

Fall 12-2016

High School Peer Tutor Alumni Research Project

Andrew L. Jeter

Follow this and additional works at: <http://knowledge.library.iup.edu/etd>

 Part of the [Curriculum and Instruction Commons](#), [Rhetoric and Composition Commons](#), and the [Secondary Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Jeter, Andrew L., "High School Peer Tutor Alumni Research Project" (2016). *Theses and Dissertations (All)*. 1424.
<http://knowledge.library.iup.edu/etd/1424>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by Knowledge Repository @ IUP. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations (All) by an authorized administrator of Knowledge Repository @ IUP. For more information, please contact cclouser@iup.edu, sara.parme@iup.edu.

HIGH SCHOOL PEER TUTOR ALUMNI RESEARCH PROJECT

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirement for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Andrew L. Jeter

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

December 2016

© 2016 Andrew L. Jeter

All Rights Reserved

Indiana University of Pennsylvania
School of Graduate Studies and Research
Department of English

We hereby approve the dissertation of

Andrew L. Jeter

Candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Bennett A. Rafoth, Ed.D.
Distinguished University Professor, Advisor

Gian S. Pagnucci, Ph.D.
Distinguished University Professor

Sharon K. Deckert, Ph.D.
Professor of English

Richard Kent, Ph.D.
Professor of Literacy & English Education
University of Maine

ACCEPTED

Randy L. Martin, Ph.D.
Dean
School of Graduate Studies and Research

Title: High School Peer Tutor Alumni Research Project

Author: Andrew L. Jeter

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Bennett A. Rafoth

Dissertation Committee Members: Dr. Gian S. Pagnucci
Dr. Sharon K. Deckert
Dr. Richard Kent

This study examines the perceived intellectual and dispositional takeaways for high school alumni who had been peer tutors in their secondary context. The research question which drove this study was, “What abilities, values, and skills do tutors develop from their experience as peer tutors and how, if at all, have they used those abilities, values, and skills in their lives beyond high school?” The findings come from the completed surveys of 63 high school tutor alumni who all tutored at a large, public suburban high school with a diverse population, and who represent a cross-section of the school’s population. The survey was adapted from one made available by the Peer Writing Tutor Alumni Research Project (PWTARP), a national project which seeks to better understand the developmental process of students who engage in the work of peer tutoring during their undergraduate university experience. I collected this data between 2010 and 2013 in my role as the program coordinator and although I knew these tutors very well, their responses were anonymous. Participants named 25 skills, abilities, and values they developed. Participants also indicated, through the survey’s four Likert-scale questions, that they found their tutor experiences were important or influential to their development after high school. This study used the grounded theory method of initial and focused coding for analysis of the data generated by the survey’s open-ended responses. These responses generated 180 pages of text. During the analysis 132 initial codes were

applied to 2,231 excerpts from the survey responses. The 132 initial codes were grouped into 34 focused codes. These focused codes were further consolidated into 11 categories that describe the learned skills, innate abilities, and developed values of respondents. These analytic categories are descriptive in nature and constitute the major findings of this study. These categories include writing, reading, collaboration, adaptability, patience, perseverance, confidence, maturity, leadership, bravery, and joie de vivre.

Keywords: peer, tutor, collaboration, skills, abilities, values, high school

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
ONE	INTRODUCTION	1
	Overview of the Study	1
	Background of the Problem	3
	Collaborative Learning in a Broader Context	11
	Design of the Study	14
	Benefit of the Study	17
	Research Question	20
	Organization of the Study	21
TWO	REVIEW OF LITERATURE	23
	Introduction	23
	Theoretical Framework	24
	Review of Literature	26
	Abilities	29
	Skills	32
	Values	38
	Conclusion	44
THREE	METHODOLOGY	46
	Introduction	46
	Context and Design of the Study	47
	Data Collection	49
	Participants	50
	Methodology	52
	Description of the Survey	53
	Method of Analysis	55
	Conclusion	59
FOUR	FINDINGS	61
	Introduction	61
	Survey Results	63
	Skills, Abilities, and Values Defined	64
	Research Question Answered	65
	Coding Process Results	69
	Categories	70
	Writing	71
	Reading	72
	Collaboration	73

Chapter		Page
	Adaptability.....	75
	Patience.....	77
	Perseverance.....	78
	Confidence.....	79
	Maturity.....	80
	Leadership.....	82
	Bravery.....	83
	Joie de vivre.....	84
	Findings Summarized.....	86
FIVE	DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	90
	Introduction.....	90
	PWTARP and the High School Tutor's Experience.....	90
	A Tutor's Place in the World.....	95
	Skills.....	98
	Abilities.....	99
	Values.....	101
	Implications and Limitations.....	102
	Implications for High School Teaching.....	103
	Implications for Writing Center Practice.....	105
	Implications for Future Research.....	106
	Reading.....	106
	Classroom-embedded collaborative learning.....	108
	Limitations of the Study.....	109
	Conclusion.....	109
	REFERENCES.....	111
	APPENDICES.....	118
	Appendix A – Peer Tutor Alumni Research Project Survey.....	118
	Appendix B – Coding Instructions.....	122
	Appendix C – Initial Codes Listed Alphabetically.....	124

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1 Percentage of Survey Participants by Age and University Major	52
2 Named Skills, Abilities, and Values and Number of Uses by Participants	66
3 Training & Experiences Impact on Development as University Students	67
4 Extent Literacy Skills Influenced by Tutoring Experience.....	67
5 Importance of Skills, Abilities, & Values in Volunteer & Charitable Work.....	68
6 Training & Experiences Importance to Job Interviews & Hiring Process.....	68
7 Focused Codes	70
8 Analytic Categories.....	70

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1 Grounded theory process for analysis of data.....	56
2 Grounded theory coding sequence for leadership category	59

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Overview of the Study

The Peer Writing Tutor Alumni Research Project (PWTARP) seeks to better understand the developmental process of students who engage in the work of peer tutoring during their undergraduate university experience. The project is a way to capture what its originators, Brad Hughes, Paula Gillespie, and Harvey Kail (2010), described as “one of the most important experiences in [peer tutors’] educational careers, a complex, multi-faceted experience whose influence persists not just years but decades after graduation” (2010, p. 13). An early goal of the originators was to give others easy access to the survey they used to gather data on their own alumni tutors. The expressed hope of Hughes et al. was that more college and university writing centers would repeat the research and add to the collective knowledge about the development of young people who engage in peer tutoring.

Writing centers, also commonly known as literacy centers or learning centers, are places set aside on campuses where students can work on their writing. Frequently, these centers use student tutors, also known as peer tutors. Students are often more willing to learn from a peer and within the peer-to-peer dynamic and find opportunities to improve their writing. For those who work and conduct research in writing centers, the impact of peer tutoring on a tutor’s education is apparent as well.

This study collected and analyzed existing public data from a large, public, suburban high school. The data consist of responses to surveys returned over three years beginning in 2010 and ending in 2013. The data was analyzed to determine what abilities,

values, and skills high school tutors reported developing from their experiences as peer tutors and how they have used those abilities, values, and skills in their lives beyond high school. Understanding these skills, abilities, and values—these talents of the former high school tutors—is key to understanding what the respondents were trying to communicate through the survey. For the purposes of this study, skills, abilities, and values will be defined, which was not done in the original PWTARP (Hughes et al., 2010), as something one can learn (skills), something that one has the innate potential for (abilities), and something one can develop from core beliefs (values). This study extends the PWTARP by applying it to tutors who worked as high school peer tutors before moving on to college or university and beyond. The addition of this study, the first from a high school, to the PWTARP gives the writing center community a more complete picture of the impact of tutoring on tutors and on their long-term development. This dissertation also joins a growing number of dissertations that analyze high school writing centers and peer-to-peer tutoring programs. These dissertations, particularly Cynthia Dean's (2010) *The Ecology of Peer Tutoring: Perspectives of Student Staff in One High School Writing Center* and Dawn Fels' (2010) *The Vernacular Architecture of Composition Instruction: What the Voices of Writing Center Tutors Reveal about Standardized Instruction and Assessment*, argue for a deeper engagement in this growing field. Dean's dissertation looked at the transitions that students made between their roles as students and as tutors in the context of high school. Fels studied the impact of standardized writing pedagogy and assessment on student writers through the eyes of tutors who had worked in high school writing centers. The findings of the current dissertation continue this conversation. The findings also help to inform high school

writing center directors who seek to create better learning environments for peer tutors and help high school administrators to better appreciate the important teaching and learning that occurs in high school writing centers.

Background of the Problem

This study used anonymous responses to a survey of graduated tutors that I conducted while I was the coordinator of the Niles West High School Literacy Center. Originally, the survey responses were to be used in a report to the board of education and administration; however, due to an internal political shift on the board of education that moved its focus elsewhere, that report was never completed. The responses remained unexamined until I repurposed them for this study. Generally, little research has been conducted on this population, and this study is the first to address what tutors at the secondary level learn and how they utilize what they learn in college and beyond. Considering the number of high schools in America, there can be little doubt that many have some kind of tutoring program, but finding or identifying them is a daunting task. Having said that, the number of “found” programs increases every year. In the Midwest and the Mid-Atlantic states particularly, centers are finding each other and getting organized (Baran, 2013; CAPTA, n.d.; COWLLC, n.d.). The growing number of “found” peer tutoring programs around the country calls for us to understand how these programs impact young learners.

The Literacy Center opened in 2005 at Niles West High School, a public, suburban high school with approximately 2,600 students. By 2010, the program had graduated 296 tutors who had conducted over 100,000 tutoring sessions. As the coordinator of the program, I got to know these tutors very well and saw how hard they

worked on a daily basis to help their peers. After their graduations, the tutor alumni would often correspond with me or come for visits to tell me about their lives. It became apparent to me that many of them showed a continuing commitment to participating in or creating occasions for collaborative learning opportunities and service learning. For example, Sean quadruple majored while working as a Writing Fellow at his university. Charles created an after-school tutoring program at a local high school close to his university. Kelly tutored grade school and middle school students while studying to be an English teacher. Ivan became the first freshman ever hired to tutor at his university's math center. Many other participants reported majoring or minoring in education or volunteering their time and energy to charitable organizations. These examples suggested to me the possibility that the peer-to-peer program gave these alumni tutors something unique that may not have been available in more traditional learning settings. These communications from my tutor alumni also inspired the original survey and this study of that survey's data.

At stake here are much broader questions related to teaching, learning, and the purpose of education as we move into the 21st century. If students are learning skills, abilities, and values in peer-to-peer situations, should more schools institute similar programs? Should these programs be more widely available, and how would those programs be created in schools with tight funding? Is there a way to provide students with collaborative learning opportunities without creating a writing center? What is the role of the teacher in a classroom where collaborative learning happens, and how can high school writing assignments be designed to facilitate that collaborative learning?

Many of these questions are informed by the work of John Dewey (1944), one of the founders of progressivism. Dewey, who believed in the instrumental value of education for creating a more democratic, equal, and just society, can be considered a forefather of progressive writing center pedagogy. Dewey established that the purpose of education was more education, by which he meant that learning should last throughout one's lifetime and is its own reward. Dewey's concept of education is liberal in nature, a quality most clearly reflected in his description of what it means to have the dispositional attitude of "open-mindedness" (1944, p. 206), which was required for a truly reflective thinker. According to Dewey, liberalness of mind is the "accessibility of mind to any and every consideration that will throw light upon the situation that needs to be cleared up, and that will help determine the consequences of acting this way or that" (1944, p. 206). A liberal education is, as William Cronon (1998) describes it, "an educational tradition that celebrates and nurtures human freedom" (1998, p. 73). Essentially, Dewey argued that "intellectual growth means constant expansion of horizons and consequent formation of new purposes and new responses" (1944, p. 206).

Peer tutoring draws on many of the elements of the progressive, liberal education described by Dewey (1944). The progressive influence on writing centers and the thousands of schools and colleges where they are housed is not a new phenomenon. In peer tutoring, a student-centered focus is maintained, a personal interest in learning is fostered, curriculum is connected to real-world problems and concerns, and life-long learners are created. Although research dating back to the 1970s shows that writing centers have sought to foster a progressive education, for reasons that are not entirely clear, writing centers have only thrived primarily in the postsecondary context. With the

publication of Kenneth Bruffee's seminal 1978 article "The Brooklyn Plan: Attaining Intellectual Growth through Peer-Group Tutoring," writing centers at the postsecondary level had a roadmap for creating what would eventually become the nearly ubiquitous presence of writing centers on college and university campuses nationwide.

Just a few years before that, in 1975 and 1976, two books were published on the value of peer-to-peer tutoring for grade and high school-age children. Sophie Bloom's (1975) "Peer and Cross-Age Tutoring in the Schools: An Individualized Supplement to Group Instruction," published by the National Institute of Education, was both a rationale for using peer and cross-age tutors in the classroom and a review of the relevant research at the time. Of the 15 studies Bloom used in her rationale, nine, or 60%, reported findings that student tutors improved, or had "positive and significant changes in [their] attitudes toward self or school" (1975, p. 14) in terms of their "attitude toward school or self concept" (1975, p. 13) of tutors. By this, Bloom meant researchers who attempted to measure "changes in attitude toward self and school" (1975, p. 14). Bloom concluded that tutors benefit from peer-to-peer work because they are placed in a position of responsibility that helps them to mature. A year later, in a book of collected essays called *Children as Teachers: Theory and Research on Tutoring*, Allen (1976) found that in terms of tutor gains, tutoring helped below-grade level tutors to improve their reading skills, but it called for more widespread research on outcomes for tutors. Bruffee (1978) utilized much of Bloom's and Allen's work to call for greater use of peer tutoring programs at colleges and universities. Bruffee laid the groundwork for much of what we now see as the work of writing centers and their peer-to-peer tutoring programs at the postsecondary level, and posited an understanding of the intellectual growth tutors

experience as a result of their work. Bruffee's impact was profound for peer-tutoring programs at the postsecondary level, but, even though much of the research he used came for secondary contexts, high school writing centers are still uncommon.

Bruffee (1978) and others hoped that working with peers would give students an opportunity to step outside of the restrictive transmission model, the top-down relationship of teacher-to-student, so that they might partake in what Bruffee called a "socially productive, service-oriented social exchange" (1978, p. 449). Bruffee relies on the notion of "social-intellectual processes at the root of peer tutoring" (1978, p. 448) as a way to explain how tutors and tutees gain more than simply academic knowledge from tutoring. They gain the academic maturity necessary for Dewey's "open-mindedness" (1944, p. 206) as well. Furthermore, Bruffee discovered that not only did peer-to-peer tutoring help students to make better judgments about the world (1978, p. 453), but they were also able to unlock knowledge of which they were previously unaware (1978, p. 451). Bruffee's argument then was that colleges and universities needed to find a way to incorporate what was known to work with those high school students, as described by Bloom (1975) and Allen (1976), at the postsecondary level.

Harvey Kail and John Trimbur (1987), in their essay "The Politics of Peer Tutoring," described the reality of what Bruffee (1978) had inspired the field to consider, specifically that peer tutoring in the context of a college or university writing center allowed tutors to reach their "socially productive, service-oriented social exchange" (Bruffee, 1978, p. 449) by specifically "locating the source of knowledge in the social fabric rather than in the power lines of generation and transmission" (Kail & Trimbur, 1987, p. 10) traditionally associated with teachers' transmission of knowledge to

students. Through their metaphor of power lines, Kail and Trimbur argued that the lines of transmission between those creating the knowledge—the scholars in the field—and those who are supposed to receive that knowledge—the students—is turned on its head when peer-to-peer collaborative learning is incorporated into the learning matrix. In a collaborative situation, students begin to construct their own knowledge because they have gained a liberalness of mind that allows them to throw “light upon the situation that needs to be cleared up” (Dewey, 1944, p. 206). They disrupt the status quo of the traditional learning environment as Kail and Trimbur explain:

Locating the sources of knowledge in the social fabric rather than in the power lines of generation and transmission offers a way to talk about peer tutoring that goes beyond the operational model of plugging tutors into the grid. Peer tutoring, in this view, is not a supplement to the normal delivery system but an implicit critique of gen/tran ideology and the official structures of curriculum and instruction (1987, p. 10).

Kail and Trimbur (1987) describe the situation created by this critique as “a crisis of authority” (1987, p. 10) because it decreases the dependency that students have on their teachers. The habit of relying on teachers for acquisition of knowledge, “the ideology of gen/tran” (1987, p. 10), is something that students must then unlearn. It is through collaborative learning, they argue, that the process of this unlearning begins. “Peer tutoring based on collaborative learning... provides students with a form of social organization to negotiate the crisis successfully and reenter the official structures of authority as active agents rather than as passive objects of transmission” (Kail & Trimbur, 1987, p. 11).

Theorized in this way, it becomes obvious how this “crisis of authority” (Kail & Trimbur, 1987, p. 10), born of the integration of collaborative learning into a traditional classroom setting, can change an institution. It can also reframe the idea that the tutor in peer tutoring needs to somehow have superior writing or literacy skills. In fact, it has been noted elsewhere that peer-to-peer tutoring works best when the tutor is as close to a peer of the tutee as possible and that students at-risk, those with educational disabilities, or who are below grade-level are often better at assisting other students and often learn more than the tutee through the process (Allen, 1976; Jeter, 2011a).

In the years that I ran the peer-tutoring program (2005 – 2013), I saw evidence of this on a daily basis. When we created the program, we knew we could not rely solely on our best writers primarily because we were creating a literacy center where students could get assistance with any academic subject not just writing. In order to hire tutors, we had agreed that tutors could have a “C” in a subject like English while being primarily interested in tutoring math or science. Not every student, after all, can be adept at every subject. Once we had made this decision, I began to see all types of students being recommended to be tutors.

In the next few years, I started to see the amazing work that students who had their own academic struggles could do with others. Students from our special education classes had a wealth of strategies to assist other students. One young woman, Ruth, had been in special education classes for English and science for most of her middle school and high school careers, but found a following of eager students when she began tutoring. Each day she worked, a line of math tutees would form all waiting for Ruth to have a free

moment. She would frequently start a session saying something along the lines of “Oh yes, this was hard for me to at first....” Students loved her.

We also hired students from our ELL program. Jimmy was an ethnic Korean whose parents immigrated to the US from Brazil with he was in eighth grade. Even though Jimmy struggled to acquire his third language, English, he was a sought-after tutor for chemistry and physics. He once told me that he liked being a tutor because he was so quiet in class, but the peer-tutoring program gave him a chance to talk to his peers. This social aspect to the work of a peer-tutoring program cannot be underestimated. We also hired from our athletic teams. Alice was the captain of our girls’ basketball team. A strong player who could beat most of the boys in one-on-one, Alice had never believed herself to be strong in academics. The peer-tutoring program showed her what she could do and she, in turn, showed most of the boys basketball team the importance of winning off the court as well as on. Her presence as someone they respected got them to show up for help on the academic work.

At the same time that we were hiring these young people even though they might not have been the best writers, I was also making sure to push them in terms of tutoring outside of their comfort zones. Jimmy found that tutoring other ELL students was fulfilling and Ruth learned that there was a logic to the arguments in papers that mirrored the logic in math. Alice and others found that their own perceptions of their own shortcomings were often just that, perceptions picked up along their academic path that were frequently baseless. Daniel, for instance, had been a mathematics prodigy since grade school. As a tutor, he gravitated toward the math and science sessions for his first year of tutoring. When he returned as a junior, I told him that I expected him to help out

with English and social studies papers as well. Reluctantly, at first, he put himself to the test of tutoring writing. At the end of this senior year, he told an audience of his peers, at the Center's award ceremony, that working outside of his comfort zone made him a better tutor and student. He told them that he had learned far more than his tutees during those writing sessions and had sloughed off his anxiety about writing.

This more egalitarian approach to tutor pairing enacts Bruffee's (2008) "conversation of mankind" (2008, p. 96) because it mirrors the read-aloud strategy from reading pedagogy (Fisher, Frey & Lapp, 2009), which has become a key strategy used by high school teachers in the past decade. This strategy stipulates that a teacher reads a piece of writing out loud while giving expression to the thoughts and difficulties she has with the text and the process or strategy she uses to overcome those difficulties. In this way, teachers model what strong readers do when they read. Students then apply that information or enact those strategies to their own reading situations. In actual peer-to-peer, or as-near-to-peer-as-possible, tutoring, wherein the tutor and the tutee have as-close-to-similar experiences and skills, this modeling and enactment happens automatically and without the artifice of a teacher pretending to be the same age as the students who are, in the secondary level, significantly younger and less skilled at reading.

Collaborative Learning in a Broader Context

In recent years, the current literature in the field has taken Dewey's (1944) values and extended them to groups that have traditionally been overlooked by writing center scholarship. Works like Laura Greenfield and Karen Rowan's (2011) *Writing Centers and the New Racism: A Call for Sustainable Dialogue and Change*, Frankie Condon's (2012) *I Hope I Join the Band: Narrative, Affiliation, and Antiracist Rhetoric*, and Harry

Denny's (2010) *Facing the Center: Toward an Identity Politics of One-to-One Mentoring* have all asked readers to consider the kinds of values Dewey enumerated, particularly through fostering a personal interest in learning, finding connections between curriculum and real-world problems, and becoming more open-minded, in terms of how they might help tutors and the centers in which they work to address systemic bigotry.

