

Scaffolding in the Center:  
Training Tutors to Facilitate Learning Interactions with L2 Writers

by

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## ABSTRACT

Writing centers are learning settings and communities at the intersection of multiple disciplines and boundaries, which afford opportunities for rich learning experiences. However, navigating and negotiating boundaries as part of the learning is not easy or neutral work. Helping tutors shift from fixing to facilitating language and scaffolding literacy learning requires training. This is particularly true as tutors work with second or subsequent language (L2) writers, a well-documented area of tension. This mixed methods action research study, conducted at a large university in the United States (US), centered on a tutor training intervention designed to improve writing tutors' scaffolding with L2 learners by increasing tutors' concrete understanding of scaffolding and shifting the ways tutors view and value L2 writers and their writing. Using a sociocultural framework, including understanding writing centers as communities of practices and sites for experiential learning, the effectiveness of the intervention was examined through pre- and post-intervention surveys and interviews with tutors, post-intervention focus groups with L2 writers, and post-intervention observations of tutorials with L2 writers. Results indicated a shift in tutors' use of scaffolding, reflecting increased understanding of scaffolding techniques and scaffolding as participatory and multidirectional. Results also showed that post-intervention, tutors increasingly saw themselves as learners and experienced a decrease in confidence scaffolding with L2 writers. Findings also demonstrated ways in which time, common ground, and participation mediate scaffolding within tutorials. These findings provide implications for tutor education, programmatic policy, and writing center administration and scholarship, including areas for further interdisciplinary action research.

## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Jason, Emily, Ryan, and Laura. You are my always.  
Your love, steadfastness, and support made this project and process possible. I am  
forever grateful that the adventures we take, we take together.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES .....	vii
LIST OF FIGURES .....	viii
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION .....	1
The Emergence of Writing Centers as Spaces for Language and Learning .....	2
Local Context .....	10
Problem of Practice .....	17
Intervention .....	18
Purpose of Study and Research Questions .....	19
2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS AND LITERATURE REVIEW .....	21
Sociocultural Theory .....	22
Experiential Learning Theory .....	26
Communities of Practice .....	29
Power Dynamics within L2 Tutorials .....	32
Tutor Education .....	44
3 METHODS .....	50
Research Questions .....	51
Research Design .....	51
Researcher's Subjectivity and Positioning .....	54
Cycles of Research and Innovation .....	56

CHAPTER	Page
Innovation .....	59
Participants and Sampling .....	72
Data Collection .....	74
Data Analysis .....	80
Validity and Trustworthiness .....	86
Research Timeline .....	89
<b>4 DATA RESULTS AND ANALYSIS .....</b>	<b>91</b>
Qualitative Results .....	94
Quantitative Results .....	125
Mixed Methods Summary of Results .....	130
<b>5 DISCUSSION .....</b>	<b>136</b>
Summary and Discussion of Results .....	136
Conclusions Related to Theoretical Perspectives and Previous Research ....	141
Implications for Theory and Practice .....	149
Limitations .....	157
Recommendations for Research .....	159
Conclusion .....	161
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>163</b>
<b>APPENDIX</b>	
<b>A EXPLANATION OF SCAFFOLDING TECHNIQUES AND CODING</b>	
<b>SCHEME .....</b>	<b>175</b>

APPENDIX	Page
B OBSERVATION AND DISCUSSION FORM .....	177
C PRE- AND POST-INTERVENTION SURVEY INSTRUMENT .....	180
D SURVEY PROTOCOL .....	188
E PERMISSION TO ADAPT EXISTING SURVEY INSTRUMENT .....	190
F OBSERVATION PROTOCOL .....	192
G INTERVIEW PROTOCOL .....	194
H INTERVIEW QUESTIONS .....	196
I FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL .....	199
J L2 WRITER FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS .....	202
K INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) APPROVAL DOCUMENTS ...	206

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Explanation of Scaffolding Techniques .....	63
2. Comparison of Sentence-level Concerns in U.S. College and L2 Student Populations .....	67
3. Explanation of Scaffolding Techniques .....	82
4. Overview of Data Collection and Analysis Organized by Research Question .....	86
5. Timeline of Research Study .....	90
6. Data Collection Sources .....	92
7. Tutors' Use of Scaffolding Techniques in Observed Tutorials with L2 Writers ..	114
8. Tutors' Use of Tutoring Strategies in Observed Tutorials with L2 Writers .....	115
9. Quantitative Data Collection Sources .....	125
10. Comparison of Tutors' Pre- and Post-intervention Perceived Knowledge of Scaffolding .....	128
11. Comparison of Pre- and Post-intervention Tutor Identification of Scaffolding Techniques .....	128
12. Comparison of Tutors' Post-Intervention Use of and Confidence Using Scaffolding with L1 and L2 Writers .....	129



## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Illustration of the Interdisciplinary Nature of Writing Centers .....	2
2. Approaches and Prioritization of Writing and Language Processes and Production .....	40

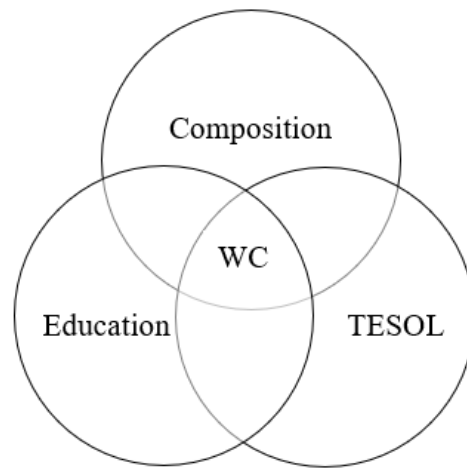
## Chapter 1: Introduction

*The "help" writing centers provide is not simply fixing a comma splice like using spit to pat down an unseemly cowlick. Rather, the work of a writing center is a matter of being available mentally and emotionally to engage in the mutual construction of meaning with another. The bigger the gap between the two people, the more work that construction of meaning, context and identity might take. (Grimm, 2008, p. 9)*

Language and language learning are ever changing and never neutral. The powerful and complex natures of language and language learning involve the intersections of many concepts—theory and practice, personal and collective identity, immediate circumstances and larger context. These components also converge in the daily work of writing centers, especially in interactions between writing tutors and second or subsequent language (L2) writers participating in the joint work of negotiating the multifaceted dynamics of language and language learning. Writing centers typically are programs and locales where learners work one-on-one with tutors on any writing assignment at any stage of the writing process. Tutors support and encourage writers through the writing process by providing formative feedback and individualized assistance, but tutors do not assign grades or take ownership of the work. As such, writing centers sit at the crossroads of different disciplines, language experiences, and levels of literacy. They are home to language, literacy, and learning in a multitude of forms, leaving some scholars to refer to writing centers as borderlands (Severino, 1994), contact zones (Min, 2016), and bodegas (Wilson, 2012). As borderlands, writing centers show great promise; however, they may also be sites of deficit thinking and frustrated interactions between tutors and writers.

## The Emergence of Writing Centers as Spaces for Language and Learning

As seen in Figure 1, writing center work draws upon knowledge and practices from the fields of composition, education, and teaching English to speakers of other languages TESOL. Additionally, it draws from the intersections of those disciplines (e.g., second language writing as an intersection of composition and TESOL; English education as an intersection of composition and education).



*Figure 1:* Illustration of the interdisciplinary nature of writing centers. Adapted from “Let’s Talk! ESL Students’ Needs and Writing Centre Philosophy” by L. Moussu, 2013, *TESL Canada Journal*, 30(2), p. 65.

With this model in mind, many scholars and practitioners acknowledge the potential of writing centers as ideal spaces where writing, literacy, and language can be negotiated, practiced, and improved, and significant, individualized learning can occur (Williams, 2002; Eckstein, 2016; Blazer, 2015; Nowacek & Hughes, 2015; Harris, 1995).

Viewing writing center work at the crossroads of multiple disciplines may be a more recent development, but understanding writings center as locales for practice, experimentation, and negotiation is not a new idea. Writing centers have their history in

the laboratory school movement of the 1800s where educators and scholars such as John Dewey advocated for classrooms structures where students could work individually and actively with the teacher moving from student to student providing individualized instruction and support. Writing seemed particularly well suited to this approach since familiarity with writing concepts and skills are typically linked to the actual practice and process of writing—developing, drafting, reflecting, receiving feedback, revising. As the laboratory approach to education increased in popularity in the late 1800s, university-level composition courses also emerged in greater numbers. The writing laboratory model for teaching composition was seen as effective for learners, but unsustainable for faculty, who spent an enormous amount of time in one-on-one consultations (Lerner, 2009).

Complicating conditions was the fact that writing and language are not a static or set subject matter. Writing as a discipline is never fully known. It shifts with audience, exigence, genre, and language, never allowing writers to become fully autonomous in their learning. As writing instructors shifted away from the laboratory approach to the less laborious lecture and drill classroom model, one-on-one consultations were largely reserved for struggling students. Additionally, writing instruction shifted away from experimentation and application. Correct use of language increasingly became a focus in composition classrooms, offering a “way to mark students as culturally deficient or simply a more tangible focus for instruction than the much more difficult task of helping students make meaning over what they’re writing” (Lerner, 2009, p. 29).

The idea of one-on-one writing assistance and collaboration as a form of remedial instruction persisted (Williams & Severino, 2004). While the roots of writing center work, in constructivism, sociocultural theory, and experiential learning, led to the first

standalone writing center being modeled after Dewey's approach to education, most writing centers evolved as a response to a demand for remedial education, pushing the laboratory model out in favor of a hospital or medical model for fixing students and their texts (Lerner, 2009; Grimm, 1999). The model of writing centers as a place for deficient or remedial writers and language learners continued into the 1970s and 1980s as the demographics of American colleges and universities shifted, and writers' use of language other than the dominant standard American academic English was seen as deficit in terms of language and literacy (Grimm, 1999; Gutiérrez, Morales, & Martinez, 2009).

Stephen North's (1984) "The Idea of the Writing Center" and Muriel Harris's (1986) *Teaching One-to-One: The Writing Conference* attempted to move writing center work beyond deficit thinking and remedial models and reestablish individualized, collaborative, and experiential instruction as a valuable and viable form of educating writers. Jeff Brooks' (1991) call for minimalist tutoring also marked a shift from remedial, "fix-it" writing center work by suggesting writing centers encourage learners to be more autonomous, experiential, and responsible for their work. This hands-off or non-directive approach to tutoring was problematic, but in this era of "making the student do all the work" (Brooks, 1991), direct instruction was seen as a return to the "fix-it" model and akin to appropriating or authoring the writer's text.

This directive, non-directive paradigm was complicated by the fact that most writing center administrators came from the field of rhetoric and composition and had little or no background in educational learning theory or language instruction, rendering most unfamiliar with the very roots of writing center work in sociocultural and experiential learning. The hands-off, "minimalist" approach to writing and language

instruction was fundamentally at odds with constructivist perspectives that shaped writing center work and located learning in the interaction, participation, and negotiation possible in one-on-one learning exchanges and structures. As Lunsford (1991) explained

The idea of a center informed by a theory of knowledge as socially constructed, of power and control as constantly negotiated and shared, and as collaboration as its first principle presents quite a challenge. It challenges our way of organizing our center, of training our staff and tutors, and of working with teachers. (p. 5)

The rhetoric and composition lens also proved problematic for those seeking sentence-level language feedback or instruction for their writing. In fact, sentence-level language instruction, as seen through the lens of rhetoric and composition studies, was often characterized and understood as basic proofreading or editing, rendering it seemingly different and distant in purpose and process from tutoring. Sentence-level instruction as editing was positioned and seen as a scenario that did not afford writers opportunities to learn or to do the work themselves, leading many writing centers to adopt a no-editing stance.

Second language (L2) writers were particularly alienated under minimalist or non-directive tutoring as they were often asked by tutors to recall and make use of unfamiliar or unknown rhetorical and linguistic structures. L2 writers often had a mastery of sentence-level concepts but lacked “the linguistic proficiency as well as the rhetorical and cultural knowledge needed to effectively revise and self-edit their papers (e.g., Hyland, 2003; Matsuda, 1999)” (David & Moussu, 2015, p. 50). Williams and Severino (2004) framed the basic problem of tutors taking a minimalist or non-directive approach when

working with L2 writers, explaining that “the tutor cannot elicit what the writer does not know” (p. 167).

At the same time the non-directive, no-editing approach to writing center work was being accepted or embraced as normal practice, the discipline of writing center studies continued to develop and emerge as an established discipline or field of study. This led to the creation of writing center tutor training manuals and materials that reified this non-directive, directive paradigm and deficit stance or remedial lens for working with L2 writers. As tutor education embraced and espoused these positions, writing tutors found themselves struggling to align this paradigm with actual practice, leading to frustration and guilt, particularly in connect with L2 tutoring sessions. These sentiments were captured in the scholarship of the time as articles appeared with titles such as “Tutoring ESL Students and Overcoming Frustration” (Wills, 2004), “Help! How do I Tutor the International Student?” (Fink, 1990), “The ESL Quandary” (Dossin, 1996), “Avoiding the Proofreading Trap” (Cogie, Strain, & Lorinskas, 1999), and “Guilt-Free Tutoring: Rethinking How We Tutor Non-Native-English-Speaking Students” (Blau, Hall & Sparks, 2002). Essentially, L2 writers came into the writing center seeking help with both rhetorical and linguistic aspects of writing, hoping to get help from tutors who they identified as having expertise in these areas (Harris & Silva, 1993; Williams, 2002), and tutors found themselves trying to provide L2 writers with assistance in writing without addressing the language and literacy concerns L2 writers were bringing with them into the tutoring sessions. This further frustrated the interactions between L2 writers and writing tutors and further established deficit thinking, leading many tutors to assume most L2 writers lacked the ability to determine what kind of help they most needed.

Fortunately, as writing center studies and scholars have continued to develop, an increasing number of writing center professionals have called for those within the field to recognize writers' rhetorical and linguistic differences as contextual and not deficit (Denny, 2010; Grimm, 1999; Wilson, 2012; Green, 2015). Also, as research in writing center studies has increased so has the visibility of theoretical frameworks and their function within both scholarship and practice. Most notably, writing centers have all but abandoned the non-directive, directive paradigm and begun to talk about the interactions between writers and tutors in terms of sociocultural theory and tutoring strategies such as instruction, motivation, and scaffolding (Nordlof, 2014; Thompson, 2009; Mackiewicz & Thompson 2014; 2015). These terms and research-based tutoring strategies are slowly moving from the scholarly literature to tutor training materials as are more viable approaches to working with L2 writers. This shift away from a problematic paradigm and towards established tutoring strategies is also important because it returns writing center work to its roots in constructivist and sociocultural theories and realigns writing center work with the scholarship and practice found in both education and TESOL or second language (L2) writing.

While instruction, motivation, and scaffolding are interconnected and all necessary for structuring learning, scaffolding is particularly important within writing center work (Williams, 2002; Kim, 2015, Mackiewicz & Thompson, 2014, Nordlof, 2014; Fitzgerald & Ianetta, 2016). Scaffolding is the process by which an educator or more experienced peer “tailors the learning process to the individual needs and developmental level of the learner. Scaffolding provides the structure and support necessary to progressively build knowledge” (Kolb, Kolb, Passarelli, & Sharma, 2014, p.



218). Since scaffolding is an individualized process, it aligns well with writing center work where tutors assess and address the needs of learners in one-on-one tutoring sessions. Unlike instruction and motivation, scaffolding, requires interaction, participation, and negotiation. Just as “Learning is not something done to students” (Ambrose, Bridges, DiPietro, Lovett, & Norman, 2010, p. 3), neither is scaffolding. Scaffolding is not a mechanism by which a tutor transfers knowledge to the writer, but it is within the interaction and meaning-making process that collective and individual knowledge is constructed.

Yet scaffolding, if viewed through the lens of deficit thinking, can be just as much of a hindrance to structuring learning as it is a help. It is worth noting that although writing center and L2 scholars have championed the use of scaffolding as a tutoring strategy, they have typically positioned the tutor as the “more capable peer” (Vygotsky, 1978) without addressing the limitations of that view or the ways in which roles may shift, allowing L2 writers to lead learning and inform interactions with writing tutors. Scaffolding as a viable and vital tutoring strategy requires reframing tutors as collaborative learners, rather than experts. As Grimm (2008) suggests, scholars and writing center practitioners should consider “the mediational work of communicating across difference, the reciprocal learning that occurs in long term writing center relationships, and the repertoire of communication competencies that develop as a result of negotiating rather than regulating difference” (p. 14). Tutors’ use of scaffolding with L2 writers should always encourage interaction and negotiation with learners and not be used as a mechanism for maintaining power structures or reinforcing deficit thinking.

To best implement scaffolding as a tutoring strategy and avoid wielding scaffolding as a tool to reinforce deficit thinking about L2 writers, effective tutor education on scaffolding and working with L2 writers is essential. Often tutor training on working with L2 writers and writing has been problematic at best and discriminatory at worst (Denny, 2010; Moussu, 2013; Thonus, 2014; Wilson, 2012). Tutor training has often been little more than a single training hour spent painting L2 writers as a single demographic of learners with shared needs and expectations (Wilson, 2012). Tutor training has also often been framed by deficit thinking, leading to discussions of L2 writers as problems to be handled in a specific way, leading to specific policies and procedures not imposed on work with any other group of writers who make use of writing centers (Denny, 2010; Grimm, 1999).

Understandably, the needs of L2 writers should not be ignored, but training for tutors may be better framed by challenging the assumptions tutors have about L2 writers, reinforcing the validity and value of different rhetorical and linguistic structures and experiences, emphasizing inquiry and negotiating tutoring session agendas with L2 writers, and learning more about language, including sentence-level language issues. Additionally, tutors should understand how scaffolding can help tutors to focus on interactions with individual writers and move interactions from generic to-do lists to sound strategies with a toolbox of practices to choose from when working with individual learners, whether L2 or not. The inclusion of scaffolding does not replace but should inform and enhance tutor education on working with L2 writers and providing language learning support. While improved tutor education is important for the development of writing center work at large, knowledge of tutoring theory, strategies, and language and

literacy are essential in a local context where learning exchanges between writing tutors and L2 writers occur. It is in a local setting that this action research study will seek to address this problem of practice, which is the tension that exists between writing tutors and L2 writers, stemming from both uninformed interactions and assumptions within writing center tutorials.

## **Local Context**

### **Setting**

Like most writing centers, the Brigham Young University (BYU) Writing Center works with writers from across campus on various assignments and at various stages of the writing process. The Writing Center tutors conduct more than 15,000 writing tutoring sessions per year, on a campus with more than 33,000 students. While international students at BYU only represent 4% of the larger student population (BYU Communications), many of these students self-identify as L2 writers when registering for to use the Writing Center. In fact, during Fall 2018, L2 writers represented almost 8% of Writing Center clientele and 15% of all tutoring sessions.

### **Participants and Terminology**

As with any study, it is important to establish both the participants and the labels being used to describe them. For this study, the term *L2 writers* will be used to identify the largely international student population who self-identify as English language learners and who make use of the BYU Writing Center. While other terms such as *ESL* (English as a Second/Subsequent Language), *EAL* (English as an Additional Language), *NNS* (Non-Native Speaker), *ELL* (English Language Learner), *multilingual*, or *translingual* may also be found in the literature, they are often associated with other demographics or

subset populations (e.g., *ESL* writers, which may include ESL 1.5 writers, or *translingual* writers who may make use of multiple Englishes, but for whom English is not a subsequent language). Other terms may connote an age range or be more common when naming programs than people. *L2* will be used because it commonly represents those for whom English is a second or subsequent language and is an established and accepted term from the field of second language (L2) writing, the expertise and research of which inform this study.

Similarly, writing center tutors are referred to by many labels, including *coaches*, *partners*, *advisors*, *consultants*, etc. The BYU Writing Center has begun referring to their writing tutors as *writing consultants* since *tutor* often implies a more hierarchical relationship, and *tutorials* are now commonly understood as how-to videos and instructions. However, the terms *tutor* and *tutorial* or *tutoring session* are well-established in writing center literature and will be used in this study to refer to writing center employees working one-on-one with writers in 30 or 60-minute writing consultations.

The BYU Writing Center has almost 50 tutors who represent more than 40 areas of study from across campus. All are native English speakers, though some identify as bilingual or multilingual. Tutors participating in this study successfully completed a 3-credit, semester-long internship or 6-week transfer tutor training, which is required for all new writing center staff. New tutors are hired twice a year through a substantial hiring process that includes submitting writing samples, a resume, and a cover letter; providing a faculty recommendation; taking a grammar and usage diagnostic quiz; commenting on a sample paper; and being interviewed. Those who complete the internship or transfer

tutor training are eligible to receive the first level of International Tutor Training (ITT) certification through the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA). This initial training and certification process requires tutors to study foundational readings and research from the field of writing center studies, complete coursework emphasizing the connection between theory and practice and promoting metacognitive learning practices, and complete a practicum that eases them into the tutoring process (observations, team tutorials, reflective writing, etc.). In addition to the internship or transition tutor training, all tutors must attend a weekly tutor training meeting. The tutors included in this study will include those who have completed initial training and are attending the weekly tutor training class.

As associate coordinator of the BYU Writing Center, I oversee ongoing tutor education, which includes all training beyond the initial internship. I also manage the Writing Center and oversee daily supervision of the tutors and the program. In addition to program management, I am responsible for program development, assessment, and reporting. Working with the coordinator, I provide strategic planning for the program. This vast and varied set of responsibilities allows me to have a deep understanding of both the daily and long-term work of the Writing Center.

My understanding of both the BYU Writing Center and writing center studies is also informed by my educational background and experience in the field. I hold multiple degrees in English, with a rhetoric and composition emphasis, have TESOL certification, and am working on a doctoral degree in education. This combination of formal education has been intentional as it covers the main foundations and intersections of writing center work (i.e., rhetoric and composition, TESOL, and education). My experience with

writing centers began when I was an undergraduate student employed as a writing tutor in the BYU Writing Center. I went on to direct the writing center at Utah Valley University. In addition to publications within the field of writing center studies, I have been an active member of professional writing center organizations, sitting on the executive boards of both the International Writing Centers Association and the Rocky Mountain Writing Centers Association. This work has also been informed by my experience teaching ESL and composition courses, serving as a program administrator for a writing fellows program, and returning to work at the BYU Writing Center as associate coordinator.

At a local level, I have experienced the larger trends in writing centers as both a BYU Writing Center tutor and administrator. As a tutor, I was trained not to “edit” or provide much sentence-level help to writers, specifically L2 writers, as it was understood to be a “lower order concern” than organization (Blau et al., 2002; Weigle & Nelson, 2004). Tutor training often included discussions of directive and nondirective tutoring and rarely included suggestions for working with L2 writers.

Upon returning to the BYU Writing Center in 2013, I discovered that many of these problematic paradigms and practices had persisted. A “grammar” tutor had been hired to assist writers with sentence-level concerns, and all other Writing Center tutors were to avoid addressing sentence-level concerns with writers. I was keenly aware of tensions tutors felt in L2 writing consultations. These tensions may have been heightened by the existence of an ESL Writing Lab, located directly across the hall from the Writing Center. In 2010, the ESL Writing Lab (under the direction of the Department of English Language and Linguistics) was created in response to the Writing Center (under previous leadership) and the College of Family Home and Social Science (FHSS) Writing

Lab turning away L2 writers. Both programs claimed their writing tutors were not trained or equipped to work with students whose first language was not English. The ESL Writing Lab worked to address the needs of L2 writers, which seemed to provide additional rationale for Writing Center tutors to not adequately assist L2 writers and for administrators to not train writing tutors to interact, negotiate, and learn alongside L2 writers in effective ways. The separation also seemed to heighten established notions of L2 writers as deficit and vastly different.

Additionally, the continued use of the non-directive, directive paradigm and absence of research-based tutoring strategies, and the deficit thinking and lack of training and resources for working with L2 writers was concerning. Working on a new strategic direction plan for the BYU Writing Center, the newly hired faculty coordinator and I agreed that turning away L2 writers from our program did not reflect the values, theories, and best practices of writing center work. Ignoring the needs of both L2 writers and writing tutors was also not acceptable. More needed to be done to understand the tensions and improve tutor training. As Grimm (2008) claims, “The tutoring situations that are not clear, not comfortable, not coherent in familiar ways are the ones that call for closer inspection” (p. 18).

As part of this redefining of the BYU Writing Center’s perspective and practices, I created a set of core beliefs to guide our work:

#### BYU Writing Center Core Beliefs

- We are all writers and learners.
- Learning to write is an individual, ongoing process that requires experimentation, practice, and time.

- Collaborative learning is a valuable mode of learning that relies upon effective communication and adaptability.
- Writing facilitates learning and community, so context, audience, and genre matter.
- All writers—emerging to advanced—can benefit from sharing their writing with careful, supportive readers.
- Writing center work is important, professional work. (BYU Writing Center, 2017)

These core beliefs would help guide the training I would develop or revise and the policies and practices we would implement within the Writing Center, particularly those associated with working with L2 writers. I began teaching mandatory weekly tutor training for all staff. This training included, among other things, the core beliefs, working with L2 writers and writing, and understanding and addressing sentence-level language concerns. I also began assessing current training, tutoring, and tutor concerns. Both informal conversations and formal end-of-semester surveys given to the tutors revealed a lack of knowledge about and confidence using certain tutoring strategies and working with L2 writers.

During the summer of 2016, the ESL Writing Lab merged into the Writing Center after some attempts at joint training and several discussions where it became clear there had been shifts in perspective, training, and practice in the Writing Center, shifts that aligned with the purposes of the ESL Writing Lab. As part of the merger, the Writing Center began tracking L2 writers' use of the Writing Center and increasing training on



working with L2 writers. As we continued assessing our training, tutors continued to cite working with L2 writers as an area of concern and tension.

To better understand the tutors' concerns and the training modification needed, I surveyed tutors about their knowledge of, application of, and confidence using tutoring strategies (instruction, motivation, and scaffolding) with L1 and L2 writers. The results from two different IRB-approved survey cycles with more than 60 tutors revealed that when using the tutoring strategies of instruction, motivation, and scaffolding, tutors felt less knowledgeable about scaffolding as a tutoring strategy and felt less confident using scaffolding, especially with L2 writers. Three follow-up, semi-structured interviews provided additional insight into these results as tutors explained that they understood scaffolding as a concept but were unsure of what tasks or techniques were associated with scaffolding as a tutoring strategy. Additionally, all three tutors suggested that a lack of participation or interaction by L2 writers in a writing tutorial caused tutors to shift from scaffolding as an interactive tutoring strategy to instruction, which required no participation from the L2 writer.

### **Problem of Practice**

There has been a clear increase in research connecting writing center theory and practice, including research on tutoring strategies. This coupled with the frequent L2 writing consultations taking place in the BYU Writing Center, would make it easy to assume writing tutors are comfortable and confident in working with L2 writers, but this is not necessarily the case, as shown by my previous research cycles. In fact, writing center work at both the larger and local levels suggests continued deficit thinking about both L2 writers and scaffolding. These mindsets and approaches to structuring learning

are interconnected since educators' attitudes toward learners largely influence the types of learning exchanges and opportunities educators provide (Pettit, 2011). While previous training for BYU Writing Center tutors has covered both scaffolding and the needs of L2 writers, these concepts need to be better connected. As one tutor succinctly stated, "We don't want to know more about the *why* behind ESL tutoring. We get it. We want to know *how*" (Kim Rose, personal communication, June 30, 2016).

While it is clear that tutors use more than one tutoring strategy (Mackiewicz & Thompson, 2014; Merkel, 2018; Grimm, 2009; Thonus, 2014), researchers from both L2 writing and writing center studies have identified scaffolding as an essential tutoring strategy within writing consultations because it provides individualized guided practice and facilitates negotiation and learning for all participants within the writing consultation. (Weissberg, 2006; Kim, 2015; Parisi & Graziano-King, 2011; Williams, 2004; Thompson, 2009; Williams, 2002). Clearly, tutors need to understand scaffolding not just as a concept or general strategy but as a series of tasks or techniques to use in tutoring practice, including sessions with L2 writers.

### **Intervention**

The innovation for this action research study was a tutor training intervention designed to shift perspectives and practices. As Blazer (2015) has observed,

No other area of our work is more important than the learning we do with our staffs, specifically the staff education we design, experience, and reflect on. Our best chance to see a transformative ethos embodied in our everyday practice is to facilitate opportunities for staff learning that are in sync with the difficult content on this work. (p. 25)

The training intervention for this study addressed the needs of L2 writers from a nondeficit perspective and reinforced the use of scaffolding as a central tutoring strategy for working with all learners, including L2 writers. The training consisted of three regularly scheduled classroom modules and several practicum components.

The first 50-minute classroom module focused on scaffolding as a central tutoring strategy and consisted of defining scaffolding and techniques associated with scaffolding, identifying how it is used in conjunction with instruction and motivation, and introducing ways in which it can further learning and mitigate problematic power dynamics and deficit thinking among peer learners. The training session also included group analysis and discussion of video-recorded L2 writing consultations where scaffolding tasks were used to engage both the tutor and writer in learning.

The second 50-minute classroom module focused on the contextual nature of writing and language use, recognizing different rhetorics, literacies, and expectations within tutoring sessions, examining assumptions, values, and experiences that both tutors and L2 writers bring with them into tutoring session. This approach to training tutors to work with L2 writers aimed to combat deficit thinking—that L2 writers simply lacked English language, writing skills, and understanding of American educational culture. This approach encouraged tutors to recognize their own assumptions, develop empathy for other learners, and understand the need to work with each L2 writers as individual language learners.

The third classroom module concentrated on helping tutors learn more about sentence-level language issues. Past trainings centered on the top twenty errors made by undergraduate writers (Lunsford & Lunsford, 2008), which tutors were often familiar and

comfortable with. For this intervention, tutors worked with common L2 sentence-level issues (Ferris, 2006; Ferris & Hedgecock, 2013).

The practicum portion of the training consisted of three rounds of observations, two peer and one administrative. Each observation was followed by a discussion between the administrator or peer observer and the observed tutor. These discussions offered opportunities to provide feedback, encouraged reflection, and reinforced essential tutoring strategies, including scaffolding. This iterative process functioned as a form of scaffolding for the tutors as it provided chances for tutors to observe demonstrations of scaffolding, provide and receive feedback on their use of scaffolding, retrieve learned material, and reflect on and discuss tutoring practices.

### **Purpose of Study and Research Questions**

The purpose of this action research dissertation study was to measure writing tutors' actual use of scaffolding with L2 writers within the context of the intervention, to measure the effectiveness of the intervention, and to understand how training influences tutors' knowledge of, use of, and confidence using scaffolding, particularly with L2 learners. The research questions guiding this study were as follows:

RQ1: How does training influence tutors' actual use of scaffolding within tutorials with L2 writers?

RQ2: How does participating in training on scaffolding influence tutors' knowledge of scaffolding as a tutoring strategy?

RQ3: Following the training intervention, how do tutors compare their use scaffolding with L1 and L2 writers?

RQ4: What factors influence tutors' use of scaffolding in tutorials with L2 writers?

