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Interactions on the Online Writing Center: Students' Perspectives

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INTERACTIONS ON THE ONLINE WRITING CENTER: STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES

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Title: Interactions on the Online Writing Center: Students' Perspectives

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This research explores the current state of online writing centers by analyzing the contributions of scholars, tutors, and students to the pedagogical practices of online peer tutoring. The study examines three areas of online peer synchronous tutoring from students' perspectives: a) students' experiences, b) students' revision processes, and c) sound practices for online tutoring. The findings emphasize the importance of including students in conversations about online tutoring practices to improve and enhance the ways writing centers help students become better writers.

This dissertation addresses new areas of research by observing interactions during online sessions and interviewing students to determine effective tutoring practices. With the lack of published empirical research devoted to online peer tutoring practices, this research provides a foundation for online tutor training scholarship with student voices. The students explained their expectations of sessions, reaffirmed practices previous writing center research has deemed important, and made suggestions instrumental to developing sound online peer tutoring practices. This dissertation argues for the inclusion of students' voices in order to fully develop sound practices for online tutoring.

Additionally, the findings offer insight to the types of online peer tutor feedback that contributed to students' revisions, the decisions students made when revising, and student response to instructor's comments on their final papers. The two most influential

factors that affected student revisions were: a) the ways tutors posed feedback, and b) whether or not they developed a plan to address the student's goals.

This research calls for online writing center scholarship to incorporate students' experiences and perspectives. The first three chapters of this dissertation provide the rationale for conducting this research. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 present the results of the study aimed at specific journal audiences. Chapter 7 summarizes the findings and provides suggestions for future research. Writing the chapters in this format resulted in a slight overlap in the information presented. The major contribution of this dissertation is that it addresses how students' experiences and perspectives of online tutoring can provide writing center scholars broader perspectives on theory, how online peer tutoring impacts revision processes, and how tutoring practices contribute to student learning.

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Introduction

The primary research question of this dissertation is: how do the interactions that transpire between tutors and students during online tutoring sessions lead to the revisions of students' writing assignments? This dissertation study contributes to the writing center and composition fields by examining three areas of online peer synchronous tutoring from the students' perspectives: a) students' experiences, b) students' revision processes, and c) best practices for online tutoring. Through interviews, the participants provided a context for how they viewed the tutors' comments, instructors' comments, and how their interactions with tutors led to the decisions they made about revising their assignments. By examining the on-screen interactions between tutors and students as well as how the students responded to the feedback they received from the tutors, we gain a better understanding of how students follow up with the tutors' response in an online tutoring session and how that leads to the students' revisions of an assignment. Onore (1992) stated that giving students a voice involves providing them with opportunities to negotiate meaning through exploration and reflection on their learning.

Online components to education, such as online courses, degrees, tutoring, etc., are ever growing. As of Fall 2008, approximately 4.6 million students were enrolled in at least one online course, which is a 17% increase over the number reported the previous year (Allen & Seamen, 2010). Additionally, the number of students taking at least one course online increased from 23% to 45% in the last five years and students who took

online courses on average enroll in two per term (Crux Research, 2013). As the popularity of online education grows, the writing center can follow the positive response of distance education in order to provide more students with opportunities to receive assistance with their writing. An important way to encourage this growth is by examining the ways students and tutors interact in these online environments. While distance education seems to have a steady increase, the online writing center is generally-speaking a slow-moving trend. Numerous writing centers have online resources for students, but not many of these writing centers utilize the synchronous aspect of online tutoring. One-on-one online tutoring maintains the same individual relationship as the face-to-face writing center. As resources for these projects become more available to writing centers, it is essential for writing centers to take advantage of them.

I assisted in developing an Online Writing Center (OWC) at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) in order to reach more students and provide them with another option for receiving help on their writing. When I worked on the OWC at IUP, I became interested in studying students' experiences with the OWC and how the interactions that occurred on-screen during a session contributed to the revisions the students made on their assignments. In my research, I found that there is not enough scholarship that includes students' voices and experiences with OWCs, the interactions that occur during online tutoring sessions, how those interactions impact the students' revisions of assignments, and what students perceive as effective online tutoring practices, which is further addressed in Chapter 2.

Interactions that take place between tutors and students affect how students revise their assignments. By observing the on-screen interactions between tutors and students, I

analyzed how the feedback students received about their writing influenced the ways they revised their papers. An example of the types of interactions that occurred during an online tutoring session is as follows:

Skylar receives an assignment from her instructor asking her to examine how childhood obesity has affected the education curriculum at her local elementary school. Skylar is concerned with how to write a concise thesis to represent the main point of her paper. Skylar makes an appointment with the online writing center and is prepared to discuss her assignment with a tutor. The conversation between Skylar and the tutor unfolds as they address Skylar's concerns with writing a clear thesis:

EXCERPT

1 Tutor: Skylar, your thesis should summarize the main point of your essay and preview what you will discuss in your paper….your supporting points. You want to be able to set up the argument for the rest of the paper.

2 Skylar: Okay. That makes sense but how do I do that?

3 Tutor: Well…what do you feel is the main idea of your paper?

4 Skylar: Hm…I think it's that the school feels that obesity has become a problem in the district. That they need to do something about it.

5 Tutor: Okay. Has the school made changes to the curriculum?

6 Tutor: Or what kind of actions has the school taken?

7 Skylar: Well… the school sent a letter home saying that the students can no longer have cookies, cake, or cupcakes during school celebrations or birthday parties. Is that what you mean?

8 Tutor: Yes, that would be one of your supporting points. Now, take a second to

re-read your introduction. Where is your main point?

Skylar and the tutor continue to look at the thesis, main point and sub-points of the paper in order to have her thesis accurately represent her argument. When Skylar is done with the online tutoring session, she revises her paper and submits it to her instructor. When she receives the paper back from the instructor, the comments from the instructor do not address her thesis.

Before the session, Skylar makes the decision to discuss her paper with an online tutor because she is concerned about her thesis. What concerned her about her thesis? Did she have prior experiences with instructors marking her down on her thesis?

During the session, Skylar responds or, at times, does not respond to the tutor's questions. What are Skylar's experiences with this online session? More specifically, from Turns 5 to 6, does Skylar understand the question the tutor is asking of her? Does the tutor jump in too soon with a new question that confuses Skylar? Was Skylar getting ready to respond to the tutor when another question was asked? Or, did Skylar not have enough time to respond to the tutor? Was any of this detrimental to Skylar's understanding of how to revise her thesis?

After the session, Skylar continues to revise and compose on her own. How does Skylar re-enter the paper? How did the session influence the ways she revised? Did she take notes during the session and use them in her revision process? Did she make more changes to her thesis when the session was over? What did she think about the paper once she submitted it? When she received her paper back from her instructor, how did she feel about the instructor's comments? How does she feel about the instructor not commenting on her thesis? I addressed these types of questions in my study. Through examining

students' experiences with online tutoring and how they followed up with the tutors' feedback, we can understand how interactions between tutors and writers leads to the revisions of assignments and how students' respond to these experiences.

Tutor Response and Student Follow-up

My study analyzed how students and tutors interacted during tutoring sessions and how the students followed up with the feedback during and after the online session. The importance of response to student writing has been highly discussed in the field of composition (Anson, 1989; Bruffee, 1984; Ferris, 2003; Sommers, 1982; Straub, 1996). In this scholarship, response has been researched from the perspective of instructors responding to their students' writing. In this scholarship, there is a focus on how to provide feedback that leads to the development of student writing; Sommers (1982) argued that responding to student writing should not take away from the student's purposes. Scholarship on response to student writing in composition is beneficial to online writing centers because tutors provide feedback on multiple levels. Tutors offer students feedback in the moment when discussing the paper, but they also provide students with a plan for continuing to work on their papers once the session is over. While this scholarship helps instructors and tutors learn about best practices when responding to student writing and providing students with feedback, it is unclear how students interact with this feedback. There is little research that includes interviewing students to discover how they follow up with tutor or instructor response or how the feedback they receive leads to the revisions they make. My study examined tutors' responses to student writing in an online platform and how the interactions between the students and tutors led to the revision of the students' assignments.

In composition scholarship, there are some studies focused on how students respond to feedback in their writing classes and whether the feedback has led to further revision. Weaver (2006) found that students value feedback, but they do not always know what to do with it. Students may need guidance to understand the feedback before they can use it. Sometimes, students feel that the feedback is too vague and difficult to deal with. Chaudron (1984) argued that "the revision process must be learned as an interaction between writers and their readers" (p. 11). Chaudron also determined that there was no difference between teacher or peer feedback when it came to the improvement of the students' revised assignments. Similarly, Beason (1993) argued that overall there is an improvement between students' drafts when they previously received feedback on their writing, but that students were selective when they made decisions about their revisions based on the feedback they received. But, what contributed to the decisions these students made? How did students engage with the response they received? Did students revise their papers based on the feedback they received? If so, how did students decide what areas were the most important to address? Or, what to spend the most time on? Why did students decide to disregard certain feedback they received? My study addressed these questions by looking at how students interacted with tutors' response during online tutoring sessions and how the feedback they received from the tutors led to the revision of their assignments.

In addition to their instructors, the online writing center is another way students receive response to their writing. Since the feedback they receive is in an online platform, their interactions with the tutors' responses change. They receive feedback that they respond to in the moment of the synchronous tutoring and at the end of the session when

they make a plan with the tutors for when they continue to revise their papers. After the session, students continue to work on their own and have more time to process the information they received during the session. These areas of response include how students are actively engaging with the assignment before they receive the final evaluative feedback from the instructor. Through looking at online writing center sessions, I researched how students interacted with tutors' responses in the moment by examining the interactions on the screen, the marks made on the students' papers, and the dialogue between tutors and students. By interviewing the students, I also discovered how the students responded to the tutors' advice after the session was over, and how they responded when they received the instructors' overall comments and grade.

Instructor response to student writing is a significant area of research; yet, there is a lack of scholarship aimed directly towards tutor response to student writing during a tutoring session, especially in the online writing center. Scholarship on tutor response to student writing in an online environment is still developing, especially in the synchronous online tutoring. By conducting research on the OWC, observing interactions, and following up with students to discuss their experiences, I addressed a new area of research in order to discover how students interacted in the synchronous online chat, how it led to revisions in their writing assignments, and what students' suggested to promote sound online tutoring practices.

What is the Online Writing Center?

The Online Writing Center (OWC), which is typically an extension of a physical writing center, helps students one-on-one with their writing at any stage of composing their paper, from creating a rough draft to proofreading and editing. The OWC allows for

collaboration and tutoring to occur over the Internet instead of through face-to-face interactions. Since online tutoring has been substantially defined and the components of different approaches to online tutoring have been theorized and explained at great lengths by other researchers[1] (Harris & Pemberton, 2001; Hewett, 2002), I briefly describe how I used the terms and clarify the distinctions between asynchronous and synchronous tutoring. I followed Coogan's (1999) definition that the "idea of an electronic writing center is dialogizing the scene of college writing; to begin using the Internet to invite other voices into our conferences" (p. 91). The OWC provides a space where students can benefit from one-on-one help from a tutor, but when they meet to discuss writing they are not necessarily face-to-face or in the same room. Rafoth (2009) found that "The most fully developed OWLs replicate the best of writing program design by offering tutoring for students of varied abilities, writing resources, learning modules, publication space, and teacher's resources" (p. 149). For the purposes of this research, I mainly focused on the scholarship that addressed asynchronous and synchronous online tutoring because the scholarship has not developed a full review of the synchronous online tutoring, which my study was based on.

The online writing center that uses asynchronous interaction is time-displaced interaction that usually occurs through email. The students send the paper to a tutor in an email by either attaching the document or pasting it into the body of the message along with any questions they may have about the paper. The tutor responds with comments about the writing by embedding them in the students' text as well as adding an end commentary. Hewett (2002) explained that asynchronous interaction normally lacks the

[1] For a complete list and explanation of all the types of OWLs, refer to Harris and Pemberton's (2001) article "Online Writing Labs (OWLs): A Taxonomy of Options and Issues."

dialogical and removes the personal nature because the student sends a question and then waits for the tutor to respond. The tutor engages each writing problem individually and the conversation typically ends with the tutor's response.

Synchronous interaction occurs in a real-time chat where written or spoken dialogue transpires between the tutor and student. Most environments include an on-screen file sharing program or whiteboard. Harris and Pemberton (2001) stated that the synchronous chat allows for true conversational interactions where "participants must take the time to write – rather than speak – their observations and commentary" (p. 532). Because of these features, the sessions are considered more interactive and closely mirror face-to-face sessions. IUP's Online Writing Center conducts synchronous tutoring through the Cisco WebEx platform. Users share documents, files, or their computer's entire desktop; through video on-screen conferencing, the tutor and student review the paper together and discuss the paper through the use of Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) audio. When observing online sessions, I focused on the interactions that occurred during one-to-one synchronous tutoring sessions examining the practices and conversations that unfolded when the tutor and student interacted about writing.

Framework for the Dissertation:

Interactional Approach Through Conversational Analysis

This study analyzed how students and tutors interacted during online synchronous peer tutoring, how these interactions led to the students' revisions, and what students reported as being effective online tutoring practices. While students interacted with the response they received from the tutor, they were actively learning with the revision process. Chickering and Gamson (1987) stated that students "must talk about what they

are learning, write about it, relate it to past experiences and apply it to their daily lives. They must make what they learn part of themselves" (p. 4). Through the process of writing and working with a tutor, students develop an understanding of the assignment that is presented to them. When they choose to get help from a tutor in an online session, they are interacting with the writing process and responding to immediate feedback; then, they reflect on the process as they work on the assignment after the online tutoring session has ended. But in the end, what did the student take away from the whole process? Onore (1992) argued that

> Learners learn best when they are *engaged*, when they are supported through collaboration with peers and teachers to *explore*, and when they have the opportunity to *reflect* on their learning, to stand back from it and assess what and how they have learned. (p. 184; Onore's emphasis)

Through conducting interviews, which is explained in Chapter 3, the participants in this dissertation study reflected on their revision process and interactions with the tutor. This study included students' experiences by understanding how they interacted with the online writing center when receiving feedback from a tutor.

Active learning contributes to students' understanding of course content and develops their overall knowledge (Anderson & Adams, 1992; Braxton, Milem, & Sullivan, 2000; Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 1991; McKeachie, Pintrich, Yi-Guang, & Smith, 1986). For the purposes of this study, the course content I was interested in was students' revision processes. More specifically, I examined the students' experiences with the online tutoring environment and how the responses they received from a tutor led to revision of an assignment. Students received

an assignment from their instructor and internalized how to engage with the assignment. They participated in an online tutoring session and explained their understanding of the assignment to the tutor along with any questions they had about the assignment. Together, the students and tutors reviewed the students' papers and the tutors provided feedback. The students revised the papers after the online session and eventually submitted them to their instructor. Then, the students received the paper back from their instructor with feedback that was related, affirmed, or disjointed from the tutoring sessions they had online with the tutors. By including the students' experiences with all these different interactions, we understand where there was a break in the circle of information— from assignment and instructor, to student, to tutor, to handing in the assignment. With all these different steps, we can see how the conversation comes full circle. During the interviews, the students have the opportunity to reflect on their processes and make their learning more explicit. Onore (1992) found that reflection is what learners need to produce knowledge for themselves.

As a further rationale for undertaking the examination of the interactions that transpired during an online tutoring session between tutors and students and moving toward a theoretical framework for this study, I incorporated a combination of interactional approach with conversational analysis. For the purposes of this study to analyze how students interacted with the tutors' response in an online environment, students reflected and discussed their progress through a follow-up protocol analysis, which is explained in more detail in Chapter 3. The interactional approach included an examination of the different approaches students had for interacting with writing that led to the revisions of their assignments, which was examined through the lens of grounded

theory and conversation analysis approaches to analyze the interactions that take place on-screen between the tutors and students.

Interactional Approach Through Conversation Analysis

The interactional approach was used to look at the conversations that occurred during online tutoring sessions, which were examined through a conversation analysis approach. The online writing center influenced how students perceived their writing and assignments. When working on assignments with tutors, students are influenced by everything that happens in relation to the interactions from classroom conversations, to conversations with peers as well as the instructors' comments or instructions on an assignment. The students' understanding of the assignments is influenced by multiple factors and as a result, directs what is discussed in the session. These interactions as well as others result in how students revise or change their writing. By observing these interactions and interviewing the students, which is further explained in Chapter 3, I examined how these interactions led to the students' revisions of assignments. These interactions ultimately shaped the way students perceived the assignment and then affects how the students worked with the tutors during online sessions, which consequently reshaped the students' writing.

In order to examine the importance of how students received feedback on their writing during online tutoring sessions and how it contributed to their revisions of an assignment, which I believe the scholarship is only beginning to develop, my study observed the interactions that occurred during online tutoring sessions. I analyzed how students experienced these factors and how they chose to either share or refrain from revealing information about the assignment. Onore (1992) argued that "conversations

reveal much more than they literally say. The nature of entire contexts can be exposed by the kinds of conversations that take place within them" (p. 181). A Conversation Analysis approach (CA) was used to analyze the interactions that took place between the tutor and student. The conversations and comments in the students' papers were transcribed and analyzed by using a CA method, which examines the "interactive practices that organize events within individual actions" (Goodwin & Heritage, 1990, p. 292). The students and tutors engaged in real-time conversations through VoIP, which was one of the areas this study examined. A video recording of each session with the audio conversation and actions that occurred on the screen was captured and saved through WebEx.

In my study, the students' experiences with the online tutoring session and the feedback they received were important to understanding their revision process. During an online tutoring session, students disclosed information about the writing assignment and what they perceived as important to explain to the tutors. CA was applied to the conversations between tutors and students, which is further explained in Chapter 3, by examining turn-taking, choices of vocabulary, and the questions students asked. Additionally, the online tutoring sessions followed an inquiry-based model, which according to Bruner (1961) is a form of active learning that is based around student's questions and goals. Through the writing process and the online tutoring session, this study determined how students gained control of their learning by examining their range of "ownership decisions" (Rosaen, 1993).

Research Questions

My study was guided by the four main research questions:

1) What are students' experiences, interactive processes, and understanding of their writing and revision production when using the online writing center?
    a. What interactions occur during an online tutoring session between the student and tutor? (For example, what is the pattern of turn-taking? How do tutors identify topics for discussion? And so on.)
    b. What modes of communication does the student employ when interacting during an online tutoring session? (For example, does the student write directly on his or her paper? Does the student highlight or use track-changes during the session? And so on.)
    c. How do students respond to the feedback they receive during an online tutoring session? (For example, does the student immediately revise the text while receiving the feedback? Does the student agree or disagree with the tutor's feedback? Is there a discussion about the feedback the tutor offers? Does the student make a note to return to that section of the text? And so on.). Response in this question refers to the actions students take after they receive feedback from tutors as well as their attitude about the feedback.
2) How do students revise their assignments from the feedback they receive? This question refers to how the advice provided by the online tutoring influenced the students' decisions and actions when revising their assignments.
3) How do students respond to the instructors' overall comments about the paper in relation to the tutoring session? Similar to research question 1c, response in this

question refers to students' attitudes and perceptions toward the instructors' comments in relation to the tutoring session.

4) What online tutoring practices do students find helpful? What suggestions do students have for tutors to use in future tutoring sessions?

Organization of Dissertation

This dissertation focuses on students' experiences with online synchronous peer tutoring, how these experiences impacted the ways students revised, and what online practices students found to be helpful. When I first started researching this topic, I discovered that there has not been a significant amount of scholarship published that observed online tutoring sessions and interviewed students about their experiences with online tutoring. Students' experiences—the meaning further explained in Chapter 3—referred to their modes of communication, interactive processes, student response to tutor feedback, and writing production. Additionally, students' experiences can be thought of in terms of interactive processes, writing and revision production, and understanding.

As I developed this study, I used a grounded theory approach when transcribing and analyzing the online sessions, retrospective interview analysis, and interviews. Grounded theory enabled me to be flexible when conducting research and to develop theory from the data. This flexibility was essential because there has only been a small amount of empirical research conducted about online synchronous peer tutoring. In order to develop interview questions for the students, I observed the online sessions to see what trends and patterns emerged. The online sessions provided the foundation and context for the participants' interview questions. Additionally, I applied a conversation analysis approach to the interactions that occurred between tutors and students during the online

tutoring sessions. More specifically, I examined who took more turns speaking, what types of language, such as directive or facilitative, the tutor used when providing advice, and what types of questions were being asked.

In order to understand the students' revision processes, I asked each student to participate in a retrospective interview, where they described their revision processes explaining how they re-entered the paper, what choices they made for revising, and flipped through their final paper page-by-page addressing each change they made. Additionally, they discussed how the online sessions impacted their revision and composing processes. The retrospective interviews provided the narrative of how the students' writing developed from one draft to the next. During the same session, the participants were also interviewed about their experiences, how they perceived themselves as writers, and what tutoring practices they found to be most helpful. The students were asked to provide a copy of their final papers, which was scanned, with the instructors' comments and they were asked to respond to the instructors' comments that were associated with the online tutoring sessions. The revisions on the final papers were analyzed, coded, and compared to the papers they worked on with the tutors. All of these components provided the students' perspective of online tutoring and how it impacted them as writers.

In order to fully report the different areas of this study, this dissertation exists in two parts: a) dissertation-only chapters (Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 7), and b) free-standing articles to be submitted to journals (Chapters 4, 5, and 6). The former chapters are meant to provide the foundation for this dissertation as well as explain the rationale and overall significance of this research. The latter chapters are meant to be able to stand-alone and

report the results of the study with specific audiences and journals in mind. As a result of the chapters being written in this manner, there is a slight overlap of information.

Chapter 1 explains the significance of including students' experiences with online tutoring in online writing center scholarship in order to gain an understanding of how tutoring sessions affect the students' revisions. I discuss briefly the areas that construct the online writing center and student writing that is further developed in Chapter 2. Next, I present an argument for why the online writing center should be further explored and the opening in the scholarship for this research. Then, I explain how interactional approach combined with conversation analysis allows me to include students' experiences with the online writing center and analyze how students followed up with the tutors' feedback.

Chapter 2 provides a critical review of writing center scholarship examining the trends of online writing centers and tutoring as well as investigating the intersections of pedagogy and technology of online writing centers. After reviewing this scholarship, I argue that the research should focus more on actual tutoring practices that occur during an online tutoring session instead of administrative protocols. Because the current research focuses on operational concerns when the online tutoring and practices are addressed, the scholarship could benefit from further development. After conducting a review of literature, I determined areas that need further exploration: the interactions occurring on the screen during the session, how students respond to the feedback they receive from tutors as it becomes part of their revision processes, and what students perceive as sound pedagogical practices for online synchronous peer tutoring.

After showing how the current research on online writing centers has created the two gaps I explored, I explain in Chapter 3 the methodology for my study. In order to address the areas that I believe that scholarship is only beginning to develop—response to student writing in online tutoring sessions, interactions that occur during the session, discussion of the on-screen practices— I conducted a study of IUP's Online Writing Center. This research involved observing, transcribing, and analyzing online tutoring sessions, retrospective interview analysis, interviews, drafts of student writing, and the instructors' comments on the students' final papers.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 present the results of this research with each chapter aimed at a different journal audience. Due to the nature of writing the chapters in this format, there may be some repetition in the information presented, such as the rationale, literature review, scholarship, and methods for conducting this research.

Chapter 4, "Synchronous online peer tutoring: What students say they learned," describes what the participants say they learned about their writing practices from online sessions and what they say about their experiences with online tutoring. This chapter was written for submission to *Computers and Composition* because the journal values empirical evidence that examines how computers and technology communication intersects with writing development. The research provides a close look at the on-screen interactions that occurred in one-to-one synchronous online tutoring sessions between tutors and student writers, such as who determined the goals of the session, what types of questions were asked, and how the tutor identified topics to focus the session.

Chapter 5, "Student revision processes: How synchronous online tutoring contributes to revision," explains how online tutoring sessions contributed to participants'

revisions of assignments, how they made choices about what to revise, and how they responded to the instructors' comments. During the interviews and retrospective interview analysis, the participants explained their revision processes, how they re-entered the paper after the online session, the decisions they made about what to revise, and how they went about revising. This process included the participants going page-by-page through the final draft and discussing the areas that they added, changed, deleted, or reordered. The results of this study demonstrated how the participants addressed the tutors' advice when it aligned with their aims and goals. This chapter was written for submission to *The Writing Center Journal* because of the chapter's emphasis on how online tutoring practices contributed to the writers' revision processes.

Chapter 6, "Sound practices for online tutoring: Suggestions from students," focuses on the participants' reflections of what they found helpful during their online peer tutoring session and what they suggested for future online tutoring sessions. Since there are few studies that incorporate students' voices into developing effective online tutoring practices, this chapter is also written for submission to *The Writing Center Journal.* Most of the scholarship about best practices for online writing centers is either from the director's perceptions of the tutor's role in the writing center or the tutor's perspective of the online session. In this chapter, I provide suggestions for online tutoring through the voices of students who participated in online sessions, in conjunction with the scholarship in the field.

Chapter 7, the final chapter, summarizes my findings by addressing each research question and explains the significance of this research to the writing center field. This chapter also addresses limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

Ultimately, this research acknowledges the importance of the contributions that students can make in the writing center field. This dissertation research adds an understanding of the students' experiences to writing center scholarship, specifically in synchronous online writing centers. Additionally, my study also adds to the development of writing center scholarship by providing tutors with recommendations for responding to student writing in an online environment. This study was primarily qualitative, involving observations of recorded online tutoring sessions, retrospective interview analysis and interviews of the students, and two writing drafts provided by the students.

Conclusion

This chapter makes the argument that there is a need to study online writing centers and the student-tutor interactions that occur during online tutoring in order to determine how online tutoring leads to students' revisions. I provided a rationale for why online writing centers should have further research conducted about online tutoring practices that contribute to students revising their assignments. I started by explaining the importance of students' input and discovering their reactions to the online writing center. Then, I defined the components of the online writing center including the distinction between asynchronous and synchronous tutoring. In order to understand the intricate layers of the online tutoring I researched, I provided a framework to view this dissertation by using an interactional approach with conversation analysis to discuss online writing centers. As I moved towards Chapter 2 and a discussion about the scholarship that is produced in this area, I found gaps that open a path for this dissertation to address areas that are still developing: the interactions occurring on the screen during an online tutoring session, how students revise their assignments based on the decisions they make about

the feedback they receive from tutors, and students' perceptions of sound practices for online synchronous peer tutoring.

CHAPTER TWO

MOVING THE ONLINE WRITING CENTER FORWARD

Introduction

Virtual online writing centers, also commonly referred to as online writing labs (OWLs), have been in existence in one form or another for the past 20 years. Brown (2000) identified that there are various ways to discuss online writing centers and not all directors use the term OWL. The implementation of online writing centers is a slow-developing trend. Technology in the writing center scholarship started with debates about the effects of adding computers to the writing center (Blythe, 1997; Carino, 1998; Farrell, 1987; Luchte, 1987; Neuleib & Scharton, 1990; Whipple, 1994; Wright, 1987) to technology being used to launch online resources for writers, such as automated file retrieval systems, email drop boxes, and synchronous, real-time chats (Guardado & Shi, 2007; Harris & Pemberton, 2001; Hewett, 2002, 2006, 2010; Inman & Gardner, 2002). The online writing center initially began with directors and tutors posting web resources that are helpful for writers to use to develop their writing and can be accessed at the writing center's webpage, for example the Purdue OWL website. Then, online writing centers became more interactive through the use of email attachments to share papers and open dialogue between tutors and students. As the online writing center has evolved to include new technologies and platforms, there has not been one established concept of online writing centers. Hewett (2002) acknowledged that there is not one notion of the online writing center, but many variations as institutions have developed their own vision of how it should look and what its function for serving their clientele should be. Bangou and Wong (2009) stated that each writing center develops the online environment through

"reconstructing the technology" and "making it their own" (p. 172). Each online writing center utilizes different technology, platforms, and approaches to interact with writers depending on the needs of their clientele.

While numerous writing centers have online resources for students, there are not many that participate in the synchronous feature of online tutoring, even though resources for these projects are becoming more accessible to writing centers. Directors of writing centers are beginning to take advantage of online tutoring in order to reach more of their students, which is important because as Monroe, Rickly, Condon, and Butler (2000) stated:

> The future of education lies, then with the online, networked university, with its flattened hierarchy and collateral human and electronic networks, connecting schools, universities, businesses, and communities. In a way, the writing center today, with its face-to-face and online components, may be a fleeting Kodak moment of the university in transition, where students attend campus-based classes but with online support systems. (p. 218)

The online writing center provides students with an alternative outlet to the physical writing center environment in order for students to receive assistance on their assignments to improve their writing.

Throughout this chapter, I examine issues in online writing center scholarship as well as any research that seems to be moving in a different direction than the rest of the scholarship. My research was centered on online writing centers, online tutoring, student response to writing sessions, and technology in the writing center. As I examined the scholarship, I noted the researchers' main concerns about online writing centers and

categorized them based on how the issues were addressed: theoretical, empirical, and how-to. I looked for gaps in the scholarship as well as examined common or divergent threads in the research I reviewed. From this review of the online writing center scholarship, I determined that there is a need to include students' voices in the scholarship and I focused my research on students' experiences with the online writing center, how on-screen interactions during an online tutoring session led to the revision of the students' assignment, and students' perspectives of effective online tutoring practices.

By conducting this review of literature, I saw an opening for research focused on tutoring practices in online sessions and how students followed up with tutor response in an online tutoring session. My study addressed this area of the scholarship by examining the on-screen tutoring practices and investigating how students responded to the immediate feedback they received from the tutor as well as after the session when they were working on their own. In this chapter, I present a review of the literature and scholarship investigating the intersections of pedagogy and technology of online tutoring.

The Current Scholarship: Theoretical, Empirical and How-To

The scholarship on online writing centers can be grouped into three categories, including some overlap: theoretical, empirical, or how-to. The theoretical scholarship applies a theory, lens, or pedagogy to the online writing center. Theoretical scholarship is also concerned primarily with theories or hypotheses; therefore, it does not easily reduce to a set of observations or practices. Empirical scholarship focuses on studies conducted that may include experiments and observations and then reports the findings. Lastly, the how-to scholarship provides guidance to readers about how they can build an online writing center as well as how to respond to student writing.

The majority of the research falls into the first category looking at the online writing center from a theoretical standpoint and focusing on administrative concerns. There are few empirical studies of online tutoring practices and the dialogue or response that occurs within an online session, as my study did. The scholarship is significantly focused on operational concerns and intellectual work. One of the main limitations of the research on online writing centers is that the scholarship spends much time on issues such as funding, technology support, and how to make the writing center more visible. First, I briefly highlight and outline my classifications, explaining what they are and how they were discussed. Then, I further investigate the areas of research that I think would be more beneficial for the direction of online writing centers, such as tutor response to student writing.

I define operational concerns as those concerns that address the online writing center from a more administrative level, considering external issues and how the writing center interfaces with the campus. These operational concerns are meant to serve students, but do not represent students' experiences or response to online tutoring. Through a close reading of the literature, I found six categories of operational concerns:

1) Funding (Brown, 2000; Monroe et al., 2000; Shadle, 2000),
2) Personnel (Beebe & Bonevelle, 2000; Brown, 2000; Shadle, 2000),
3) Technology support (Beebe & Bonevelle, 2000; Brown, 2000; Hewett, 2002; Shadle, 2000),
4) Servers and internet connection (Beebe & Bonevelle, 2000; Brown, 2000; Shadle, 2000),
5) Advertising (Beebe & Bonevelle, 2000; Brown, 2000; Shadle, 2000), and

6) Expanding the writing center or building alliances (Brown, 2000; Monroe et al., 2000, Hewett, 2002; Shadle, 2000).

Funding generally addressed where the funding comes from, how to request more funding, and how the lack of funding either limits the use of online writing centers or dictates the resources available. Shadle (2000) stated that "A few OWLs were highly funded for staff and/or equipment, but more were not. A clear majority either had no permanent funds for the OWL or had to juggle discretionary or tutoring funds" (p. 10). As a result, funding issues also include the means to pay the staff and can dictate the options for the programs needed in order to get the online writing center operational. Brown (2000) acknowledged that "Adding an OWL component to a writing center requires funds to purchase the necessary equipment if a center does not already have computers and Internet access" (p. 23). Funding and whether or not the writing center can hire or train tutors for online tutoring directly affects the personnel concern, which means that some students may be unable to access the writing center without it having an online entity. The argument focuses on whether there is enough staff to operate an online writing center, though Brown (2000) argued that paying for online tutors is no more expensive than on-site staff.

The concerns of funding and staff correlate with technology support. Technology support refers to what, if any, technological assistance the university offers. A main issue in the development of online writing centers is that not all directors are familiar enough with technology and the programs in order to implement an online tutoring program. Additionally, this concern with technology and online platforms does not take into account how the students experience or interact with the interface of the program, but

only how the tutor or the director does. According to Beebe and Bonevelle (2000), if the institution lacks financial and technological support as well as computer expertise, the writing center is not able to "experiment with technology and thereby reinvent itself in this changing educational climate" (p. 48). As a result, directors are focused on how technology support is either beneficial for them or the lack of technology support ultimately influences the writing center's use of any online platform. In some cases, this lack of support may prohibit writing centers from having an online entity and being able to serve the students who could use it.

A similar concern to the issues of technology support is related to how the online writing center affects the university servers and connection to the Internet. The importance of university servers and Internet connection has been highly theorized, though may no longer be as imperative as it once was. This concern has to do with a slow Internet connection delaying the process of online tutoring or disrupting the university's server. Shadle (2000) observed that "Twice as many OWLs were hooked into a campus server instead of owning their own. Most respondents felt their servers were medium or fast with mediocre or excellent maintenance of the center computers" (p. 11). The university's servers and Internet connection distinctly shapes the type of program or software the online writing center can employ.