Lori Salem and Jennifer Follett (2013), in their essay, "The Idea of a Faculty Writing Center: Moving from Troubling Deficiencies to Collaborative Engagement" outline how the dynamics of collaborative learning, which has proved itself so successful with students, needs to be applied to the faculty at universities. They call for enacting Dewey's (1944) values of creating and maintaining a student-centered focus—even if those "students" are actually faculty writers—to foster a personal interest in learning, to connect real-world problems and concerns to the curriculum, or, again for faculty writers, to introduce the processes of publishing academic writing, applying for tenure, and furthering the scholarly conversation of the academy. In calling for universities to support the idea of a faculty writing center, Salem and Follett ask institutions of higher learning as a whole to embrace Dewey's idea of open-mindedness.

The promise of collaborative learning and the enactment of Dewey's (1944) open mindedness has taken off at the postsecondary level. It has led the field of writing center studies to grow to the point that these investigations into its liminal spaces inform our understanding of the community as a whole. This is particularly the case in terms of how writing centers and peer tutoring programs manifest the Deweyan call for education that can help foster a more democratic, equal, and just society. The scholarship suggests that the time is right to look far more closely at the work of high school writing centers to see

if they too are on track to advance the ideals and values of open-mindedness, democracy, equity, and justice. The time is right to ask what abilities, values, and skills tutors develop from their experience as peer tutors and how they have used those abilities, values, and skills in their lives beyond high school.

High school writing centers across the nation are often designed to embolden tutors to become a part of the collaborative learning that will lead them to be independent, critical thinkers who willingly disrupt the traditional gen/tran ideology (Kail & Trimbur, 1987, p. 10). Many high school writing centers are student-centered or tutor-led, which promotes tutors as leaders in the community. They also promote the work of tutors as connected to the real-world work of the students who attend the schools. These centers also focus on the collaborative efforts of their tutors with tutees. For example, in the Chicagoland area, the 21 members of the Chicagoland Organization of Writing, Literacy, and Learning Centers (COWLLC, n.d.) all adhere to the kinds of training formats that give their peer tutors an opportunity to see their work not as remediation, but as knowledge construction. Many of these schools, in fact, have embraced collaborative learning to such an extent that their tutors, not teachers, train neophytes for their peer-to-peer programs. These programs and others, like the Minnetonka Public High School Writing Center (Minnetonka Public Schools, 2014) in Minnetonka, Minnesota, the Thomas A Edison High School Writing Center (Evans, 2014) in Fairfax, Virginia, and the Berkeley Preparatory School's Betty-Bruce H. Hoover Center for Writing (Berkeley Preparatory School, n.d.) in Tampa, Florida, enact Dewey's (1944) values through their daily work and in the missions that guide their work.

Design of the Study

This study collected existing data consisting of the results from a survey of 63 alumni tutors from a diverse, suburban, public school of approximately 2,600 students. The school is comprised of 47.5% white, 28.9% Asian, 13.8% Hispanic, 5.6% black, and 3.8% multiple races. Additionally, 36.5% of students in the school have low-income status, 11.6% of students have disabilities, and 4.9% of students are designated as English language learners (Illinois State Board of Education, n.d.). The survey was based on one created by Kail et al. (2016). To date, I have been unable to find the any published records of another high school engaging in the work of the PWTARP, and this is the first dissertation to utilize the PWTARP for data collection.

The survey was distributed via email to alumni who had spent at least a year away from high school. Emails were sent between 2010 and 2013. The emails contained a link to a Google form that was the survey and informed consent letter (see Appendix A for full survey and letter). The survey was comprised of two sections. The first section collected demographic details, which included age, gender, graduation year, number of years worked as a tutor, college/university graduation year if applicable, college/university major and minor, post-undergraduate degree status, and occupation. The second section asked a mix of open-ended and Likert-scale questions. The first of these questions asked respondents to list what abilities, values, and skills they felt they had acquired from their tutoring experience. The subsequent questions asked for examples of the abilities, values, and skills they had gained and how those examples had either influenced respondents' choice of major/minor and/or been of value to them in the search for positions at companies or graduate schools. The next two questions asked

participants about the importance of these abilities, values, and skills in their family relationships and friendships as well as their influence on participants to engage in charitable or volunteer acts. Next, the survey asked a question about how much their tutoring experience has influenced their own literacy. Finally, the survey ended with a question that allowed participants to discuss any drawbacks in their experience as a tutor. These open-ended questions generated 180 pages of writing from the study's 63 respondents. The questions were open-ended so that they could capture the full responses of participants to their educational experience.

If a secondary school has participated in the PWTARP, those findings have not been published. Therefore, in early 2010, in my role as the peer tutoring program coordinator, I looked to existing high school tutor scholarship to determine if similarities existed between the findings of the surveys and the experience of high school tutors. In determining that similarities did exist, I adapted the PWTARP survey for the needs of our high school alumni. I then emailed the survey, a Google Form housed in my work Google account, to alumni for whom I had an email address and who had attended university for at least one year. As tutors graduated, I emailed them the survey after they had completed their first two semesters of college.

The original reason for collecting the data was to use it for an annual report to the Board of Education for our district to legitimize the work of the tutors specifically and, more generally, the peer-tutoring program. The school administrators, in particular the English department chair and the principal, also believed that this was a worthwhile way to assess the work of the tutors and the program. During my tenure as coordinator, I was responsible for creating an annual report to the school board. Prior to the alumni survey, I

had also conducted student satisfaction surveys and a research project on the impact of one-on-one tutoring sessions for freshmen social studies and English papers. Those data were eventually reported to the board and made a part of the Board of Education Board Packet. The data from the alumni survey, however, were never reported to the board as its focus had moved on from the peer-tutoring program. To date, no official analysis of this data has been undertaken. I had read many of the survey responses, but not in a systemic, analytical way.

The respondents graduated from high school between the years 2006 and 2013 and were between the ages of 18 and 24 at the time they completed the survey. Respondents reported that they had or would graduate from college between 2009 and 2017. The respondents were 53% female and 47% male. During their high school careers, 30.2% of respondents had tutored for one year, 39.7% had tutored for two years, and 30.2% had tutored for three years, the maximum number of years a student could tutor in the high school. Finally, respondents to this survey represented a cross-section of the high school population because they were identified as someone who acted as a leader in the community. The return rate for the survey was approximately 31% and occurred over a 3-year period.

The analysis of the data followed the specific approach to grounded theory methods set forth in Kathy Charmaz's (2014) *Constructing Grounded Theory*, which is in keeping with the methods used by Hughes, Gillespie, and Kail (2010) in the PWTARP. In their original research, Hughes et al. (2010) described their methodology as "an organic, recursive process" (2010, p. 23) wherein each researcher read their data independently and created a detailed list of themes. By comparing the themes and

clumping them accordingly under more general themes, the team developed categories for their findings.

Benefit of the Study

In November of 2013, the National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing (NCPTW) convened in Tampa, Florida. It would be Harvey Kail's last conference as the Director of the Writing Center at the University of Maine before he retired. Kail's career has been long and distinguished, and he has, in many ways, helped to define the writing center community through his leadership and scholarship. So it was with some surprise that I saw Harvey Kail enter the room that was the site of the Special Interest Group (SIG) for High School Tutoring. As the leader of this SIG, I was interested in hearing from constituents about how NCPTW could continue to reach out to high school writing centers and tutors.

In the decade that I have been working with high school students and collaborative learning paradigms, I have also been working to educate people from postsecondary contexts about how much our secondary school work is like their work. I have at times run into people who did not believe that a writing center could really work in a high school, let alone a peer tutoring program. People have patiently explained to me, mostly before they discovered where I worked, that teenagers really aren't capable of tutoring their peers on something as complex as writing. Frequently, when I am introduced to someone from a university, his or her first question to me is, "What University helped you set up your center?" I am usually met with raised eyebrows when I say, "None." And even though there have been writing centers and peer tutoring

programs in high schools since the early 1980s (Ferrell, 1989; Kent, 2006; Fels & Wells, 2011), people still seemed shocked at this “new” development in their field.

Additionally, my colleagues and I have felt a resistance on the part of our university colleagues against high school teachers and tutors being recognized as equal members of the writing center community. Not all of this is intentional, of course. Except for three books, *The High School Writing Center: Establishing One and Maintaining One* (Farrell, 1989), *A Guide to Creating Student-staffed Writing Centers: Grades 6-12* (Kent, 2006), and *The Successful High School Writing Center: Building the Best Program with Your Students* (Fels & Wells, 2011), there is very little in the way of books or articles that in the course of discussing writing centers or peer tutoring acknowledge that these programs exist anywhere except in postsecondary contexts. Reading the scholarship of the field, then, becomes a matter of translating for anyone interested in thinking about writing centers and peer tutors at the secondary level. Indeed, this is so pervasive in the field that even a book like Neal Lerner’s (2009) well-received *The Idea of Writing Laboratory*, which chronicles the history of writing centers, essentially ignores the past 30 years of high school writing center history. More recently, Jackie Grutsch McKinney’s (2013) new book *Peripheral Visions for the Writing Centers* purports that “writing center work is complex, but the storying of writing center work is not” (2013, p. 3). Secondary school peer tutors make the story of writing centers much more complex, but apparently as there is only one slight reference to high schools in the book and not one reference to high school peer tutors, not enough to be included in a book that would complicate the “grand narrative” (2013, p. 3) told by writing center professionals. Again, however, it should be noted that it is not always an intentional exclusion. As Grutsch McKinney

points out, “The effect of the writing center grand narrative can be a sort of collective tunnel vision” (2013, p. 5). In the case of high school writing centers and peer tutoring programs, the tunneling of the vision of postsecondary school professionals has excluded the great rising sea of high school professionals and peer tutors who are very quickly changing the landscape of writing center work.

I am glad to report, however, that in the past decade, things have begun to change. Although I am usually the first person to point out the major differences between working with teenagers and young college-age adults, it is becoming clearer to many that the important work that these secondary school teachers and tutors are doing is not too terribly different than the work of professors and tutors at postsecondary contexts like two-year colleges, small liberal arts colleges, and even major research universities.

So, when Harvey Kail walked into the SIG for High School Tutoring, it was apparent that times really were changing. As with every SIG I run, we began by introducing ourselves and explaining why we were attending. When we got to Kail, he was succinct—he was there because high school writing centers and peer tutors were “the future of our field” (personal communication, November 2, 2013).

Although this study was conceived before Kail’s pronouncement, indeed before I had even met Kail, its existence is further proof that Kail was right. There are now 137 high school writing centers that have been identified by the International Writing Centers Association’s (IWCA) Secondary School Committee (Baran, 2013). NCPTW in both 2012 and 2013 were chaired by high school teachers. There are now two micro-regional organizations, in Chicago and Washington DC, that cater primarily to secondary school centers and their tutors, and each of these organizations have hosted their own

conferences for approximately 500 and 300 tutors respectively (COWLLC, 2011; NVWP, 2013). Clearly, the future is now.

In addition to being relevant to the rapid growth of high school writing centers and their peer tutoring programs, this study also seeks to bridge a gap in research. In recent years, dissertations have been written about high school writing center tutors and their work and identity in that context (Dean, 2010; Fels, 2010) and on what mechanisms students and tutors use to transfer academic knowledge from one context to another (Wells, 2011). This study hopes to add to this knowledge by specifically looking at the abilities, values, and skills alumni tutors believe they learned from their tutoring experiences, which are outside the realm of the traditional classroom. At its root, this study is an extension of the PWTARP, which looked at tutors from postsecondary contexts only. With the blooming of secondary school writing centers and peer tutoring programs, it is now necessary to add secondary school peer tutors to this important research project.

Research Question

The idea for this research was conceived in the spring of 2009 when, after several years of receiving messages from alumni tutors about their lives after high school, I recognized a need to investigate what skills, abilities, and values graduated tutors were transferring with them to their postsecondary contexts. The research question was developed as I began to design the study, which was heavily influenced by my discovery of the PWTARP website (Kail et al., 2016) which contained a survey and information about similar research conducted at the university level. This helped me to develop the research question for this study:

What abilities, values, and skills do tutors develop from their experience as peer tutors and how, if at all, have they used those abilities, values, and skills in their lives beyond high school?

In their 2010 article on the PWTARP, Hughes et al. called for other college and university peer tutoring programs to take up this research and add their data to the project (2010, p. 17). Since the PWTARP was created, 10 colleges and universities, including Duke University, George Mason University, Penn State University, and the University of Vermont, have added their own work to the site (Kail et al., 2016; Hughes et al., 2010, p. 39). The inclusion of data from a secondary school setting has the potential to strengthen my argument that high school writing centers and peer-tutoring programs should be valued alongside college and university writing centers and peer tutoring programs.

Organization of the Study

This dissertation is organized in five chapters. In this chapter, I provided a rationale and overview of my study and its relation to the PWTARP project. I explained the design of the study and provided the research question the study seeks to answer. In Chapter 2, I clarify the theoretical framework for the study and define key terms used in that framework. The review of the literature is organized around the framework and includes documents from the PWTARP, journals, and essays of high school tutors.

In Chapter 3, I chart the methodology for my research, which involves using grounded theory methods to code and analyze 63 surveys comprised of 180 pages of open-ended responses. The open-ended questions gave alumni the opportunity to reflect, in some cases for the first time, on their educational experiences in high school. I coded this data with a coding assistant, who is also a writing center director and who has

worked with peer tutors at the high school level for the past 17 years. She was provided with detailed instructions (see Appendix B for instructions), which are discussed in Chapter 3.

Chapter 4 provides a detailed report of the findings from the coding of the data collected from the high school archives. And in Chapter 5, I discuss the highlights of the results and explain the implications of the findings, including the implications for teaching at the secondary level. I also offer possible directions for further research particularly in terms of tutor reading skills, the goals of tutor training, and the role of collaborative learning in the classroom.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

This study sought to analyze existing data collected through a survey of former high school peer tutors. The survey was based on the PWTARP, which provides a survey that reveals the “skills, values, and abilities” (Hughes et al., 2010, p. 14) tutor alumni carry with them after they have finished their collegiate tutoring careers. Although the originators of this survey, Hughes et al. (2010), did not provide clear definitions for these terms and how they are distinguished from one another, they used William Cronon’s (1998) essay “‘Only Connect...’ The Goals of a Liberal Education” to provide a theoretical framework for their study.

According to the Associations of American Colleges and Universities’ (AACU) (1998) “Statement on Liberal Learning,” a liberal education teaches one to “live responsible, productive, and creative lives” (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 1998). The AACU’s statement further explains that a liberal education teaches one to be intellectual, ethical, inquisitive, and analytical while exploring an understanding of culture and one place in it (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 1998). Cronon’s (1998) essay provides 10 guidelines for what makes someone a liberally educated person. Hughes et al. (2010) did not provide a clarification for how these guidelines fit within the framework of their “skills, values, and abilities” (2010, p. 14). However, Cronon’s 10 guidelines are a collection of skills, values and abilities and, therefore, illustrate for us the kinds of information we hope to find in the survey responses.

This chapter discusses this study's theoretical framework as it relates to the literature of the field, and thus provides a way of understanding the purpose, significance, and ultimately the findings of the study. It also defines the terms of the PWTARP survey and organizing those terms in relation to Cronon's (1998) 10-point guidelines. In particular, a distinction will be drawn between the word "ability" and the word "skill." Next, each of Cronon's 10 guidelines will be assigned to a larger category determined by the language of the PWTARP. The literature to be reviewed herein will then be discussed as it relates first to "skills," then "abilities," and finally "values." This organization was chosen so that the reader could more clearly see how the more rudimentary "skills" and "abilities" lead up to and deeply inform the "values" a tutor develops during their tutoring career, which reflects how Cronon's guidelines build from the more elementary, "They can listen and hear" (1998, p. 76), to the more complex, "They practice humility, tolerance, and self-criticism" (1998, p. 78).

Theoretical Framework

To answer questions such as what do tutors learn, and what abilities, values, and skills—the essential goals of a liberal education—tutors learn through their collaborative experiences, this study turned to William Cronon's (1998) article "'Only Connect...': The Goals of a Liberal Education," and in so doing, this study borrows the theoretical framework used in the original PWTARP (Hughes, et al., 2010, p. 16). Cronon offered a context, that of a liberal education, for understanding the outcomes reported by the tutors who participated in the survey. The originators of the PWTARP also used Cronon's work, but this study builds on their initial steps by defining key terms and extending

PWTARP's theoretical framework vis-à-vis Cronon's guidelines, or goals, for being a liberally educated person to the high school writing center context.

Cronon's (1998) goals provided a lens for understanding the themes within the tutors' narratives. Cronon wrote his goals as a reaction to what he considered to be a watering-down of the liberal education universities had traditionally promised students. He described that on the modern campus the term *liberal education* had become either a "marketing ploy or shibboleth" (1998, p. 73). In order to counter what he saw as a growing trend, Cronon defined what a liberal education is and enumerated its goals. For Cronon, the liberal education comes out of "an educational tradition that celebrates and nurtures human freedom" (1998, p. 79) and, indeed, has at its core the values of "freedom and growth" (1998, p. 80), which mirrors John Dewey's (1944) philosophy of education. Cronon asserted that liberal education "aspires to nurture the growth of human talent in the service of human freedom" (1998, p. 80), but that it has become tempered by the culture war, defined by Cronon as "our struggle over educational standards" (1998, p. 74). Cronon argued that the result of the politically charged debates over things like what content to teach or what diversity to honor has been that educators have turned their eyes away from how to best engage students in a liberal education and the values it espouses. He believed that educators had instead looked toward the seemingly more approachable problem of which curriculum to engage students in in order to achieve that liberal education (Cronon, 1998).

Instead of focusing on that perhaps easier problem, Cronon (1998) gave educators a list of goals that created a yardstick for what a liberally educated person might look like. In Cronon's words,

A liberal education is not something any of us ever *achieve*; it is not a *state*.

Rather it is a way of living in the face of our own ignorance, a way of groping toward wisdom in full recognition of our own folly, a way of educating ourselves without any illusion that our educations will ever be complete. (1998, p. 79)

Education is, again in Cronon's words, "for [the] human community" (1998, p. 79). In Cronon's essay Dewey's (1944) educational philosophy merges with James Gee's (2006) notion of a discourse community, which Gee described in his essay "What is Literacy?" as "a socially accepted association among ways of using language, of thinking, and of acting that can be used to identity oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or 'social network'" (2006, p. 29). Cronon's guidelines thus have become descriptors for what a tutor might learn through the collaborative experience of peer tutoring.

Cronon's (1998) list of qualities for the liberally educated person are to listen and hear; read and understand; write clearly, persuasively, and movingly; problem solve; respect rigor as a means for finding truth; practice humility, tolerance, and self-criticism; get things done; nurture and empower others; and connect with others in creative ways (1998, p.76). These qualities echo what Bruffee (1978) described in "The Brooklyn Plan" as a "socially productive, service-oriented social exchange" (1978, p. 449) that will lead to the intellectual growth of students. An understanding of what growth occurs for high school students who tutor in peer-tutoring programs, where collaborative learning is nurtured, makes this study important to the field.

Review of Literature

Fitting Cronon's (1998) guidelines inside the larger categories of skills, values, and abilities detailed by Hughes et al. (2010) provides a way to look at the existing

literature on the topic of the intellectual and dispositional takeaways for peer tutor alumni. Hughes' et al. use of the terms "skills, values, and abilities" (2010, p. 14) originates in the responses they received from their own participants during the development of their survey and require some further definition, which they did not provide. Originally, Hughes et al. used this kind of open-ended language in the survey because they wanted participants to have flexibility in how they answered. It was then left up to the participant to make a distinction, particularly, between what the survey might mean by a skill versus an ability. The U.S. government and many U.S. companies use "KSAs:" knowledge, skills, and abilities descriptors to determine one's competency for a particular job (United States Office of Personnel Management, n.d.). Since all of the original PWTARP participants were college graduates with experience in the working world, they would have had an opportunity to encounter these KSAs and would have possibly understood the survey's terms through that lens. For this reason, this study will use the United States government's Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) (n.d.) definition for the terms "skills" and "abilities." Understanding these skills, abilities, and values—these talents of the former high school tutors—is key to understanding what the respondents were trying to communicate through the survey.

According to the OPM, an ability is the "competence to perform an observable behavior or a behavior that results in an observable product" (United States Office of Personnel Management, n.d.), and a skill is the "competence to perform a learned psychomotor act" (United States Office of Personnel Management, n.d.). The difference lies in one's potential to learn the competency, as in a skill, as opposed to simply having the potential for the competency because of some characteristic that is inherent, innate, or

congenital. It is important to note that these definitions do not preclude a person from improving on either a skill or an ability. They are definitions that provide an understanding for existing competencies, not necessarily potential increases in competencies.

For example, a person is usually born with the capacity to hear. Hearing then, would be considered an ability of a person. This ability can almost always be improved on. As a child learns to be a more active and discerning listener, for instance, he or she can learn that not all bird songs are the same and can learn to distinguish between a blue jay and a northern cardinal. Writing, on the other hand, is considered a skill, as there is nothing inherent to a person that is necessary to writing. Unlike an ability or skill, a *value* is an easier word to understand because it is not potentially conflated with another word in the framework. A value, simply put, is a belief one feels strongly about.

