknesses or areas that you think you need to develop/improve as a Writing Center tutor.**

6. **Please describe a challenging tutoring session in which you faced obstacles, new or existing. How did you overcome the obstacles?**

7. **If any of the survey questions made you think of a specific experience and/or story, or you wanted to expand upon your answer, please write out your response here. Please indicate the survey section and question number, if applicable.**

8. **If you answered "Undecided" to any of the questions from the first two pages, can you explain why you went with that option? Please indicate the survey section and question number.**

9. **What challenges do Writing Center tutors face that others (students, professors, staff, parents, etc.) at Kutztown University are not aware of but should be?**

10. **Finally, in a few words, what has the Writing Center taught you?**

Would you be interested in answering more Writing Center tutoring questions in an interview? _____ Yes _____ No

Thank you for your participation!

This research has been approved by the Kutztown University IRB – approval #05092022.

Appendix G. Current Tutors Interview

Interview of Current Undergraduate and Graduate KUWC Tutors

_____Undergraduate _____ Graduate   **Preferred pronouns** _____
How many semesters have you tutored at the KUWC? _____
Is this your first Writing Center position? _____Yes _____No
Major(s)/Minor(s)

_____

The interview is meant to be a conversation in which some of these questions lead into and/or overlap with answers from the survey.

1. Walk me through a typical Writing Center session.
2. What aspect of the Writing Center makes it important for college campuses?
3. Can you describe your tutor identity for me? How have you become the tutor you are today? What experiences have shaped you?
4. What do students need to know about Writing Center tutors?
5. What do professors need to know about Writing Center tutors?
6. Do you feel comfortable working with all types of students – by level: undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral students? Students with disabilities, emergent bilinguals, etc.?
7. Do you feel like you have a sense of authority during a tutoring session? If not authority, how is your voice heard by the student? How do you have a "breakthrough" moment in a session?
8. Do you feel as if a power struggle happens between yourself (the tutor) and the student for order of concerns regarding their paper? How do you overcome this struggle, if it exists?
9. How do you think your voice is important for students? Do you think you have a significant impact on their writing abilities?
10. How did the tutor training you received aid you in becoming a Writing Center tutor? What did you learn?
11. What advice would you give to students considering a Writing Center tutoring position?
12. How has tutoring impacted your stress level?
13. How could your relationships with your fellow tutors be improved?
14. At this point in the interview, we could go through some of the essay-type questions from the survey, looking for expansion on some of their answers.
    a. This may include the interviewee pointing out a question or having stated an idea with the above questions that overlaps with their previous survey answers, etc.

*There is the potential for natural questions not posed above to occur during the interview process as tutors share their stories.
This research has been approved by the Kutztown University IRB – approval #05092022.

Appendix H. Former Tutors Survey

Survey of Former Undergraduate and Graduate KUWC Tutors

_____Former Undergraduate _____ Former Graduate
Preferred pronouns _____
How many semesters did you tutor at the KUWC? _____
Was this your first Writing Center position? _____ Yes _____ No **Graduation Year**_____
Have you worked in other Writing Centers since graduating from KU? _____ Yes _____ No
Major(s)/Minor(s)
_____

Utilizing the following Likert scale, please answer the proceeding questions to the best of your ability:

Strongly Disagree (1) *Disagree* (2) *Undecided* (3)
Agree (4) *Strongly Agree* (5)

Tutor Training	SD	D	U	A	SA
1. You felt adequately trained as a Writing Center Tutor.	1	2	3	4	5
2. You found staff meetings to be beneficial for more tutoring information.	1	2	3	4	5
3. You felt that your voice was heard during staff meetings.	1	2	3	4	5
4. You felt that your concerns were heard by your Director.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Your Director was aware of the type of tutor you were.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Your Director offered you directions on how to improve tutoring skills.	1	2	3	4	5
7. You felt like more could have been learned about your role as a WC tutor.	1	2	3	4	5
8. You were provided with tutoring resources.	1	2	3	4	5
9. You were trained to handle all types of students, which may have Included emergent bilinguals, students with disabilities, etc.	1	2	3	4	5
10. You felt comfortable working with the students mentioned in #9.	1	2	3	4	5
11. You are/were aware that there are different tutoring styles and approaches.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Most of your coworkers knew more about tutoring than you did.	1	2	3	4	5
13. You felt comfortable trying out new tutoring styles and approaches.	1	2	3	4	5
14. You always felt prepared to start a semester of tutoring sessions.	1	2	3	4	5
15. You would have been interested in more training options to have become a tutor.	1	2	3	4	5
16. You were aware of information about Writing Center practices and theory.	1	2	3	4	5

Tutoring Sessions	SD	D	U	A	SA
1. You felt like you adequately helped students with their papers.	1	2	3	4	5
2. You felt like you adequately helped students with their concerns.	1	2	3	4	5
3. You felt as if your feedback was heard/utilized by the students.	1	2	3	4	5
4. You found it easy to initiate conversations with students.	1	2	3	4	5
5. You were insulted when students did not listen to your feedback.	1	2	3	4	5
6. You found it fulfilling when students did listen to your feedback.	1	2	3	4	5
7. You had the resources needed to have a productive session.	1	2	3	4	5
8. You felt that your voice was heard during a session.	1	2	3	4	5
9. You felt that you had many productive sessions.	1	2	3	4	5