Writing centers are always creating ways to advertise their services. Shadle (2000) found that online writing centers are not successful when they cannot advertise and be seen by the university (p. 9). There needs to be a stronger communication between the writing center and the faculty, students, and university in order for the online writing center to be visible (Brown, 2000). This scholarship has shown that through advertising

and communication with other departments, alliances are formed and the writing center has been able to expand its boundaries. The online writing center can develop a partnership with other departments and units. The services the writing center provides has the ability to reach across multiple disciplines; and by the writing center residing on the web, it can eliminate the misperceptions that the writing center is mainly for English majors. Hewett (2002) stated that the online writing center can also "extend the writing center community" as well as support "instructors and writing styles that reach across multiple disciplines" (p. 12). The online writing center benefits the physical writing center because it further serves students across the university, and consequently directors can ask for funding from other departments. Monroe et al. (2000) found that "Because the writing center now has greater visibility (and, consequently, a greater responsibility to legitimize its work), it currently operates on a substantially larger budget than when it was housed in a single department" (p. 220). This scholarship does not determine what students find as a helpful way to reach them or educate them about the writing center.

Operational concerns are at the forefront of OWC discussions when an administrator starts an online tutoring program because these external issues need to be established before the OWC can move forward. These operational concerns leave the students' voice out of the conversation. Since the actual online tutoring practices seem to reflect what may already be happening in the writing center and directors already participate in tutor training, online tutoring practices appear to be the easier aspect of getting the writing center online, which does not consider how the students experience the online writing center. Only once administrators get all the operational concerns

settled can they then can take a closer look at the tutoring itself and realize that it is not as simple as transferring face-to-face practices to an online environment.

This review of scholarship shows the importance of addressing the operational concerns of OWCs. In order to further develop these operational concerns, which continue to be important, writing centers would benefit from more research focused on students' experiences with OWCs. Since students' experiences with OWCs are closely related to these operational concerns, OWC scholarship will become even more meaningful with the inclusion of research that focuses on the online tutoring practices and interactions that occur between student and tutor when developing online tutoring programs. Response to student writing and how students interact with that response is a key component to tutoring, which will be addressed in the next section.

Response and Dialogue

Tutors' responses to student writing are critical during online tutoring and writing center work. A great portion of the information that has been developed about the importance of response to student writing has been discussed in the field of composition (Anson, 1989; Bruffee, 1984; Ferris, 2003; Sommers, 1982; Straub, 1996). The research and scholarship produced in this area has been influential in the teaching of writing and is relevant for online tutoring. Scholarship on response to student writing in composition is relevant to online writing centers because there are multiple levels of feedback that occur during online tutoring. The students received feedback that they responded to in the moment as well as reflected on after the session as they revised their paper. The scholarship I review explains how different approaches to responding to student writing can benefit the students and provide guidance for tutors.

The studies I reviewed acknowledged the importance of implementing reflective practices that remind teachers and tutors to pay attention to the amount of commentary they provide and the kind of language they use. This scholarship suggested that the commentary should be encouraging and tailored the students' purposes. Anson (1989) argued that certain ways of responding to texts contribute to writing improvement, whereas others do not. Anson more specifically indicated that teachers need to pay closer attention to the ways they respond to students' texts because it is not always as encouraging, or as Straub (1996) termed facilitative, as they believe it to be. Anson (1989) advised instructors to be reflective of their responsive practices in order to ensure they are in fact supporting student writing development and improvement.

Straub (1996) determined that there were only two ways of providing students with feedback on their writing: directive or facilitative. Straub provided examples of instructor feedback that is facilitative and supportive along with showing how it is less controlling than directive commentary. Straub (1996) concluded that "The more a teacher's comments tap into her strengths as a teacher the more they become an extension of herself, the better those comments will be" (p. 247). But how do students interact with this approach? What are students' experiences when receiving feedback that is either directive or facilitative?

In order for students to receive feedback that is helpful when they revise their assignments, the response needs to be clear and student-oriented. Sommers (1982) warned teachers about giving feedback to students that have mixed messages and can cause confusion to the students. Sommers further explained that when responding to earlier drafts of work teachers should not focus on sentence-level errors because if there

are problems with clarity and organization, most likely, the student will rework those major parts of the text. Therefore, the sentence-level errors will no longer be significant because those sentences may not exist in future texts. Sommers (1982) stated that when teachers provide more comments it is "difficult for students to know what is the most important problem in the text and what problems are of lesser importance" (p. 151). Therefore, when commenting on student work, more is not always better (Rafoth, 2009; Sommers, 1982; Straub, 1996). While such a conclusion is clear from the teacher's perspective, what do the students think? How do students respond to the feedback they receive? How do they determine what areas of the text to revise? Which areas do they decide to focus on? In order to address these questions, my study analyzed how students interacted with the tutor's response in an online environment through examining the students' experiences with the online writing center.

Ferris (2003) moved the conversation beyond tutor response in the form of written feedback and argues that the most effective feedback to student writing includes both written and oral feedback. Ferris asserted that students should receive feedback on multiple draft stages and on a variety of writing aspects. The feedback should always fit the assignment and be tailored to the student, which is what the online writing center aims to do. While tutoring sessions in an online environment may eliminate the oral feedback component Ferris (2003) advised, the real-time written chat approach allows students to mirror conversational dialogue and receive immediate feedback about their writing. The real-time chat also allowed students to ask questions about their writing and raise concerns they may have with the assignment.

The online writing center consists of multiple levels of feedback to student writing. Online tutoring includes feedback that students interact with in the moment and can ask questions about. Students also leave the session with feedback to reflect on and continue to work with as they revise their assignments. While learning about the best practices from instructors' perspectives is helpful, my study adds an understanding of students' experiences with online tutoring and how their experiences led to the revisions of their assignments. The studies reviewed suggest the importance of how students receive feedback on their writing and a conscious effort by the responders to reflect on these practices by paying close attention to how much commentary they provide, what aspects of the writing they spend the most amount of time addressing, and whether or not their feedback is encouraging or controlling. As I turn to writing center scholarship, I question why there has not been this emphasis on response to student writing, especially in conjunction with the online writing center. Instead, the writing center scholarship tends to focus on building a relationship, collaboration of peers, and establishing a dialogue.

In the writing center scholarship, tutor response to student writing has focused on the importance of establishing a relationship through dialogue and collaboration. Through dialogue, students can gain clarity on their work. Ferris (2003) explained that when students fully discuss their concerns without the worry of assessment from an authoritative figure, then they can engage "in unrehearsed, low-risk, exploratory talk" (p. 130). In addition to students having the freedom of exploratory talk, Ritter (2005) stated that "conversation allows for more time to process information" (p. 60).

Dialogue is one of the most important aspects of a writing center session (Thomas et al., 2000); therefore, this dialogue should be replicated during the online session. The

replication of dialogue can be accomplished by the use of synchronous real-time chat features, such as an on-screen, file-sharing program or whiteboard. Harris and Pemberton (2001) found that the online session was a new opportunity for tutors to grow and find an "online voice" (p. 537). Dialogue is a way to encourage students (Thomas et al., 2000; Coogan, 1999). Coogan (1999) explained that "Rhetoric answerability can dialogize the conference and encourage students and tutors to produce internally persuasive discourses. But it also seems true that there is only so much we can see on each other's conceptual horizons" (p. 105).

In addition to creating an open dialogue during online tutoring sessions, the relationship between the tutor and student is established through collaboration. Hewett (2006) stated:

> From a theoretical perspective, online dialogue, like its oral counterpart, presumably can foster collaboration, a concept common to social constructivist epistemology, which holds all knowledge to be socially developed and relative to the group to which it applies. Such dialogue seems natural to developing ideas and discussing the writing process with student writers. (p. 6)

Students engaged in collaborative work in order to improve their writing with the help from their peers as well as "peers offering help, furthermore, learned from the students they helped and from the activity of helping itself" (Bruffee, 1984, p. 638). Bruffee (1984) declared that "The first steps to learning to think better, therefore, are learning to converse between and learning to establish and maintain the sorts of social context, the sorts of community life, that foster the sorts of conversation members of the community value" (p. 640). The online writing center establishes a place where a community of

writers can dialogue on their writing processes and collaborate with tutors through an online chat.

Besides focusing on the importance of dialogue and collaboration to establish a relationship with the student, researchers also find that online writing centers are less hierarchal than face-to-face sessions and break down the power dynamics (Carlson & Apperson-Williams, 2000; Harris & Pemberton, 2001; Healy, 1995; Jones et al., 2006; Rafoth, 2009). A significant focus of the research conducted about online sessions has addressed the power relations that are present between tutor and student when interacting and providing feedback. Jones, Garralda, Li, and Lock (2006) stated that "Many of these studies suggest that in on-line tutoring sessions relationships tend to be less hierarchical, even when tutors are truly authority figures, like class teachers" (p.3). Through observing online sessions, Jones et al. learned that by having tutors respond to students with more open-ended questions, the questions encouraged the students to look for the answers themselves. Jones et al. (2006) also argued that "This strategy leads not just to longer client turns, but also results in more egalitarian distribution of interactional control and more cooperative topic management" (p.13). Ultimately, the power relations are transformed by altering the time and space of the writing center when it moves into an online environment and the hierarchy is flattened, as Carlson and Apperson-Williams (2000) acknowledged.

The importance of building a relationship with the student through dialogue and lessening the issues of hierarchy were generally discussed when looking at tutor response to student writing in the online environment. Response to student writing is a significant area of research; yet, there is a lack of scholarship aimed directly towards tutor response

to student writing during synchronous online tutoring sessions. In order to develop more scholarship in this area, my research examined the interactions that occurred in synchronous online peer tutoring, what students recalled from their experiences during these sessions, and what they believed they learned about their writing practices. My research analyzed how students interacted with immediate tutor feedback in the moment by examining the interactions on the screen, the marks made on the students' papers, and the dialogue between tutors and students. Through understanding the students' experiences, my study examined how the interactions during the online tutoring session led to the revision of the students' assignments. In the following sections, I focus on how tutor response is discussed in the asynchronous, email interaction. Then, I discuss the scholarship in synchronous, chat interaction.

Asynchronous tutoring. The asynchronous form of online tutoring usually entails an interaction that is time-displaced, where students submit questions with their paper and wait for a response. The tutors include feedback throughout the paper as well as including a long, complex explanation at the end of the student's writing. The tutors work through the writing concerns individually and then respond to the student through email (Harris & Pemberton, 2001). This section focuses on how the scholarship addresses tutor response to student writing through email, as some research provides a more in-depth analysis and proposal than others.

As shown through the composition scholarship that addresses response to student writing, there are multiple options for responding to writing in email (Cooper et al., 2005; Rafoth, 2009). Cooper, Bui and Riker (2005) provided a how-to guide about responding to writing during online tutorials. Similar to small-talk at the beginning of a face-to-face

session, when tutors respond to the students' writing, they should start by setting a friendly tone in the beginning remarks; according to Cooper et al. (2005), by responding this way, students read the feedback as constructive and gentle (p. 311). In order to establish this friendly relationship, Carlson and Apperson-Williams (2000) applied rules about dialogue from Casal (1998) in order to maintain positive relationships over email between students and tutors. Carlson and Apperson-Williams (2000) stated that in the tutor's email response there should be "no personal attacks for flames wars", "clear labeling of messages", and "no gushing about or bashing of characters or authors" (p. 131). Carlson and Apperson-Williams (2000) also found that during online sessions tutors should communicate "in such a way that courteous and patient dialogue becomes the norm when physical appearance and tone of voice cannot convey such qualities" (p. 132). In addition to Carlson and Apperson-Williams's argument, Cooper et al. (2005) suggested that the tutor can soften criticism by employing Socratic questioning. More specifically about the students' texts, Cooper et al. advised that the tutor should explain the logic behind grammatical changes, but not correcting them all. Lastly, the concluding remarks should include praise and reiterate the concerns in the paper. As Cooper et al. (2005) acknowledged, in asynchronous tutoring environments the tutor does not know whether or not the student is receptive to the tutor's advice unless the student resubmits the paper for more feedback. Even if the student does resubmit the paper, the tutor still is unaware of how the student responded to the feedback, whether or not it was helpful, and what the student considered effective tutoring practices. In order to contribute empirical research to this scholarship that addresses, my study analyzed the interactions between

student and tutor during a real-time chat tutoring session to learn about the students' experiences with the online writing center.

Rafoth (2009) conducted similar research to Cooper et al. (2005) by providing an empirical look at how tutors respond to student writing in an online platform. Rafoth observed the email interactions of the tutors and students at the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Writing Center, focusing on the response tutors provided through email to students. Rafoth asked the tutors to reflect on the process and collected feedback from the students who engaged in the online sessions. Rafoth concluded with four lessons about online tutoring that resulted from the research. First, similar to Sommers (1982) and Straub (1996), Rafoth (2009) determined that when writing comments to students, less is more. Second, the focus and consistency of the response is paramount (Rafoth, 2009, p. 149). Third, similar to Cooper et al. (2005), Rafoth (2009) distinguished that tutors should be direct, but polite, with the feedback they provide. Lastly, how the tutors read the students' papers affect how they provide feedback. After reviewing the responses about asynchronous tutoring provided by both tutors and students, the tutors altered how they responded to the students' papers by being more selective with comments and reading from a new perspective. In order to provide a more selective response to the students' writing, Rafoth (2009) explained that it is helpful for students to understand that clearly communicating the main idea of each paragraph is most important; but in order to reach that point "the tutor has to ignore the many other opportunities for comments that she sees and concentrate on helping the writer get his main idea across" (p. 155). The comments should be streamlined, providing feedback plainly and confidently so that the suggestions are clear to the students and the message is consistent (Rafoth, 2009).

Similar to Rafoth's study, Rilling (2005) included a thorough insight about how tutors respond to student writing through email by looking at the steps tutors take throughout the process. Rilling (2005) explained that "On our web site, we encouraged students to explain their concerns with the writing process and product in their email messages, and we used these comments to create a more multidimensional response to their writing" (p. 360). A suggestion Rilling (2005) offered tutors was for them to employ a color-coding system when responding to writing. As a result, the tutors' explanations remain clear and consistent throughout the text. Rilling advised tutors to practice a three-part response to student writing. In the beginning of the email, tutors personalize the message in order to establish a friendly tone, as previously discussed by Carlson and Apperson-Williams (2000), Coogan (1999), Cooper et al. (2005), and Thomas et al. (2000). This opening comment is also where the tutors can explain the comments they provided the students to help them understand the feedback. Next, Rilling (2005) explained that tutors provide feedback by "directly writing into the student's text as a type of interruption to focus on form-related issues, to ask questions related to lexical choices, and to point out issues of organizing structures and content flow" (p.368). Finally, the end comment describes the strengths and weaknesses of the text.

These studies reflect the different types of practices tutors utilize when responding to student writing. This scholarship provides guidance for tutors when offering feedback through email by suggesting that the feedback is friendly, encouraging, clear, and consistent. Rafoth (2009) advised tutors to keep in mind that "Good feedback is time-consuming to write, challenging to prioritize, and easy to ignore" (p.156).

Synchronous tutoring. Synchronous tutoring occurs online during an interactive, real-time chat, Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) audio, or video streaming. Most online synchronous tutoring environments include an on-screen, file-sharing program, or whiteboard. Synchronous interaction occurs when tutors and students communicate through a microphone and hear each other through the speakers of their computers. Because of these features, the sessions are considered interactive and closely mirroring face-to-face sessions. Harris and Pemberton (2001) explained that the synchronous chat allows for true conversational interactions where "participants must take the time to write – rather than speak – their observations and commentary" (p. 532). Similarly, Hewett (2006) noted that those "who engage in synchronous, conference-based OWI [online written instruction] may do so in part because it resembles oral dialogue in its give-and-take talk characteristics, which seems to offer the best of both worlds: both writing and speaking about writing" (p. 23). The synchronous online tutoring preserves the collaborative nature of writing center sessions. While discussing the assignment, students reveal information about themselves as they interact with the tutors.

For the purposes of my study, I analyzed how students interact with immediate tutor response in the moment. By observing the interactions between the tutor and student, I examined what information the student shared with the tutor, the students' experiences with the online tutoring environment, and how the feedback he or she received led to revising the assignment. The study conducted in this dissertation primarily focused on the interactions that transpired during synchronous tutoring sessions, investigating the practices and conversations that occurred as the tutor provided the student with feedback.

In order to examine the on-screen interactions, the online sessions have to be recorded. Shewmake and Lambert (2000) studied a program for online tutoring called *Ceilidh*. The authors explained that the students submit a paper to the webpage and use the chat function to discuss their writing with a tutor. This program allowed for a record to be saved at the end of the session for future reference or research by tutors, students, or administrators. The records can also be used to develop tutor training. Shewmake and Lambert (2000) also emphasized the value of one-to-one conferences and a shared-document environment, which allows students and tutors to view students' texts together. But in Shewmake and Lambert's research, an essential aspect of online tutoring is absent: the response or interaction between tutor and student, which is a main focus of this dissertation. Shewmake and Lambert did not include any information about what occurs in the actual tutoring session or how tutors respond to student writing.

In contrast, Hewett (2006) provided a study about response to writing through a whiteboard program, but the interactions are between an instructor and students. In this study, Hewett analyzed the use of an online environment by observing first-year English classes at Pennsylvania State University, which consists of "fifty-two online interactions from twenty-three undergraduate students" (p. 9). Hewett examined the areas students asked for help on, their primary concerns, prewriting work, and brainstorming. Hewett also analyzed the language used by the students and instructors on the whiteboard interaction, determining four areas: language that informs, elicits, directs or suggests. Hewett's findings are beneficial considering what Anson (1989), Ferris (2003), Sommers (1982) and Straub (1996) advised about providing encouraging support for students that helps writing development and does not control the students' texts. Hewett (2006)

observed that "The conferences also reveal a characteristic that may be common to other synchronous online conference platforms: such conferences are text-intensive dialogues that may lead to only one or two discrete writing changes—or even none" (p. 23). The benefits of Hewett's research when applied to writing center work lacks an imperative component of collaborative peer-to-peer instruction that is valued in the writing center field because of the power dynamics of the instructors and students. Additionally, due to anonymity of participants, Hewett was unable to conduct interviews of the students.

The research about effective tutoring practices for consulting online sessions is limited. In order to develop this scholarship, Robertson (2005) researched tutors' experiences with online tutoring and determined that tutors were reinventing the wheel (p. 115). Robertson reported that tutor training materials are mainly focused on face-to-face tutoring and there should be more training materials that emphasizes the importance of the use of language in online tutoring. One of the tutors in Robertson's study discussed the importance of direct and clear language. This focus on language in online environments is consistent with previous scholarship by Kastman-Breuch and Racine (2000) and Rafoth (2009). Kastman-Breuch and Racine (2000) suggested that tutors need to be more directive and assertive in online sessions. Similarly, Hewett (2010) advised that commentary should inform and be straightforward. Rafoth (2009) also determined that tutors should be direct, but polite, with the feedback they provide. The language used in an online session creates the persona presented by the tutor, since in most online sessions tutors and students are unable to see each other. Sabatino and Rafoth (2012) advised that it is important to project a style that is not overly formal or casual no matter what style the student expresses. Additionally, a tutor in Robertson's (2005) study offered

a similar suggestion, "There is more to [responding online] than appears on the surface. Be gentle. And don't be a smartass" (p. 91). The research in online tutoring emphasized the importance of how tutors represent themselves in an online environment and how to maintain a professional style of communication.

Most of the scholarship about best practices for online writing centers is from either the director's perspective of the tutor's role (Kastman-Breuch & Racine, 2000; Carlson & Apperson-Williams, 2000; Coogan, 1999; Harris & Pemberton, 2001; Hewett, 2006; Sabatino & Rafoth, 2012) or the tutor's perception of the online session (Cooper, Bui, & Riker, 2005; Hewett, 2010; Rafoth, 2009; Rilling, 2005; Robertson, 2005). Therefore, the scholarship that exists lacks students' perspectives about what they find as effective practices in online peer tutoring. The scholarship I reviewed in this section provides insight to how synchronous tutoring has been addressed in prior research. By having access to the on-screen chat and the shared-document of the students' text, my research examined how students responded to immediate feedback, the marks made on the students' papers, and information shared between tutors and students. Since online writing centers are still developing research, the areas that have been addressed provide groundwork for me to build new research from. The review of scholarship shows that response to student writing and the students' experiences still needs to be developed.

In addition to reviewing the scholarship, I created a list of interactions that occur between tutors and students based on my experiences of working at four different university writing centers, researching, designing, constructing, and developing the OWC at IUP where this study was conducted, preparing and training the tutors for the new platform, observing online tutoring sessions, and conducting a pilot study of IUP's online

writing center. In addition to my experiences, the list of interactions was also informed by my previous research, current research questions, and review of the literature. These interactions are related to the information that students revealed during the online tutoring session and how they responded to feedback that promoted revision. These were interactions that involved the students actively participating in the session and contributed to their experiences with the online writing center. The following set of criteria was established to determine interactions of interest during the sessions:

- The student provides information about the assignment;
- The student explains any concerns with the assignment and/or writing;
- The tutor and student determine the focus of the tutoring session;
- The student asks questions about his or her writing or assignment;
- There is a shift in the role of tutor and student;
- The student responds to feedback given by the tutor about the student's paper or the assignment;
- The student makes revisions directly to the student's paper;
- The tutor and student develop a plan for future revisions after the session;
- The student self-reflects.

These interactions of interest are highly contextual and dependent on the individuals involved. This list of criteria was used as a personal foundation to determine how students interacted with the online writing center, developed an understanding of their experiences with online tutoring, and how the tutoring session influenced their revision of the assignment. The results of this research are beneficial to the education of tutors and

directors by providing them with an understanding about the ways that their interactions with students lead to the revision of their assignment.

Conclusion

This chapter explained how the online writing center has evolved through the use of multiple functions and features to research that addresses tutor response to student writing. The scholarship reviewed suggests an overall emphasis on operational concerns, which detracts from more imperative discussions about response to student writing that occurs during on-screen interactions. Through a closer examination, the research provides some advice to tutors when responding to student writing. This scholarship suggests that tutors engage in encouraging and supportive dialogue in order to foster a positive relationship with students, which can be established through collaboration. The feedback tutors provide to the students' writing should be clear and consistent by streamlining the comments. My study contributes to online writing center scholarship by developing an understanding of the students' experiences with the online writing center.

Hewett (2002) determined that there has not been enough research on what makes a good tutorial, how the tutorial interactions lead to changes in the students' writing, and that the scholarship should look beyond the comparison of OWC and face-to-face. This review of literature echoes similar concerns as Hewett. While some scholars also emphasize the importance of evaluating and assessing online writing sessions, there has been little empirical data to further this discussion. Additionally, there is a lack of scholarship that develops sound practices for online tutoring from students' perspectives.

My research examined tutoring practices and students' experiences with the online writing center. In my review of scholarship, I found that there is not enough

research that focuses on student's experiences with OWCs, the interactions that occur during an online tutoring session, and how those interactions impact the students' revisions of assignments. Response in the online writing center includes multiple levels of feedback provided by the tutor to the student's writing, which informs the students' experiences. By utilizing the features that the scholarship has deemed important in online tutoring sessions, such as the dialogue through VoIP and the program's ability to save records, my study addressed the gaps in the research and examined how students interacted with the feedback they received during online tutoring sessions as well as how the students' experiences led to the revisions they made in their assignments.

As I move toward Chapter 3, I show how my study addressed the gaps in the scholarship, which has been discussed in detail in this chapter, and provide a context for my study to analyze the interactions that occurred during online tutoring sessions and how the students revised their assignments based on the feedback they receive from the tutors. Through examining online tutoring sessions, I developed an understanding of how students interacted with response in the moment by examining what occurs on the screen, the comments made on the students' papers, and the dialogue between tutors and students. Chapter 3 develops the methodology for studying response to student writing, the interactions that occur during the session, how students' experiences led to revisions of their assignments, and how students responded to the instructors' overall comments on their papers in relation to the online tutoring session. My study was primarily qualitative involving observations of recorded online tutoring sessions, retrospective interviews of the students' experiences with the online writing center, interviews of the students, and two writing drafts provided by the students.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

As I conducted this research, I examined how students' experiences with the online writing center related to the revisions they made to their assignments. Students' perceptions and experiences included their modes of communication, interactive processes, response to feedback, and writing production. The students' experiences can be thought of in relation to interactive processes, writing and revision production, and understanding. The interactive processes included how students used the online platform and the different methods for communicating with tutors. The writing and revision production referred to the moments when students made changes to the written document either during or after the session; more specifically, how the interactions with the tutor effects the ways students' revised their text. The understanding was examined through the retrospective interview analysis and interviews when the students described their experiences explaining what influenced their revisions or responses during the online tutoring session as well as how they perceived or understood what occurred during the session. All these different aspects contributed to the students' experiences with the online writing center and affected their revision process in various ways.

This dissertation aims to describe the interactions that occur in online tutoring, examine how students follow up with the feedback they receive from a tutor in order to revise their assignments, how students respond to the instructors' comments on their paper in relation to the tutoring session, and what students' perceive as effective online tutoring practices. This research also attempts to build theory by using data collected

from the students who participated in online writing center sessions. Glaser and Strauss (1967) stated that theory is generated from data, which means that "most hypotheses and concepts not only come from the data, but are systematically worked out in relation to the data during the course of the research" (p. 6). Since meaning was derived from action, I examined the interactions between the tutors and students. Grounded theory employs a dimensional analysis where names and labels are used to designate the properties of the data in order to continue the analysis through the development of vocabulary (Kools et al., 1996). I used a grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Haig, 1995; Robrecht, 1995) to determine the interactions that occurred on-screen during an online tutoring session and understand students' experiences with online tutoring. The nature of this topic lends itself to a grounded theory approach because there has not been previous research, to my knowledge, that studied how students interacted with the tutor response they received during online peer tutoring sessions or what students' perceived as effective online tutoring practices.

The scholarship I reviewed in the previous chapter described how synchronous tutoring has been addressed in prior research and the importance of conducting research that analyzes students' interactions with the feedback they receive on their writing to the forefront of the scholarship. My research involved investigating the practices that occur during the online tutoring sessions. During the online tutoring session, the participants shared their computers' desktop; through video on-screen conferencing, the tutor and participant looked at the paper together. Together, they discussed the paper through the use of Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) audio. By observing these interactions, my study examined how the participants responded to feedback in the moment, the marks

made on their papers, and the information shared between the tutors and participants. I also asked the participants to respond to the instructors' comments on their papers in relation to the online tutoring sessions. This study contributes to the current scholarship by researching students' experiences with online tutoring, how students responded to the feedback they received about their writing, and how students revised based on that feedback.

My study was guided by the four main research questions:

1. What are students' experiences, interactive processes, and understanding of their writing and revision production when using the online writing center?
    a. What interactions occur during an online tutoring session between the student and tutor? (For example, what is the pattern of turn-taking? How do tutors identify topics for discussion? And so on.)
    b. What modes of communication does the student employ when interacting during an online tutoring session? (For example, does the student write directly on his or her paper? Does the student highlight or use track-changes during the session? And so on.)
    c. How do students respond to the feedback they receive during an online tutoring session? (For example, does the student immediately revise the text while receiving the feedback? Does the student agree or disagree with the tutor's feedback? Is there a discussion about the feedback the tutor offers? Does the student make a note to return to that section of the text? And so on.). Response in this question refers to the actions students take

after they receive feedback from tutors as well as their attitude about the feedback.

2. How do students revise their assignments from the feedback they receive? This question refers to how the advice provided by the online tutoring influenced the students' decisions and actions when revising their assignments.
3. How do students respond to the instructors' overall comments about the paper in relation to the tutoring session? Similar to research question 1c, response in this question refers to students' attitudes and perceptions toward the instructors' comments in relation to the tutoring session.
4. What online tutoring practices do students find helpful? What suggestions do students have for tutors to use in future tutoring sessions?

These questions were addressed by conducting research that focused on one-to-one synchronous peer online tutoring sessions examining the practices and interactions that occurred on-screen between tutors and students. This study analyzed response to student writing in an online platform as well as established an understanding of how the students' experiences with online tutoring led to the revision of their assignments.

In this chapter, I describe how I conducted this study, including participant selection, data collection, and data analysis. I begin with the design of my study. Then, I discuss the types of data I collected and how they are related to my research questions. I conclude this chapter with an explanation of how I analyzed the data I collected.

Design of Study

The research of this study was designed to add students' voices to the writing center scholarship and understand the interactions during online tutoring from the

students' experiences. This inquiry into the experiences of the students was dependent on the information that the participants shared with me about their online tutoring sessions as well as the information they shared with tutors during the sessions. I engaged the participants in discussions of their experiences with online tutoring, what they thought of their finished papers— in terms of it being submitted to the instructors—, and what they learned about their writing. Additionally, I collected data involving the participants' revision processes, their response to instructors' comments to their papers, suggestions for future tutoring sessions, and effective tutoring strategies.

In order to gain an understanding of students' experiences with online tutoring and how these experiences are related to their revision processes, my research included observing synchronous online sessions, analyzing drafts of the participants' writing in order to see how the revisions progressed, and interviewing the participants. These components provided the whole picture of how the participants revised in relation to online tutoring sessions. In order to develop interview questions, I observed the online sessions to find similar themes among the participants, gain an understanding of what the participants were requesting assistance on from the tutor, and to provide a foundation for interview questions. Through the interviews and retrospective analysis, I collected information about the participants' experiences with the OWC, how these interactions led to the revisions of their assignments, and how the participants responded to the instructors' overall comments on their papers in relation to the tutoring sessions. I asked the students to participate in a retrospective interview in order to learn about their perspectives when revising their assignments and how they developed their writing from the drafts they worked on with the tutors to the final drafts they submitted. The

participants verbalized their processes of interacting with the tutors and explained the decisions they made when working on their writing. Specifically, the participants explained how they went about revising when the online session was over, the choices they made when revising, and flipped through their final paper page-by-page discussing each change they made. During this process, the participants connected their revision process with the tutoring practices and discussions with the tutor during the online session, which demonstrated how the online session was connected to the ways they revised. The final drafts and the drafts the participants worked on with the online tutors were compared to analyze changes made from one draft to the next. Additionally, I asked the participants to respond to the instructors' comments on their final paper in relation to the tutoring sessions. This provided insight for how the instructors' overall comments were related, affirmed, or disjointed from the online tutoring sessions.

Lastly, the participants were also asked to share what practices they found to be most helpful during the online tutoring sessions. With these suggestions provided by the participants, I was able to revisit the online sessions to observe the feedback the participants found helpful and then compared that to the revisions made to that section of the papers as well as any comments the instructors made on that section. All these components add to an understanding of the participants' experiences with online tutoring sessions and how these sessions were connected to their revisions processes and preferences of tutoring practices.

Site and Participant Selection

The site chosen for this study was the writing center at IUP where I had primary responsibility for creating the online writing center. The undergraduate and graduate

enrollment of this university is approximately 15,000 students. In 2011, the online writing center was a new addition to the physical writing center, which was established in 1971. The online platform was launched for use by all students at the end of Spring 2011 semester and was publicly advertised to the university in October 2011. Initially, these synchronous online tutoring sessions occurred through the Google Documents platform. As of Fall 2012, IUP's online tutoring switched to the Cisco WebEx platform.

This study had two sets of participants[2]: students and tutors. The first set of participants was the students who were invited to participate in the online tutoring sessions. I asked students enrolled in composition classes that required students to write multiple drafts of various assignments as well as receive instructor feedback. These classes included three levels of English composition courses: English 100: Basic Writing, English 101: College Writing, and English 202: Research Writing. Within the first few weeks of the semester, I invited students to participate in the study (see Appendix A) and fill out Informed Consent (see Appendix B). I also provided the students with instructions (see Appendix C) for how to access the OWC with a demonstration of the steps involved and played a short video that explained what was involved with an online session. Eight students fulfilled the requirements of the study: to participate in a synchronous online tutoring session with a writing center tutor and meet with me for an interview about the tutoring session.

All students were encouraged to visit the OWC, regardless of whether they chose to be a part of the study since this research was independent of their classes. The online tutoring occurred as it was normally conducted and the tutors did not know whether or

[2] Besides this explanation of the two sets of participants, the term "participants" in this dissertation refers to the students in the study.

not the student was a participant in the study. Additionally, I also asked instructors for a copy of the class syllabus in order to contact the participants a week before each assignment was due. Throughout the semester, I emailed all the students who agreed to be a part of the study reminding them to participate and provided details that explained how to set up an appointment.

The second set of participants was the tutors who worked in the writing center and conducted online tutoring sessions with the participating students. The number of tutor participants ranged anywhere from two to four depending on whether or not the tutors chose to be identified during the online session. Tutors asked to participate (see Appendix D) in this research study also filled out Informed Consent forms (see Appendix E) for the observation of the recorded online sessions.

Order of Procedures

1. The instructors were identified and contacted about visiting their classes.
2. The students were identified and filled out informed consent to participate in the research.
3. The students signed up for an online tutoring session and this tutoring session was conducted like any other online tutoring session.
    a. The students shared their papers and entire desktops through the program Cisco WebEx.
    b. Through video on-screen conferencing, the tutor and student discussed the paper through the use of Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) audio.
    c. Similar to all other sessions, students were asked to consent to the session being recorded through WebEx. WebEx created a video

recording with the audio and the actions that took place on the screen during the session.

4. I transcribed and analyzed the online session. Along with the interview questions that all students were asked, I contextualized interview questions relevant to each online session.
5. The students were contacted to meet with me.
6. During this meeting, 1) the student participated in a retrospective interview analysis; 2) I interviewed the student.
    a. The interview included a discussion of the online tutoring session, the revisions the student made to the paper after the session, and the instructors' marks on the students' papers. Additionally, students were asked to discuss suggestions for future tutoring sessions and effective tutoring strategies. Interview questions may be found in Appendix F.

Data Collection

The data collected for this study describes interactions that occurred during online tutoring. It provides an understanding of students' experiences with the OWC, how students respond to the feedback they received from tutors, and how these interactions led to the revision of their assignments. The primary methods of this study included observations of recorded online tutoring sessions, retrospective interview analysis, and interviews of the student participants, and document analysis of two writing drafts provided by the students. All participants were asked to sign voluntary informed consent forms after being briefed about the study and their rights and roles as participants. From the tutoring sessions, I collected a video recording with the audio and the actions that

occurred on the screen during the session. In the following sections, I explain the procedures and data I collected, including online tutoring sessions and on-screen interactions, two drafts of the students' writing, and the retrospective interview anlaysis and interviews of the students.