The following outline details the organization of Cronon's (1998) 10 qualities as subcategories of Hughes et al. (2010) "abilities, values, and skills" (2010, p. 14) (for reference purposes, the number in parenthesis following the guideline is the number Cronon originally assigned the guideline in his list):

1. Abilities

- a. They listen and they hear. (1)
- b. They can talk with anyone. (3)
- c. They can solve a wide variety of puzzles and problems. (5)

2. Skills

- a. They read and they understand. (2)
- b. They can write clearly and persuasively and movingly. (4)

- c. They understand how to get things done. (8)
- d. They nurture and empower the people around them. (9)

3. Values

- a. They respect rigor not so much for its own sake but as a way of seeking truth. (6)
- b. They practice humility, tolerance, and self-criticism. (7)
- c. They follow E. M. Forster's injunction from *Howard's End*: "Only connect..." (10) (1998, p. 76)

As with any other categorization scheme, this study recognizes that this organization is imperfect. There is the possibility of various interpretations, particularly if one takes into account that Cronon's (1998) qualities build on one another and, therefore, do not necessarily have distinct lines of demarcation. Nurturing and empowering people, for instance, is predicated on one's abilities to listen and speak with others and, often, solve problems. In the end, however, this organization allowed for a clearer understanding of the collected data.

Abilities

The category of abilities consists of the ability to listen and to hear, to talk to anyone on a wide range of topics, and to solve a variety of "puzzles and problems" (Cronon, 1998, p. 77). The first of these, listening and hearing, is integral to the tutor's job (Gillespie & Lerner, 2008; Ryan & Zimmerelli, 2006) and is evident in much of the existing responses to the PWTARP surveys and published work of former tutors. Former tutors report that they have retained meta-communicative skills, listening skills, and the related ability to ask generative questions (Kail et al., 2016; Evertz & Zucker, 2011;

Virgintino, 2014). Nathalie Virgintino, for example, reflects on how her current work as a graduate student and teacher are influenced by her work as a tutor at Concordia College, “My experience as a writing center peer tutor gave me confidence as a student while learning to work collaboratively and listen carefully to others” (2014). And in “Everything I Needed to Know About Life I Learned at the Writing Center,” Soma Kedia (2007) describes how her tutoring experience “compelled” her “to really converse with people: to listen, without judgment, to the words of people from many different walks of life” (2007, p.14). Listening and hearing, then, are key parts to interacting with others and, thus, doing the job of a tutor. They are also abilities that once honed seem to linger for tutors well after their work is finished (Hughes et al., 2010).

The ability to talk to anyone on a range of topics is a core facet of tutoring. Cronon (1998) writes that liberally educated people “know how to talk” (1998, p. 76). He indicates that they can discuss in meaningful ways a wide variety of topics to diverse types of audiences because “they are genuinely interested in others” and not just in hearing themselves talk (1998, p.77). Evidence from the PWTARP surveys and the relevant literature seem to indicate that this gregariousness is present in the experience of alumni tutors. Data from the University of Vermont indicated that 71% of respondents identified “interpersonal skills” (Dinitz & Kiedaisch, 2009, p. 2), those skills needed to interact with others appropriately, as being something they took from their tutoring experiences. These interpersonal skills are akin to the aforementioned meta-communicative skills (Kail et al., 2016). Both require the listener to be aware of her own skills and how those skills can be utilized to best interact with a speaking partner.

This social adroitness is what Allie Guiang (2010), a high school peer tutor, described as, “We learn about our tutees, why they’re here or what they need help with, and sometimes we’re lucky enough to just talk to them and get a little insight into who they are outside of the peer tutoring program” (2010, p. 1). George Davros (2010), another high school peer tutor, linked this adeptness with the need to think critically. He describes forcing himself to “constantly question the approach I am using to solve a problem and to look for a better one” (2010, p. 4). The nimbleness of mind that both Guiang and Davros speak of is reflected in the findings of Paula Gillespie’s PWTARP research at Marquette University, where a respondent reported adaptability as being something that transferred with her to her post-college context (Kail et al., 2016).

As with Cronon’s (1998) quality of listening and hearing, this kind of adaptability can lead people to ask generative questions which can facilitate how tutors “negotiate relationships in a variety of settings” (Evertz & Zucker, 2011). Of these settings, former tutors have written about conducting meetings and speaking to “diverse audiences” (Wilkins, 2009). One respondent from Corcordia College reported, “I find myself completely at ease, whether I’m talking to a laborer fixing a section of railroad track, or meeting with the top Executive at a Fortune 500 company” (Virgintino, 2014). Through this kind of work, tutors have also discovered that being able to negotiate and maintain diplomacy (Gladstein, 2010) have stayed with them years after they have graduated. In the PWTARP data from the University of Vermont, 57% of respondents discussed mentoring and teaching as being the result of developing the ability to be able to talk to anyone.

The University of Vermont respondents also spoke to Cronon's (1998) quality of being able to "solve a wide variety of puzzles and problems" (p.77). Of the 92 respondents, 31% reported "general thinking skills" as a takeaway from their experiences (Dinitz & Kiedaisch, 2009, p.2), which was also echoed by respondents from Marquette University (Kail et al., 2016). This was further exemplified by Purdy (1998), who spoke directly to the importance of peer tutoring in his maturation as a problem solver:

Belief in collaborative learning has structured not only what I have done in the classroom as a composition instructor, but also has shaped my outlook on problem solving in other spheres, for example, in my work as a technical writer at IBM, as associate editor of *Computers and Composition*, and as a peer advisor for new composition instructors at [University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign]. (Purdy, 1998)

The influence that Purdy felt was similarly reported by a participant in Virgintino's (2014) PWTARP survey from the alumni of The Writing Center at Concordia College. A participant in the survey described her experience as having "helped me hone my analytical and critical thinking skills" (Virgintino, 2014). Solving a "variety of puzzles and problems" (Cronon, 1998, p. 77) requires a deft mind that is practiced in seeing the different angles and perspectives that people can bring to a situation.

Skills

In this section, four of Cronon's (1998) goals of a liberally educated person will be introduced, and research will be presented from the field to show that writing tutors often acquire these skills through their tutoring work. These four goals constitute the skills detailed in Cronon's article. Skills, as has been stated earlier, are not abilities; they

are behaviors that are learned, not inborn (United States Office of Personnel Management, n.d.). According to Cronon, the skills possessed by a liberally educated person are reading and understanding, writing, understanding how to get things done, and nurturing and empowering other people.

Fundamental to schooling are the abilities to read and to understand. According to Cronon (1998), reading and understanding are the ways in which humans actively seek knowledge about the world around them. People who read and understand, Cronon argues, gain insight not just from all the myriad things they read in print but also from art museums, concert halls, athletic achievements of others, theatre, cinema, television, nature, wildlife, craftsmen, and mechanics. And while he argues that people cannot possibly be expert at reading and understanding all of these things, Cronon believes that a liberally educated person should, at the very least, have a curiosity about them (p. 76). By invoking the idea of curiosity, Cronon raises the specter of the audience as a crucial component of effective reading, and as composition instructors well know, audience is also a key consideration in effective writing. If one can write for an audience, the thinking goes, then one can not only read with a purpose but also read for an audience. As one often reads to know the mind of the writer, tutoring can be perceived as a kind of reading of the writer.

The research shows that former tutors gained both processing skills and the ability to analyze and detect errors (Kail et al., 2016; Wilkins, 2009), both key to being a skilled reader, but other tutors have also reported that their work as tutors had more profound impacts, including helping the tutor to become more “understanding and insightful to the way other people think and communicate” (Virgintino, 2014). A former

tutor from the University of Vermont reported that her experience made her learn to mirror the tutor process, in this case examining an entire paper before delving into any one part of it, in the rest of her life. “Learning to look at big picture items, not just the small pieces, helps with both my social and family relations” (Dinitz & Kiedaisch, 2009, p. 3).

Writing is also a goal of liberally educated people, according to Cronon (1998). This skill is evident in most of the findings of the PWTARP and other literature (Dinitz & Kiedaisch, 2009; Evertz & Zucker, 2011; Purdy, 1998; Welsch, 2008). Beyond the mere putting-pen-to-paper of writing, Cronon states that real writing by liberally educated people expresses “what is in their minds and hearts so as to teach, persuade, and move the person who reads their words” (1998, p. 77). For writing tutors then, writing becomes not only a powerful and versatile tool for expressing themselves, but can also be a tool for learning about the writing process. Writing tutors suggest that their work helped them to become models for how to behave and think like an educated person. For example, Soma Kedia (2007), writing in the *Writing Lab Newsletter*, wrote that being a writing tutor and someone who thus had to work with writing often taught her to have a “robust understanding of reflection, conversation, and response as part of the learning process” (2007, p.13). Additionally, as Virgintino recounted in her PWTARP research, tutors can be impacted by the way others handle writing as well as their actual writing. A respondent to her survey wrote, “I saw the other tutors as role models. Their knowledge of writing exposed me to the complexity of the writing process both creatively and academically” (2014).

Perhaps it is the help of their role-modeling colleagues that enable tutors to acquire and practice the skill described by Cronon (1998) as “understanding how to get things done in the world” (1998, p. 78). Cronon describes this goal as “learning how to get things done in the world in order to leave it a better place” (1998, p.79). This know-how is consistent with the applied nature of teaching and learning in writing centers, where tutors must negotiate competing demands and feel responsible for helping students to meet concrete goals. As one alumna reported, “I loved my work at the Writing Center and sought to duplicate parts of it in any new position. In many ways, the Writing Center provided a template for my future work” (Dinitz & Kiedaisch, 2009, p. 4). Alumni tutors from George Mason University reported using their experiences in their center to acquire positions after leaving, “Of the respondents, 88% said they used the skills they gained and the overall experience at the writing center in either the hiring process for employment or the application process for grad school” (Wilkins, 2009). These tutor graduates also indicated that their experiences as tutors helped them to win a Fulbright, teaching assistantships, and other positions (Wilkins, 2009). Kathleen Welsch (2008) explores the professional end goals for tutors in her article “Shaping Careers in the Writing Center.” She offers, “experience in administration, public relations, client relations, writing, and personal professional development” as five “areas of focus” for the professionalization of tutors (2008, p. 2). These areas, which are closely akin to the professionalization standards set forth in Ryan and Zimmerelli’s (2006) *The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors*, illustrate how closely aligned tutor professional standards are with the expectations for people in the business world.

The research suggests that tutors' abilities to be patient and nurturing arise out of their experiences tutoring peers. An alumni tutor from Marquette University reported that "patience" was one of her takeaways (Kail et al., 2016). Earnest Cox (2004), a former tutor from the University of Arkansas, reported in his article "Coming Home: A Writing Center Staffer's Personal and Professional Journey" in the *Writing Lab Newsletter* that the effects of his undergraduate tutoring experience were his retention in school and his eventual embracing of teaching as a career. These abilities, described by Cronon (1998) as nurturing and empowering others (1998, p. 78), are wrapped up tightly with notions of equity and community. In Cronon's words, "Liberally educated people understand that they belong to a community whose prosperity and well-being are crucial to their own, and they help that community flourish by making the success of others possible" (1998, p. 78).

Other former tutors give perhaps more complex examples of the nurturing and empowerment of others ascribed by Cronon (1998) to the liberally educated person. Lauren Shimanovsky (2010), in an essay written in response to a call for a book on high school writing centers, discussed the possibility of an element of social justice in the daily work of peer tutoring. Shimanovsky writes, "The peer-tutoring program proves to every person it touches that there is always help. Someone... will always be there, no matter what the problem is" (2010, p. 2). Shimanovsky also expressed an understanding that the work of peer tutoring was something that would follow her after she had left high school, "As I move on to college, and eventually to a career, I will carry my peer-tutoring experience in my heart, allowing it to shape how I view myself, others, and the path I make for myself" (2010, p. 2). Shimanovsky foresaw what the college-aged tutors of the

PWTARP had come to know, that the experience of tutoring had touched her deeply and that its effects would stay with her and guide her for years to come.

In the same vein, Colin Sato (2012), the keynote speaker for the 2012 National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing and an 8-year veteran of tutoring both at the high school and university level, described coming to understand his work as a tutor as “being for others” (2012). Because Sato’s speech comes several years after he had graduated from high school, his speech, in some ways, mirrors the type of data that the PWTARP seeks.

Sato’s (2012) speech focused on the development of tutor identity, which he referred to as the “subjective counterpart” to PWTARP. Consequently, he repeatedly identified that his coming to understand his role and identity as a tutor was linked to the process of tutoring itself:

For me, understanding tutor identity has been an evolving process. Identity went from being a purely personal experience, to an intellectual curiosity, to a theoretical foundation, to a principle of being and becoming that lies at the heart of my role as a tutor. (2012)

Sato continued by explaining that tutoring is itself the “process of defining” oneself through “learning to inhabit that theoretical ideal we call our identity” (2012). Sato’s speech indicates that he was deeply impacted by his years of tutoring at the high school level. He recounted his journey through his first 3 years of tutoring as at first “a fine thing to do” and then a far more considered decision. He described a decision he made in his second year of tutoring to “just try to *be* for that person, even if it meant ignoring other things that were important to me” (2012). In this way, Sato illustrates an enactment of

Cronon's (1998) quality of nurturing and empowering people by assigning them more importance than he gave himself and by subsuming his needs to the needs of the community.

Values

Values in the context of this study are defined as beliefs about which one feels strongly. William Cronon's (1998) discussion of values most closely aligns with what Hughes et al. (2010) described as the "values" tutors gain from their experiences. The first two values described by Cronon are a respect for rigor as a way of seeking the truth and the practice of humility, tolerance, and self-criticism (1998, p. 77). The third value possessed by a liberally educated person is the openness to "follow E. M. Forster's injunction from *Howard's End*: 'Only connect...'" (1998, p. 78), or in other words, what Cronon described as the importance of "being able to see connections that allow one to make sense of the world and act within it in creative ways" (1998, p. 78). He also asserts that each one of the other qualities he ascribes to the liberally educated person, "listening, reading, talking, writing, puzzle solving, truth seeking, seeing through other people's eyes, leading, [and] working in a community" (1998, p. 78), are at their very core about connecting with other people and groups of people.

The first of these "value" goals is that a liberally educated person respects "rigor not so much for its own sake but as a way of seeking truth" (Cronon, 1998, p. 77). Here, Cronon (1998) evoked Dewey's (1944) call for education for education's sake, especially when Cronon stated "educated people love learning, but they love wisdom more. They can appreciate a closely reasoned argument without being unduly impressed by mere logic" (1998, p. 77). Cronon explained that truly liberally educated people believe in the

marriage of knowledge and values, as “knowledge serves values” and that educated people “strive to put [the] two... in constant dialogue with each other” (1998, p. 77).

Rigor is a combination of the difficulty of a required academic task and the thoroughness with which the task is undertaken, which mirrors Cronon’s (1998) marriage of knowledge and value described above. Any task, it may be said, could be difficult if the person attempting the task did not have the necessary information to complete the task. Adding two large numbers for a child, however, could be rigorous rather than simply difficult, if the child had little experience with adding large numbers and took the time to investigate how to add large numbers and to check her work in several ways as to insure its correctness. Similarly, for a high school student or undergraduate, a 10-page paper might be arduous or difficult, but it would be rigorous if that student not only completed the assignment’s requirements but also took the time to make sure that her research for the paper was in-depth and that she had several opportunities to work with a peer tutor to improve the quality of her writing through the paper-writing process. In addition to expectations, intentionality is required for an academic task to be rigorous. Voluntary trips to a writing center to work on drafts of a paper and to brainstorm ideas with someone clearly complicates the process of completing an assignment. Although it will make an essay better, it is not the most simple of routes for a student. Attendance in a writing center and work with a peer tutor then can be seen as direct engagement in rigor by a writer wherein she is attempting to marry the knowledge she is gaining by completing the paper with her value of making sure that the writing and learning experience for her are serious and complicated.

Results from the PWTARP survey completed by Carlton College tutor alumni give an example of people advancing this conversation between knowledge and values. Respondents indicated that they gained the ability to be “deliberate, conscious writers” and to be more collaborative (Evertz & Zucker, 2011). Being more collaborative, deliberate, and conscious of one’s behaviors are deliberate ways of making a task more complicated and, therefore, more rigorous. The bent toward improving oneself through the complicating of a relationship with knowledge is what Kathleen Welsch (2008) described as “personal professional development” (2008, p. 2). It is also the kind of experience that sticks with tutors once they have moved beyond the scope of undergraduate tutoring work. As James Purdy explained, in his 1998 *Dangling Modifier* essay, “Taking It with You: Personal Reflections on Life ‘After’ the Writing Center,” of his work in a collaborative learning paradigm, “my experience as a peer writing tutor has not really left me; rather, it has shaped everything since” (Purdy, 1998).

More than just complicating assignments, the embracing of rigor for rigor’s sake can complicate lives too. Cox (2004) of the University of Arkansas learned this after his tutoring experience, a complication of his life as a student, led him to some realizations. In his article “Coming Home: A Writing Center Staffer’s Personal and Professional Journey” in *Writing Lab Newsletter*, Cox explained that his retention in school and his eventual embracing of teaching as a career were the direct outcome of his undergraduate tutoring experience. Cox identified the “direction and the supportive learning culture” as the direct “catalysts” responsible for his maturation from a student to a teacher (2004, p. 3).

That this supportive learning culture was supernumerary in nature lends credit to the idea held by the writing center community that in seeking out collaborative learning environments like writing centers, tutors and tutees, indeed professionals as well, are enacting Cronon's (1998) quality of someone who embraces rigor. That tutors can learn from environments like this is also evident in the testimonies of former high school tutors. Former tutors George Davros (2010) and Allie Guiang (2010) identified attributes of rigor. Davros recalled how his work taught him perseverance (Davros, 2010) and Guiang identified intellectual curiosity as a value she learned (Guiang, 2010).

Cronon (1998) also described liberally educated people as having "the intellectual range and emotional generosity to step outside their own experiences and prejudices, thereby opening themselves to perspectives different from their own" (1998, p. 77–78). The "opening" of oneself to the experience of others is the key, Cronon argued, to a liberal education, because it allows a person to know and accept others and other viewpoints, or as Cronon wrote: "From this commitment to tolerance flow all those aspects of a liberal education that oppose parochialism and celebrate the wider world" (1998, p. 78). This kind of openness requires humility, or the ability to admit ignorance or wrong doing; tolerance, or an acceptance of difference; and self-criticism, or the ability to critique what might be closely held beliefs for the wider good. All of these attributes require a person to have what respondents to the Swarthmore College PWTARP survey reported as "a reflective practice" (Gladstein, 2010) about their everyday lives.

Practicing humility, tolerance, and self-criticism for the greater good is clearly identifiable in the writing of Soma Kedia (2007), a former tutor who recounts her journey

from a haughty 19 year-old who could not conceive that she might need training in writing tutoring to a graduate writing tutor with a “robust understanding of reflection, conversation, and response as part of the learning process” (2007, p.13). Kedia found that “At its core, peer tutoring teaches us how to relate to other people” (2007, p.14). She continues by describing a tutor’s work as “an act of radical social action” (2007, p.14) because of its profound, long-term impact not just on the tutees but also on the tutors. For Kedia, tutoring is about being focused on others and new ways of seeing, which has led her to see the world in a different, more tolerant way. In particular, Kedia writes that peer tutoring, “has given me the tools we all need to be cognizant of systemic injustice and to attempt... to coax those systems into a disposition informed by the lessons of collaborative learning” (2007, p.15).

As best described by Cronon (1998), “a liberal education is about gaining the power and the wisdom, the generosity and the freedom to connect” (1998, p. 78) with others. When applied to the work of the PWTARP, this goal translates to questions about the connections tutors make and how those connections impact tutors across time. This is the crux of what the PWTARP seeks to understand (Hughes et al., 2010). It is also, in many ways, what Bruffee (1978) entreated people to seek out in his Brooklyn Plan.

Connections are made between tutors, tutors and tutees, and tutors and the contexts in which they work. The making of connections is a known quantity in the writing center world and a capacity that many tutor alumni report, the PWTARP has shown, as something that remains with them when they leave college. The University of Vermont PWTARP survey results cast connection through the lens of collaboration, and tutor alumni reported: “learning happens best when the dynamic is collaborative” (Dinitz

& Kiedaisch, 2009, p. 3). James Purdy (1998) made it clear that the connections he forged in his work as a tutor shaped the way he taught in the classroom and worked in nonacademic spaces. Cox (2004) wrote of the feeling of connectedness that his writing center gave him: “Once I became part of the writing center, I also became a part of a special culture. The writing center was a place where I felt comfortable” (2004, p. 3). A respondent from Concordia College spoke to this same kind of interconnectedness in the PWTARP survey: “the writing center was more of a family to me than a work space. I saw the other tutors as role models” (Virgintino, 2014).

In their words, the connections facilitated by the writing center context helped tutors realize the greater, or perhaps grander, role that connecting through collaborative learning can take in society. As Kedia (2007) wrote, peer tutoring “has given me the tools we all need to be cognizant of systemic injustice and to attempt... to coax those systems into a disposition informed by the lessons of collaborative learning” (2007, p.15). Lauren Shimanovsky (2010) also discussed the idea that social justice is a part of the daily work of peer tutors. As described by PWTARP respondents from the University of Wisconsin (Kail et al., 2016), greater social empathy comes from an understanding that connections are made in the centers where tutors work and that those connections and the ability to make them become a part of the tutors who inhabit those spaces (2016).

Hughes et al. stated in their 2010 article on the PWTARP that they had “set out to explore and document what peer tutors take with them from their training and experience” (2010, p. 13). Although they were only concerned with peer tutors who had transitioned from college to post-college settings, research from the field indicates that the story of what peer tutors take with them can begin in the secondary context. Colin

Sato (2012), for example, wrote that his identity was changed as a result of his work as a high school peer tutor. Once in university, Sato reported:

[I] began to realize that tutoring had in fact had a profound effect on my identity. I felt like I had changed more than just what I knew or knew how to do. Tutoring had changed who I was, the way I saw and reacted to and felt about helping other people. (2012)

Sato's speech suggests that the same kind of "developmental experiences" of college peer tutors (Hughes et al., 2010, p. 13) happen to high school tutors as well. In fact, the present study argues that high school students who engage in the peer tutoring behaviors of effective college peer tutors are impacted in the same way despite being in a different physical and intellectual stage of development.