## Chapter 2: Theoretical Frameworks and Literature Review

*How can tutors strike a balance between providing the guidance that second language writers often seek and not providing so much that they are either editing or appropriating students' texts? The key, I believe, is in the interaction. (Williams, 2002, pp. 80-81)*

Just as language and language learning are not neutral, neither is theory. Theories or “conceptual frameworks are the foundational assumptions that determine how we act. Buried shallow or deep, again, they are always already there, whether we choose to investigate them or not” (Hall, 2017, p. 6). Theory shapes practice, but theory also shapes thinking and the ways we seek to know the world. Since theory informs research and intervention design, to effect long-lasting change, it is essential to understand the theoretical perspectives guiding research. Being intentional and specific in identifying and naming the theories underlying research and practice is important for understanding “our own assumptions” and the long-term implications of theoretical frameworks (Gutiérrez & Vossoughi, 2010, p. 104). Consequently, this chapter focuses on the theoretical foundations of the study as well as the research that informs and makes room for this work.

At an epistemological level, writing center work stems from constructionism. Specifically, writing centers are sites for constructivism, where social interactions lead to individual understanding or meaning making (Crotty, 1998). In essence “expertise is not located in individuals, either in the tutor or in the [writer], for example, in a writing center consultation; rather expertise emerges through their interactions” (Hall, 2017, p. 72). However, while the engagement, participation, and communication inherent in interaction are essential to learning, not all interaction produces the same opportunities

for learning. Consequently, if “tutoring is only valid if it is part of the learning process” (Dossin, 1996, p. 14), writing center scholars and practitioners must seek to understand the theories and practices that facilitate or discourage learning. Central to writing center beliefs and behaviors of learning are the theoretical frameworks of sociocultural theory (SCT), experiential learning theory (ELT), and communities of practice (CoP). These theories also inform the ways writing center scholars and practitioners think about learning as well the research lens and methods central to this proposed study.

### **Sociocultural Theory**

Sociocultural theory (SCT) stems from understanding that knowledge is constructed through interactions with others. Sociocultural interactions and internalization are often connected to the work of Lev Vygotsky (1978) who reasoned that meaning is made both socially and then individually and internally. Writing and learning are both seen as social acts. Writers are shaped by interactions with readers and the work of other writers, the communities and cultures bound up in the intersections of text and audience. Likewise, culture and engagement with others, individually and collectively, shape how learners come to know and understand the world. This idea underpins sociocultural theory and practice, commonly accepted within the fields of literacy and language (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996; Lee, 2016; Hanjani & Li, 2014; Lei, 2016; Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Nasir & Hand, 2006; Gutiérrez, Morales, & Martinez, 2009) as well as writing center work (Williams, 2004; Nordlof, 2014; Mackiewicz & Thompson, 2014; Kim, 2012).

In writing centers, the individualized social interaction that takes place sets writing centers apart from traditional classrooms (Weissberg, 2006; Harris, 1995). As

Harris (1995) has explained, “When meeting with tutors, writers gain kinds of knowledge about their writing and about themselves that are not possible in other institutionalized settings” (p. 27). In writing center tutorials, L2 writers particularly benefit from interaction with writing tutors because in this setting, L2 writers have opportunities to clarify, ask questions, and negotiate meaning in ways that are not offered in traditional classrooms or in written comments from instructors (Shvidko, 2015; Best, Jones-Katz, Smolarek, Stolzenburg, & Williamson, 2015; Williams, 2004). For writers, interacting with trained writing consultants, typically fellow students, offers a chance for formative feedback and individualized assistance in a low-stakes and resource-rich environment. The interaction that takes place between the writer and the writing tutor is essential to learning in a writing center session. According to Thompson (2009), “Unless the relationship between the tutor and the student is highly interactive, learning is not likely to occur, even though active participation is not by itself sufficient for learning” (p. 419). These social interactions between writers and tutors not only define the purpose and scope of writing center work, but they facilitate learning within tutorials.

### **Scaffolding**

One key interactive approach within sociocultural theory is the concept of scaffolding. As Kim (2015) has noted, “Scaffolding entails structuring learning interactions to provide tailored assistance to help the learner recognize the current knowledge level and reach the next level of development” (p. 67). Making use of scaffolding requires participants to constantly assess and adjust the learning activities to the needs of individual learners. Tailoring assistance, guiding practice, and negotiating as part of scaffolding also lead to learning within a sociocultural framework. For these



reasons, scaffolding has been identified as an essential form of interaction between L2 writers and writing tutors. In fact, Hyland & Hyland (2006) have suggested that scaffolding is at “the heart of the writing conference” (p. 5). Scaffolding is central to both sociocultural theory and conferencing with writers, for it allows learners to build knowledge and access understanding and abilities that would not be available without the assistance of a mentor or other learner. Scaffolding encourages writers and tutors to work together in the learning process, to negotiate, to assist, and to construct new understanding. It offers opportunities for all learners to make connections, reinforce what they know through discussion and practice, and stretch as they learn new concepts, ideally making use of the strengths and expertise of both participants as part of the scaffolding process.

For scaffolding to be most effective, learning should take place in what Vygotsky (1978) refers to as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which he defined as “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under the guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (p. 86). Within writing tutorials, making use of the ZPD includes assessing what a writer or learner can accomplish individually and focusing the interaction and learning structure on the individual’s potential for learning. In essence, making use of the ZPD, learners achieve what they could not on their own. Identifying the need to make use of the ZPD within L2 tutorials, Powers (1993) has suggested that learning through writing tutoring is not possible until we acknowledge and understand what L2 writers bring with them to writing center tutorials and allow that to inform the tutoring strategies and learning

structures employed in L2 tutoring sessions. Yet the ZPD is characterized by more than just an identified ideal range for learning where interaction should take place. As Williams (2002) explained, “The zone of proximal development is not simply a predetermined next stage of readiness. Rather, it is mutually constructed and can only be determined dialogically, suggesting that knowledge creation is a socially mediated activity” (p. 84).

Although the terminology, definitions, and boundaries for desired interactions within L2 tutorials vary (Merkel, 2018; Williams, 2002; Ewert, 2009; Kim, 2015; Parisi & Graziano-King, 2011), in order for tutors to be trained to make use of scaffolding as a tutoring strategy, scaffolding must be defined, accessible, and applicable. Mackiewicz and Thompson’s (2014; 2015) research has been particularly useful in the way it has defined and provided concrete techniques for scaffolding. Mackiewicz and Thompson (2014; 2015) identified eight techniques connected to scaffolding as a tutoring strategy:

1. pumping or soliciting the learner for additional information;
2. reading aloud;
3. responding as a reader or listener;
4. referring to a previous topic;
5. limiting or forcing a choice;
6. prompting or asking the learner to fill in the blank;
7. hinting or giving context clues; and
8. demonstrating or modeling.

These specific techniques provide increased opportunities to examine and understand scaffolding. While these specific scaffolding techniques were included as part of this

tutor training intervention and research study, they have only been used previously to study the interactions between L1 writers and writing tutors (Mackiewicz & Thompson, 2014; 2015).

### **Experiential Learning Theory**

Another constructivist theory that has emphasized informed interaction is experiential learning theory (ELT). ELT, as outlined by theorists such as Dewey, Lewin, Piaget, and Kolb, has emphasized “the central role that experience plays in the learning process” (Kolb, 2015, p. 31). Writers do not learn solely by attending lectures about writing, seeing models of writing, and talking hypothetically about the writing process. Tutors do not become effective tutors if their only experience with tutoring is embedded in reading about tutoring interactions. Language learners do not achieve language proficiency without making use of language. Learners develop understanding and abilities by actively engaging in and reflecting on the work they seek to learn more about. Writers learn by writing. Tutors learn by tutoring. Language learners learn by using language. As part of the experiential learning process, learners receive guidance, feedback, opportunities for reflection, and resources, such as time and space, to practice and improve.

However, while the concept of ELT seems clear, the role of an experiential educator is not always straightforward. Those structuring learning through ELT must be continually “balancing attention to the learner and to the subject matter while also balancing reflection on the deeper meaning of ideas with the skill of applying them” (Kolb, 2015, p. 300). As an experiential educator, a writing tutor must be learner-centered, helping writers as learners stay motivated and build on prior knowledge, while

remaining subject-focused, understanding and bringing attention to writing and learning processes and products. In this way, educators facilitate learning not by instructing learners through an experience but by mediating through that experience (Raelin, 2010), empowering the learner, building relationships, and functioning as an active participant and co-learner (Kolb et al., 2014; Merkel, 2018). Clearly, structuring learning in experiential ways requires negotiation and adoption of and adaption to nontraditional roles. Brannon and Knoblauch (1982) captured the work of the ELT educator well as they described the relationship between teacher, writer, and text:

[T]he teacher's proper role is not to tell the student explicitly what to do but rather to serve as a sounding-board enabling the writer to see confusions in the text and encouraging the writer to explore alternatives that he or she may not have considered. The teacher's role is to attract a writer's attention to the relationship between intention and effect, enabling a recognition of discrepancies between them, even suggesting ways to eliminate the discrepancies, but finally leaving decisions about alternative choices to the writer, not the teacher. (p. 162)

Essentially a writing tutor as experiential educator and co-learner must be able to balance attention and support between the writer and the writing, learning and helping the writer learn by effectively doing the work of writing. This dynamic is important as it helps flatten traditional teacher-student hierarchies (Kolb & Kolb, 2017) and allows for more peer-like interactions.

Within ELT the learner is also an active participant. In fact, while the educator, as a participant, in the experiential learning interaction can do things to increase opportunities for learning, it is ultimately up to the learner to move the work of learning

forward through action (Burns & Danyluk, 2017; Kolb & Kolb, 2009; Kolb & Kolb, 2017). Given this understanding, it is important to note that ELT encompasses not just the action of the experience or process of completing a task, but it includes the reflection and conversation that surround the shared, learner- and learning-centered experience.

### **Environment**

An important aspect of ELT is attention to the learning environment. As Dewey (2002) noted, learners are not like “coins are in a box, but as a plant” in need of sunlight, soil, and sustenance (p. 296). The context and physical conditions that a learner is placed in deeply influences their ability to experiment and experience learning. The learning environment not only includes physical space, but also time, resources, meeting of learning preferences or differences, and meeting of expectations (Kolb & Kolb, 2009). A learning environment needs to be a “welcoming space that is characterized by respect for all. [ . . . ] It needs to be safe and supportive, but also challenging. It must allow learners to be in charge of their own learning and allow time for the repetitive practice that develops expertise” (Kolb & Kolb, 2017, p. 33).

Research into L2 writing center tutorials has shown the importance of attending to environmental factors as part of the learning process. In studies of interactions between tutors and L2 writers, researchers have found that meeting a learner’s expectations, the ability to connect, asking and addressing of questions, and the presence of negotiation are factors in the success of a session and the satisfaction of the learner (Thompson et al., 2009; Bell & Elledge, 2008; Ewert, 2009; Merkel, 2018; Kim, 2015; Williams, 2004). Mackiewicz and Thompson (2013) reinforced the importance of environment in the learning process by outlining how one tutor altered her feedback when a writer expressed

concern with the looming paper deadline: “rather than pushing the student to make the revisions she believed would most improve the essay, the tutor decides first to focus on lowering the student’s anxiety” (p. 65). This example highlights the key role of the learning environment within the framework of experiential learning and the ongoing balance a tutor must address between the needs of the writer and the writing. Although writing centers pride themselves on being places where all learners are welcome (Carino, 2003; Grutsch McKinney, 2013), not all learners may feel welcome or supported in writing centers. Consequently, environment is an aspect of ELT that is essential for writing tutors to be aware of and trained to address through their interactions with learners.

### **Communities of Practice**

The final constructivist approach to inform this study is the concept of Communities of Practice (CoP). This subset of SCT was first introduced by Lave and Wenger (1991). In short, CoP are characterized and defined by “a *domain* of knowledge, which defines a set of issues; a *community* of people who care about this domain; and the shared *practice* that they are developing to be effective in their domain” (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002, p. 28). These defining characteristics reflect individual and collective ways of knowing and negotiating meaning, including the “routines, words, tools, ways of doing things, stories, gesture, symbols, genres, actions or concepts that the community has produced or adopted” (Wenger, 1998, p. 83). CoP are dynamic, shaping and being shaped by individual and collective identities and interactions.

### **Negotiation and Identity**

Central to CoP are the ideas of negotiation and identity. In fact, through a CoP lens, meaning is only possible through situated and ongoing negotiation and renegotiation, suggesting that “understanding and experience are in constant interaction—indeed, are mutually constitutive” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, pp. 51-52). Social interaction is key to learning and shapes individual and community identities simultaneously and cyclically. As Hall (2017) explained, “According to this view, learning is not something to be acquired, as in a body of knowledge, which one either has or doesn’t have. Rather, learning is participation” (p. 19). If participation, negotiation, and identity are involved in learning, then learning is never uniform or designed, only “facilitated or frustrated” (Wenger, 1998, p. 229) as individuals and communities interact.

Thinking of writing centers as CoP is particularly helpful, for in writing centers “identity and the politics of negotiation and face are always present and require inventory and mapping” (Denny, 2010, p. 28). Understanding writing centers as CoP is necessary for structuring and sustaining an environment or culture of learning (Geller, Eodice, & Condon, 2007). This includes examining the ways in which tutors share language and practice and the ways they establish and negotiate boundaries.

The theoretical framework of CoP also acknowledges that individuals belong to more than one CoP and must always be navigating and negotiating issues of identity in relation to these CoP. For writing center tutors, this multiplicity of CoP and the traversing of boundaries and *brokering* between communities is essential to their role and identity as tutors (Wenger, 1998). Brokering “involves processes of translation, coordination, and alignment between perspectives” in ways that help facilitate learning (Wenger, 1998, p.

108). In writing center studies, the role of the broker connects to the threshold concept of tutors as “expert-outsiders,” (Nowacek & Hughes, 2015, p. 172), where tutors engage in learning with and assisting writers into new territory, fluctuating between areas of expertise and unfamiliar contexts. The work of tutoring as traversing borders, brokering, and embodying the realm expert-outsiders, reinforces the idea of writing centers as crossroads and CoP where boundaries and differences function as “potential learning resources rather than barriers” (Akkerman and Bakker, 2011, p. 137).

In fact, writing centers as interdisciplinary spaces reinforce the idea that “all learning involves boundaries” (Akkerman and Bakker, 2011, p. 132). This foundational characteristic of writing center work as boundary work can be a challenge for writing centers residing within traditional academic systems, since within these systems, vertical expertise is typically valued and made visible more than horizontal expertise (Engeström, Y., Engeström, R., & Kärkkäinen, 1995; Marsh, Bertrand, & Huguet, 2015). Vertical expertise is understood as expertise of a “well-bounded domain” typically within a ranked system, while horizontal expertise includes a broader, multi-dimensional view of expertise” (Engeström et al., 1995, p. 319) gained through moving across borders rather than remaining within a siloed space. While writing centers are often housed within siloed departments where vertical expertise functions as the currency of institutional systems and structures, writing centers as CoP and tutors as boundary crossers, make use of horizontal expertise and approaches to their work as they negotiate with individual writers and writing from various academic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds.

The brokering and border work of tutoring is particularly important since writing itself is bound by community (Lei, 2016), and writers, especially L2 writers, don’t just



need help polishing their papers—they need help navigating new communities and contexts (Williams, 2002; Merkel, 2018). Grimm (2008) framed writing center work well in terms of CoP when she explained that “the ‘problems’ are not located in individuals but in the difficulty of moving among systems” (p. 8). Situating and seeing problems not within individual language learners but within educational systems is key (Gutiérrez, Morales, & Martinez, 2009) as is helping learners negotiate and navigate systems and CoP. As tutors and L2 writers participate in crossing and bridging boundaries, they facilitate their own learning processes. This is done through negotiating practices, rethinking assumptions, and making sincere efforts to communicate and problem solve (Wenger et al., 2002). In writing center work, the writing center is not only a CoP, but it is a site for brokering between communities as part of the learning process—a process involving practice, negotiation, and identity (Lave & Wenger, 1991). It is through the negotiation of identity and practice within writing center consultations that writers and tutors have opportunities to learn.

### **Power Dynamics within L2 Tutorials**

Since theoretical frameworks are used to define and determine knowledge and practice, they can also be used to define and defend power structures, including those related to language and peer tutoring dynamics. However, power dynamics in these realms are rarely static, but they are defined by a series of choices, perspectives, and practices that participants make in relation to each other and larger cultures and contexts. Theoretical frameworks, language boundaries, and peer tutoring roles have all been lenses used to define and determine power structures as part of L2 writer and writing tutor interactions. The characterization and assumptions of power dynamics in these areas

have contributed to tensions, deficit thinking, and inadequate application of tutoring strategies. Ultimately, since power is particularly integral to the established problem of practice, proposed intervention, and research study, understanding how these theories inform potential power dynamics is useful.

### **Theoretical Frameworks and Power**

In SCT, ELT, and CoP, all theories framed by constructivism and social interaction, power dynamics are not inherently static, but are established by participants. Power dynamics are shaped by interactions and have the potential to remain dynamic and fluid throughout the learning process. Accordingly, although theoretical frameworks can be used to rationalize and reify power structures, these lenses are not inherently problematic. As Wenger (1998) explains,

Communities of practice are not intrinsically beneficial or harmful. They are not privileged in terms of positive or negative effects. Yet they are a force to be reckoned with, for better or worse. As a locus of engagement in action, interpersonal relations, shared knowledge, and negotiation of enterprises, such communities hold the key to real transformation—the kind that has real effects on people’s lives. From this perspective, the influence of other forces (e.g., the control of an institution or the authority of an individual) are no less important, but they must be understood as mediated by communities in which their meanings are to be negotiated in practice. (p. 85)

Through the lens of theoretical frameworks such as CoPs, SCT, and ELT, meaning is made through interactions among participants, or, in other words, “Learning is not something done *to* students, but rather something students do” (Ambrose et al., 2010, p.

3). In fact, one of the reasons SCT, ELT, and CoP are foundational to this study is because defining practices associated with these theories—scaffolding, negotiating, brokering—signal interaction is taking place between participants, and power is potentially fluid within these processes, increasing possibilities for learning.

Despite the possible neutrality of the three identified theoretical frameworks as tools, scholars and practitioners have often used these theories to maintain or deny power (Gutiérrez, 2008). For instance, according to several studies of interactions between K-12 students and their teachers, research revealed that “teachers who believed students should be taught using constructivist strategies allowed their students more control in the classroom” (Pettit, 2011, pp. 138-139). Clearly, belief informs practice. For this study, the power structures and assumptions surrounding scaffolding and peer tutoring must be acknowledged. Vygotsky’s (1978) description of scaffolding interactions within the ZPD includes “*problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers*” [italics in original] (p. 86). This line has been consciously or subconsciously interpreted and used to establish the authority of writing tutors as the constant, “more capable peers.” This has placed writers and learners making use of writing centers in a deficit position of being seen as the less capable participants. While these positions and power structures may be a reality at times, in an interactive, dynamic tutoring session, roles are rarely static.

### **Tutoring Roles and Power**

Although both L2 writing and writing center studies scholars have recognized the harm in using a deficit model of SCT to define the interactions between writers and tutors (Merkel, 2018; Nowacek & Hughes, 2015), researchers on both sides have used this lens

to define existing problematic power structures. Several studies on writing center interactions between L2 writers and writing tutors have outlined the perceived dominance of writing tutors (Lee, 2015; Blau et al., 2002; Thonus, 2004; Weigle & Nelson, 2004; Raymond & Quinn, 2012) and the passivity or a lack of observed engagement by L2 writers (Lee, 2016; Cogie et al., 1999; Thonus, 2004). While there may be reasons to categorize participants as dominant or passive, such as the lack or abundance of conversational turn taking, research must also be careful not to make assumptions about exchanges through a deficit lens, thus reinforcing this power dynamic. This reification can also be seen in the research from both fields, where the focus on the writer as a learner has often led to the failure to see tutors as engaged learners.

The learning that takes place within writing center tutorials always involves two participants. In fact, tutors have reported long-term and lasting learning as a result of engaging with writers in tutorials (Bruffee, 1995; Hughes, Gillespie, & Kail 2010; Nowacek & Hughes, 2015), and writing center scholars have often defined learning on both the part of the tutor and writer as central to tutoring writing (Hall, 2017). With this in mind, it may be easier to see how the roles of participants shift during interaction. For example, as part of scaffolding, limiting or forcing a choice may put the tutor in a position of power, but responding as a reader or listener to seek clarification or establish shared comprehension may provide the writer with a measure of power and shift the tutor to the role of primary learner. While studies of L2 writing tutorials may have primarily focused on L2 writers and writing, tutors are also learning within these interactions.

Many scholars from the disciplines of L2 writing and writing center studies have recognized the potential for learning that interaction between tutors and L2 learners can

facilitate, but they have not concluded that these interactions have been or should be symmetrical in terms of power. In fact, L2 writers often desire or expect tutors to inhabit the role of the expert (Thompson et al., 2009; Moussu, 2013; Mackiewicz & Thompson, 2014). Additionally, L2 writers may also lack the language or educational and rhetorical context to talk about their writing in expert ways (Moussu, 2013). As Thompson et al. (2009) explained, cultural variables may also be at play, rendering insistence on equality and symmetry in L2 writing tutorials problematic:

To encourage tutors to deny their expertise in striving for equality may hurt students because it may lead tutors to hold back suggestions that students need to improve their writing and because students are not likely to trust tutors who are not more expert than they are. However, it is important for tutors to know that their collaborations with students should not be hierarchical. Students likely not only set the agenda but also maintain control throughout in most satisfactory writing center conferences. (p. 100)

Understandably then, the expectations placed on participants can influence how interactions are studied or how participants engage with each other. According to Lee (2016), “Both tutors and learners work in a collaborative manner in which involvement may vary according to learners’ beliefs about their roles in writing consultations” (p. 61). Such beliefs and role expectations may not allow for symmetry within these learning exchanges.

Yet, it is also important to recognize that interactions within L2 tutorials can be asymmetrical without being static or entirely hierarchical in power. Scaffolding and learning in writing consultations can go both ways, involving both the writer and the tutor

(De Guerrero & Villamil, 2000; Hanjani & Li 2014; Merkel, 2018). Essentially, the roles of both the tutor and writer must be continually negotiated as expertise and expectations shift (Thonus, 2004; Merkel, 2018), requiring tutors and writers to be flexible and adaptable in how they interact during tutorials (Grimm, 2009). This awareness and negotiation is particularly important in writing center settings because language access, acceptance, and negotiation have significant power dynamics, many of which writing centers, writing tutors, and L2 writers are ill-prepared to navigate.

### **Language and Power**

Another power dynamic visible in writing centers is the connection between power and preferences for a single, static, standardized language or form of English. Only making use of or requiring others to only make use of a single dominant language reinforces the power of those using that dominant language. While there are perceptions that mastering a single standardized variant of academic English grants access to power, in reality, those with access to multiple languages increasingly wield access and power not available to monolingual learners (Paris & Alim, 2014; Rafoth, 2015; Wilson, 2012; Gutiérrez, Morales, & Martinez, 2009). Increasingly, writing centers are drawn into interdisciplinary debates underscoring the tensions between resisting monolingual ideologies and deficit thinking and helping L2 learners gain proficiency in a dominant form of English and make informed and thoughtful decisions about language negotiation and use. Those in composition and writing center work who have embraced translingualism (Horner, Lu, Royster, & Trimbur, 2011; Olson, 2013, Green, 2015; Moroski, 2018) may encourage tutors to embrace this mindset, which promotes the interweaving of different languages and language forms and resisting and negotiating

language, rather than managing or embracing a single dominant form. Translingual approaches to writing offer new ways of thinking about and navigating systems. However, L2 scholars have pointed out that translingual practices may not be fully developed or proven (Matsuda, 2014; Atkinson, Crusan, Matsuda, Ortmeier-Hooper, Ruecker, Simpson, & Tardy, 2015).

The ongoing discussion surrounding translingualism is vital to the work of supporting writers and language learners, but interdisciplinary approaches may be needed to fully move the discussion from theory to into research-based practice. (Lee, 2016; Matsuda, 2014; Horner et al., 2011). Scholars from L2 writing have pointed out that translingualism may, in part, encompass work that already exists as part of L2 writing scholarship (Atkinson et al., 2015; Matsuda, 2014; Gevers, 2018). Translingual approaches certainly offer possibilities for addressing problematic power structures within writing and writing center studies, but Atkinson et al. (2015) warn against conflating or replacing L2 writing scholarship with translingual scholarship, explaining that

Although translingual writing and L2 writing overlap in their critique of the historically monolingual, English Only focus of composition studies, translingual writing has not widely taken up the task of helping L2 writers increase their proficiency in what might still be emerging L2s and develop and use their multiple language resources to serve their own purposes. (p.384)

Translingualism has informed and is relevant to this research study, particularly for the possibilities it provides in addressing problematic power structures by offering options to writers. However, it does not serve as a replacement for scholarship from L2 writing or

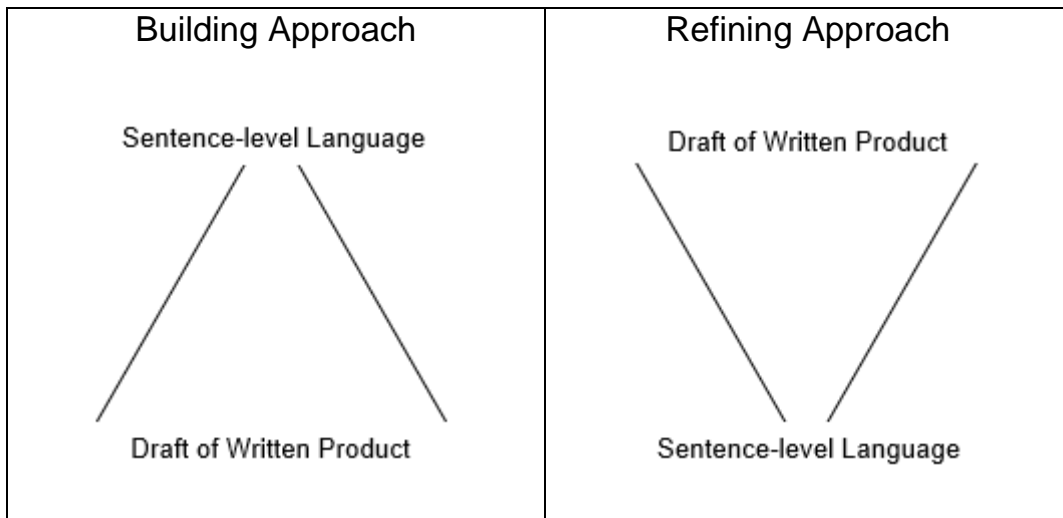
education which provide guiding research, particularly in connection to the international L2 demographics of participants.

Related to the idea of translanguaging and supporting L2 writers in learning an additional language are valid concerns about encouraging tutors to make use of translanguaging approaches without needed tutor education. L2 writing and writing center scholars have reminded others that most undergraduate writing tutors and many emerging L2 writers likely lack the specialized skills, language proficiency, and political power within their educational settings to effectively negotiate, resist, and restructure language in meaningful and beneficial ways (Rafoth, 2015; Gevers, 2018). Rather than assuming or asserting expertise in the debate over language use and power, writing tutors can embrace linguistic diversity by approaching differences in language from a stance of inquiry and rhetorical or contextual language and literacy rather than taking a deficit stance and only seeing differences as errors (Denny, 2010; Olson, 2013; Gevers, 2018). Most importantly, tutors and L2 writers can increase their understanding of and proficiency in language and recognize the link between language and power (Denny, 2010; Olson, 2013; Matsuda, 2014). Increasing tutors' explicit understanding of language and the cultural and contextual boundaries and power dynamics of language use enables and empowers tutors to have more informed conversations and engage both in scaffolding with writers and in the collaborative work of navigating, resisting, and negotiating language use.

However, even the way language is understood and prioritized within writing centers and language learning communities calls for greater reflection if negotiation and collaboration are to take place within tutorials. For writers approaching text production



from a language learning perspective, attending to sentence-level language may be central to the writing process and understood as a precursor to the production of a full text. Often L2 writers have learned English through a building approach: learning vocabulary, learning to construct sentences, learning to construct paragraphs, and finally learning to produce an entire paper. On the other hand, writing center tutors have often experienced and been trained to understand writing through the discourse of composition studies, which has typically encouraged addressing content and organization before attending to sentence-level language. In fact, within this compositionist framework, attending to sentence-level language has often been characterized as proofreading or editing, making it the final step in this refining approach. As Figure 2 illustrates, language learning or a building approaches and compositionist or refining approaches to writing and sentence-level language often compete with each other and often do so through participants' differing priorities and short-term goals within tutorials.



*Figure 2:* Approaches and prioritization of writing and language processes and production. Language learners often take a building approach to writing and compositionists often take a refining approach.

Certainly, these models of prioritization provide a simplistic overview of rich disciplinary histories, systems, and structures that inform both L2 writing and composition studies (see Ferris & Hedgecock, 2013, p. 62 for an a more in-depth comparison of these disciplines). Yet, writing tutors and L2 writers often enter into tutoring sessions without a clear understanding of what informs these disciplinary approaches or even an awareness that the other participant within the tutorial is functioning from a competing model of writing and language processes and prioritizations.

Although the writing process is not a strict or simple linear process, these models of prioritization or ranking may suggest otherwise to tutors and writers working from a process or prioritization framework. In fact, for writing centers, the compositionist approach to prioritizing writing and language issues and a process-based approach has led many writing centers to refer to the invention and organization of ideas as “global” or “higher order” concerns and sentence-level issues as “local” or “lower order” concerns (Harris & Silva, 1993; Hall, 2017; Cheatle, 2017; Ryan & Zimmerelli, 2015, Balester, 2016). This terminology of higher-order and lower-order concerns implies that attention to sentence-level language lacks importance within the early and middle stages of the writing process, though language is precisely what enables the production of text and the process of writing. Within this compositionist framework, sentence-level language often is and has been characterized as separate from the writing process—as editing that takes place after writing and revising have been completed. When tutors are trained to think about sentence-level language in terms of editing rather than as an integral part of writing or literacy education (Min, 2016) and when tutors are trained to separate language issues from writing and prioritize sentence-level language last, tutors may be dismissive of

learners' sentence-level concerns. Additionally, those training tutors to work within this compositionist framework may see editing or proofreading as outside the scope of a writing center's purpose, leading to little or no tutor education on sentence-level language and policies against attending to this aspect of a writer's work. Tutors operating within such writing center communities and systems may function only within their known compositionist framework, knowingly or unknowingly withholding language learning possibilities and power within the tutorial.

Not adequately addressing sentence-level language with L2 writers is particularly problematic since these writers are typically invested in both writing and language-learning processes. While prioritizing tasks has value as a pragmatic approach, always prioritizing sentence-level language last within a tutorial may mean never fully addressing one of an L2 writer's primary concerns. Tutorials often come with time constraints, which may mean that operating from a higher-order to lower-order or global to local approach results in not having time to properly address or engage in scaffolding in conjunction with sentence-level language. For example, with limited time available, a tutor may address an L2 writer's expressed concerns with pronoun use by giving the writer a handout to help them as they proofread at a later point in the writing process. This approach does not allow for individualized assistance or scaffolding tailored to the needs of the writer.