Recorded Online Tutoring Sessions and On-Screen Interactions

Each online session was recorded through the use of Cisco WebEx. Since the online sessions were recorded, which is a practice of all online sessions, my observations did not interfere with the usual practices of the online writing center. The OWC sessions ranged from 17 minutes to 60 minutes with an average of 33 minutes among the eight sessions. The following was collected: a video recording with the audio, the actions that occurred on the screen during the session, and a draft of the participants' texts. The sessions consisted of the participants' paper that the participant revised and added comments to during the session.

Drafts of Student Writing including Instructor's Comments

Each student was asked to provide two drafts of their papers for which they received online tutoring help: a) the drafts they worked on with the tutor, and b) the final papers they handed in to the instructor and received back with their instructors' comments. These drafts established links between the interactions during the online tutoring sessions and the revisions of the students' assignments, which addressed my second research question. The final drafts were used to determine how the instructors' comments were related, affirmed, or disjointed from the online tutoring sessions, which addressed my third research question.

Retrospective Interview Analyses and Interviews

Once the student had received the final submitted paper back from the instructors, I met with the students approximately one week after the online tutoring sessions for interviews and retrospective interviews. Arch, Bettman, and Kakkar (1978) determined that verbal protocols not only trace the decision-making process, but also allow for an explanation of it. With the use of grounded theory, the retrospective interview analysis added to the ability of participants to create a new understanding of how online tutoring sessions are related to the participants' revision processes. Hannu and Pallab (2000) confirmed this approach when they explained that the verbal protocol "is particularly useful when research is exploratory (i.e., when there is no well-founded theory to guide investigation of the target process)" (p. 388). There are some drawbacks to this approach, such as the possibility that participants might try to impress the researcher or the process of talking aloud through a walk-through of their process. The retrospective interviews provided the students' experiences with the online writing center by having the students explain the decisions they made during the interactions with the tutor and the processes of revising the papers. I used an audio recorder during the interviews with the students.

During the retrospective interview analyses, the students explained the changes they made from one draft to the next. They explained what happened when the session was over, how they re-entered the paper, the decisions they made about what to revise, and how they went about revising. These retrospective interviews included the students going through the final draft with me page-by-page and showing me the areas that they added, changed, deleted, or reordered. Since I observed the recording of the sessions before meeting with the participants, I had prior knowledge of what the participant

discussed with the tutor. I used that information to initiate conversations about revisions when the participants did not discuss those areas. Therefore, the retrospective interviews addressed my second and third research questions. The participants were asked to reflect on the process of revising their papers and how the interactions with the tutor contributed to those revisions.

During the same session after provided a retrospective walk-through of their revisions, I interviewed the participants to gain a context of how they viewed the tutors' and instructors' comments as well as how their interactions with the tutor led to their decisions about revisions. I asked the participants to explain why certain areas were the focus of the tutoring session. The interviews addressed my first, second, third, and fourth research questions by asking the participants to provide an understanding of their experiences. Most of the interview questions were context-based and in relation to the online tutoring sessions. I asked the participants about specific moments in the session when they asked a question or responded to the feedback given by the tutor about their paper, and moments when the conversation seemed to quickly jump to a topic different from the one the tutor and participant were currently discussing; for example, if the participants asked the tutors questions that may seem irrelevant to what was happening during the session in that moment, I asked the participants to clarify what provoked them to ask those questions.

An instance of this occurred when one participant asked specific questions regarding APA guidelines. In the process of the tutor looking up the information and providing her with answers, the participant interrupted the tutor and asked a different question changing the focus of the session. As a result of this interaction, I asked the

participant about that moment and why she was no longer interested in the APA formatting guidelines. Additionally, I asked the participants:

- About the instructors' feedback and comments on their papers in relation to the tutoring sessions, which addressed my third research question.
- What suggestions they had for future online tutoring sessions, which addressed my fourth research question.
- To reflect on what tutoring practices they found to be particularly helpful, which also addressed my fourth research question.

An example of questions that guided these interviews were (for full list of interview questions see Appendix F):

- What were your experiences with the online tutoring session?
- How did you go about revising the paper after the session?
- Do you have any suggestions for tutors for future sessions?

Additionally, participants were asked specific questions about their papers and revisions. For example, one student was asked:

- What did you think of the changes you made to your introduction?
- Did you add a specific example of a TV show to your paper? Was the note "give a specific example of TV show" helpful? Would it have been more helpful to write that example out during the session?

These two dynamics provided a full picture of the sessions and how the interactions influenced the students' work. With the addition of the instructors' comments after the students visited the OWC and revised the papers, the research comes full circle. Since the goal of the online writing centers is to help students develop their writing, it is important

to go to the source to understand the students' experiences with the online tutoring sessions, how these sessions led to revisions and whether the instructor comments on the sections discussed in the tutoring session. The qualitative components provided insight to the processes and practices that took place during online tutorials.

Data Analysis

Students' experiences with revising assignments were influenced by their interactions with tutors in the online writing center. The interactions that occurred during the online tutoring sessions affected how the students understood the assignments and, consequently, what was discussed in the session and how the students revised their writing. In this study, I used a conversation analysis approach to examine the interactions that occurred during the online tutoring sessions. Conversation analysis allowed me to analyze the turn-taking pattern of the interactions between tutors and students and how those interactions were related to the information that was shared. For example, CA methodology provided a lens to observe when students' voices were most present during the session and when students took control of the information that was being discussed.

Additionally, I used a grounded theory approach when analyzing the data because there is little previous research that studies the on-screen interactions or how students respond to the feedback they received from tutors during synchronous online sessions; therefore, the theory was built from the bottom-up. Grounded theory allowed me to be flexible and discover meaning from the data. Strauss and Corbin (1998) explained that grounded theories "offer insight, enhance understanding, and provide a meaningful guide to action" (p. 12). As a result, I did not attempt to test a theory, but instead, use the data to generate theories. Strauss and Corbin (1998) stated that theories in this regard refer to:

> A set of well-developed categories (e.g. themes, concepts) that are systematically interrelated through statements of relationship to form a theoretical framework that explains some relevant social, psychological, educational, nursing, or other phenomenon. The statements of relationship explain who, what, when, where, why, how, and with what consequences an event occurs. (p. 22)

Specifically in my research, I was examining how the interactions between tutors and students impacted the ways the students revised their papers. In order to develop categories, trends, and patterns, I conducted line-by-line analysis of the transcripts of the online sessions, interviews and retrospective interview analysis.

To assist in my data analysis, I used NVivo 9 software. NVivo is a qualitative data analysis software that is used to organize and code data. I coded segments of information ranging from single words to full sentences. During the open coding stage, I broke the data into parts, examined the parts, and compared them for similarities and differences. Then, they were put into categories. I used NVivo to code quickly, observe patterns, and develop trends occurring in the research. As I read through the transcripts and participants' papers, I conducted line-by-line coding of each observation marking trends. Then, I highlighted the phrasing and NVivo added it to the code's file. Additionally, through the coding, I quantified the trends and patterns as reported in the students' experiences. For example, as further reported in Chapter 4, I coded the data to determine how many students referred to specific tutoring practices and how often those tutoring practices were discussed. Additionally, as shown in Chapter 5, the same coding principles were used for document analysis of the participants' papers to determine which revisions were classified as substantial—rewriting introductions, adding conclusions,

reordering paragraphs, and adding new information to clarify ideas— and which revisions were minor.

By observing these interactions and conducting a follow-up protocol analysis with the participants, I examined how these interactions led to their revisions and the instructors' comments on these revisions. Also, by studying the interactions that occurred on the screen during the online tutoring session, I analyzed the students' experiences based on the previously established criteria and examined when students chose to either share or refrain from revealing information about the assignment. All these interactions resulted in shaping the way the students understood the assignment and then affected the interactions that occurred during the online tutoring session. This chapter concludes with an explanation of how the data collected in this study was analyzed. Table 1 summarizes the connection between the research components of this study. More specifically, this table provides a synthesized list for each research question, the data that was collected to address that research question, and the approach(es) of analysis applied to the data.

Table 1

Summary of Dissertation Research Components

Research Question	Data	Analysis
What are students' experiences, interactive processes, and understanding of their writing and revision production when using the online writing center?	Observations of recorded online sessions	Grounded Theory Approach Conversation Analysis Approach
	Interview	Grounded Theory Approach
How do students revise their assignments from the feedback they receive?	Observations of recorded online sessions	Grounded Theory Approach Conversation Analysis Approach
	Retrospective interview	Grounded Theory Approach
	Interview	Grounded Theory Approach
	Drafts of Student Papers	Document Analysis Approach
How do students respond to the instructors' overall comments about the paper in relation to the tutoring session?	Interview	Grounded Theory Approach
What online tutoring practices do students find helpful? What suggestions do students have for tutors to use in future tutoring sessions?	Retrospective Interview	Grounded Theory Approach
	Interview	Grounded Theory Approach

Recorded Online Tutoring Sessions and On-Screen Interactions

This study consists of observations of the interactions during recorded online tutoring sessions. During the online tutoring sessions, the screen was shared, which means both the tutors and students from different locations viewed the same document at the same time. I observed and analyzed a recording of each online session. Since the online session was recorded following typical protocol of IUP's OWC, my observations

did not interfere with the session. These findings were reviewed after the session took place and did not influence the online tutoring practices. During this time, I used a grounded theory approach to develop interview questions. Additionally, I used grounded theory to develop trends and patterns I saw happening across the sessions. As explained above, the transcripts were coded and analyzed.

Additionally, the audio conversation was transcribed and analyzed by using a conversation analysis approach (CA). Deckert and Vickers (2011) explained that CA allows for the examination of the construction of meaning through the organization of the conversation. More specifically, CA provides an examination of the constructs and interactive practices between the tutor and student during the online tutoring session. Goodwin and Heritage (1990) stated that "situated analysis of an emerging course of action shapes the further development of that action" (p. 292). I applied a conversation analysis approach to the sessions in order to see what questions were being asked, for what purposes these questions were being asked, and who had control of the session. An example of a complete CA transcript of one session can be found in Appendix G and a CA transcript glossary can be found in Appendix H. The level of detail when applying the CA approach included noting and analyzing pauses, backchanneling, overlap in dialogue, and on-screen movements, such as scrolling the page, highlighting, or typing. These details provided insight to the level of engagement of the tutors and students, the wait time between interactions, and moments that may have influenced a change in the conversation.

By using CA to analyze the conversations and comments, I examined the interactions by looking at turn-taking patterns, choices of vocabulary, and the questions

students asked. Deckert and Vickers (2011) explained this process as seeing "how the conversation unfolded turn-by-turn, and how such turn-by-turn interaction defined the context of talk" (p. 208). For example, first, I identified moments when the tutor provided advice to the student. Then, I analyzed what type of language, such as directive or facilitative, the tutor used when providing that advice. More specifically, I examined the patterns of changes the student made based on the feedback they received and who took more turns speaking during those interactions. The conversations also were examined based on the interactions of interest that I previously established. All transcripts and written text in the students' papers included in this dissertation are exactly as they occurred in the session. There were no adjustments or changes made to them, except to remove any identifying information of the participants. The sessions directly influenced the interview and retrospective interview analysis because that provided the foundation for what to ask the participants.

Audio Recordings from Interviews and Retrospective Interview Analyses

I conducted the interviews based on questions that were generated from the recorded online session observations and then transcribed the interviews and retrospective analyses. I also used a grounded theory approach to determine what themes and trends were occurring among the participants. This method was especially useful when students were asked about their experiences with the online tutoring session. Since it was a broad question, it allowed for various responses. This approach to grounded theory was also true for the retrospective interviews when students discussed their revision processes. The participants provided their final papers with instructors' comments, which was also discussed in the interview. The paper and instructors'

comments were analyzed in relation to the session and what the participants discussed during the online session. More specifically, whether or not instructors commented on sections that the students worked on with the tutors. During the interviews, the participants were asked their reactions to the instructor comments.

Since the interviews were context-based and the questions developed from the on-screen interactions with the tutor, I reviewed each audio recording of the interviews and retrospective interviews carefully. Reviewing the audio recordings allowed me to determine what areas were discussed and analyze the interactions of interest to guide the interview. While listening to the interviews and retrospective interview analyses of the students, I made notes of emerging themes and issues that were salient in each of the sessions and interviews. These themes were informed by the criteria for the interactions of interest outlined in Chapter 2. These interactions of interest included:

- The student provides information about the assignment;
- The student explains any concerns with the assignment and/or writing;
- The tutor and student determine the focus of the tutoring session;
- The student asks questions about his or her writing or assignment;
- There is a shift in the role of tutor and student;
- The student responds to feedback given by the tutor about the student's paper or the assignment;
- The student makes revisions directly to the student's own paper;
- The tutor and student develop a plan for future revisions after the session;
- The student self-reflects.

Additionally, the transcriptions of the retrospective interviews—an example of a complete retrospective interview analysis can be found in Appendix I— were analyzed for trends focusing on the areas students recalled revising, their discussions of the revision processes in relation to the online sessions, and how the feedback they received impacted the ways they revised. For example, when I asked one of the students to share with me her revision process she discussed revising her paper paying close attention to the length of her paragraphs. She explained that the online tutor advised her that in some places her paragraphs were too long and lacked a clear focus; therefore, she explained that she went through her paper with his advice in mind, making sure to keep her paragraphs more specific and focused on her research questions. Additionally, this participant discussed specific paragraphs, such as her introduction, that she recalled revising taking into account the tutor's advice. As a result of this conversation with the student, I revisited the online session coding and analyzing the conversation she had with the tutor as well as the two drafts of her paper comparing the paragraphs she shortened and made more specific from one draft to the next.

Drafts of the Students' Writing

The two drafts of the participants' writing were analyzed by examining the areas of the paper that changed from one document to the next. In order to accomplish to determine the revisions, multiple levels of analysis occurred. With both drafts of the participants' paper opened up on my computer, I highlighted and marked all the changes that the students made while working with the tutor. Then, I went through the paper again, marking and highlighting in a different color all the changes the student made after the session. For example, I may leave an electronic comment stating, "New conclusion", or

"This part was moved from the introduction." Once the revisions were highlighted and marked, I examined the instructors' comments in relation to the online tutoring session and the revisions the participants made to their papers. Since as stated in the previous section, the drafts of the students' writing were used during the interviews and retrospective interviews, I was able to apply what the students described about their revisions and how the tutors' feedback contributed to those revisions to the changes the students made from one paper to the next as well as the instructors' comments. The instructors' comments on the participants' final drafts were added to the conversation of the participants' revisions to determine how the comments were related, affirmed, or disjointed from the online tutoring sessions. For example, in one online session, the participant asked the tutor for advice when writing his conclusion. He explained during his interview that he is not always comfortable with writing conclusions and he believes it is the trickiest part of writing a paper. He and the tutor discussed strategies for writing the conclusion, which he said he wrote down and then used when writing on his own after the session. The instructor directly referenced the participant's conclusion in the overall comments stating that the "conclusion is thoughtful and shows that you've considered all the information you gathered and arrived at some final thoughts for your reader." This example shows how the revisions the participant made in relation to the online tutoring session were directly related to the instructor's comments about his writing.

Conclusion

This chapter explains the design and methods of this study. The methodology sheds light on students' experiences with their online session, students' revision

processes, and what they found as effective tutoring practices. All four elements of the data —online tutoring session, retrospective analysis, interview, and drafts of students' papers— were used to discover students' experiences with the online tutoring sessions and how the session impacted their revision practices and them as writers.

By asking students to share their experiences with online tutoring and revision processes, this study provides students voice, suggestions for sound tutoring practices, and an understanding of students' experiences to the writing center field. Observations, retrospective analyses, and interviews provide the best opportunities to gain insight to students' experiences and respond to the research questions. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 present the results of this research with each chapter having a different focus and addressing different research questions. Due to the nature of writing the chapters in this format, there may be a slight overlap in the explanation of the rationale, literature review, scholarship, and methods for conducting this research.

CHAPTER FOUR

SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE PEER TUTORING: WHAT STUDENTS SAY THEY LEARNED

Preface

This chapter describes what students reported learning about their writing practices from online tutoring sessions and disclosed about their experiences with online tutoring. This chapter provides a close look at the on-screen interactions that occurred in one-to-one synchronous online peer tutoring sessions between tutors and student writers, such as who determined the goals of the session, what types of questions were asked, how the tutor identified topics to focus the sessions. Additionally, since this chapter includes empirical evidence that examines how the communication through synchronous online tutoring impacts writing development, this chapter was written for submission to *Computers and Composition.*

Introduction

Virtual online writing centers, also commonly referred to as online writing labs (OWLs), have been in existence in one form or another for the past 20 years. Brown (2000) identified that there are various ways to discuss online writing centers and not all directors use the term OWL. The implementation of synchronous online writing centers is a slow-moving, yet up-and-coming trend. Technology in the writing center scholarship started with debates about the effects of adding computers to the writing center (Blythe, 1997; Carino, 1998; Farrell, 1987; Luchte, 1987; Neuleib & Scharton, 1990; Whipple, 1994; Wright, 1987) to technology being used to launch online resources for writers, such as automated file retrieval systems, email drop boxes, and synchronous, real-time chats

(Guardado & Shi, 2007; Harris & Pemberton, 2001; Hewett, 2002, 2006; Inman & Gardner, 2002). As we continue to promote these forms of instruction and the attention to online learning and online writing centers grows, we need to investigate how online tutoring impacts students and what they have to say about their writing through these developing forms of instruction in order to understand the ways we are serving them. This chapter adds to the literature about synchronous online tutoring by conducting a small-scale empirical study that included what participants' recalled about their experiences and learning through one-to-one synchronous peer tutoring sessions.

In order to address the need for scholarship that investigates the effects of synchronous online tutoring on student revisions, Hewett (2006) conducted a study about response to writing with professional tutoring through synchronous whiteboard instruction. In this study, Hewett analyzed the use of an online environment by observing "fifty-two online interactions from twenty-three undergraduate students" from first-year English classes at Pennsylvania State University (p. 9). Hewett examined the areas that students requested help on, their primary concerns, prewriting work, and brainstorming. Hewett also analyzed the language used by the students and instructors on the whiteboard interaction, determining four areas: language that informs, elicits, directs or suggests. These findings supported what scholars in the field of composition (Anson, 1989; Bruffee, 1984; Ferris, 2003; Sommers, 1982; Straub, 1996) have advised about providing encouraging support for students that will help writing development and not control the students' text. Hewett (2006) observed that "The conferences also reveal a characteristic that may be common to other synchronous online conference platforms: such conferences are text-intensive dialogues that may lead to only one or two discrete writing changes—

or even none" (p. 23). While Hewett was able to determine how the language used by the instructor affected the ways students' in the study revised, the results of the study cannot easily be applied to collaborative peer-to-peer online sessions without taking into account the power dynamics of the instructor-student relationship. More specifically, it is unclear whether or not the language used would be received differently from a peer tutor than it was from an instructor. Additionally, Hewett (2006) was unable to conduct follow-up interviews with students due to anonymity (p. 18). In order to address this need for students' voices in the scholarship, I interviewed students to determine what they report learning about their writing from participating in online tutoring sessions.

The purpose of this chapter is to report students' experiences when using the online writing center, investigate the ways that online tutoring contributed their perceptions of themselves as writers, and provide insight the impact these sessions in order to best address their needs. My research included conducting an empirical study that examined online peer tutoring practices and students' experiences with the online writing center. The primary methods of data collection included observations of the recorded online tutoring sessions and interviews of the student participants. I observed and transcribed each online tutoring session before I conducted the interviews with the student participants. The observations of the recorded sessions provided an understanding of the interactions between the student and tutor, and helped focus the interviews. The interviews occurred approximately a week after the student participated in the online session; the time between the online session and interview gave the student the opportunity to reflect on the session. During the interviews, the students were asked to explain their experiences with online tutoring and to discuss what they learned about their

writing through the use of online tutoring. Through observing the online sessions and conducting the interviews, I gained insights into the ways in which students understand their writing practices and how online tutoring impacts what they say they learned about their writing.

Active Learning, Transfer, and Writing Center Sessions

From a 'transfer' perspective, the goal of writing center sessions is to help students become better writers through transferring the resources they learn during a session to other writing with which they may engage. Students also use what they learn in their classes to inform the session and contribute to their writing. Transfer typically refers to gaining knowledge about something and then applying that knowledge in a future situation (Haskell, 2001; Perkins & Salomon, 1990; Royer, Mestre, & Dufresne, 2005). Beach (2003) explained it as: "learning from one task later applied to learning a new task – understood as transfer – invokes the metaphor of transporting of something from one place to another" (p. 39). Transfer may vary between task transfer and context transfer; Wells (2011) explained that "Task differences might involve learning a specific task and then being asked to perform a new task, whereas context differences might involve learning that takes place in one environment and then is applied in a different environment" (p. 27). Additionally, Judd (1939) proposed that transfer focuses on "grasping the general principles or generalization of the subject matter" (as cited in Tuomi-Gröhn & Engeström, 2003, p. 20). Therefore, transfer includes gaining knowledge about a particular writing principle through one task or context and applying it to another.

In online tutoring sessions, transfer would consist of students learning through a writing task or learning a writing principle and then applying that principle to a future

writing task. For example, a student works with an online peer tutor on how to construct a clear thesis statement. The tutor explains that the thesis statement should set up the paper by summarizing the main points and previewing supporting points; then, the tutor helps the student to reconstruct her thesis statement following those guidelines. In order to determine if the student can transfer this knowledge about thesis statements, she would then have to apply those guidelines about thesis statements in her next writing assignment; this action would have to be done independently, without the tutor prompting her to do so. Because the student learned it, we can see the transfer. However, establishing transfer—gaining knowledge about something and applying that to a future situation— in that way is difficult and sometimes imperfect. There may not be another occasion to manifest that exact context because the next paper may not have a thesis statement. If the opportunity does occur and the student writes a thesis statement, we may not recognize it as a thesis statement. While we may conclude that transfer occurred if the next time the student completes the task, it may have been an accident. Or, the concept of a thesis statement could be given a different term by another instructor and the student does not recognize the connection. Identifying this type of transfer in writing is difficult.

Transfer can also include metacognition. Wardle (2007) determined that a predictor of successful knowledge transfer is the ability to be metacognitive (as cited in Perkins & Salomon, 1990). Being metacognitive involves the students being able to recall what they learned and understanding how to apply those ideas. Therefore, successful transfer is determined through meta-awareness of writing practices by what students report that they learned from the online tutoring sessions and the ways they understand that they can apply these concepts to future writing. Transfer may not always require this

level of recognition of the task and I recognize this is not the whole picture of transfer. For the purposes of this study to understand how transfer plays into their writing processes, participants reflected and discussed in an interview what they learned about their writing process from the online tutoring sessions. In order to see if the participants can exhibit successful transfer, I asked them to reflect on what knowledge they gained from collaborating in an online peer tutoring session, what they learned from the session, and how they could apply those ideas to future writing assignments.

In order for transfer of the generalization of knowledge to occur the student needs to participate in active learning. Active learning involves students engaging with the process as they participate in it. Chickering and Gamson (1987) stated that students "must talk about what they are learning, write about it, relate it to past experiences and apply it to their daily lives. They must make what they learn part of themselves" (p. 4). Through the process of writing, students have to understand the assignment that is presented to them. When they choose to get help from an online tutor, they are actively engaging with the writing process and responding to feedback in the moment; then they reflect on the process as they work on the assignment after the online tutoring session has ended. Onore (1992) argued that

> Learners learn best when they are *engaged*, when they are supported through collaboration with peers and teachers to *explore*, and when they have the opportunity to *reflect* on their learning, to stand back from it and assess what and how they have learned. (p. 184; Onore's emphasis)

During this process, the student is actively engaging with the assignment and their writing process. But in the end, what did they take away from the whole process? The

focus of these interviews was to address this question by learning about students' perceived experiences with online tutoring. When students are actively engaged with the session, they may recall the session as a whole or certain aspects of the session that contributed to their understanding of writing. Additionally, what do students believe they learned from these online tutoring sessions? In order to understand the transfer that takes place from online tutoring, it is important to understand what students' believed they learned from the sessions. This recognition of transfer occurs when students are prompted to be metacognitive during the interviews where the students reflect on the sessions in order to determine what writing practices they learned in the session that can also be applied to future writing assignments.

In this study, I examined how active learning and transfer led to students' understanding of writing practices as associated with the online tutoring session. I asked the students to be metacognitive by examining the ways that they saw the online writing center session actively contributing to their own understanding of writing practices and how these practices impacted their learning. This metacognitive transfer was accomplished during the interviews when students were asked to recall what they learned from the online tutoring sessions and how that can be applied to improve their writing. In these interviews, students referred to specific tutoring practices that taught them something about their writing and related to the improvement they saw. In some cases, students were also critical of themselves as writers and how these strategies could benefit them in the future.

Writing Center Clients and Writing Practices

Development of Online Writing Centers

The online writing center (OWC) provides a space where students can benefit from one-on-one help from a tutor, but when they meet to discuss writing they are not necessarily face-to-face or in the same room. Rafoth (2009) stated that "The most fully developed OWLs replicate the best of writing program design by offering tutoring for students of varied abilities, writing resources, learning modules, publication space, and teacher's resources" (p. 149). Synchronous interaction can occur in a real-time chat where written dialogue transpires between the tutor and student or through both the tutor and student speaking through a microphone and hearing each other through the speakers of their computers. Most environments include an on-screen, file-sharing program or whiteboard. The synchronous online tutoring preserves the collaborative nature of writing center sessions. Hewett (2002) explained that "The synchronous tutorial that addresses invention issues, content development, or organizational principles almost always will have a collaborative nature to it" (p. 9). For this study, I focused on the interactions that occurred during one-to-one synchronous tutoring sessions examining the practices that transpired on screen and the verbal communication exchanged between the tutor and student.

Program WebEx

The Online Writing Center at IUP uses Cisco WebEx that by its design puts the majority of the control in the students' hands. WebEx allows users to share documents and files or the computer's entire desktop; through video on-screen conferencing, the tutor and student look at the paper together. By doing so, the student is the "host" of the

session, which requires the student to control the screen and allows the tutor to see the paper. Together, they discuss the paper through the use of Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) audio; the sessions replicate face-to-face sessions through verbal communication, but differ since the program lacks the ability to project the tutor or student's body movements or facial expressions. WebEx also has a written chat space and whiteboard, though these features were not used in the sessions of this study except when the student typed the instructor's name to provide spelling clarification for the tutor to send a report form stating the student had met with the tutor. Similar to the program Ceilidh in Shewmake and Lambert's (2000) study, WebEx has the capability for a recording of the session to be saved. WebEx creates a video recording with the audio and the actions that take place on the screen during the session.

Synchronous Online Tutoring and Response to Writing

Directors of writing centers are beginning to take advantage of online tutoring in order to reach more of their students. Monroe, Rickly, Condon, and Butler (2000) stated that:

> The future of education lies, then with the online, networked university, with its flattened hierarchy and collateral human and electronic networks, connecting schools, universities, businesses, and communities. In a way, the writing center today, with its face-to-face and online components, may be a fleeting Kodak moment of the university in transition, where students attend campus-based classes but with online support systems. (p. 218)

As we encourage students to use this developing form of instruction, we should not just determine the best ways to respond to students in these platforms, but also to discover what students learn about their writing from engaging in online tutoring.

Tutors' responses to student writing are a critical part of online tutoring and writing center work. Since there are multiple levels of feedback that occur during online tutoring, I turn to the field of composition where a great portion of the importance of response to student writing has been developed (Anson, 1989; Bruffee, 1984; Ferris, 2003; Sommers, 1982; Straub, 1996). The research and scholarship produced in this area has been influential in the teaching of writing and is relevant for online tutoring because there are multiple levels of feedback that occur during online tutoring. Students receive feedback that they respond to in the moment as well as reflect on after the session as they revise their paper. While this scholarship helps instructors and tutors learn about best practices when responding to student writing and providing students with feedback, it is unclear what students take away from online tutoring sessions. By interviewing the students, I discovered what students recalled from their online tutoring sessions and what they believed they learned.

Composition scholarship acknowledges the importance of implementing reflective practices that remind teachers and tutors to pay attention to the amount of commentary they provide and the kind of language they use. This scholarship suggests that the commentary should be encouraging and tailored to the student's purpose. Anson (1989) argued that certain ways of responding to texts contribute to writing improvement, whereas others do not. More specifically, Anson determined that teachers' response is not always as encouraging, or as Straub (1996) termed facilitative and supportive, as they

believe it to be. In order to address this concern, Anson (1989) advised instructors to be reflective of their responsive practices in order to ensure they are in fact supporting student writing development and improvement. Similarly, Straub (1996) suggested that instructors provide feedback that is supportive and less controlling than directive commentary. In this scholarship, there is a focus on how to provide feedback that leads to the development of student writing; as Sommers (1982) argued, responding to student writing should not take away from the student's purposes (p. 353). Therefore, when commenting on student work, more is not always better (Rafoth, 2009; Sommers, 1982; Straub, 1996). While such a conclusion is clear from the teacher's perspective, how do students reflect on the commentary they receive? How do students interact with this approach? What are students' experiences when receiving feedback that is either directive or facilitative? How do they see these approaches impacting their learning?

Writing center scholarship examines interactions in online tutoring to determine best practices when providing students with feedback. Rafoth (2009) looked at practices that student writers found helpful in asynchronous email tutoring. Rafoth observed the email interactions of the tutors and students at the IUP Writing Center, focusing on the feedback tutors provided through email attachments to students. Rafoth asked the tutors to reflect on the process and collected feedback from the students who engaged in the online sessions. Rafoth concluded with four lessons about online tutoring that resulted from the research. First, similar to Sommers (1982) and Straub (1996), Rafoth (2009) determined that when writing comments to students, less is more, meaning that too many comments can become confusing and overwhelming; the students may not understand how to prioritize the comments and become frustrated. Second, the focus and consistency

of the response is paramount (p. 149). Third, similar to Cooper, Bui, and Riker (2005), Rafoth (2009) distinguished that tutors should be direct, but polite, with the feedback they provide. Lastly, how the tutors read the student's paper affects how they provide feedback. After reviewing the responses about asynchronous tutoring provided by both tutors and students, the tutors altered how they responded to the students' papers by being more selective with comments and reading from a new perspective. In order to provide a more selective response to the students' writing, Rafoth (2009) explained that it is helpful for the students to understand that clearly communicating the main idea of each paragraph is most important; but in order to reach that point "the tutor has to ignore the many other opportunities for comments that she sees and concentrate on helping the writer get his main idea across" (p. 155). The comments should be streamlined, providing feedback plainly and confidently so that the suggestions are clear to the student and the message is consistent (Rafoth, 2009). In order to take this research a step further, my study asks what the students believed they learned from this online instruction and how they understand the ways to apply the tutoring strategies to future writing assignments.

Hewett (2006) similarly examined response to student writing and the language used by the students and instructors on the synchronous whiteboard interaction. But as previously mentioned, Hewett could not follow up with these students due to anonymity to determine what students learned from these interactions or what were the students' experiences with the whiteboard instruction. Additionally, Hewett (2010) conducted related research examining one-to-one online conferences between instructors and students, observing text-based instructional commentary. The student participants in Hewett's study answered an informal questionnaire about the feedback they received

from college-level teachers. Hewett (2010) examined what students requested help on, whether or not the students reported using the feedback, and how the students believed their experiences with the online instruction could have been improved. The results showed that students had concerns about the advice not seeming clear and the ambiguity of language used by the instructors. Similar to Cooper, Bui, and Riker (2005) and Rafoth (2009), Hewett (2010) suggested that instructors provide commentary that is straightforward and informative.

Since online writing centers are still developing, the areas that have been addressed provide opportunities from which to build new research. The scholarship shows that response to student writing and student's experiences still need to be examined. While there is a focus in composition and writing center scholarship on best practices when responding to student writing, this research now needs to take the next step in determining how these online forums contribute to students' perceptions of their writing. Response to student writing is a significant area of research; yet, there is a lack of scholarship aimed directly towards what students report they learned from participating in synchronous peer tutoring sessions. In order to develop more scholarship in this area, my research examines the interactions that take place in synchronous online peer tutoring, what students recall from their experiences during these sessions, and what they believe they learned about their writing practices.

Design of the Study

For this study, I recruited students from three levels of writing courses: English 100: Basic Writing, English 101: College Writing, and English 202: Research Writing. These students were enrolled in courses that were taught by other English instructors at

IUP. Eight participants fulfilled the requirements of the study: to participate in a synchronous online tutoring session with a writing center tutor and meet with me for an interview about the tutoring session. When observing and transcribing recordings of the online tutoring session, I applied a grounded theory approach to determine trends and patterns I saw happening across the sessions. I also applied a conversation analysis approach to the sessions in order to see what questions were being asked and for what purposes these questions were being asked. Strauss and Corbin (1998) stated that "Creativity manifests itself in the ability of researchers to aptly name categories, ask stimulating questions, make comparisons, and extract an innovative, integrated, realistic scheme from masses of unorganized raw data" (p. 13) With grounded theory, I was able to generate interview questions based on the content was discussed in the online sessions and used the data to determine patterns occurring among the participants. The sessions directly influenced the interviews and retrospective analyses because they provided me with the foundation and context about what to ask the participants. Grounded theory allowed me to create an understanding about the students' experiences with online tutoring.

The recordings of each OWC session ranged from 17 minutes to 60 minutes with an average of 33 minutes among the eight sessions. By observing and transcribing the sessions, I gained an understanding of the focus of the session as well as the range of what was discussed between the tutor and student. The interviews took place about a week after the online session. With a week between the online session and the interview, the students had the opportunity to reflect on the session, revise that paper, and potentially apply what they learned in the session to other writing assignments. In each

interview, the participants were asked to explain their experiences with online tutoring, what they thought of their paper now that it was finished— in terms of it being submitted to the instructor—, and what they learned about their writing. These interviews were also transcribed and analyzed to develop trends and concepts of students' understanding of their writing practices. I conducted line-by-line and open-coding by closely examining the data, breaking the data into discrete parts and comparing for similarities and differences. These codes were then put into categories by marking trends. To assist in my data analysis, I used NVivo 9 software. Through the coding, I quantified the trends and patterns as reported in the students' experiences. Additionally, in these interviews, I collected data involving participants' revision processes, their response to their instructors' comments on their papers, suggestions for future tutoring sessions, and effective tutoring strategies. For this chapter, I focused on what the participants say they learned about their writing practices, what they shared about their experiences with online tutoring, whether or not they saw improvement in their writing, and my observations of what took place during the session.