Conclusion

Bloom's (1975) "Peer and Cross-Age Tutoring in the Schools: An Individualized Supplement to Group Instruction," published by the National Institute of Education, was both a rationale for using peer and cross-aged tutors in the classroom and a review of the relevant research at the time. Of the 15 studies Bloom used in her rationale, 9 reported finding about tutors having a changed attitude, through their tutoring experiences, about themselves and their education (1975, p. 13). Bloom explained in her summary that 60% of the studies found that changed attitudes related to improvements in understandings of self-value and educational importance (1975, p. 14). Bloom concluded that tutors benefit from peer-to-peer work because they are placed in a position of responsibility that helps them to mature. Like so many before and after her, Bloom was focused primarily on tutee and tutor achievement and academic achievement in its situated context. The advent and

broader use of the PWTARP gave writing center professionals the opportunity to seriously consider the ramifications for peer tutors years after they finished their formal work as tutors.

This chapter examined how William Cronon's (1998) 10 guidelines of a liberally educated person fit into the framework created by Hughes et al. (2010) in the PWTARP, whose aim was to better understand the abilities, skills, and values that tutors acquired through their experiences. Within the PWTARP framework, Cronon's guidelines of listening and hearing others, talking to anyone, and solving a wide variety of puzzles and problems are considered abilities. Cronon's guidelines of reading and understanding, writing, understanding how to get things done, and nurturing and empowering other people are considered skills. Finally, Cronon's guidelines of respect for rigor as a way of seeking the truth; the practice of humility, tolerance, and self-criticism; and the order to "only connect..." or bring together people and ideas (1998, p. 76) are considered values. This study seeks to understand the findings of the survey results from 63 high school peer tutors through operationalizing Cronon's guidelines within the context of PWTARP's metric of "skills, abilities, and values" (Hughes et. al., 2010, p. 14).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study analyzed existing public data from a large, suburban high school that was generated by a survey, based on the model of the PWTARP (Kail et al., 2016), completed by graduated high school peer tutors. The former peer tutors completed the survey between 2010 and 2013. As the tutor program coordinator, my original purpose for collecting the data was to inform an internal report to the Board of Education. The data has been repurposed for this study, which sought to answer the following research question:

What abilities, values, and skills do tutors develop from their experience as peer tutors and how, if at all, have they used those abilities, values, and skills in their lives beyond high school?

This chapter provides details on the system of data collection, the participants, the survey used, and the methodology for analyzing the data. The analysis of the data followed grounded theory methods, which calls for an “inductive, comparative, emergent, and open-ended approach” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 12). This approach allowed me to develop analytic categories for the data through a process of both initial and focused coding in coordination with a coding assistant. This process of coding with another person also allowed me to better understand the data because I had someone with whom I could discuss codes and my understanding of those codes and the analytic categories to which they led. The conflict resolutions and consensus building that occurred in these discussions allowed the coding assistant and me to refine our codes to better describe the

data. This process mirrors the peer tutoring process that the survey participants engaged in while in high school. In many ways, the coding assistant and I acted as peer tutors for each other.

Context and Design of the Study

When I first undertook this project it was for a report to the Board of Education for the district where I was the coordinator of the peer-to-peer tutoring program. The project initially arose from a question, “What are my tutors learning from their tutoring experience that I did not anticipate?” The data was to be used to support the work that the peers were doing by showing, or showcasing, the benefits the tutors received from the experience. During the collection of the data, the Board became uninterested in the project and in the program as a whole. Not too long after the survey closed, the program, as it had been originally designed, was shuttered. It was at that time that I decided to repurpose the data for use in this study. Without this dissertation, the data that was generated by the project might have remained unexamined.

This data was collected through the peer-to-peer tutoring program at a large, suburban high school in the Midwestern region of the United States. The program, which operated from 2005 – 2013, was unique at the time because it was solely operated by teachers, not administrators, and it was widely considered to be the largest school-based peer-tutoring program in the world. The program had 250 peer tutors whose demographic profile was representative of the school’s population and saw an average of 30,000 discrete visits each academic year. With the exception of freshmen, any student was eligible to be recommended to be a tutor. The tutors spoke over 80 languages in their homes and represented students from all economic levels. The population also included

English language learners, special education students, and students who struggled academically. The 18 teachers on staff, who were also the leaders of the program, trained the tutors. Training commenced with a one-day session at the end of summer and was then considered ongoing for the rest of the year. Through quarterly observations and guided conversations, tutors' strengths were supported and weaknesses addressed. Senior tutors also played a role in mentoring, observing, and guiding younger tutors. As the coordinator of the program, I was responsible for coordinating the efforts of the tutors and teachers and writing the training manual.

Every year, tutors who had graduated would return to visit or emailed updates about their lives. This led to many opportunities for me to hear from former students about how the peer-tutoring program had impacted them in high school and influenced them at university. This also led me to be interested in a better way to collect and understand those stories. When I discovered the PWTARP survey, I was already designing a survey of my own for a report to our Board of Education. The PWTARP survey helped to speed up the process and also allowed, for the first time, for data from a high school to be included with data the PWTARP collected from universities. All alumni tutors, which included new alumni once they had completed the first year of university, who could be reached via email were invited to participate in the survey. Of the 296 tutors who graduated during the study, 204 had email addresses on file with the school. By the time the survey was closed in 2013, 63 alumni had responded. This represents a 31% return rate.

This data captures a unique collection of responses from students in a unique situation. They were a diverse group of races, cultures, creeds, and orientations. In many

ways, this data not only captured the thoughts of alumni peer tutors but also a significant moment in the rise of secondary school writing centers as an education force. As with the PWTARP, it is my hope that this study will spur other high schools to participate in similar university-level research.

Data Collection

The original collection of the data—the responses to the survey—was not done for this study; instead, the data was collected for a report to the board of education and district administration in the school district where I worked. During that collection process, 204 graduated tutors were emailed a link for an online Google Form survey with an attached consent letter (see Appendix A). These tutors were chosen because they had left email addresses with the tutoring program before graduating. In completing the survey, the respondents were not required in any way to identify themselves. This data set of anonymous responses was stored in the school's Google Docs account. The survey was open for respondents between 2010 and 2013. Although the survey was designed for former tutors to be able to respond regardless of their status as a college student, all the respondents indicated that they were or had attended college. Due to internal political shifts on the board and within the administration, the report was never written and the data remained unanalyzed. I then requested permission from the school to use the data for the completion of this dissertation.

Once I had acquired permission to use the anonymous data set, I recruited a second, outside coder who would be unfamiliar with the respondents to assist me with the coding. Due to the anonymous nature of the data set, it was impossible for me to contact survey respondents to glean more information or clarity about their written responses. For

this reason, this data set represents a snapshot of what the tutor alumni were thinking at the time they completed the survey.

Participants

Because students were recommended for tutoring based on their leadership qualities and not necessarily their academic standing, the tutors represented the demographic profile of the school more so than had they been recruited because of their enrollment in AP classes, which are traditionally not representative. According to the State Board of Education's 2013–2014 Report Card (n.d.), which shows a 5-year trend, this high school's student racial populations were 47.5% white, 28.9% Asian, 13.8% Hispanic, 5.6% black, and 3.8% multiple races. Additionally, 36.5% of students in the school have low-income status, 11.6% of students have disabilities, and 4.9% of students are designated as English language learners (n.d.).

Although one of the goals of the peer-tutoring program where these tutors worked was to have a tutor team that was representational of the very diverse population of the school, the participants shared certain attributes by having worked as tutors in the same center. Particularly, they had homogeneity of purpose and expectations. The peer tutoring program's expectation for all tutors was that they would work in a collaborative setting with at least one other student at least 3 times each week during the school year. This means that most alumni tutors who responded would have tutored at least 100 times each academic year, for a minimum of 1 year and a maximum of 3 years. Many tutors tutored far in excess of these numbers.

Another expectation of the program was that at the end of each session tutors were required to fill out a conference form with 3 open-response sections. This means

that they were required to take time to think about what had transpired in the session and then to process it through writing. Additionally, as stated in the center's mission statement, all tutors were expected to be school leaders:

For students, the [peer tutoring program] is a place for developing academic maturity, which includes proficiency in the three core academic literacies, while learning the skills and joys of interacting appropriately with a wide variety of learners and teachers. In addition, student tutors will have the opportunity to hone their own literacy abilities and interpersonal skills. The [peer tutoring program's] student tutors work under the agreement to be school leaders by dedicating their free time to the service of their peers and their community. (Jeter, 2011b)

While it could be said that these are general expectations for all high school students, most high schools are too large and too honed to student individualization to hold all students to expectations of this type. Only in a small, organized group like the school's peer tutoring program could the kind of colloquy these expectations require become manifest. As Gladstein and Regaignon (2012) indicated, the scale of an institution, or in this case a program, can "collapse distances between" (2012, p. 16) people who would otherwise not have a chance to interact. In the case of the participants of this study, they had all been a part of a program that had collapsed the distance between their peers, their own writing, and their potential leadership skills.

As shown in Table 1, respondents were between the ages of 18 and 24. Thirty-four of the respondents are women and 30 are men. Thirty-one percent of respondents indicated that they were majoring in sciences, which ranged from geology to neuroscience. Twelve percent were majoring in education, which included elementary

and secondary. The rest of the respondents indicated that they were majoring in fields as varied as German, accounting, political science, creative writing, kinesiology, and speech pathology.

Table 1

Percentage of Survey Participants by Age and University Major

<u>Age (<i>n</i> = 63)</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Majors (<i>n</i> = 81^a)</u>	<u>%</u>
18	19	Science ^b	31
19	30	Education ^c	12
20	22	Math or Accounting	10
21	13	English ^d	8
22	10	Foreign Language ^e	5
23	5	Kinesiology	4
24	1	Philosophy	4
		Political Science	4
		Psychology	4
		Other ^f	18

^a *n* is higher because some tutors reported having more than one major. ^b Includes: Biology, Biochemistry, Biomedical Engineering, Chemical Engineering, Chemistry, Crop Science/Agroecology, Electrical Engineering, Engineering, Geology, Mechanical Engineering, Microbiology, Molecular & Cellular Biology, Neuroscience, Physics, and Pre-Med. ^c Includes: Elementary, English as a Second Language, Secondary English, and Secondary Mathematics. ^d Includes: Composition, Creative Writing, and Literary Criticism. ^e Includes: Arabic, German, and Spanish. ^f Includes: Actuary Science, Art, Business Management, Economics, Finance, Food Science – Culinology, Human Development & Human Studies, Management, Speech Pathology, Sports Management, and Undecided.

Two respondents who graduated several years apart were both double majoring in biology and Spanish. Finally, although it was not a requirement of the survey nor a part of the study design, all participants were enrolled at university or had recently graduated when they completed the survey.

Methodology

Below is a description of the survey I used to collect the data and the method I used to code and analyze the data. The method used for coding the data comes from

Kathy Charmaz's (2014) *Constructing Grounded Theory*. This grounded theory method led me to what Gladstein and Regaignon (2012) called, "the concepts and categories that [will] help us and our audience understand our subject" (2012, p. 24).

Description of the Survey

In 2009, in my capacity as peer tutoring program coordinator, I drafted a survey (see Appendix A for full survey) based on the PWTARP model (Kail et al., 2016) and, in 2010, disseminated it to an email list of tutor alumni. The open-ended questions were specifically designed to "elicit full responses, not too scripted... by the question" (Hughes et al., 2010, p. 17). These open-ended questions fell into two general categories. The first category of questions asked participants to reflect on their work as tutors when they were in high school. These questions were:

1. What are the most significant abilities, values, or skills that you developed in your work as a peer tutor?
2. Of the abilities, values, or skills that you listed above, would you illustrate those that strike you as most meaningful by sharing an episode or event that took place during your time as a tutor?
3. Were there any downsides to your experience as a peer tutor?
4. Would you please rate (1 Not Important–5 Very Important) the importance of your literacy center training and experience as you developed as a university student and explain your rating?

The second category, which was 60% of the open-response survey questions, asked participants how they believed their tutoring experience had affected their lives after high school. In other words, this category of questions asked participants to engage

their metacognition to evaluate their current lives based on past experiences. More specifically, the survey asked participants to reflect on what abilities, values, or skills they acquired as tutors and then to apply those qualities to their lives as undergraduate students, employees, family members, friends, and volunteers. In this set of questions, the survey differed from the PWTARP survey in that I took local considerations into account. In the list of local considerations were multiple reports from graduated tutors about adding education minors to their college studies; creating or taking opportunities to engage in volunteer and charitable works; and taking jobs as tutors in their postsecondary school contexts. These questions were:

5. Did those abilities, values or skills that you developed as a peer tutor seem to be a factor in your choice of major/minor or job?
6. Did these qualities seem to play a role in your acceptance to university or in your interviewing for a job? How do you come to that conclusion?
7. Do any of the qualities you feel that you developed as a tutor play a role in your social or family relationships?
8. What, if any, volunteer or charitable opportunities have you participated in since you left [high school]?
9. To what extent do you think your own literacy skills have been influenced by your experience as a tutor?
10. Have you tutored since graduating from [high school]? Please elaborate or provide an example.

From these questions, some themes arose easily, as with the original PWTARP surveys (Hughes et al., 2010, p. 23), but for the questions that required longer, more nuanced or narrative responses, the themes arose out of the grounded theory method.

Method of Analysis

The analysis of the data followed the grounded theory method set out in Kathy Charmaz's (2014) *Constructing Grounded Theory* and which is in keeping with the methods used by Hughes et al. (2010) in the PWTARP. Charmaz's book is a guide for conducting qualitative research using a ground theory method. The book provides a systematic yet flexible approach to collecting and analyzing qualitative data while stipulating that grounded theory "begins with inductive data, invokes iterative strategies of going back and forth between data and analysis, [and] uses comparative methods" (2014, p. 1). As this study utilized existing data, I leaned more heavily on Charmaz's methods for coding and analyzing the data than for data collection.

Charmaz (2014) calls for an initial round of coding that looks at "fragments of data—words, lines, segments, and incidents" (2014, p. 109). Then, in order to begin the process of analyzing the data, Charmaz prescribes focused coding, which categorizes initial codes by grouping "large batches of data" (2014, p. 138). These focused codes allow one to "synthesize, analyze, and conceptualize larger sections of data" (2014, p. 138). This process of coding is detailed in Figure 1.

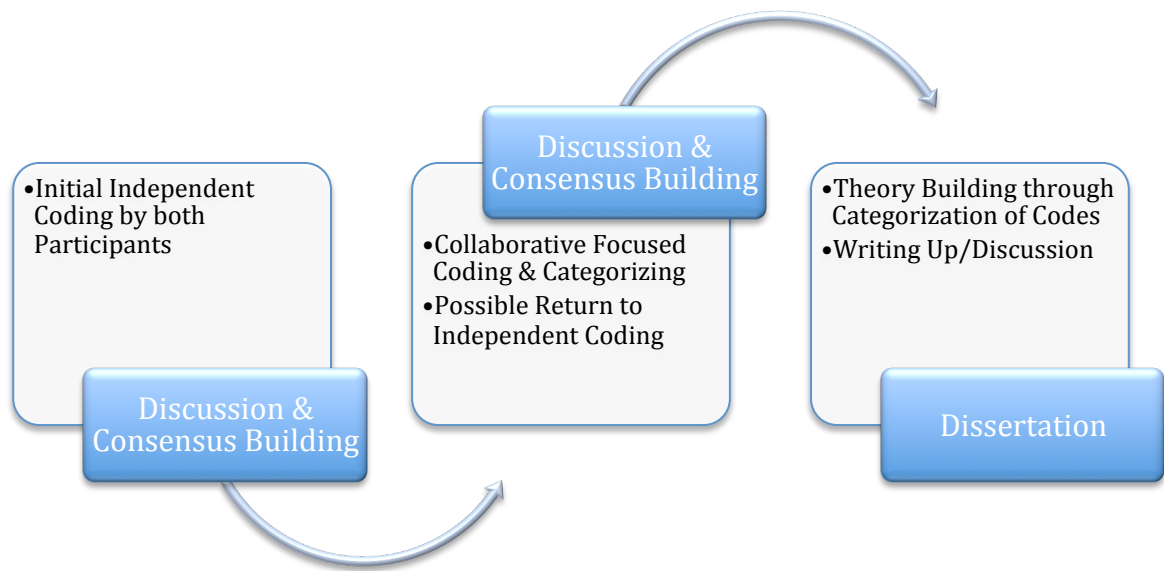


Figure 1. Grounded theory process for analysis of data. This figure illustrates the process I used for analyzing the data for this dissertation.

In their research, Hughes et al. (2010) described their methodology as “an organic, recursive process” (2010, p. 23) wherein each researcher read and coded their data independently and created a list of themes. By comparing the themes and grouping them accordingly under more general themes, the team was able to create categories for their findings (Hughes et al., 2010). They described their method in this way:

Each of us independently read each response to the open-ended questions and developed detailed lists of themes that we saw... We then compared our lists of themes and clustered these detailed themes into fewer more general ones; those most frequent themes formed the categories for the findings we report here. (2010, p. 23)

In this way, the PWTARP method (Hughes et al., 2010) and Charmaz's (2014) method mirrored one another.

For the analysis of the data generated by this research project, I invited another reader, who has some 17 years of writing center and peer tutoring experiences but who was unfamiliar with my former tutors—the survey participants who created this data set—to join me as a coding assistant. Although the survey was anonymous, I was so familiar with the program and its participants, that the use of an outside coder allowed me to see the data through the eyes of someone unfamiliar with this group of tutors. This also allowed this study to again mirror the PWTARP by having more than one coder examine the data.

I provided the coding assistant with a copy of instructions (see Appendix B for instructions), and we met to discuss the process before we began. In order to code the data, we used an online program called Dedoose (2016). This program allowed us to code independently (in separate locations), and to combine our work via the Internet so that we could compare our codes. Working independently and following Charmaz's (2014) design, we categorized "segments of data with a short name that simultaneously summarizes and accounts for each piece of data" (2014, p. 111). Once we completed our independent coding, we met to discuss our 132 initial codes and resolve any discrepancies we might have in understanding the data. This consensus building and conflict resolution primarily consisted of consolidating similar codes, explaining code rationales to each other, and debating the merit of codes. This led to a rich conversation about our codes and was the beginning of my analysis of the data.

Once the initial coding was completed, my coding assistant and I independently used focused coding (Charmaz, 2014, p. 138) to group related codes into broader categories. We returned to our dialogue to discuss our larger categories and to again build consensus. We debated the relationship between codes until we had agreed that there were 34 focused codes which, in turn, fit into 11 categories into which our 132 initial codes fit. This process allowed me to make better “comparisons between data and data, data and codes... codes and categories, and categories and concepts” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 163) before I entered into a discussion of the data.

From 132 initial codes arose first 34 code groups, which eventually resolved themselves into 11 categories. For example, during the initial coding, we used 15 codes to describe behaviors or activities that spoke to the tutors’ leadership skills. During the next stage in coding, as detailed in Figure 2, these 15 codes were grouped under 5 focused codes. Finally, these 5 codes were grouped in the category “leadership.”

For example, during one of our discussion and consensus building meetings, my coding assistant and I discussed this response: “I feel like I always learned something from each tutee I tutored. If I did not know exactly how to do something, I would have it taught to me so that I could better assist the tutee” (R-48). Originally, my coding assistant coded this as “humility.” Upon reflection, we realized that this could have also been coded as “maturity” or “confidence.” The tutor was taking the initiative to be better informed for her tutees, which we recognized as a type of maturity, and she was showing that she was not worried about others thinking she did not know something, which is confidence in oneself. We then looked at the other excerpts under the code “humility” to see if they likewise would fit into similar codes. All the excerpts coded with “humility,”

we realized, could be grouped under one of three of our other codes: being at ease, confidence, and maturity. As we continued to have these conversations about the codes, our focused codes—codes that described broader groups of initial codes—emerged. Finally, when we discussed how to categorize our focused codes, we realized that five of our focused codes all described leadership in some way.