However, whether or not scaffolding or learning interactions focus on sentence-level language, questions and concerns in this area still remain central to the work of L2 writers. While L2 writers vary vastly in language and literacy proficiencies, as writers and language learners, they are still largely invested in their use of language as central to

making meaning and expressing ideas. Using language in informed and deliberate ways allows a writer to construct stronger paragraphs and papers, and this process of giving attention to language assists in the language learning and acquisition process. For L2 writers, attention to sentence-level language is not reduced to error management but is seen as building a solid linguistic structure through which ideas and information can be communicated. This approach does not dismiss organization and rhetorical structure, but it does not assign preference to the global-to-local approach writing tutors may often make use of in writing center sessions. In fact, L2 writers forced to work within this unfamiliar compositionist framework may experience feelings of frustration or powerlessness, particularly if they are not invited to engage as a full participant within the tutoring session by helping set the agenda, negotiate priorities, or work within their own ZPD within the session

These diverging views on priorities within writing and writing tutorials can be a source of tension between writing tutors and L2 writers (Moussu, 2013; Hall, 2017; Bell & Elledge, 2008). This disconnect can also influence power dynamics where tutors lose credibility for their lack of expertise in sentence-level language issues or are seen as withholding information if they fail to address language concerns. On the other hand, L2 writers may be seen as unaware of or unconcerned with “higher order” concerns, reinforcing deficit thinking about L2 writers writing and language skills. The idea of tutors as experts and L2 writers as the sole learners within a tutorial are cultural constructs that must be negotiated in relation to prioritizing writing and language concerns. However, these tensions and power dynamics are also the product of different disciplinary approaches that intersect within writing centers (Harris & Silva, 1993;

Moussu, 2013; David & Moussu, 2015). If not understood and addressed within writing center work, these disconnects frustrate opportunities for scaffolding and individualized learning exchanges within tutorials, as participants rely on their own experience and understanding of writing and language processes and priorities rather than communicating and collaborating across boundaries.

### **Tutor Education**

While the differences and disconnects possible in L2 writing tutorials have been highlighted, there are many familiar and favorable aspects of the interactions between L2 writers and writing tutors. As with other writing center sessions, researchers from various fields have agreed that participant engagement within L2 tutorials leads to increased satisfaction and potential for learning (Kim, 2015; Parisi & Graziano-King, 2011; Williams, 2004). Researchers have also identified a need to better understand the interactions between tutors and writers, both with L1 and L2 writers (Grimm, 2008; Mackiewicz & Thompson, 2014; Bell & Elledge, 2008; Kim, 2015). Certainly, all writers and learners benefit from educational exchanges that provide a combination of instruction, motivation, and scaffolding. Each of these tutoring strategies are key to writing center work in general, which includes supporting and facilitating L2 writing and learning. While all tutoring strategies are needed to effectively support learning, individualized scaffolding is central to tutoring theory and practice (Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Kim, 2015; Parisi & Graziano-King, 2011; Williams, 2004; Weissberg, 2006), increasing the need for a clear understanding of scaffolding by both scholars and practitioners of writing center work.

Since scaffolding and the ZPD are so closely linked to SCT and the work of Vygotsky, L2 writing and writing center scholars often have a shared understanding of scaffolding as a general concept. However, as previously described, there is less consensus on what scaffolding looks like in practice. The work of Mackiewicz and Thompson (2014; 2015) has outlined concrete techniques and tasks connected to scaffolding. This connection between theory and practice is essential for writing center work, including tutor education. As part of previous research, interviews with BYU writing tutors revealed that tutors are more aware of scaffolding as a concept but are not always aware of scaffolding in practice as a tutoring strategy for daily use. Establishing and developing deeper connections between scaffolding as a theory and scaffolding in practice through tutor education is vital for helping tutors make use of scaffolding as an effective tutoring strategy.

Just as writing centers and demographics of tutors vary, so does tutor education. Specific recommendations for tutor education on working with L2 writers may differ, but there is general agreement that such training should not be limited to an isolated class session, required reading (Moussu, 2013; Williams, 2006; Blau et al., 2002), or list of tips (Nakamaru, 2010). Such approaches are inadequate or even discriminatory (Moussu, 2013, Thonus, 2014; Wilson, 2012; Gutiérrez & Orellana, 2006). Tutor education should also not generically address all language learners and L2 writers as if their needs were identical or indistinguishable from the concerns of L1 writers (Thonus, 2014; Blau et al., 2002; Wilson, 2012). Harris and Silva (1993) articulated the difficult balance in addressing the needs of L2 writers as part of tutoring education:

To what extent should we help tutors become aware of such differences? On the one hand, there is a danger that they can begin to use general patterns as givens, expecting all speakers of other languages to fit the models they have learned. On the other hand, without any knowledge of cultural preferences tutors are likely to see differences as weaknesses and to assume that the ESL student needs basic writing help. (p. 527)

This balance should also include helping tutors develop “a sense of expertise that can prepare them to be simultaneously confident enough to work with writers from a wide range of disciplines and levels of experience and humble enough to remain open to constantly learning” (Nowacek & Hughes, 2015, p. 172). This sense of expertise is important since helping tutors as educators feel prepared to work with L2 writers will largely determine their success (Pettit, 2011). Consequently, finding a balanced, respectful, and responsive way to provide the training tutors need to effectively work with L2 writers is most likely to occur as writing center administrators tailor tutor education to their own contexts and programs.

### **Tutor Education and Working with L2 Writers**

While tutor education should be constantly reassessed and revised to meet the needs of specific learners and educational settings, scholars from composition, education, linguistics, and subfields such as L2 writing and writing center studies have agreed on some important characteristics of and content concepts for educating tutors to work with L2 writers:

- Training should be research based (Weigle & Nelson, 2004; Moussu, 2013)

- Tutors should learn how cultural, rhetorical, and linguistic understanding and choices connect to power dynamics in writing and tutoring (Bell & Youmans, 2006; Denny, 2010; Carino, 2003; Moroski, 2018; Wilson, 2012; Blazer, 2015; Green, 2015; Nakamaru, 2010)
- Tutors should recognize L2 writers as writers, language learners, and language negotiators (Green, 2015; Eckstein, 2018; Williams, 2002).
- Tutors should receive training on sentence-level language issues to develop explicit understanding (Weigle & Nelson, 2004; Moussu, 2013; Eckstein, 2018; Blau et al., 2002; Williams, 2002)
- Tutors should be taught to approach their work with L2 writers with a focus on inquiry and negotiation instead of deficit and management (Blazer, 2015; Williams, 2004; Eckstein, 2018; Rafoth, 2015; Blau et al., 2002)
- Tutors should be taught to use direct and clear communication with L2 writers, paying close attention to the terminology and rhetorical structures used to communicate (Williams, 2004; Bell & Youmans, 2006; Rafoth, 2015; Blau et al., 2002).

While it is important to address these areas of perspective and practice in tutor education, it is even more vital to establish an environment for ongoing learning and dialogue related to these topics. As Grimm (2009) explained, “Significant change in any workplace occurs when unconscious conceptual models are brought to the surface and replaced with conscious ones” (p. 16). Consciously and consistently highlighting research-based approaches to working with L2 writers is central to innovation and improvement.



## **Tutor Education and Experiential Learning**

In fact, best practice for tutor education has rarely included classroom instruction or other one-time, one-semester events. While traditional, vertical sharing of expertise is important for facilitating other forms of learning exchanges (Marsh et al., 2015), it should be only a portion of the training structure. In fact, Geller et al. (2007) has called for less reliance on structured syllabi and required readings and an increase in experiential learning. As Wenger (1998) suggested, learning “belongs to the realm of experience and practice” (p. 225). With theoretical roots in SCT, ELT, and CoP, it is little wonder that writing center and L2 writing research calls for more practice and experience within tutor education and an environment conducive to ongoing learning. Scholars from across the interdisciplinary realm of writing center work—writing center studies, L2 writing, and education—have suggested that some of the most effective methods for encouraging learning and educating tutors, beyond practice or experience, include the following:

- Observations (Nakamaru, 2010; Mattison, 2007; Hall, 2011; Loewenberg, Ball & Forzani, 2009; Ambrose et al., 2010; Lawson, 2018; Hall, 2017)
- Feedback (Mackiewicz & Thompson, 2014; Mattison, 2007; Hall, 2011; Lang, 2016; Weissberg, 2006; Loewenberg Ball & Forzani, 2009; Ambrose et al., 2010; Lawson, 2018)
- Discussions with peers and administrators (Mattison, 2007; Hall, 2011; Lang, 2016; Raelin, 2010; Ambrose et al., 2010; Hall, 2017; Lawson, 2018; Haigh & Barrett, 2014; Blazer, 2015)
- Reflection (Rafoth, 2015; Mackiewicz & Thompson, 2014; Brown et al., 2014; Mattison, 2007; Hall, 2011; Lang, 2016; Hall, 2017; Weissberg, 2006; Burns &

Danyluk, 2017; Loewenberg Ball & Forzani, 2009; Lawson, 2018; Haigh & Barrett, 2014; Blazer, 2015; Nakamaru, 2010; Akkerman & Bakker, 2011)

It is worth noting that many of these learning methods are intertwined. For example, reflection both informs discussions and results from discussion. Additionally, scholars have suggested this experiential education be cyclical or frequent (Loewenberg Ball & Forzani, 2009; Hall, 2017; Lang, 2016; Gevers, 2018; Hord & Sommers, 2008) responsive (Hall, 2017), informed by research (Gevers, 2018; De Guerrero & Villamil, 2000; Hall, 2017), and should take place in a low-stakes, learning-centered environment (Brown, Roediger, & McDaniel, 2014; Mattison, 2007; Hall, 2011; Lawson, 2018; Haigh & Barrett, 2014; Blazer, 2015).

While these outlined theoretical frameworks and practices are useful as researchers and scholars study interactions between L2 writers and tutors in writing center sessions, this information remains hypothetical and theoretical unless understood and implemented by writing center tutors. Clearly, addressing and reconciling a problem of practice involving interactions between writing tutors and L2 writers was not possible without rethinking, reassessing, and revising tutor education.

### Chapter 3: Methods

*Methods are inseparable from methodologies and methodologies are underpinned by philosophical assumptions about the nature of the world and how we can know it.*

*(Hyland, 2016, p. 121)*

Methodology is inextricably linked to theoretical perspective. Theories are important not simply because they inform research methodology, but because theory and research are used to “justify our actions to ourselves and to each other” (Wenger, 1998, p. 11). Examining writing center tutors’ evolving understanding and use of scaffolding required aligning methodology with the established research questions and chosen theoretical frameworks. This was important, for according to Rossman and Rallis (2017), “the conceptual framework provides a basis for a coherent study. It connects the *what* with the *how* of the inquiry” (p. 107).

Since sociocultural theory (SCT), experiential learning theory (ELT), and Communities of Practice (CoP) served as frameworks for this study, an action research, mixed methods approach was enlisted to provide multiple ways of understanding and addressing the problem of practice. Quantitative survey data provided an overview of collective engagement and understanding within the writing center as a CoP, and descriptive statistics helped establish patterns present in sociocultural interactions. While these approaches offered important information about the shared experience of participants, the constructivist foundation for this work suggested the need for a more in-depth understanding of participant interactions and the internalization of meaning made through mediated learning experiences. For this reason, qualitative methods such as interviews, qualitative survey questions, and focus groups were employed to allow a

more textured and detailed understanding of participant experience. The research questions and research design for this study reflected SCT, ELT, and CoP frameworks with an emphasis on qualitative research design, but this study also included vital quantitative components that informed the mixed methods action research approach.

### **Research Questions**

Given that the purpose of this study was to examine how a tutor training innovation affected writing center tutors' experiences scaffolding within tutorials with L2 writers, four research questions guided this study:

RQ1: How does training influence tutors' actual use of scaffolding within tutorials with L2 writers?

RQ2: How does participating in training on scaffolding influence tutors' knowledge of scaffolding as a tutoring strategy?

RQ3: Following the training intervention, how do tutors compare their use scaffolding with L1 and L2 writers?

RQ4: What factors influence tutors' use of scaffolding in tutorials with L2 writers?

### **Research Design**

#### **Theoretical Foundations**

The epistemology of writing center work resides in constructionism, with the mid-level constructivist theories of SCT and related ELT and CoP informing both the pedagogy and practice of tutoring. These theories give shape and meaning to writing center work by locating the construction of knowledge in the interactions that take place in writing center settings. From this theoretical perspective, there are ample opportunities

to learn within writing centers as tutors interact with writers, as writers and tutors interact with text and language, as tutors interact with tutors and administrators, etc. Observing and reflecting on these interactions also provides a contact point and opportunity to internalize ways in which to know and make meaning of the world. These theoretical foundations remind writing center scholars and practitioners to look to these intersections and interactions for increased understanding and sites for critical research. Following this line between theory and research, this study on the scaffolding interactions between writing tutors and L2 writers aimed to align writing center belief with behavior and theory with practice.

### **Action Research**

Action research, sometimes referred to as teacher research, is focused on “the improvement of practice, the improvement of the understanding of practice, and the improvement of the situation in which the practice takes place” (Ivankova, 2015, p. 29). This approach to research “offers a process by which current practice can be changed toward better practice” (Mertler, 2017, p. 13). Action research is most concerned with applied outcomes and addressing problems of practice, rather than scholarship that provides generalizable knowledge. Action research studies require a systematic and cyclical approach that includes inquiry, reflection, collaboration, innovation and evaluation (Creswell, 2015). With this understanding of action research, writing centers are ideal locales for such an approach, particularly given their intersection of disciplines and stakeholders and their propensity toward reflective practice (Williams, 2006).

Action research also differs from more traditional research design in that action research studies are centered around an intervention or innovation designed to address a

specific problem of practice with the aim of affecting change. Because action research is localized, it typically allows researchers to conduct fieldwork in participants' own contexts (Grutsch McKinney, 2016) and include participants in a more collaborative research process. In this way, action research makes it possible to conduct research not just *about* or *on* participants, but *with* participants as stakeholders and collaborators in the study (Mertler, 2017). The action research process is cyclical, meaning multiple cycles of research will have been completed prior to the final research cycle. These previous research cycles provide further insight into the problem of practice and allow for research instruments to be piloted, revised, and refined. This action research approach allows researchers to provide practical solutions within their educational settings using systematic, empirical research methods. Action research was a key component of methodology for this study since the study was centered around a tutor training intervention designed to address a specific problem of practice associated with interactions between tutors and L2 writers within a specific writing center.

### **Mixed Methods**

Action research can be enhanced through a mixed methods research approach. As Ivankova (2015) has noted, "While mixed methods seeks to provide more comprehensive answers to study research questions, action research seeks to provide more comprehensive solutions to practical problems" (p. 53). Besides embracing a shared pragmatic approach to research, mixed methods and action research seek to make use of multiple perspectives and triangulate research findings. Mixed methods research is also a useful for the ways it builds upon the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative research, providing both breadth and depth (Grutsch McKinney, 2016; Ivankova, 2015).

Mixed methods research aligns well with the cyclical nature of action research by allowing for a sequential research design that employs both qualitative exploration and inquiry as well as quantitative with the testing and confirming of data.

Given the sociocultural foundations of this study, a qualitative approach was emphasized within the research design to allow for increased attention to the interactions and experiences of participants. The inclusion of quantitative research enabled the triangulation of data, provided insight into larger patterns and trends, allowed for increased participants and perspectives as encouraged within action research. For these reasons, this study was designed as a convergent parallel mixed methods action research study.

### **Researcher's Subjectivity and Positioning**

The role of the researcher is key with action research. My role as researcher was one informed by almost two decades in writing center work—first as a tutor and then as a writing center administrator. It was also informed by my own academic background in rhetoric and composition, TESOL, and education as well as my previous work teaching writing and ESL courses as a composition instructor. As an action researcher, I functioned as a participant observer, falling somewhere between immersion and participation on the involvement spectrum (Rossman & Rallis, 2017). In my role as associate coordinator of the BYU Writing Center, part of my responsibilities included overseeing tutoring education. This work involved planning and teaching a weekly fifty-minute tutor education class. This role also included mentoring tutors in project-based experiential learning by assisting, guiding, and supporting tutors in the creation of writing resources, research and conference presentations, teaching workshops or training

modules, etc. Along with working with tutors as students, I functioned as their direct supervisor in the Writing Center, which also included assessing individual employee performance. As a researcher in this setting, I taught and facilitated the majority of the training intervention and assessed its effectiveness through data collection, analysis, and reporting.

My position within the research setting benefitted the study because my familiarity with participants and processes likely allowed for a more informed and responsive intervention design. Also, the established rapport I have with tutors may have allowed for more in-depth interview discussions. However, there may also have been limitations associated with this position, including my position of power over the tutors. Despite the rapport I may have developed with participating tutors, I was still both their instructor and supervisor, which may have influenced the responses they provided within data collection. For instance, tutors may not have been as open or truthful about their experiences but may have provided answers they assumed I would find agreeable.

With an awareness of my position in the Writing Center and in relation to the tutors, I took measures to mitigate potential limitations within the research design. For example, to encourage honest survey responses, surveys were anonymous. Also, as part of the tutor training intervention, I did not collect observation or post-observation discussion forms used in the peer observation process, so tutors could have open learning conversations with peers without feeling their work was being assessed by a supervisor or that the instructor was a less-visible, primary audience. While there was no way to eliminate my influence as a researcher functioning from a position of power, my awareness and research design choices reduced the possible impact.



## **Cycles of Research and Innovation**

As part of action research, this research study was also influenced by three previous cycles of action research and tutor training inventions. These IRB-approved cycles not only provided opportunities to better understand the identified problem of practice, but they also allowed for testing research instruments and piloting various aspects of the tutor training intervention. In these ways, these previous cycles informed this study since understanding where we need to go in education depends on our understanding of where we have been. As Hargreaves (2007) noted, “The past should be a motivator, not a museum” (p. 231).

The first research cycle included developing and testing a questionnaire asking about instruction, scaffolding, and motivation as tutoring strategies, which confirmed the problem of practice. This research further revealed the disconnects between tutors’ understanding of tutoring strategies and their use and confidence using those strategies with both L1 and L2 writers. Part of data collection also included asking for ways training might better help tutors understand and use tutoring strategies. These findings led to a more focused, formal fifty-minute tutor training class on instruction, scaffolding, and motivating writers as central tutoring strategies. They also led to thinking about increasing experiential learning as part of tutoring education.

The second cycle of research made use of the same Likert-scale questionnaire to increase the sample size and confirm previous findings. This cycle of research included video-recording, transcribing, coding, and analyzing three writing center tutorials with L2 writers to see how tutors made use of all three tutoring strategies. The data collection and analysis for this second cycle also allowed for application and practice using the coding

scheme developed by Mackiewicz and Thompson (2014; 2015) (Appendix A) that will be discussed later in this chapter. Although analysis of the video-recorded tutorials established that tutors were making use of instruction, scaffolding, and motivation regularly with L2 writers, analyzing data from the questionnaire revealed that scaffolding was the tutoring strategy with the largest gap between tutor understanding and tutor use with L1 and L2 writers. These research findings led to a decision to focus the training intervention and dissertation study on tutors' use of scaffolding with L2 writers. This decision was supported by both my chair, who recommended narrowing my research focus, and the review of literature from both L2 writing instruction and writing center studies that identified participant engagement and scaffolding as key to effective L2 writing center tutorials (Kim, 2015; Parisi & Graziano-King, 2011; Williams, 2004).

The third cycle of research offered another chance to revise and refine the questionnaire (Appendix C) based on peer and faculty feedback and elements from a similar survey designed and used by Lane et al. (2015) that had been used to evaluate the impact of training on teachers' knowledge base and practice. Permission to adapt my existing survey in relation to the Lane et al. (2015) survey was granted on February 2, 2018 (Appendix E). After collecting data from the revised questionnaire, the survey instrument was analyzed for internal reliability using Cronbach's alpha (or coefficient alpha). A score above .70 (on a scale of 0.0–1.0) is an established, acceptable rate of internal reliability. The piloted questionnaire had the overall Cronbach's alpha score of .820, rendering it a reliable instrument. Additionally, I ran other statistical analyses on questionnaire response data, including a cross tabulation and chi-square analysis of three sets of variables: tutor's perceived understanding of scaffolding and their perceived use

of scaffolding with L1 writer and L2 writers. The purpose of analyzing these variables was to determine if responses to the items correlated or whether individual responses were independent of each other. In other words, did tutors' knowledge of scaffolding affect their use of it within L1 or L2 tutorials? Somewhat surprisingly, these items did not correlate in statistically significant ways, indicated by resulting  $p$ -values that were all above the accepted  $p < .05$  standard.

While the lack of statistical significance for these variables may have been due to the small data set used for this third research cycle ( $n = 15$ ), these findings did encourage thinking beyond the assumption that tutors were not using scaffolding because of a lack of understanding or needed knowledge base. This idea was reinforced as I conducted three IRB-approved, semi-structured interviews, and tutors spoke of scaffolding being affected by time and energy resources as well as writer engagement and responsiveness. Their responses indicated that scaffolding within tutorials was a more complex issue than what much of the literature review and previous research cycles suggested.

These interviews also provided valuable insights into tutor training on scaffolding, ultimately leading to revised intervention plans. The tutors explained how iterative, experiential learning had taught them more about scaffolding in their day-to-day work than any class training or formal reading. They saw these latter components as primarily useful for introducing concepts. The tutors each spoke of formal and informal observations and post-observation discussions as being formative in reminding them of what scaffolding looks like as a tutoring strategy and why it is important in structuring learning within tutorials. These activities not only increased their awareness and

understanding of scaffolding, but they also provided time for self-reflection on the tutors' own practices.

One of the strengths of a research design that included both action research and a mixed methods approach was the ability to understand and attempt to address a problem of practice from various vantage points using a cyclical approach of increasing understanding, planning for change, taking action, and assessing outcomes. These three previous research cycles helped narrow my problem of practice to writing tutors' use of and experience with scaffolding when working with L2 writers. These cycles informed my intervention by illuminating the need for more cyclical and experiential tutor education components. These cycles also helped me hone a survey instrument and my interview, observation, coding, and analysis skills. With each cycle, I returned to the literature from writing center studies, TESOL, and education and found additional perspectives to inform this final innovation and research cycle.

### **Innovation**

Given the theoretical frameworks, guiding scholarship, and previous research cycles, it was clear that a tutor training intervention was the innovation most likely to effect change and influence interactions between writing tutors and L2 writers. Specifically, this tutor training intervention was designed to shift tutors' mindsets away from thinking about L2 writers in deficit terms and increase and improve tutors' use of and experience using scaffolding as a tutoring strategy within L2 writing tutorials. As Gutiérrez and Vossoughi (2010) acknowledged, "Engaging university students in Vygotskian approaches to learning [. . .] provides them a tool for challenging deficit views of nondominant students and their communities and for participating in educational

ecologies organized around the very theories they are studying” (p. 105). This tutor education intervention addressed SCT by examining interactions between learners. It connected with ELT by providing training that was more experiential in an environment designed to promote learning. It made use of CoP in addressing shared practices in a shared domain and seeking to facilitate learning and negotiation by brokering between the many disciplines that overlap in writing center work. This final step of moving the innovation and research forward again into action, additional experience, and an intervention was important, for “progress is not in the succession of studies but in the development of new attitudes towards, and new interests in, experience” (Dewey, 1897, para. 39). The intervention included revising three traditional classroom modules and increasing experiential training components to include peer and administrative observations, reflections, and discussions.

### **Classroom Training**

Before becoming a writing tutor, most programs require prospective tutors to complete a one-semester training course or internship (Williams, 2006). Prospective tutors who apply to work at the BYU Writing Center complete a 3-credit internship that introduces interns to writing center pedagogy and practice. Completing this internship and conducting 25 hours of independent tutoring in the Writing Center qualifies an intern to receive Level 1 International Tutor Training Certification through the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA) and makes the intern eligible to continue working and training in the Writing Center as a tutor. Tutors continue their writing and tutoring education after the internship by attending a weekly training class. Attendance at this class provides ongoing tutor education, ensures the program and its tutors remain

academically aligned and informed, and helps tutors complete requirements for two additional levels of CRLA certification. These trainings provide a space for instruction as well as guided practice and discussion. These trainings also help facilitate the work of the writing center as a CoP. Experienced tutors (CRLA Level 3 certification and beyond) are mentored in researching, helping teach trainings, and developing writing and tutoring resources, which extends their learning, reinforces the collaborative nature of writing center work, and allows these experienced tutors to function as mentors and change agents among their peers. While I have overseen and typically taught the weekly training, this visible inclusion of peers as both participants and leaders was important in facilitating change within the Writing Center as an established CoP, encouraging improved practice as a shared goal and not a hierarchical edict.

The training intervention made use of the weekly training class but shifted the focus of three modules or class sessions. The first modified session has typically covered all three tutoring strategies (instruction, motivation, and scaffolding), leaving little room for considering these strategies beyond their definitions and possible use. To shift tutors' attention to scaffolding, I reminded them of instruction and motivation as a review of content from the internship, but the module focused on scaffolding.

When reintroducing the idea of scaffolding within the ZPD and the idea of a more experienced peer assisting a learner, I was purposeful in pointing out that within writing center tutorials, these roles are not fixed but are fluid. We discussed how tutors can be learners and L2 writers can be mentors. Framing scaffolding as multidirectional and power and expertise as dynamic variables was important for moving scaffolding beyond deficit thinking models and hierarchical power structures. I reinforced this concept by

reminding tutors that this multidirectional idea of scaffolding supported two of our writing center's core beliefs (the value of collaboration and the idea that we are all writers and learners). As part of the training, rethinking assumptions about scaffolding in conjunction with learning and power was an important precursor to discussing scaffolding techniques, offering perspective and purpose to inform practice.

The remainder of the training moved scaffolding from a concept and general tutoring strategy to the realm of practice. I provided tutors with a reminder of concrete practices or techniques associated with scaffolding as outlined by the work of Mackiewicz and Thompson (2014; 2015) (see Table 1). However, I adapted the list of techniques to put explanations and terminology into language more familiar and accessible for tutors (see also Appendix A). For example, while Mackiewicz and Thompson (2014; 2015) use the term *pumping*, *soliciting information* was used as a more accessible way to describe the task to tutors, and we discussed questioning as a primary way to solicit information.

Table 1

*Explanation of Scaffolding Techniques*

Scaffolding technique	Explanation of technique
Soliciting information	Tutor encourages problem solving by requesting information (includes asking questions)
Reading aloud	Tutor reads or has writer read aloud portions of the paper or assignment description materials to encourage attention to detail, reflect on revision tool, or draw attention to specific aspects of the assignment
Responding as a reader or listener	Tutor functions as a reader to increase writer's awareness of audience and emphasize potential areas distraction or misdirection for readers. Tutor functions as an active listener, echoing writer's words to clarify information, increase audience awareness, or amplify ideas.
Referring to a previous topic	Tutor reminds writer of a previous concept covered to help writer recall and apply information in a new situation
Limiting or forcing a choice	Tutor offers options, focusing the task for the writer or limiting choices to help guide work
Prompting	Tutor narrows possible answers by providing the writer with a partial response that leaves room for a limited, focused response.
Hinting	Tutor uses context clues to prompt answers or awareness
Demonstrating	Tutor models certain tasks for writers

*Note:* Adapted from *Talk about writing: The tutoring strategies of experienced writing center tutors* by Mackiewicz, J., & Thompson, I. (2015). New York, NY: Routledge. pp. 33-43.

Since previous cycles of research indicated tutors were familiar with the idea of scaffolding from internship readings, but they were unsure of the tasks or practices associated with scaffolding, it was important to provide visible concrete examples of these techniques. Each tutor was given a peer observation form (Appendix B), and I showed videoclips of scaffolding techniques being used in actual tutorials with L2 writers, which had been gathered from a previous cycle of research and for which I had been given IRB approval to use within training. Tutors noted on their observation form



which scaffolding technique was being used in each clip. We then discussed the use and purpose of each technique within the daily practice of tutoring. The final videoclip showed an interaction where both the L2 writer and writing tutor took turns in the roles of learner and more experienced peer, drawing upon each other's knowledge and strengths to increase their collective understanding. We discussed this exchange, including how the use of concrete scaffolding tasks linked theory and practice. Tutors were then informed that the video clip observations functioned as a practice for the two peer observations and post-observation discussions they would be completing as part of training. Additional observation forms were provided to facilitate the observations and post-observation discussions.

The second revised and refocused training established the need to use scaffolding with L2 writers, emphasizing the idea that L2 writers are language learners whose experience with language is contextual, not deficit. To engage tutors, I began the training class by asking tutors to define what "good" writing looks like. I showed a slide with a poem on one side and scientific writing on the other and asked which piece of writing was better or more effective. The tutors quickly noted that the writing was contextual and that effectiveness depended on factors such as the author's purpose, audience, or discipline. I then showed them a slide with a quote in English from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and a quote in Mandarin Chinese from Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*. I again asked which writing was better, and we again discussed context. We discussed how writing is culturally and contextually bound and that there is no single way to write well but many ways to write effectively and that different contexts and cultures call for different rhetorical and linguistic moves. We watched a videoclip from *Writing Across*

*Borders* (Robertson, 2005) where a Japanese student explained how the relationship between the reader and the writer is different in Japan and in the United States. This example further illustrated the contextual nature of language and literacy.

After establishing the idea of multiple and diverse ways to write well and assumptions we bring to writing and language, I introduced the idea that L2 writers are not deficit, but the knowledge, experiences, and expertise they bring to writing consultations is contextual. Rather than simply framing L2 writing as different from L1 writing, it was important to help tutors think of all writing as contextual, challenging existing narratives about L2 writers as distinctly different or other than a monolingual standard or stereotype of L1 writers and writing.

We discussed why thinking of L2 writers in the context of being language learners might be best paired with tutors taking a stance of inquiry and negotiation rather than assumption. I briefly introduced the idea that language learning approaches to writing and American composition approaches to writing are different and require negotiation. Additionally, I showed the lists of sentence-level language concerns for American undergraduate students and California State University L2 writers (as cited in Ferris & Hedgcock, 2013, p. 285), and we discussed how even our own understanding and expertise of English, particularly sentence-level language, was contextual. We discussed what tutoring techniques would be most useful in approaching writing as contextual, including inquiry, negotiation, and scaffolding with writers as individuals with individual purposes, audiences, and expertise. We reviewed the techniques associated with scaffolding as covered in the previous training module. I ended the training by again stressing the need to negotiate and understand the context of the writer's

work and language learning and reminding tutors to complete peer observations and post-observation discussions.

For the third revised training class, tutors were asked to increase their explicit understanding of sentence-level language concepts that L2 writers commonly find challenging. While writing tutors previously received training in grammar and usage, that training focused on the most common undergraduate writing concerns as researched by Connors and Lunsford (1988) and Lunsford and Lunsford (2008). However, writing tutors typically have been familiar with these concerns and shown high levels of proficiency dealing with them since tutors must show proficiency with these concepts as part of the hiring process. As L1 writers, these participating tutors were far less familiar with and proficient at addressing common L2 writing concerns, often relying on an intuitive or innate sense of language to address L2 writers' questions or concerns. However, to assist L2 writers in navigating and negotiating language concerns as part of writing and to be able to engage in scaffolding and instruction on these topics, tutors needed increased training in this area. Drawing upon the work of Lunsford and Lunsford (2008) and Ferris (2006), Table 2 outlines the differences in sentence-level language concerns between general undergraduate student writers and L2 writers.