The purposes of observing the sessions and conducting the interviews were to determine through the students' active learning in online tutoring sessions what transfer took place in online sessions in terms of what the students said they learned. In the case of this research, the students were engaged in writing practices synchronously with a tutor online. They were asked to recall their experiences and how those experiences contributed to their learning. The transfer was not based on whether or not they applied the information to a new context, but instead what the student recalled from the session and how they saw it enhancing their learning.

Results

Observations of Recorded Online Sessions

Observations of the recorded online tutoring sessions were meant to provide background information about the sessions and connect the sessions to each other. In this research, by transcribing and analyzing the videos of the online tutoring sessions, I examined what occurred in the sessions by using both grounded theory and conversation analysis approaches. When observing the sessions, I paid close attention to: who asked the questions, who seemed in control of the session, in what ways the control switched, and what content was being discussed. This analysis provided insight about the meanings of the online interactions by creating this observed situation (Schatzman, 1991). These sessions varied from focusing on sentence level clarity, organization, content, thesis statements, tone, introductions, conclusions, and elaborating ideas. The online tutoring sessions followed an inquiry-based model, which according to Bruner (1961) is a form of active learning that is based around student's questions and goals. At the beginning of each session, the students determined the focus of the session by stating what they wanted to work on with the tutor. Throughout the session, the tutor responded with check-ins to see if the session was on course for what the student wanted to accomplish. These check-ins included the tutor asking questions such as, “Does that make sense? Did you see anything else along the way you wanted to look at? Have we gotten to the part you asked about yet? Have you finished that section yet or are you still working on it?” The check-ins provided the student and tutor with the opportunity to make sure the session was going in the direction to meet the student’s needs. Additionally, in some of

the sessions the students posed questions or provided comments that redirected the session and addressed their needs in that moment.

As I observed the sessions, I applied a grounded theory approach and coded the transcripts by marking the changes that the participants made to their writing while working with the tutor. These codes were then categorized based on higher or lower order concerns. Once these categories were determined, I applied a conversation analysis approach to the interactions between the tutors and students to determine when these changes were being made. I analyzed who took more turns speaking as well as what type of language, such as directive or facilitative, the tutor used when providing advice. Specifically, I analyzed the patterns of the types of changes the student made based on the feedback they received and who took more turns speaking.

From my observations, I determined that when discussing higher order concerns— such as information included in a thesis, whether or not research questions were answered, content, organization of the information, etc.— the students' voices were most present during the session and the students took more turns than the tutors speaking. For example, in one session, the tutor and student were previously discussing how she could break up her introductory paragraph, which was over a page in length. While it was the tutor's suggestion for the student to break up the paragraph, the student took control of the session by stating exactly how she could accomplish that task, without the tutor asking her do to so:

> Student: Then I could like maybe chance a sentence (2) so I could like add it on to maybe hm (.1) up to where I say 'skinny people are everywhere' (2)

Tutor: [mm

Student: [maybe I could cut that out and like make that a second paragraph and like start something new there then where I say (2)

((scrolls paper down on screen))

hmm (3) where was it?

((still scrolling))

hmm (4) ((reading from her paper)) 'there comes a time when self-esteem issues become too much'

like I could add that (.2) to the beginning maybe. And then like change a sentence or something so it fl[ows

Tutor: [yeah

Student: into that.

Tutor: Yeah, I think that's a good idea. That makes sense.

Student: Okay.

The student moved the section she referred to in the conversation and started to compose a sentence to create the flow she explained to the tutor. During this time, she verbalized her revision process as she put it in action by stating:

Student: Then I would have to like maybe find (1) a good-uh (2) sentence right here

((pointing the mouse to the place where she just cut the paragraph from in her introduction))

that would-um (.1) make it flow into the next idea or something like that.

Tutor: Right

She started to change the text by typing, “The influence of beauty in media can have” then stopped to check with the tutor to see if her ideas were on track by asking the tutor:

Student: Could I just add like the effects on women’s self-esteem?

Tutor: Yea, it can. The-the influence of media on be-beauty can have a (.1) significant impact on a woman’s self esteem.

The student then continued the conversation by stating that she has to do something with the “skinny women are everywhere” part and explained where she could add that part. From this interaction, it was clear that the student took control and spoke more turns than the tutor when addressing the organization of her ideas in her paper. She directed the changes and took action to make those revisions in the moment. She had a clear idea of how to reorganize her paper and conveyed that to the tutor.

In contrast, when discussing formatting or lower order concerns—such as grammatical errors, sentence level clarity, wordiness, missing words, punctuation, verb tense, articles, spelling, possessives, subject-verb agreement, or word choice— the tutor took more turns than the student speaking and used that time to explain rules or provide coded feedback. Coded feedback involves giving a somewhat detailed explanation of areas or rules about content that may need to be rewritten because of language differences or grammatical concerns. As a part of coded feedback, the tutor provided what Ferris and Roberts (2011) called direct feedback: “Direct feedback is given when the teacher provides the correct form for the student writer; if the student revised the text, s/he needs only to transcribe the correction into the final version” (p. 388). Coded feedback includes

the tutor directing the student's attention to areas that may not fit the appropriate academic standard in order to help her understand how to revise them.

For example, in one session, the student's sentence in its original form read: "Stated by American Society for engineering education, only 18% of the nations undergraduate went to women back in 2007." The first feedback the tutor provided addressed the need to capitalize of the word engineering, and then education:

Tutor: Make sure the "e" is capitalized in-in that (.1) because when you are talking about specific names of things, you know, those are proper nouns so every word would be capitalized.

Student: Mm-hm

Tutor: You know all the big words so the "e" in engineering would be capitalized because it is the name of-like a specific organization.

Student: Mm-hm

Tutor: So just make sure that gets capitalized.

((starts to read a sentence from the student's paper))

"Stated by the American Society for engineering education" And then (.1) well-hm-then so the whole thing is called the "American Society for Engineering Education," right?

Student: Yeah

Tutor: so the "e" in engineering and education would be capitalized.

In this interaction, the tutor took more turns speaking and not only stated that engineering and education should be capitalized, but also provided an explanation for why. The conversation continued as the tutor read the rest of the sentence aloud then stated:

Tutor: Alright now undergraduate needs to be plural right? Because there is more than one undergraduate?

Student: mm-hm

Tutor: And then [uh

Student: [It's supposed to be undergraduate degrees. (2)

Tutor: Uh-alright (.1) uh-okay. Yeah

The tutor read the sentence again with the change and stated:

Tutor: And then but nations there isn't plural it's (.2) because you aren't talking about one nation because it's a possessive (.) So it's apostrophe 's' because the undergraduate degrees belong to the nation.

In this example, the tutor provided coded feedback on two different changes he believed the student needed to make. He stated specifically why engineering and education should be capitalized as well as why nation's is a possessive; he provided the student with an explanation and foundation of the rules for these changes. In these instances, the tutor controlled the session and took more time speaking than the student in order to explain the rules.

When addressing these lower order concerns, the level of instruction varied from the tutor directly stating the need for the change, for example, "this needs to be changed" to reading the changes and having the students notice them on their own. In all sessions, 5 out of 8, that included this type of sentence level clarity feedback, all participants by the end of the session made the changes on their own and in some cases before the tutor even reached that part of the sentence.

Additionally, when conducting a conversation analysis approach, I coded and analyzed the moments students showed agency. I will refer to agency as the moments where the students took control of the session or initiated a conversation to have their needs met. Dewey (1916) stated that agency refers to the students taking interest and ownership of the outcomes; they act with purpose, intent and motivation (p. 125). In these instances, the students took control of the outcomes of their learning and writing practices. This agency is a key component of active learning because the students are invested in their writing process and engaged with the tutor to achieve their proposed outcomes. From my analysis, I determined that in all eight sessions the students showed agency in some sort of way, whether it was at the beginning of the session when stating their goals and concerns, by redirecting the session in the middle to address their concerns, or towards the end when they asked questions to make sure their needs were met. An example of agency occurred when a student redirected the session from her initial concern about the tone of her paper to the organization of her ideas. The student was previously discussing the tone of her paper and the tutor explained ways for the paper not to sound as if the student is "ranting" [student's initial word]; the student interjected and changed the course of the session when she stated:

> Student: Hm and then also I just thought of something actually. I wanted to make sure that-hm (2) I feel like this paragraph where I talk about different types of learning styles is really long and-hm I'm wondering if I should have put this towards the beginning where I give the background?

In this interaction, the student shifted the conversation from discussing the tone of the student's paper to a conversation about the organization of her content. Another example occurred while reading through the paper together, the student, whose main concern for her paper was her thesis statement, reached a paragraph near the end of the paper, when she realized a main point was not included in her thesis statement. This main point had to do with something happening out of the person's control— Hurricane Sandy. By acknowledging this and communicating it to the tutor, the student was actively engaging in the reformulation of her thesis statement to represent her paper in its entirety. As a result, the tutor and student revisited the thesis statement and discussed the ways that she could incorporate this idea.

Through observing these sessions, I determined that these students were actively engaged with the collaborative nature of online tutoring. The sessions included a balance of control shifting between student, tutor, and together collectively constructing knowledge. In all sessions, the students took an active role in the direction of the session and contributed knowledge in order to improve their writing practices.

Student Interviews

The interview questions were developed from observing the online tutoring sessions. The sessions directly influenced the interviews because they provided me with the context and foundation for what to ask the participants. The interviews focused on either the participants' personal experiences with the online tutoring or their perceptions of their writing. I asked the students about their experiences with online tutoring, whether they saw improvement in their writing, and what they learned about their writing from the online tutoring session. During the interviews, I also applied grounded theory in order

to code patterns of trends among the eight participants and what they reported about their sessions. This approach to grounded theory was especially useful when students were asked about their experiences with the online tutoring session. Since it was a broad question, it allowed for diverse responses.

In order to activate the participants' recollection of the session, the interview began by first asking each participant, "What were your experiences with the online tutoring session?" This question was purposefully posed as an open-ended question to allow the participants talk about their own interactions and discuss what their perceived experiences were. A focus of this study is to bring students' voices into the writing center scholarship as well as gain an understanding of how the participants experience the online session. Therefore, in this study, the data was acquired from the students' experiences.

In order to determine the ways the students transferred knowledge or what they learned about their writing practices, I asked them three questions:

- What do you think of the paper now that it's finished?
- Do you think the tutoring session helped improve your writing?
- What did you learn about your writing through this process?

These parts of the interview are separated into two sections: students' experiences with online tutoring and student perceptions of their writing.

Students' experiences with online tutoring. At the beginning of each interview, I asked each student, "What were your experiences with the online tutoring session?" When I coded and analyzed their responses, I found six instances that were reported by at least half of the participants:

- Students' rating of the experience,
- Reasons for using the OWC,
- Tutoring strategies,
- What they accomplished in the session,
- Online tutoring,
- The program WebEx.

Students started, ended, or in some cases both, by rating their experiences of tutoring. For example, students stated that they "really liked it", "it was a good experience", "it was cool", etc. These ratings reflected a positive experience with online tutoring. Figure 1 offers a visual representation of the results when the participants were directly asked to discuss their experiences with online tutoring. This figure shows six reported experiences by at least half of the participants when they reflected on their use of online peer tutoring and how they engaged with the online tutoring practices.

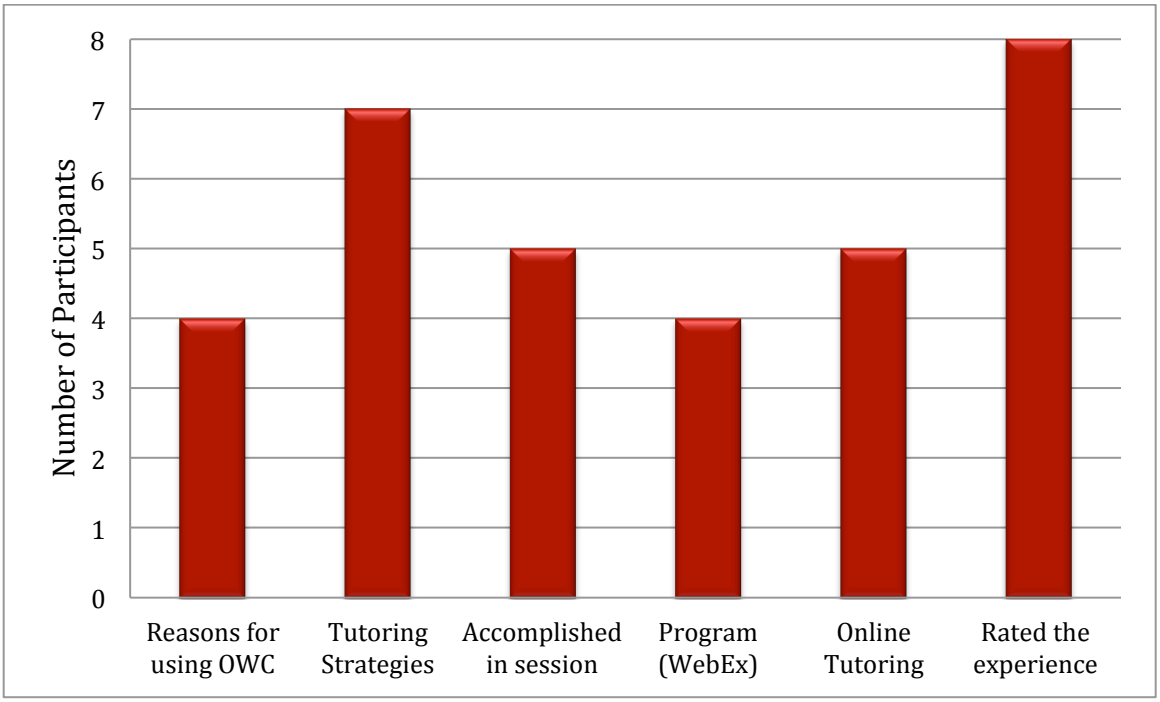

Figure 1. Graph of reported students' experiences with online tutoring by at least half of the participants.

Four out of eight participants stated why they chose to use the OWC. One participant explained that she used the online tutoring because she had "about a page and a quarter of the paper and it needed to be 3." She wanted help knowing where to elaborate her ideas. While only 50% of the participants explained their reasoning for using, 88% discussed specific tutoring practices and about two-thirds discussed what was accomplished in the session. For example, one participant recalled how the tutor helped her articulate her questions: "She was really helpful in helping me articulate my questions because sometimes we don't always know how to ask the questions we have, ya know? She was able to follow my train of thought and really help me with the questions I had on my paper." Additionally, another participant stated that the tutor helped her organize the paper so that it ended as strong as it started. These examples show that the students were metacognitive about what occurred in the session and how collaborating with the tutor

enhanced their writing practices. By remembering the tutoring practices and what was accomplished in the session, the students were able to understand how to transfer those writing practices to future writing assignments.

Another trend from these interviews was the participants' recollection of online tutoring: about two-thirds of the participants discussed online tutoring generally and half directly referenced the program; for example, "I didn't have to leave my room and I really liked the fact that I could just sit there and I could share my screen and she could see what was going on in real time and tell me what to do and all that." Additionally, two participants compared their online tutoring experience to face-to-face tutoring in the physical center. One participant stated that she had received tutoring in the physical center "but it was hectic in there, and then once I tried to go, but there was a whole list, so all the times I went it just wasn't a good experience for me. But this time it was a perfect experience. It just depends on the person really. Online it did have the personal effect, but I still like the personal, personal effect, like face to face. I still had my paper done and I was able to send it as soon as I was done elaborating on that." These experiences show the range of areas the participants recalled about the session focusing on how they rated the session, but also the tutoring practices they engaged with the tutor.

Students' perceptions of their writing. In addition to determining what participants recalled about the session, the interviews focused on what participants say they learned about their writing from online tutoring. The participants were asked to discuss their own writing practices and what they learned about their writing. In their answers, participants evaluated their own writing, discussed the grade of their paper, stated what they learned, discussed techniques of writing or reading, and stated the

improvement they saw in their writing. Figure 2 provides a visual graph displaying the nine different areas students discussed during their interviews when asked to reflect on their writing, the session, and how the session affected them as writers. This figure illustrates the variety of reported ways the online writing center impacted students, specifically students' perceptions of their writing and what they say they learned.

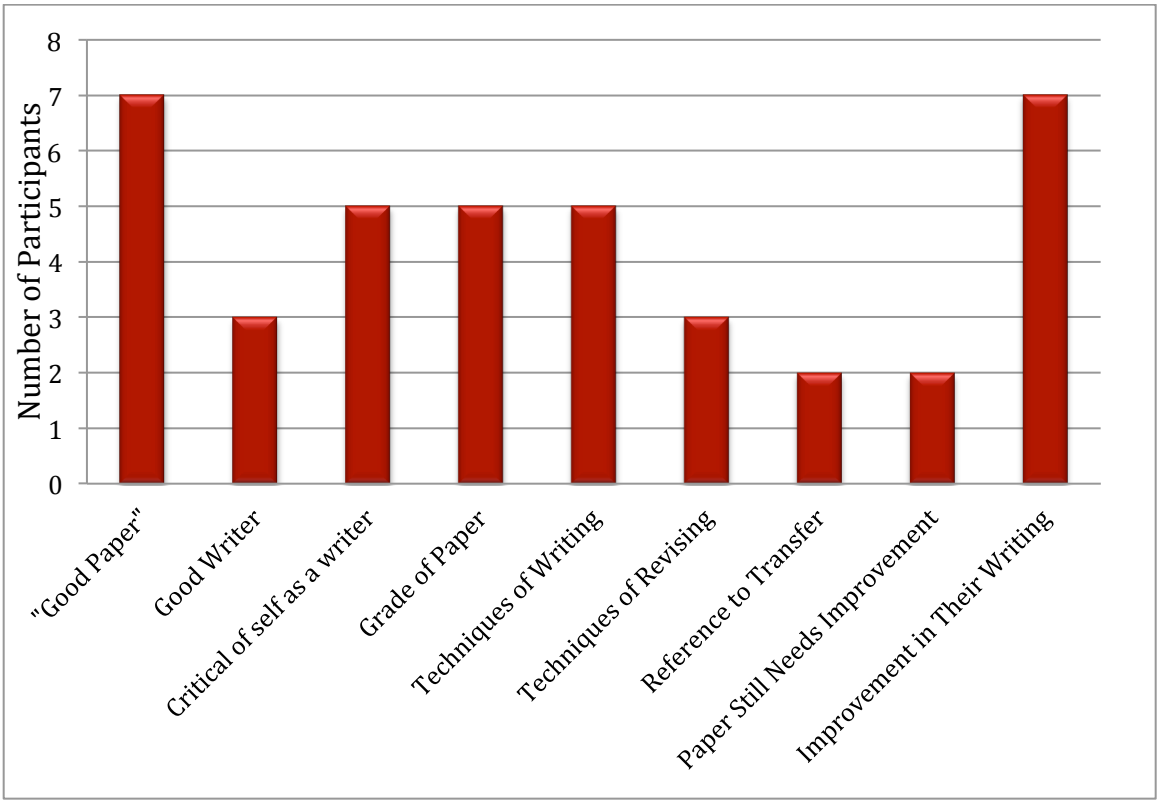

Figure 2. Graph showing the areas students reported when discussing their perceptions of their writing and what learned through online tutoring.

For example, when asked if they saw improvement, seven out of eight participants said that “yes” they saw their writing improve from using the online writing center. One participant did not directly answer the question and therefore was not counted. In addition to discussing that they saw their writing improve, they also discussed what they learned about themselves as writers or about their writing practices. One participant stated that she learned the importance of taking a step back when she writes. She stated,

"I learned to take a step back and really process what I was saying. I'm really emotionally tied to some of the things I research because it is something I've experienced in the past and I wanted to improve on that for when I'm a teacher." In this example, through working with a peer tutor online, the participant learned a general writing strategy of taking a step back from her writing in order to process what she wants to convey. She also explained how she could transfer that strategy to future writing practices. In these instances, the participants were metacognitive about their improvement and how they used tutoring strategies to improve their writing. More specifically, one participant stated the importance of being aware of her paragraph size and how that transferred into her work after the session. She stated, "I was more conscious through writing the rest of my paper on my paragraph size, when I should add a new paragraph because sometimes it confuses me a little bit and [the tutor] helped me figure out what I was going to write my topic and stuff for the rest of my paper so it was a lot easier to be organized." In these examples, the participants shared how what they learned in the session has directly impacted their writing and transferred into future practices.

The participants showed that they were able to evaluate their writing and were critical of themselves as writers. By being critical of themselves as writers, the participants showed that they were capable of thinking critically about their writing practices and the knowledge they gained from being metacognitive. For example, one participant stated, "I learned that my writing isn't as bad as I think it is. Sometimes I write and I'm just like, I don't think it's very good, but there wasn't as many corrections to it as maybe I would have liked or would have expected. I don't know if that just because my writing isn't as bad or if it's just preferences." Additionally, 38% of the

participants said they were good writers while 88% stated that their paper was a good paper. However, two participants stated that their paper could still be improved. The one participant explained that she felt her paper could have been expanded more, but she did not continue writing because she already had reached the ten-page requirement for the assignment. The other participant said she felt the topic was boring and she could not think of a good idea for the paper. In the interviews, two-thirds of the participants directly referenced the grade of the paper, either stating that they did not think they were going to receive such a high grade on the paper or that they were confident they would get a good grade on the paper they worked on with the tutor.

In all these interviews, the participants stated something they either learned about themselves as writers or about their writing that they could transfer to future writing practices. They saw the sessions as beneficial and explained how their writing improved from actively engaging with a tutor online.

In-Depth Look at One Participant

To further illustrate the ways in which students discussed their experiences and exemplified transfer from online writing center sessions, I paired the interview findings with a more detailed example of one student, Jillian (pseudonym).

Online tutoring session. Jillian had a 20-minute online peer tutoring session. Her paper was six pages, double-spaced and focused on teaching, understanding students' learning styles, and approaches to meeting the needs of different students. At the beginning of the session, she stated that she wanted to work on organizational issues and to sound educated. Jillian directed the majority of the session asking the tutor about specific areas she wanted to receive help on. For example:

Jillian: Should I try to take out more "you's" and put in "as a teacher" or-like "teachers" in general, or something like that so (1) [I-um don't

Tutor: [or like]

Jillian: sound so soapboxy.

Tutor: Yeah that definitely helps and then even if your using the word "one" sometimes can help. Like instead of-hm saying "you should do this," you could say-uh well "one should consider this" while you know what I mean?

Jillian: mm-hm

Tutor: I know I-I-I will use that sometimes just to get rid of the "you's". That's the one big-big-big change that I know a lot teachers and-uh a lot of professors try to get their students out of the habit of doing especially in the transition between high school and college so that-uh you learn to write a more-uh higher end paper, ya know?

Jillian continued this conversation by asking how to connect two paragraphs in the paper and together they discussed adding a transition from one idea to the next. Jillian jumped in again to state that she also wanted to look at her conclusion because she was worried it sounded too "cheesy." Jillian was actively engaged in the session and directed its path by bringing up her concerns. When they discussed her conclusion, Jillian and the tutor generated knowledge together about the best way to end her paper. Through this conversation, Jillian determined she wanted to add a framing story to her paper:

Tutor: Well- I always find you write the best conclusion when you read through the entire paper again and you get the whole idea of what it

is you're trying to say.

Jillian: [uh-huh

Tutor: [and then you can say it in you conclusion.

(10)

The other thing you can think about doing in your conclusion is hm (.2) I've had a lot of professors tell me you should take your paper to the next level in your conclusion. Like (2) uh-you talk in your paper about how teachers can use this like in their classrooms so in the conclusion you can say-like "if they did this then this would happen." So you like [kind of

Jillian: [uh-yeah I

Tutor: you know you kind of broaden the-uh spectrum of where this could take you, you know? That always makes it better.

Jillian: So maybe to help me with my conclusion I could do like a framing story (.) and that might help me start my paper better too because my intros kind-of sucky too.

Tutor: Yeah that's always-uh that's definitely a good way to start your papers for sure and then in your conclusion you can refer back to the story that you opened your paper with.

Jillian: And then kind of say how it might change if the teacher changed some of their methods using the techniques that I talked about in my paper?

Tutor: Exactly (1)

Jillian: Okay

Tutor: That's very good and-and stories are more interesting anyway when you tell them people are more interested, and be like "this is cool what is she going to talk about with this story", or if it like made you really mad, the reader might be like "what the heck? What happened with this?" And they'll want to keep going.

Throughout the session, they developed and established knowledge together. The whole session followed this type of pattern where Jillian suggested an area to look at and then together they negotiated ways to address that area. In this interaction, the tutor and Jillian are building the context of information together by offering ideas that directly connect to what the other person previously said. Jillian participated in the negotiation of knowledge by debating topics and concepts with the tutor; Bruffee (1984) described this process in peer tutoring as building knowledge "by negotiating collectively toward new paradigms of perception, thought, feeling, and expression" (p. 646). Through conversations, students negotiated ideas and determined the processes that work best for them. In this session, Jillian and the tutor worked together and collaboratively shared knowledge.

Interview. In her interview, Jillian discussed the program WebEx, tutoring strategies, her rating of the experience, herself as a "good writer," areas of transfer, techniques of writing, and the improvement in her writing. She began the interview by expressing a setback she had with the program. She explained that:

> First off, I had a problem getting the link to start the meeting. I didn't come to my email. Like 5 -10 minutes before the sessions I realized I couldn't get on. So I had to call them. And they sent me a link and within like 10 minutes, then I was like 15 minutes late because then I needed to update my computer. But they were really helpful in helping me solve the problems. They were really good at providing information for how to share my desktop and how the flow of the session would go.

This response shows the importance of having a well-working program because while Jillian was able to recall the session as being helpful, her immediate response was the malfunction she experienced with getting the session started.

When discussing her concern to sound educated in her paper, Jillian critiqued herself as a writer: "I feel very strongly about my voice as a writer. I feel I am a good writer, and sometimes I get a little naggy because I feel strongly about certain topics, that's what I asked for her help with, to stop being so naggy." In order to fix that concern, she recalled one of the suggestions from the tutor that helped improve her writing: "I would never have thought to replace 'you' with 'one' could. That's something I'll keep in mind for the future."

Similarly, Jillian stated what she learned in the session:

> That sometimes I get carried away. I can definitely get really naggy sometimes. I learned to take a step back and really process what I was saying. I'm really emotionally tied to some of the things I researched because it is something I've experienced in the past and I want to improve on that for when I'm a teacher,

teacher. So I get really carried away and I just start typing and typing away and I just need to stop.

After having the opportunity to reflect on the session and revise her paper, Jillian stated, "I feel really good about it [the paper]." Jillian explained the improvement of her writing from setting the goals with the tutor to the strategies she can apply to her writing to address her concerns, which directly referenced the transfer she saw.

Conclusion, Implications and Future Research

In the observations of the recorded online tutoring sessions and the interviews about students' experiences, the students reported either learning something about their writing that was directly based on their goals for the session; or in other cases, they learned something about their perceptions of themselves as writers. The goals of the session were connected to the transfer of what the students learned about their writing because, as Wells (2011) stated, "By setting personally meaningful goals, the highly self-efficacious student will likely be more motivated to achieve them than a student who does not set authentic goals" (p. 51). For example, we can see that Jillian directly referred to her goal of sounding educated in her piece and the suggestion from the tutor about how to improve that area of her writing. This instance shows the transfer that occurred from Jillian actively engaging in the session to learning strategies she could apply to her writing.

From what these students shared, we can see specific ways learning occurred in these sessions. The OWC contributed to their writing practices beyond just the paper they wrote for that class. They are taking knowledge away from the sessions and discussing ways they can either apply it to their writing or use it to improve their writing. They

talked about the tutoring strategies from the online sessions and saw how these strategies benefit them as writers. The interviews showed how the students believed they improved their writing from using online tutoring and how these sessions aided them to think critically about themselves as writers because they discussed the areas they were struggling with and where they were succeeding in composing. Active learning is taking place during the session, as Bruffee (1984) stated, when students "talk about the subject and about the assignment. They talk through the writer's understanding of the subject. They converse about their own relationship and, in general, about relationships in an academic or intellectual context between students and teachers" (p. 645). It is not certain whether the students would have been as reflective of these practices without being prompted to do so in the interviews. Through these interactions, they are able to examine the improvement in their writing and how they can apply these strategies in future writing.

In all these sessions, the students found the online tutoring sessions helpful and were able to pinpoint something that either improved their writing or forced them to look at their writing differently. This finding shows that transfer based on the notion of meta-awareness occurred. This transfer was successful because the students were able to report what they learned from the sessions, recall the knowledge they gained from working with a tutor, and understand how to apply those ideas. Future research would include following up with the students again to see if there were any other connections they may not have noticed a week later or to see if they are in fact applying these areas of transfer in their new classes the following semester. Additionally, research should seek to focus on a larger scale of students. Through the use of programs like WebEx, the records can be

used for future reference or research by tutors, students, or administrators. The records can also be used to develop tutor training. We must continue to investigate the ways that online tutoring effects our students' perceptions of themselves as writers and what they are taking away from these sessions in order to best address their needs.

CHAPTER FIVE

STUDENT REVISION PROCESSES:

HOW SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE TUTORING CONTRIBUTES TO REVISION

Preface

Chapter 5 explains how online tutoring sessions contributed to students' revisions of assignments, how students made choices about what to revise, and how they responded to their instructors' comments. The results of this study demonstrated how students addressed the tutors' advice when it aligned with their aims and goals. This chapter was written for submission to *The Writing Center Journal* because of the chapter's emphasis on how online tutoring practices contribute to the writers' revision processes.

Introduction

When students visit the online writing center for help on a paper, a tutor may spend 30 to 60 minutes providing advice and assisting them in developing ideas, making changes to the draft, and devising a plan for future revisions. However, when the session is over, the tutor does not always know what becomes of the students' paper unless the students request more assistance or share this information. The tutor does not know if the students use the advice given or if the students found the feedback helpful. Does the student choose to make any further changes to the paper beyond revisions in the session? What does the student do with the information he or she has gained in the online session? How does online tutoring affect the ways the student revises?

I address these questions about how online tutoring contributed to students' revision processes. This chapter reports how online tutoring impacted the ways students revised their assignments, the choices they made while revising, and how they responded

to the instructor's comments. When conducting research, I examined the revision processes of students who used one-to-one synchronous online peer tutoring. This research included document analysis of the draft that the participants worked on with the tutor and the final draft they submitted to the instructor. I conducted interviews and retrospective interviews with the participants to learn about their revision processes, how their interactions with the tutor led to their decisions about revisions, and how they viewed the tutors' and instructors' comments. Through the interviews and retrospective analyses, I gained insight about how students revise based on the feedback they received in the sessions. Additionally, the participants provided their responses to their instructors' comments on their final drafts. Since the goal of online writing centers (OWC) is to help students develop their writing, it is important to find out from the students how these sessions lead to revisions. This chapter builds on the current scholarship about revision by asking students to describe their revision processes from working with a tutor to when they handed in the paper to the instructor.

Revision in Composition and Writing Center Scholarship

Revision in this dissertation is related to Murray's (1972) concept of rewriting: "reconsideration of subject, form, and audience. It is researching, rethinking, redesigning, rewriting- and finally, line-by-line editing, the demanding, satisfying process of making each word right" (p. 12). Revision includes the thought processes of composing ideas to the deletion, substitution, addition, and the reordering of information. When researching revision in student writing, I studied changes from one draft to the next during and after the sessions. I also examined how students perceived the feedback they received during online tutoring affecting their revision processes.

The majority of composition scholarship focuses on defining or redefining the concepts of revision (Bernhardt, 1988; Berthoff, 1981; Murray, 1984; Perl, 1980; Sommers, 1980; Wallace & Hayes, 1991) and effective teacher feedback that leads towards revision (Duijnhouwer, Prins, & Stockking, 2012; Ferris, 1997; Goldstein, 2004; Hillocks, 1982; Silver & Lee, 2007; Yagelski, 1995). Additionally, the scholarship includes the comparison between peer feedback and teacher feedback (Beason, 1993; Chaudron, 1984; Paulus, 1999), and the effects of a particular peer-review method (Berkenkotter, 1983; Freedman, 1992; Harris, 1986; Karegianes, Pascarella, & Pflaum, 1980; Mendonca & Johnson, 1994; Neubert & McNelis, 1990; Newkirk, 1984; Sherrard, 1994; Thomas, 1986; Zhu, 1995). These studies provide a foundation for how revision is defined and how classroom feedback affects students' revisions. But how does online peer tutoring affect students' revision processes? What do students have to say about their revision process? What areas do students choose to revise? How do they make these decisions? The two areas of revision I focused on in order to answer these questions about online tutoring and revision are: a) students' responses to tutor and teacher feedback, and b) students' reported perceptions of their revision processes.

Students Responses, Preferences and Perceived Revision Processes

Few studies incorporate students' responses to the feedback they receive (Duijnhouwer, Prins, & Stockking, 2012; Paulus, 1999; Silver & Lee, 2007; Weaver, 2006; Yagelski, 1995). The scholarship that investigates students' responses to feedback typically looks at what types of feedback they found helpful. Although there has been a growth in the research on students' preferences and perceptions of the feedback they received from teachers (Cohen, 1987; Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1990; Ferris, 1995; Hayes &

Daiker, 1984; Leki, 1991; Radecki & Swales, 1988; Silver & Lee, 2007), certain questions still need to be asked: how do students respond to feedback during online tutoring sessions? Do students revise during the session? Do they make notes in the text to return to later? What is their revision process after they receive this feedback and the session is over? My study addressed these questions.

In composition scholarship, some research includes how students respond to feedback in writing classes and whether the feedback led to further revision. Silver and Lee (2007) conducted a study of 33 students, who were approximately ten years old in age, to investigate student attitudes to teacher feedback in order to gain insight to why some feedback encouraged more revision than others. Silver and Lee determined that students made the most use of feedback formed as advice as opposed to criticism or praise. Additionally, Silver and Lee suggested the importance of providing students with the purpose of teacher feedback to promote revision. Similarly, Duijnhouwer, Prins, and Stokking (2012) conducted a study of 96 graduate students to discover the effects of feedback that included improvement strategies and student motivation, process, and performance. They asked the students to fill out four questionnaires during a nine-week course and then interviewed eleven students about the feedback they received on their writing. Duijnhouwer, Prins, and Stokking (2012) explained that the students were asked whether the feedback they received on their writing was "motivating or demotivating, and useful or useless, and whether they had used the strategy" (p. 176). The researchers determined that when the students were provided more strategies they planned and revised more; however, most of the participants did not see these strategies as either being motivating or demotivating. But what were the students' revision processes that

contributed to the decisions they made? How did the students get from one draft to the next? What did that process look like?