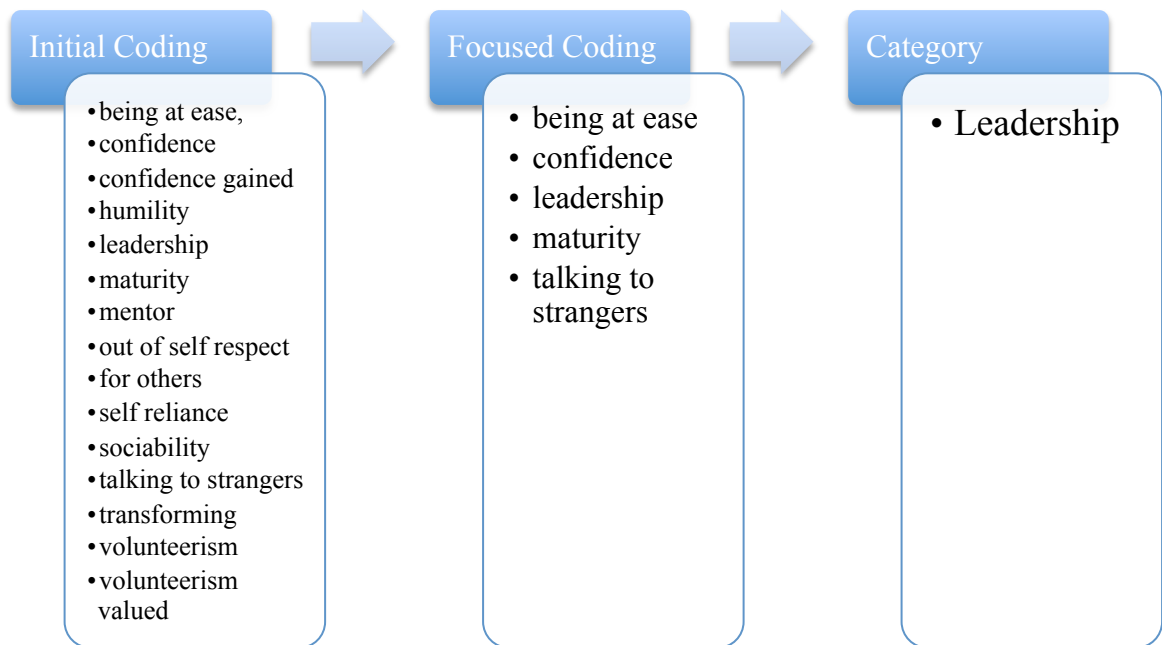


Figure 2. Grounded theory coding sequence for leadership category.

The analysis of these focused codes began by applying Cronon's (1998) 10 qualities of a liberally educated person, as operationalized in Chapter 2, as categories for the data.

Conclusion

This chapter provided details on the original impetus for this research project and for the data collection that occurred through a survey based on the PWTARP (Kail et al., 2016). It gave a detailed account of the demographic data that participants in the survey

provided. This chapter also discussed the survey itself, which contained 10 open-ended questions that generated 180 pages of writing from the 63 respondents.

Finally, this chapter discussed the study's use of grounded theory in order to analyze the data. I used a second reader who is familiar with the field but not with the data in order to balance my familiarity with the data and to help engender a conversation about the data and the codes we developed. This conversation was the beginning of my analysis of the data.

I believe it is important to note here that the use of a second reader created the kind of collaborative learning environment that the participants in the survey spent so much time creating when they were tutors. As Kenneth Bruffee (2008) reminds us in "Peer Tutoring and the 'Conversation of Mankind'," "reflective thinking is something we learn to do, and we learn to do it from and with other people" (2008, p. 209). This study seeks to better understand a group of people who spent their high school years helping and working with others in order to build and nurture greater understanding of the world around them. A second reader for this study acts in the same way.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter will discuss the findings of the survey responses and the initial and focused coding my coding assistant and I created for the data through the grounded theory process (Charmaz, 2014). The findings help to answer the research question for this study:

What abilities, values, and skills do tutors develop from their experience as peer tutors and how, if at all, have they used those abilities, values, and skills in their lives beyond high school?

The participants in this study were high school peer tutors who responded to a survey (see Appendix A for full survey) that specifically asked them to reflect on their experiences as tutors and explain what effects being a high school peer tutor had had on their lives, both academic and personal, in college and beyond. Of the 204 tutors who were sent the survey, 63 tutors completed the survey. This represents a 31% return rate. The respondents were largely representative of the student population of the school as a whole. The student population, according to the State Board of Education's 2013-2014 Report Card (n.d.), which shows a five-year trend, comprised racial populations that were 47.5% white, 28.9% Asian, 13.8% Hispanic, 5.6% black, and 3.8% multiple races. Also of note were the 36.5% of students in the school who have low-income status, 11.6% of students with disabilities, and the 4.9% of students who are designated as English language learners (n.d.).

There were also ways in which the participants were similar. Particularly, they had homogeneity of purpose, expectations, and leadership. The expectation for all tutors was that they would work in a collaborative setting with at least one other student at least three times each week during the school year. This means that most alumni tutors who responded would have tutored at least 100 times each academic year, for a minimum of one year and a maximum of three years. Many tutors, it may be noted, tutored far in excess of this number.

Additionally, at the end of each session, tutors were required to fill out a conference form with three open-response sections. The form required them to take time to think about what had transpired during the session and then to process it through writing. In this way, the peer tutors were more likely to be reflective or metacognitive of their work with others.

Further demographic information gathered in the survey gives a picture of the respondents. Respondents indicated that they were between the ages of 18 and 24, with the majority of 71.4% being between the ages of 18 and 20. Thirty-four of the respondents are women and 30 are men. The respondents were almost evenly split between how many years they had tutored, with 19 respondents (30.2%) indicating that they had tutored one or three years and 25 respondents (39.7%) indicating that they had tutored two years.

Next, this chapter will discuss the findings of the survey as they relate to the research question, particularly, these findings are what the respondents indicated were the abilities, values, and skills they developed as high school peer tutors. Finally, this chapter will conclude with a discussion of the findings of the grounded theory coding process and

the eleven categories that arose from that process. The responses to the nine open-ended questions on the survey (see Appendix A for full survey) generated 180 pages of text. My coding assistant and I coded this data using 132 codes in 3,570 code applications on 2,231 excerpts. From these codes the following 11 categories emerged: writing, reading, collaboration, adaptability, patience, perseverance, confidence, maturity, leadership, bravery, and joie de vivre.

Survey Results

This section will discuss the survey responses and the major findings of the analysis of the data. The first survey questions asked participants to list their answers and so reporting the answers to those questions becomes what Hughes et al. (2010) called a “relatively straightforward task” (2010, p.23). These reports will be followed by a discussion of the codes that were created to analyze the 180 pages of text that respondents generated to the more open-ended survey questions and the eleven key findings that arose out of the grounded theory coding and analysis (Charmaz, 2014).

It is important to remember two things while considering these results. First, the respondents for this survey worked at a literacy center and not in a writing center. In other words, these respondents may not necessarily be focused on writing and their lives as writers as they were answering the survey questions. Some tutors, in fact, may not have tutored very much writing during their time in the center. Some tutors were very specifically math or science tutors. Therefore, it is unwise to look at the writing category and assume that the number of respondents who discussed writing (22/63) is necessarily low. Although more respondents discussed collaboration or joie de vivre, these results do not require category-to-category comparison because the categories are primarily

descriptive. They tell us a story about what respondents feel they learned, which is what this study hoped to uncover. Whereas collaboration and *joie de vivre* may be more significant in this study, they do not negate the importance many respondents felt about less reported categories like writing and reading.

Second, when they were tutors, I knew the respondents very well and worked next to them every school day for years. For that reason, the results of the Likert-scale questions, which mirror the PWTARP survey, were no surprise to me. My tutors loved the work they did and the collaborative center in which they worked. This passion was reported back to me from alumni through phone calls, visits, and emails in the years after they had left for college. Indeed, those communications were the reason I began this research. These Likert-scale questions go a long way in addressing my initial question about whether or not tutors really did find their experience as tutors to be meaningful and influential.

Skills, Abilities, and Values Defined

The first question on the survey asked participants to identify the “most significant” skills, abilities, and values tutors developed through their work. As defined earlier in this study, a skill is a behavior that one learns during life without needing to be born with the capacity to do the behavior from birth. An ability is the competency to do something based on an inherent, innate, or congenital characteristic of an individual (United States Office of Personnel Management, n.d.). Values are beliefs about which one feels strongly. The skills tutors reported acquiring are, in some regards, expected. As writing teachers around the world know, for example, if one works with writing, one generally becomes a better writer, or as one of the survey respondents declared, “By

reading other people's writing, I was able to see what makes a good paper and what makes a bad paper” (R-21). And as another respondent clarified, “I also picked up good paper revising skills through tutoring which I use on my own papers” (R-56).

The abilities tutors describe are perhaps a more nuanced set of qualities in that the improvement tutors saw in these qualities happened for the most part through the work they did in sharpening their skills. Similarly, the values described by tutor alumni appear derivative—they come about because of the tutors’ understandings and manifestations of the skills and abilities they acquired and honed through the work of others.

Research Question Answered

The first question on the survey (see Appendix A for full survey) asked participants to identify “the most significant abilities, values, or skills” that they developed as a result of their work as peer tutors. This question addresses the first part of this study’s research question:

What abilities, values, and skills do tutors develop from their experience as peer tutors and how, if at all, have they used those abilities, values, and skills in their lives beyond high school?

As detailed in Table 2, respondents named 25 skills, abilities, and values a total of 325 times within the scope of this question. The preponderance of the responses, 69%, fell in the category of skills, which comprised 13 named skills. Respondents named 5 abilities, which was 18% of the overall. Finally, seven of the responses were values, which makes up 13% of the overall responses.

Table 2

<i>Named Skills, Abilities, and Values and Number of Uses by Participants</i>					
<u>Skills</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Abilities</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Values</u>	<u>Number</u>
Working with Others	42	Adaptability	26	Leadership	15
Communications Skills	40	Patience	21	Empathy	13
Teaching	27	Confidence	6	Respect	7
Critical Thinking	24	Perseverance	4	Altruism	3
Listening	23	Commitment	1	Joy	3
Collaboration	19			Honesty	1
Improved Academics	14			Humor	1
People Skills	13				
Executive Skills	10				
Becoming Better Writer	7				
Metacognition	3				
Reading	1				
Research	1				
Total Uses	224	Total Uses	58	Total Uses	43

It is important to note of this table that it represents what the respondents said when prompted to “list” the skills, abilities, and values they developed. In the open-ended questions that followed in the survey, respondents were given more space to respond and expand upon what is detailed in Table 2. It is through the reflection and writing required by the open-ended responses that the participants were able to better explain what, for example, “becoming a better writer,” “patience,” or “working with others” actually meant. These responses made up the bulk of the 180 pages of data that were coded for this study.

The other questions in the survey that did not allow for open-ended answers were the four Likert-scale questions. Each one of these questions asked participants to rate the importance of an aspect of their tutoring experience on their lives after high school. These questions gave participants a range of numeric values from 5 to 1 wherein 5 was very influential or important and 1 was not influential or important.

One question asked participants to rate the importance of their tutor training and experiences on their development as university students, which all respondents had attended. The number of responses and the percentage that number represents of the total responses is shown in Table 3.

Table 3

<i>Training & Experiences Impact on Development as University Students</i>			
<u>Likert-scale</u>		<u># of Responses</u> (<i>n</i> = 63)	<u>% of Responses</u>
Very Important	5	35	55.6%
	4	17	27%
	3	6	9.5%
	2	4	6.3%
Not Important	1	1	1.6%

Clearly, the vast majority of survey respondents (92.1%), those giving a score of 3 or higher, felt that their training and experiences played a key role in how they developed as new scholars in their postsecondary contexts. Particularly, another of the survey's Likert-scale questions asked respondents to indicate how influential their training and work as a peer tutor had been on their own literacy skills. As indicated in Table 4, 95% of respondents indicated that their tutoring experiences were influential at some level.

Table 4

<i>Extent Literacy Skills Influenced by Tutoring Experience</i>			
<u>Likert-scale</u>		<u># of Responses</u> (<i>n</i> = 61)	<u>% of Responses</u>
Very Influential	5	34	55.7%
	4	19	31.1%
	3	5	8.2%
	2	3	4.9%
Not Influential	1	0	0%

The last two Likert-scale questions of the survey asked participants how influential their tutoring experiences had been on their postsecondary nonacademic experiences including

volunteer and charitable work as well as job interviews and the hiring process. Table 5 shows the responses for participants who answered the question of the importance of their skills, abilities, and values in their volunteer and charitable work.

Table 5

<i>Importance of Skills, Abilities, & Values in Volunteer & Charitable Work</i>			
<u>Likert-scale</u>		<u># of Responses(<i>n</i> = 58)</u>	<u>% of Responses</u>
Very Important	5	33	56.9%
	4	14	24.1%
	3	8	13.8%
	2	1	1.7%
Not Important	1	2	3.4%

The majority of respondents (94.8%) reported that their secondary tutoring experiences were influential in their charitable or volunteer work. As Table 6 shows, the majority of respondents (87.3%) also reported that tutor training and experiences were important to their job interviews or the hiring processes they went through.

Table 6

<i>Training & Experiences Importance to Job Interviews & Hiring Process</i>			
<u>Likert-scale</u>		<u># of Responses(<i>n</i> = 63)</u>	<u>% of Responses</u>
Very Important	5	24	38.1%
	4	20	31.7%
	3	11	17.5%
	2	3	4.8%
Not Important	1	5	7.9%

The remainder of this chapter will be dedicated to the coding process and the resultant categories that process created from the data of the open-ended survey questions. These questions allowed the respondents to give richer, fuller explanation of the skills, abilities, and values they developed as tutors and how they used those skills, abilities, and values in their lives after high school.

Coding Process Results

The use of the grounded theory method (Charmaz, 2014), wherein my coding assistant and I coded the 180 pages of text, resulted in 132 initial codes (see Appendix C for full list of initial codes). We read with an eye to understanding what the participants had wanted to communicate through their words by following these guides:

1. Breaking the data up into their component parts or properties
2. Defining the actions on which they rest (Find the gerund.)
3. Looking for tacit assumptions
4. Explicating implicit actions and meanings
5. Crystalizing the significance of the points
6. Comparing data with data
7. Identifying gaps in the data (Charmaz, 2014, p. 125)

This reading produced a wide range of codes as well as codes that we could easily group together.

Next, through the focused coding process, we determined which codes were the most significant. We took time to resolve the disputes, discrepancies (which included combining repeated codes), and misunderstandings we had about the meaning of the codes we had created. The discussions we had allowed us to not only understand each other's codes, but our own as well. Finally, we determined which codes made the most sense for sorting the data. This process reduced the number of codes, listed alphabetically in Table 7, to 34.

Table 7

Focused Codes

<u>Codes</u>		
1. adaptability	11. confidence	22. patience
2. being at ease	12. critical thinking	23. perseverance
3. becoming a better writer	13. equality	24. reading
4. better person	14. family & friendship	25. real life
5. bravery	15. humor	26. seeking help
6. collaboration	16. job readiness	27. skills
7. college not as rigorous	17. joy	28. talking to strangers
8. commitment	18. leadership	29. teaching
9. communications skills	19. learners	30. time management
10. community	20. listening	31. training outcomes
	21. maturity	32. tutoring at college
	21. metacognitive skills	33. values
		34. working with others

At this point in the process, we were able to further consolidate these codes into eleven categories as shown in Table 8.

Table 8

Analytic Categories

<u>Categories</u>		
1. writing	4. adaptability	8. maturity
2. reading	5. patience	9. leadership
3. collaboration	6. perseverance	10. bravery
	7. confidence	11. joie de vivre

An example of this process is the “leadership” category. We grouped 15 initial codes together during the focused coding because of their relationship to each other. This produced 5 focused codes that could be best represented by the term “leadership” which is illustrated in Figure 2, which can be found in Chapter 3.

Categories

As shown in Table 8, the eleven categories that arose from the coding process constitute the major findings of this survey and are explained in this section. Within the

framework of this study, the categories are arranged as the skills of writing, reading, and collaboration. The abilities respondents described are adaptability, patience, perseverance, and confidence. Finally, the values tutor alumni reported developing were maturity, leadership, bravery, and joie de vivre. The categories are descriptive in that they are like the titles to the rich stories the tutors provided through the survey. In this section, the categories will be listed according the framework for this study. In the Findings Summarized section, the categories will be listed in terms of their significance in the number of respondents who reported them. Portions of these narratives will be used throughout this section to illustrate the depth of experience the tutor alumni reported in their open-ended responses. Since the survey responses were anonymous, these portions of the narratives will be attributed to respondents by the letter “R” for respondent and an assigned number (1-63). The number of respondents out of the total 63 is listed in parenthesis for each category.

Writing. Responses from the survey participants (22/63) illustrate a deepening relationship with writing in terms of how they had matured as writers, how they became more aware of the process of writing, how their skills in writing helped them to identify as teachers, and how their proficiency at writing and tutoring of writing made their college experiences richer and more meaningful.

These respondents explained their maturation as writers as being a direct result of their tutoring in high school. The iterative and recursive nature of their job—to help multiple students on assignments they had also encountered as students—gave them the practice with writing that allowed them to grow as writers themselves or as one tutor succinctly wrote: “To me, these necessary skills would have taken a much longer time to

develop had I not had the chance to guide students through the same process” (R-18).

Respondents also discussed their new ability to deal with both higher and lower order writing concerns and a greater awareness of the writing process itself and how it fit into their educations.

Their work as peer tutors helped respondents become more aware of their role, within the peer-tutoring paradigm as well as at college and with friends, as teacher within the writer/tutor relationship. This growing realization that they had the capacity and drive to be literacy leaders through teaching was carried with them to their college contexts. Most respondents reported finding college easier than their colleagues who had not been peer tutors, or as one respondent said, “My skills as a writer were much more developed going into college than other students because of [peer tutor] training” (R-59).

Specifically, the training and experience of peer tutoring in high school impacted their ability to work well with fellow students and professors. One respondent described the tutoring process in her own context as a university student: “I was very open to letting others (professors and peers alike) tear apart my writing so that it could grow into a better essay. The peer tutoring process helped me see the benefits of being so open” (R-49). Respondents discussed multiple ways they tutored in their dorms and made friends through tutoring new college acquaintances. Writing and the tutoring of writing was a key for some in terms of the all-important social aspects of university.

Reading. Respondents (16/63) identified that tutoring helped improve their reading comprehension and that the reading strategies they had learned as students transferred to their work with tutees in tutoring situations. Discussions about reading came up frequently in the survey responses. Within the 63 survey responses, 41 mentions

of reading skills improvement were made. These references generally dealt with the relationship that tutors' work had with reading, particularly, about the recursive nature of the reading task as a way of learning. Tutors also wrote about how the work of tutoring someone in a paper extended not only to the tutors' own writing skills, but also their reading skills. As one tutor explained: "My reading comprehension, which was really hurting prior to my experience as a tutor, has gotten better. Having to read an essay and understand it in a short amount of time everyday was good practice for me" (R-16).

In addition to writing about the tutoring experience making them better readers, respondents discussed teaching discreet reading strategies. Often, the kinds of reading skills tutors were teaching were modeled through the tutors' behavior and the data shows instances of tutoring skills bleeding over into their lives as university students, especially when they encounter difficult texts. What this respondent wrote was indicative of the overall experience tutors had at university: "When I am doing readings for class, I find that I ask myself the same types of helpful questions [of myself that I had asked as a tutor] to guide me through parts that I am struggling with" (R-42). While they had been tutoring reading and writing during high school, they had also been accumulating the lessons intended for their tutees.

Collaboration. Most respondents (54/63) described collaboration as the skill to work with others, even strangers, through clear communication in order to solve an important problem. This is not surprising that alumni discussed this in their survey responses as peer-to-peer tutoring programs, at their very root, are generally collaborative experiences for students. Survey respondents defined their collaborative work as being an "appreciation for other's ideas" (R-52), "working with various types of students with

different strengths” (R-2), and as “the most meaningful [part of tutoring]” (R-16).

Respondents explained that collaboration was what brought enjoyment to their roles as tutors. For the first time, they reported, during their secondary school experience, many of them came face-to-face with the kinds of students they had never worked with before, and they found the experience enriching. Respondents discussed the importance of being able to talk to strangers on a variety of subjects at university. Underscoring each of these responses was a belief that communication skills were key to being a successful tutor and student.

Collaboration, many of the tutor alumni responded, meant not only working with others but being flexible as well. They described the importance of both being flexible in the strategies they used with others and with their own academic work. They described a flexibility of self which arose from their experiences and which often gave them insight into how different people think and learn, as one tutor wrote: “Most often, tutees think about problems in different ways than I might. This means that working with a tutee requires one to keep an open mind about different paths to the same solution” (R-18).

Many of the respondents (45/63) indicated that they learned some kind of empathy through their collaborative work as well. Repeatedly, respondents identified the needs of others as being more important than their own needs. They explained how the empathy they gained traveled with them to their university settings and collaboration as being what made their work at university easier: “Learning is all about team work and once you realize that in college and make a small group of friends within your major with whom you work with on assignments, learning becomes a lot more enjoyable and easier” (R-40). Whereas many tutors discussed tutoring being a part of existing friendships,

frequently in the data set tutor alumni also told personal stories about how their collaborations had led to powerful new friendships. The following example, for instance, gives a look into the life of a tutor and how much that tutor was impacted by her work in high school:

Tutoring is more than just a job; it is a way of thinking that extends far beyond the time spent in the center. My first quarter at college, before I was working as a writing or math tutor, one of my friends Samatha was studying for a math test the next day. She asked me a question about a problem on derivatives, and I helped her work through it. I offered to explain the concept a little bit more generally, and she grasped the concept very quickly. Before we knew it, morning had come and neither of us had slept. The studying was focused, she was so quick to pick up on explanations and do practice, it was a fun and productive night for both of us. Instead of asking for money I asked how she did; she aced her test. Samantha and I have now been together for about a year and a half. (R-37)

In addition to blooming friendships, a quarter of the respondents (15/63) reported that their high school experience altered or showed them a career path, particularly for those tutors who found education as an occupation appealing.