Table 2

*Comparison of Sentence-level Concerns in U.S. College and L2 Student Populations*

U.S. college students (Lunsford & Lunsford, 2008)	L2 California University students (Ferris, 2006)
1. Wrong word	1. Sentence structure
2. Missing comma after introductory element	2. Word choice
3. Incomplete or missing documentation	3. Verb tense
4. Vague pronoun reference	4. Noun endings (singular/plural)
5. Spelling error, including homonyms	5. Verb form
6. Mechanical error with quotation	6. Punctuation
7. Unnecessary comma	7. Articles/determiners
8. Unnecessary or missing capitalization	8. Word form
9. Missing word	9. Spelling
10. Faulty sentence structure	10. Run-ons
11. Missing comma with non-restrictive element	11. Pronouns
12. Unnecessary shift in verb tense	12. Subject-verb agreement
13. Missing comma in compound sentence	13. Fragments
14. Unnecessary or missing apostrophe	14. Idioms
15. Run-on sentence	15. Informality
16. Comma splice	
17. Lack of pronoun-antecedent agreement	
18. Poorly integrated quotation	
19. Unnecessary or missing hyphen	
20. Sentence fragments	

*Note:* Adapted from *Teaching L2 composition: Purpose, process, and practice* by Ferris, D., & Hedgecock, J. S. (2013). New York, NY: Routledge. p. 285.

For this third training class, I introduced tutors to the differences in sentence-level language knowledge and abilities that commonly differ between L1 and L2 writers. We discussed the difference between implicit and explicit understanding of language, and the need for tutors to increase explicit awareness of sentence-level language to assist, negotiate, and draw upon the strengths and experience of L2 writers in tutoring sessions.

In addition to discussing the differences between implicit and explicit knowledge and the difference between L1 and L2 sentence-level language concerns, we discussed the need to shift from thinking about sentence-level language as proofreading and editing to language learning, noting the false split that sometime occurs between language and writing. Tutors then worked in small groups to identify sentence-level language concerns, name concepts, provide options for working with sentence-level language concepts, and find resources to help them explain concepts. We then went through the concepts as a larger group to reinforce and extend learning about these sentence-level language concepts, model possibilities for scaffolding, and help tutors increase in explicit awareness and reinforce the difficulty of language learning outside an implicit comfort zone of native proficiency.

### **Experiential Training Methods**

While classroom training offered a useful starting point, as the frameworks for this study, the guiding literature, and previous research cycles for this study have suggested, experiential learning was also a vital component within the intervention. Experiential learning, specifically observations and post-session discussions, reflection, and feedback, were used to reinforce and enhance classroom concepts and provided real-time, iterative, and responsive training. This iterative, experiential approach was also important for innovating or affecting change within a writing center as a community of practice. As Wenger et al. (2002) has noted,

[Shared knowledge] is an accumulation of experience—a kind of ‘residue’ of their actions, thinking, and conversations—that remains a dynamic part of their ongoing experience. This type of knowledge is much more a living process than a

static body of information. Communities of practice do not reduce knowledge to an object. They make it an integral part of their activities and interactions, and they serve as a living repository for that knowledge. (p. 9)

Experiential learning not only served as bridge to move learning from classroom ideas into applied learning, but it provided opportunities for a tutor training innovation to effect real and lasting change by highlighting a particular tutoring strategy and increasing the frequency of conversation and reflection surrounding certain related practices and perspectives.

**Peer observations and discussions.** Within the Writing Center, interns are required to observe experienced tutors and discuss tutoring pedagogy and practice with observed tutors, but prior to the intervention, this practice had not been extended to subsequent levels of training and tutor certification. Following the training class modules where observations were modeled using a standardized observation form (Appendix B), tutors were asked to conduct two peer observations and participate in post-observations discussions. This afforded each tutor the opportunity to watch or observe two tutoring sessions and be observed twice. Post-observation discussions offered tutors opportunities to reflect on and discuss tutoring practices, including scaffolding as a central tutoring strategy. Unlike the observation form used by interns, the peer observation form listed the tutoring strategies of instruction, motivation, and scaffolding and techniques related to each of the strategies (Appendix B). The inclusion of specific tutoring strategies on the form was designed to encourage increased awareness, reflection, feedback, and discussion on the use of tutoring strategies, specifically scaffolding.

While peer observations were encouraged, the observation forms and discussions were not included as part of data collection or analysis. While learning can be facilitated, it should not be forced (Wenger, 1998). Given my position of authority over the tutors, requiring tutors to formally submit observation and discussion forms for review would have likely led to less authentic discussions and possibilities for genuine change within the Writing Center. Previous studies on peer observations in writing centers have confirmed that reporting or submitting observation and materials to a supervisor typically shifts the experience from a reflective to an evaluative process (Lawson, 2018; Hall, 2011; Mattison, 2007). While, as a researcher, educator, and supervisor, I would have liked to access and assess peer observations, authentic change was more likely through authentic interactions. Instead, inclusion of this experiential learning element was designed to facilitate four peer interactions that encouraged observation, reflection, feedback, and discussion about scaffolding as a core tutoring concept.

**Administrator observations and discussions.** As a writing center administrator overseeing tutor education and supervision, I have conducted administrative observations and evaluations of all experienced tutors each semester for the past five years. After conducting an observation, I have met with the observed tutor and discussed the observed session and their work in general, including addressing any questions they have related to tutoring. The administrative observations for this training intervention differed from previous observations in several ways. All observed tutorials included tutors working with L2 writers. This allowed for post-observation reflection, feedback, and discussion to address the individual tutor's work with L2 writers as well as any general questions they had about L2 writing tutorials. This individualized approach allowed me to address

questions about working with L2 writers in connection with a specific context, reducing the need to generalize about L2 writers, which has been all too common in writing center training. Observing and discussing tutors' work with L2 writers also provided an opportunity to reinforce key concepts and patterns of thinking introduced in the classroom training, again linking theory to practice.

Along with focusing on observing L2 tutorials, as an observer, I used the same observation form as the tutors used for peer observation and post-observation discussions (Appendix B). This form outlined and emphasized the use of tutoring strategies and techniques, including scaffolding. It also prompted and encouraged discussion about specific tutoring strategies using the following questions: "What tutoring strategies (scaffolding, motivating, instructing) did you consciously make use of and why?" and "What tutoring strategies or tasks did the writer seem most responsive to?" These questions not only invited reflection and discussion on tutoring strategies, but also discussion on how they impacted writers. For this portion of the intervention, these questions helped tutors connect their use of scaffolding to their specific interactions with L2 writers.

Conducting administrative observations and discussions provided another iteration of training on scaffolding and facilitated individual feedback that tutors in previous cycles of this action research study have described as valuable to their learning and development as tutors. These one-on-one conversations also offered opportunities to address obstacles and communicate to tutors that they could expect difficulties when scaffolding, navigating, and negotiating language with writers but that failures and setbacks were to be understood as essential learning tools, that open communication



through failures and setbacks would be vital to the overall success of the innovation and individual tutor learning. Like peer observations, the forms used in the observation and discussion process functioned to facilitate learning, not act as artifacts within the larger research study.

### **Participants and Sampling**

The participants for this study were students at Brigham Young University, a large, private research university in the Western United States. Participants were generally between 18 and 30 years of age. Participating tutors were selected based on their completion of at least one level of tutor certification through the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA). This ensured that the participating tutors had conducted at least 25 hours of tutoring (roughly 50-60 tutorials) and 20 hours of training over the course of a semester or term, establishing a foundational level of tutoring experience and education. Given the demographics of the writing tutors and the institution, the participating tutors were undergraduate students and native-English speakers, though two participating tutors identified as bilingual or multilingual.

The sample size for tutors participating in the study varied among data collection sources. Although, 28 tutors participated in the training intervention, only 19 completed the anonymous pre-intervention survey and 21 completed the anonymous post-intervention surveys. Ten tutors participated in post-intervention audio-recorded consultations with L2 writers. The ten tutor participants involved in audio-recorded sessions were selected based on their status as an experienced tutor (Level 2 or 3 CRLA), if an L2 writer had voluntarily scheduled an appointment to work with the tutor, and if both the participating tutor and writer voluntarily signed consent forms. Five of the ten

tutor participating in these observations also participated in pre- and post-intervention semi-structured interviews.

Purposive, maximum variation sampling was used to identify and request the participation of the five tutors who were interviewed. Two tutors, one male and one female, were selected because of their status as new tutors, having just completed the internship and Level 1 CRLA certification and beginning Level 2 CRLA certification. One tutor was selected for her status as a bilingual tutor with mid-range experience: Level 2 CRLA certification and one year of tutoring. The final two tutors, one male and one female, were selected based on their extensive experience as writing tutors, each with at least two years of tutoring, Level 3 CRLA certification, and 800 or more completed tutoring sessions. This variation in participating tutors provided insights into the effectiveness of the tutor training intervention from multiple perspectives and helped establish commonalities in experience despite the diverse identities, experiences, and practices of the tutors.

L2 writers also served as participants, and sampling and sample size also varied alongside data collection. All participating writers self-identified as an L2 writer when registering to use Writing Center services, indicating that English was not be their native language. Participating L2 writers voluntarily scheduled a 30-minute writing consultation in the Writing Center and had used the Writing Center at least one other time in the last six months, as identified by the Writing Center's database. Ten L2 writers participated in the post-intervention audio-recorded tutorial observations. Nine L2 writers participated in post-intervention focus groups. The first focus group had five participants, and the second focus group had four participants. Focus groups were purposely small to allow for a

higher level of engagement and input from participants. The Writing Center database was used to identify potential focus group participants. Participants consisted of L2 writers who had participated in a post-intervention tutoring session. Potential participants were contacted via email and invited to participate in an anonymous focus group. Participants were compensated \$10 for participating in the focus group to draw a wider range of participants for a sampling that might better represent the larger demographic of L2 writers who use the Writing Center.

### **Data Collection**

The innovation or training intervention was meant to spark change and shift or resolve the problem of practice. The purpose of the data collection process was to investigate the influence of the innovation. The convergent parallel mixed methods action research study used four types of data collection—pre- and post-intervention survey responses from tutors, pre- and post-intervention interviews with tutors, audio-recorded post-intervention observations of L2 tutorials, and post-intervention focus group responses from L2 writers. Collecting more than one form of data was essential to addressing the different research questions guiding this study, and multiple perspectives helped triangulate data and inform ongoing understanding and practice.

### **Pre- and Post-Intervention Questionnaire**

Measuring how individual tutors perceived their understanding and application of scaffolding before and after participating in the training intervention was central to this study, aligning with the second and third research questions (RQ2: How does participating in training on scaffolding influence tutors' knowledge of scaffolding as a tutoring strategy? and RQ3: Following the training intervention, how do tutors compare

their use scaffolding with L1 and L2 writers?). A pre- and post-intervention survey instrument was used to collect this data (Appendix C).

While the two surveys shared 23 questions, the post-intervention survey included an additional three questions asking about participants' experience with the training intervention. The survey relied heavily on Likert-scale and multiple-choice questions to capture tutors' knowledge of, use of, and confidence using tutoring strategies. The questions on tasks related to scaffolding were adapted from Mackiewicz and Thompson's (2014; 2015) work on tutoring strategies. The Likert-scale question design of asking about tutors' knowledge of, use of, and confidence applying tutor strategies was based on a pre- and post-teacher in-service survey designed and used by permission from Lane et al. (2015) (see Appendix E). Three open-ended questions were included to capture qualitative information and provide depth and voice to tutor responses and provide an opportunity for training to be tailored and responsive. For example, portions of the training intervention were emphasized or revised based on how participating tutors answer pre-intervention open-ended survey questions about what sorts of questions they had about scaffolding as a tutoring strategy and what questions they had about working with L2 writers. A responsive approach was useful as part of action research, where the primary aim was to address a problem of practice. A series of three identifying questions (e.g. favorite color, animal, and food) were designed to create a unique identifier for each participant while maintaining participant anonymity. In addition to ensuring anonymity, a unique identifier for each participant also made comparisons of pre-and post-intervention responses possible.

For the pre-intervention questionnaire, tutors as potential participants were contacted via email. Research information, consent material, and a link to the pre-intervention questionnaire was included in the body of the email (Appendix D). The survey questionnaire was designed to take no more than 15 minutes. All questionnaires were completed via Qualtrics to help ensure anonymity and streamline the data collection process. Following the intervention, tutors as potential participants again received an email with research information, consent material, and a link to the post-intervention survey. Gathering data from a larger group of tutors provided an important overview of the impact of the innovation, including larger trends and quantitative data not available through the pre- and post-intervention interviews.

### **Pre- and Post-Intervention Interviews**

The proposed pre- and post-intervention interviews complemented the surveys by providing additional depth and insight into the overall data collected. Potential participants were asked to participate based on their unique perspective and status (new, mid-experienced, bilingual, experienced, male, or female). The diversity of perspective was essential for better understanding the spectrum of the intervention's influence and tutors' experiences, which were unavailable via survey data statistics. For example, as part of the survey, tutor participants were asked to rate their use of scaffolding with L1 and L2 writers, but in an interview setting, participants were asked if their use of scaffolding changed when working L2 writers, how it changed, and why they thought their use of scaffolding differed (Appendix H).

Each interview was semi-structured, allowing for flexibility in responses and conversational direction. However, each interview was designed to take no more than 30

minutes, though some took far less time, based on existing rapport between interviewer and participant and the participant's response length. Pre-intervention interviews took place during the same week as pre-intervention surveys. Post-intervention interviews took place during the same two-week period post-intervention surveys were distributed and collected. The extended timeframe (two weeks instead of one week) for post-intervention data collection was provided to accommodate tutor participant availability during a busier time of their work and school schedule with the aim of retaining a strong response rate. Participating tutors were asked the same 11 questions they responded to as part of the pre-intervention interview process. This allowed for comparison and provided an increased measure of rich description about the intervention's influence on tutors' experience with scaffolding as outlined in the second and third proposed research questions.

### **Audio-Recorded L2 Tutorial Observations**

While the pre- and post-intervention surveys captured data related to tutors' perceptions of knowledge of, use of, and confidence with scaffolding, observations were essential in determining whether tutors were scaffolding with L2 writers and what specific tasks or techniques they were employing. This data collection corresponded to the first research question: How does training influence tutors' actual use of scaffolding within L2 tutorials? Ten audio-recorded tutoring sessions fulfilled the need for observational data. Ten observations were a larger sample than is typically included in writing center research studies, which has often taken more of a case study approach (Kim, 2015; Weigle & Nelson, 2004; Thompson, 2009). However, ten observations offered sufficient data to establish emerging patterns in tutors' use of scaffolding with L2

writers. Additionally, this sample size corresponded to Mackiewicz and Thompson's (2014; 2015) study of interaction in ten L1 writing center tutorials, providing additional opportunities to build upon and make use of existing research in this area.

Of the ten post-intervention audio-recorded tutorial observations, five took place with the tutors who participated in pre- and post-intervention interviews. This purposive sample of diverse tutors again provided a range of practice and experience to consider as part of the intervention impact. The other five tutorials were selected based on existing appointments that L2 writers had voluntarily made as part of their general use of services. No participant was observed twice, so selection of the final five observations was also based on the unique combination of participants and participant consent within a two-week post-intervention period. All potential participants were asked to voluntarily participate in the study just prior to the tutorial (Appendix F).

Audio-recorded tutoring sessions were conducted as regular BYU Writing Center tutorials, typically lasting 30 minutes. Audio-recorded sessions took place in a semi-private writing center tutoring space which was partitioned off from the main tutoring area by a modular wall, but was still visible in the space, helping both control for noise and ensure that writers participated in a typical tutoring location. Collecting and analyzing a corpus of 10 video-recorded L2 writing center tutorials was important in establishing larger trends in tutors' use of scaffolding with L2 writers and increasing the reliability of findings by providing data about actual use of scaffolding to complement tutors and L2 writers' perceptions on writing tutorial interactions.

## Focus Groups

Focus groups with L2 writers about their experiences and interactions with tutors as part of writing tutorials was important as part of better understanding the perceptions of other tutorial participants and the actual use of scaffolding with L2 writers. This additional form of data collection informed and aligned with two central research questions (RQ1: How does training influence tutors' actual use of scaffolding within L2 tutorials? and RQ4: What factors influence tutors' use of scaffolding in tutorials with L2 writers?). It increased the reliability of the study by providing a way to triangulate data collected from tutors. It also addressed one of the limitations of the guiding work of Mackiewicz and Thompson (2014; 2015) by including data from both tutors and writers. Most importantly, it acknowledged the central role of L2 writers in this study and made room for the inclusion of all participants' voices, allowing scholars and practitioners to “learn *from* and not merely *about*” the students we work with (Ladson-Billings, 2014, p. 76). This form of data collection was central to the design of this action research study, underscoring the need to make sure the “intervention benefits the very community for which it was intended” (Gutiérrez, & Vossoughi, 2010, p. 103). This inclusion of stakeholder voices and collaboration in understanding and addressing a specific problem of practice was also central to action research made possible through a mixed methods research design.

A few weeks following the conclusion of the training intervention, those L2 writers who participated in a tutoring session post-intervention were contacted via email and asked to participate in a focus group about their experience using the BYU Writing Center. Those willing to participate were invited to meet for a focus group. Potential



participants were asked to complete consent forms prior to the focus group (Appendix I). Two focus groups took place. Focus groups took no more than 50 minutes and included questions about tutor and L2 writer interactions, specifically aligning with the techniques associated with scaffolding as a tutoring strategy (Appendix J). To encourage focus group participation from L2 writers with diverse experiences and insights, not just outliers with strong viewpoints, participants were compensated \$10 to take part in the focus group.

### **Data Analysis**

Similar to data collection, data analysis is informed by theoretical frameworks and provides a lens through which research is understood. Data analysis is most effective when it corresponds to theoretical perspectives and established research questions (Saldaña, 2016; Ivankova, 2015). While the qualitative and quantitative analysis processes overlapped and informed each other as part of the mixed methods research design, each still maintained a distinct approach.

#### **Qualitative Data Analysis**

Since the aim of the research questions was to measure the influence of a tutoring training intervention on tutors' experience with scaffolding and establish how scaffolding was used within tutoring sessions with L2 writers, the questions and data analysis reflect the guiding constructivist frameworks of SCT, ELT, and CoP. The qualitative data collected as part of the proposed research study included responses from open-ended pre- and post-intervention survey questions, pre- and post-intervention tutor interviews, and L2 writer focus groups. The aims for understanding the data, as outlined in the research questions, included both addressing "participants' realities" and "participant

actions/processes and perceptions found within the data” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 70), which aligns with a process approach to coding data.

Using a process approach, I conducted an initial coding of each dataset, which included an open coding approach with the use of gerunds to focus on the action taking place or being described. Much of the first round of coding was done by hand, but subsequent iterations took place via MAXQDA, allowing for comparisons between audio recordings and transcripts and easier sorting of codes. In subsequent rounds of coding, codes were clustered to identify patterns and themes within the research findings. The findings from each dataset were compared to see what themes persisted past the intervention and which new themes emerged from the innovation or as datasets overlapped and informed each other. In some instances, initial codes or gerunds such as *confirming*, *affirming*, and *verifying* were combined under the larger code and theme of validation. Other iterations of coding led to reorganizing or developing related codes that were more representative of the data. For example, the initial code of *participating* was later separated into *participating*, *valuing participation*, and *valuing the participant*. This iterative process approach to the qualitative components of the study aligned with the purpose of qualitative research in further exploring and describing the phenomena being studied, which in this case was the impact of an action research intervention on tutors and L2 writers’ experience with scaffolding.

For analyzing audio-recorded tutoring observations, *a priori* coding was used. Since the interaction between writing tutors and writers in tutoring sessions was not a new phenomenon, an established coding schema existed. The tutoring techniques that Mackiewicz and Thompson (2014; 2015) outlined as connected to scaffolding also

functioned as codes central to their established coding scheme for analyzing writing tutorials as seen below in Table 3 (see also Appendix A).

Table 3

*Explanation of Scaffolding Techniques*

Scaffolding technique	Explanation of technique
Soliciting information	Tutor encourages problem solving by requesting information (includes asking questions)
Reading aloud	Tutor reads or has writer read aloud portions of the paper or assignment description materials to encourage attention to detail, reflect on revision tool, or draw attention to specific aspects of the assignment
Responding as a reader or listener	Tutor functions as a reader to increase writer's awareness of audience and emphasize potential areas distraction or misdirection for readers. Tutor functions as an active listener, echoing writer's words to clarify information, increase audience awareness, or amplify ideas.
Referring to a previous topic	Tutor reminds writer of a previous concept covered to help writer recall and apply information in a new situation
Limiting or forcing a choice	Tutor offers options, focusing the task for the writer or limiting choices to help guide work
Prompting	Tutor narrows possible answers by providing the writer with a partial response that leaves room for a limited, focused response.
Hinting	Tutor uses context clues to prompt answers or awareness
Demonstrating	Tutor models certain tasks for writers

*Note:* Adapted from *Talk about writing: The tutoring strategies of experienced writing center tutors* by Mackiewicz, J., & Thompson, I. (2015). New York, NY: Routledge. pp. 33-43.

I transcribed the ten post-intervention audio-recorded tutoring observations and uploaded the transcripts and recordings into MAXQDA, qualitative analysis software. Transcriptions were read and coded at least two times each, applying *a priori* coding for analyzing tutors' use of scaffolding. This coding of tutoring techniques used in actual

tutorials were then compared with the themes and findings from the other data collected and analyzed as part of this study.

### **Quantitative Data Analysis**

The quantitative analysis approach also aligned with established theoretical frameworks and research questions by extending understanding of processes and interactions, acknowledging and making use of guiding and established coding schema as part of the context for this study, and identifying the frequency of specific interactions and possible relationships among those interactions and the intervention. Where qualitative analysis provided description and depth, quantitative approaches provided answers about frequency and breath. Accordingly, the qualitative response data was analyzed using both a qualitative process coding approach and through a quantitative lens by tracking the frequency of common responses. Additionally, data from audio-recorded observations was quantified or transformed into numeric data allowing for the application of descriptive and inferential statistical analysis for each of the ten observations.

Although quantifying idiosyncratic observational data rendered the statistical data nongeneralizable and did not allow for the deductive research analysis typical of quantitative analysis, quantifying data did allow for confirmation that scaffolding was taking place. Given the violation of these assumptions underpinning quantitative analysis, data was not used to compare or determine a set standard for scaffolding use within tutoring sessions, as might be done via more traditional or rigorous quantitative analysis. However, quantifying observational data and running frequency measures provided insights into tutors' overall use of scaffolding techniques when working with L2 writers.

Quantitative analysis of the observations and pre- and post-intervention surveys was conducted by importing data into SPSS 25 and conducting descriptive statistical analysis (e.g., measures of central tendency, frequency, and variability). As Ivankova (2015) noted, descriptive statistics are used in mixed methods action research for “the purpose of identifying trends and patterns in the data and uncovering potential relationships among the variables” (p. 220). Inferential statistics were also used to further understand the relationship among variables. For example, bivariate correlation was used to determine if the number of semesters a tutor had worked in the Writing Center influenced their knowledge, use, or scaffolding pre- and post-intervention. Wilcoxon signed-rank analysis was used to see if tutor training increased tutors’ confidence in using scaffolding with both L1 and L2 writers. This analysis was also used to compare pre-and post-intervention data and variables such as knowledge, use, and confidence using scaffolding as well as the number of scaffolding techniques tutors could identify from a list of tutoring tasks provided in both the pre- and post-intervention questionnaire.

It is important to note that Wilcoxon signed-rank was used for this study as the nonparametric alternative to a paired samples t-test. For statistical analysis, parametric testing is typically used when the parameters are known or assumptions can be made about the sample population. However, since this study involved a small sample population with high levels of variance or distribution of variables and employed Likert-scale questions, resulting in ordinal data responses, a nonparametric test was needed. Wilcoxon signed-rank was more acceptable and accurate as a statistical measure for this study since it uses the median as the measure of central tendency, rather than mean.

Comparing median responses safeguarded against outlier responses within such a small and varied sample of participants.

### **Mixed Methods Analysis**

This inclusion of multiple forms of qualitative and quantitative analysis was central to this mixed methods action research study. After conducting qualitative and quantitative data analysis, combined mixed methods data analysis was used to see how each form of data either supported or contradicted the other (Ivankova, 2015). This approach assisted in triangulating data and providing opportunities to understand data in more complex and complete ways. *A priori* coding of observations and L2 writers' focus group responses were used to establish if and to what extent tutors actually used scaffolding as a tutoring strategy with L2 writers. Pre- and post-intervention survey and interview data was analyzed through process coding and statistical analysis to determine if and to what extent training influenced tutors' experience with scaffolding and with L2 writers. Additional insights were available through this convergent mixed methods approach to data analysis. Table 4 provides an overview of data collection and analysis in conjunction with the guiding research questions for this study.

Table 4

*Overview of Data Collection and Analysis Organized by Research Question*

Research question	Data collection	Data analysis
RQ1: How does training influence tutors' actual use of scaffolding within tutorials with L2 writers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post-intervention, audio-recorded tutorial observations</li> <li>• Post-intervention focus groups with L2 writers</li> <li>• Pre- and post-intervention tutor surveys</li> <li>• Pre- and post-intervention tutor interviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process and thematic coding</li> <li>• <i>A priori</i> coding</li> <li>• Descriptive statistics</li> <li>• Triangulation of data</li> </ul>
RQ2: How does participating in training on scaffolding influence tutors' knowledge of scaffolding as a tutoring strategy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre- and post-intervention tutor surveys</li> <li>• Pre- and post-intervention tutor interviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process and thematic coding</li> <li>• <i>A priori</i> coding</li> <li>• Descriptive and inferential statistical analysis</li> <li>• Triangulation of data</li> </ul>
RQ3: Following the training intervention, how do tutors compare their use scaffolding with L1 and L2 writers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre- and post-intervention tutor surveys</li> <li>• Pre- and post-intervention tutor interviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process and thematic coding</li> <li>• Descriptive and inferential statistical analysis</li> <li>• Triangulation of data</li> </ul>
RQ4: What factors influence tutors' use of scaffolding in tutorials with L2 writers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post-intervention, audio-recorded tutorial observations</li> <li>• Post-intervention focus groups with L2 writers</li> <li>• Pre- and post-intervention tutor surveys</li> <li>• Pre- and post-intervention tutor interviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process and thematic coding</li> <li>• Triangulation of data</li> </ul>

**Validity and Trustworthiness**

As with any study, the complexity of the research context affected the validity and trustworthiness of this study. Trustworthiness is typically established using credibility,

transferability, dependability, and confirmability as criteria (Ivankova, 2015, p. 265). The amount, diversity, and type of data collected as part of this study assisted in triangulating data, which improved credibility, dependability, and confirmability. Maintaining clear and detailed descriptions of participants and processes improved transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Including data from L2 writers provided the potential of including instances of negative case analysis (Ivankova, 2015, p. 266) to increased credibility. Confirmability may also have increased through the inclusion of and transparency about my biases as a researcher, and the feedback and guidance from a doctoral committee increased dependability by serving as a form of external audit (Ivankova, 2015). Member checking was also employed to help establish the reliability of the data collected from tutors being interviewed for this study, ensuring that tutor responses and my understanding and analysis of the data were aligned with what each tutor intended to communicate. These combined efforts were designed to increase and maintain trustworthiness.

Establishing the validity of this study was also essential. Since this action research study will include a tutor training intervention, deliberate participant selection was essential to mitigate the influence of maturation and the novelty effect. Maturation as a threat to validity occurs when participants naturally develop physically or psychologically during the research study, impacting data collection and/or analysis (Smith & Glass, 1987). Writing tutors naturally develop in ability, understanding, and confidence as they increase in experience, exposure, and practice. These developments could impact participants over the course of a semester. To mitigate the impact of maturation as a threat to validity, the sample of writing consultants participating in the



study was limited to those who had completed the internship and had at least one semester of experience working in the Writing Center. The validity of the study was also likely to be impacted by the novelty effect, which occurs when participants exhibit higher levels of excitement and increased levels of attention to a variable or research intervention due to the newness of novelty of the variable or intervention and which is not sustained over time (Smith & Glass, 1987). For interns, training on scaffolding and working with L2 writers may be new and novel territory, but only experienced and previously trained tutors participated in the study, diminishing the novelty effect as a threat to validity.

Another potential limitation or threat to validity was the role of the researcher as related to the experimenter effect. The experimenter effect threatens validity when “some experimenters, by virtue of their charm and energy, may motivate their research [participants] to perform particularly well (thus distorting the typical level of the [participant]’s motivation)” (Smith & Glass, 1987, p. 149). Since I work closely with the potential participants of my planned research study, I was particularly careful that my enthusiasm for the research did not influence participants’ responses. Certainly, my role as their supervisor and my commitment to the project was a threat to validity. To decrease this threat to validity, pre- and post-intervention surveys took place anonymously and via Qualtrics. I did not collect peer observation materials as part of the intervention, and I audio recorded tutoring sessions as part of data collection and reviewed the recordings at a later time, making the presence of the researcher as observer unnecessary during the actual tutorials. I also made use of the existing training structures of weekly training classes and regularly scheduled administrative observations to

normalize the training intervention. Making use of existing training structures and removing myself from direct connections with data collection and aspects of the intervention was key to maintaining validity.

The validity of the survey instrument was another area essential to address. Fortunately, the pre- and post-intervention questionnaire had been piloted during previous cycles of this action research study, which increased process validity (Ivankova, 2015). Piloting allowed for feedback from both participants and faculty overseeing the research process, which was an essential step for increasing validity (Fowler, 2009). Additionally, Cronbach's alpha analysis was been applied to previous iterations, helping establish internal validity for the instrument. As part of this research cycle, Cronbach's alpha analysis was again applied to the pre- and post-intervention survey to measure construct and internal validity as a part of increasing the trustworthiness and validity of the overall study.

### **Research Timeline**

Since tutor training occurs on a semester-based timeline, the timeline for the proposed research study also centered around semesters. As seen in Table 5, both the data collection and intervention began September, which was the beginning of the Fall 2018 semester. Data collection concluded in early December just prior to the end of the semester. Data analysis began in December and continued through the following semester. Data analysis was an iterative process that continued through the next semester and into the summer.