Additionally, Weaver (2006) surveyed 44 students about their perceptions of written feedback. Weaver found that students value feedback, but they did not always know what to do with it. Weaver concluded that the students might need guidance to understand the feedback before they can use it. The students considered feedback that was vague, negative, or lacked guidance to be unhelpful for their writing improvement. Students considered feedback that was too vague difficult for them to interact with it. Similarly, Beason (1993) studied first and final drafts of 20 writing across the curriculum students, analyzing the feedback they received on their first draft, areas they revised, and the criteria affected by revision. Beason (1993) argued that overall there was an improvement between students' drafts when they previously received feedback on their writing, but that students were selective when they made decisions about revisions based on the feedback they received. Do students revise their papers based on the feedback they receive? If so, how do the students decide what areas to revise? Why do students decide to disregard certain feedback they receive?

Revision and Changes from Draft to Draft

As I turn the focus to online environments, there are few published studies that look at how students revise from the feedback they received in online environments (Guardado & Shi, 2007; Hewett, 2006; Tuzi, 2004). The majority of the studies focused on students' revision processes in online environments come from the second language (L2) scholarship. Tuzi (2004) compared 20 L2 students' initial and revised drafts after they received electronic feedback (e-feedback) and oral feedback. Tuzi explored the

relationship between e-feedback and oral feedback as well as the revisions students made from the feedback they received. Tuzi found that while students preferred oral feedback, greater revisions resulted from the e-feedback. The findings of this study showed that students made more macro-level revisions following the e-feedback than the oral feedback. But what contributed to the decisions these students made?

Guardado and Shi (2007) conducted a study of 22 Japanese students in a year-abroad academic exchange program at a Canadian university. Guardado and Shi explored 22 L2 students' experiences of online peer feedback examining the feedback they received, revisions they made, and their perceived experiences. Guardado and Shi compared initial and revised drafts of the students' writing. They found that slightly more than half of the students revised their papers. Of those who revised, four made major revisions and three made minor revisions. Additionally, nine of the 22 students made no revisions and ignored peer comments. Guardado and Shi determined that the feedback offered in the text-only online environment promoted balanced student revision that took into consideration their audience's needs. Why was the number of students who chose to revise so low? Guardado and Shi believed it might have to do with the students' uncertainty with approaching the comments. What would these students report about their revision processes and how the advice they received contributes to their own revision processes?

Similarly, Hewett (2006) studied the revisions students made from the feedback they received from professional tutors through synchronous whiteboard instruction. Hewett analyzed 52 online interactions from 23 undergraduate students at Pennsylvania State University. Hewett conducted a textual analysis of the interactions, the drafts of the

essays, and all available drafts placed within the final portfolio for the students' first year English class. Hewett determined that the whiteboard synchronous sessions allowed the professional tutor and student to use the text to talk about and fully develop ideas (p. 20). The findings of the study showed that 73% of the interactions were connected to revisions within a particular essay draft. Additionally, Hewett found that it was common for the feedback to lead to only one or two discrete writing changes. Why did the students choose to make only one or two changes? Hewett (2006) was unable to conduct follow-up interviews with students due to anonymity.

Since there are few studies that investigate how online tutoring impacts student revision processes, the previous research provides a foundation for new research. While there is a focus in composition and writing center scholarship on student revision processes, this research needs to advance by discovering how these online environments contribute to student revision processes.

In order to continue research on student revision processes, we need to learn more about how students approach revising assignments and how online tutoring contributes to those processes. The previous research addresses what feedback leads to revision and how to pose feedback that is facilitative and that addresses the student's individual needs. To further advance this scholarship, we explore how students revise based on the feedback they receive in the online tutoring sessions. Through interviews, we can learn from students more about their revision processes and how they make decisions about what to revise. This research benefits both composition studies and writing center scholarship.

This study examined students' revision processes by observing their online tutoring sessions and then interviewing the students after they revised the paper, submitted it to the instructor, and received the paper back with the instructor's comments. This research offers an understanding to how students revised their assignments after they received feedback from a tutor, what choices they made in the revision processes, and how they responded to the instructor's comments. The questions that guide this research are:

1. How do online peer tutoring sessions contribute to student revision processes?
2. How do students respond to the feedback they receive during an online tutoring session?
3. How do students revise their assignments after the session from the feedback they receive?
4. How do students respond to the instructor's overall comments about the paper in relation to the tutoring session?

By addressing these questions, this study demonstrates how online peer tutoring sessions impacted revision processes and how students approached the revision process after they received feedback during online peer tutoring.

Methods

When conducting this research, I focused on how online synchronous peer tutoring contributed to students' revision processes, such as what students chose to revise, how they approached revision, how students made choices about what to revise, and how they responded to the instructors' comments on their revised drafts. I collected data from eight participants' online tutoring sessions. I transcribed the recorded sessions, ranging

from 17-60 minutes. During the week following their sessions, the students revised their papers, submitted them to their instructors, and received grades and feedback. I then conducted interviews and retrospective analyses with each writer. I recorded and transcribed each one, ranging from 12-38 minutes. Additionally, I collected the drafts they received back from their instructors with the comments and feedback to use in comparison with the draft they worked on during the online tutoring session. I analyzed these data focusing on areas of revision, revision processes, decisions about revising, and participants' responses to instructors' comments.

In this study, I explored how the interactions during online writing center sessions led to the student's revision of an assignment; these findings were determined through the interviews and retrospective interviews. During the retrospective analyses, the participants discussed their revisions from one draft to the next. They explained how they re-entered the paper after the session was over, their decisions about what to revise, and how they made those revisions. This process involved the participants going over the final drafts with me, pointing to the areas that they added, changed, deleted, or reordered. I used my prior knowledge of the session to initiate conversations about revisions when the participants did not discuss those areas. The participants were prompted to reflect on their revision processes and how working with the online tutor contributed to those revisions. The participant interviews and retrospective analyses were used to gain an understanding of how the interactions during online peer tutoring led to the revisions of their assignments and how they responded to the instructors' overall comments on their papers in relation to the tutoring sessions.

Participants

The participants in this study were eight students enrolled in three levels of writing courses: English 100: Basic Writing, English 101: College Writing, and English 202: Research Writing. The results of all eight participants will be presented with more detailed examples from two participants, Robert and Linda, pseudonyms, which are included with the overall results.

Online Tutoring Sessions

Each student participated in an online tutoring session with a peer tutor from Indiana University of Pennsylvania's Online Writing Center, which uses Cisco WebEx for its tutoring platform. WebEx allows users to share documents and files or the computer's entire desktop. Through video on-screen conferencing, the tutor and student looked at the paper together and they discussed the paper through the use of Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) audio. WebEx has the capability to save a recording of the session. WebEx created a video recording with the audio and the actions that took place on the screen during the session. I observed and transcribed a recording of each Online Writing Center (OWC) session ranging from 17 to 60 minutes, with an average of 33 minutes among the eight sessions. I observed these recordings prior to conducting the interviews. I analyzed the online sessions, looking at the areas revised during the session, how the writers responded to the feedback in the moment, and what type of feedback the tutors provided. Additionally, the recording of the session provided a draft of the students' papers and the changes they made during the session; these changes were analyzed comparing the initial draft they worked on with a peer tutor to the final draft they submitted to the instructor.

Interviews and Retrospective Interview Analyses

The interviews and retrospective interview analyses took place approximately a week after the online session. With a week between the online sessions and the interviews, the participants had the opportunity to revise their papers, submit the final drafts to the instructors, and receive the assignments back with the instructors' comments on them. The retrospective interviews allowed the participants to verbally explain their processes of revising their papers and how they transformed the papers they worked on with the tutor to the final papers they submitted to the instructors. I transcribed and analyzed the audio recordings of the interviews and retrospective analyses, ranging from 12 to 38 minutes with an average of 21 minutes among the eight students. I analyzed and transcribed the retrospective interview analyses and interviews to gain a better understanding about how students approached the revision process.

Retrospective interview analyses. During the retrospective interview analyses, I asked each student to explain their revision processes and walk me through their decisions as they made changes to their drafts. They explained what happened when the session was over, how they re-entered the paper, the decisions they made about what to revise, and how they went about revising. This analysis included the students going through the final drafts with me page-by-page and pointing out the areas that they added, changed, deleted, or reordered. Since I observed the sessions before the retrospective interview analyses and interviews, I had prior knowledge of what the student discussed with the tutor. I was able to use that information to activate conversations about revisions when the students did not discuss those areas. The transcriptions of the retrospective interviews were analyzed for trends, focusing on the areas students recalled revising, their

discussion of the revision process in relation to the online session, and how the feedback they received impacted the ways they revised.

Interviews. I interviewed the students about their interactions during the tutoring session, their revision processes, the changes they made, and their responses to the instructor's comments. In each interview, the students were asked additional questions about their revision processes. They were asked the followed questions:

- Did you take notes during the online tutoring session?
- How did you go about revising the paper after the session?
- Why did you choose to revise specific areas?
- If applicable, why did you choose not to revise a specific section you worked on with the tutor?
- What are your responses to the instructor's comments on the areas you revised, if there were any?

Most of the interview questions were context-based and in relation to the online tutoring session. I asked the students specific questions about their own sessions and revisions; for example, how they went about making further changes to their thesis statements, or if they chose to reformat the paper as discussed with the tutor. I analyzed the interviews to gain insight regarding how students made decisions about what to revise, how they responded to the instructors' comments, how online tutoring affected their revision processes, and the decisions they made about revising.

Student Drafts and Instructor Comments

I asked the students to bring to the interview a copy of the final drafts of their paper that they received from the instructors. This paper was compared with the draft that

the students worked on with the tutor as it was presented in WebEx. I conducted document analysis of these drafts, examining areas that were changed from one draft to the next. In the final drafts, I mainly focused on the areas of the students' papers that we discussed during the online tutoring session and what changes they made to their papers. Additionally, I looked at any areas that may have been related to discussions in the session as well as the areas discussed in the retrospective interview analysis and interview. Lastly, I examined the instructors' comments in relation to the online tutoring sessions and the revisions the students made to their papers. These drafts were used during the interviews and retrospective analyses for the students to describe what revisions they made and how the tutors' feedback contributed to those revisions. The instructors' comments on the students' final drafts were used to add to the conversation of the students' revisions to determine how the comments are related, affirmed, or disjointed from the online tutoring session. Of the eight students, six received their papers back from the instructor before the semester was over and in time for the interview.

Results

Revisions in this study consisted of those changes in the writing that took place during the session when the student worked with the online tutor, as well as the ones that the student completed on his or her own when the session was over. All eight of the writers made revisions to their drafts.

Summary of Results

- All eight students made revisions to their assignment.
- All eight students took notes during the online peer tutoring session:
    - Five students took notes directly in their Word document.

- Three students took notes on a separate piece of paper.

- In-text revisions during the session:
  - 92 minor revisions.
  - Eight substantial revisions.
- Revisions after the session:
  - 32 substantial revisions.
- Trends:
  1. Revision processes and insight to the students' decision-making during and after the online tutoring sessions.
  2. Importance of having a plan to execute feedback.
  3. Balance between when students decided to accept feedback or disregard it.
  4. Students' responses to instructors' comments.

Detailed Results

All eight of the participants reported that they took notes during the session: five students took notes directly in the Word document they shared with the tutor during the session and three took notes on a separate piece of paper. For example, one student explained that he wrote notes on paper about his introduction, revisions, and conclusion to remind him how to address these areas when he went back to revise on his own. Another student took notes directly in the Word document adding comments in the text, such as "give specific example of TV show," and then she highlighted the text in yellow order to make sure she did not forget it. These notes provided the students with guidance and a reminder about what areas to address and how to revise when they re-entered the paper.

The majority of the in-text changes during the session included minor changes such as punctuation, fixing typos, deleting words, citation formatting, subject-verb agreement, combining sentences, word choice, article usage, etc. These revisions consisted of 92 changes during the eight sessions. There were only eight major changes that occurred during the sessions; these revisions included clarifying or elaborating ideas and the organization of the paper by rearranging paragraphs. After the sessions, all eight of the students made revisions. The students made a total of 32 substantial revisions that were related to the online session. These changes included rewriting introductions, adding conclusions, reordering paragraphs, and adding new information to clarify ideas. While I only examined first and final drafts, these results are similar to the numerous revisions that took place in Tuzi's (2004) study – 274 drafts, 97 were first drafts and 177 revisions—as well as Hewett's (2006) 73% of revisions that were connected to the interactions during the synchronous conference. In contrast, these numbers of revisions are higher than found in Guardado and Shi's (2007) study.

To further illustrate the trends found in the data: the importance of having a plan to execute the feedback, the balance between accepting feedback and choosing to disregard it, gaining insight of the thought process behind the decisions made during and after the session, and their responses to instructors' comments. Additionally, I used detailed examples from two students, Robert and Linda, pseudonyms, which are included with the overall results. This information was derived from the observations of the recorded sessions, the retrospective interview analyses, and interviews. Robert showed a balance of accepting feedback and attempting closely to follow the tutor's suggestions as well as choosing not to follow the feedback that he did not feel addressed his overall

purposes. Linda took notes in the text which helped gain insight to her thought processes and allowed me to see the thought process in the session as well as after the session.

Revision Processes

All of the writers had a clear understanding of their revision processes and could concisely explain them; these participants also stated whether and how their processes changed based on the feedback they received during the online session. Additionally, all eight participants stated that the first step of their revision process after the session involved reading through the paper, initially checking for flow and lower order concerns. In some cases, the participants discussed re-using the tutoring strategy of reading the paper aloud in order to catch mistakes and pay close attention to the organization of information.

After initially reading through the paper, the participants then addressed the feedback they received from the tutor. Those who fixed their introductions started with addressing the introduction or adding a framing story. Others looked at the order of paragraphs. The participants went through the papers addressing the areas they worked on with a tutor. For example, one participant explained,

> I just added a little bit more to the conclusion to like make it more powerful because it was kind of really vague, it was vague, but it was still good, I just added more to kind of make it more of a powerful ending statement or ending paragraph.

This participant was able to recall the feedback by the tutor and explain how she executed that feedback. The participants not only understood the purpose of the feedback they received, but with the tutor, they developed a plan for making those changes.

For example, Robert first proofread his paper after the session, before he revised it again. Then, he made changes to his introduction as the tutor suggested. He remembered the tutor telling him to try to get the reader's attention, so he thought of a way to start off with something that happened to him with music. He connected to the readers to see if his experience happened to them as well and then he explained why he chose music for his topic. Then, he finished answering the last questions of his research and wrote his conclusion. He summed up his ideas and said that he would do further research on music. This explanation of his revision process shows how he took into account the tutor's advice along the way. Robert's revision process was methodical as he went through each area he worked on with the tutor and chose to work only on the sections he believed addressed his purposes. The tutor provided advice that was helpful and assisted Robert in developing a plan for further revisions. By having a plan and advice from the tutor, Robert was able to revise his paper and produced an effective final draft, according to Robert and his instructor.

In contrast, Linda's composing and revision process consisted of writing everything for the paper first and then going back and making the changes that were necessary. After the session, Linda started by making further changes to the introduction. She made her introduction shorter and more direct than it was initially. She removed a lot of the information in the original introduction and added it to different areas throughout the paper. Then, she reworded various sections of the paper. Linda changed how she approached writing her paper from the advice she received from the tutor. Linda continued to go through her paper breaking up paragraphs that were too long. Then, she added more information to areas that she and the tutor discussed that needed elaboration.

Linda found the feedback from the tutor directly contributing to how she revised her paper and approached writing. She reported that she found the tutor's advice to be concrete and helped her develop a plan for re-entering her paper. Her approach takes a less sequential approach than Robert's.

In some cases the participants remembered how the online session changed or influenced their revision processes. Linda discussed how the tutor recommended that she adjust her paragraph size: "the tutor mentioned that my paragraphs were too long." Then she explained how she went about addressing it:

> I split my paragraphs up, I did smaller things he told me to do. And when I was writing the rest of my paper I remembered his advice to me about the paragraphs to keep them to more specific topics so I just used that throughout to write the rest of my paper and made sure I didn't make my paragraphs too long. I stuck to my research questions so that's how I used that.

In these cases, the advice offered by the tutor altered Linda's revision process because she re-entered the paper with a new strategy and approach for making changes to her writing. Recalling and applying this new strategy is important because Linda did not just follow the advice the tutor provided to revise one section or another, but she altered her whole process of revising based on the feedback she received from the online tutor.

In addition to the tutor's advice, two students discussed receiving extra help from their instructors about the format of their paper and whether or not the information was set up the proper way. Linda also found herself balancing the advice given by the tutor and her instructor. Linda believed the tutor's and instructor's views on paragraph length were different. Linda's instructor told her that her introduction could be as long as she

needed it to be, whereas the tutor suggested she break up her introduction. Linda decided to make the introduction shorter but not as short as she believed the tutor wanted. Linda stated:

> My teacher told me that my intro could be as long as I needed it to be as long as I addressed what I was supposed to address, whereas [the tutor] was like you should break it up, and my teacher said it was fine. I still made it shorter, but not as short as [the tutor] wanted it, as [the tutor] eventually, initially told me, but I eventually made it shorter and I changed it.

What Linda does not mention is the reasoning why the tutor suggested she make her introduction shorter and how her introduction became more focused by the revisions she made.

Linda also explained how balancing between the tutor's and instructor's feedback changed the way she revised on her paper:

> I was more conscious through writing the rest of my paper on my paragraph size, when I should add a new paragraph because sometimes it confuses me a little bit and like he [the tutor] told me how to do that. It was a lot easier to be organized. And I wrote it a lot faster than if I just tried to figure it out as I went.

When making revisions on paragraph length and her introduction, Linda altered the way that she revised in order to balance her writing between the advice provided by the tutor and her instructor.

Developing a Plan for Further Revisions

As previously mentioned, it was important for the writer to know not only the purpose of the feedback they received, but also to have a plan for making those changes.

This finding supports Weaver's (2006) claim that students may value the feedback, but they do not always know how to use it. The advice provided by the tutors included guidance and direction for the students to develop a plan for further revisions. In these cases, the students and tutors were able to talk through the text to develop ideas. Hewett (2006) explained this task:

> The free give-and-take of ideas enabled the participants to work together toward a solution for the student's writing problem… It seems important, therefore, to remember that collaboration is interactive in terms of sharing thoughts and generating ideas, and that a natural result of interactivity is a new or different way of thinking that may emerge in one's writing—often closely resembling the writing developed together. In this sense, the online conferences in this study appeared to have used textual talk and instruction both appropriately and efficaciously. (p. 20)

By using the text during the session and receiving feedback online, students can work through the text to develop ideas and negotiate the goals of their writing. When the advice provided by the tutor included the purpose of the revisions and a plan to execute the changes, the student had a clear objective and was able to follow the tutor's advice for making the necessary revisions.

One detailed example of developing a plan for further revision took place when Robert was addressing a concern with his paper; Robert told the tutor that his introduction sounded boring. The tutor started off by reading the introduction aloud to Robert. The introduction Robert worked on with the tutor read:

> That's why for this public life investigation I choose to do music. Why music?

Well I at first I had a hard time trying to find a topic that interests me. Then I thought about it, I asked myself what it is that I do every day and can't live without. The first thing that came to mind was music, I have a strong love for music; music is like my best friend. It's there when no one else is. Music is so powerful; you can tell something about a person by the type of music they listen to. I can't live a day without music, and it's very important to me.

In order to help Robert address his concern, the tutor provided Robert with detailed advice on how to create a more interesting introduction. The tutor said:

Tutor: So usually with your introduction you want to talk about what it is your paper is going to be about [and] you want to like hook your

Robert: [mm-hm]

Tutor: reader or like say something interesting that they're really going to like or that-that they will think is interesting or something that they didn't know about you beforehand. So I'm trying to think, (.1) so if you have like stories are a good way to do it. Like a short little anecdote about a time that (.2) hm (.1) that like music really influenced you or when the first time you really remember anything about music and then why it became important to you.

Robert: Okay

Robert agreed with the tutor. The tutor offered further advice:

Tutor: And you just kind of (.1) you'll kinda add that to the beginning and then (.2) hm (.1) cause I like the part where you where you talk about ((quoting line from his paper)) "your strong love for music and how

music is your best friend" (.) hm (1) That it's very powerful (.) That's-that's very interesting, and you should leave that in there but in the beginning you kind of want to (.1) uh- put something in there to like hook the reader in. You know what I mean?

Robert: Yea so that first paragraph I have is it okay to leave that and add something like a paragraph before that one?

Tutor: Or just a few sentences in the beginning of that paragraph.

Robert: Okay

In both these instances, the tutor helped Robert develop a plan for addressing the introduction and provided detailed advice. When Robert revised his paper, he closely followed the tutor's advice and added a story to grab the reader's attention. He decided to add a new introduction paragraph and move the previous introduction (shown above) shared with the tutor to his second paragraph. The new introduction read:

> I stay up all night lying in my bed with my laptop listening to music yawning like crazy but don't want to go to sleep because I'm listening to music. I just had to listen to these songs, I was so anxious for the next song to play I just couldn't go to sleep. I would then eventually go to sleep with my laptop still open lying next to me. I've fell asleep with my laptop open so much that one day when I woke up to it was broken on the floor. You would think that I would learn my lesson from that; I still do it till this day.

Based on the advice given by the tutor, Robert revised his introduction to include a personal story. After he made these changes, he believed that the paper did not sound as boring as it initially did, but instead quite exciting.

In this example, the advice Robert received from the online tutor and the revisions he made produced positive results. Robert's instructor made significant comments about his introduction, stating: "Your introduction is beautiful – it draws your readers in and gets them thinking about your topic, while also introducing you as the author and your take on the subject." Robert was very surprised by this comment because this was the first time that he received full credit for his introduction. He was surprised he did so well and attributed it to the writing center session. By the tutor and student devising a clear plan together, Robert effectively revised his introduction.

Similarly, the tutor and Linda discussed how people in a culture view women and how the media influenced this. This section of Linda's paper also addressed her concern to analyze a citation that her instructor had told her to improve. Linda and the tutor discussed different types of influences on women's perceptions of beauty. The tutor suggested that Linda consider how culture influences people's views of women. Linda saw this idea connecting to a question she raised earlier in her paper where she asked, "Where has this new sociocultural image of the 'deal woman come from?' The tutor agreed with her and explained that she could talk about cultural influences right after that question. Linda typed in that area of her text "(Cultural Image of Beauty)" and then highlighted it in yellow as she did with the previous comment. Linda then highlighted the sentence with her cursor: "The two periods in history in which the 'ideal woman' was the thinnest occurred during the 1920s and the 1980s." Linda was asked by her instructor to elaborate on this sentence. He also said that if she could not find specific research on why those two decades were significant then she could use her own ideas and examples to support it. Linda explained that while there was one study done, there has not been a lot

of research on this topic. The tutor suggested to Linda: “you want your perception that you could maybe support with other research, rather than just some random opinion or something.” The tutor offered Linda feedback to help focus her ideas and provided directions for how she could analyze the information she included.

After the session, Linda returned to this area and added information about the perceptions of women in the Renaissance period and then the periods of time where she believed the connection to thinness and beauty began. In her original paper, Linda did not fully explain how the 1980s were influential and this is one of the aspects she revised for her final draft. Linda added background information when she wrote:

> Why these two decades exactly is unclear, but I believe it could be because the 1920's decade was the year that the image of beauty started to significantly change and after the 80 's was when awareness, prevention, and rehabilitation of eating disorders started becoming more prevalent. I can recall many instances in my own life where my self-esteem was affected by images of skinny women in the media who were portrayed as gorgeous and successful. On more than one specific occasion I remember walking past the Victoria's Secret store in the mall and marveling at the posters of the models plastered in the windows. With all of this pressure to be lean and good-looking, it is no wonder why a woman can have issues with her self-esteem.

From these additions to her paper, we can see talking through the text helped Linda and the tutor addressed Linda’s concern to develop her ideas fully. This information helped her to get her point across and directly address both the instructor and tutor’s advice. The instructor commented on this section stating, “This is good analysis.” Linda said that she

was happy with the response she received from her instructor and felt the time she spent revising this section was helpful.

The Choice Not to Follow Tutor's Feedback

Two participants chose not to make changes to an area that the tutors suggested; additionally, one student forgot about a note she left in her paper and therefore did not revise that section. When these participants were asked why they chose not to follow the tutor's advice on a particular area, they explained that they did not believe it served their overall purposes for the paper.

For example, Robert chose not to follow the tutor's advice about elaborating an area in his paper. One of Robert's goals at the beginning of the session was to find places to elaborate and lengthen his paper accordingly; the tutor provided advice on an area Robert could expand. The tutor pinpointed a specific area in the text where Robert could expand his ideas:

Tutor: And the other thing that you want to do is kind of elaborate more on some of the things you say. Like-hmm for instance like the example I think on page 4, in the second paragraph where you say you-hmm where you talk about the different genres of music and how not everybody will like the one type of music [(.1) hmm you can

Robert: [mmm]

Tutor: talk about that a little more about that and about I'm trying to think, like how you might like something different than something like one of your relatives, older relatives, [like But you know that helps you

Robert: [mmhmm]

Tutor: do the same thing. Or like how you can get the same message from that music. You could use for example, I don't know if you go to church or anything, but you talk about like-hm gospel music (.2) but-hm the message that they send out or the <u>way</u> they send it out, and then if you would listen to a rap artist, but then-hm you specifically name a song from that rap [artist and then kind of compare the two.

Robert: [mmm]

Tutor: You could do something like that

Robert: Yeah I kn-kn-kn-know I know that I have to-like go back [and do that

Tutor: [okay]

Robert: (.1) and see that I could add.

Other than that because my teacher encouraged me to come do this writing center thing because they is my last paper so I figured I might as well use the writing center. So I figured I'd come get help.

What is interesting about this interaction is that Robert did not get very involved in collaborative learning or contributing any ideas. Robert showed a level of agency when he disagreed with the tutor by his minimal response. Instead of responding to the tutor's advice, Robert restated that he had to go back and make changes to see what he could add. Robert then explained that he was using the OWC because his instructor encouraged his class to use it and because this paper was the last one he would write for the semester, he

decided he would get help on it. In this instance, Robert was not very engaged with the tutor's advice or in participating in that conversation about elaborating on his ideas.

After the session, Robert chose not to take the advice given by the tutor. While Robert recalled the tutor's suggestion to make a connection between the gospel music and rap artists, he did not make any changes to that section. Robert did not think it was necessary to add this idea to his paper. Robert confirmed the disagreement with the tutor's advice during his interview. He explained that he wanted to focus his paper more about the research he gained and not about himself. Robert showed personal agency and purposefully chose not to include this change in his revision process. By learning about Robert's revision processes from his perspective, I discovered that Robert was thinking independently and he understood how his decisions focused on the importance to remain focused on his goals for the paper. This type of agency supports what Ferris (1997) determined: "A student's lack of responsiveness to a teacher's comment is not necessarily a sign of laziness or recalcitrance but may rather indicate that the student is thinking creatively and functioning independently—surely the ultimate goal of all writing teachers" (pp. 333-334). This decision is significant because Robert showed that he did not have to take all the advice provided by the tutor, but understood that he could pick and choose what feedback he wanted to utilize. He knew that his purposes come before the tutor's. While this is something that is emphasized in all writing center tutoring sessions at IUP—that the students do not need to take all the advice provided because it is their paper—not all students shared this level of agency.

Response to Instructor Comments

As previously mentioned, only six out of the eight participants received their papers back before the semester was over and in time for the interview. Of the 61 comments made by the instructors, 15 were about areas that were related to the online session—which are about 47% of the substantial revisions made by the students. The comments ranged from praise to personal commentary about the topic, such as "Your passion is evident and you have a clear thesis" or "Yes, I agree." Only in one place did an instructor provide feedback that asked the participant to include more information about a section that she worked on with the tutor. This participant was frustrated by the instructor's comment and responded by stating that if she knew that this level of detail is what the instructor wanted she would have included it. A few of the participants did not think they did well on the paper and were surprised by their instructors' positive comments. For example, Robert was surprised by the grade he received, but he believed that this paper was the best he had written.

The writers were happy with the results of their papers and the feedback they received from the tutors. One participant discussed how she specifically addressed a problem that had been present in other assignments; the instructor said the paper was easy to follow and well organized, which was something the participant had lost points on for her previous paper. Additionally, after that the paper was finished, Linda felt good about it. In addition to working with the tutor, she also went over the paper with her instructor because she and the tutor did not go over her whole paper. Her instructor said overall it was a really good paper, and this comment gave her confidence that she would get a good grade.

Conclusion

This research offers insight about how online tutoring sessions contributed to student's revision of an assignment, how students made choices about what to revise, and how they responded to their instructor's comments. By observing online sessions and conducting interviews and retrospective interview analyses, the results of this study provided evidence of the ways in which students followed the tutor's advice when it addressed their aims and goals. While students made substantial revisions after the online sessions, the extent of those revisions varied based on the tutors' approach. When the tutor's feedback was formed as advice, the participants made major revisions after the session. Directive feedback resulted only in immediate changes during the session, but did not contribute to further changes after the session. The most of the students addressed lower order concerns (punctuation, verb tense, spelling, etc.) first before addressing the higher order concerns (organization, elaboration, clarifying ideas, etc.). When given advice to improve their work, the students addressed all the areas except when they felt the suggestions conflicted with their overall purposes.

For writing center tutors and directors, it is helpful to know that by discussing the ideas with the student they are then able to conceptualize how those substantial revisions will occur. In my research, I found the importance of students needing to know the purpose of the feedback they received; this finding supports Silver and Lee (2007), who determined the importance of students knowing the purpose of feedback. In addition to the purpose of feedback, I also discovered that in order for revision to occur, the students found it helpful to develop a plan to execute the advice given by the tutors. By having an idea of how to approach the revision, they were able to revise the text on their own. As a

result, almost all the areas were revised except in cases where the student forgot to do so or the feedback clashed with their own purposes. As supported by Weaver's (2006) findings, when the tutor's advice was specific and provided them with guidance, students were able to develop strategies in the moment and make plans for further revisions. The student and tutor could collaboratively determine the best course of action based on the student's preferences and needs. When the students had a clear idea of how to approach revision, they effectively executed their plan and received positive results.

During the interviews, students indicated that the online tutoring directly affected how they revised their papers. The students explained the ways that their revision processes changed from the feedback and advice that they received during the online sessions. These changes resulted in both global and local revisions. They included how they approached the content of information, such as organizing ideas or deciding what to include. In other cases, students re-used strategies the tutors employed during the session, such as reading the paper aloud in order to locate mistakes and check the flow of information. Additionally, the advice they received from tutors helped the students determine a plan for continuing to work on their paper and improve their writing.

By observing and interviewing students about their revisions processes, I investigated the reasoning behind the decisions students made. Before making assumptions about why students may or may not revise a certain section of their papers, instructors should ask them about those decisions. As exemplified through Robert's experiences, and confirmed by Ferris's (1997) research, students' decisions may have logical purposes that instructors otherwise would not know, otherwise, or might classify

based on laziness. By discussing these decisions with the students, we discover their purposes and goals about writing.

As online tutoring and learning grows, we should continue to investigate the ways feedback received in this platform affects the composition and revision processes. Future research should also look at a larger number of students to determine if there are other ways that online sessions affect the revision process. Additionally, researchers could use retrospective interview analyses in order to learn more about what happens as students make decisions about how they plan to revise. Lastly, research could follow-up with students to determine if students continue to use these revision strategies in future writing assignments.

CHAPTER SIX

SOUND PRACTICES FOR ONLINE TUTORING: SUGGESTIONS FROM STUDENTS

Preface

This chapter focuses on what students reported during their interviews as helpful online tutoring practices and their suggestions for future sessions. Since there are few studies that incorporate students' voices into developing effective online tutoring practices, this chapter is also written for submission to *The Writing Center Journal.* In this chapter, I provide suggestions for online tutoring through the voices of students who participated in online sessions, in conjunction with the scholarship in the field.

Introduction

Online components to education, such as online courses, degrees, and tutoring, are becoming more prominent. According to the 13th annual *College Explorer* (2013) survey, conducted by Crux Research, the number of students taking at least one course online increased from 23% to 45% in the last five years. Additionally, students who take online courses on average enroll in two per term (Crux Research, 2013). In order to adapt to the growing trend, many writing centers offer online resources and tutoring. Writing center directors have found it essential to incorporate technology to meet the demands of the students. In an email interview, Crump stated that while the amount of face-to-face sessions may still outnumber the online sessions, the physical writing center might not be the starting point for students (as cited in Stahlnecker, 1998). For some students, writing assistance may be acquired solely through online environments. In order to most effectively help students, it is important to determine what practices students believe

promote their writing development. This dissertation research provides a foundation to develop online tutor training scholarship with student voices. The students explained their expectations of sessions, reaffirmed practices that previous writing center research has deemed important, and made suggestions that are instrumental to developing sound practices for online peer tutoring. This chapter argues that in order to fully develop sound practices for online tutoring students' voices need to be included in the conversation.

Online writing centers have increased the ways students can get help with their writing. Directors of writing centers consider the design or model they would like to follow and how these models will reach students. There are numerous conversations about operational concerns; yet the scholarship about training and actual tutoring practices in online spaces seem scant. On the surface, online tutoring practices seem to be an easier aspect of establishing an online presence because the practices reflect what may already be happening in the physical writing center. It is only once administrators get all the operational concerns settled that they take a closer look at the tutoring itself and realize that it is more complicated than transferring face-to-face practices to an online environment.