Adaptability. For the respondents (43/63), adaptability was the ability to listen and actively hear someone and then adjust their tutoring approach based on that listening. Listening was key to being able to “ask the right questions... [and have an] appreciation for other's ideas” (R-52). It was also through listening that tutors identified the beginnings of the relationships they fostered with their students with whom they worked. Respondents acknowledged, however, that listening and the conversations that occurred

because of this careful listening were not always easy. They described complex situations of positioning themselves rhetorically to better collaborate with their tutees. One tutor described it as a “conversational modality” (R-37) that required

recall of knowledge on both ends, reshaping of knowledge, categorization of knowledge, careful listening, useful interpretation of things heard, a heightened level of focus, the possibility of frustration, and is just plain cognitively demanding for both sides when done right. (R-37)

Listening became a key to their ability to conceptualize ideas and use various ways of explaining those ideas to others. Listening became the root of their ability to adapt to the learning styles of others.

These respondents also described their adaptability as being the end product of the back-and-forth work with tutees, which could come from critique as often as not. Born from the types of sometimes-continuous relationships that tutors and tutees can have, many tutors acknowledged that the process of becoming adaptable was not always easy. They also acknowledged, however, that those relationships could bring self-criticism, self-reflection, and a burgeoning respect for others.

Many of the tutor alumni reported (33/63) learning more about themselves and others through learning to be adaptable and discussed how their ability to adapt to others has benefitted them in the larger world. They reported that it has helped them with their work at university as well as in their lives outside of academia, which included friends and family. One respondent wrote, “I believe that by learning that people think in different ways, I can somewhat think of how people think in different situations. So when I apply for a job, I try to think of how the person interviewing me is thinking about me

based on what I am doing or saying” (R-40). Being adaptable meant that tutors were better able to deal with people who held different views on issues than they did and led many tutors to write of their growing patience while working and adapting with others.

Patience. Survey participants (30/63) wrote that patience was the ability to meet people where they are, to listen attentively to ideas that possibly counter to their own, and to acknowledge different approaches to how things can be accomplished. Participants’ burgeoning adaptability allowed for their growing capacity to be patient with their tutees as well as with the learning process as a whole. Patience was “probably the most important” (R-25), as one respondent put it, quality for a tutor to possess, but that it was not something they felt they had in an overabundance to begin with:

The [program] taught me how to interact with people in a respectful and kind manner. It requires a lot of patience and can be frustrating sometimes, but it has taught me to still keep calm and try various approaches to help someone learn something. These skills are crucial in day-to-day human interactions. (R-30)

Within their narratives, the tutors described patience as the ability to meet people where they are, to listen attentively to ideas that possibly counter to their own, and to acknowledge different approaches to how things can be accomplished. This was a common theme when they wrote about their academic lives, but survey respondents also connected the need for patience with the wider world of working with people in general, which included their families and college friends. One tutor quipped: “I have been able to tutor my little brother without wanting to rip his head off. The patience that I acquired by tutoring students with all different attitudes definitely helped that” (R-47).

Interwoven through the respondents' discussions of patience, were their parallel understandings of the need to stick with a tutee or a process or a switching of processes. They understood that patience alone would not have been enough had they not also learned perseverance.

Perseverance. The former tutors (28/63) described perseverance as a stick-to-it-ness, which they applied to the educational task they and their tutees were addressing as well as their need to remain diligent with the tutee as they learned at varying paces. In many regards, perseverance and patience were discussed in the data hand-in-hand. The respondents clearly saw the relationship, but also clearly realized that perseverance was an important ability independently. One tutor pointed out the importance of persistence in tutoring others when she wrote: "Perseverance is a must when working with a tutee. One cannot just give up on solving a problem when another student is looking up to me for help" (R-18). Respondents also described perseverance as a determination to get better at tutoring itself, which was key to their experience. Perseverance, the responses indicate, is a requirement when working with a tutee and a lasting takeaway for tutors. Tutor alumni also realized that the process of tutoring in a persistent manner made them better tutors.

Respondents indicated that this perseverance they had acquired traveled with them to their university experiences:

In college, it has been no different. I am even busier with even less time, yet I still devote hours a day to tutoring peers on my floor in subjects I am either currently taking or took in high school. This often does not allow me to begin my work until very late, but I still make an effort to tutor because I recognize the impact

that it has on my learning and understanding, especially if I am tutoring a subject I am currently taking. (R-12)

These respondents described perseverance—a stick-to-it-ness—as important for their success both as high school tutors and beyond because it provided them with practice at being and maintaining both patience and their newly developing confidence.

Confidence. Over 60% of respondents (37/63) discussed a growing confidence in their survey responses. They identified confidence as their ability to be more trusting of their own skills, particularly writing, their work collaborating with others, and their college and professional work. Their growing confidence allowed them to be more at ease with others, particularly strangers. For adolescents, this ability to maintain their confidence around people who are new to them is a rare gift. At the heart of the matter, their tutoring experiences seem to have given them the ability to slough off their childhood shyness and the awkwardness that comes with not knowing oneself well. Through the survey, respondents explained that they were confident adults who were ready for a university experience. One tutor wrote: “I felt SO prepared going into college” (R-47) and another confided that:

Coming to college I can tell that I am on much more stable footing than many of my peers, not necessarily in terms of a career path or life plan, but in terms of knowing myself and being able to think about and face unknowns relatively comfortably. (R-42)

As for their work with others once they arrived at university, many shared specific stories about speaking up in classes or dorm settings to add their opinions or to offer assistance to students who were struggling. One engineering student shared how she had used her

past tutoring experiences to institute a peer-to-peer dynamic among her colleagues:

“Electrical engineers work in teams. Tutoring helps develop social skills with people you have never met before. In my engineering lab, we work together and the social skills I developed as a tutor help me cooperate with my teammates” (R-53). And another student described her time as a tutor by writing: “Self esteem booster! Today, I am a confident senior at my university (Insert King Kong beating his chest image here)” (R-60).

As with their experiences in college, respondents (37/63) also indicated that they had become more confident in their job interviews and career choices as a direct result of their tutoring work. A tutor summed it up well by writing: “Making a person you have never met feel comfortable and confident in you is one of a tutee's biggest challenges. This is essentially what a job interview is about as well” (R-18). The data provides an opportunity to see into the minds of these former tutors and gives us a real sense for what they learned through those experiences. As they developed their skills and abilities, they grew into adults with values informed by those collaborative learning experiences.

Maturity. Respondents (41/63) recognized that stepping up in situations, being responsible, empathizing with tutees, being compassionate, and helping others were all qualities of a mature person. Maturity happens for young people at different times and at different rates. This category attempts to describe how the tutors saw themselves growing into responsible young people as a result of their tutoring experiences, which is illustrated in this excerpt from a tutor survey response: “I think the [tutoring program] was one of the main places that really fostered that type of stability in me while I was in high school” (R-42). In general, the respondents recognized that taking responsibility—stepping up—in situations was an important part of their role as tutors and that they were more likely to

step up when needed as a result of their experience. Frequently this growing maturity was paired with a general sense of empathy toward their tutees or others, as this respondent so clearly pointed out:

No longer do I immediately get angry with someone with whom I do not see eye-to-eye with; rather, now I try to see the problem from their perspective and understand their point of view before asserting myself or giving my opinions. (R-12)

Both of the following tutor responses exemplify the idea that tutor alumni valued or appreciated their growth in maturity. In the first case, the tutor wrote that she was glad that she had matured into an independent person: “Tutoring other students makes your independence grow, and independence as a university student is key to surviving” (R-50). Another respondent described how her maturation as a tutor played a part in her community work, interviewing, and career choices: “[Tutoring] was the reason why I joined the Chicago Civic Leadership Certificate Program. This program helps make a difference in the community that has served me by allowing me to serve back” (R-11).

Finally, respondents went further to discuss how their growing maturity had changed the way they saw their lives as students and people in the wider context of society. The following quote helps to illustrate the depth of the respondents’ contemplation of their growing maturity as thinkers:

[Maturity allowed me] to break myself from the endemic shortsightedness that characterized most schools. Namely, it helped me to relieve myself of the beliefs that value is grades, that education is degrees, and other manifestations of the

scarcely ubiquitous conviction that meaning is granted from above rather than from within. (R-37)

Indeed, the above quote is indicative of the coded excerpts from these respondents, who made up 65% of the overall group. It showed young people who had come to terms with the need to help others before they helped themselves and to lead others, even when they did not know they needed to be led.

Leadership. Survey respondents (34/63) wrote that being more empathetic, altruistic, and compassionate allowed them to take on leadership roles in the communities. As a respondent wrote of her sense of leadership: “This comes from the experience of empathizing with tutees, and making them feel comfortable with me” (R-18). Many of them wrote about how their growing confidence in their skills, like writing and reading, when coupled with the opportunities they had to step into tutoring situations, allowed them to be a leader in other settings. One respondent wrote of her time as a tutor: “I learned to be a leader. Often times, I even learned something from my tutees from their different perspective of doing things... I also discovered what it means to make a commitment and to live up to it” (R-8).

They also described how tutoring had led them to take on leadership roles in the communities. From tutoring at the local grade schools and university dorms to working with parents who had gone back to school, the tutors wrote of the many opportunities they had taken to be a leader: “I feel as if I am a much more effective mediator between two relatives or friends who are arguing” (R-18).

And finally, they discussed how the leadership they had acquired as tutors had led them to consider their lives after college. Survey respondents (32/63) wrote specifically

about how the leadership they gained by working with their peers in high school helped them to better understand their career choices, particularly for those tutors who were bound for education programs.

Bravery. Bravery, as described by the former tutors (36/63), is defined as being able to move past or beyond one's shyness with others. They suggested that this quality required them to combine their stick-to-it-ness, or perseverance, with the capacity to keep calm, communicate clearly, and to wield confidence. One respondent wrote that this bravery now manifested itself in the following way: "[Working with others] requires a lot of patience and can be frustrating sometimes, but it has taught me to still keep calm and try various approaches to help someone learn something" (R-30).

The 57% of respondents who discussed bravery were very forthcoming about what it took to overcome their shyness, a difficulty for teenagers the world over. While they declared they were shy openly, they wrote that tutoring had helped them to overcome that shyness. One such response stated that tutoring had given the respondent "better communication skills" (R-5) so that she was better "able to help others" (R-5). And another tutor wrote: "I'm a shy person, so I find it difficult to go out and join clubs and aspire for leadership positions. However, [tutoring] made it easy for me to get involved" (R-61).

This new found or developing bravery allowed tutor alumni to seek out more opportunities to show their bravery while being a part of their university community or while seeking employment. One respondent made the link between being brave enough to reach out for help and having the opportunity to achieve higher grades:

The training and experience of being a tutor has broadened my ability to ask for help. Before I was a tutor, I would never ask questions even when I was confused. But now, I am able to ask my professor questions and I am receiving higher grades because of it. (R-5)

These respondents were clear that their experiences in a collaborative peer-to-peer dynamic allowed them to come out of their shells, as this tutor wrote: “Tutoring helped me become more outgoing in the social aspect of my life. I’m not as shy, and I tend to strike up conversations more often than before” (R- 61). Their new bravery also allowed them to be less passive in their communities, university, and beyond. They wrote of being excited about their newfound freedom from shyness, as this writer put it: “The experience I have gained has allowed me to attack problems instead of simply letting them attack me” (R-18). This idea of being the primary actors in their own lives—of being brave enough to take control of their own lives—was a precursor to the final category of this study.

Joie de vivre. Tutor alumni (51/63) described acquiring a passion for life, which manifested as an enjoyment, belonging, caring, love, joy, happiness, and connection to others. This passion for life, which I will refer to as *joie de vivre*, was an idea that 81% of survey respondents discussed 164 times in the data. They discussed ideas like enjoyment, belonging, passion, caring, love, joy, happiness, and connection to others. Many of the responses were about working directly with students and the kinds of joy they extracted from these encounters: “I worked him through the problems and he said, “Ohhhhhhhh! I wish my teacher actually showed it like this.’ That moment where I got it to 'click' for him probably made me happier than he was” (R-19). Many of the tutors also wrote about

a “great feeling” (R-33) while tutoring or that tutoring sessions made them “feeling good” (R-4). One respondent even described this feeling as a “quite an addicting feeling” (R-4) while another wrote: “I just love the feeling I get when a tutee finally understands” (R-35). This “great feeling” (R-33) in these cases was a combination of a tutor who wanted to help and a tutee who, through that help, had realized or learned the target concept. This combination, the tutors wrote over and over again, allowed them to be happy in the high school context. Their reward, in many cases, was not limited to their own happiness at the moment, but was stretched out when tutees returned to thank them, as this tutor wrote:

My happiest moments in the [the program] were when people began requesting me as a tutor and when I knew that a student actually understood what it was that I was trying to convey to them and when they would come back and let me know how well they were doing after our tutoring session. (R-44)

Former tutors’ responses also discussed *joie de vivre* in the greater contexts of their schooling, relationships with friends and family, career choices, and community interactions, which included charitable and volunteer opportunities. They wrote of giving “through sacrifice rather than from overabundance” (R-37) and the joy they received from knowing they had made a positive difference in the lives of others. They discussed small ways in which they found happiness, like being better at expressing thoughts and ideas during classes, and they wrote of more profound ways of being able to enjoy themselves like giving speeches to hundreds of people.

They also wrote about how tutoring had changed them as people in fundamental ways. They described being changed in core ways through the process:

After tutoring, I noticed I became more open, I started to enjoy being around people, and being able to express myself... I also started to connect with my family more by calling, hanging out, any means necessary because I have a lot of cousins from all over the world, and being open helped me connect back with many of them. (R-38)

There is also an expansiveness to the way the tutors wrote about their passion for life and their education. One tutor wrote that she learned to “value scholarship, honesty, passion, and dedication” (R-47) whereas another tutor remarked that she had become “a much more actively altruistic person” (R-37).

Although they are still young, these respondents wrote about changes that often take many years for people to realize. Some of the respondents’ tutoring experiences were as short as a single year, and yet most of the respondents had some experience with feeling these kinds of core emotions from their work with others.

Findings Summarized

The analysis of the data in this study sought to answer the follow research question:

What abilities, values, and skills do tutors develop from their experience as peer tutors and how, if at all, have they used those abilities, values, and skills in their lives beyond high school?

The survey respondents named 25 skills, abilities, and values 325 times. The respondents cited skills 69% more often than they cited abilities or values. Predominant among those skills were working with others; communication skills; teaching; critical thinking; listening; and collaboration. Of the abilities listed, adaptability and patience were the

most named. Leadership and empathy were the most named values respondents reported caring about. Tutor alumni also reported that their development as university students, their general literacy skills, and their charitable or volunteer work, and their experiences in job interviews were deeply influenced by their experiences as high school peer tutors.

Finally, the grounded theory method for coding the open-ended responses of the survey, as outlined in Chapter 3, produced 11 categories, which are comprised of 132 initial codes. These categories are descriptive in that they give a sense of the rich narratives that were provided by respondents through the survey. These 11 categories are summarized below (The number of respondents out of the total 63 are listed in parenthesis for each category.) and sorted according to their significance in the results:

- Joie de vivre (51/63): Tutor alumni described many times acquiring a passion for life, which manifested as an enjoyment, belonging, caring, love, joy, happiness, and connection to others.
- Collaboration (54/63): Respondents described collaboration as the skill to work with others, even strangers, through clear communication in order to solve an important problem.
- Adaptability (43/63): For the respondents, adaptability was the ability to listen and actively hear someone and then adjust their tutoring approach based on that listening.
- Maturity (41/63): The respondents recognized that stepping up in situations, being responsible, empathizing with tutees, being compassionate, and helping others were all qualities of a mature person.

- Confidence (37/63): The respondents identified confidence as their ability to be more trusting of their own skills, particularly writing, their work collaborating with others, and their college and professional work.
- Bravery (36/63): Bravery, the tutors described, is defined as being able to move past or beyond one's shyness with others. They suggested that this quality required them to combine their stick-to-it-ness, or perseverance, with the capacity to keep calm, communicate clearly, and to wield confidence.
- Leadership (34/63): Survey respondents wrote that being more empathetic, altruistic, and compassionate allowed them to take on leadership roles in the communities.
- Patience (30/63): Survey participants wrote that patience was the ability to meet people where they are, to listen attentively to ideas that possibly counter to their own, and to acknowledge different approaches to how things can be accomplished.
- Perseverance (28/63): Former Tutors described perseverance as a stick-to-it-ness, which they applied to the educational task they and their tutees were addressing as well as their need to remain diligent with the tutee as they learned at varying paces.
- Writing (22/63): Survey participants illustrated the deepening relationship they have with writing in terms of how they mature as writers, how they become more aware of the process of writing, how their skills in writing help them to identify as teachers, and how their proficiency at writing and tutoring of writing make their college experiences richer and more meaningful in multiple ways.

- Reading (16/63): Respondents identified that tutoring helped improve their reading comprehension and that the reading strategies they had learned as students transferred to their work with tutees in the tutoring situations.

Although the respondents were glad that they had acquired their skills and abilities, their responses to the survey made it clear that they were most excited by, or most in awe of, the values they developed during their tutoring experiences. They wrote fervently about the maturity and leadership they had developed during their time as tutors. They described their transitions from shyness to bravery like a rite of passage and their overall passion is palpable in the way they described themselves and the lives after tutoring. These categories constitute the major findings of this study.

From the tutor alumni responses to the survey questions, 11 categories emerged. These categories represent what the respondents believed they developed from their years of tutoring their peers in a high school. Through their own words, this chapter illustrated what the tutors had learned through the analytic categories of writing, reading, collaboration, adaptability, patience, perseverance, confidence, maturity, leadership, bravery, and *joie de vivre*. The next chapter will discuss these categories in terms of the theoretical framework for this study and offer some ideas for further research while identifying the limitations of this study.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

In this final chapter, I will discuss the findings in terms of how they fit within the scope of the PWTARP (Kail et al., 2016) and this study's theoretical framework. The PWTARP sought to include many schools in its research by sharing its research design and survey for adaptation. Since its inception in 2010, the project's website has listed several schools, including Carleton College, George Mason University, St. John's University, St. Thomas University, Swarthmore College, and the University of Vermont, that have completed similar research. This study will be the first to publish findings from a PWTARP-modeled survey of former high school tutors. All other PWTARP schools are postsecondary.

The theoretical framework for this study was based on William Cronon's seminal 1998 article "'Only Connect...': The Goals of a Liberal Education." This chapter will return to Cronon's work to see how the findings of this study compare to what Cronon holds up as a benchmark for American education. Finally, I will discuss the implications this study has for high school teaching and writing center practice, the implications for future research, and the limitations of this study.

PWTARP and the High School Tutor's Experience

These findings do not require a comparison to the original PWTARP findings to give us an idea of what high school peer tutors learn or how they develop as a consequence of their experiences; however, this study was born of the PWTARP and, therefore, is a part of that overall data collection and analysis set. To this end, for many in

the writing center community who work in postsecondary contexts, this study may help to answer the question of whether or not high school students are capable of tutoring their peers in the way that college-age students are capable of doing.

The PWTARP reported seven key findings that the respondents—college-level, peer-tutor alumni—developed: “a new relationship with writing; analytical powers; a listening presence; skills, values, and abilities vital in their professions; skills, values, and abilities vital in families and in relationships; earned confidence in themselves; and a deeper understanding of and commitment to collaborative learning” (Hughes et al., 2010, p. 24).

For the most part, while the PWTARP findings were illustrative, they focused on what this study has defined as skills and abilities—in other words, a skill is a behavior that one learns during life without needing to be born with the capacity to do the behavior from birth, while an ability is the competency to do something based on an inherent, innate, or congenital characteristic of an individual (United States Office of Personnel Management, n.d.). Values are beliefs about which one feels strongly. Becoming a better writer, critical thinker, listener, and collaborator, for instance, are skills. The only ability Hughes et al. (2010) reported discovering was confidence, which they described as “earned” because it grows through the improvement of skills and, in the case of tutors, the use of those skills with others. As for values, Hughes et al. made only one reference to a respondent describing “joy” (2010, p. 31), which this study treats as a value, something about which one believes deeply. The joy in this case was described as the deep emotional feeling a tutor alumna felt at discovering her own writing process through helping others. The other references to values in their article do not explain what that

value is or how it is different from the skills and abilities they discovered. This study, on the other hand, found that 81% of the high school peer tutors who completed the survey reported 4 types of values: a deep appreciation for their growing maturity, capable leadership, capacity for bravery, and joie de vivre for a life of intellectual collaboration and giving.

It is not surprising, then, that the other colleges and universities that have participated in the PWTARP had slightly different approaches or findings to the survey as it was designed to be adapted by participants. George Mason University, for instance, focused primarily on how their alumni had “made use of their Writing Center experiences” (Zawacki, 2010). The University of Vermont and Carlton College similarly focused solely on “skills and abilities” (Dinitz & Kiedaiscsh, 2009) and collaborative skills like asking generative questions and negotiating relationships (Evertz & Zucker, 2011). Jill Gladstein (2010) of Swarthmore College reported primarily on how her respondents had been impacted in their university lives and careers by their peer tutoring work. Finally, the survey of former tutors at Concordia College found that their respondents developed “significant skills including confidence building, collaboration, listening skills, analytical skills, a different relationship with writing and an overall stronger educational experience” (Virgintino, 2014). Significantly, Virgintino’s results include an explanation of her data based on what she describes as, “one of Concordia’s strongest values is its emphasis of creating and serving a community” (2014). Her survey found that: “during peer tutors’ service to the community, they learn about themselves as students and as individuals, making them more confident and also strengthening their communication skills” (2014). In the case of tutors from Concordia College, as with the

other PWTARP schools, values are built upon the skills and abilities, but are not emphasized in the research reporting overall.