Table 5

*Timeline of Research Study*

Timeframe	Action research cycle and dissertation tasks
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct pre-intervention surveys and interviews</li> <li>• Provide tutor training session focused on scaffolding</li> <li>• Provide tutor training session on L2 writing as contextual</li> <li>• Encourage peer observations and post-observation discussions</li> </ul>
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide tutor training on L2 sentence-level language concerns</li> <li>• Peer observations and post-observation discussions</li> <li>• Conduct admin observations and post-observation discussions</li> <li>• Audio record 10 post-intervention tutorial observations</li> </ul>
November– December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post-intervention focus groups with L2 writers</li> <li>• Post-intervention surveys and interviews</li> </ul>
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transcribe qualitative data</li> <li>• Code and run descriptive statistics on observations</li> <li>• Run statistical analysis on surveys</li> </ul>
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Code and analysis of focus group and interview transcripts</li> </ul>
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the majority of data analysis</li> <li>• Draft results (Chapter 4)</li> </ul>
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft discussions (Chapter 5)</li> <li>• Revise and submit initial draft of final two chapters</li> </ul>
April–August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback and revision cycles</li> <li>• Format and submit dissertation</li> </ul>
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defend dissertations</li> </ul>

As data collection and analysis concluded, the writing of the results and discussion of the results followed, also as a cyclical process.

## Chapter 4: Data Results and Analysis

*Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience. (Kolb, 2015, p. 51)*

The research process often serves as both a window and a mirror, both reflecting practice and offering new perspectives. The training intervention central to this study was developed and implemented in order to address a specific problem of practice, namely a need for writing center tutors to move beyond deficit thinking about L2 writers, recognize them as language learners, and scaffolding within tutoring sessions in ways that allowed for more collaborative learning exchanges.

As outlined in Chapter 3, the intervention consisted of three parts: three weekly class training modules, administrative observation and post-observations discussions with individual tutors, and peer observations and post-observation discussions. Each of the 50-minute trainings had a specific focus designed to improve tutors' use of scaffolding with L2 writers. The first training module emphasized scaffolding as a tutoring strategy. The second training module introduced the idea of L2 writing as contextual rather than deficit. The third module provided explicit instruction and practice with L2 sentence-level language concerns. The administrative observations of each tutor were of tutoring sessions with self-identified L2 writers, and post-observation discussions centered on the observed sessions specifically and the tutor's work with L2 writers and use of scaffolding techniques or strategies generally. Finally, tutors were encouraged to conduct at least two peer observations and post-observation discussions, potentially allowing each tutor to participate in four peer observations and reflective discussions, twice as an observer and twice as the tutor being observed. Peer observations were strongly encouraged, but they

were not required. In fact, only 12 of the participants reported that they had conducted all the requested formal peer observations and post-observation discussions, although there may have been informal, partial, or unreported peer observations.

To measure the influence of the innovation, data was collected both before and after the training intervention. As described in Chapter 3 and outlined in Table 6, data was collected from both writing center tutors and L2 writers in an effort to increase understanding of stakeholders' experiences and to improve triangulation of data.

Table 6

*Data Collection Sources*

Data sources	Number of participants ( <i>n</i> =)	Word count of qualitative data
Focus Groups with L2 Writers (2 sessions)	9	15,744
Pre-interviews	5	13,087
Post-interviews	5	11,042
Observations (10 sessions)	20	43,982
Pre-Intervention Surveys*	19	1,978
Post-Intervention Surveys*	21	1,491
Total		87,324

*Note: \*16 paired pre- and post-intervention surveys*

L2 writers participated in post-intervention focus groups and were observed in post-intervention tutorials with writing tutors. In addition to observations, writing tutors participated in pre- and post-intervention survey questionnaires, and select tutors gave pre- and post-intervention interviews. The five selected tutors represented tutors with a range of experience. Trina and Joseph represented new tutors, having transitioned from interns to tutors just prior to the intervention. Daniel and Anna represented experienced

tutors having both worked at least two years in the Writing Center. Sofia represented both tutors with a mid-range of experience as well as multilingual tutors.

Data collected from stakeholders was analyzed using *a priori* coding for techniques related to tutoring strategies, including scaffolding (Mackiewicz & Thompson, 2014; 2015). Data was also analyzed and coded using a thematic approach, which allowed for a more organic approach to generating codes and identifying patterns and themes in the data. Coding was completed iteratively, first by hand and then using qualitative software MAXQDA. Data was also analyzed statistically using SPSS (version 25). To improve the reliability of findings and the validity of the data collection and analysis process, dissertation committee members reviewed and offered feedback throughout the cyclical process.

Methods for data collection and analysis were guided by the four research questions grounding this study:

RQ1: How does training influence tutors' actual use of scaffolding within tutorials with L2 writers?

RQ2: How does participating in training on scaffolding influence tutors' knowledge of scaffolding as a tutoring strategy?

RQ3: Following the training intervention, how do tutors compare their use scaffolding with L1 and L2 writers?

RQ4: What factors influence tutors' use of scaffolding in tutorials with L2 writers?

In this mixed methods study, qualitative and quantitative findings related to the influence of the intervention developed simultaneously and were later compared and

combined to inform and enrich findings. Chapter 4 mirrors this process by first outlining qualitative and quantitative findings before addressing the research questions and summarizing results from a mixed methods approach.

### **Qualitative Results**

The influence of the intervention was most widely seen in the qualitative data in the shifts of participants' narratives and concerns. Most notably the training intervention appeared to increase the participatory nature of tutoring sessions, reframe the tutors' roles to include the role of learner, and possibly shift the ways in which tutors used scaffolding when working with L2 writers. Additionally, qualitative data highlighted mediating factors that influenced the use of scaffolding within tutorials with L2 writers.

#### **Increase in Participatory Nature of Tutoring Sessions**

Although writing tutors were taught in the internship that writing center work involves working with writers and not just writing, the training intervention amplified this message. Throughout the training intervention, tutors learned about the interactive process of scaffolding and the different language and literacy knowledge and skills L2 writers bring with them into tutorials. In post-observation discussions with the researcher and administrator, tutors discussed their actual, observed interactions with L2 writers as well as participatory tutoring techniques associated with scaffolding and working with L2 writers.

**Scaffolding as collaborative work.** A major finding from this study was that post-intervention, tutors shifted thinking about scaffolding as something done *to* L2 writers to something done *with* L2 writers. This shift included moving from thinking about individualizing interactions according to the needs of L2 writers to individualizing

interactions according to what language and literacy knowledge and skills L2 writers bring with them into a tutorial. In her pre-intervention interview, Sofia, an experienced bilingual tutor, described scaffolding as “building a foundation to lead the student to the point that you're trying to get them to.” She explained,

You're at a certain stage and the student's at a different stage, but you keep asking them questions that are just a little bit above their level and then eventually they'll get it and get to where you want them to go.

This approach to scaffolding, centered in tutor expertise with a deficit approach to the writer, was emblematic of the problem of practice. After participating in the training intervention Sofia's description of using scaffolding was less about applying the tutoring strategy to writers and more about engaging and structuring learning with individual learners. In her post-intervention interview, Sofia described using scaffolding when working with an L2 writer:

And, so, with him, I think he wanted to focus on, like, organization and understanding of his piece. And, so, with that one, I used a lot of reader response and a lot of, what is it called, forcing a choice, like limiting options and soliciting information, like asking questions, especially from him. [. . .] I think with him, just being involved and making it that way so that it wasn't just me telling him all the time "OK this is what's wrong with it. Fix it." It was "what do you feel about it? OK. How can we go about fixing it? This is what I got from it when I was reading through. Is that what you wanted to convey?" [. . .] And, so, at the end of the session, he, I felt like he was really happy with his work, and he felt like throughout the session he was like "Oh okay. I understand like, I see where this



problem lies" because we were so involved with it, because of the scaffoldings that we had done.

Sofia's example is illustrative and representative of other tutors' interview responses where tutors described their scaffolding with L2 writers as much more interactive after participating in the training intervention. This shift in thinking and practicing scaffolding and structuring tutoring sessions as participatory was an essential outcome of the innovation.

The post-intervention shift to thinking about tutoring and scaffolding as participatory was also present in pre- and post-intervention open-ended survey responses. In pre-intervention surveys, tutors did not seem as focused on engaging with writers within the scaffolding process. One tutor noted, "I just need refreshing on what scaffolding is and how to apply it. I have forgotten most of what I learned in the internship, but I am sure it would come back to me if we addressed it again." This type of response reflected the idea that tutoring strategies, such as scaffolding, were applied to writers to facilitate learning. Post-intervention survey responses reflected a much more engaged or collaborative approach to tutoring L2 writers with tutor questions such as "How do I successfully help ESL writers without just telling them what to change?" and "How do you help students who are not willing to engage in the discussion?" and tutor realizations such as "I think it would help to work on setting expectations clearly with ESL writers." The shift to viewing and using scaffolding as a collaborative tool for learning may have influenced additional findings and practices, as described below.

**Tutors increasingly valued L2 writers as participants in tutorials.** One such related finding was that post-intervention, tutors increasingly valued L2 writers'

participation in tutoring sessions. While tutors viewed L2 writers as participants prior to the training intervention, the value tutors placed on L2 writer participation appeared to increase after the training intervention. In post-intervention open-ended survey responses, tutors acknowledged the importance of acknowledging and engaging L2 writers within tutorials. Tutors shifted to seeking to better understand L2 writers as participants, asking questions such as “Have ESL students provided feedback that tells which methods have been most effective for them when working with grammar and sentence structure errors?” Not only did this type of thinking reveal a shift in deficit thinking about L2 writers, but it positioned L2 writers more wholly as valued participants in tutorials.

Adding to the findings were data from post-intervention interviews, where tutors’ descriptions of working with L2 writers also demonstrated an increase in how tutors valued the participation of L2 writers. Anna, an experienced writing tutor spoke openly about the need to place a higher value on listening to and responding to L2 writers as co-participants. She described how this approach improved her work with L2 writers.

Speaking of a tutorial with an L2 writer, she explained:

I read a sentence, and I thought I knew what she meant. And I, you know, based on what I thought she was saying, she would make this change. But, I don't know why; I don't remember if we'd like been talking about it in training recently [. . .] Anyway, I decided to instead ask her, "So what did you mean by this?" and she started telling me, and I was like "You know, what I thought, it was totally different." So, I'm really glad I didn't just tell her how to fix it because it turns out, the word she was using was actually perfect for the situation, and what we really needed to change was a preposition or like something really small that effected

the meaning. [. . .] So yeah. I thought that was good, like bringing it back to her, like making sure I'm trying to understand what she's saying and then building off of that.

Rather than diminishing or selectively valuing L2 writers' input as it reinforced the tutor's position, the tutors in this study seemed to increasingly value a wider range of input and participation from L2 writers that informed the work from the writers' perspective, moving learning forward for all participants.

This valuing of L2 writers' participation was also present in the ten post-intervention audio-recorded tutorials. These observed sessions were coded for evidence of L2 writers as active participants—initiating conversation, asking questions, and taking the lead in learning a concept. However, it was not simply that L2 writers participated that was important, but that their participation was valued by the tutors and used to invite collaborative learning or to adjust learning within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The following exchange from an observation between Daniel, an experienced tutor, and L2 writer illustrates engagement, collaboration, and the valuing of L2 writers' participation:

Tutor: Okay, so then *products* would be plural. So, have the apostrophe outside the *s*.

Writer: Okay. That's what I was wondering, I wasn't sure.

Tutor: Yeah, no, thank you for bringing me back to that.

Writer: Then this is wrong, right? "All salesmen are . . ."

Tutor: Oh, yeah, I didn't even catch that, thank you.

Writer: No, yeah, no problem I just saw it, so that's good we're both doing it right?

[shared laughter]

Tutor: Tag teaming it. Okay, any other questions?

Writer: Not for that.

Within the exchange between Daniel and the L2 writer he was working with, the writer participated in guiding the discussion. Daniel clearly expressed his appreciation for the writer's active engagement within the interaction, acknowledging both the writer's competence and ability to inform and guide the collaborative exchange. Echoing this appreciation for L2 writers' as active participants, Trina, a new tutor, also described in a post-intervention interview the benefits of working with L2 writers as co-learners and collaborators:

I think, if I don't explain a concept clearly enough, then when I refer back to it, students, and that's also the beauty of it though, is students will then do it wrong.

Then you're like, "Okay. Now I realize I explained that incorrectly. Let me clarify that."

Rather than have L2 writers simply receive instruction, Trina valued when L2 writers were willing to apply writing and language concepts because when they did so, she was better able to adjust the assistance she was providing, learning for herself what was working or not working within the interactive learning process. In both examples, not only did the tutors demonstrate appreciation for the L2 writers' participation, but they included the writer in a more participatory version of tutoring, working *with* the writer to improve the paper and further learning through scaffolding.

**L2 writers as active participants in scaffolding and learning.** In post-intervention tutorials and focus groups, L2 writers reinforced the understanding of scaffolding as participatory. Though not directly involved with the training intervention central to this study, the view and voices of L2 writers as key stakeholders added value and validity to qualitative data derived from tutor responses and experience.

Tutors' post-intervention thinking of L2 writers as language learners and navigators, not deficit writers, mirrored how L2 writers described themselves. The majority of focus-group participants spoke of language learning or practice—working on listening, pronunciation, phrasing, increasing vocabulary, etc.—as a main purpose for using the Writing Center. They expected tutors to provide structure within the tutorial and information about writing and language concepts, but L2 writers were very vocal in wanting ownership of their work and making final decisions about their writing and language use.

Additionally, L2 writers described themselves as engaged language learners and participants within tutorials, and as previously established, observation data showed L2 writers in this role. Over the ten sessions recorded following the training intervention, the code for L2 writers as active participants occurred 289 times. The following observed exchange illustrates an L2 writer as an active participant in the scaffolding process:

Tutor: This is kind of like way back in the beginning, we've got the  
inserted phrase.

Writer: Sure. Non-extension phrases, right?

Tutor: Yeah, exactly.

The tutor used the scaffolding technique of referring to a previous topic to encourage the L2 writer to recall and apply information provided earlier in the session. The writer recalled and shared the information, reinforcing learning and application. The learner's response provided the tutor with validation that the scaffolding technique used was effective, and the writer then sought validation or confirmation on their choice. The tutor confirmed that the writer was using the information effectively. Both participants were actively involved in the scaffolding process. Just as tutors increasingly valued L2 writers' participation throughout post-intervention data, L2 writers functioning as active participants aligned with how they described themselves within focus groups and with tutors' post-intervention descriptions of L2 writers, not as passive receivers of essay corrections but as active and engaged language learners and writers.

**Participants increasingly saw tutorials as requiring connection and relational work.** Another related outcome to understanding scaffolding as interactive and participatory work was participants' increased understanding of the relational aspects of tutoring sessions. Joseph, a new tutor did not discuss relational work in his pre-intervention interview, but he noted post-intervention that his work with L2 writers had improved because he had "taken more time to get to know them" (L2 writers) rather than just jumping into the work of the session. When asked about a time he effectively used scaffolding with an L2 writer, Joseph described a successful post-intervention tutorial and attributed much of the success to relational work, explaining, "something clicked between us, and we were on the same page."

In the post-intervention interviews, surveys, focus groups, and observed sessions, descriptions and observations of relational work most often included establishing shared

experience, using common language, and making use of validation. Following the training intervention, participants noted the importance of connecting with each other and how that connection was often facilitated by shared understanding or experiences. While few tutors noted the need for connection in their pre-intervention survey and interview responses, throughout the ten post-intervention observations, writing tutors and L2 writers established shared connections over everything from having taken a class from the same professor to praising each other's wedding rings and discussing balancing studies with being newly married. They connected over their academic majors, over personal travel, and procrastination. In the post-intervention interview, Sofia noted how she made use of her experience as a multilingual writer, drawing upon that common experience to help define her role and relationship with L2 writers. This conscious relational work of connecting with an L2 writer was also evident in Sofia's post-intervention observation as she used both her Spanish-language experience and personal experience as a language learner to connect with the L2 writer she was working with. These kinds of shared connections were increasingly evident following the training intervention and seemingly provided or established the common ground participants needed to engage and work together within tutoring sessions.

Common language was another key factor in what participants described post-intervention as relational work. Making use of a shared language was evident in observed sessions where tutors and writers facilitated learning and language interactions by effectively making use of Spanish, French, or Portuguese alongside English. Common language and connection were also discussed in post-intervention interviews. Sofia spoke of working with a Korean student and the frustration of not having English or Spanish to

use with the student, hindering her ability to easily relate to and connect with the writer. While prior to participating in training, Joseph did not mention the role of communication and shared language with L2 writers, following training he spoke of working with a student from Shanghai whose English proficiency was so limited that the lack of common language led to a lack of connection or basic understanding. In describing this interaction, he joined other tutors in expressing an increased understanding of needing to connect with and relate to L2 writers within learning exchanges. In post-intervention focus groups, L2 writers spoke of valuing multilingual writing tutors for their use of language and ability to understand the process of learning and acquiring another language. In a post-intervention survey response, one tutor asked if using a shared language other than English might be useful when working with an L2 writer, which was an idea that had not surfaced prior to the training intervention. Common language as a shared space and point of connection spoke to the relational work that participants saw happening alongside or in conjunction with participatory scaffolding and learning.

Finally, in the post-intervention data, validation surfaced in participant responses and observed tutorials as an important element in the relationship between tutors and L2 writers and their attempts to make use of scaffolding in increasingly participatory ways. While the *a priori* coding of tutoring techniques and strategies used to analyze the data did not include validation, when added to the coding schema, validation emerged as a major theme within the qualitative data and appeared in the data in 220 instances. In post-intervention tutorial observations, writing tutors used validation as a scaffolding and motivating technique to help move the writer through the ZPD, noting when the writer was on the right track or when a revision was successful. Tutors' common utterances of



*yeah, yes, and uh-huh* to writers' inquiries or attempts at revision or application provided confirmation that the writing, language, and learning were headed in the correct direction. This was important for L2 writers who actively sought validation within observed tutorials and described tutor feedback in focus groups as an important precursor to receiving teacher feedback, acknowledging how validation can be formative within a tutorial.

For tutors, part of the relational work of tutoring and scaffolding involved receiving validation from L2 writers. Following the training intervention, tutors described how an L2 writer returning to specifically work with them again provided validation that their tutoring assistance was valuable and was moving the L2 writer's learning forward. In his post-intervention interview, Joseph noted how formative validation could be, especially "when ESL students come back that you've worked with and they trust you. And knowing that you did something right the first time, that the scaffolding worked and like built their confidence in you and you helped them to do well on their assignment or paper." He described this validation as an important part of his experiential learning as a writing tutor. Trina and Sofia reinforced this idea describing similar instances, again indicating a shift in the tutors' thinking from scaffolding and learning as unidirectional to multidirectional within tutorials with L2 writers. Following the training intervention, tutors expressed a desire for validation that the tutoring techniques they were using were successful. While tutors noted that they valued administrator feedback as part of the training intervention, when they spoke of validation, their responses most often included the validation they felt when individual L2 writers returned to work with them.

Validation as important relational work and a participatory learning tool was also described by almost all interviewed tutors when they shared what they felt were post-intervention sessions where they had used scaffolding effectively with L2 writers. If a writing tutor attempted a scaffolding technique, and the L2 writer effectively made use of the scaffolding, the tutor expressed feeling validated in using that technique. Daniel explained that seeing L2 writers make use of the tools or strategies he was providing as a tutor helped him understand the purpose of scaffolding and that it was empowering for both the L2 writer and him in his role as a writing tutor. Post-intervention, validation emerged as important relational work that moved learning forward and reinforced the finding that tutors increasingly understood scaffolding to be participatory, with participants providing markers of validation to assist in structuring learning within tutorials.

### **Tutor Roles Shifted from Expert to Learner**

Just as tutors' understanding of L2 writers' role shifted following the training intervention, findings from the data also show a shift in how tutors viewed their own role and purpose. Most notably, post-intervention, tutors saw themselves less as experts and more as learners or co-learners in their work with L2 writers. Tutors expressed their role as learner in three particular areas, recognition of writing and language as contextual and culturally bound, increased awareness of systems and pressures on L2 writers, and understanding the need for additional explicit sentence-level language instruction in order to scaffold with L2 writers in this area.

### **Tutors increasingly recognized language and writing choices as contextual.**

One of the training intervention modules focused on showing how writing and language

decisions are not simply right or wrong but how they are shaped by context and culture. Post-intervention survey and interview responses demonstrated how this reframing from deficit to difference or contextual thinking about L2 writing choices encouraged tutors to think of themselves as learners. In her post-intervention interview, Anna, an experienced tutor, noted she hadn't been aware of how culture shaped writing choices and would need to be more mindful of context moving forward. In open-ended survey responses, multiple tutors requested more cultural information about approaches to writing and working with writers. Sofia, who had not spoken of contextualized writing and language choices in her pre-intervention interview, spoke post-intervention of writing tutors needing to be more aware of culture and language. She explained,

You have to be sensitive to the needs of the writer. If you're asking questions or you're responding as a very insensitive reader and not taking all, like, the cultural and linguistic aspects into consideration as well, then you're just going to come off offensive or, like, that you don't want to be there, that you don't care about the writing.

As a new tutor, Joseph noted that tutors could only provide options that seem best suited for American academic writing, but it was up to each L2 writer to decide how they wanted to use their writing and language skills. He noted, “they're the ones that make the decision, and even just like phrasing suggestions like that, [ . . . ] ‘this is why I think we should do this, but it is up to you’” marked an important shift in how he understood his role as a writing tutor.

**Tutors seemed more aware of systems and pressures on L2 writers.** As tutors shifted from experts in writing to learners being made aware of contextual and cultural

aspects of writing and language use, tutors expressed new or heightened awareness of and interest in the systems and pressures L2 writers navigate and negotiate. In post-intervention survey responses, tutors expressed a desire to learn more about these issues. Tutors asked questions such as “What are ways that I can better embrace other writing styles?,” “How can I help a Japanese student write in a way that makes sense to them AND in a way that will make sense to their professor?,” and “What is expected of them by their professors, both in English-learning and GE classes?” Thinking through the systems, pressures, and power dynamics L2 writers face, Anna, in her post-intervention interview spoke of how she was rethinking her role: “Since I end up giving students feedback in lots of different contexts, here [in the Writing Center] it's like more of this, like, you know, the kind of expert-outsider type thing.” The reframing of her role as a tutor included both making use of her existing skills and expertise while also being aware of her role as an outsider and learner, seeking to better understand the context L2 writers work within.

**Tutors recognized needing to more explicitly understand sentence-level language.** As part of the training intervention, tutors participated in a 50-minute class session focused on explicitly understanding and addressing L2 writers’ sentence-level language concerns. Tutors’ post-intervention interview and open-ended survey responses highlighted how explicit training in grammar and usage issues added to tutors’ shift towards thinking of themselves as learners. Tutors clearly recognized their inability to provide scaffolding for writing and language concepts they did not fully understand. In their post-intervention interviews, Anna and Joseph both spoke of their struggles to explain sentence-level concepts they hadn’t fully grasped, rendering some of the

information they provided L2 writers “pointless” because they could not provide the reasons for their recommendations. In order to provide instruction and scaffolding as part of helping L2 writers learn and navigate language and writing choices, the tutors recognized the need to assume the role of learner and learn more about the sentence-level concepts briefly covered in the training intervention. Speaking of the training intervention, one tutor wrote as part of a survey response,

I often lack the vocabulary to describe ESL writers' errors in ways that they will understand, so it was helpful to put labels to the errors I see and be able to discuss with groups about how to explain things well.

Another wrote,

I still have a few questions about how to explain certain grammatical ideas (esp. commas) that are intuitive to a native speaker, but not intuitive to an ESL writer. I wonder if we could make a worksheet or something on the rules behind those common errors?

These responses were reflective of other tutor survey and interview responses where tutors expressed appreciation for the training received on sentence-level language as well as the need to learn more in order to find common ground and to assist or scaffold with L2 writers. In this way, tutors saw themselves as learners during and following the training intervention.

**Tutors as learners provided uneven experiences for L2 writers and needed additional training.** Post intervention, tutors showed signs of shifting from deficit thinking to contextual thinking and from thinking of themselves as experts to informed learners. However, not all tutors shifted in the same way, making L2 writers experiences

in the Writing Center uneven and signaling the need for additional learning and improvement among tutors. Post-intervention data revealed that tutors' work with L2 writers and tutors' real or perceived need for additional training varied based on tutors' knowledge and experience.

The data collected from the post-intervention observations clearly indicate that tutors have varying levels of knowledge, particularly when it comes to helping L2 writers navigate and negotiate sentence-level language. In one session, a tutor skillfully explained the connotation vs. the denotation of a word, addressed vague pronoun reference, and used speaking-into-writing strategies to help the writer with phrasing. In another session, a tutor repeatedly referred to prepositions as *articles*, was confused when the writer asked if she needed a conditional verb, and told the writer not to worry too much about grammar when that was what the writer repeatedly requested assistance learning. The varying levels of tutors' knowledge and skill was also captured in focus group responses where L2 writers openly discussed the problems of getting tutors who were "not helpful," "wasted time on purpose," or provided "superficial" assistance. Speaking of receiving help from tutors on sentence-level concerns, one writer explained, "It would be really helpful to just be straightforward and yeah, but just don't be rude and saying like 'because it's wrong.' Just briefly explain that. I feel like it will be better." L2 writers often explained frustration and uneven experiences with tutors as tutors being unwilling to help, but observational data and survey and interview responses indicated a lack of knowledge likely rendered tutors *unable* rather than *unwilling* to help.

This lack of knowledge helped increase tutors' shift from the role of expert to learner or co-learner and resulted in requests for additional training, specifically explicit

sentence-level language training. Post-intervention, tutors described actively trying to apply the information they received in training and returning to the lesson slides to review sentence-level language concepts. They noted that the limited training they received had been helpful and requested additional training and resources to help them acquire the knowledge necessary to effectively assist L2 writers with sentence-level language. Tutors recognized that their lack of understanding rendered them learners and influenced their ability to scaffold with L2 writers.

In addition to tutors' variance of knowledge leading to L2 writers experiencing inconsistency with writing and language assistance, experience also played a major role in how tutors saw themselves as learners and in their ability to scaffold or structure learning with L2 writers. Trina, a new tutor, sheepishly admitted in her pre-intervention interview that she had only ever worked with two L2 writers, and in her post-intervention interview happily reported working with many more over the semester. She suggested that it was not her lack of knowledge but her lack of experience that had influenced her ability to work with L2 writers. She explained,

I think I talked last time about how I struggled with using, like, we talked about scaffolding and using scaffolding with ESL writers. I struggled with that a lot at the beginning of the semester, not that I'm not struggling with it now, but at the beginning, I just felt like I was confusing them more by trying to scaffold with them. I feel like now I've been doing that more, I can use the questions that I use with native speakers with ESL students, but I just have to make sure before, there's a lot more explaining. So, if they have questions about, or if there's something off in a sentence, talking about, "Okay, what is wrong with this

sentence?" Doing more explaining and telling. Then once we've established that, you can still scaffold throughout and refer back to it. Like, "Okay. We've already gone over this. How would you fix it based on this example here?"

As a new tutor, she understood basic writing and language concepts but still needed to learn how to apply the information to structure learning within tutorials. It was experience as experiential learning she reported as helping her better understand scaffolding with L2 writers and improve the assistance she was able to offer.

In contrast, Sofia's extensive experience as a bilingual writer and tutor influenced her scaffolding with L2 writers and her understanding of herself as a learner or co-learner in more complex and nuanced ways. In both her post-intervention observation and interview, Sofia downplayed her need to improve her explicit understanding of L2 sentence-level language concerns and relied heavily on her own experiences navigating systems, language, writing, identity, and power as a bilingual or multilingual writer. In an observed session, Sofia deflected the L2 writer's request for help and recommended the writer address sentence-level concerns later, on her own, by reading the paper aloud and listening for where sentences sounded wrong. Sofia's experience with language, culture, and identity within the university setting and within its systems seemed to lead her to make assumptions about other L2 writers' experiences, including inferences about how writers might best navigate and negotiation language in order to better integrate and assimilate into this particular university setting.

Sofia's bilingual experience also seemed to inhibit her shift to the role of learner and co-learner in helping L2 writers understand and navigate language choices. In her



post-intervention interview, she described how her use of scaffolding with an L2 writer had been problematic. Speaking of the L2 writer, Sofia said,

I feel like for her, um, I think she was going for, like, integrating her voice, but it's really hard at a university like this to integrate your voice as a minority because it might come off as unlearned or like there's a deficit somewhere. And so I, like, I had gone through that, and I felt like that maybe came into the tutorial as well, where I didn't want her to go through that and didn't want her to feel like "OK, my minority voice is not good enough for, like, these grades that I'm getting." And so, I think that also plays a role. Like, what kind of, like, "yes, we're all at a university, but what kind of university is it?"

Rather than work with the L2 writer to develop the understanding and skills needed to make informed language choices, Sofia's personal experience seemed to lead her to guide the writer to what Sofia deemed as safe language choices. Her experience as a bilingual writer who had experienced bias and difficult language and identity encounters seemed to lead her to value protecting, rather than scaffolding with L2 writers. While the data cannot confirm the motivation for Sofia's choices, her experience appears to have influenced her interactions with L2 writers, including her valuing of certain aspects of the training intervention (e.g., valuing navigating systems over explicit grammar instruction to facilitate linguistic choices). Her approach to tutoring L2 writers from a place of wanting to protect likely also contributed to L2 writers' differing experiences with tutors in the Writing Center.

## Changes in Tutors' Use of Scaffolding

Since only one set of observations was collected for this study, there is evidence of tutors' actual use of scaffolding but no available comparison of tutors' use of scaffolding prior to and following the training intervention. However, tutors' post-intervention interview and open-ended survey responses suggest tutors' understanding of scaffolding techniques may have shifted in ways that better aligned with L2 writers' preferences as language learners.

**Tutors' actual use of scaffolding in L2 tutorials.** Analysis of the ten audio-recorded tutoring sessions revealed that tutors frequently used scaffolding as a tutoring strategy when working with L2 writers. Using *a priori* coding established by Mackiewicz and Thompson (2014; 2015), sessions were coded for tasks and techniques associated with three tutoring strategies: instruction, scaffolding, and motivation (see Appendix B). These qualitative data were quantified by counting the frequency of observed strategies. Despite being converted into quantitative data, they are presented alongside qualitative data since they are best understood within the context of the interview and open-ended survey response data.

Of particular importance to this study was the coding of tutors' actual use of scaffolding techniques (see Appendix A). While scaffolding is not inherently unidirectional, and in actual sessions, L2 writers were active participants in the collaborative learning process, as guided by the first research question for this study, only the tutors' use of scaffolding tasks and techniques was coded as part of this part of the data analysis. Within the ten observed sessions, there were 20 participants: ten writing tutors and ten L2 writers. Given the focus on tutors' post-intervention use of scaffolding,

Table 7 outlines only the scaffolding techniques used by tutors in each of the recorded sessions, presenting both the mean and standard deviation for each technique across all ten sessions. To provide context, the use of each technique across all observed sessions is also provided as a percentage of all scaffolding techniques used. For example, tutors modeled or demonstrated an average of 9.3 times within a single session ( $M = 9.3$ ,  $SD = 4.3$ ), and modeling or demonstrating accounted for 10% of all scaffolding techniques used across the ten observed sessions.