Online tutoring may be seen as a different space for students to receive assistance with their writing, instead of an extension of the physical writing center. This difference means that online tutor training needs to be developed and not seen as simply mirroring the practices used in face-to-face training. Kastman-Breuch and Racine (2000) determined two assumptions for the argument for online tutors. The first assumption is that "training used in face-to-face centers does not translate easily to online writing centers" (p. 246). The second assumption is that the goals of face-to-face sessions and

online tutoring are the same: "namely, student-centered, process-based pedagogy" (p. 246) and that these goals can be successfully accomplished in both mediums. In other words, Kastman-Breuch and Racine found that while the goals for both face-to-face and online tutoring are similar and can both be successfully accomplished, online tutoring needs to establish training that is more specifically geared for online spaces and the challenges those tutors may face.

As a result, directors and tutors have been trying to determine sound pedagogy when tutoring in this new online space. The online space poses a new experience for tutors, which raises the question: how can tutors provide students with the best practices in online platforms? Kastman-Breuch and Racine (2000) explained that this new experience might include "forming relationships with online clients, procedures for responding to documents online, and creating appropriate tutor roles" (p. 246). While some of the practices tutors use in face-to-face sessions may also be beneficial during online tutoring, tutors need to be prepared for the different experience of the online platform and learn practices to effectively collaborate with writers and one another. Online tutoring allows for students who are unable to make to campus to receive help on their writing extending the collaboration beyond the boundaries of the campus. Additionally, since online tutoring sessions can more easily be recorded than face-to-face sessions, these recordings allow for collaboration among tutors. Shewmake and Lambert (2000) studied a program for online tutoring called *Ceilidh*, which allowed for a record to be saved at the end of the session for future reference or research by tutors, students, or administrators. More specifically, tutors can revisit sessions to collaborate with other

tutors on developing sound tutoring practices or use those sessions of models for future sessions. These sessions can be used for tutor training meetings and research.

Most of the scholarship about best practices for online writing centers is either from the director's perceptions of the tutor's role in the writing center or the tutor's perspective of the online session. For example, the director may have the perspective of how the tutor should handle tutoring sessions, what areas they should be focusing on, such as higher order concerns over line-editing, and how demands of the university might influence the tutor's role. Additionally, the tutors bring the knowledge of tutor training practices and collaborating with other tutors, directors, and faculty about writing practices as well as potentially working with students from similar classes or previously having an instructor themselves. These aspects impact how a tutor might see a session as helpful or if they believe they helped a student improve. But neither of these perspectives includes what students report as helpful. What practices do students find to be effective in an online environment? In order to determine pedagogically sound online tutoring and continue to develop online tutor training, I argue that it is essential to include students in this conversation and ask them what they believe, from their experiences, best practices should be. The purpose of my research was to better understand what students perceive to be helpful and effective in synchronous online peer tutoring. There is little research that involves directly asking students to share their experiences, especially with online tutoring, and to explain what online tutoring practices they believe are most helpful. It is essential to go to the source and find out from the students themselves what they believe to be effective online tutoring sessions. Students can provide insight to their own learning,

they understand what may promote improvement in their writing practices, and they have experience with different kinds of writing instruction and instructors.

In this chapter, I address the need for best practices for tutoring in online environments. The focus of this study is students' reflections on what they found helpful during their online peer tutoring session and what they suggest for future online tutoring sessions. The primary methods of data collection included observations of recorded online tutoring sessions and interviews of the student participants. I observed and transcribed each online tutoring session before I conducted the interviews with the students. In the interviews, I asked students three questions: what online tutoring practices they found effective, whether or not they accomplished what they were hoping to during the session, and what suggestions they had for future sessions. The interviews occurred approximately a week after the student participated in the online session; this time gave the student the opportunity to reflect on the session. Through observing the online sessions and conducting the interviews, I gained insight into what online tutoring practices students believed to be effective and the practices they thought should be continued. In this chapter, I address Robertson's (2005) recommendation to provide tutors with clear suggestions to develop their online practices. I pose suggestions for online tutoring through the voices of students who have participated in online sessions, in conjunction with the scholarship in the field. This chapter addresses the need for more scholarship to investigate online tutoring practices that include students' voices, which are often silent in these conversations.

Overview of Online Tutor Training

Online writing centers initially began with directors and tutors posting web resources that were helpful for writers to use to develop their writing and was accessed at the writing center's webpage, for example the Purdue OWL website. From the students' perspective, however, these were little more than handouts, but now more easily accessed. They contained helpful links and sometimes graphics, but were still largely static in nature. In the mid-1990s, however, writers were able to use the Internet in more interactive ways. Online writing centers became more dynamic through the use of email attachments to share papers or synchronous real-time chat where tutors and students participate in open dialogue.

Since online tutoring is a different experience than traditional face-to-face tutoring sessions (Bell, 2004; Blythe, 1997; Kastman-Breuch & Racine, 2000; Coogan, 1999; Harris & Pemberton, 2001; Robertson, 2005), such as body language, communication through technology, space, proximity to one another, and hierarchy, it is important to develop tutor training that determines best practices for online sessions. To date, the literature about training tutors for consulting online sessions is limited; yet, students' first experiences with writing centers may be through online tutoring. Furthermore, this scholarship does not include students' perspectives about what they believe best practices are in online tutoring. Online tutor training still mainly relies on practices that take place in face-to-face sessions. Harris and Pemberton (2001) acknowledged, "attempting only to replicate familiar face-to-face tutorials in an electronic, text-oriented environment can lead to frustration, and to defeat OWL planners find themselves unable to stimulate all the characteristics of effective tutorials" (p. 522).

As a result, more scholarship that helps tutors understand best practices when tutoring in an online environment needs to be developed.

Robertson (2005) conducted a study to seek the perspectives of tutors' experiences in online tutoring and determined that tutors are reinventing the wheel (p. 115). One of the tutors in Robertson's study discussed the difference of face-to-face and online tutor training materials and the necessity to develop training materials geared more specifically for online tutoring:

> I think the training materials would have to address a language that would be the most direct and clear, and not leave room for ambiguity or misunderstanding. The training materials address posture and body expression during one-on one-tutoring. The reverse of this would be to emphasize language that would be direct and clear. (p. 91)

From the students' perspective, direct and clear language allows students to understand the feedback and know how to make the revisions suggested. This focus on language in online environments is consistent with previous scholarship by Kastman-Breuch and Racine (2000) and Rafoth (2009). Kastman-Breuch and Racine (2000) suggested that tutors need to be more directive and assertive in online sessions. Rafoth (2009) also determined that tutors should be direct, but polite, with the feedback they provide.

An important aspect of creating a collaborative environment in an online space hinges on the persona presented by the tutor. In most online sessions, tutors and students are unable to see each other. Tutors need to present themselves in a friendly and professional way. Students may perceive a tutor who is too casual as not professional or knowledgeable, where as a tutor who is too professional may intimidate the student. In

order for online tutors to maintain a professional tone, Sabatino and Rafoth (2012) advised that it is important to project a style that is not overly formal or casual no matter what style the student expresses. In order to demonstrate this style, Sabatino and Rafoth (2012) provided an example:

> In response to "I respectfully request a moment of your time for assistance with my essay…" the tutor might reply, "I'd be happy to help you with your paper." This reply signals not only the tutor's politeness but also her professionalism. (p. 81)

In this example, Sabatino and Rafoth show how a tutor can display a moderate style. Being polite and professional involves a balance of using a friendly tone and softening criticism. Cooper, Bui, and Riker (2005) suggested this balance can be accomplished by employing Socratic questioning. A tutor, June, in Robertson's (2005) study offered a similar suggestion, June stated: "There is more to [responding online] than appears on the surface. Be gentle. And don't be a smartass" (p. 91). By this, June means that the online tutor should avoid using sarcasm or being a know-it-all. In order to build a rapport in the online environment, tutors can use a friendly tone. These suggestions show the importance of how tutors represent themselves in an online environment and how to maintain a professional style of communication.

Additionally, researchers find that online writing centers are less hierarchal than face-to-face sessions and break down the power dynamics (Carlson & Apperson-Williams, 2000; Harris & Pemberton, 2001; Healy, 1995; Jones et al., 2006; Rafoth, 2009). From the students' perspective, the power relations are leveled because students may not be recognized or judged based on appearance. A significant focus of the research

investigating online sessions has addressed the power relations that are present between tutor and student when interacting and providing feedback. Jones, Garralda, Li, and Lock (2006) stated, "Many of these studies suggest that in on-line tutoring sessions relationships tend to be less hierarchical, even when tutors are truly authority figures, like class teachers" (p. 3). Ultimately, the power relations are transformed by altering the time and space of the writing center when it moves into an online environment and the hierarchy is flattened, as Carlson and Apperson-Williams (2000) acknowledged.

When tutors respond to student writing in an online environment, they can build a relationship with the student through dialogue and lessen the issues of hierarchy. Cooper, Bui and Riker (2005) stated that there were ways to establish online relationships between tutors and writers that empower the writers in their process through the use of collaborative techniques. Through observing online sessions, Jones, Garralda, Li, and Lock (2006) learned that by having tutors ask students open questions, the tutors encouraged the students to look for the answers themselves. Jones et al. describes open questions as those that elicit more extended replies (p. 12). These types of questions encourage students to explore their own solutions and have control over what happens with their writing. Furthermore, Jones et al. (2006) argued that by using open questions, students have longer turns and equal interactional control of the session. Meaning that the students will be more likely to take agency of their writing and participate in the online sessions than if they are directly told what changes they should be making.

From this scholarship, it is clear that developing a relationship between tutor and writer is just as important in the online environment as it is for face-to-face sessions, but the approaches for doing so may be different. During an interview, Rafoth (2009) said

that writing centers should "make use of the available technology in ways that are really sound pedagogically, and not just quick or easy or efficient or cheap" (as cited in Babcock, 2009). In other words, it is important to focus research on developing best practices in online environments; this progression means moving from the theoretical to the practical implications of online tutoring and incorporating the voices of our tutors and students.

There is a lack of scholarship aimed at determining effective online tutoring practices. For example, in the last fifteen years, *The Writing Center Journal* has published three articles on this topic (Severino & Deifell, 2011; Severino, Swenson, & Zhu, 2009; Wolfe & Griffin, 2012). Additionally, Robertson (2005) addressed the need for more research on best practices for online tutoring by studying tutors' experiences with online tutoring. Robertson (2005) researched tutors' experiences with online tutoring and determined that tutors were reinventing the wheel (p. 115). Robertson concluded that that majority tutor training materials are focused on face-to-face tutoring sessions and there needs to be more research that determines sound tutoring practices in online environments. While Robertson added to the currently scant scholarship by including tutor voices in the understanding of online tutoring practices from the tutor's perspective, questions about what students found to be effective online tutoring practices were still left unanswered. While tutors can discuss what practice they perceive as most beneficial to student writing improvement, tutors can not be certain without directly asking the students themselves. Students can provide insight to their own learning and share what practices they found most helpful to improving their writing.

Scholarship on pedagogically sound online tutoring practices is still developing, especially in the synchronous online environments. By conducting research on the OWC, observing interactions, and following up with students to discuss their experiences, I addressed a new area of research in order to discover how students interacted with the synchronous online chat and what they believed to be helpful and effective tutoring practices.

Methods

The purpose of this research was to gain insight into the practices students participating in online peer tutoring believe to be effective and helpful. From this research, I collected data from eight participants' online tutoring sessions. The participants in this study were eight students enrolled in three levels of writing courses: English 100: Basic Writing, English 101: College Writing, and English 202: Research Writing. Each student participated in an online tutoring session with a peer tutor from the Online Writing Center at IUP. Through video on-screen conferencing with the program Cisco WebEx, the student shared his or her desktop with the tutor and the student controlled the screen. Together, they discussed the paper through the use of VoIP audio. I transcribed the recorded sessions, ranging in the length from 17-60 minutes.

Approximately one week after the online session, I conducted interviews individually with each student. I recorded and transcribed each one, ranging from 12-38 minutes. During the interviews, I asked students to discuss what they found to be most helpful during the tutoring session. Each student was asked the following questions:

1. Was there anything the tutor did that you found particularly helpful?
2. Is there anything you wish would have been covered that wasn't?

a. If yes, then: Did you indicate that to the tutor at any point? How would it have been best to accomplish that?

3. Would you participate in an online tutoring session again?
4. Do you have any suggestions for tutors for future sessions?

The interviews were transcribed and analyzed for trends and information that added insight into students' perspectives of effective tutoring practices. This study included students' input in order to develop pedagogical sound online peer tutoring practices.

Students' Opinions About Online Tutoring

During the interviews, the participants shared with me what they found to be helpful in their online tutoring sessions. They discussed what effective communication entailed and suggestions for future online tutoring sessions. I was impressed with how perceptive these participants were to what occurred during the session as well as how these practices related to the things they perceived to be happening in the world around them. The participants pinpointed specific moments that they considered to be helpful or effective during the online session. The participants provided insight to their expectations of sessions as well as reaffirmed practices that previous writing center research deemed important. Their insights included a focus on the importance of clear communication—such as listening to one another, checking-in, asking students for their opinions, and providing feedback. Additionally, the participants discussed reading the paper aloud and writing during the session. In this section, I disclose students' perspectives and feedback about online tutoring practices.

Communication

An essential aspect of online tutoring is promoting clear communication. Through clear communication, the tutor and student were able to understand each other and the goals of the session. Additionally, the student was able to develop a plan for revisions and understand the purpose of those revisions. According to the students in this study, clear communication involved listening, responding, asking questions, prompting discussion, and providing feedback. As a result of clear communication in the sessions, all of the students said that they would do an online session again. These areas of communication are further developed and explained with the students' perspective of how successful communication was accomplished.

Listening. A necessary part of tutoring and important part of interactive communication is being able to listen to the writer and provide feedback accordingly. Good listening, as explained by Spear (1987), is "reciprocal not just receptive; active not passive; responsive not silent. The best listeners combine verbal and nonverbal reactions to encourage a speaker and sustain reaction" (p. 116). But what if the listener is not capable of providing a physical reaction? How does the importance of listening transcend online space?

During one interview, a student reported that an important aspect of online tutoring was the ability to be a good listener. This student discussed how having the tutor listen to her and rearticulate what she said was very helpful:

> She would listen to my whole question, and I feel sometimes it's hard for us to listen to completely to other people and she really did listen completely and then

she would restate what I said to make sure she had it and then would go on to help me from there.

According to this student, being a good listener involved the tutor fully taking in what she was saying, without trying to predict where she was going or jumping in with advice before she was finished articulating her thoughts. Tutors are sometimes too eager to provide advice and respond to the student before we let them fully think out their ideas. The student recommended that tutors wait until students finish their thoughts before providing any advice.

As a result of good listening, the student felt that the online session went well because there was no miscommunication or confusion between her and the tutor. Instead, she stated that the tutor was articulate and clear with the advice she was providing. The student stated that "She was really good at helping and she was really articulate with what she was trying to help me with. There was no confusion between the two of us. This response reflects what Spear also identified as good listening." Spear (1987) explained that listeners can confirm their own understanding of the discussion and make sure they were hearing the message that was being presented by the speaker. By restating what the tutor understood the student to be saying, the tutor established clear communication and showed the student that she was listening. This communication was especially important during online sessions since the tutor was unable to physically respond. Cooper, Bui, and Riker (2005) provided an example of how to accomplish this; the tutor could say, "So your argument is that Reich is generally incorrect in his perceptions of the impact of foreign workers on the U.S. economy, right?" (p. 132). The purpose of this kind of question was to confirm the tutor's understanding of the writer's

intent, while also allowing for the feedback to be negotiable. These questions, similar to ones used in face-to-face sessions, engage the writer and establish a mutual understanding. These types of check-in or follow up questions are helpful in establishing clear communication between the tutor and writer.

Another important part of listening is also being able to know when to respond and clearly formulate what you have heard. Rafoth (in press) acknowledged that in order to be an authentic listener tutors need to recognize opportunities to respond. Similarly, Spear (1987) explained, "listeners can help to clarify meaning, highlight major ideas, recall undeveloped issues, elicit further elaboration, sustain through, and point out inconsistencies" (p. 117). In other words, listeners can help writers develop ideas and express their thoughts by fully listening to what the writer has to say and taking the opportunities to help writers generate meaning. For example, in one session, the student explained to the tutor that she wanted to re-write her conclusion because she felt it could be stronger. Instead of immediately responding with suggestions, the tutor asked for the student's opinion: "Why do you think it needs to be stronger?" The student explained that she felt as though the conclusion acted as a "disclaimer," more specifically she wanted the conclusion to end with more of an effect on the audience. The tutor and student then discussed ways that she could reorder the final paragraphs of her paper in order for it to "end with more of a punch," as stated by the tutor. In this example, the tutor took the opportunity to listen to the student's purposes and ideas, restated why the student wanted to make those changes to her paper, and then together they discussed how the student could make the appropriate revisions.

Although there were no recorded physical responses during these sessions, the tutors provided respond through backchanneling, such as “hmm”, “MM-mm,” or “mm-HM.” These utterances communicate to students that the tutors are still following along or engaged in the session. Additionally, tutors can still show they are listening by allowing students to fully articulate their ideas before responding with advice, recognizing opportunities to respond, and confirming what the student has said by rearticulating it back to the student. This communication shows students that what they have to say is valued and will result in less confusion or misunderstanding between tutor and student. Spear (1987) suggested activities for building better listening skills, such as drawing out where the listener uses cues by the speaker in order to encourage the speaker to say more on a topic (p. 125). Additionally, Cuny (2012) provided exercises to help students comprehend verbal and nonverbal behaviors of unconditional positive regard as well as assist students in practice empathetic listening skills (p. 79).

Asking opinions. Spear (1987) explained that an aspect of good listening involved prompting the speaker to say more. In addition to listening and checking in to make sure there was no confusion between the tutor and student, students appreciated when they were asked their opinions, what their thoughts were and what they would change.

One participant stated, “[The tutor] also asked me what my thoughts were and what I thought I could change, which was one thing that really helped me to examine my paper better and think about how I could make it better. So I really liked that too.” In this example, the participant explained that because the tutor asked her more questions about her ideas for the paper, she was able to think about the ways to make her writing more

concrete. More specifically, the tutor and student discussed the effects of media on women; the tutor asked her: "How does culture view women? How does the media?" These questions then prompted the student to think about what she meant by these terms and they discussed how she could add specific examples in her paper. By asking her questions, the tutor helped the student develop her ideas and make her examples specific and concrete. Additionally, another participant said, "It was really good because it wasn't a one way conversation, it was like 'how do you think this sounds?' and 'what do you think about this?'" This participant recalled specific questions that the tutor asked her that she found valuable. The participant appreciated that the tutor asked her opinions about the changes they were making together and this interaction resulted in true collaboration. A third participant in the study echoed similar sentiments about the effectiveness of being asked her opinion during the online session. The student shared:

> Always ask for feedback before and after it's done. Like 'what do you think about it', 'Do you think it flows better?' Like what [the tutor] asked is: 'what did your professor say about your paper that you wanted to work on at the beginning?' And at the end, 'Did you think it flows better?'

This participant also recalled specific questions and moments where the tutor asked her opinion and she found it particularly helpful. She suggested that all tutors should ask the student at the beginning and end of the session what the student wanted to work on and whether or not that was accomplished. By including specific examples for tutors to use in the future, she showed that the tutor's questions in this session had an impact on her. This student is referring to a similar suggestion provided by Matsuda and Cox (2009), who recommended that at the beginning of the session tutors should ask the writer to explain

the purpose, audience, and main idea of the paper. Tutors should use this information to check in with the writer throughout the session and to confirm that the writer is reaching his or her audience.

Providing feedback. While students liked being asked questions, they also wanted more feedback that was clear and specific. One student, who expressed that she found it helpful for the tutor to ask her questions, also stated that she would like more feedback from the tutor:

> I would say to give a little more feedback because he did a lot of asking me. And I'm not always sure of what I should change or how. And he was like maybe that could work. Maybe just being a little more sure about the feedback that you give. I'm glad he asked me what I thought I should change, but I wasn't sure if that was the right thing to do, so that's probably the only thing that I didn't have any problems with it at all.

The student suggested that tutors give more concrete feedback and provide direction for revisions. The student advised that the feedback offered by the tutors include guidance and explanation about whether or not the ideas the student had were productive. Sabatino and Rafoth (2012) stated that "Give reasons for their advice or suggestions in order to help the writer decide how to make the needed changes" (p. 83). Tutors should help students to not only understand the feedback, but also develop a plan for how to move forward with the suggestions.

Communication is a significant part of online tutoring sessions especially since nonverbal, physical responses are commonly absent. The students in this study recalled very specific moments where the communication was clear and allowed for effective

sessions with minimal confusion. These students focused on areas of listening, asking questions, and providing feedback. By providing examples, they developed a foundation of what good listening and communication looked like during online sessions. Tutors should keep in mind these areas of communication when working with students in online environments.

Accomplished in the Session

As a result of the positive communication that occurred during the session, only one student reported that she and the tutor did not cover everything she was hoping for during the session. All but one student felt that everything they wanted to discuss in the session was covered; this student explained that she wanted to have the tutor provide feedback on her conclusion, but because they ran out of time they never got to it. When asked whether or not she had expressed this concern to the tutor, she stated that she never expressed this to the tutor because she wanted the tutor to look over the whole paper. In this instance, the student purposefully provided the tutor with a broad request hoping that more would be accomplished in the session. She implied that by making one broad request, she expected to receive more guidance from the tutor than if she asked about more specific areas. In contrast, from a writing center perspective, it would seem that if students asked for as much as they could then they would expect to receive more. Instead, students are asking for less and expecting more. This contradiction shows how students' expectations of writing in the academy can become ensnared. Additionally, the other students shared that the tutor covered everything they were looking to accomplish in the session. Most students responded to the question, "Is there anything you wish would have been covered that wasn't?" by stating, "I don't think so," or "not that I can think of."

Tutors should continue to ask questions and make sure that the students are accomplishing the goals they set out to when they began the session.

Reading the Paper Aloud

During an online synchronous tutoring session with VoIP, the tutoring practice of reading aloud is similar to face-to-face sessions and occurs by either the student or tutor reading the paper out loud for both to follow. Reading a paper aloud online differs from face-to-face sessions; when using an online tutoring platform like WebEx, the student has control of the screen and has to scroll through the paper as it is being read. Consistent with previous tutor training scholarship, students believe that reading the paper aloud was important and helpful (Block, 2010; Caposella, 1998; Gillespie and Lerner, 2000; Ryan & Zimmerelli, 2006). Scholars suggest that writers or tutors read the paper aloud in order to focus their attention, keep them involved with the revision process, promote self-initiated revision, and generate audience awareness. Gillespie (2002) suggested that "reading gives them [students] a new, different context for knowing what they've written" (p. 47). Additionally, by reading the paper aloud the students read at a slower pace, and therefore they are able catch their own mistakes.

In this study, the students found it more helpful to have the tutor read the paper to them than if they read the paper aloud because they could hear how it sounded. Six of the students made direct reference to the tutoring practice of reading the paper aloud. Five students discussed how helpful it was and gave specific reasons. Additionally, one student mentioned that the tutor did not read the paper aloud and wished that she had. The student stated, "It was a little awkward because she was silently reading my paper. It might have been helpful if she read it aloud. I read it aloud afterward, so it might have cut

that step out." While the student felt this practice would have been more productive for her during the session, she did not indicate to the tutor at any point that reading the paper aloud would have been more helpful.

The participants in this study offered multiple reasons for why they felt it was effective to have the tutor read the paper to them. These reasons included being able to hear how it sounded when someone else read it, hear whether or not it sounded the way they intended it to, look at the writing differently, remain focused on the words, and pay close attention during the session. For example, three students recalled how when the tutor read the paper they were able to hear the way their writing sounded and to look at their writing from another perspective:

- I was just listening to her, seeing how it sounded. It was nice. It's different when you're reading your own paper then having someone else read it. Because you hear what they think something sounds like, so maybe you could put a comma there to make people pause there or something like that. So I was, if I wasn't listening to her or reading along with her, I was reading ahead and correcting it before she got to it.
- He actually gave feedback and he was the one who was actually reading it so I could hear how it sounded from a different person's point of view.
- I personally liked, her reading the paper rather than me. Like I said before, when I read it, I would have read it how it's supposed to say, like an extra and, like and but I would only read it once. Having someone else read it so I could follow along. I know sometimes what I want it so say, but then when she

> reads it I was like… ehhh… but some people may not like it like that. I thought it worked well.

These participants found it helpful to hear what their papers sounded like when someone else read them. This reading of the paper aloud enabled them to view their paper from another perspective and see potential changes that they made not have noticed if they read the paper themselves. Because one participant found it helpful for the tutor to read the paper aloud, she suggested that for future online sessions the tutor should always read it aloud. Similarly, another student stated, "I think the best thing that was helpful was reading aloud. I think they should continue that. I think that was a lot of help."

Some of the participants preferred the tutor to read aloud because it allowed them to focus on what was written. The participant stated: "She read through my paper and I chose for her to read it so I could focus on the words, because sometimes, even when I would read it I would read what it's supposed to say and not what it actually should say." These participants were able to see the value of hearing the tutor read it and they could revise their work in order to accurately convey what they want.

Even though one student expressed being nervous about the tutor reading her paper aloud knowing that the tutor was in the writing center during the session, she found it really helpful. She believed that by having the tutor read her paper aloud she was able to look at her writing differently:

> It helped me learn, it helped me look at my writing different. Like usually I'll just look at it and I just say the same and it helped me read it as if I was reading someone else's paper rather than me talking to myself.

In an online environment where we may not be able to see the student, we might consider that the student is not paying attention if we are reading aloud. She shared that reading aloud was not only helpful for revising her paper, but because she "had to move the screen so that [the tutor] could keep reading the paper and that kept [her] paying attention and not zoning out." In online tutoring through WebEx, the student has control of the screen, so as one student stated, she had to pay attention in order to know when to scroll down.

During the interviews, the participants recalled how the tutor reading the paper aloud helped them revise their papers. Having the tutor read the paper aloud helped the students hear their writing from a different perspective, look at their writing differently, focus on the words on the page, and remain attentive during the session. The one aspect they all agreed on was that they preferred the tutor to do the reading aloud. Tutors should continue the practice of reading the paper aloud and not hesitate to read the paper aloud themselves because there are clear benefits for the student.

Writing during the Session

During the interview, I asked the participants whether or not they would have preferred to revise sections of their paper during the session. This question was prompted because I noticed when observing the online sessions that there was little writing taking place besides lower order concerns or quick organizational fixes. The participants seemed to be divided on whether or not they would have liked to take the time to write during the session. Several participants stated that it would have been helpful to make the changes during the session because they could have received more feedback on those areas, or because they were not sure how to go about addressing that area. One participant stated,

> I think maybe it would have been helpful to actually write it out with him because I was always the person that liked person-to-person interaction because I felt I could get more feedback off of it. This was definitely the first time I've done online tutoring, but … hmm… that would have helped me more.

This participant equated writing during an online session to the interactions that take place during face-to-face sessions. By having the opportunity to write with the tutor, the student would have the opportunity to receive more feedback on her writing.

In contrast, some participants stated that they would not have liked to use the session time to make revisions. These participants discussed the need to take a break from writing and come back to it with a fresh mind. One participant stated that:

> I think coming back to it later is better, because the longer you are away from things I think the more you have to think about it. You know how you always have a conversation and you know you're really mad and you can't think straight and afterwards you think of the best things to say, that's why I think you should wait. I don't have that as much in writing as I do in everyday conversations when you think of the best insults.

This participant makes the parallel between reentering the paper with a clear mind to her experiences with not having a clear head in an argument. The participant saw the importance of taking time before revising the paper. She believed that by taking more time she could more clearly construct her thoughts. Additionally, several participants shared that either way would have worked for them and that they did not see it necessary, but could have been helpful. Since the students seem to be split on this option, I believe it would be a good idea to give the student the option during the session. All the

participants had a clear idea about whether or not it would be helpful to them. With that said, students should be given the option to write during the session. This option for writing can be accomplished by helping students write the keywords or ideas with a plan for how to return to it later.

Suggestions and Conclusions

In order to address the lack of scholarship aimed at training tutors in online spaces, I asked the students who participated in synchronous peer tutoring to share with me what they believed to be particularly helpful. Additionally, I asked these students to discuss what suggestions they had for online tutoring. I conclude with suggestions for online tutoring practices that I developed from the discussions I had with these students:

- Set goals and guidelines.
    - As with face-to-face sessions with students, establish goals and guidelines. Explain to students what is possible during the session,
    - Determine the guidelines of the session and how the session might unfold. For example, tutors could explain to the students that after reading each paragraph together they will revisit the goals of the session and the student can ask questions at any time.
    - Do not plan to cover everything. This will allow students to know what can be accomplished during the session and there will be no confusion.
- Listen closely to what the student is saying.
    - Listen to what the student has to say. Resist temptations to jump in with advice before the student has finished her thought.
    - Restate the student's ideas to make sure that you understand her ideas.

    - Ask the student for confirmation. “Am I understanding what you’re saying?”
- Check-in.
    - Ask for feedback before and after the session. Check-in with the student throughout the session to make sure that you and the student are on the same page. Without having the ability to read nonverbal, physical responses, it is important to verbalize your understanding of the student’s writing.
    - Throughout the session, check-in with the student. Make sure the session is going at a good pace and the student is engaged with the sessions.
- Ask the students their opinions.
    - Ask the students their opinions about the changes you are suggesting. Ask questions about their ideas for the paper in order to help them think about the ways to make their writing better.
- Develop a plan and provide concrete feedback.
    - Give feedback about the changes. Help the student develop a plan and let the student know if his or her ideas are going in the right direction.
    - It is important for the student to know the purpose of the feedback and have a plan for making those changes. Include guidance and direction for the students to develop a plan for further revisions.
- Read the paper aloud.
    - Continue the practice of reading the paper aloud. Give the student the option to read the paper aloud and be willing to read the paper aloud

ourselves. Do not hesitate to read the paper aloud yourself; there may be more benefits for the student than you realize.

- Allow for more writing during the session.
    - Give the student the option to write during the session. Writing center sessions should not be just about providing the student with feedback on their writing. Students like the option to do more than make notes in their text to revisit later; they also want the opportunity to write with the tutor. We should allow for writing to take place too.

These suggestions are just the beginning of the conversation about developing best practices for online peer tutoring. They are by no means exhaustive, but they provide significant insight to how students perceive the tutoring practices in online environments. Research needs to continue to develop these practices and engage students in these discussions about tutoring practices that directly affect them.

As online practices continue to evolve, researchers should continue to ask students what practices they find effective. This research could involve using focus groups to determine what practices students embrace as well as a conversation that requires students to justify their preferences. Additionally, the research could include students who have done consecutive or multiple sessions within a semester in order for the students to engage in a range of tutoring practices that would allow them to distinguish between tutoring styles. Future research would also target more specific populations, such as multilingual writers and non-traditional students. This research could focus on whether or not the practices need to be tailored towards specific groups or just individuals. Lastly, research could target students who take courses solely online. By

targeting students utilizing distance education, the research can expand best practices to take into account online course instruction, determining what overlap and dissonance is beneficial to students in peer tutoring.

In this chapter, I offered insights and suggestions for best practices for online sessions, based on students' experiences using online synchronous peer tutoring and previously published scholarship. In the field of writing centers, there has been a significant amount of advice and guidelines written about practices during face-to-face sessions, but there has not been a significant amount of scholarship developed for tutoring in online environments. As writing center directors continue to develop ways to reach more students and meet their evolving needs for writing assistance, what is most important is to continue to ask students what they find helpful and productive in online sessions as this platform continues to grow and the audience is far-reaching. Fallon (2010) determined when studying the roles of tutors that: "the educational role and the job of peer tutors will probably always be in a constant state of revision" (p. 228). The conversations about tutoring in online platforms need to be continued, further developed, and reflected upon.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

Most writing center and composition scholarship uses theories to provide insights into students' experiences with writing, revision practices, and online environments; student voices and opinions do not always enter into the theoretical discussion. The contribution this dissertation makes to the field is in the inclusion of student voices and experiences with peer synchronous online tutoring, how these practices are incorporated into their revision processes, and the writers' perceptions of best practices.

Throughout this study, I examined three areas of the online peer synchronous tutoring from the students' perspective: a) students' experiences, b) students' revision processes, and c) best practices for online tutoring. Each area sheds light on how students interact with online tutoring. Students' perceptions and experiences included their modes of communication, interactive processes, response to feedback, and writing production. Additionally, I explored students' revision processes when working on a paper with an online peer tutor. Revision in this dissertation referred to Murray's (1972) concept of rewriting: "It is researching, rethinking, redesigning, rewriting- and finally, line-by-line editing, the demanding, satisfying process of making each word right" (p. 12). Therefore, revision included thought processes and actions of composing ideas, the deletion, substitution, addition, and the reordering of information. When researching revision in student writing, I studied the changes students made from the draft they worked on with the online tutor to the final draft submitted to the instructor, analyzing the revisions they made during and after the session. I also examined how students perceived the feedback they received during online tutoring affecting their writing processes. Lastly, I

interviewed students to determine best practices for an online tutoring environment. Students discussed the importance of clear communication—such as listening to one another, checking-in, asking students for their opinions, and providing feedback. Additionally, students discussed reading the paper aloud and writing during the session.

The participants in this study were eight undergraduate students enrolled in three levels of writing courses: English 100: Basic Writing, English 101: College Writing, and English 202: Research Writing. Each student participated in an online tutoring session with a writing center tutor and met with me for a retrospective interview analyses and interview about the session. I observed and transcribed a recording of each Online Writing Center (OWC) session ranging from 17 minutes to 60 minutes with an average of 33 minutes. By observing and transcribing the sessions, I gained an understanding of the focus of the session, interactions, and the range of what was discussed between the tutor and student. Approximately a week after the session, I asked the student to come in for an interview and retrospective interview analysis. With a week between the online session and our meeting, the students had the opportunity to reflect on the session, revise the paper, and receive the paper back from their instructors. In these interviews, I collected data involving students' experiences with online tutoring, what students stated they learned about their writing, students' revision processes, their response to instructors' comments to their paper, suggestions for future tutoring sessions, and effective tutoring strategies. These interviews were also transcribed and analyzed to develop trends and concepts of students' understanding of their writing practices. This research provides the full circle of the students' revision processes when utilizing the online writing center. Additionally, this research addressed a gap in the scholarship by studying the interactions

that occurred on the screen during an online tutoring session, how students revised their assignments based on the decisions they made about the feedback they received from tutors, and students' perceptions of sound practices for online synchronous peer tutoring. This study emphasized the importance of including students in the conversation about online tutoring practices in order to improve and enhance the ways writing centers can help students become better writers.