This is not to say that the respondents for Hughes et al. did not acquire any values through their tutoring experiences. Instead, it seems apparent that the PWTARP study was focused more intently on the skills their tutors acquired. The preponderance of evidence indicates that the PWTARP is focused primarily on the advancement of writing and the tutoring of writing. That makes perfect sense. It is a project dedicated to writing centers and their peer tutors. It does, however, throw a sharp light on how the respondents to this survey of high school tutors emphasized the values gained through their experiences. The respondents in this study wrote at length about the values—deep beliefs—that they had acquired through their tutoring practice. The sense of maturity, leadership, bravery, and *joie de vivre* they wrote of speaks to their life-changing experiences.

Perhaps the emphasis on values in the writing of the high school peer tutor alumni arose out of the almost universal need of high school students to better understand themselves and the power dynamic in which they live. Although it may not always be obvious to people who teach at the postsecondary level, college students better understand their place and position—the limits and the scope of their power. They have already overcome their reliance on their parents' opinions and beliefs. They are better at questioning and pushing back against authority because they know themselves better. College students also have a better sense of ownership over their own educations. Most high school students have not even grappled with the idea that education is voluntary. They do not really understand that their education is something they should control. In

high school, it is cool to hate school and what one does, all feel compelled to do. The pressure to conform is so intense that most students do not even recognize that it guides their every step. High school is a place of fitting in and towing the line. High school students often cannot question the gen/tran ideology (Kail & Trimbur, 1987, p. 10) because they do not even know that it is there, and doubt its existence when told it is there.

For the PWTARP respondents, perhaps the volatile mix of adolescent angst and naiveté was too far in the past for them to concentrate too much on beliefs they acquired. When they were surveyed was their belief development so far in their past that it seemed an integral part of themselves and did not warrant outside credit? For the respondents to this survey, notions of being brave enough to overcome their shyness, mature enough to recognize someone else's needs before addressing one's own need, and enthused enough to describe themselves as one respondent did when he wrote: "The [tutoring program] changed who I was from a mellow, bored, tired, and quiet individual, to a person who loves to be around people, can make jokes, and have a good time" (R-38) were clearly paramount in their minds. The collaborative work they did which built their skills and abilities beyond what their non-tutor friends were achieving altered the very way they looked at and believed in the world. The peer-tutoring program itself gave them an alternative way of looking first at their educational experiences and then at themselves. In the words of one survey respondent, the opportunity to be a peer tutor gave them a chance to: "value scholarship, honesty, passion, and dedication" (R-47). For those of us who work with teenagers every day, it is remarkable to read survey responses like these

two: “I enjoyed sitting down with a fellow classmate and teaching them something new” (R-33) or “I can say with every bit of my heart that it impacts everyone positively” (R-4).

In the public institutions of local high schools, conformity, sports, test scores, GPAs, and appropriate behavior are the standards by which most people judge a school’s worth. The young respondents to this survey remind us that the potential for schools is far greater and far more important than simply passing on the canon of Western civilization or winning the state championship. As one respondent wrote: “The [tutoring program] is where I did most of my thinking on a broader scale than what high school usually limits a student’s priorities to (such as homework, attendance, gossip, grades, etc.)” (R-42). Another young writer shared that: “Being a peer tutor was, hands down, the best decision I made in high school. It made an otherwise exhausting system bearable” (R-31). Awakening passion for learning and collaboration may well start with igniting a *joie de vivre* in our students that years of gen/tran ideology (Kail & Trimbur, 1987, p. 10) have doused.

The Tutor’s Place in the World

This study investigated what tutors learn—their skills, abilities, and values—using Cronon’s (1998) theoretical framework to understand the tutors’ self-reported outcomes. Indeed, Cronon’s goals provided a lens for explaining the tutors’ narratives. As a reaction to what he described as the term *liberal education* becoming either a “marketing ploy or shibboleth” (1998, p. 73) for the modern college, Cronon defined liberal education and enumerated its goals. For Cronon, a liberal education came out of “an educational tradition that celebrates and nurtures human freedom” (1998, p. 79) and, indeed, had at its core the values of “freedom and growth” (1998, p. 80), which reflect

John Dewey's (1944) own philosophy of education. Cronon asserted that liberal education "aspires to nurture the growth of human talent in the service of human freedom" (1998, p. 80). Cronon's goal was to provide benchmarks for a liberal education and the values it espouses.

Cronon's (1998) list of qualities created a yardstick for what a liberally educated person might look like. In Cronon's words,

A liberal education is not something any of us ever *achieve*; it is not a *state*.

Rather it is a way of living in the face of our own ignorance, a way of groping toward wisdom in full recognition of our own folly, a way of educating ourselves without any illusion that our educations will ever be complete (1998, p. 79).

Education is, again in Cronon's words, "for [the] human community" (1998, p. 79). In Cronon's essay we see the merging of Dewey's (1944) educational philosophy with James Gee's (2006) notion of a discourse community, which Gee describes as "a socially accepted association among ways of using language, of thinking, and of acting that can be used to identity oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or 'social network'" (2006, p. 29). Gee's social network seems to be the place where many of the tutor alumni in this study ended up. For example, this respondent wrote:

I was able to consider my purpose to others and to the world, what I really valued and how I was as a person because of my values, what kind of things I really enjoyed and what things I just did because I was told or because of societal pressures, and other existential topics like that. (R-42)

By considering her "purpose to others and the world" she has stepped out of the world of the average adolescent high school student. It would seem that this tutor had found her

social network wherein she was allowed to think about existential issues through her tutoring experiences and was able to have a wider worldview. When we see students at the secondary level begin to consider philosophic concepts like this, we are seeing the growth of a critical thinker who is actively engaged in the world. For many of the tutors, this is the most important outcome of their experiences.

Cronon (1998) reminds us of Dewey's (1944) assertion that education gives one "open-mindedness" (1944, p. 206) when he describes a liberal education as one in which a person must negotiate, or "grope toward wisdom," (Cronon, 1998, p. 79) through the spaces in between people and subjects. This groping through Gee's (2006) "social network" (2006, p. 29) with high school students disrupts the gen/trans education critiqued by Trimbur and Kail (1987, p. 10). In many ways, the study participants followed the trajectory of average students until they engaged in the peer-to-peer tutoring program. Then they began to develop the attributes Cronon described as being people fundamentally suited to living a liberally educated life. They joined the human community by engaging in a social network (Gee, 2006, p. 29)—the peer-tutoring program—and discovered a way to educate themselves through collaborative work, or, as Cronon explained it, connecting to others (1998, p. 78). With each new peer tutoring opportunity, tutors found a growing sense of themselves and their skills, abilities, and values. This is Dewey's "constant expansion" (1944, p. 206) as seen through the lens of collaborative learning. This is clearly echoed in one alumni's survey response:

When I [see the types] of improvement and passion that can come from just an hour of work with my peers, it makes me realize how much untapped potential there is in the educational system for passion, and vigor, and enjoyment. (R-37)

Cronon's (1998) list of qualities also echo what Bruffee (1978) described in the Brooklyn Plan as a "socially productive, service-oriented social exchange" (1978, p. 449) that will lead to the intellectual growth of students. This is illustrated by one respondent's musing that she felt like: "people aren't using each other as stepping-stones—they're just stepping on each other. Many students don't know how to peer tutor because they are too busy trying to be better than the next student" (R-61). She, like so many of her colleagues, is rooted in a service-oriented mindset. They felt, as this young person did, that their work as tutors was

[a] form of charity at [school], but it never felt like charity. I was able to provide the community with something they needed. Sure I wasn't handing out money to tutees, but tutoring services cost a lot at college. The [tutoring program] taught me how to be charitable and giving. (R-52)

It is clear then, that Cronon gave us the entry guidelines for that social network and, thereby, provides for us a means for understanding what to look for in the survey results of the participants.

Skills

As defined by the U.S. government, a skill is a behavior that one learns during life without needing to be born with capacity to do the behavior from birth (United States Office of Personnel Management, n.d.). Cronon's (1998) essay identifies the following skills as being four of the ten qualities of a liberally educated person (for reference purposes, the number in parentheses following the guideline is the number Cronon originally assigned the guideline in his list):

- They can write clearly and persuasively and movingly. (4)

- They read and they understand. (2)
- They understand how to get things done. (8)
- They nurture and empower the people around them. (9) (1998, p. 76)

These skills are clearly reflected in the skills respondents described in their survey responses, which were new skills at or improvements in writing, reading, and collaborating. Whereas the writing and the reading are clearly reflected in Cronon's list, collaborating can be seen here in perhaps a new light. The respondents to the survey clearly identified that they knew how to "get things done" and showed that their work with others, both in high school and after, was about nurturing and empowering people. This is best illustrated through the words of the tutors themselves. As one tutor wrote, "My ability to empathize with another person has improved. Meeting the needs and emotions of a tutee with grace and meticulousness has helped me empathize with people I encounter on a daily basis" (R-17). Coming together, empathizing, and completing important work while helping those around them to be better students and learners, this is the core of Cronon's guideline describing "nurturing and empowering" others.

Abilities

An ability is the competency to do something based on an inherent, innate, or congenital characteristic of an individual (United States Office of Personnel Management, n.d.). Cronon (1998) listed three abilities in his list of ten:

- They listen and they hear. (1)
- They can talk with anyone. (3)
- They can solve a wide variety of puzzles and problems. (5) (1998, p. 76)

Respondents to the survey explained that they gained adaptability, patience, perseverance, and confidence through their tutoring experience. Adaptability requires both listening and talking with others. Patience is required for all three of these qualities and perseverance is often required to talk with anyone, especially those with whom we are uncomfortable, and to solve puzzles and problems. Confidence comes from, among other things, the ability to listen and talk with others and to solve a wide variety of problems. These three qualities also help to build more confidence in someone, especially peer tutors, as can be seen in this passage from a tutor's survey response:

I found that everyone learns differently. It's important to adapt to the individual and teach them in a way that they can relate to. This can be frustrating in the beginning, but incredibly rewarding when you have a breakthrough. I remember when I first started tutoring I worked with a student on an English paper. It was difficult for me to take a step back from my style of writing and try to edit/revise the paper according to the student's style of writing. However, as time went on, I found that I actually learned from these students. I learned what mistakes I was making and I saw what mistakes students commonly make. (R-33)

The tutor found that adaptability was crucial to her work with the tutee and that she had to adapt based upon what she heard from the tutee and how they worked together to solve the puzzle that is writing an English paper. Perhaps an even more important puzzle that she worked out, however, was that she could learn from the students she was helping and be confident enough to report it in the survey.

Values

Values are beliefs about which one feels strongly. They come from one's skills and abilities and interactions with the people around us. Cronon (1998) listed three values in his essay:

- They respect rigor not so much for its own sake but as a way of seeking truth. (6)
- They practice humility, tolerance, and self-criticism. (7)
- They follow E. M. Forster's injunction from *Howard's End*: "Only connect..." (10) (1998, p. 76)

This study uncovered four values tutors gained from the high school experiences in peer tutoring: maturity, leadership, bravery, and *joie de vivre*. Maturity can be seen as something one needs in order to respect rigor and practice humility, tolerance, and self-criticism, which are also qualities of a leader. A leader must also connect, as in Cronon's final quality, with others—build bridges between people. Bravery is often required when one seeks the truth, especially if it is about one's own writing. In many ways, bravery is also needed to be humble and tolerant of others.

It is in this meeting and being tolerant of others, in the respecting of hard things and hard truths, especially when they are our own honest evaluations of ourselves that make us grow to appreciate the life we have and the world we inhabit. Of connecting, Cronon (1998) wrote:

More than anything else, being an educated person means being able to see connections that allow one to make sense of the world and act within it in a creative way... A liberal education is about gaining the power and wisdom, the generosity and the freedom to connect. (1998, p. 78)

As the tutor alumni described their growing *joie de vivre* for the world around them, they were invoking Cronon's idea that we make the world a better place by being an active, vital part of it. Tutor replies as simple as "I really loved it because of the people I got to meet" (R-61), to the more introspective, "When [my tutees] succeeded at something it made everyone feel good" (R-4), illustrate Cronon's call to connect for the good of the individual and the community. When one tutor wrote that she had asked her tutee how she had done on her biology test and the tutee replied that she had gotten a good grade, the tutor didn't just feel like she had done a good job, but that she had made an important connection as well, "I was genuinely happy for her. I had made a connection with her and I actually cared how she was doing" (R-24). In truth, Cronon's call to connect echoed deeply in some of the tutor responses. As one tutor wrote:

When I have seen the type of improvement and passion that can come from just an hour of work with my peers, it makes me realize how much untapped potential there is in the educational system for passion, and vigor, and enjoyment. (R-37)

The journey from working with a peer on an English paper to considering the global need for a reimagining of the public school system is a credit to the work the high school tutors did in connecting.

Implications and Limitations

This section will highlight the implications for high school teaching and writing center practice, particularly tutor training. There will be a discussion of possible research routes that are opened up because of this study. Finally, there will be a discussion of the limitations of this study.

Implications for High School Teaching

The findings of this study also have implications for the standard high school English classroom. For the average American high school student, four years of English class means reading novels, writing about those novels, receiving a grade for that writing, and moving on. Eventually, this average student will also write a 3 – 5 page “research paper” wherein the teacher will give the research—journal articles, news paper article, primary documents—to the student for use as evidence. Revisions to students’ papers, if allowed, are often at the students’ choice and only to improve the grade assigned to the first draft through the correction of grammar and usage errors. Often, it should be noted, teachers feel this is the only way to assign and assess papers for their students, particularly when their average semester student load is over 120.

This study, however, indicates that working in a writing center, which requires repeated returns to a paper to discuss higher order concerns, has a positive and long lasting effect on students. Therefore, this study compels classroom teachers to consider finding meaningful ways to include recursive, iterative writing practices, like those found in writing centers, in their classrooms and assignments.

In the past few years, I have changed my classroom style and assignments as a result of this study. Instead of 5 papers, I now assign only 3. They are multiple draft assignments that require students to meet with a peer at least twice between each draft. The assignments require organizational and focus changes between drafts and deemphasizes grammar and usage until the last draft. The “research paper,” for instance, is now an 18-week long assignment and has been rebranded to be a “paper about research.” The final draft is a minimum of 25 pages. The multiple drafts require my

students to think deeply about their subject and write in multiple ways. The peers that they meet with are now their classmates, all of whom have been trained as the tutors in this study were trained. I have also begun requiring that my students perform a self-evaluation and assessment of each draft prior to handing it in. This simulates the tutoring session summary reports that the alumni tutors in this study were required to complete after each tutoring session.

As a result, in the past three years I have begun receiving emails from former students thanking me for these assignments. These messages from college echo the messages I received from the tutor alumni so long ago and which helped me to conceive of this study. My former students speak of being well prepared for the rigors of college writing. They recount how excited their research makes them and how their classmates are not as quick to understand the purpose of research in “research paper” writing as they are. They write to me to tell me that for them writing is fun and helps them to enjoy their college experience.

These changes in the ways both the tutors in this study and my writing students approach their educations and writing seem to be indications that they have realized or learned a threshold concept (Adler-Kassner, Majewski, & Koshnick, 2012; Wardle & Downs, 2014, p. 6) in writing. Something fundamental about writing and learning and the processes of each has changed for them. Indeed, their understanding of the whole range of skills, abilities, and values has changed with their experiences. Their paradigmatic view of writing, what Wardle and Downs (2014) describe as an understanding of “a whole set of ideas” (2014, p. 7)—its function, purpose, recursive and iterative nature—

has changed from a mere institutional requirement to a living, active way of communicating and understanding.

Similarly, Adler-Kassner, Majewski, and Koshnick (2012) invite a reconsideration of the entire arena of high school composition instruction. Adler-Kassner et al. suggest that threshold concepts could be used as a “productive frame for faculty” (Adler-Kassner et al., 2012) to question and reimagine the goals and purpose of general education (Adler-Kassner et al., 2012). Although they were discussing the general education provided at the postsecondary level, their suggestion and the findings of this study compel high school writing teachers to consider using threshold concepts (Adler-Kassner, Majewski, & Koshnick, 2012; Wardle & Downs, 2014, p. 6) to address the needs of writers and their own pedagogy in their classrooms.

Implications for Writing Center Practice

The findings of this study show that tutors gain more than a simple improvement in their academic skills. They are changed by their experiences in broad and profound ways. They feel more connected to their communities and a deeper appreciation of their lives in and outside of the academy. Therefore, perhaps it is time to ask what the goals for tutor training actually are. The tutors who were surveyed for this study, for instance, were not trained with life-changing goals in mind. They were trained to use strategies to assist their peers with their academic work and yet they gained so much more than a tool kit of strategies.

After my work with the PWTARP model, it is hard not to envision research that mimics its design. A survey of the tutor training goals on a regional or even national level might give researchers insight into the priorities the writing center community has in this

regard. Individual programs could be invited to research their own goals and determine how those goals are manifested by their tutors. Research of this type could help writing center directors to better understand what role their programs play in their institutions and in the lives of their students. Could an increased understanding of the role of tutoring as service learning or as an academic field benefit programs that struggle with funding issues or finding a place within an institution?

A PWTARP-like survey could also be created for tutors to complete as they move through their tutoring careers. Like a reflective journal, this information could be collected annually and compared not only across tutors and programs, but also chronologically for the individual tutors. Couple with a survey on tutor training goals, this kind of longitudinal study into the maturation of tutors could give the writing center community powerful information on the growth of tutors and the importance of the goals set for them.

Implications for Future Research

The survey responses of this study answer many of the questions writing center directors have asked over the years. We have a better understanding of what peer tutors learn in terms of their skills, abilities, and values. We know better how what they learned impacts their lives in the wider world. However, this study also raises questions that demand further investigation.

Reading. As detailed in Chapter 4, tutors reported in large numbers that they felt their reading skills improved as a result of their tutoring work. In some ways, this is not surprising as they often worked with tutees on reading novels and textbooks. What is perhaps more surprising was that many of the respondents attributed their improved

reading skills not to their work with tutees on reading, but rather on writing. Tutors described their reading improving as a result of working on tutees' papers. They wrote of the repetitiveness of working with multiple tutees on multiple drafts and of having to read quickly for content so that they could assist other students on their drafting strategies.

I believe that we can learn more about how tutors learn through a study of the intersection between writing and reading during tutoring sessions. How does reading and reading pedagogy fit into the collaborative learning paradigms writing centers create? What role does reading have in the maturation of tutors and how is reading a gateway for becoming a better tutor? How could tutor education programs be adjusted to utilize reading and reading pedagogy to the benefit of tutors and tutees? Do writing center training programs use reading pedagogy in training their tutors? What would it look like to train writing center tutors in reading pedagogy and what outcomes would it have for a program that had historically seen itself as writing focused? These questions also prompt me to ask what the role of the writing center director might be in engendering an atmosphere where reading is prized as a training tool?

Finally, as reading theorists have emphasized in recent years, modeling is one of the keys to helping struggling readers (Fisher, Frey, & Lapp, 2009). Writing centers and peer-tutoring programs seem like excellent sites to study the effects of this modeling, but might also call into question long held beliefs about tutors and whether or not they should be writing on tutees' papers. A study of the use of reading and reading pedagogy, which emphasizes modeling, might help us to better understand whether the modeling of writing within the tutoring session—claims, evidence, warrants, theses, topic sentences, transitions—might be beneficial. As the International Writing Center Association

prepares to create a web-based warehouse of best practices, research on how reading and reading pedagogy could benefit the lives of tutors and tutees would be an important part of that collection.

Classroom-embedded collaborative learning. It is an economic reality that many secondary schools cannot afford a peer-tutoring program. It is also true that many schools, like mine, struggle with the political or financial factors once programs are open and operating. Our thriving center, for instance, was eventually closed because its teacher-led design conflicted with the top-down administrative structure of the school. These institutions, however, could benefit from a PWTARP-like organization for composition teachers who are interested in embedding peer-to-peer learning opportunities in their classrooms. Now that some of the benefits of peer tutoring for tutors have been identified, locating schools and teachers who would participate in research could be the next step. As with the mission of the PWTARP, having multiple teachers at multiple sites conducting this research might provide a preponderance of evidence that embedded peer-to-peer programs are beneficial to a wide range of students in a range of contexts. In 2014, at the International Writing Across the Curriculum conference in Minneapolis, I discussed this idea with high school teachers from Minnesota and Virginia. Our three schools could act as the programs of Hughes et al. (2010) did for the PWTARP by piloting this research project.

Grounded theory could be used to develop a series of surveys that participating teachers could complete at stages in the process of incorporating the collaborative learning model. These teachers' students could use reflective journaling—perhaps through an online survey to be completed at regular intervals—to track their progress

through the training and its impact on their academic and social lives. A website could also be built to share the projects information and the research model with others. In many ways, this could be a “test kitchen” of best and emerging practice of collaborative learning environments.

Limitations of the Study

The limitation of this study was that it used existing data, which was not originally collected for this dissertation. This limited my ability to rethink or extend the data collection as it was occurring. I could not alter the survey as responses were written. I was also not able to expand the survey by offering it to tutors from other schools. In most ways, this survey constitutes a single snapshot of what was happening in the minds of the tutors when they responded to the survey.

This limitation, however, is balanced by the advantage this study had in the size of its data set. With so many collected responses—180 pages of text from 63 survey participants—this data trove has provided me with an opportunity to delve deeply into the experiences of high school peer tutors. This study is also continuing the work of the PWTARP (Kail et. al., 2016) by acting as an invitation to other high schools to consider adding their own data to the ever-growing collection of the project. This inclusion of former high school tutors’ voices in the PWTARP will help directors, students, and administrators to better understand the role of and need for writing centers and peer tutoring programs at both secondary schools and universities.