10. You felt you had the authority to influence students' mindsets.	1 2 3 4 5
11. Your expectations differed greatly compared to the students'.	1 2 3 4 5
12. Your role was known by the student from the beginning of the session.	1 2 3 4 5
13. You were the authority figure in the room.	1 2 3 4 5

Tutor Stress	SD D U A SA
1. Working in the KUWC caused you additional stress.	1 2 3 4 5
2. You left work feeling more stressed than when you arrived.	1 2 3 4 5
3. Students expected you to have more knowledge (styles, of content, etc.).	1 2 3 4 5
4. You felt that your role was not adequately known by students.	1 2 3 4 5
5. You felt you had adequate coping skills after difficult sessions.	1 2 3 4 5
6. You felt emotionally drained after a session, or after KUWC work.	1 2 3 4 5
7. You felt more like a teacher than like a tutor.	1 2 3 4 5
8. The amount of training you went through produced more stress.	1 2 3 4 5
9. You found it difficult to be the voice heard during your time as tutor.	1 2 3 4 5
10. You had too much responsibility as a WC tutor.	1 2 3 4 5
11. You found it difficult to ask your coworkers for advice during sessions.	1 2 3 4 5
12. You found your coworkers difficult to approach.	1 2 3 4 5

In a few sentences or so, please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. Please answer truthfully, and, if more space is needed, you may expand on the back of the paper. Please write legibly.

[Please note: Tutors were given line spacing within the document. Lines were removed for conservation of space.]

1. **If applicable, discuss additional ways for tutors to be trained. Additionally, was there an aspect of tutor training that you think should have been a requirement or needed to be expanded that you felt was missing during your time as a tutor?**

2. **Please recall a situation in which you felt like your voice was not being heard. This situation can be between tutors, student and tutor, tutor and Director, etc. How was the situation resolved, if it was?**

3. **What advice would you give to new tutors, or to students who may be interested in becoming Writing Center tutors?**

4. **What strengths did you develop as a Writing Center tutor that you have taken into your professional life post-graduation?**
5. **What areas do you recall struggling with during your time tutoring? How did you strengthen these weaknesses in your post-graduation life?**

6. **If possible, please recall a challenging tutoring session in which you faced obstacles. How did you overcome the obstacles?**

7. **If any of the survey questions made you think of a specific experience and/or story, or you wanted to expand upon your answer, please write out your response here. Please indicate the survey section and question number, if applicable.**

8. **If you answered "Undecided" to any of the questions from the first two pages, can you explain why you went with that option? Please indicate the survey section and question number.**

9. **What challenges do Writing Center tutors face that others (students, professors, staff, parents, etc.) at Kutztown University are not aware of but should be?**

10. **Finally, in a few words, what has the Writing Center taught you?**

Would you be interested in answering more Writing Center tutoring questions in an interview? _____ Yes _____ No

Thank you for your participation!

This research has been approved by the Kutztown University IRB – approval #05092022.

Appendix I. Former Tutors Interview

Interview of Former Undergraduate and Graduate KUWC Tutors

_____**Former Undergraduate** _____ **Former Graduate**

Preferred pronouns _____

How many semesters did you tutor at the KUWC? _____

Was this your first Writing Center position? _____ Yes _____ No   **Graduation Year**_____

Have you worked in other Writing Centers since graduating from KU? _____ Yes _____ No

Major(s)/Minor(s)

_____

The interview is meant to be a conversation in which some of these questions lead into and/or overlap with answers from the survey.

1. Recall, if possible, a typical Writing Center session that you experienced with students.
2. What aspect of the Writing Center makes it important for college campuses?
3. What experiences as a tutor have shaped you into the person you are today? Has the time that you spent tutoring influenced you now as a person post-graduation?
4. What do students need to know about Writing Center tutors?
5. What do professors need to know about Writing Center tutors?
6. Did you feel comfortable working with all types of students – by level: undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral students? Students with disabilities, emergent bilinguals, etc.?
7. Did you feel like you had a sense of authority during a tutoring session? If not authority, how was your voice heard by the student? How did you have a "breakthrough" moment in a session?
8. Did you feel as if a power struggle happened between yourself (the tutor) and the student for order of concerns regarding their paper? How would you overcome this struggle, if it existed? How do you recommend current tutors handle issues such as the one you have explained?
9. How do you think your voice is important for students? Do you think you have a significant impact on their writing abilities?
10. How did the tutor training you received aid you in becoming a Writing Center tutor? What did you learn?
11. Is there any advice that you have, now that you are no longer a tutor, that you would like to give to current or future Writing Center tutors?
12. How did tutoring impact your stress level?
13. Do you recall getting along well with your fellow tutors?
14. At this point in the interview, we could go through some of the essay-type questions from the survey, looking for expansion on some of their answers.
    a. This may include the interviewee pointing out a question or having stated an idea with the above questions that overlaps with their previous survey answers, etc.

*There is the potential for natural questions not posed above to occur during the interview process as tutors share their stories.

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