Summary of Major Findings

In this final chapter, I provide a brief list of the major findings from this research. This list is divided into three categories: a) students' experiences, b) students' revision processes, and c) sound practices for online peer tutoring.

Students' Experiences

- Six patterns of reported students' experiences by at least half the participants.
    - Students' rating of the experience.
    - Reasons for using the OWC.
    - What was accomplished in the session.
    - Tutoring practices.
    - Online tutoring.
    - The program WebEx.
- All eight participants were critical of themselves as writers, their writing, and their papers.
- All eight participants demonstrated successful transfer based on the notion of meta-awareness.
- The OWC contributed to their writing practices beyond just the paper they wrote

for that class.

Students' Revision Processes

- All eight students made revisions to their assignments.
- All eight students took notes during the online peer tutoring sessions:
    - Five students took notes directly in their Word document.
    - Three students took notes on a separate piece of paper.
- In-text revisions during the session:
    - 92 minor revisions.
    - Eight substantial revisions.
- Revisions after the session:
    - 32 substantial revisions.
- Most influential factors that affected student revision:
    - The ways tutors posed feedback
    - Whether or not they developed a plan to address the student's goals.
- Students' voices were most present and they took more turns speaking than the tutors when discussing higher order concerns— such as the thesis, research questions, and organization.
- Tutors' voices were most present and they took more turns speaking than the students when discussing lower order concerns—such as grammatical errors and sentence level clarity.
- Feedback formed as advice and helped the student develop a plan resulted in substantial revisions after the session.

- Directive language produced minor revisions in the moment, but no further follow-up with those revisions after the session.

Sound Practices for Online Peer Tutoring

- All students pinpointed specific moments that they considered to be helpful or effective during the online session.
- Clear communication – specifically naming: listening, clarity, confirmation, and responding in a thoughtful manner.
- Set goals and guidelines.
- Listen closely to what the student is saying.
- Check-in.
- Ask the students their opinions.
- Develop a plan and provide concrete feedback.
- Read the paper aloud.
- Allow for more writing during the session.

Research Questions Addressed

Next, I briefly summarize the findings in order to answer the four main research questions:

Research Question 1

- What are students' experiences, interactive processes, and understanding of their writing and revision production when using the online writing center?

From observing online tutoring sessions and interviewing students, I gained insight about students' experiences with online synchronous peer tutoring through the Cisco WebEx platform. This question provided the opportunity to explore how students'

perceptions of online tutoring shaped their experiences with writing and revision. In each interview, students were asked to explain their experiences with online tutoring and what they learned about their writing. Since there has not been previous research that studies how students interact with the tutors during online sessions and what students report about their experiences, this study was conducted with a grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Haig, 1995; Robrecht, 1995). I used grounded theory to develop trends and patterns I saw happening across the online sessions and interviews. Therefore, when asking students about their experiences, I began each interview with the open-ended question, "What were your experiences with the online tutoring session?" The aim of posing a broad question was to elicit their broad recollection and avoid steering the focus toward one aspect of the online tutoring session over another. Six patterns in their responses occurred during the interviews by at least half of the participants:

- Students' rating of the experience. When asked the question: "What were your experiences with the online tutoring session?" all eight participants started, ended, or in some cases both, by rating their experiences of tutoring. For example, students stated that they "really liked it", "it was a good experience", "it was cool", etc.
- Reasons for using the OWC. Half of the students stated why they chose to use the OWC. These reasons included receiving help on articulating ideas, organization, flow, etc. One student explained that she used the online tutoring because she had "about a page and a quarter of the paper and it needed to be 3." She wanted help knowing where to elaborate her ideas.

- Tutoring practices. Seven out of the eight students discussed specific tutoring practices. By remembering the tutoring practices and what was accomplished in the session, the students understood how to transfer those writing practices to future writing assignments
- What was accomplished in the session. Five out of eight students discussed what they accomplished with the tutor during the session.
- Online tutoring. Five out of eight students discussed online tutoring generally. For example, the ability to receive help on writing without leaving the dorm room.
- The program WebEx. Half the students directly referred to the program. For example, the ability to share the screen with the tutor and having to scroll through the paper.

These experiences demonstrated the range of areas that the students recalled about the session focusing on how they rated the session and the tutoring practices they engaged in with the tutor. During the interviews, I learned that the students were critical of themselves as writers, their writing, and their papers, which showed that they were capable of thinking critically about their writing practices and the knowledge they gained.

Successful meta-awareness transfer occurred. Students in this study also reported what they learned about their writing. The students shared how the online writing center contributed to their writing practices and how they took knowledge away from the sessions and either applied it to their writing or used it to improve their writing. In the observations of the recorded online tutoring sessions and the interviews about students' experiences, the students reported a specific tutoring practice or moment in the session that either helped them improve their writing or caused them to approach their

writing differently. This recognition shows that transfer based on the notion of meta-awareness was successful because the students reported what they learned from the sessions, recalled knowledge they acquired from working with a tutor, and understood how to apply those ideas. By observing the online sessions, I learned that the goals the student and tutor determined for the session were connected to the transfer of what the students learned about their writing. This finding supports what Wells (2011) stated, "By setting personally meaningful goals, the highly self-efficacious student will likely be more motivated to achieve them than a student who does not set authentic goals" (p. 51). An example of determining meaningful goals was explained in Chapter 4 when during Jillian's interview, she directly referred to her goal of sounding educated in her paper. Jillian explained to me during her interview that her perception of needing to sound more educated was equated with her feeling as though she was "naggy" and "soapboxy." A suggestion from the tutor to remedy this concern involved replacing the word "you" with either "one" or "teachers." During her interview, Jillian specifically recalled this advice from the tutor about how to address that area of her writing. In these online sessions, the transfer that occurred from the students actively engaging in the session to learning strategies they could apply to their writing.

Online synchronous peer tutoring contributed to the students' writing practices beyond just the paper they wrote for that class. Through the interviews, I learned that the tutoring strategies benefited them as writers. The students explained that their experiences with online tutoring helped improve their writing and enhanced their critical thinking about themselves as writers by discussing the areas of composing with which they either struggled or excelled.

Research Question1a. What interactions occur during an online tutoring session between the student and tutor? (For example, what is the pattern of turn-taking? How do tutors identify topics for discussion? And so on.)

Research Question1b. What modes of communication does the student employ when interacting during an online tutoring session? (For example, does the student write directly on his or her paper? Does the student highlight or use track-changes during the session? And so on.)

Research Question1c. How do students respond to the feedback they receive during an online tutoring session? (For example, does the student immediately revise the text while receiving the feedback? Does the student agree or disagree with the tutor's feedback? Is there a discussion about the feedback the tutor offers? Does the student make a note to return to that section of the text? And so on.). Response in this question refers to the actions students take after they receive feedback from tutors as well as their attitude about the feedback.

From observing the sessions, I determined that the main interactions between the tutor and student happened verbally through Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP). At the beginning of each session, the students determined the focus and goals by stating what they wanted to work on with the tutor. Throughout the session, the tutor responded with check-ins to see if the session was on course for what the student wanted to accomplish. These topics became the forefront of the conversation as they read through the paper. Additionally, if tutors saw something else they felt needed to be addressed, then the tutor would raise questions to see if the student wanted to revise that area.

Agency and turn-taking patterns. The patterns of turn-taking during verbal communication varied depending on the areas of writing the student and tutor discussed. The control of the session was based on who had agency of the information. More specifically, from my observations, I learned that when discussing higher order concerns— such as information included in a thesis, whether or not research questions were answered, content, organization of the information, etc.— the students' voices were most present during the session and the students took more turns speaking than the tutors. In contrast, when discussing formatting or lower order concerns—such as grammatical errors, sentence level clarity, wordiness, missing words, punctuation, verb tense, articles, spelling, possessives, subject-verb agreement, or word choice— the tutors took more turns speaking than the students. When tutors took more turns speaking, they were explaining rules and providing a somewhat detailed explanation of areas or rules about content that may need to be rewritten because of language differences or grammatical concerns.

Agency and control of the session also emerged when students did not agree with the tutors' advice. In most cases, the students did not verbally voice this disagreement during the online session with the tutor. In those instances, the students either remained quiet or posed questions to understand the feedback the tutor provided. I learned through the interviews and retrospective interview analyses that when the students did not agree with the tutor's advice they chose not to revise those sections. These students showed that they did not feel they had to accept all the feedback provided by the tutor, but also did not speak up to share that with the tutor. An example of a student taking control of his writing is shown in Chapter 5 when Robert purposefully chose not to revise a section as

suggested by the online tutor. The tutor suggested that Robert elaborate a section by adding a personal example that made a connection between the gospel music and rap artists. When I asked Robert about this decision during his interview, Robert explained that he did not want to revise that section of his paper because he believed that it would change the overall focus of his paper, making it more about himself and less about his research. This decision is significant because Robert understood that he could pick and choose which feedback he wanted to utilize. He showed agency by choosing to put his purposes and goals before the tutor's. While these instances of students' disagreeing with the tutor's feedback were few, from the observations, I determined that in all eight sessions the students showed a level of agency by either stating their goals and concerns at the beginning of the session, redirecting the session in the middle to address their concerns, or asking questions at the end of the session to make sure their needs were met. I learned that students took control of the outcomes of their learning and writing practices.

Additionally, interactions occurred through the students' texts as the students typed directly in the Word document and provoked more verbal discussion about the students' writing. During the interviews, I learned that all eight of the participants took notes during the session: five students took notes directly in the Word document they shared with the tutor and three took notes on a separate piece of paper. These notes provided the students with guidance and a reminder about what areas to address and how to revise when they re-entered the paper. During the interviews, students shared that their approaches varied by either highlighting notes in the text, putting the notes in all caps, or taking notes on a separate piece of paper. Additionally, I learned that throughout the

session students were actively engaging in the revision process, which will be further explained in Research Question 2.

Research Question 2

- How do students revise their assignments from the feedback they receive after the online tutoring session? This question refers to how the advice provided by the online tutoring influenced the students' decisions and actions when revising their assignments.

Few studies incorporate students' responses to the feedback they received during the composing process, specifically Duijnhouwer, Prins, & Stockking, 2012; Paulus, 1999; Silver & Lee, 2007; Weaver, 2006; Yagelski, 1995. This research focused on what types of feedback students found helpful. For example, Silver and Lee (2007) studied student reactions to teacher feedback in order to understand why some feedback resulted in more revisions than others. Silver and Lee discovered that their participants made the most use of feedback formed as advice as opposed to criticism or praise encouraged more revision; more specifically, their results showed that the majority of the revisions were considered minimal changes and substantive revisions were infrequent. Similarly, Duijnhouwer, Prins, and Stokking (2012) examined the effects of teacher feedback that included improvement strategies and student motivation, process, and performance. The researchers determined that the students planned and revised more when provided with more strategies; however, most of the participants did not perceive these strategies as either being motivating or demotivating.

My study also looked at how students utilized feedback by analyzing the online sessions and revisions made from the draft the students worked on with the tutor to the

final draft the students submitted to their instructors. My study also examined what types of feedback contributed to revisions, but more specifically, I examined not just the changes that were made, but also how the feedback impacted the participants' revision processes. During the interviews and retrospective analyses, participants were asked to explain how they made decisions about their revisions as they made changes after the online session. The participants explained what that process looked like.

In addition to Silver and Lee (2007) and Duijnhouwer, Prins, and Stokking (2012), Beason (1993) studied students' first and final drafts examining the feedback they received on their first draft, areas they revised, and the criteria affected by revision. Beason (1993) determined that students' drafts improved when they previously received feedback on their writing, but that students were selective when revising. Similar to Beason (1993), the participants in my study were also selective with the revisions they made. Unlike Beason, since my study included interviews with my participants, I was able to gain insight to why these students were selective. The participants shared how they decided what areas to revise and why they chose to disregard certain feedback they received.

There are even fewer studies that look at how students revise from the feedback they received in online environments: Guardado & Shi (2007), Hewett (2006) and Tuzi (2004). For example, Guardado and Shi (2007) studied how online peer feedback contributed to the revisions students made. They determined that slightly more than half of the 22 participants revised their papers. Of those who revised, four participants made major changes and three made minimal revisions. Why was the number of students who chose to revise so low? Guardado and Shi hypothesized that the number of students

revising were low because the students' were unsure how to approach the comments. Similarly, Hewett (2006) studied students' revisions based on professional tutors' feedback through synchronous whiteboard instruction. Hewett found that the feedback provided by the professional tutor typically led to only one or two discrete writing changes. Similar to these studies, my research analyzed how online feedback impacted students' revisions processes, but my study differs by interviewing the participants to determine how they approached revising assignments and how they made decisions about what to revise. While these studies provide an examination of the feedback provided in an online environment and the revisions the participants made, they did not interview the participants to include the students' perspectives. The significance of my study is the inclusion of the participations' experiences of how they made decisions and choices about what to revise, and their revision processes based on the feedback they received.

Revisions during and after online sessions. Revisions in this study consisted of those changes in the writing that took place during the session when the students worked with the online tutor as well as the ones that the students completed on their own when the session was over. All eight of the writers made revisions to their drafts. The majority of the in-text changes during the session included minor changes such as punctuation, fixing typos, deleting words, citation formatting, subject-verb agreement, combining sentences, word choice, article usage, etc. These revisions consisted of 92 changes during the eight online sessions. Out of the eight participants, five participants made a total of eight major changes during the sessions, which included clarifying or elaborating ideas and the organization of the paper by rearranging paragraphs. Therefore, three participants made no major changes during the session. After the sessions, all participants made

further revisions. They made a total of 32 substantial revisions that were related to the online session. These changes included rewriting introductions, adding conclusions, reordering paragraphs, and adding new information to clarify ideas. These results are similar to the numerous revisions that took place in Tuzi's (2004) study – analysis of 274 drafts, 97 were first drafts and 177 revisions—as well as Hewett's (2006) 73% of revisions that were connect to the interactions during the synchronous Through the retrospective interview analyses and interviews, students explained their processes of revision based on the feedback they received during the session. All eight students revised their papers when the session was over. Students found it helpful to know the purpose of the feedback and to have a plan for how to execute it. Four trends emerged from the interviews: revision processes and insight to the students' decision-making during and after the online tutoring sessions, the importance of having a plan to execute feedback, balance between when students decide to accept feedback or disregard it, and students' responses to their instructor's comments. Each trend emerged out of the observations of the recorded sessions, retrospective interview analyses and interviews with the students. These trends span the interactions during the session and the students' revision processes after the session.

Two most influential peer tutor feedback factors. From the observations of recorded online sessions, I determined that the two most influential factors that affected student revisions were: a) the way the feedback was posed by the tutor, and b) whether or not the student and tutor developed a plan for addressing the revisions and their goals. These results were determined through the use of grounded theory and conversation analysis approaches. As I observed the sessions, I coded the transcripts by marking any

changes that the students made in their writing while working with the tutor as well as any changes they made to their final drafts. Then, I applied a conversation analysis approach to the interactions that occurred between the tutor and student when these changes were made or when a discussion took place about a section the student revised. For example, I examined a conversation where the student and tutor discussed ways to improve the student's conclusion. I analyzed who took more turns speaking, what type of language, such as directive or facilitative, the tutor used when providing advice, and whether or not the tutor and student discussed a plan for how the student could address that area. Then, I analyzed the changes in the document from the draft the student had with the tutor to the final draft they submitted in reference to their conversation. Specifically, I analyzed the patterns of students' revisions based on the feedback they received.

From this analysis, I determined that how tutors posed their feedback and tutoring strategies impacted the ways the students revised. When the tutor's feedback was formed as advice, students made major revisions after the session. In contrast, directive feedback resulted only in immediate changes during the session, but did not lead to further changes after the session. When revising after the session, most students started by addressing lower order concerns (punctuation, verb tense, spelling, etc.) before revising the higher order concerns (organization, elaboration, clarifying ideas, etc.). When tutors offered advice to improve students' work, the students addressed all areas except the ones they felt conflicted with their overall goals, as explained above in Research Question 1. The tutoring strategies employed during the session affected how the student approached revising the paper. For example, students re-used strategies the tutors employed during

the session, such as reading the paper aloud in order to locate mistakes and check the flow of information. Furthermore, the advice they received from tutors helped the students determine a plan for continuing to work on their paper and improve their writing.

Additionally, I learned that students' decisions about areas to revise were impacted by whether to not they had developed a plan with the tutor and whether or not this plan met their overall goals. This finding supports Silver and Lee's (2007) research that showed the significance of students knowing the purpose of feedback to their revision practices. Additionally, I learned that in order for revision to occur after the online session, the students found it valuable to develop a plan for the feedback given by the tutors. By having an idea of how to revise, they were able to make changes to the text on their own. This finding supports Weaver's (2006) claim that students may value the feedback, but they do not always know how to use it. As a result, almost all the areas students were working on with an online tutor were revised except in cases where the student forgot to do so or the feedback clashed with their own purposes. When the feedback provided by the online tutor incorporated the purpose of the revisions and a plan to make the changes, the student had a clear objective and made the necessary revisions. For writing center tutors and directors, this finding is beneficial for tutor training because with a plan for revision, students were able to conceptualize how those substantial revisions will occur. Therefore, this result demonstrates the importance of how the tutor approaches the session and the potential take away the student may have for their writing development and processes. When the students had a clear idea of how to approach revision, they effectively executed their plan and received positive results.

As illustrated in Chapter 5, Robert was able to effectively revise the introduction of his paper based on the plan he developed with the tutor. The tutor provided Robert with detailed advice on how to create a more interesting introduction by suggesting that Robert include a story that could be used to grab the reader's attention. The tutor connected this suggestion with a specific idea in Robert's paper: "your strong love for music and how music is your best friend." The tutor explained that Robert could include a story about a time he was influenced by music and why he became interested in music. Based on the advice given by the tutor, Robert revised his introduction to include a personal story. By the tutor and student devising a clear plan together, Robert effectively revised his introduction.

Research Question 3

- How do students respond to the instructor's overall comments about the paper in relation to the tutoring session? Similar to research question 1c, response in this question refers to students' attitudes and perceptions toward the instructor's comments in relation to the tutoring session.

In order to bring the conversation full circle—from receiving the assignment, working on it with a tutor, revising during and after the session, handing in the assignment, and receiving a grade and commentary from the instructor— I asked the participants to bring a final copy of their papers with their instructors' comments. The instructors' comments on the participants' final drafts were used to add to the conversation of their revisions to determine how the comments were related, affirmed, or disjointed from the online tutoring sessions. Of the eight participants, six received their papers back from the instructors. The participants were asked to respond to their

instructors' comments on the areas that they worked on with the tutor. Of the 61 instructor comments, 15 were about areas that were related to the online session— or about 47% of the students' substantial revisions. The comments ranged from praise to personal commentary, such as "Good analysis", "Good stat.", "Your passion is evident and you have a clear thesis" or "Your conclusion is thoughtful." Only in one place did an instructor provide feedback that asked the student for "more elaboration" about a section that she discussed with the tutor. When asked in the interview about this section, the student stated that she was frustrated by the instructor's comment and that if she knew that this level of detail in her writing was what the instructor wanted she would have included it. This instance shows the disconnect in the circle of information because the student did not understand what the instructor wanted her to accomplish in that section of her writing and the tutor also was unable to assist because he did not have not having prior knowledge of the instructor's expectations.

Additionally, when asked about their response to the papers and instructors' comments, a few of the students did not think they did well on their paper and were surprised by their instructors' positive comments. In most cases, the students were pleased and surprised by the instructors' comments. I learned that while three out of eight of the students said they were good writers and seven out of eight of the students stated that their papers were good papers, they were mostly surprised by the positive comments and praise they received from their instructors. Overall, the students reported being happy with the results of their paper, the tutor's feedback, and the instructor's comments.

Research Question 4

- What online tutoring practices did students find helpful? What suggestions

do students have for tutors to use in future tutoring sessions?

To date, the research about training peer tutors for consulting online synchronous sessions is limited to either the director's perceptions of the tutor's role in the writing center (Kastman-Breuch & Racine, 2000; Carlson & Apperson-Williams, 2000; Coogan, 1999; Harris & Pemberton, 2001; Hewett, 2006; Sabatino & Rafoth, 2012) or the tutor's perspective of the online session (Cooper, Bui, & Riker, 2005; Hewett, 2010; Rafoth, 2009; Rilling, 2005). Therefore, the scholarship that does exist lacks students' perspectives about what they experience as effective practices are in online tutoring. In this dissertation, I addressed a new area of research by examining online peer tutoring, observing interactions during the session, and interviewing the students to determine what they experienced as helpful and effective tutoring practices. This research provides a foundation to develop online tutor training scholarship with student voices. The suggestions reported by the students for effective tutoring are just the beginning of the conversation about developing sound practices for online peer tutoring. In order to further this scholarship, conversations about sound practices should continue. This development of sound practices might involve focus groups and discussions between students and tutors to gain an equal perspective about what practices both find effective.

Importance of communication. In my study, how the students revised their papers, improved their writing, and continued to utilize tutoring strategies was connected to the online tutoring practices that students found helpful. In the interviews, students were asked what online practices they found helpful and what they believed should be used in future sessions. These students focused on the importance of communication, specifically naming listening, clarity, confirmation, questions, and responding in a clear

and thoughtful manner. The students pinpointed specific moments that they considered to be helpful or effective during the online session. I learned that the students understood what practices helped promote their improvement as writers and valued the advice they received from the tutors. Additionally, these interviews showed that the students were able to reflect on the sessions and determine what practices supported their learning. When analyzing the interviews, I used a grounded theory approach in order to code patterns of trends among the eight participants and what they reported to be helpful or effective online tutoring practices. I analyzed trends and patterns of what the students reported as helpful online tutoring practices and the advice that they had for future online sessions. By using grounded theory, I was able to offer insight and provide suggestions for sound online tutoring practices. Through applying a grounded theory approach to the observations, interviews, and student feedback, I developed suggestions for sound practices for online synchronous tutoring; these included the importance of setting goals and guidelines, tutors fully listening to what students have to say, the tutor checking-in and asking for their opinions, developing a plan and receiving concrete feedback, providing options for reading the paper aloud, and having the opportunity to write more during the session. When students are given the opportunity, they can have an active role in online tutor development because they have a clear understanding of what practices benefit them as writers and promote their writing development.

Methods as Findings

The methods in this dissertation included a combination of conversation analysis and grounded theory approaches to examine the online sessions, retrospective analyses, interviews, and document analysis of drafts of the participants' papers. While each of

these methods provided me lenses to view the data, the combination of all four allowed for a rich understanding of the participants' experiences with online tutoring and their revision processes. Grounded theory allowed me to discover meaning from the data, enhance my understanding of the data, and generate theories from the data. Conversation analysis approach of the online sessions allowed me to examine the turn-by-turn interactions between tutors and students. Additionally, the retrospective analyses and interviews provided insight to the choices the participants' made as they revised. Lastly, through the document analysis, I determined the level of changes the participants made and the instructors' comments on those areas. The combination of these methods allowed me to learn the whole picture of the participants' revision processes as well as how they perceived the online sessions.

Through the use of a conversation analysis approach, I developed a context for the interactions between the tutors and students. Through a close examination of the construction of their interactions, I gained an understanding the balance of control in the session as well as the level of engagement of the students. By using conversation analysis, I examined the pauses, utterances, turn-taking, and language of the participants. For example, I examined the ways students responded to the feedback provided by the tutor and in some instances when the student chose not respond or changed the direction of the conversation. More specifically, this type of interaction was seen with Robert, which is explained in Chapter 5, when at one point in the session he barely acknowledged the feedback provided by the tutor. Previously, Robert had been actively involved and offering his input during the session, but at this specific moment, Robert only responded with utterances and then changed the subject. Through a close examination of the

constructs of this conversation, I observed the change in Robert's engagement in the conversation and noticed how this change shaped the context of the session. By analyzing this shift in their interactions, I made notes to ask Robert about this change in his interaction during his interview and examined his paper for any changes to that section.

Through the interview, I gained further insight to the constructs and context of the interactions between the tutors and students. The conversation analysis approach provided me with areas to further explore during the interviews. Additionally, the interviews and retrospective analyses added further reaffirmation to what I observed during the conversation analysis of the online sessions. Returning to the example of Robert, he confirmed during this interview that he disagreed with the advice provided by the tutor. He also explained why he did not want to take the tutor's advice: he did not want it to change the focus of his paper. The conversation analysis and interview showed that Robert took control of his revisions, showed agency, and understood that he did not have to accept all advice provided to him. During the interviews and retrospective analyses, the students provided me with insight to their interactions with the tutor as well as the choices they made while revising.

The analysis of language used during interactions between the tutor and student, which were examined through a conversation analysis approach, was closely connected to the revisions students made. These revisions were examined through retrospective interview analysis and document analysis of the students' drafts. My experiences echoed what Deckert and Vickers (2011) explained about the use of conversation analysis to interactions: "CA analysts have been able to draw conclusions about the nature of conversation as well as the social patterns that exit in language" (pp. 113-114). By

studying the language of tutors when providing feedback to the students' writing, I was able to see what types of advice prompted revision during and after the sessions. In addition to CA, I applied a grounded theory approach when coding the changes that the participants made while consulting with the tutors. More specifically, I categorized the codes based on higher or lower order concerns and examined the interactions between the tutors and students to identify when these changes were made. I analyzed turn-taking constructs of the interactions and the type of language, such as directive or facilitative, the tutor used when offering feedback. Additionally, I examined the types of revisions the students made based on the feedback they received. As explained in Chapter 4, I observed that the students' voices were most present during discussions of higher order concerns and that the tutors' took more turns than the students speaking when offering direct feedback on lower order concerns. I also learned that direct feedback prompted the students to make changes in the moment, but did not necessarily lead to substantial changes after the session.

With the combination of conversation analysis, document analysis, and the retrospective interviews, I determined how the tutors' language when providing feedback impacted the ways students revised. The combination of these methodologies provided a rich understanding of the students' experiences as well as the impact on their revisions. The interviews and retrospective analyses added a deeper understanding to the constructs of the interactions during the online sessions that provided me with the insight to the students' perspectives.

Limitations

This study included voices of eight student participants who each spent about an

hour to two hours of their time being involved in the study. One of the limitations of this study was the lack of time I had to spend with these students. Most of these students did not use the online writing center until close to the end of the semester. The participants waiting to have the online session posed problems with setting up interviews before their finals or before they left for the semester. As a result, two students did not receive their papers back from their instructor.

An additional difficulty with this study was in recruiting students and the variety of backgrounds of these students. I recruited students from composition classes that require students to write multiple drafts of various assignments and receive instructor feedback. Once I identified instructors who allowed me to solicit participants their classes, within the first few weeks of the semester, I visited the classes, described the study, and invited students to participate. I also provided the students with instructions for how to access the OWC with a demonstration of the steps involved. Additionally, I asked each instructor for a copy of the course syllabus in order to follow up with the students a week before each assignment was due. I had over fifty students who agreed to participate in the study, but only eight students completed the steps of the study. Throughout the semester, I emailed all the students who agreed to be a part of the study reminding them to participate and providing links to videos and written documents that explained how to set up an appointment and what the online session would entail. Even though I offered the students support for setting up the appointments, only eight students followed through with the study.

Additionally, this study initially aimed to include students from multilingual backgrounds. While English 101 and 202 English as a Second Language sections were

recruited and students initially signed up to be a part of the study, ultimately the students did not follow through. I contacted these students to find out why they had not participated in the study. While I had a difficult time receiving feedback from these students, the insufficient and unofficial feedback I received focused on forgetting about the study or preferring to have a face-to-face session.

Future Research

Although this study revealed a number of interesting and important ideas about students' perspectives on peer tutoring in online environments, there are a number of areas that could be addressed in future studies. The first call was for student voices and experiences to be incorporated in the writing center scholarship. This study proposed one approach for achieving this task, and this research focused mainly on students' interactions, experiences, revision processes, and perceptions of best practices in online synchronous peer tutoring. In order to best address students' needs, research should continue to investigate the ways that online tutoring affects students' perceptions of themselves as writers and what they are taking away from these sessions in order to best address their needs.

A suggestion for future research is to include a range of student backgrounds in order to receive students' voices from multilingual backgrounds. As online tutoring and learning grows, we should continue to investigate the ways feedback received in this platform affects the composition and revision processes. To remedy the issue with recruiting multilingual students I mentioned above, researchers might involve a more hands on workshop or in-class time that allowed the students to experience how the online writing center could be beneficial for them.

Lastly, as mentioned in Research Question 4, there needs to be more development of sound tutoring practices for online sessions. In order to develop sound practices of online tutoring, future research should increase the number of students interviewed in order to see if there is more consistency in the practices reported. In order for this dissertation to examine the processes of revision, it was necessary to find students who were required to write multiple drafts and received instructor feedback. Another way to include more participants would be to contact all students who use the online writing center, instead of just those who were previously recruited. Research needs to continue to develop these practices and engage students in these discussions about tutoring practices that directly affect them.

Continuing the Conversation

As I reviewed the scholarship and prepared to investigate online writing center environments, I discovered that the overview of online peer tutoring was missing the incorporation of students' voices and opinions. This study included students in the conversations focused on writing center scholarship in online environments by examining students' experiences, revision processes, and reported effective online tutoring practices. I believe that this step is important in order to move the field toward theory and criticism that investigates approaches to meeting students' needs in these new platforms. Scholars have examined the practical matters of online tutoring when it comes to implementing a program and developing concepts around how these programs impact face-to-face tutoring, but it is time to enhance the research that has been done by adding students' experiences, perspectives, and understandings to the writing center and composition professional practices. Through the voice of students, the writing center community has a

better opportunity to evolve practices and understand the impact our communities have on students. This dissertation is one example that attempts to change the focus to reaching and assisting students by including them in our conversations. By continuing this conversation, I hope this research will contribute to a new lens to the writing center scholarship and develop more practices based on students' feedback.

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APPENDIX A

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE: STUDENTS

How many have gotten feedback from a coach or an instructor – or a friend -- to improve your performance?

The tutors at the Writing Center are asking for the same kind of thing. Professor _____ has allowed me to come ask you to participate in online writing center sessions. The online writing center is a place where you can receive help with your writing and get feedback from a tutor. This online platform is in the beginning stages, and we would like to ask you to use it so we can see how you interact with tutors in this online environment.

By observing these online sessions, we can look at the interactions between you and a tutor and see what tutoring practices are helpful for you and how these interactions affect the way you revise your papers.

At the time of setting up the appointment you will include the instructor's name _____ (this is asked of all students partaking in online sessions). The professor's name will let us know that you may be a student participating in this study and we will check it with the list we put together of students who agree to participate.

From the session we will collect:

1. Screen recording of the sessions through saving your paper in WebEx
2. A Copy the written chat session, which occurs in print text during the session.
3. Copies of syllabi and assignments from the participating instructor (so that the you will know what the assignment is if the student forgets to bring it to the session.)

You will also be asked to come in for an interview once you have received the final submitted paper back from the instructor with the instructor's comments.

I will now walk you through the steps of how to access the online writing center, which you can use whether or not you choose to be a part of the study (see Appendix B).

If you would like to be part of this research project, please fill out this form. You have an option to either check "yes" or "no" and sign the document. Place the completed form in the envelope. As a part of Federal regulations and any time we work human beings in research, we need a record of both who said yes and who said no. If you agree to participate, please give us complete and accurate contact information so we can reach you easily. You can keep the top sheet to remind you of what this is all about.

APPENDIX B

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

THE WRITING CENTER

Informed Consent – Students

You are invited to participate in a project designed to make tutoring sessions more helpful and effective.

The purpose of this study is to discover how students' experiences with the online writing center leads to the revision of their assignment. Whether or not you participate in this project will not affect your grade in this class, and you can still receive tutoring. When you are working on a paper in this class you can visit the online writing center. This session will be saved in WebEx. This information will help Writing Center tutors learn how they can be more effective when helping students on their writing assignments.

Make sure when you set up an appointment to include the instructor's name. This will let us know that you may be participating in this study.

From the session we will collect:

1. Your paper in WebEx
2. A Copy the recording of the online tutoring session.
3. Copies of syllabi and assignments from the participating instructor (so that the tutor will know what the assignment is if the student forgets to bring it to the session.) Like you would for a typical tutoring session.

After the online tutoring session, you will be asked to come in for an interview once you have received the final submitted paper back from the instructor with the instructor's comments. You will bring to the interview a copy of the paper with the instructor's comments.

There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this project. Your participation in this study is voluntary; if you choose to participate, you may withdraw at any time all information will you provide be confidential. The information may be published in professional journals or presented at conferences but we'll keep your identity confidential.

Please return the statement below and put it in the envelope at the front of the room. Take the extra unsigned copy with you.

Thank you for considering this opportunity!

Lindsay Sabatino
Teaching Associate
109 Keith Hall
Indiana, PA 15705
Phone: 724/357-3029

Dr. Ben Rafoth
Director of IUP Writing Center
218 Eicher Hall
Indiana, PA 15705
Phone: 724-357-2263

This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (Phone: 724/357-7730).

VOLUNTARY CONSENT FORM -- STUDENTS

___ I agree to participate in this study. (Please complete information below.)

___ I do not wish to participate. (Please write name here and return this form_____.)

~ Please complete the information below if you agree to participate ~

I have read and understand the Informed Consent. I understand that my responses are confidential and I have the right to withdraw at any time. I have received an unsigned copy of this informed Consent Form to keep in my possession.

Name (Please print) _____

Signature _____ Date _____

E-mail address _____

Phone number _____

Can I text you? _____

Best time to contact you: _____

I have explained the nature, purpose, and potential benefits associated with participating in this study, have answered any questions, and have witnessed the above signature.

_____

Project Director Date

APPENDIX C

Online Writing Center Instructions

All tutorial sessions conducted by the IUP Online Writing Center are recorded for training purposes only. If you do not wish to have your session recorded, please let your tutor know at the beginning of the session and recording will be stopped.