Table 7

*Tutors' Use of Scaffolding Techniques in Observed Tutorials with L2 Writers (n = 10)*

	Use per session $M (SD)$	Percent of total scaffolding techniques across all sessions
Reading Aloud	26.2 (12.87)	28%
Reader or Listener Response	23.5 (6.64)	25%
Soliciting Information	19.9 (7.31)	21%
Modeling or Demonstrating	9.3 (4.3)	10%
Referring to a Previous Topic	6.8 (3.71)	7%
Hinting	4.7 (1.49)	5%
Limiting or Forcing a Choice	3.0 (1.63)	3%
Prompting	1.5 (1.18)	2%
Scaffolding Task Total	94.9 (19.73)	--

As shown in Table 7, following the training intervention, tutors made use of scaffolding within sessions with L2 writers in observable ways. The most frequently used scaffolding techniques within the ten observed sessions included reading aloud, responding as a reader or listener, and soliciting information. However, tutors varied in their individual use of scaffolding tasks and techniques. This variation was expected due to variance in personal tutoring styles, participants' rate of speech, use of revision or wait time within a

session, interactions between tutor and L2 writer, writing assignments, or needed areas of assistance. For instance, reading aloud may not have been used when a tutor and writer were working on a resume or slide deck, and a tutor may have chosen to use prompting or hinting when a writer knew how to address a sentence-level concern but needed help identifying where the concern was occurring in the paper.

Table 8 shows how tutors' actual use of scaffolding compared to their use of other tutoring strategies (i.e., instruction and motivation). It is worth noting that all three sets of tutoring strategies are needed within an effective tutorial and strategies are best understood as integrated, rather than individual approaches or strategies in competition with each other.

Table 8

*Tutors' Use of Tutoring Strategies in Observed Tutorials with L2 Writers (n = 10)*

	Use per session <i>M (SD)</i>	Percent of total tutoring techniques across all sessions
Session Length (min)	28.1 (7.59)	--
Scaffolding Tasks	94.9 (19.73)	46.7%
Motivational Tasks	56.8 (16.87)	27.8%
Instructional Tasks	54.9 (24.4)	25.7%
Total Tutoring Task	206.6 (50.57)	100%

Again, variance exists in how individual tutors employed different tutoring strategies, but scaffolding was readily found within each session and accounted for 46.7% ( $M = 94.9$ ) of all tutoring strategies used. Additionally, scaffolding may have been more evident within the observed sessions based on how tutors were trained to conduct a session (e.g., reading aloud as a traditional part of writing center tutoring process) and may have been used

more frequently by tutors, not in an effort to scaffold but as part of their standard tutoring process. While these factors certainly influenced the use and observable presence of scaffolding within the ten tutoring sessions, the high frequency of scaffolding suggests tutors likely were consciously choosing to use scaffolding techniques in these sessions.

**L2 writers' use of and preferences for scaffolding techniques.** In post-intervention focus groups, L2 writers explained how scaffolding techniques—reading aloud, referring to a previous topic, modeling, hinting, prompting, responding and as reader or listener, limiting or forcing choices, and soliciting information—helped them as both writers and language learners. L2 writers explained their shared preference for having the tutor read the paper aloud, noting that this allowed them, as language learners, to listen, notice pronunciation, focus on their writing, and identify places that might be confusing for readers. They spoke of modeling and limiting choices as giving them a sense of what options or possibilities existed with the language. They recognized how referring to a previous topic promoted learning through identifying patterns in the language and how reader response provided the formative feedback they wanted, so they could revise their work before having a teacher or TA respond to their writing. Many L2 writers appreciated tutors' use of hinting or prompting because it encouraged learners to recall and apply what they already knew, helping them learn and providing a sense of ownership. All L2 writers spoke of the importance of questions, not only to help them as writers make connections and clarify ideas, but to help them see where a reader might be confused by the text. They also appreciated tutors asking questions because it allowed the writers to use their expertise and make choices, instead of relying only on the tutor's

ideas. In these ways, L2 writers felt scaffolding assisted their learning about both language and writing.

**Tutors' developed a concrete knowledge of scaffolding techniques and purposes for scaffolding.** Prior to the training intervention, survey and interview data showed that tutors primarily had a theoretical idea of scaffolding. Following the intervention, survey and interview data showed that post-training, tutors were better able to list and discuss concrete techniques associated with scaffolding, including how these techniques facilitated learning for L2 writers. The training intervention module tutors participated in reintroduced the concept of scaffolding that had been introduced in the internship. More importantly, however, the training connected scaffolding as concept to concrete tutoring techniques, provided video examples from real tutoring sessions with L2 writers to illustrate what these techniques looked like in practice, and allowed for reflection and discussion on how these specific techniques encouraged learning. The administrative and peer observations and post-observation discussions reinforced this learning through the use of an observation form that guided tutors to look for tutoring strategies (scaffolding, instruction, and motivation), note techniques associated with each strategy, and discuss scaffolding techniques (see Appendix B).

As a result, in their post-intervention interview and open-ended survey responses, tutors were not only able to name more of the strategies associated with scaffolding, but they spoke of how these techniques improved learning within tutorials with L2 writers. Anna explained how prompting and reader response led to improved clarity and audience awareness, which was much more useful and practical than thinking about writing in terms of correct or incorrect because it gave meaning to and rationale for revisions. Daniel

discussed the role of questioning or soliciting information, noting that questions were only useful when they are timely and intentional:

You can hand them [L2 writers] the hammer, but if they don't know that a hammer is supposed to hit nails, they may as well not have it. And, so, if the questions aren't leading to something or if they aren't building up to a teaching moment or helping them realize something, there's often little point in doing them, and that's something I've tried to phase out in favor of just telling people things.

Sofia, added to the purpose for questioning, explaining how she used questions with L2 writers to better identify what they already knew and where they were within the ZPD. Joseph, noted that when he read aloud with expression or emphasized parts of the text, writers were more able to identify areas that needed additional attention or revision. Trina and Daniel spoke of limiting or forcing choices to help L2 writers identify, recall, narrow, and think through language and writing choices. Daniel also remarked how using an L2 writer's own work as a model could increase the writer's confidence and provide a structure to return to when revising. While results from this study did not track pre- and post-intervention scaffolding between tutors and L2 writers, findings indicate that the training resulted in tutors being more able to identify and articulate the purposes for scaffolding techniques, setting important groundwork for tutors' use of scaffolding with increased awareness and purpose.

**Tutors increasingly recognized the integration of scaffolding, instruction, and motivation.** Following the training intervention, tutors expressed a better understanding of how scaffolding connected to instruction and motivation. Prior to participating in the

training intervention, tutors generally identified scaffolding as one of three main tutoring strategies—instruction, motivation, and scaffolding—and noted that it served a different purpose than the other strategies. They spoke of scaffolding as being used in a complimentary but individual way. However, post-intervention, tutors discussed scaffolding as integrated with other tutoring strategies. They noted how the strategies worked in tandem and built upon or informed each other to encourage learning. They wrote and spoke of instruction informing scaffolding. Daniel explained how instruction provided purpose to writing, language, and learning choices and helped build rapport and establish credibility within a learning exchange. Trina spoke of the need to clearly explain concepts to L2 writers prior to asking them to apply that concept through the use of scaffolding techniques such as hinting, prompting, or referring to a previous topic. Similarly, tutors spoke of how writers applying writing concepts through scaffolding tasks led to tutors being able to provide more specific and genuine praise. Providing a sense of ownership was also amplified when tutors used scaffolding techniques that allowed L2 writers to make use of their own writing or language skills, whether emerging or fully developed.

**Participants use validation for learning and extending tutoring strategies.**

Another finding related to the idea of integrating tutoring strategies was participants' use of validation in conjunction with tutoring strategies, including scaffolding. While the *a priori* coding scheme used did not include validation as a technique related to tutoring strategies, validation appeared repeatedly in the observations as well as interview and focus-group responses. L2 writers often came to the Writing Center seeking validation as an intermediary step prior to turning their written assignment in for grading. Throughout



the observed sessions, L2 writers sought confirmation from tutors that the writing or language use was clear and effective. Tutors validated L2 writer's work with high frequency in ways that bridged, extended, and encouraged scaffolding, instruction, and motivation. In the observed tutorials, tutors offered validation alongside scaffolding techniques such as reader or listener response (i.e., "Yeah. That makes sense."), referring to a previous topic (i.e., "Uh-huh. Just like before."), or soliciting information (i.e., "Yeah. Is there anything you would add?").

Tutors also used validation to acknowledge an L2 writer's emotions before offering a motivation technique such as reinforcing ownership:

Tutor: [reading the paper aloud] "Steven Ellis the Founder keep [slight pause before the word *keep*] the business for more than 20 years without a major reported food safety incident."

Writer: Oh, *kept*.

Tutor: Yeah, I think it should be *kept*. I think you're exactly right.

In this example, the tutor validated the writer's revision and stressed that the idea and work belonged to the writer, empowering the writer and adding to the writer's confidence. In another instance, validation of the writer's feeling preceded the tutor's use of empathy, another motivating technique:

Writer: I don't know. This is really hard.

Tutor: For sure. I feel you.

In this exchange, Sofia, chose to acknowledge the writer's feelings before connecting to her own experience learning American Academic writing forms.

In its most simple form, participants used validation to confirm application or understanding of information in ways that traversed and supported scaffolding, instruction, and motivation within the observed tutorials:

Tutor: I would say like, *verbal communications skills* because you can also have written communication skills, which are like less relevant for face-to-face sales.

Writer: Okay. That's true. More specific right?

Tutor: Yeah.

In this example, the tutor provided instruction in the form of suggestion and explanation, the writer added to the explanation and confirmed their understanding of the tutor's suggestion, the writer sought validation for the explanation provided, and the tutor offered validation that the writer was correct. The writer and tutor used validation to confirm their efforts within the learning exchange were working, whether that be writing and language use or tutoring techniques. This use of validation was not just frequent within observations, but it aligned with what L2 writers and tutors described in post-intervention data—the need for participants to feel like they were on track. When working together, participants wanted to know if scaffolding and their learning exchanges within the ZPD were working and if learning was taking place. Validation offered that insight and connected scaffolding to instruction and motivation in important ways.

### **Mediating Factors Influencing the Use of Scaffolding**

Throughout the qualitative data, tutors and L2 writers made it clear that knowledge was not the only variable determining the use of scaffolding within writing center tutorials. Time, participation, and common ground were also influencing factors.

**Time as a mediating factor.** In both pre- and post-intervention data, participants noted and demonstrated how time limitations impacted the use of scaffolding in tutorials. Participants, both L2 writers and tutors, were very aware of the time constraints and how time influenced learning. In focus groups, L2 writers agreed that “thirty minutes is not enough time” and expressed frustration that personal introductions and reading the paper left little time to “actually work” with the tutor or complete revisions. In pre- and post-intervention surveys and interviews, tutors also noted how time often dictated how they would work with writers. Tutors asked questions such as “What are some ways that I can scaffold when time is very limited?” and “How do you effectively manage your time with ESL writers?”

Supporting this finding was the striking influence of time in all ten observed tutoring sessions. The effect of time was evident as L2 writers asked how much time was left in the session. It was present as tutors began tutorials by pointing out that they would have only 30 minutes to work with the writer and when tutors alerted writers that only 5-10 minutes remained in the tutoring session. Participants were very aware of time within the tutorial and seemed to make decisions about learning interactions and the structuring of learning based on time.

Yet, time constraints were not only shaped by Writing Center policy and session length. In one observed session, the L2 writer could only meet for 15 minutes due to her busy schedule. Another L2 writer explained that her interest in engaging and learning within a tutorial often depended on when the assignment was due. In observed sessions, tutors had their own time constraints, such as class or the end of their work shift. In these

instances, they would often hurry to get through the paper, relying on instruction or motivation and often eliminating scaffolding activities or techniques.

**Participation as a mediating factor.** Participants throughout the study indicated that both the writer and tutor's willingness and ability to actively engage within a tutorial influenced the use of scaffolding techniques and tutoring strategies. In both focus groups, L2 writers commiserated and complained about having to work with tutors who were tired near the end of their shifts or with tutors who were shy and who expected the writer to guide the session. In tutor interviews and surveys, tutors expressed frustration about having to work with writers who "just wanted someone to fix the paper" and who wouldn't engage or weren't proficient enough at English to actively participate in collaborative learning. In survey responses tutors asked questions such as "How do you help students who are not willing to engage in the discussion?" reinforcing the idea that a lack of participation influenced learning strategies and opportunities.

On the other hand, tutors and writers expressed acute awareness of how much participants could accomplish when actively working together within a tutorial. L2 writers spoke of how appreciative they were of tutors who used reader response, targeted questions, and modeling to engage them in learning. Tutors explained how effective scaffolding could be within a session when each participant was involved. Joseph described his experience with an L2 writer who was actively engaged in the session and their collaborative efforts at learning:

We would correct a problem, and then we would go to the next sentence, and just the way that I read the sentence aloud, he was able to make the corrections before I got to the error, and I think that worked really well.

In her post-intervention interview, Sofia summed up the need for participation in learning and structuring learning through scaffolding:

You both have to be really invested in bettering the writing, right? [. . .] And when I had to be hands-on, I was tired. I didn't want to be [engaged], I was sick, right? And, so, I didn't want to be there, but I just realized, like, this is for the betterment of both of us.

This understanding of participant engagement as central to scaffolding and collaborative learning echoes the foundations of tutoring and scaffolding and the idea of making meaning with others and increasing understanding through interaction and participation.

**Common ground as a mediating factor.** As previously mentioned, writers and tutors noted how connections and differences (cultural, rhetorical, linguistic, etc.) impacted communication and learning in tutorials. Within observed sessions, L2 writers and tutors sought to establish common ground. This seemed to facilitate several key components in the tutorials—rapport building, negotiation, and even scaffolding—that are relationally bound. Additionally, in both focus groups, L2 writers mentioned how useful it was to work with a tutor they already knew or with a tutor who shared a common language or experience as a language learner. Tutors also expressed the need to find common ground with writers. In their descriptions of sessions where scaffolding with L2 writers was effective, tutors noted “having a connection from the get go” or how “something clicked” between them and the writer. Joseph specifically spoke of how having common ground between tutor and writer influenced scaffolding:

Scaffolding needs to be adjusted to each student and that some methods are going to work well for some of ESL students. And so for the student that I was able to

talk to, and we just were like on the same page, it was a lot easier to give him more responsibility during the tutorial, but with students like the girl from Shanghai, where we don't understand each other that well, scaffolding, we tone down a bit, and I take on a little bit more responsibility.

While tutors and writers never suggested that the lack of connection or common ground fully prohibited scaffolding, they recognized common ground as a significant influence shaping learning exchanges.

### **Quantitative Results**

Quantitative data offered new findings resulting from the training intervention as well as evidence that reinforced qualitative results. These results include differences between tutors' perceived and demonstrated knowledge of scaffolding, similarities between tutors' reported use of scaffolding with L1 and L2 writers, tutors' decreased confidence using scaffolding with L2 writers, and tutors' reported use of scaffolding being confirmed by the actual scaffolding within observed L2 writing tutorials.

#### **Quantitative Data Collected**

As shown in Table 9, of the 28 tutors invited to participate in the study, 19 completed the pre-intervention questionnaire (68% response rate;  $n = 19$ ), and 21 completed the post-intervention questionnaire (75% response rate;  $n = 21$ ).

Table 9

#### *Quantitative Data Collection Sources*

Qualitative Data Sources	<i>N</i>
Pre-intervention Surveys	19
Post-intervention Surveys	21
Paired Pre- and Post-intervention Surveys	16

Within these participant groups, 16 participants were identified as completing in both the pre- and post-intervention survey questionnaire. Data from the survey questionnaires were analyzed statistically using in SPSS 25.

### **Survey Questionnaire and Sample Validity**

Since the majority of the quantitative data collected for this study stemmed from a pre- and post-intervention survey instrument, it was essential to evaluate the internal reliability of the survey and of the sample population participating in the survey. The main construct of 15 questions related to the tutoring strategies of instruction, motivation, and scaffolding was piloted during previous research cycles to increase validity and reliability in the survey instrument.

Using a Cronbach's alpha reliability test in SPSS 25, the survey data for the main tutoring strategy construct (15 questions) and the central scaffolding subconstruct (5 questions) were evaluated to measure the survey instrument's internal reliability. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2006), Cronbach's alpha scores above .70 indicate an acceptable rate of internal reliability, on a scale of 0.00 to 1.00, where "1.00 is the maximum possible coefficient that can be obtained" (p. 163). When applied to the questionnaire's central construct for this study, the Cronbach's alpha score was 0.796, and the Cronbach's alpha score for the scaffolding central subcontract was 0.797, suggesting internal reliability for the central construct and subconstruct of the survey instrument.

Since all participants were experienced tutors who had completed the Writing Center internship and at least one semester of tutoring within the Writing Center, it was

important to establish that the number of semesters each participant previously worked did not impact the validity of the data. The correlation between the number of semesters tutors worked and their perception of their knowledge of scaffolding ( $r = 0.0245$ ), which indicates an insignificant or very weak relationship between the two variables. Both the survey instrument and the sample population were found to be useful to this study in terms of reliability and validity.

### **Tutors' Perceived and Demonstrated Knowledge of Scaffolding**

The first major finding from the quantitative survey responses revealed that following the intervention tutors did not report an increase in their own explicit knowledge of scaffolding, but they demonstrated increased knowledge by more accurately identifying and listing tasks associated with scaffolding. Given the small sample size of the study and the use of a Likert-scale in data collection, rather than analyze data through a paired-sample t-test that compares mean responses, for increased accuracy, the non-parametric version of that test, a Wilcoxon signed-rank test, was used to compare the median scores from each participant. The effect size measure for a non-parametric test such as the Wilcoxon signed-rank is the probability of superiority for dependent measures ( $PS_{dep}$ ), which was also calculated as part of data analysis. As shown in Table 10, a Wilcoxon signed-rank test indicated that tutors' post-intervention knowledge did not show a statistically significant increase over pre-intervention results ( $z = -1.667, p < .096$ ). Additionally, the effect size ( $PS_{dep} = .31$ ) suggests that when randomly sampled, only 31% of tutors would report a post-intervention increase in their knowledge of scaffolding.



Table 10

*Comparison of Tutors' Pre- and Post-intervention Perceived Knowledge of Scaffolding*

	<i>n</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	Range	<i>p</i> -value	<i>PS<sub>dep</sub></i>
Pre-intervention knowledge of scaffolding	16	4	4	.096	.31
Post-intervention knowledge of scaffolding	16	4	1.0		

However, tutors' perception that they did not experience an increase in their knowledge of scaffolding was at odds with their pre- and post-intervention ability to correctly identify tasks associated with scaffolding as a tutoring strategy. As seen in Table 11, a Wilcoxon signed-rank test revealed that tutors' ability to correctly identify scaffolding tasks post-intervention showed a statistically significant increase over pre-intervention results ( $z = -2.21$  and  $p < .03$ ).

Table 11

*Comparison of Pre- and Post-intervention Tutor Identification of Scaffolding Techniques*

	<i>n</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	Range	<i>p</i> -value	<i>PS<sub>dep</sub></i>
Pre-intervention scaffolding tasks identified	16	5.31	4	.03	.56
Post-intervention scaffolding tasks identified	16	6.31	3		

The effect size (*PS<sub>dep</sub>*) suggests that when randomly sampled, 56% of tutors' post-intervention would be able to correctly identify more scaffolding tasks than they were before receiving a training intervention centered on scaffolding within tutorials. These findings indicate that tutors may not have readily recognized shifts in knowledge about scaffolding, particularly scaffolding as a practice.

**Differences in Confidence Scaffolding with L1 and L2 Writers**

Another important quantitative finding was the difference in tutors' confidence scaffolding with L1 and L2 writers. Prior to the training intervention, there was no statistically significant difference in tutors' reported use of scaffolding with L1 and L2 writers. However, following the intervention, tutors reported being much more confident scaffolding with L1 writers than with L2 writers. Table 12 illustrates the results of two Wilcoxon signed-rank tests comparing tutors' perceived use of scaffolding and confidence using scaffolding with different demographics of writers.

Table 12

*Comparison of Tutors' Post-Intervention Use of and Confidence Using Scaffolding with L1 and L2 Writers*

	<i>n</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	Range	<i>p</i> -value	<i>PS<sub>dep</sub></i>	<i>Z</i>
Post-intervention scaffolding use with L1 writers	16	5	1	.26	.13	-1.13
Post-intervention scaffolding use with L2 writers	16	4.5	1			
Post-intervention confidence using scaffolding with L1 writers	16	5	1	.01	.56	-2.81
Post-intervention confidence using scaffolding with L2 writers	16	4	3			

Although the difference in tutors' reported use of scaffolding with L1 and L2 writers was not statistically significant ( $z = -1.13$ ,  $p = 0.26$ ,  $PS_{dep} = 0.13$ ), tutors reported a statistically-significant difference in their confident using scaffolding with the two demographics of writers ( $z = -2.18$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ,  $PS_{dep} = 0.56$ ). Additionally, the range of tutors' confidence levels working with L2 writers revealed a wider variance (range = 3) than tutors' confidence levels when working with L1 writers (range = 1), indicating a greater dispersion of confidence levels. Ultimately, after participating in the training intervention, tutors did not report a substantial difference in their abilities to scaffolding

with different types of learners, but they did feel less confident scaffolding with L2 writers.

### **Mixed Methods Summary of Results**

Findings from the qualitative and quantitative data provide rich insights about the influence of the innovation on the established problem of practice. However, this mixed methods study is most beneficial when analysis of the data allows for the triangulation of findings and for results to compliment and extend knowledge related to the research. The following summary is a mixed methods overview of results organized by research question.

#### **RQ1: How does training influence tutors' actual use of scaffolding within tutorials with L2 writers?**

Data from observed sessions, focus groups with L2 writers, and pre- and post-intervention survey and interviews with writing tutors suggest that tutors were not only using scaffolding within tutorials with L2 writers, but post-intervention, they seemed to be making use of scaffolding in more purposeful and participatory ways. Frequency data generated from the 10 observed sessions confirmed that on average, tutors' use of scaffolding accounted for 47% of their overall tutoring strategies.

This use of scaffolding may have been informed by tutors' increased awareness of scaffolding techniques and purposes. Data collected pre-intervention demonstrated tutors' lack of practical or concrete knowledge of scaffolding and scaffolding-related tasks or techniques. Post-intervention tutors' survey responses showed a statistically significant increase in their ability to name actual scaffolding techniques. Additionally, a comparison of pre- and post-intervention survey and interview data indicated tutors' understanding of

scaffolding moved from general theory to a practical set of techniques that purposefully provided structure to learning exchanges between participants. In post-intervention interviews, tutors recalled specific scaffolding techniques they used with L2 writers and articulated how those techniques facilitated learning possibilities. This increase in awareness and concrete knowledge of scaffolding techniques likely influenced tutors' actual use of scaffolding.

Tutors' actual use of scaffolding and the participatory and multidirectional scaffolding observed in the audio-recorded tutorial may have been affected by the training. While data was only coded for tutors' use of individual scaffolding techniques, data analysis demonstrated a high level of participation on the part of L2 writers. Post-intervention, tutors' understanding of scaffolding was much more participatory, something done *with* L2 writers, not *to* them within a tutorial. In comparison with pre-intervention data, post-intervention, tutors increasingly valued L2 writers' participation in tutorials and L2 writers' validation that the tutoring, including the use of scaffolding was helpful. While not part of the *a priori* coding scheme, validation emerged from process coding as a form of scaffolding, a kind of marker that both participants used to communicate the effectiveness of the learning interactions and the application of language and writing concepts, reinforcing tutoring as multidirectional and relational.

L2 writers also confirmed tutors actual use of scaffolding throughout post-intervention focus group discussions. L2 writers shared examples of tutors using various scaffolding techniques and spoke to how those approaches encouraged learning. They confirmed the idea of scaffolding as participatory and purposeful work as they discussed the techniques used and the need for both participants to be engaged in the tutorial. While

L2 writers spoke of their experiences within tutorials, they also noted that the actual application of the identified techniques and the participation of tutors varied from session to session, which was also a finding of tutors' actual use of scaffolding within the observed sessions.

**RQ2: How does participating in training on scaffolding influence tutors' knowledge of scaffolding as a tutoring strategy?**

Post-intervention quantitative survey data revealed that after participating in the training intervention, tutors did not report a measurable change in their knowledge of scaffolding. However, additional quantitative and qualitative data findings demonstrate changes in tutors' knowledge of scaffolding. When comparing tutors' pre- and post-intervention survey data and analyzing responses with a Wilcoxon signed-rank test (the nonparametric version of a paired samples t-test) it is clear that tutors did not report a statistically significant change in their knowledge of scaffolding ( $p = .096$ ). While the ceiling effect within the Likert-scale response model may have impacted results (reporting high levels of knowledge on the pre-intervention survey may have left little room to report additional knowledge gains), through a mixed methods lens, tutors' perceived changes in their knowledge of scaffolding does not align with other data demonstrating shifts. Another Wilcoxon signed-rank test on pre- and post-intervention survey data showed there was a statistically significant increase in the number of scaffolding tasks or techniques tutors could identify after participating in the training intervention ( $p = .03$ ), indicating more increase in tutor understanding than what tutors reported. Qualitative data from pre- and post-intervention surveys and interviews, also show how tutors' knowledge of scaffolding changed as they increasingly understood

scaffolding as integrating and extending other tutoring strategies. Tutors reported experiential learning and validation from L2 writers as contributing to their understanding of scaffolding. Tutors demonstrated a shift in their role from expert to learner, noting that they needed additional knowledge in areas such as sentence-level language and cultural and contextual writing and language differences in order to function as a more knowledgeable peer and provide scaffolding or structure learning for L2 writers. Additionally, as discussed in relation to the first research question, throughout the data, tutors showed a shift towards a more participatory, practical, and purposeful understanding of scaffolding.

**RQ3: Following the training intervention, how do tutors compare their use scaffolding with L1 and L2 writers?**

Although, on the post-intervention survey, tutors did not report differences in their understanding or application of scaffolding within tutorials with L1 or L2 writers, they did note a difference in confidence. Triangulated data amplified this finding. Results from a Wilcoxon signed-rank test revealed there was not a statistically significant difference in tutors' reported use of scaffolding with each group of writers ( $p = .26$ ), but there was a statistically significant difference in their reported confidence ( $p < .01$ ). This decreased sense of confidence when working with L2 writers was readily evident in the qualitative data where tutors reported in pre- and post- survey and interview responses that they lacked confidence working with L2 writers. This lack of confidence was linked to various factors prior to the intervention (e.g., wanting to help, not wanting to offend, etc.), but after receiving training, tutors' responses indicated an increased awareness of tutors' need to learn more about writing and language concepts, contexts, and systems

associated with L2 writers—a shift from expert to learner—that influenced their confidence. Post-intervention tutors demonstrated increased understanding of tutoring and scaffolding as relational work and noted that a lack of common ground affected their ability to confidently work with L2 writers. These findings of tutors shifting from the role of expert to that of learner and valuing common ground and connection to build upon seemed to further tutors’ differences in confidence when working with L1 and L2 writers.

**RQ4: What factors influence tutors’ use of scaffolding in tutorials with L2 writers?**

As the findings have suggested, tutors’ knowledge of and confidence using scaffolding are not the only factors that influence their use of scaffolding with L2 writers. Time constraints significantly mitigated the use of scaffolding and were visible throughout the data. Tutors and L2 writers navigated and negotiated time limits within the ten 30-minute observed tutorials. In focus groups and in both pre- and post-intervention surveys and interviews, participants acknowledged how due dates, tutorial length, procrastination, and time worked all impacted their ability to initiate or participate in scaffolding. L2 writers and writing tutors also spoke of participation as being key to scaffolding within a session. Tutors described shifting from scaffolding to instruction as a tutoring strategy when a writer was not engaging in a tutoring session. L2 writers spoke of their appreciation for tutors who were actively interested in working with them on learning language or understanding writing concepts and allowed writers to make use of their own language and literacy skills in a tutorial. Finally, participants noted common ground and connection between participants as influencing the use of scaffolding.

Establishing common ground through shared language and personal or academic experiences was visible throughout the observed sessions and a common finding within

data collected from tutors and L2 writers. Connection often described by participants as cultural, but participants sought to establish connection through individual, personal and academic shared experiences, whether that be familial similarities or shared study habits. Shared language included the use of languages other than English as well as a shared level of proficiency with English that made engagement possible. Shared proficiency with English was not limited to L2 writers' language knowledge or abilities, but it included writing tutors' ability to explicitly understand English grammar and work with writers on sentence-level language. Common ground also included shared understanding of L2 writers and language learners who entered the tutorial with contexts for their choices rather than with deficits in language and literacy. L2 writers spoke of themselves as language learners throughout the focus groups, and post-intervention, tutors increasingly describes themselves more as peer learners and L2 writers as value participants and language learners within tutorials. Despite the training intervention and shifts in thinking about scaffolding and L2 writers, participants' use of scaffolding was also dependent on additional factors such as time, participation and common ground.

The mixed methods results from this study show how the training intervention influenced experience scaffolding with L2 writers and what additional variables may have impacted the use of scaffolding within the sessions observed. While there is still room for additional research, these results have important and wide-ranging implications for the continued work of tutoring L2 writers within writing centers.



## Chapter 5: Discussion

*I am a work in progress; the writing center where I hang my hat is a work in progress; we hope to keep learning more and doing better, and we wish we were faster at that process. (Moroski, 2018)*

In understanding this study, it is important to remember it is an action research study. Beyond addressing a set of research questions or offering a training intervention as a one-time event or fast-acting solution to an established problem of practice, this study was employed as part of an ongoing, long-term effort to address and improve how writing center tutors and L2 writers interact with each other in ways that facilitate learning. In addition to being used to understand the results of a single tutoring training innovation, this study's purpose is to inform future cycles of tutor training. It is meant to contribute to research and data-driven decision making in writing center studies and the related fields of L2 writing and education. It is also meant to inform understanding and practice in relation to a specific site and community of stakeholders—writing tutors, L2 writers, and writing center administrators. As action research, this study reinforces the iterative nature of learning, whether that be writing, acquiring language, training tutors, or larger and local-context writing center research. Consequently, this final chapter of this study provides a summary of results, discussion, conclusions, implications, limitations, and areas for further research.

### **Summary and Discussion of Results**

Writing centers sit at the boundaries of several disciplines—rhetoric and composition, TESOL, and education—which means the work that takes place in these spaces often carries the tension of different philosophies and approaches born out in

practice as writing tutors and L2 writers work together to make meaning and further learning. The history of writing center work, including the rise of deficit thinking about L2 writers, the devaluing or neglect of sentence-level language and literacy, and the problematic use of paradigms and practices uninformed by research and perpetuated in tutor training all stand at odds with the sociocultural roots of the field. These disconnects help establish and explain a significant problem of practice at both a larger and local level, namely ongoing tensions tutors and L2 writers feel when working together in writing center sessions, which are amplified by deficit thinking and the lack of or ineffective use of scaffolding within tutorials.

With this problem of practice in mind, this action-research study sought to provide a tutor training intervention and to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention. The purpose of the training intervention was to improve learning interactions between writing tutors and L2 writers through increased knowledge and use of scaffolding and to assist writing tutors in thinking about L2 writers as language learners with existing language and literacy strengths and skills, rather than as deficit writers. To further this work, four research questions framed this study:

RQ1: How does training influence tutors' actual use of scaffolding within tutorials with L2 writers?