Conclusion

Peer tutors gain a great deal more than knowledge about writing and writing pedagogy when they work in a writing center. This study unearthed skills, abilities, and

values that tutors learn during their time as peer tutors. Moreover, this study showed that these skills, abilities, and values stick with them for years to come. Perhaps most importantly, peer tutoring taught them how to find the joy in collaboration with others.

However, this study also requires that we give a hard look at the way we teach all writing students, not just tutors. If we know that the recursive and iterative behaviors tutors engage in can help them to achieve greater skills and abilities and a worldview that benefits them, then we are required to ask if we can also provide those same opportunities for writing students generally.

My interest in this research began with multiple phone calls, emails, and visits from former tutors who wished to share with me how much they had learned through the peer-tutoring program. As this study concludes, I find myself receiving more emails and phone calls from writing students similarly enthralled with what they have learned in the collaborative learning environment of my classroom. Clearly, the peer tutoring process is allowing these young people to learn threshold concepts (Wardle & Downs, 2014) which make their lives as writers, if not easier, at least more fulfilling.

References

- Adler-Kassner, L., Majewski, J., & Koshnick, D. (2012). The value of troublesome knowledge: Transfer and threshold concepts in writing and history. *Composition Forum*, 26. Retrieved from <http://compositionforum.com/issue/26/troublesome-knowledge-threshold.php>
- Allen, V. (1976). *Children as teachers: Theory and research on tutoring*. New York, NY: Academic Press, Inc.
- Association of American Colleges & Universities. (1998). Statement on liberal learning. Retrieved from <https://www.aacu.org/about/statements/liberal-learning>
- Baran, H. (2013). America's middle and high school writing centers [Google My Maps]. Retrieved from <https://maps.google.com/maps/ms?msid=210626383184312643086.000482e7760d9f76b8b5f&msa=0&dg=feature>
- Berkeley Preparatory School. (n.d.). Hoover Writing Center. Retrieved from <http://www.berkeleyprep.org/page/School-Life/Hoover-Writing-Center>
- Bloom, S. (1975). *Peer and cross-age tutoring in the schools: An individualized supplement to group instruction*. Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Education (DHEW).
- Bruffee, K. (2008) Peer tutoring and the “conversation of mankind”. In R. Barnett & J. Blumner (Eds.), *The Longman guide to writing center theory and practice* (pp. 206-218). New York, NY: Pearson Education, Inc. (Reprinted from *Writing centers: Theory and administration*, pp. 3–15, by G. Olson, Ed., 1984, Urbana, IL: NCTE)

- Bruffee, K. (1978). The Brooklyn plan: Attaining intellectual growth through peer-group tutoring. *Liberal Education*, 64(4), 447-468.
- CAPTA. (n.d.). The capital area peer tutoring association. Retrieved from <https://captawritingcenters.org/about-us/capta-writing-centers/>
- Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Condon, F. (2012). *I hope I join the band: Narrative, affiliation, and antiracist rhetoric*. Boulder, CO: Utah State University Press.
- COWLLC. (n.d.). Current members. Retrieved from <https://sites.google.com/site/chicagoowllc/current-members>
- COWLLC. (2011). Tutor conference 2011. In the *Chicagoland Organization of Writing, Literacy, and Learning Centers* (Conferences & Meetings). Retrieved from <https://sites.google.com/site/chicagoowllc/tutor-conference-2011>
- Cox, E. (2004). Coming home: A writing center staffer's personal and professional journey. *Writing Lab Newsletter*, 29(4). Retrieved from <http://writinglabnewsletter.org/archives/v29/29.4.pdf>
- Cronon, W. (1998). "Only connect..." The goals of a liberal education. *American Scholar*, 67(4), 73-80.
- Davros, G. (2010). The value of perseverance (unpublished essay). Niles West High School, Skokie, IL.
- Dean, C. (2010). *The ecology of peer tutoring: Perspectives of student staff in one high school writing center*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest. (AAT 3415470)

- Dedoose Version 6.1.18. (2016) Available from www.dedoose.com
- Denny, H. (2010). *Facing the center: Toward an identity politics of one-to-one mentoring*. Boulder, CO: Utah State University Press.
- Dewey, J. (1944). *Democracy and education*. New York, NY: Macmillan Company.
(Original work published 1916)
- Dinitz, S., & Kiedaisch, J. (2009). Tutoring writing as career development. *Writing Lab Newsletter*, 34(1-5). Retrieved from
<http://writinglabnewsletter.org/archives/v34/34.3.pdf>
- Evans, S. (2014). Writing center. Retrieved from
<http://www.fcps.edu/EdisonHS/students/writingcenter.htm>
- Evertz, K., & Zucker, R. (2011). From Kathy Evertz and Rachel Zucker, Carleton College. In *The Peer Writing Tutor Alumni Research Project* (Colleague Contributions). Retrieved from http://www.writing.wisc.edu/pwtarp/?page_id=17
- Fels, D. (2010). *The vernacular architecture of composition instruction: What the voices of writing center tutors reveal about standardized instruction and assessment*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest. (AAT 3413161)
- Fels, D., & Wells, J. (Eds.). (2011). *The successful high school writing center: Building the best program with your students*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Ferrell, P. B. (Ed.). (1989). *The high school writing center: Establishing one and maintaining one*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Fisher, D., Frey, N., & Lapp, D. (2009). *In a reading state of mind: Brain research, teacher modeling, and comprehension instruction*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

- Gee, J. (2006). What is literacy? In Vandenberg, P., Hum, S. & Clary-Lemon, K. (Eds.), *Relations, locations, positions: Composition theory for writing teachers* (pp. 29-39). Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Gladstein, J. (2010). From Jill Gladstein, Swarthmore College. In *The Peer Writing Tutor Alumni Research Project* (Colleague Contributions). Retrieved from <http://www.writing.wisc.edu/pwtarp/?p=458>
- Gladstein, J., & Regaignon, D. (2012). *Writing program administration at small liberal arts colleges*. Anderson, SC: Parlor Press.
- Greenfield, L., & Rowan, K. (Eds.). (2013). *Writing centers and the new racism: A call for sustainable dialogue and change*. Boulder, CO: Utah State University Press.
- Grutsch McKinney, J. (2013). *Peripheral visions for writing centers*. Boulder, CO: Utah State University Press.
- Guiang, A. (2010). Tutor-of-the-year award acceptance speech (unpublished speech). Niles West High School, Skokie, IL.
- Hughes, B., Gillespie, P., & Kail, H. (2010). What they take with them: Findings from the Peer Writing Tutor Alumni Research Project. *Writing Center Journal*, 30(2), 12-46.
- Illinois State Board of Education. (n.d.). *Illinois report card 2013-2014: Niles West High School – Niles CHSD 219: Student characteristics*. Retrieved from <http://illinoisreportcard.com/School.aspx?source=StudentCharacteristics&source2=StudentDemographics&Schoolid=050162190170003>

- Jeter, A. (2011a). Building a peer tutoring program. In D. Fels & J. Wells (Eds.). *The successful high school writing center: Building the best program with your students*. (39 – 50). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Jeter, A. (2011b). Literacy Center Mission Statement. Retrieved from <https://sites.google.com/a/d219.org/the-literacy-center/mission-statement>
- Kail, H. (2006). Situated in the center: The peer writing tutor alumni research project. CCCC, Chicago, IL. Retrieved from http://www.writing.wisc.edu/pwtarp/?page_id=286
- Kail, H., Gillespie, P., & Hughes, B. (2016). *The peer writing tutor alumni research project*. Retrieved from <http://www.writing.wisc.edu/pwtarp/>
- Kail, H. & Trimbur, J. (1987). The politics of peer tutoring. *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, 11(1-2), 5-12.
- Kedia, S. (2007). Everything I needed to know about life I learned at the writing center. *Writing Lab Newsletter*, 31(7). Retrieved from <http://writinglabnewsletter.org/archives/v31/31.7.pdf>
- Kent, R. (2006). *A guide to creating student-staffed writing centers: Grades 6-12*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Lerner, N. (2009). *The idea of a writing laboratory*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Minnetonka Public Schools. (2014). Writing Center. Retrieved from <http://www.minnetonka.k12.mn.us/Schools/MinnetonkaHighSchool/SupportServices/Pages/WritingCenter.aspx>

- NVWP. (2013). Reports from 3rd annual writing tutor conference. In the Northern Virginia Writing Project (Young Writers & Families). Retrieved from <http://nvwp.org/2013/11/18/transformations-from-the-center-reports-from-the-3rd-annual-writing-tutor-conference/>
- Purdy, J. (2003). Taking it with you: Personal reflections on life ‘after’ the writing center. *The Dangling Modifier*, 10(1). Retrieved from http://www.ulc.psu.edu/Dangling_Modifier/Articles/oldArticles/Fall-2003_web-Taking_It_With_You.htm
- Ryan, L., & Zimmerelli, L. (2006). *The Bedford guide for writing tutors* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin’s.
- Salem, L., & Follett, J. (2013) The idea of a faculty writing center: Moving from troubling deficiencies to collaborative engagement. In A. Geller & M. Eodice (Eds.), *Working with Faculty Writers* (pp. 50-72). Boulder, CO: Utah State University Press.
- Sato, C. (2012). Keynote address at the National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing (unpublished speech). DoubleTree Hotel Magnificent Mile, Chicago, IL.
- Shimanovsky, L. (2010). The path I make for myself (unpublished essay). Niles West High School, Skokie, IL.
- United States Office of Personnel Management. (n.d.). *Classifications & qualifications: General schedule qualifications policies*. Retrieved from <http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/classification-qualifications/general-schedule-qualification-policies/#url=General-Policies>

- Virgintino, N. (2014). From Nathalie Virgintino, St. John's University. In *The Peer Writing Tutor Alumni Research Project* (Colleague Contributions). Retrieved from <http://www.writing.wisc.edu/pwtarp/?p=536>
- Wardle, E., & Downs, d. (2014). *Writing about writing: A college reader* (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's.
- Welsch, K. (2008). Shaping careers in the writing center. *Writing Lab Newsletter*, 23(8). Retrieved from <http://writinglabnewsletter.org/archives/v32/32.8.pdf>
- Wells, J. (2011). *Millennial strike back: Students' reports of knowledge transfer from high school to college*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest. (AAT 3466593)
- Wilkins, B. (2009). Peer tutor and writing fellow alums report professional and personal benefits. *The George Mason University WAC Program Newsletter*. Retrieved from http://wac.gmu.edu/program/newsletter/archive/fall2009/peer_tutor_survey.html
- Zawacki, T. (2010). From Terry Zawacki, George Mason University. In *The Peer Writing Tutor Alumni Research Project* (Colleague Contributions). Retrieved from <http://www.writing.wisc.edu/pwtarp/?p=336>

Appendix A
Peer Tutor Alumni Research Project Survey

Dear Alumni Tutor,

Aloha from the Lit Center! I hope you are doing well and that you are finding all sorts of success out there in the “real world.” Since you left, we have been very busy tutoring and refining our tutor education program.

It is for this reason that I am writing to you. I’ve spent years looking into the effects of tutoring on the tutees, but now realize that I am missing a pretty big part of the puzzle – you! My interest in your post-Niles West experience has led me to engage in research to determine what exactly are the effects of tutoring during high school on tutors’ post-high school experiences. In essence, I would like to know what the long-term value of tutoring is for the tutors.

In order to come to understand this value better, I am asking you to complete this survey. It shouldn’t take too long, maybe a half an hour, but I am hoping it will give you the opportunity to really reflect on your tutoring experiences in high school. I am interested in all your successes, of course, but am also interested in anything else you may have to say about your experiences. I’m not looking for any specific answers, just your honest answers.

By filling out the survey, you will become a “subject” in my research. Because of this, there are certain important points you should know:

1. By filling out this survey, you are giving me your consent to use your information during any report (e.g.: to the Lit Center Staff, Board of Education, International Writing Center Association) I may make on the research.
2. You are NOT required to complete this survey or to answer any questions that might make you feel uncomfortable.
3. This survey is anonymous and is being collected by a means that will make it impossible for me to identify you.
4. The time required to finish the sheet will vary depending on the length of your answers.
5. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in the research.

I hope you enjoy reflecting on your past experiences tutoring. I know that I will enjoy reading them!

Thanks for everything,

Andrew (AKA Mr. Jeter)

PEER TUTOR ALUMNI RESEARCH PROJECT
SURVEY

Demographic Information

What is your age? _____

What is your gender? _____

When did you graduate? _____

What was (were) your major(s)? _____

If you have already graduated from university, have you pursued any additional education? Please specify degree(s) and institution(s). If you are currently a graduate student, please specify institution and degree.

How many years did you tutor in the Literacy Center? _____

What occupation(s) have you pursued since graduation?

Reflections on Your Tutoring Experience

1. What are the most significant abilities, values, or skills that you developed in your work as a peer writing tutor? Please list them.
2. Of the abilities, values, or skills that you listed above, would you illustrate those that strike you as most meaningful by sharing an episode or event that took place during your time as a tutor or a trainee?
3. Did those abilities, values or skills that you developed as a peer tutor seem to be a factor in your choice of major or job? Would you elaborate?
4. Did these qualities seem to play a role in your acceptance to university or in your interviewing for a job? How do you come to that conclusion?

Would you rate the importance of your training and/or experience as a tutor in the interviewing or hiring process for your first job?

5	4	3	2	1
Very influential				Not influential

5. Do any of the qualities you listed in question one play a role in your social or family relationships? Can you give an example?

6. What, if any, volunteer or charitable opportunities have you participated in since you left school?

Would you rank the importance of the skills, qualities, or values you developed as a tutor in your volunteer or charitable work?

5	4	3	2	1
Highly important				Unimportant

7. To what extent do you think your own literacy skills have been influenced by your experience as a tutor? Please explain.

To what extent has your literacy skills been influenced by your training and/or work as a tutor?

5	4	3	2	1
Very influenced				Not influenced

8. Have you tutored since graduating from high school? Please elaborate or provide an example.

9. Were there any downsides to your experience as a peer tutor? Please elaborate.

10. Would you please rate the importance your literacy center training and experience as you developed as a university student?

5	4	3	2	1
Highly important				Unimportant

Please explain your rating.

If you would like to add any comments, please feel free to do so at this time:

If you would be interested in talking about these topics more, please provide your name and email below. You are not required to provide this information.

Your name: _____ (optional)

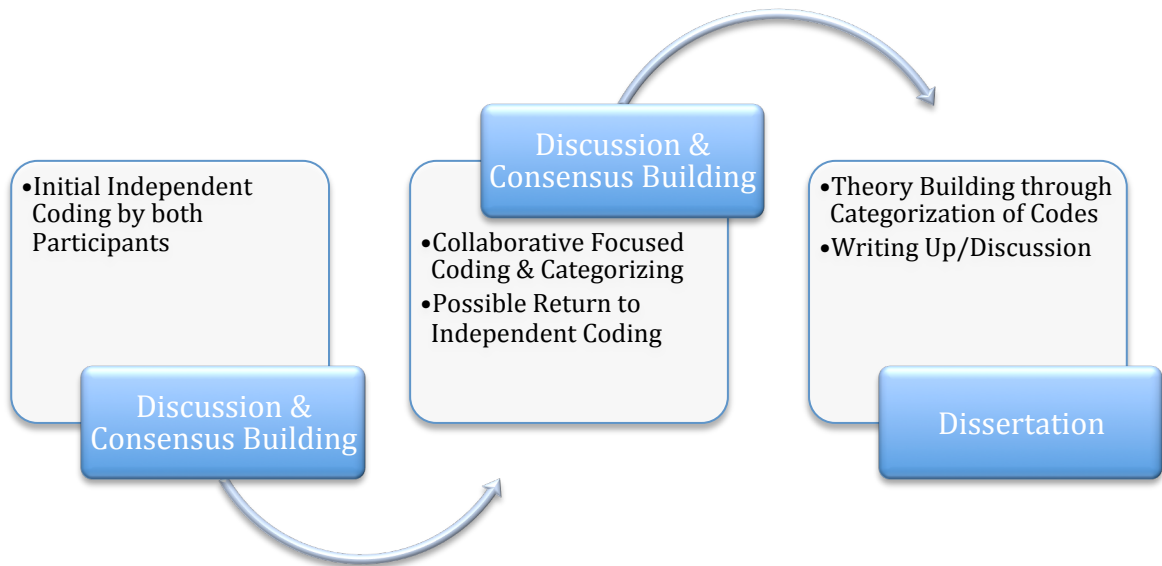
Your email address: _____ (optional)

Thank you for taking the time and effort to respond to this survey. I will keep you informed about the results.

Appendix B

Coding Instructions

Coding – “categorizing segments of data with a short name that simultaneously summarizes and accounts for each piece of data” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 111).



1. **Initial Independent Coding** – In this first step, you will code the data independently using the program Dedoose. Follow the steps below and email or call me if you need any assistance.
 - a. **Begin Coding** – Read through the data and apply short summaries of what you are reading. Using the following strategies (1.b.) to help you think about and code the data.
 - b. **Coding Strategies** – Charmaz (2014) suggests the following strategies to keep in mind while you are coding
 - i. Breaking the data up into their component parts or properties
 - ii. Defining the actions on which they rest (Find the gerund.)
 - iii. Looking for tacit assumptions
 - iv. Explicating implicit actions and meanings
 - v. Crystalizing the significance of the points
 - vi. Comparing data with data
 - vii. Identifying gaps in the data (2014, p. 125)

Here is an example:

Example of Codes	Narrative Data to be Coded
-Tutoring with new tutee -Meeting outside the center -Academics outside of school -Changed perception of education. -Caring	A student whom I had never met worked with me once on an essay in the [center]. Later that week after we were both done with cross country practice (she was on the girls' team but I didn't know her before then) I asked her how the essay was going, which--a teacher later told me--had a profound impact on the way she viewed her education as a cooperative effort, and that people really cared about her success.

2. **Focused Coding** – Once we are finished with our independent coding, we will come together to share our codes with each other.
 - a. We will determine which codes are the most significant and most frequently used.
 - b. We will resolve any disputes we may have about the meaning of the data and the codes.
 - c. We will determine which codes make the most sense for categorizing the data.
 - d. We will determine which codes fit within the theoretical framework.
 - e. If we determine that it is necessary or warranted, because our codes are insufficient to describe the data, we may at this time decide to return to another round of independent coding.
3. **Creating Categories** – Using our focused codes, we will begin to create categories for the data.
4. **Theory Building** – From the categories, I will begin to build a theory based on the data and our codes. If I need to consult with you, I will contact you. Thank you for your time and energy!

References

Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Appendix C

Initial Codes Listed Alphabetically

Codes		
1. adaptability	45. improved own	89. school to university
2. Analogous thinking	knowledge of	90. seeking help
3. articulate	disciplines	91. self evaluation
4. being at ease	46. improved own	92. self reflective
5. becoming a better writer	literacy skills	93. self reliance
6. better person	47. individualized	94. service jobs
7. better student	instructions	95. skills
8. bravery	48. insightful	96. sociability
9. cognitive ability impact	49. interpersonal skills	97. social learning impact
10. cognitive ability impact	50. job readiness	98. talking to strangers
11. cognitive ability impact	51. joy	99. teaching
12. collaboration	52. leadership	100. teaching ability
13. college not as rigorous	53. learners	101. time management
14. college not as rigorous	54. learning community	102. training lacking
15. commitment	55. learning styles impact	103. training outcomes
16. commitment	56. listening	104. transforming
17. communication skills	57. made friends in center	105. tutor post high school
18. communications skills	58. make friends	106. tutoring at college
19. community	59. making a difference	107. unclear to me
20. community positive	60. maturity	108. value public education
21. compassion	61. mentor	109. values
22. complexity of learning	62. metacognitive skills	110. values clarified
23. confidence	63. more teacher training	111. values volunteerism
24. confidence gained	64. negative judgments absent	112. volunteerism valued
25. confidence wavered	65. no effect student skills	113. volunteerism
26. critical thinking	66. no improvement literacy skills	114. volunteerism
27. distinguished among peers	67. not sure how to categorize	115. volunteerism valued
28. diversity sensitive	68. out of self	116. working with adults
	69. paperwork	117. working with others
	downside to center	118. Questions
	70. passion found	119. C/U Major(s)
		120. PU Degree Status
		121. Jobs
		122. SAV as Tutor 1
		123. SAV Experiences 2
		124. SAV Impact on Major/Job 3
		125. SAV Impact on U/J

29. diversity sensitive	71. passions found	Acquisition 4
30. emotional attachment	72. patience	126. SAV in Social/Family Relationships 5
31. empathy	73. peer tutoring effective	127. Volunteer/Charitable Activities 6
32. equality	74. perseverance	128. Tutor Impact on Self Literacy 7
33. evaluative skills	75. personal gain	129. Post-HS Tutoring 8
34. explaining/learning styles	76. problem solving	130. Downsides to Tutoring 9
35. family & friendship	77. Quotes	131. Importance of T & T to C/U Experience Examples
36. family and friendship	78. reading	132. Additional Comments
37. family no influenced	79. real life	
38. flexibility	80. reluctant tutee	
39. generosity	81. reputation/valuable tutor	
40. helping others valued	82. resourceful	
41. humility	83. respect for others	
42. humor	84. responsibility to community	
43. identity found	85. responsibility to community	
44. improve own literacy skills	86. school to career	
	87. school to job	
	88. school to life skills	