Overview of the Main Steps

Before your session

1. Access our SetMore appointment calendar and book a session
2. Receive an email with a link to begin your session

At your scheduled appointment time

1. Click the link provided in the appointment email
2. Use your speakers and microphone or a cell phone to speak to the tutor
3. Share your screen and discuss your paper in real time

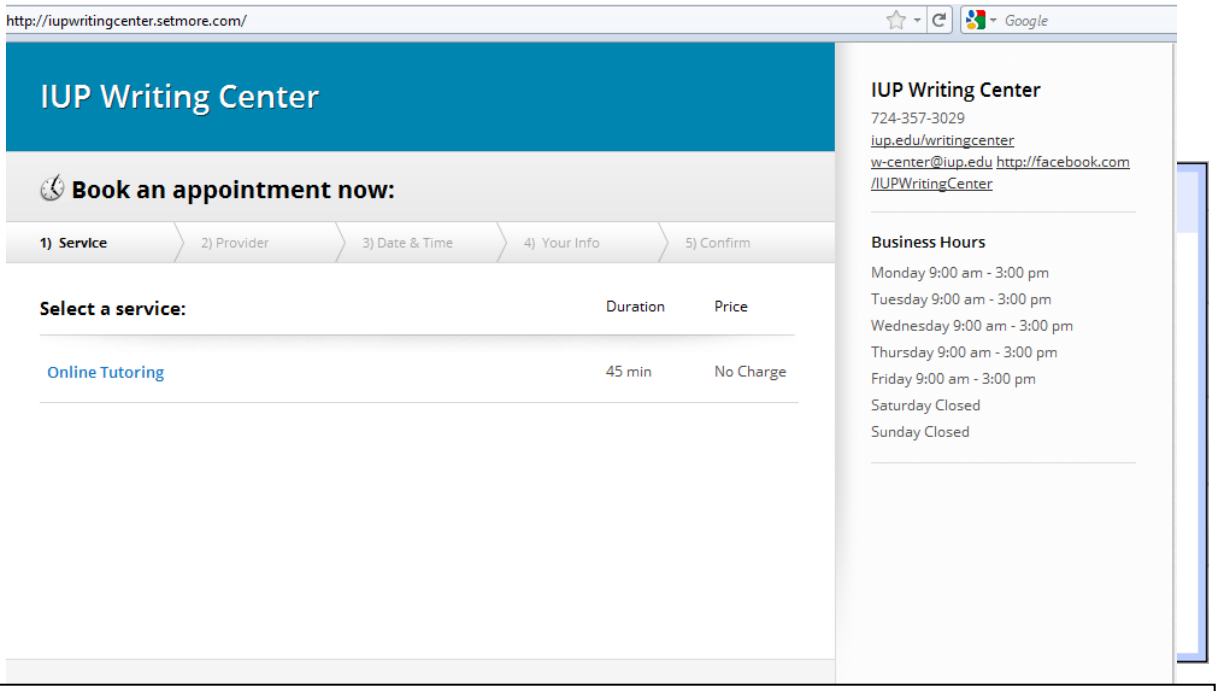
After your appointment is finished

1. Ask your tutor to send a report form to your professor *(optional)*
2. Access the session recording *(optional)*

Main Steps in Detail

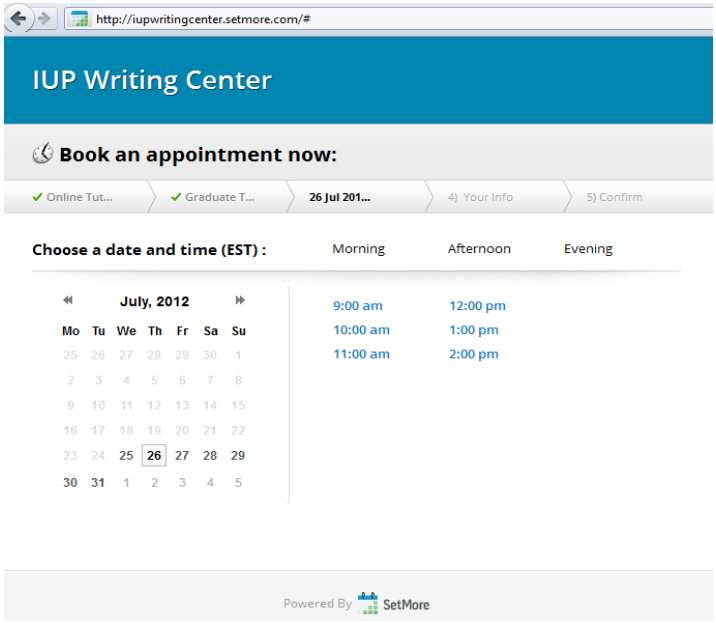
To Make an Appointment

1. Visit the **Writing Center Homepage** (iup.edu/writingcenter)
2. Select **Meet Us Online.**
3. Then click on **Log in to the Online Writing Center**
4. **Log in** using your IUP network log-in.
5. Next, select **click here to access the appointment calendar**. A new window will open.



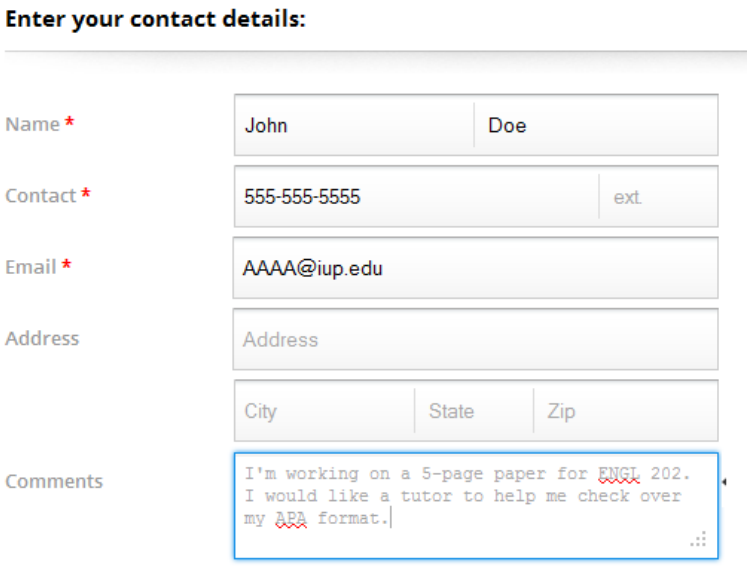
If you are not booking using the above website, we will not receive your appointment request. *The Google Calendar is no longer in use.*

6. Select **Online Tutoring** on the Service page
7. Select an **Undergraduate** or **Graduate Tutor**. *Please choose a tutor that matches your own level.*
8. Select a **date** using the calendar and **time** by clicking on an available time:

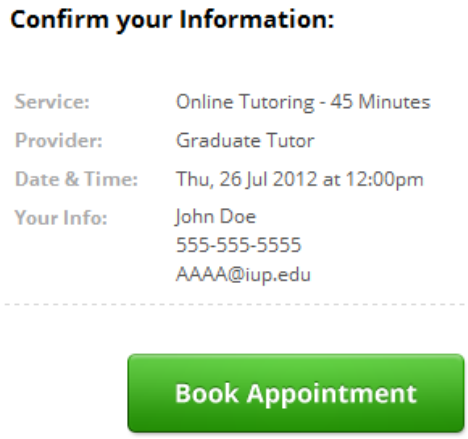


Please note: *SetMore allows appointments to be booked* ***no sooner than two days in advance.***

9. Enter your contact details including a **current phone number and email**.
10. In the **Comments** box, please include:
    - **a.** The class you're writing the paper for
    - **b.** The assignment (descriptive essay, cover letter, research paper, etc.)
    - **c.** **How the tutor can help you**
    - **d.** The name of the tutor you'd like to work with *(optional)*



11. Confirm  your information and click **Book Appointment.**



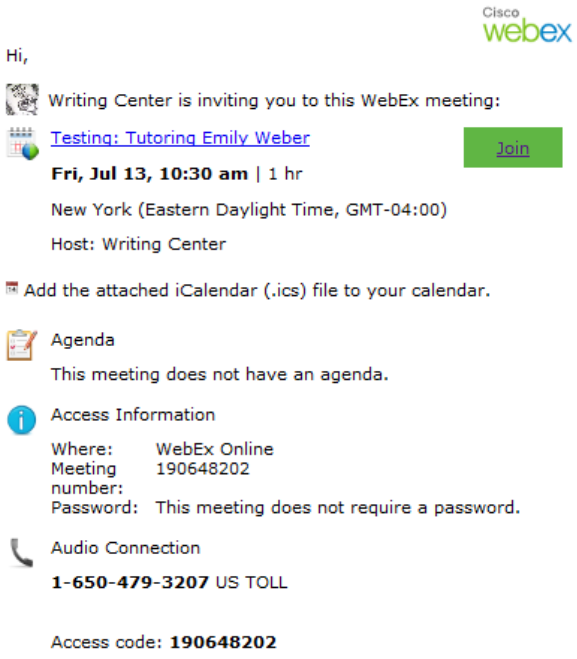
12. Check your email – you will receive a confirmation email when your request is received.

Meet Your Tutor on WebEx

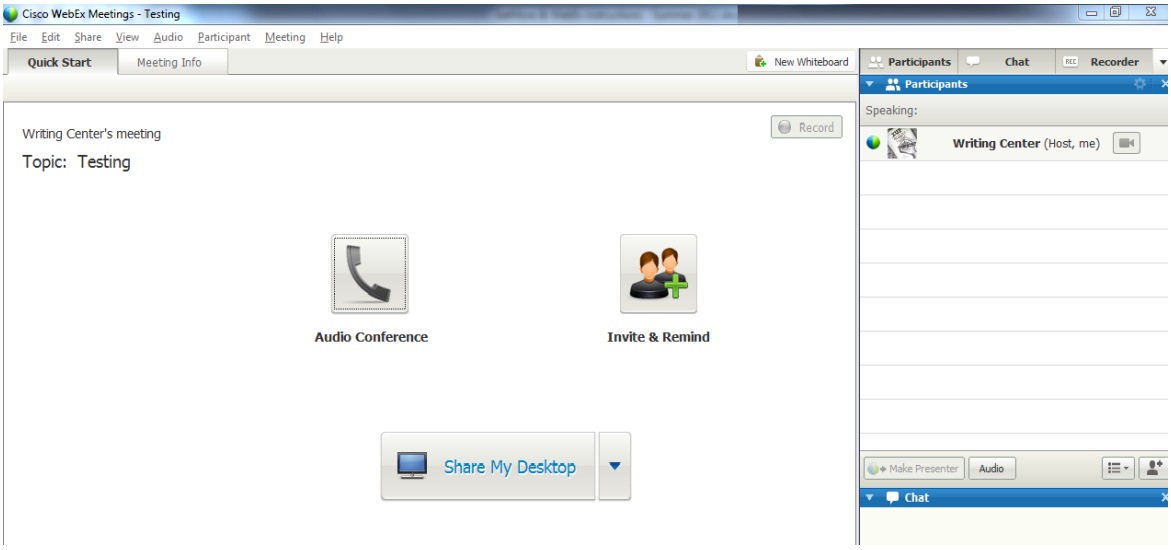
After scheduling your appointment, you will receive an email from "Writing Center via Cisco WebEx" containing a link to your meeting. Save this email until your appointment time. *Note: this is different from the SetMore email confirming your appointment.*

If you do not receive an email from WebEx, let us know at w-center@iup.edu.

To meet with your tutor, click **the green Join** icon in the email at your scheduled appointment time.

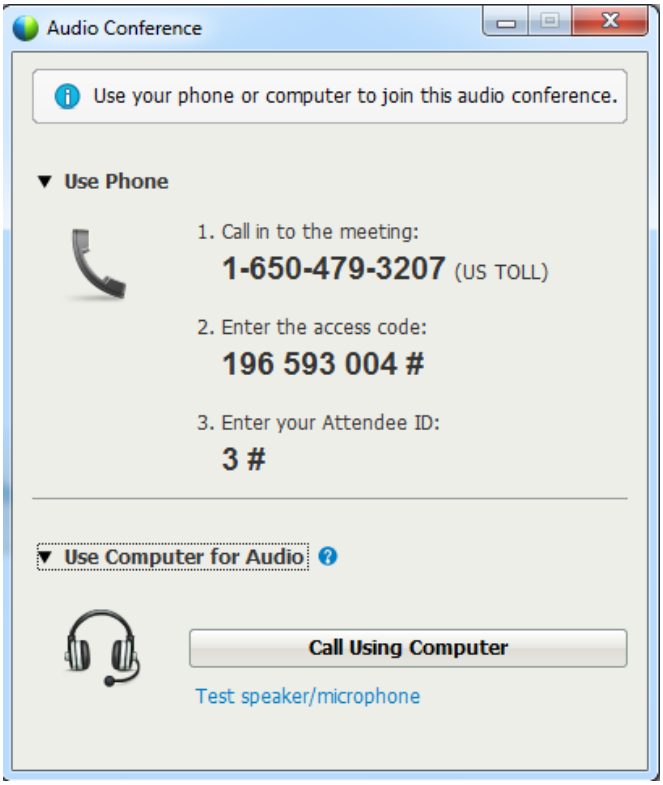


Your browser will open a new window to connect you with the tutor. Be sure to **Allow** or **Run** anything that your browser asks you to approve. Once you see this page, you are connected to the tutor:



Talking to Your Tutor

Once your meeting window is open, you should see the following:



1. Click the drop-down arrow next to **Use Computer for Audio**.
2. If your computer has speakers and a microphone, choose **Call Using Computer.**
3. The program may ask to run a test to make sure your speakers and microphone are working properly. If it does, run the test.
4. If your computer does not have speakers and a microphone, you can dial the toll number and enter the code provided in this box. ***Note: Long distance charges from your phone carrier may apply.***

Once your audio is ready, you will be able to speak with and hear the tutor. He or she will pass **Presenter Privileges** to you and request that you share your screen and display your paper. To do this, click **Share My Desktop** on the main screen:

This will allow your tutor to *view* your screen only; he or she cannot make any changes to your paper or view anything that you do not display on your screen.
During your session you can discuss any issues or concerns you have with your paper, including:

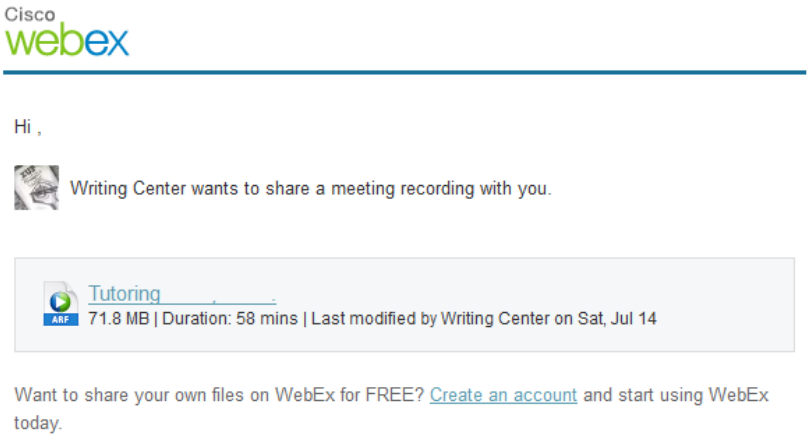
- Ideas and organization
- Checking your paper with the instructor's assignment
- Documenting your sources
- Identifying any errors in grammar or formatting

After your session, the tutor will ask you if you would like us to send a Faculty Report Form to your instructor. You may schedule another online appointment if you wish by following the same procedure.

Accessing Your Meeting Recording

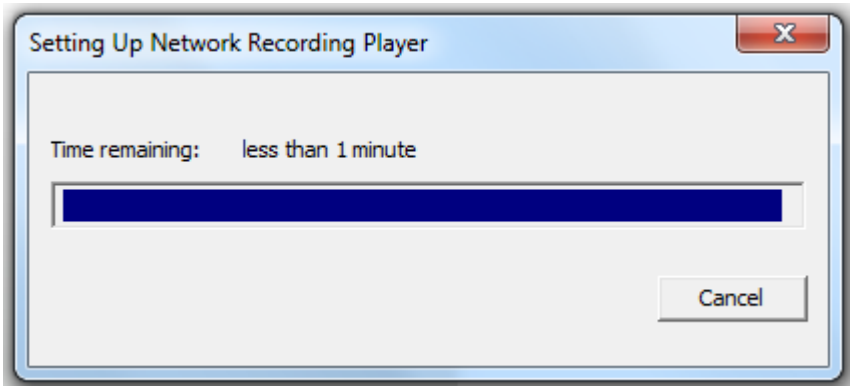
If you want to view your session after your meeting is over, please send an email to w-center@iup.edu. **Be sure to provide your name and the date of your session.**

We will send you an email containing a link to your meeting recording:



To view your recording after you receive this email:

1. Click the link in the email.
2. You can **Play** or **Download** the file. *Note: if you download the file, you will need the WebEx Player software to view it offline. We recommend viewing your meeting online by clicking Play.*
3. The meeting recording will open in a new window. You may be prompted to **Run** or **Allow** the recording to play.
4. If you are viewing a recording for the first time, you may also see the following:



5. Allow the Network Recording Player to set up. Your recording will begin playing shortly after.

APPENDIX D

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE: TUTORS

We will be conducting a study of the Online Writing Center we recently launched. By observing these online sessions we can look at the interactions between you and a tutor and see what tutoring practices are helpful for you and how this leads to students revising their papers.

You will tutor at the Online Center when you scheduled to do so, the interactions that take place between you and the student will be saved through the online platform. The information gathered will help Writing Center tutors to learn how they can be more effective in providing assistance to students who seek help with their writing assignments.

You will work with students in the online platform, as you would normally do so. Your identity will be confidential by using IUP's online account. You will know which students are participating by the students indicating that the instructor's name. The professor's name will indicate that this may be a student participating in this study and will be confirmed from the list compiled of participating students.

From the session we will collect:

1. Screen recording of the sessions through saving the student's paper in WebEx
2. A Copy the written chat session that transpires between you and the student.
3. Copies of syllabi and assignments from the participating instructor (so that you will know what the assignment is if the student forgets to bring it to the session.)

There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this project and will not effect your employment at IUP's Writing Center. If you would like to be part of this research project, please fill out this form. You have an option to either check "yes" or "no" and

sign the document. Place the completed form in the envelope. As a part of Federal regulations and any time we work human beings in research, we need a record of both who said yes and who said no. If you agree to participate, please give us complete and accurate contact information so we can reach you easily. You can keep the top sheet to remind you of what this is all about.

APPENDIX E

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

THE WRITING CENTER

Informed Consent – Tutors

You are invited to participate in a project designed to make tutoring sessions more helpful and effective.

The purpose of this study is to discover how students' experiences with the online writing center leads to the revision of their assignment. Whether or not you participate in this project will not affect work at the IUP Writing Center. You will tutor at the Online Center when you are scheduled to do so. This session will be saved in WebEx and the written chat between you and the student. This information will help Writing Center tutors learn how they can be more effective when helping students on their writing assignments.

You will work with students in the online platform, as you would normally do so. Your identity will be confidential by using IUP's online account.

From the session we will collect:

4. Screen recording of the sessions through saving the student's paper in WebEx
5. A Copy the written chat session that transpires between you and the student.
6. Copies of syllabi and assignments from the participating instructor (so that you will know what the assignment is if the student forgets to bring it to the session.)

There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this project.

Your participation in this study is voluntary; if you choose to participate, you may withdraw at any time all information will you provide be confidential. The information may be published in professional journals or presented at conferences but we'll keep your identity confidential.

Please return the statement below and deposit in the envelope at the front of the room. Take the extra unsigned copy with you.

Thank you for considering this opportunity!

Lindsay Sabatino
Teaching Associate
109 Keith Hall
Indiana, PA 15705
Phone: 724/357-3029
Email: L.Sabatino@iup.edu

Dr. Ben Rafoth
Director of IUP Writing Center
218 Eicher Hall
Indiana, PA 15705
Phone: 724-357-2263
Email: brafoth@iup.edu

This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (Phone: 724/357-7730).

VOLUNTARY CONSENT FORM -- TUTORS

___ I agree to participate in this study. (Please complete information below.)

___ I do not wish to participate. (Please write name here and return this form_____.)

~ Please complete the information below if you agree to participate ~

I have read and understand the Informed Consent. I understand that my responses are confidential and I have the right to withdraw at any time. I have received an unsigned copy of this informed Consent Form to keep in my possession.

Name (Please print) _____

Signature _____ Date _____

I have explained the nature, purpose, and potential benefits associated with participating in this study, have answered any questions, and have witnessed the above signature.

_____

Project Director Date

APPENDIX F

Sample Student Interview Questions

1) Tell me about the session.
2) What were your experiences with the online tutoring session?
3) Did you take notes during the online tutoring session?
4) How did you go about revising the paper after the session?
5) Why did you choose to revise specific areas?
6) If applicable, why did you choose not to revise a specific section you worked on with the tutor?
7) What are your responses to the instructor's comments on the areas you revised, if there were any?
8) What do you think of the paper now that it's finished?
9) Do you think the tutoring session helped improve your writing?
10) What did you learn about your writing through this process?
11) Did you meet with the tutor again?
12) Would you do an online session again?
13) Is there anything you wish would have been covered that wasn't? Did you indicate that to the tutor at any point? How would it have been best to accomplish that?
14) Was there anything the tutor did that you found particularly helpful?
15) Is there anything you wish would have been covered that wasn't?
    i. If yes, then: Did you indicate that to the tutor at any point? How would it have been best to accomplish that?

16) Would you participate in an online tutoring session again?

17) Do you have any suggestions for tutors for future sessions?

APPENDIX G

Conversation Analysis Transcript of a Recorded Online Session

Tutor: Alright so what are you working on?
Student: I'm working on-eh-umm (.2) public life investigation. And-hm-(.2) like things you see and-hmm things you see when you are out or whatever or things you observe. So I chose music and so we had to like survey a couple of people and ask them questions about the topic. ((scrolls paper up and down on the screen)) I chose music and these are my survey questions here that I asked. ((scrolls to his survey questions))
Tutor: (1) Okay, hold on a second I am having a hard time hearing you.
Student: Okay
Tutor: (2) I'm going to plug in my headphones and see if they work better. (1) What class is this for?
Student: English 100
Tutor: Okay (10) Alright (3) So what is it that you-uh want to work on with me?
Student: Hm (.3) Well I have this due tomorrow that I haven't finished it- It's a 5 page essay and I'm on the 5th page. But (.2) hmm (.3) I kind of just want to hm see how its going so far.
Tutor: Okay [well:]
Student: [And I] could use help with the conclusion and my introduction I find that my instruction is kind of boring. And I need help (.2) that's what I need
Tutor: Okay [so let's take look
Student: [here's where my introductions at ((scrolls to top of page))
Tutor: Okay (3) Let me read it for a second. ((reads softly, can hear first few words then barely audible)) For this public life investigation (38) Okay (1) So usually with your introduction you want to talk about what it is your paper is going to be about [and] you want to like hook your
Student: [mm-hm]

Tutor: reader or like say something interesting that they're really going to like or that-that they will think is interesting or something that they didn't know about you beforehand. So I'm trying to think, (.1) so if you have like stories are a good way to do it. Like a short little anecdote about a time that (.2) hm (.1) that like music really influenced you or when the first time you really remember anything about music and then why it became important to you.

Student: Okay

Tutor: You could try something like tha::t
(3)
And you just kind of (.1) you'll kinda add that to the beginning and then (.2) hm (.1) cause I like the part where you where you talk about ((quoting line from his paper)) "your strong love for music and how music is your best friend" (.) hm (1)That it's very powerful (.) That's-that's very interesting, and you should leave that in there but in the beginning you kind of want to (.1) uh- put something in there to like hook the reader in. You know what I mean?

Student: Yea so that first paragraph I have is it okay to leave that and add something like a paragraph before that one?

Tutor: Or just a few sentences in the beginning of that paragraph.

Student: Okay
(7)
((does not add any comments or make any changes to the document))
Would it be better-if like-if like I want to put two pages up at the same time or would it be better to just keep one?

Tutor: Hmmm

Student: ((formatting of the screen))
Like that. Can you see that?

Tutor: Well that's a little small

Student: ((adjusts the zoom on the screen)) .hh haha hh ( )
(3)
((continues to zoom in))

Tutor: Looks good

Student: ((scrolls down))
Alright so basically hm (.2) other than the first paragraph, I just went into how I thought about music and then I went on to-uh my survey questions. So basically then throughout the different paragraphs I introduce the-hm questions that I asked in my survey. I explained it more and then I gave (.1) then I didn't give like a specifics on what he said, but I-uh gave more of an answer that was more interesting or that I thought helped the reader more
(.1)

Tutor: Oka[y

Student: [so I like introduced the question, then I-uh gave some quotes from the reader from the classes, and then just explained. That's kind of how I go throughout the paper.

Tutor: Okay (.2) uh alright so let's see
(2)
Alright ((softly to herself)) oh right I can't type ((laughs)) Alright let me skim through some of this.
((Starts to read somewhat to herself, somewhat aloud.))
(5)
Alright and what was it that you wanted to work on again? Hm-We-we-We did your introduction.
Student: Oh this was really just the introduction and the conclusion. So I just want to see how it was because I know this is kind of (.1) I've never written a paper like this where I had to explain like different questions and stuff like that [so I wanted to know like-like how was I doing
Tutor: [mm-hm]
Student: about explaining the questions and if I'm formatting it right
Tutor: Alright well (.2) uh-there's several ways you can go about doing this because it's your paper, so unless your instructor has specific guidelines, it's kind of like whatever you want to do with it. So you can do it the way it looks like you did it,(.1) like where you kind of list the questions and then you talk about hmm (1) like where you talk about the different types of answers you get. (.3) You can do it like that. Or you can do it like whe::re you: go paragraph by paragraph and each paragraph is a question and then you give the answers to those questions and like what you thought about those answers or what you got from those answers. So like
((referring to his survey questions))
the "on a scale from 1-10" would be like one paragraph and then "Do you think music helps you get through tough times" could be another paragraph.
Student: Okay
Tutor: You could do it like [that too.
Student: [yeah that's kind of-that's kind of how I did it.
Tutor: Okay
(3)
Student: But other than that. I haven't well it's due tomorrow. And I've been procrastinating I haven't read through it and revised it or fixed the errors. I'm just still (.1) I'm kind of closing it-I'm on the last question.
((reads the question))
about "How has music impacted your life?"
I'm still writing. I just need to you know sum up the last question-so I'm kind of like-hm then I have to work on my conclusion. See
((scrolls to the blank page at the end of the paper))
I still have a whole page left-as whole page left. I have to write 5 pages. So hopefully when we read through everything we can add things.
((scrolls back to the beginning of the paper))
Tutor: Okay (.2) let's see here.

(1)
Can you-can you scroll down to like page 3 and 4? Like where you were before.
Student: Okay
((Scrolls down))
Tutor: So let's see what else you go here.
(2)
Alright.
((Reading to herself, barely audible))
(32)
Did you get anyone who said that music is not important to them? Or they feel like it's not really their thing?
Student: No I actually I haven't gotten no one who said that. Everybody that answered said that it was.
Tutor: Okay
(2)
I was just curious. (.2) Because that would be interesting to put in too like if some people said it's not their thing ya [know?
Student: [yea
(1)
Tutor: Hmm
(12)
Let's see here (1) I think that the easiest way to do it would probably be(.2) well in your conclusion you are going to sum up what everyone said and how everybody found music is important to them and that they enjoy using it and that it gets them through tough times and things like that (.2) You want to sum up that and that will take up some space. And the other thing that you want to do is kind of elaborate more on some of the things you say. Like-hmm for instance like the example I think on page 4, in the second paragraph where you say you-hmm where you talk about the different genres of music and how not everybody will like the one type of music [(.1) hmm you can
Student: [mmm]
Tutor: talk about that a little more about that and about I'm trying to think, like how you might like something different than something like one of your relatives, older relatives, [like But you know that helps you
Student: [mmhmm]
Tutor: do the same thing. Or like how you can get the same message from that music. You could use for example, I don't know if you go to church or anything, but you talk about like-hm gospel music (.2) but-hm the message that they send out or the <u>way</u> they send it out, and then if you would listen to a rap artist , but then-hm you specifically name a song from that rap [artist and then kind of compare the two.
Student: [mmm]
Tutor: You could do something like that
Student: Yeah I kn-kn-kn-know I know that I have to-like go back [and do that

Tutor: [okay]
Student: (.1) and see that I could add.
Other than that because my teacher encouraged me to come do this writing center thing because they is my last paper so I figured I might as well use the writing center. So I figured I'd come get help.
Tutor: (1)
mm-kay
(9)
Student: ((scrolls paper down to the end))
hm-I ju::st have one more page to write
(1)
Tutor: Alright (.2) do you know what you're going to write for that page?
Student: Well that page I'll just like sum up my last question where I ask-where I ask how music affects your life, and then I was going to jump into the conclusion. Or then but before I actually did that I was going to go back to the first page and read everything. Maybe I need to do that to make sure I explain more.
Tutor: Okay that's always a good idea
Student: Yea so that's everything
(2)
Tutor: So do you need help with anything else?
Student: No I don't think so. I'm good-good (.2) that's it really
Tutor: Alright (.2) Hmm (.2) so let's see here. When is this paper due?
Student: It's due tomorrow at 11 o'clock.
Tutor: .hh okay
Student: ((laughs))
Tutor: Okay ((laughs))
We[ll
Student: [it shouldn't take me too long to like you know go over it
Tutor: Yeah and when you-eh finish your conclusion if you need to there are tutors at the library that will be there until 11 tonight so if you write your last page and you go well I'm not sure about this or you just need another set of eyes to look over it. You can run over to the library real quick and they can check it over with you
Student: When does that start?
Tutor: Hmm (.2) from 8 so-uh like 20 minutes ago to uh-11pm at night
Student: So uh- 8 in the morning to 11 pm at night?
Tutor: Uh-[yup
Student: [Or-uh okay
(2)
Alright
(3)
Tutor: So-uh does your instructor need to-uh know that we had this uh-session? Do you want me to send her a report form?
Student: Uh-Yes, she did say she would like to know. I have to get her email?
Tutor: No, uh-I just need the course # and her name-uh-if you could send it to

226		me in the chat box?
227	Student:	O:kay
228		((clicks around on the screen))
229		uh-where's the chat box?
230	Tutor:	You gotta (.4)
231	Student:	Uh okay
232		((Typing))
233		Is-uh that okay? Is that all you need? Is that good?
234		
235	Tutor:	H::mmm Yup. Okay um- can I have your last name?
236	Student:	Sure
237		((typing))
238	Tutor:	Okay
239		(2)
240		She'll get an email about it.
241	Student:	Okay
242	Tutor:	Okay?
243	Student:	Alright
244	Tutor:	And if you could do me a favor and send the desktop uh back over to me (.1) like-uh make me-uh whatever it's called again. (1)
245	Student:	Alright how do I do that?
246	Tutor:	Hm:: let's see here (.2) if you go into uh- can you see my mouse at all?
245	Student:	((clicking on screening pulling up different windows)) No No
246	Tutor:	[uh-okay
247	Student:	[( )
248	Tutor:	Okay well if you go back into the message (.2) window before the-uh
249		meeting you see that little blue and green circle
250		((referring to the WebEx icon on the bottom of the student's screen)
251		down on your bar
252	Student:	((clicks on the icon))
253		[This do it
254	Tutor:	[There you go
255	Student:	Okay
256	Tutor:	Okay
257	Student:	Alright
258	Tutor:	Alright hm: I'll be sure to send your professor a-um report form so-uh
259		she'll get it.
260	Student:	Okay
261	Tutor:	Alright?
262	Student:	Alright thank you
263	Tutor:	Yea no problem and good luck with the rest of your paper
264	Student:	Alright thank you
265	Tutor:	Alright have a good night
266	Student:	Thanks you too

267 Tutor: Bye
268 ((End of session 17 minutes and 21 seconds))

APPENDIX H

Conversation Analysis Transcript Glossary

Below the transcription symbols are described in details:

Symbol	Meaning
( )	Number in parentheses indicates pauses in tenths of a second. A period in the parentheses indicates a micropause
[ ]	Brackets indicates overlap talking
-	Hyphen indicates a cutoff or self-interruption
___	Underlining indicates speaker emphasis
:	A colon indicates an extension of the sound
.hh	hh following a dot indicates an audible intake of breath
(( ))	Double parentheses comments on what happens or how something is done

APPENDIX I

Retrospective Interview Example

((3¼ page paper; tutor and student rewrote parts of her introduction and conclusion during the session and looked over her citations))

Interviewer: Walk me through your revision process. What changes did you make after the session?

Student: I, um, I think I added a little bit more to it ((pointing to the introduction)).
I tweaked it just a little bit more.
((only changes made to the introduction were minor word/grammar changes))
And then ((flips to the last page of the paper)) I tweaked my conclusion a little bit more after I was done.

Interviewer: You referred to that section as a mapping statement during your session. What is a mapping statement?

Student: What my teacher wants… it's like a thesis statement, except she didn't really call it a thesis statement she preferred to call it a mapping statement because what that statement does is it maps out the entire paper so it basically tells the audience what it is you're going to talk about during the paper.

Interviewer: You and the tutor had a discussion about whether or not you should use "I" in the mapping statement. Did you end up including "I" in it?

Student: I did end up saying that I believe, I did end up including "I" in my mapping statement. I just wasn't sure. Most of the time in my other papers your thesis, when there was a thesis statement required the paper was usually formal so you don't want to have first person and all that, so that was the only thing I was worried about, but the tutor said it was fine and I didn't end up losing points for it so it ended up well. So it was good.

Interviewer: You said you went back and tweaked things after the session. How did you go about doing that? What was your process for revising?

Student: If anything, I just, the tutor really helped me actually use that last statement to organize the rest of the paper to show the organization for the rest of my paper. And then the last paragraph is what she helped me with the most. And then she, and when that was done, I just added a little bit more to the conclusion to like make it more powerful because it was kind of really vague, it was vague, but it was still good, I just added more to kind of make it more of a powerful ending statement or ending paragraph.

((she added one sentence to the end of her conclusion that specifically

connected her ideas back to her mapping statement in her introduction))

I did the best I could on the paper, and I ended up getting full points on it. It's a good paper. ((laughs))

Interviewer: Anything else about your writing process or your revision process you'd like to share?

Student: Hmm… I had a peer review before the session that helped me out and that helped me out with concerns to have so that I wasn't going into the session without really having anything not to talk about. So that was the only thing.