RQ2: How does participating in training on scaffolding influence tutors' knowledge of scaffolding as a tutoring strategy?

RQ3: Following the training intervention, how do tutors compare their use of scaffolding with L1 and L2 writers?

RQ4: What factors influence tutors' use of scaffolding in tutorials with L2 writers?

Both the intent and the effectiveness of this action-research study are grounded in the intervention's influence on a local problem of practice. The discussion of results is informed by the four research questions guiding this study and the ongoing work of improving how writing tutors and L2 writers facilitate learning within writing center tutorials. Major findings from this mixed methods study address these guiding questions and both explain and explore the effectiveness of the training intervention as a response to an ongoing problem of practice.

The first research question sought to evaluate how tutors actually used scaffolding with L2 writers after receiving training on scaffolding and working with L2 writers. Data from the ten observed L2 sessions showed that tutors used scaffolding as a central and frequent tutoring strategy when working with L2 writers. Tutors employed a full range of scaffolding techniques—responding as a reader or listener, soliciting additional information, limiting choices, modeling, hinting, prompting, referring to a previous topic, and validating. The techniques used varied by session, but tutors appeared to use various techniques based on the individual needs of the writer and the context of the tutorial, connecting these tasks to scaffolding as a tailored approach to facilitating learning in a specific context and aligned to a learner's unique Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

In conjunction with the first research question, results of the study also revealed that post-intervention, writing tutors used scaffolding in increasingly purposeful and participatory ways. Tutors showed post-training evidence that they had new understanding of scaffolding as an interactive learning process involving relational work

and the use of collaboration and negotiation. Data revealed that participants desired common ground, sought validation, and valued each other's engagement in tutorials. Evidence of actual scaffolding by tutors and high levels of participation by L2 writers connected to participants' post-intervention descriptions of tutoring writing as an interactive, experiential endeavor. However, findings also pointed to uneven application or use of scaffolding within writing tutorials as noted by participants and observed in actual sessions. Some of the variation in tutors' use of scaffolding appeared linked to experience, whether inexperience or seemingly shared language and literacy learning experiences that led to tutors to act on assumptions about L2 writers' contexts and goals.

In response to the second research question, post-intervention data revealed that although tutors did not report a meaningful or statistically significant increase in their knowledge of scaffolding, they demonstrated and articulated an increase in this area. Following the training intervention, tutors were able to name and link specific scaffolding techniques to learning. This demonstrated an increase in practical knowledge with statistically significant gains in pre- to post-intervention data collected measuring knowledge of scaffolding techniques. Post-intervention, tutors also showed an increase in understanding scaffolding as integrated with instruction and motivation as tutoring strategies, explaining how scaffolding enhanced and was supported by the use of other tutoring strategies.

Results also exposed a clear shift in tutors' thinking of their role as writing experts to that of learners, likely emphasizing the idea that additional knowledge and experience on scaffolding and other training concepts was needed. The training intervention purposefully did not rely heavily on academic readings or lectures but used

those resources to inform more practical training on scaffolding as a practice within tutorials, including viewing and discussing videos of scaffolding in actual L2 tutorials and individualized administrative and peer feedback on tutors' work. Given the more practical and experiential training provided and the absence of traditional classroom techniques—readings, lectures, quizzes—tutors may not have been primed to see a traditionally assessed increase in practical skills and abilities as an increase in knowledge.

This shift in tutors' thinking of themselves as learners connected with the findings related to the third research question which showed a difference in tutors' confidence using scaffolding with L1 and L2 writers. Quantitative data indicated minimal and statistically insignificant differences in tutors' reported knowledge and use of scaffolding with L1 and L2 writers but a striking difference in their confidence using scaffolding with each group. Beyond a straight comparison of this variable between L1 and L2 writers, there was a notable increase in tutors' pre- and post-intervention confidence using scaffolding with L1 and L2 writers. Not seeing measurable change in reported use of scaffolding may have been due to the limited Likert-scale design of the survey questions in this area and the ceiling effect associated with that design. Differences in confidence using scaffolding with different demographics of writers may have been a result of the training intervention increasing tutors' awareness of themselves as learners as post-intervention, tutors expressed the desire to learn more about or better address cultural and contextual writing practices, sentence-level language, and the systems and pressures L2 writers navigate and negotiate. This desire for additional training in these areas may have been connected to tutors' lower levels of confidence when scaffolding with L2 writers. It

may also denote the ways in which the training intervention addressed understanding and practice but not the affective or relational work of tutoring writing.

Finally, findings connected to research question four show that additional factors influenced participants' use of scaffolding. While increased training, understanding, and experience scaffolding may have improved participants use of scaffolding, additional variables—time, participation, and common ground—significantly affected the use of scaffolding within tutorials. Qualitative data collected from pre- and post-intervention surveys and interviews with tutors and from focus groups with L2 writers amplified the ways in which the limits of time, participant engagement, and common ground within tutorials may have mitigated attempts at or opportunities for using scaffolding.

Supporting these findings was evidence from the observed tutorials showing how time restrictions, participation, and common ground either facilitated or frustrated the use of scaffolding. While the intervention was focused on increasing knowledge and practice of scaffolding with L2 writers, other factors may need consideration to better enable tutors and L2 writers to make use of scaffolding as part of writing center tutorials.

### **Conclusions Related to Theoretical Perspectives and Previous Research**

In addition to addressing research questions, the results drawn from this study connect and contribute to a larger interdisciplinary conversation. Though based on the experiences and outcomes of a training intervention at a local level, the results drawn from this research connect to sociocultural perspectives on learning, recommendations for tutor education, and the affective and relational aspects of tutoring writing.

## **Sociocultural Learning**

Findings from this study reinforce the sociocultural nature of tutoring, the idea that learning is relational, and meaning is made in context and collaboration with others. Throughout the collected data, tutors and writers spoke of the role participant engagement played in the learning and tutoring process. A tutor, as an educator, cannot assess or structure active, experiential learning for a writer without the writer taking an active role. Writers as learners cannot move beyond what they already know without the tutor offering input, instruction, and guided application or practice in ways that require individualized attention and investment in the learner and the learning process. Writers learn from tutors, and tutors learn from writers in ways that make meaning and the construction of knowledge possible.

This echoes Vygotskyian views of sociocultural theory (SCT), including scaffolding within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). It positions learning within writing tutorials as an interactive process. In this view, scaffolding is more than a set of steps applied to a learner as receiver. Rather, scaffolding is the individualized ways in which a more experienced learner supports another to incrementally increase knowledge. Scaffolding is only possible as participants seek to learn about and engage with each other as unique individuals (Kolb et al., 2014). Scaffolding is important if, in essence, “The point of tutoring is to individualize instruction” (Thonus, 2014, p. 205). As part of this study, tutors and writers both noted the need for participation that can move beyond the view of the paper or task at hand to understand how their engagement and unique interactions make learning possible.

Findings related to L2 writers and writing tutors as active participants within tutoring and learning sessions echoed previous writing center scholars who have seen how writing tutorials can and should facilitate learning for all participants (Lunsford & Ede, 2011; Nowacek & Hughes, 2015, p. 178). While some previous research has painted tutors as primarily dominant and L2 writers as passive within writing tutorials (Williams & Severino, 2004; Bell & Elledge, 2008; Williams, 2005; Kim, 2015), this study joins others who see learning within L2 tutorials as multidirectional (Lee, 2016; Hajani & Li, 2014) with active participation, including the use of scaffolding, as a sign of learning within a tutorial (Ewert, 2009; Merkel, 2018; Shooshtari & Mir, 2014). Just as guiding theory and previous scholarship have identified scaffolding as central to tutoring, the frequency with which tutors employed scaffolding tasks in the ten observed sessions included in this study confirms the presence of scaffolding as an ongoing strategy and support for learning within writing center tutorials. These sociocultural stances, painting tutors and writers as complex participants whose reasons for and approaches to learning are contextual and purposeful, are evident in this study's qualitative data, derived from tutor and L2 writers' post-intervention reflections and discussions.

### **Tutor Training**

This study also reinforces the idea that for tutors to effectively make use of scaffolding as a tutoring strategy, they need both knowledge and experience. In fact, findings suggest that tutors crave experience and experiential learning. Learning via practice is central to sociocultural theoretical frameworks, particularly experiential learning theory (ELT) and communities of practice (CoP) and to writing center work and tutor education in their individual contexts (Geller et al., 2007; Hall, 2017). Tutors learn



by tutoring and receiving feedback on their tutoring, much like writers learn to write by writing and receiving feedback on their writing. It is therefore no mistake or anomaly that tutors' survey and interview responses showed that tutors value practical and experiential learning. If learning involves individuals and unique contexts and communities, then ongoing education and practice should be tailored to those realities. As Bruffee (1995) explained

any effort to understand and cultivate in ourselves a particular kind of thinking requires us to understand and cultivate the community life that generates and maintains the conversation from which a particular kind of thinking originates. The first steps to learning to think better are to learn to converse better and to learn to create and maintain the sort of social contexts, the sorts of community life, that foster the kinds of conversations we value. (p. 90)

For tutors to develop their use of scaffolding and improve their work with L2 writers, experience, reflection, and critical discussion must be the heart of tutor education.

These training approaches and practices align with the learning modes tutors reported they most valued and desired—initial instruction but more of an emphasis on “a recursive cycle of experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting” (Kolb & Kolb, 2009, p. 297). Qualitative responses from tutors not only connected to the sociocultural educational approach of experiential learning, but responses connected to a CoP approach in tutors' requests for continued discussions and for the need to see how others made use of concepts related to scaffolding and working with L2 writers. As Hall (2017) noted,

What matters is not only the practice itself but the dialogue around it. This is central to a community of practice approach to tutor education. That talk prompts

us not only to explain and to justify tutoring decisions, but also to make them public, open to question, debate, and further revision. (p. 40)

Findings from this study not only reinforce the importance of sociocultural approaches to learning, specifically experiential learning and the learning within a CoP, but they connect with existing studies that call for ongoing tutor education, particularly related to interactions with L2 writers.

While the training intervention associated with this action-research study was evaluated as an event, tutor learning is best understood and practiced as an ongoing process. Since learning is iterative, experiential and CoP-based tutor education should be cyclical and responsive, meaning tutors provide input for where they still need information and support to best do their work. Input from writers as participants in tutorials can inform training decisions and reveal where more attention or emphasis is needed to improve learning exchanges and interactions. Understandably then, data collected in this study included tutors' post-intervention questions and requests for more information or experience with working with scaffolding, L2 writers, and L2 writing. Tutors noted the need to learn more explicitly about sentence-level language to increase confidence and better assist L2 writers, reinforcing previous researchers' recommendations that tutors receive education in this area (Williams, 2002; Moussu, 2013; Eckstein, 2016; Rafoth, 2015). Tutors requested additional training on tutoring strategies and cultural, rhetorical, and linguistic awareness connecting to Rafoth's (2015) call for tutor training based on what "knowledge, information, and skills are needed in order to function in a multilingual context" (p. 37). Tutors expressed a desire for

additional practice tutoring L2 writers and a better understanding of how tutoring fits into the larger picture of learning for students, including classroom connections.

Responses from L2 writers suggested tutors develop increased empathy and awareness of L2 concerns. They advised training on communication and the intersection of direct instruction with scaffolding. One of the key purposes of this study was to inform ongoing training since data-driven decision making that involves the voices of participants themselves is crucial to learning from the stance of sociocultural theory, experiential learning, and CoP (Hall & Hord, 2008; Wenger, et al., 2002; Hall, 2017).

### **Writing Center Work as Affective and Complex**

The results of this study reinforce the idea that writing center work with it interdisciplinarity and roots in sociocultural learning is affective and complex work for both scholars and practitioners. The work of tutors is in borderlands and shifting spaces that exist between disciplines, between faculty and students, between being experts and learners. The work of tutoring involves learning with and learning from others while dealing with the disconnects, discomforts, and confrontations that make learning and transformation possible.

Results from this study emphasize writing center work as relational work. When training tutors to work with writers, it is not enough to learn *about* other perspectives and people; tutors and writing center administrators need to learn *with* and *from* others (Blazer, 2015; Grimm, 2008; Rafoth, 2015; Green, 2015; Wilson, 2012). This study, in both its design and outcomes, recognized the need for increased understanding and learning exchanges between stakeholders. The training intervention was purposefully interdisciplinary, encouraging new perspectives and voices. Post-intervention, as thinking

shifted from deficits to contextual differences in literacy and language, writing tutors continued to have questions about the needs and viewpoints of L2 writers, and L2 writers spoke of wanting to find common ground with tutors and to be understood as language learners.

Both the tutors and writers within this study acknowledged how these exchanges impact participants' feelings of confidence and levels of discomfort. These are not new findings. Anxiety and tension writing tutors and L2 writers feel when working together is well-established (Bromley, Northway, & Shonberg, 2018; Kim, 2015), and boundary spaces are naturally places where confrontation precedes collaboration and transformation (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011a). Acknowledging and working with tension and discomfort that results from differences, real or perceived, and openly addressing issues of language and power within academia, tutors' and writers' roles and responsibilities, and challenges that are inherent is essential to the work of tutoring and of learning (Denny, 2010; Bell & Elledge, 2008; Grimm, 2008; Martinez, 2016; Valentine & Torres, 2011; Blazer, 2015). Discomfort often suggests gaps in understanding, awareness, or practice, making these spaces for continued reflection, discussion, research, and work.

Learning with and from others is, by nature, affective work. The results of this study confirm the ways in which participation, common ground, rapport, negotiation, and individualizing tutoring sessions influence learning. In post-intervention observed tutorials and in data collected from tutors and L2 writers, participants personally connecting within a learning exchange was central to their feeling satisfied or successful within and following tutoring sessions. The data confirmed ways in which tutoring

requires building common ground or finding shared language to move learning forward (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011a) or necessitates establishing enough rapport to make feedback and resulting dialogue possible (Finkelstein, Fishbach, & Tu, 2017). Tutoring is individualized, meaning it is tailored and relational to the participants involved in the tutorial or learning exchange (Thonus, 2014; Hall, 2017). In this study, both tutors and L2 writers spoke of the relational aspects of writing center tutorials, reinforcing the previous scholarship that suggests relational work matters within L2 sessions (Weigle & Nelson, 2004; Thompson et al., 2009; Kim, 2015). The training intervention and data collection process likely primed participants to provide responses about affective work since reflective discussion often facilitated the work of articulating or acknowledging learning and effort taking place around issues of identity, perspective, power, context, language, and writing.

The connections made in border spaces and the work needed to cross and bridge borders is emotional work that is both rewarding and challenging. Brokering and border crossing is ongoing and often uncomfortable since it requires attention to and shifts in identity, perspective, and expertise (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011a; Wenger, 1998). In her post-intervention interview, Anna, a seasoned tutor spoke of her role working with L2 writers as that of *expert outsider*, a term and threshold writing center concept that embodies the work of a tutor (Nowacek & Hughes, 2015). This role was echoed in the data by other tutors who described trying to navigate and balance a sense of expertise and belonging with a lack of expertise and understanding that influenced their work and their confidence. Certainly, rethinking identity and perspectives, negotiating, reflecting, and retooling is not just cognitive work, but it involves emotional labor.

## **Implications for Theory and Practice**

The results of the study indicate that after receiving training, tutors purposefully used scaffolding with L2 writers in tutorials. The training intervention coupled with ongoing tutoring exchanges and experiences resulted in tutors gaining new perspectives, negotiating identity, navigating new ideas about language, valuing L2 writers as learners, and seeking common ground. Tutors expressed feeling less confident scaffolding with L2 writers than L1 writers and noted, along with the L2 writers, that time, participation, and shared connections influenced their use of scaffolding within tutorials. These findings, while seemingly simple, provide increased understanding and important implications for both writing center theory and practice. They reinforce the essential nature of boundaries within learning processes and the sociocultural work at the root of tutoring with scaffolding as a central tutoring strategy. These implications extend to tutoring practices as well as tutor education and the role of writing center administrators in informing and supporting tutoring and learning and affecting change within writing centers as borderlands and collaborative learning spaces.

As this study reinforces, the sociocultural work of tutoring within writing centers as borderlands is not new and is not neutral. Within this study, those participating in writing center tutorials demonstrated and spoke of scaffolding learning, seeking common ground, traversing boundaries, valuing other perspectives, and engaging with others as part of their learning processes. While working with L2 writers has often been set apart as something beyond a typical tutorial, observation, interview, survey, and focus group data from this study indicate that tutoring and scaffolding learning with L2 writers is not new or different work for writing tutors. As noted in Chapter 2, writing center work is the

work of grappling with issues of language, identity, culture, and context, and requires attention to the distribution of power within learning exchanges (Denny, 2010; Greenfield, 2019). Both in this study and in everyday practice, tutors consistently work with writers whose experiences, abilities, expertise differ from their own. In essence, as Akkerman & Bakker (2011a) have suggested, “all learning involves boundaries” (p. 132). This understanding of boundaries as intersections for learning is certainly visible in writing centers where undergraduates may work with graduate writers, art history majors may collaborate with business majors, and where grappling with new genres and citation systems is considered commonplace with learning occurring for both tutors and writers. These scenarios illustrate the daily ways in which tutors work with writers in their varied contexts to communicate, collaborate, and move writing and learning processes forward.

Yet, with L2 writers, all too often borders and disconnects have been aligned with cultural and linguistic identity in ways that have made tutoring L2 writers seem different or distant from common forms of tutoring writing and scaffolding learning. Too often in tutor training and scholarship, including literature reviewed for this study, working with L2 writers has been positioned and addressed as wholly outside the realm of what Grutsch McKinney (2013) described as “the writing center grand narrative” (p. 65). While a single static understanding of what a tutorial should be has been embraced by many writing centers and presented in tutor training materials, this notion is not aligned with writing center theory and practice (Grutsch McKinney, 2013). Sociocultural and experiential learning is contextual and built upon the needs of specific learners within specific contexts. Tutors traverse boundaries in every session with writers’ whose experiences and expertise differ from their own. Working with L2 writers is no different.

Essentially, the border crossing and bridging work in these tutorials is the same; it is the power and identity politics that differ. Deficit rather than contextual framing informs problematic approaches and is what this study in its design, implementation, and discussion of results has sought to move beyond. An important takeaway from the research results is that tutors can use scaffolding as a form of brokering learning for all writers. Just as tutors might ask writers about choices related to using discipline-specific language, forms, and conventions, tutors (L1 and L2) can ask language learners about linguistic and rhetorical choices and audience awareness—offering perspective and options while encouraging autonomy for the writer and ultimately relying on the writer’s developing expertise. This approach reflects a more translingual approach to the work of brokering. Additionally, just as a tutor may have to learn more explicitly about a genre or disciplinary convention to assist a writer from another field of study, findings from this research show that tutors can and should learn more explicitly about sentence-level language, cultural conventions of writing, and issues of power and language to better scaffold with writers with different language experiences and understanding. This dynamic and contextual work of tutoring writers within borderlands and boundary spaces aligns with sociocultural and experiential learning and moves beyond a single static narrative of tutoring. The theoretically informed and aligned work of scaffolding within this study stands as a reminder of the ongoing sociocultural work of tutoring all writers.

However, if writing centers are contact zones where the work of learning is complex and interdisciplinary, and if tutoring is truly the sociocultural act of making meaning and constructing knowledge with others, perhaps the most far-reaching theoretical and practical implication is that of training tutors to be brokers (Wenger,



1998; Akkerman & Bakker, 2011a), boundary crossers (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011a), and expert outsiders (Nowacek & Hughes, 2015). This shift is purposeful for the way it allows for rethinking boundaries and roles within writing center work, reframing tutor training and learning with L2 writers to address both practical and affective aspects of tutoring and tutor education. As this study suggests, if tutors are to help L2 writers navigate and negotiate language and literacy choices then, as Rafoth (2015) claims, tutors must “be prepared well beyond what comes naturally to an earnest, well-read, and verbal native speaker” (p. 137). Tutors must be encouraged and empowered to move beyond the role of tutor as expert and engage with their work and with others from a space of inquiry and learning. Within this study, tutors valued moving from a conceptual to a practical understanding of scaffolding and appreciated and wanted an increased understanding of sentence-level language, cultural contexts for writing, and the systems and power dynamics that L2 writers navigate. Tutors appreciated traditional classroom learning, but they often preferred and placed a higher value on experiential learning, including practice, feedback from L2 writers, reflection, observations, and post-observation discussions. To further the reach and responsiveness of this training, tutor education would certainly involve input from tutors and L2 writers and the disciplines that support these learners. The training would also be both instructional and experiential. These approaches are not only aligned with the roles of expert outsider and broker, but they align with theory, previous research, and the results from this study.

Training tutors to navigate and negotiate boundaries with other learners is essential in that it encourages the needed shift from deficit to contextual thinking, making room for shared learning and increased empowerment of participants. Within this

study, repositioning tutors as learners influenced the ways tutors increasingly valued L2 writers' perspective and participation, it allowed scaffolding and learning to become multidirectional and collaborative, and reinforced L2 writers as the owners of their work. Understandably, within their work with L2 writers as language learners, tutors should be encouraged to embody both roles and move between them as needed, adapting to the needs and goals of the writer and the writing. This dual role of expert and learner, of border crosser, would also reinforce the idea that tutoring functions in a formative space—"talking in the middle" as Harris (1995) calls it—allowing learning structures and supports, including scaffolding, to be multidimensional and multidirectional.

In addition to ongoing training, including explicit language instruction and opportunities for practice, reflection, feedback, and discussion, tutors need affective support in their work. The emotional work of tutoring was not addressed in this study, but results indicate the need for responsiveness and assistance for tutors in this area. The work of traversing boundaries and grappling with issues of identity, perspective, and power are part of learning and transformation. Tutoring as brokering and functioning as both an expert and learner requires navigating issues of belonging, conflict, and confidence. As Akkerman and Bakker (2011a) note, the work of brokering "generally calls for 'personal fortitude' (Landa, 2008, p. 195). More specifically it requires people to have dialogues with the actors of different practices, but also to have inner dialogues between the different perspectives they are able to take on (Akkerman, Admiraal, Simons, & Niessen, 2006)" (p. 140). Additionally, since boundary work and tutoring require collaborating and facilitating learning in unfamiliar territory, "it is essentially a creative endeavor which requires new conceptual resources" (Engeström et al., 1995, p.

333). If confrontation is a defining feature of border work and navigating systems and if emotional labor is expected from tutors to produce the negotiation, collaboration, and transformation writing centers and learners seek, then writing centers, as CoP, need a way to address this work. The grand narrative of a formulaic or standard writing center tutorial (Grutsch McKinney, 2013) needs to be replaced with the idea of tutoring as an art (Sherwood, 2011) with space for creativity, failure, confrontation, reflection, validation, and tutors' ongoing cognitive and affective development. Accordingly, tutor education would need to be responsive to the development of the tutors and community of learners rather than focused on replicating a single type of tutorial.

Educating and empowering tutors to facilitate learning with L2 writers on issues of language and literacy requires writing center administrators to also move beyond the familiar and engage in interdisciplinary inquiry and innovation. Within writing centers, administrators, scholars, and professional practitioners need to practice and model the brokering and horizontal expertise expected of tutors. The work of border crossing and bridging is not new territory in writing center work, but it is not always explicitly acknowledged and addressed by writing center professionals. Although vertical expertise is often most valued within traditional academic systems (Engeström et al., 1995), writing center work largely relies on horizontal expertise.

Horizontal expertise allows writing center work to traverse boundaries and draw upon a wide range of resources to find solutions to the contextualized challenges of writing and learning. Certainly, the disciplinary, vertical expertise writing center administrators bring with them to their work is needed. However, limiting ways in which we traverse borders limits new learning and the new development of core practices

(Grimm, 2008; Akkerman & Bakker, 2011a). Along with tutors, writing center professionals must continually question their own assumptions and expertise in ways that encourage informed reflection and thinking about identity, power, learning, and literacy. They must be willing to cross boundaries and be active, interdisciplinary participants in ongoing the conversations, research, and “participative connection” (Wenger, 1998, p. 109) that includes other stakeholders and voices in the processes of constructing knowledge and refining writing center practice. As Anagnostopoulos, Smith, and Basmadjian (2007) explain,

Achieving common goals requires professionals to cross organizational boundaries and combine the resources, norms, and values from their respective settings into new, hybrid solutions. Horizontal expertise emerges from these boundary crossings as professionals from different domains enrich and expand their practices through working together to reorganize relations and coordinate their work. (p. 139)

While it may not be valued within many vertically aligned academic systems, as professional educators within border spaces, writing center administrators must join tutors in embracing multiple identities and roles, functioning at times as “head learner” (Hord & Sommers, 2008, p. 46) rather than an expert of a set and static domain. This includes administrators articulating their own struggles traversing borders and showing personal fortitude in order to model change within a writing center as a learning space and CoP. This implication is not without founding. Key to the intervention and research design of this study was its interdisciplinary structure and inclusion of perspectives from various disciplines and positions within academia and writing center work. This approach

likely led to findings not available via a siloed or vertical research approach. This study modeled the sociocultural approach to writing center work and the horizontal expertise tutors are asked to develop in everyday writing center practice.

Certainly, tutor training, affective support for those traversing boundaries, and writing center professionals leading the way by modeling and valuing horizontal expertise and interdisciplinary communication and collaboration plays a sizable role in improving the learning interactions and scaffolding taking place between tutors and L2 writers. However, if learning is the desired outcome of scaffolding within L2 sessions, research results related to the influence of time, participation, and common ground cannot be ignored.

No matter how effective tutors are in scaffolding and brokering with writers, writing centers must also consider the practical needs of learners. There must be sufficient time for participants to make use of scaffolding techniques, to consider other perspectives, and to find common ground. For my program, this has meant allowing and encouraging tutors to work with L2 writers up to fifteen minutes beyond the typical 30-minute session length, so scaffolding can occur and common ground can be established. Additionally, tutors' work shifts may need to be shortened, so tutors have the energy needed to actively engage with all the writers they work with during scheduled hours. Our center now limits tutoring shifts to 2-3 hours. Workloads may also need to be adjusted, so tutors have time to reflect on and discuss new concepts or facets of relational work and brokering as part of their own learning. For our program, this has meant moving peer observations and post-observation discussions forward as an ongoing part of our program. It has also meant including focus groups of different demographics of

writers in our ongoing assessment cycles, so we can better understand how our work influences their experiences and learning within the Writing Center. While these aspects of writing center work may appear seemingly insignificant, they play a vital role in effecting long-term change.

Innovation, like writing and learning, is an ongoing process. The work of negotiating and navigating borders and issues of language, learning, and power must be cyclical for new theories and practices to emerge and take hold within writing center work (Engeström et al., 1995; Akkerman & Bakker, 2011a; Akkerman & Bakker, 2011b). This action research study, rooted in a specific writing center community, mirrors important work being done within larger contexts. Current conversations about these core issues often result in cross-disciplinary exchanges at borders as colleagues from various fields engage in confrontation, coordination, and increased communication in an attempt to incite change. Rather than shy away from difficult work at the intersection of borders and systems, individual writing centers and larger related fields within academia should recognize this ongoing work within borderlands as challenging and dynamic but essential to learning and to purposeful innovation and ongoing learning and transformation.

### **Limitations**

As with any research, this study was bound by several limitations. In the case of this study, sample size, emphasizing the tutor experience, failure to recognize and respond to the affective aspects of tutoring, and methods of data collection and analysis impacted the type of results and insights available.

While action research is typically not intended to be generalizable, the scale of this study—a single writing center at a specific institution—was particularly limited. The sample size was not only limited in size, but in scope. Only undergraduate peer tutors and international student L2 writers were included, narrowing and framing knowledge resulting from the study. With only about 20 writing tutors and 20 L2 writers participating, this study did not represent a full range of experience or include the number of participants needed to reveal additional patterns and perspectives.

In addition to working with a limited sample population, this research amplified the experience of tutors who participated in the training intervention, limiting what could have been learned from L2 participants. Since the focus of this action research was a tutor training intervention, the data collection and analysis process favored tutor voices. This privileging of the tutors' experience can be seen in the amount of data collected from tutors and the coding of tutoring strategies and tasks to facilitate learning. Rather than recognizing how writers contribute within learning exchanges, L2 writers were only coded as active participants throughout the data. Certainly, there is room for more data and emphasis on the insights L2 writers since L2 voices in this study were limited to participation in observed sessions or small focus groups.

The affective nature of tutoring was an important finding within this study and not something addressed in the design of the intervention. This affective variable was evident in participants' desire to establish connections or common ground and the intervention's impact on tutors' confidence working with L2 writers. Moving forward with both tutor training and research, more attention needs to be paid to the emotional and relational work that occurs as tutorial participants interact.

There were also limitations set in place by the methods chosen for this research. The five-point Likert-scale design of the survey questionnaire narrowed the range of answers given by tutors and the ability to track smaller shifts in experience among the tutors. Similarly, questions about training asked whether tutors valued the training they received but did not attempt to measure to what extent they valued these learning opportunities, rendering the data unhelpful in determining the effectiveness of different activities within the training intervention. Finally, while action research is cyclical and efforts to improve tutors' use of scaffolding with L2 writers and shift tutors' mindsets away from deficit thinking will continue, the scope of this study was a single training intervention over a six-week period, and data was collected shortly after the intervention concluded. This condensed timeframe reduced opportunities to reinforce learning within the writing center and did not allow for or encourage long-term reflection on the learning that took place or delayed effects of the intervention.

### **Recommendations for Research**

Sitting at the intersection of various disciplines, this study offers implications for future research in numerous areas within the fields of writing center studies, education, linguistics, and rhetoric and composition. Clearly, more research needs to be done into the affective dynamics between tutorial participants, including the ways in which establishing common ground facilitates learning interactions, how power dynamics and participant roles influence scaffolding, and how scaffolding affects self-efficacy and session satisfaction for participants. As a specific extension of this study, it would be useful to research how increasing tutors' awareness about cultural differences in learning, language, and literacy, mediates tutors' confidence and self-efficacy.



Extended research might also include examining tutors' roles in different ways. This might include measuring how and what writing tutors learn from L2 writers and within L2 tutorials—about writing, language, tutoring, negotiation, etc.—and how that learning impacts the tutoring strategies tutors use co-learning and collaborating with L2 writers. A natural extension of this research may also be how increasing explicit language instruction further empowers both L2 writers and writing tutors within tutorials.

Further research with different types of writing tutors would also be useful. Studies might include conducting a similar training intervention with professional tutors or L2 or translingual writing tutors. Changing the participants included in the research would allow for exploring different tutoring dynamics and participant relationships and how those impact learning structures and tutoring strategies.

Though beyond the scope of this particular study, increasing data collection or length of study may extend learning in this area. Gathering more input from L2 writers via surveys or one-on-one interviews would allow for further triangulation of data from participants. Lengthening the study to follow tutors and L2 writers across several semesters could provide insight into whether or not frequent writing center use or tutoring practice improved interactions between tutorial participants. Lengthening the study might also allow for data to be collected on longer-term effects of the training intervention.

Overall, this study adds to an ongoing call for research. It contributes to the call for continued research within writing center work generally (Babcock & Thonus, 2018; Lerner 2014; Kjesrud, 2015). Specifically, it joins others in the call for additional research into tutoring strategies and practices used in L2 tutorials (Bell & Elledge, 2008;

Thompson, 2009; Grimm, 2008; Mackiewicz & Thompson, 2014; Kim & Cho, 2017; Kim, 2015).

### **Conclusion**

As findings from this action-research study acknowledge, there are always factors that impede learning—time, participation, common ground. Learning cannot be forced, but it can be facilitated through practices such as scaffolding and shifts in the way learners interact and understand each other. Writing centers as large and local communities of practice can examine and rethink domains of knowledge and what practices and conversations scholars and practitioners engage in to make learning more possible. They can examine whose voices and needs are attended to or amplified and what work is claimed to be beyond the scope of the field. Encouraging continuous learning through ongoing tutor education matters if writing centers want to be seen and understood as learning spaces. Just as writing center scholars and practitioners call for tutors to embrace diversity and places of discomfort with renewed energies and emphases on learning within borderlands, writing center administrators and practitioners need to be engaged in this learning as well.

Ultimately, this study contributes to a larger interdisciplinary conversation on tutoring and negotiating language and writing with learners, but more work is needed within and across multiple disciplines. Given that writing and learning are recursive sociocultural acts, it is no wonder that the work of researching writing centers is ongoing in both the larger field and in local contexts. Theory informs practice, and close examinations of practice informs theory. Understandably, this action research study does not mark a closed domain of knowledge but provides new directions and useful questions

as scholars and practitioners continue engaging with each other and the intersections of writing, language, and literacy.

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## APPENDIX A

### EXPLANATION OF SCAFFOLDING TECHNIQUES AND CODING SCHEME



### *Explanation of Scaffolding Techniques*

Scaffolding technique	Explanation of technique
Soliciting information	Tutor encourages problem solving by requesting information (includes asking questions)
Reading aloud	Tutor reads or has writer read aloud portions of the paper or assignment description materials to encourage attention to detail, reflect on revision tool, or draw attention to specific aspects of the assignment
Responding as a reader or listener	Tutor functions as a reader to increase writer's awareness of audience and emphasize potential areas distraction or misdirection for readers. Tutor functions as an active listener, echoing writer's words to clarify information, increase audience awareness, or amplify ideas.
Referring to a previous topic	Tutor reminds writer of a previous concept covered to help writer recall and apply information in a new situation
Limiting or forcing a choice	Tutor offers options, focusing the task for the writer or limiting choices to help guide work
Prompting	Tutor narrows possible answers by providing the writer with a partial response that leaves room for a limited, focused response.
Hinting	Tutor uses context clues to prompt answers or awareness
Demonstrating	Tutor models certain tasks for writers

*Note:* Adapted from *Talk about writing: The tutoring strategies of experienced writing center tutors* by Mackiewicz, J., & Thompson, I. (2015). New York, NY: Routledge. pp. 33-43.

APPENDIX B

OBSERVATION AND DISCUSSION FORM

## Peer and Admin Observation Form

Consultants can learn a lot about their work by observing and reflecting on the work of colleagues. Formative feedback and discussions are also instrumental in the peer learning process. This document is a tool to inform and enhance your observation, reflection, and discussion processes. It is not a form you will submit or retain for administrative purposes. Use it as you see fit, and as with any observations, check with the writer and consultant before observing.

**Note:** Consultants should tailor session to best assist the writer. As they do so, the process may not be linear and not all consulting practices will be used. These lists serve only as possibilities.

Consultation Process	Notes	
<p>Welcome the writer/build rapport</p> <p>Gather context to tailor the session and negotiate the process (stage of writing, deadline, session length, roles, expectations/understanding)</p> <p>Negotiate an agenda (assignment, audience, writer's concerns, tutor insights)</p> <p>Engage and learn with the writer</p> <p>Allow time to work/revise/think</p> <p>Communicate (listening and verbal and nonverbal interaction)</p> <p>Use or increase awareness of resources</p> <p>Revisit writer's concerns and shared agenda</p> <p>Summarize main ideas and possible writing or revision plans</p> <p>Invite the writer to return/normalize feedback and reflection as part of learning</p>		
Consulting Strategies*		
SCAFFOLD	MOTIVATE	INSTRUCT
<p>Solicit information/question</p> <p>Respond as a reader or listener</p> <p>Refer to a previous topic</p> <p>Force a choice</p> <p>Demonstrate or model</p> <p>Hint or prompt</p> <p>Read aloud</p>	<p>Encourage or be optimistic</p> <p>Show concern</p> <p>Praise</p> <p>Use humor</p> <p>Encourage ownership</p> <p>Express empathy or sympathy</p>	<p>Tell</p> <p>Suggest</p> <p>Explain/exemplify</p> <p><small>*Adapted from Mackiewicz, J., &amp; Thompson, I. (2015). <i>Talk about writing: The tutoring strategies of experienced writing center tutors.</i> Routledge.</small></p>

## Post-Observation Discussion

Use your observation notes and the following questions to prompt a reflective discussion about the observed tutorial and tutoring concepts and practices in general. Provide feedback (both strengths and suggestions) from your observation as part of the discussion.

What did you like about this tutoring session? What seemed to go well?

What did you find challenging about this tutoring session? Is there anything you would have done differently?

What tutoring strategies (scaffolding, motivating, instructing) did you consciously make use of and why?

What tutoring strategies or tasks did the writer seem most responsive to?

What additional feedback or discussion would be helpful to your thinking about tutoring or your tutoring practice?

APPENDIX C

PRE- AND POST-INTERVENTION SURVEY INSTRUMENT

## Pre- and Post-intervention Survey Instrument

Research on writing center sessions, writing consultants make use of multiple tutoring strategies as part of their work (Mackiewicz & Thompson, 2014). This questionnaire asks about your knowledge of, use of, and confidence using instruction, scaffolding, and motivation as tutoring strategies within consultations with native English-speaking writers and consultations with ESL writers. For each question, select the response that best matches your experience as a writing tutor.

### *Participant Information*

*Please check the box, indicating the number of semesters you have worked as a BYU Writing Center tutor (include the internship and the current semester and note that two terms equal a semester).*

- 1 semester
- 2 semesters
- 3 semesters
- 4 semesters
- 5+ semesters

Are you at least 18-years-old as of the Fall 2018 semester?

- Yes
- No

*The next three questions are designed to help ensure participant anonymity while also allowing initial survey data to be connected with final survey data.*

What is your favorite color?

What is your favorite food?

What is your favorite animal?

### *Tutoring Strategies*

#### **Tutorial Interactions and Tutoring Strategies**

Tutoring strategies are used to facilitate and encourage interactions and activities within tutorials. Rank the activities by their importance within a tutoring session with 1 being most important and 10 being least important?

- Authentic dialogue with writers about writing
- Facilitating writers' practice with writing, revision, and editing
- Showing writers errors or areas that need revision
- Negotiating with and learning alongside the writer
- Increasing a writer's confidence
- Building upon a writer's existing knowledge
- Providing a writer with clear explanations and guidelines

- Building rapport with the writer
- Establishing firm roles and responsibilities
- Increasing a writer's awareness of audience

Within the tutorials you conduct as a tutor, which activities do you engage in the most? Rank activities with 1 being most frequent and 10 being less frequent.

- Authentic dialogue with writers about writing
- Facilitating writers' practice with writing, revision, and editing
- Showing writers errors or areas that need revision
- Negotiating with and learning alongside the writer
- Increasing a writer's confidence
- Building upon a writer's existing knowledge
- Providing a writer with clear explanations and guidelines
- Building rapport with the writer
- Establishing firm roles and responsibilities
- Increasing a writer's awareness of audience

Which tutoring activities would you like to be better at facilitating? Rank activities with 1 being the activity you want to improve in the most and 10 being the activity where you don't need improvement.

- Authentic dialogue with writers about writing
- Facilitating writers' practice with writing, revision, and editing
- Showing writers errors or areas that need revision
- Negotiating with and learning alongside the writer
- Increasing a writer's confidence
- Building upon a writer's existing knowledge
- Providing a writer with clear explanations and guidelines
- Building rapport with the writer
- Establishing firm roles and responsibilities
- Increasing a writer's awareness of audience

### **Scaffolding Techniques Within Tutorials**

From the list below, select all the tutoring techniques you associate with scaffolding. (Select all that apply.)

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reading aloud</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Suggesting</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Soliciting additional information</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Responding as a reader or listener</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Showing concern</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Encouraging ownership</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Referring to a previous topic</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Explaining</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Using humor</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Forcing a choice</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Telling</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrating</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Hinting or prompting</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Encouraging or being optimistic</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Praising</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Expressing empathy or sympathy</li> </ul> |
|--|--|---|

### **Instruction as a Tutoring Strategy**

Instruction provides writers with the information they need to better understand writing concepts, processes, and practices. Tasks associated with instruction as a tutoring strategy include telling, suggesting, explaining, and exemplifying (Mackiewicz & Thompson, 2014).

*For the following five questions, consider your experience with instruction as a tutoring strategy, and using the five-point scale provided, indicate your level of agreement with each statement.*

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have <b>knowledge of instruction</b> as a tutoring strategy					
I regularly <b>use instruction</b> as a tutoring strategy <b>with native English-speaking writers</b>					
I regularly <b>use instruction</b> as a tutoring strategy <b>with ESL writers</b>					
I am <b>confident using instruction</b> as a tutoring strategy <b>with native English-speaking writers</b>					
I am <b>confident using instruction</b> as a tutoring strategy <b>with ESL writers</b>					



### Motivation as a Tutoring Strategy

Motivation provides writers with the desire, confidence, and conditions needed to apply writing knowledge and complete writing talks. To motivate writers and learners, tutors praise, show support or concern, use humor, encourage, show empathy or sympathy, and reinforce the learner’s ownership or control of the work (Mackiewicz & Thompson, 2014).

*For the following five questions, consider your experience with instruction as a tutoring strategy, and using the five-point scale provided, indicate your level of agreement with each statement.*

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have <b>knowledge of motivation</b> as a tutoring strategy					
I regularly <b>use motivation</b> as a tutoring strategy <b>with native English-speaking writers</b>					
I regularly <b>use motivation</b> as a tutoring strategy <b>with ESL writers</b>					
I am <b>confident using motivation</b> as a tutoring strategy <b>with native English-speaking writers</b>					
I am <b>confident using motivation</b> as a tutoring strategy <b>with ESL writers</b>					

### Scaffolding as a Tutoring Strategy

Scaffolding provides writers with individualized support, assessment, and feedback. It encourages reflection, discussion, and guided practice in connection with new ideas or applications. It provides the information they need to better understand writing concepts, processes, and practices. Tasks associated with scaffolding include soliciting or requesting more information (including questioning), referring to a previous topic, demonstrating, responding as a reader or listener, reading aloud, forcing a choice or limiting tasks, hinting, and prompting (Mackiewicz & Thompson, 2014).

*For the following five questions, consider your experience with instruction as a tutoring strategy, and using the five-point scale provided, indicate your level of agreement with each statement.*

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have <b>knowledge of scaffolding</b> as a tutoring strategy					
I regularly <b>use scaffolding</b> as a tutoring strategy <b>with native English-speaking writers</b>					
I regularly <b>use scaffolding</b> as a tutoring strategy <b>with ESL writers</b>					
I am <b>confident using scaffolding</b> as a tutoring strategy <b>with native English-speaking writers</b>					
I am <b>confident using scaffolding</b> as a tutoring strategy <b>with ESL writers</b>					

## ***Writers' Use of the Writing Center***

As a writing tutor, why do you think are the top three reasons writers visit and make use of the Writing Center? (Check three options.)

- They are required or offered extra credit to come.
- They value learning with another student in a low-stakes environment
- They need help fixing errors in their work
- They value a reader's response and feedback on their work
- They lack language and writing skills
- They have been encouraged to come by a teacher or peer
- They desire help writing at a college level
- They see the Writing Center as a learning resource
- They are seeking validation or approval for their writing

As a writing tutor, why do you think are the top three reasons L2 writers visit and make use of the Writing Center? (Check three options.)

- They are required or offered extra credit to come.
- They value learning with another student in a low-stakes environment
- They need help fixing errors in their work
- They value a reader's response and feedback on their work
- They lack language and writing skills
- They have been encouraged to come by a teacher or peer
- They desire help writing at a college level
- They see the Writing Center as a learning resource
- They are seeking validation or approval for their writing

## ***Tutor Education***

What type of training dealing with scaffolding as a tutoring strategy have you participated in during the Fall 2018 semester. (Check all that apply.)

- Participating in weekly training meetings
- Being observed by and having a post-observation discussion with an administrator
- Being observed by and having a post-observation discussion with at least one peer
- Completing observations and conducting post-observation discussions with peers

What type of training dealing with increasing your understanding of ESL writers and writing have you participated in during the Fall 2018 semester. (Check all that apply.)

- Participating in weekly training meetings
- Being observed by and having a post-observation discussion with an administrator
- Being observed by and having a post-observation discussion with at least one peer
- Completing observations and conducting post-observation discussions with peers

Which type(s) of training have you found most useful to your experience with scaffolding as a tutoring strategy with ESL writers? (Check all that apply.)

- Participating in weekly training meetings
- Being observed by and having a post-observation discussion with an administrator
- Being observed by and having a post-observation discussion with at least one peer
- Completing observations and conducting post-observation discussions with peers

*In the space provided, please explain why that type/those types of tutor training were most useful or impactful to your experience (i.e., knowledge, use, confidence) using scaffolding as a tutoring strategy with ESL writers.*

What questions do you have about scaffolding as a tutoring strategy?

What questions do you have about working with ESL writers?

Thank you! Your time and participation are greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact Dr. Melanie Bertrand at [melanie.bertrand@asu.edu](mailto:melanie.bertrand@asu.edu) or Lisa Bell at [lisa\\_bell@byu.edu](mailto:lisa_bell@byu.edu) or 801-422-9784.

#### References

Mackiewicz, J., & Thompson, I. (2014). Instruction, cognitive scaffolding, and motivational scaffolding in writing center tutoring. *Composition Studies*, 42(1), 54.

APPENDIX D  
SURVEY PROTOCOL

## Recruitment and Consent form for Tutoring Strategies Questionnaire

Dear BYU Writing Center Tutors:

As a doctoral student in the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College (MLFTC) at Arizona State University, I am examining writing tutors' knowledge of, use of, and confidence using tutoring strategies—instruction, scaffolding, and motivation--within writing center consultations.

The intended participants for this questionnaire are writing center tutors, so I am asking for your help as part of this study. Any information you provide as part of completing this survey will be anonymous, and data will be kept confidential. Your anonymous questionnaire responses will be used as part of my dissertation work, including publishing and presenting.

Your participation in this study is voluntary, which means you may choose not to answer questions or to withdraw from the process at any time. There are no foreseen risks for participating in this study, but benefits may include improved training for writing center consultants.

This questionnaire has been adapted from an instrument designed and used by Lane et. al., (2015) and consists of 18 questions. The questionnaire should take less than five minutes to complete.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact Dr. Melanie Bertrand at melanie.bertrand@asu.edu or Lisa Bell at lisa\_bell@byu.edu or 801-422-9784.

Please read the following consent statement and if you agree, please click on the link to indicate consent and participate in the survey.

Consent Statement: I agree to participate in the survey being conducted. I understand the survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. I understand that my employment in the BYU Writing Center nor my relationship with BYU Writing Center administration will NOT be affected if I opt out of taking the survey. I am at least 18 years of age.

[Survey Link]

Thank you,  
Lisa Bell

*If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance at (480) 965-6788.*

### References

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APPENDIX E

PERMISSION TO ADAPT EXISTING SURVEY INSTRUMENT

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From: Lane, Kathleen <k923l138@ku.edu<mailto:k923l138@ku.edu>>  
Sent: Friday, February 2, 2018 7:29 AM  
To: Lisa Bell  
Cc: Lane, Kathleen  
Subject: RE: Survey Instrument Inquiry

Dear Lisa,

Thank you for reaching out. I am glad to hear you found this information to be useful. Yes, you are welcome to use the survey as a model. When you write up your work (for your dissertation and later articles), will you please cite the tool being adapted from XXX (and reference our work)? Thank you.

Will you please reply all and loop in your advisor as well? (just to keep us all on the same page).

I wish you every success as you move forward with your work!  
Take care,  
Kathleen



APPENDIX F  
OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Dear Potential Participant:

The BYU Writing Center is committed to providing quality assistance to writers. As part of that process, we routinely observe and analyze tutoring sessions, which sometimes includes audio recording sessions. This semester, in addition to serving as an administrator of the BYU Writing Center, I am also conducting doctoral research as part of my work as a student in the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College at Arizona State University. As a doctoral student, I am observing and analyzing writing tutorials for tutors' use of scaffolding as a tutoring strategy. The audio recordings collected this semester will increase my understanding of how tutors make use of scaffolding, which may help the Writing Center improve tutor training. audio recordings will be used for educational purposes only, including dissertation research, publishing, and presenting.

Your participation in this study is voluntary, which means you may opt out or withdraw from the process at any time. There is no compensation for participating, and your decision to participate or opt out of the study will NOT affect your use of BYU Writing Center services. If you are a writing tutor, your participation decisions will NOT affect your employment at the BYU Writing Center. There are no foreseen risks for participating in this study, but benefits may include improved training for writing center tutors.

Recorded sessions will last the typical length of a BYU Writing Center tutorial (approximately 30 minutes). No personal information will be maintained with the audio recordings, and all audio recordings will be maintained on a private, password protected university computer in a locked Writing Center administrative office.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact Dr. Melanie Bertrand at melanie.bertrand@asu.edu or Lisa Bell at lisa\_bell@byu.edu or 801-422-9784.

Thank you,  
Lisa Bell, Doctoral Student

**Please read the consent statement. If you agree to participate, please indicate by signing below.**

I agree to participate in an audio-recorded BYU Writing Center tutorial. I understand the tutorial will last approximately 30 minutes. I understand that my ability to make full use of BYU Writing Center services, including future tutorials, will NOT be affected if I opt out of participating in an audio-recorded tutorial. If I am a BYU Writing Center employee, I understand that my current or potential employment with BYU Writing Center or relationship with Writing Center administration will NOT be affected if I opt out of participating in an audio-recorded tutorial. I am at least 18 years of age.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

*If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance at (480) 965-6788.*

APPENDIX G  
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

## Consent Form for Audio-Recorded Interviews

Dear BYU Writing Center Consultants:

As a doctoral student in the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College (MLFTC) at Arizona State University, I am conducting audio-recorded, semi-structured interviews about writing tutors' experience with scaffolding as a tutoring strategy within ESL tutorials. Interview responses will be used for educational purposes, including improved tutor training, and as part of my dissertation work, including publishing and presenting.

The intended participants for the semi-structured interviews are writing center tutors, so I am asking for your help as part of this study. Each interview will take no more than 30 minutes to complete. Any information you provide as part of this interview process will have personal identifying information removed to maintain tutor anonymity. Data, including audio recordings, will be kept confidential on a private, password-protected Writing Center administrator computer in a locked office. Data will be disposed of after five years.

Your participation in this study is voluntary, which means you may choose not to answer questions or to withdraw from the process at any time. There is no compensation for participating, and your decision to participate or opt out of the study will NOT affect your employment at the BYU Writing Center. There are no foreseen risks for participating in this study, but benefits may include improved training for writing center consultants. Completion of the audio-recorded interview indicates your consent to participate in the study.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact Dr. Melanie Bertrand at [melanie.bertrand@asu.edu](mailto:melanie.bertrand@asu.edu) or Lisa Bell at [lisa\\_bell@byu.edu](mailto:lisa_bell@byu.edu) or 801-422-9784.

Thank you,

Lisa Bell

*If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance at (480) 965-6788.*

APPENDIX H  
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

## **Semi-Structured Interview Questions on Scaffolding within L2 Tutorials**

*Thank you for being willing to participate in an interview about tutoring strategies within ESL tutorials. This interview should take no more than 30 minutes to complete. While no personal identifying information will be maintained as part of this interview, data collected will inform tutor training and may also be used as part of my doctoral work, including presenting and publishing on this research topic. Remember that participation is voluntary, so you may opt out of the interview at any time.*

### **Working with ESL Writers**

- Tell me a bit about your work with L2 writers at the Writing Center.
- What strategies do you use when working with L2 writers?

### **Scaffolding**

- Tell me about what you know about scaffolding as a tutoring strategy.
- How do you see scaffolding fitting in or relating to other tutoring strategies such as instructing and motivating writers? As part of your response, feel free to provide examples from your own experience.
- What specific tutoring tasks do you recognize as being part of scaffolding?

### **Scaffolding and ESL Writers**

- Tell me about a time when you felt you effectively used scaffolding within an ESL tutorial? What indicated that your efforts were successful?
- Tell me about a time when you felt scaffolding was particularly challenging within an ESL tutorial? What was particular challenging?
- With those experiences in mind, in what circumstances do you feel scaffolding is most useful when working with an ESL writer?

### **Experience with Scaffolding**

- Does your use of scaffolding change when working with ESL writers as opposed to native English-speaking writers? How so? Why do you think that is?
- What has informed your understanding or experience with scaffolding as a tutoring strategy? This may include trainings, conversations with peers or supervisors, personal study or recommended readings, reflective writing, general practice, observations of peers, observations by administrators, post-session discussions, conference presentations, etc. I'd love to know more about anything that has furthered your understanding of cognitive scaffolding as a tutoring strategy.
- Based on those experiences, what would you say have been most formative in helping you understand, apply, and feel confidence in using cognitive scaffolding? What has been least helpful?

### **Informing Tutor Education**

- What questions do you still have about scaffolding?
- What questions do you still have about working with ESL writers?
- Is there anything else you want to share with me about your experience with scaffolding as a tutoring strategy?

***Thank you! Your time and participation are greatly appreciated.***

*If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact Dr. Melanie Bertrand at [melanie.bertrand@asu.edu](mailto:melanie.bertrand@asu.edu) or Lisa Bell at [lisa\\_bell@byu.edu](mailto:lisa_bell@byu.edu) or 801-422-9784.*

APPENDIX I  
FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL



## **Consent Form for Audio-Recorded Focus Group Participation**

### ***Introduction***

This research study is being conducted by Lisa Bell at Brigham Young University as part of doctoral work for Arizona State University, under the direction of Dr. Melanie Bertrand. The purpose of this study to determine how training impacts writing tutors' use of certain tutoring strategies with multilingual writers. You were invited to participate because you recently visited the BYU Writing Center and self-identified as a multilingual writer as part of your Writing Center registration.

### ***Procedures***

If you agree to participate in this research study, the following will occur:

- you will participate in a focus group for approximately 50 minutes about what tutoring techniques and interaction you have found helpful as a writer and learner
- the focus group will be audio recorded to ensure accuracy in reporting your statements
- the focus group will take place in 3022 HBLL on [date] and [time]
- total time commitment will be 50 minutes

### ***Risks/Discomforts***

Because there will be other participants in the focus group, loss of privacy is a potential risk.

### ***Benefits***

It is hoped that through your participation the researcher may learn about tutor and writer interactions and may be able to design and provide improved tutor training for BYU Writing Center tutors.

### ***Confidentiality***

Any information you provide as part of this interview process will have personal identifying information removed to maintain anonymity. Data, including audio recordings, will be kept confidential on a private, password-protected Writing Center administrator computer in a locked office.

Also, because focus groups include discussion of personal opinions, extra measures will be taken to protect each participant's privacy. The researcher will begin the focus group by asking the participants to agree to the importance of keeping information discussed in the focus group confidential. She will then ask each participant to verbally agree to keep everything discussed in the room confidential and will remind them at the end of the group not to discuss the material outside.

Only the researcher will have access to the data collected. Any tapes and transcripts of the focus group will be destroyed after one year or at the end of the study.

### ***Compensation***

You will receive \$10 for your participation; compensation will not be prorated.

***Participation***

Your participation in this study is voluntary, which means you may chose not to answer questions or to withdraw from the process at any time. Participation does NOT impact your ability to use BYU Writing Center Services.

***Questions about the Research***

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact Dr. Melanie Bertrand at melanie.bertrand@asu.edu or Lisa Bell at lisa\_bell@byu.edu or 801-422-9784.

***Questions about Your Rights as Research Participants***

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance at (480) 965-6788.

**Statement of Consent**

I have read, understood, and received a copy of the above consent and desire of my own free will to participate in this study.

Name (Printed): \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX J

L2 WRITER FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

## **L2 Writer Focus Group Questions**

*Thank you for being willing to participate in a focus group about writing center tutoring strategies and techniques. This focus group should take less than 50 minutes to complete. While no personal identifying information will be maintained as part of this focus group, data collected will inform tutor training and may also be used as part of my doctoral work, including presenting and publishing on this research topic. Remember that participation is voluntary, so you may opt out of the focus group at any time.*

### **Working with a Tutor**

- Think about times you have worked with a Writing Center tutor, what did you find helpful about working with a writing tutor?
- What did you find challenging about working with a writing tutor?

*Writing tutors use certain techniques when working with writers. I want to learn more about which tutoring techniques you find more helpful, so the following questions will be about specific tutoring techniques.*

### **Reading Aloud**

- Does it help when you read a paper aloud as part of a tutoring session?
- How does reading your paper aloud help you as a writer?
- Do you prefer to read aloud or have the tutor read aloud?
- Do you like to read the whole paper aloud before talking about your writing, or do you like to read smaller sections of text at a time?
- Are there any times you prefer to not read your paper aloud?

### **Soliciting Information/ Questioning as Scaffolding**

One technique tutors often use is asking for more information or asking questions to help a writer think through or solve a problem or say their ideas outload, so they will be easier to write down later.

- Is it helpful when tutors ask you questions or ask you to talk more about your ideas or writing choices? Does it help you learn or improve your writing?
- What kinds of questions do you find most helpful?
- Which kinds of questions are not helpful?

- Can you think of an example of when it was helpful to have a tutor encourage you to talk through your ideas?

### **Referring to a Previous Topic**

Tutors also look for patterns and point out concepts that have already been discussed within a tutorial.

- Is it helpful when tutors point out patterns or refer to a previous topic?
- Does that technique help you as a learner or writer?
- When is it most helpful?
- When is it least helpful?

### **Responding as a Reader**

Another technique tutors use is to respond as a reader. You may have heard a tutor use this technique by saying “as a reader, I was not sure how this idea related to your main idea” or “How could you help a reader better understand what you are trying to say?”

- Is it helpful when a tutor responds as a reader or asks you to think about those who will read your writing?
- Can you think of a time it was helpful?
- When is it not helpful?

### **Forcing or Limiting Choices**

Tutors may also try to help writers and learners by encouraging them to make choices. A tutor may say something like, “do you want to write that idea down or do you want to keep going?” or “You can put a period there and begin a new sentence, or you can use a semicolon.”

- Is it helpful to you as a writer or learner to have a tutor encourage you to make choices or limit your options?
- Can you think of an example of when it has been helpful?
- Are there times when it is not as helpful to you?

### **Hinting or Prompting**

Sometimes, instead of giving the writer an answer, the tutor will provide hints or clues to help the writer discover or remember the answer. An example of hinting or prompting is when a tutor is reading a sentence aloud and reads a confusing part of a sentence more slowly or pauses when there is a missing word and waits for the writer to provide the missing word

- Can you think of a time a tutor has used hinting or prompting when working with you?
- Was hinting or prompting useful or helpful to you as a writer and learner?
- If it was helpful, why was it helpful?
- If it was not helpful, why was it not helpful?

### **Demonstrating or Modeling**

Sometimes tutors demonstrate or model how something is done. They may give an example of how you could write a sentence or show you how to do something.

- When has demonstrating or modeling been helpful to you as a writer or learner?
- When has it not been helpful?

### **Additional Tutoring Techniques**

- Are there other ways tutors have interacted with you as a writer and learner that have been helpful?
- Did you find that interaction more helpful than the ones we have been discussing?
- What is something you wish every tutor knew about working with you as a writer or learner?
- What is one thing you wish every tutor would do when working with you as a writer or learner?
- Is there anything else you would like to say about how tutors can best help writers and learners?

*Thank you for your time. Your feedback will be very useful in helping us improve the assistance writers and learners receive in the Writing Center.*

APPENDIX K

INSITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) APPROVAL DOCUMENTS

EXEMPTION GRANTED

Melanie Bertrand  
 Division of Educational Leadership and Innovation - West Campus  
 -  
 Melanie.Bertrand@asu.edu

Dear Melanie Bertrand:

On 8/31/2018 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Training Tutors to Scaffold with L2 Writers
Investigator:	Melanie Bertrand
IRB ID:	STUDY00008685
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre and Post-Intervention Tutor Interview Consent Form.pdf, Category: Consent Form;</li> <li>• L2 Writer Focus Group Questions.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions);</li> <li>• L2 Writer Focus Group Recruitment Email.pdf, Category: Recruitment Materials;</li> <li>• Bell Dissertation Research Protocol, Category: IRB Protocol;</li> <li>• Tutorial Observation Consent.pdf, Category: Consent Form;</li> <li>• Pre- and Post-Intervention Survey Consent.pdf, Category: Consent Form;</li> <li>• Pre- and Post-Intervention Survey Questionnaire.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions);</li> <li>• Pre and Post-Intervention Tutor Interview Questions.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey</li> </ul>



	questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • L2 Writer Focus Group Consent.pdf, Category: Consent Form;
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The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 (1) Educational settings, (2) Tests, surveys, interviews, or observation on 8/31/2018.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

cc: Lisa Bell  
Lisa Bell  
Melanie Bertrand

## Institutional Review Board (IRB) Authorization Agreement

**Name of Institution or Organization Providing IRB Review (Institution/Organization A):**

Arizona State University

IRB Registration #: IRB00000128 Federalwide Assurance (FWA) #, if any: FWA00009102

**Name of Institution Relying on the Designated IRB (Institution B):**

Brigham Young University--Provo

FWA #: FWA00001266

The Officials signing below agree that IRB0001302 may rely on the designated IRB for review and continuing oversight of its human subjects research described below: *(check one)*

This agreement applies to all human subjects research covered by Institution B's FWA.

This agreement is limited to the following specific protocol(s):

Name of Research Project: STUDY00008685 : Training Tutors to Scaffold with L2 Writers

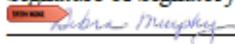
Name of Principal Investigator: Melanie Bertrand, BYU PI: Lisa Bell

Sponsor or Funding Agency: NA Award Number, if any: NA

Other *(describe)*: \_\_\_\_\_

The review performed by the designated IRB will meet the human subject protection requirements of Institution B's OHRP-approved FWA. The IRB at Institution/Organization A will follow written procedures for reporting its findings and actions to appropriate officials at Institution B. Relevant minutes of IRB meetings will be made available to Institution B upon request. Institution B remains responsible for ensuring compliance with the IRB's determinations and with the Terms of its OHRP-approved FWA. This document must be kept on file by both parties and provided to OHRP upon request.

**Signature of Signatory Official (Institution/Organization A):**



Date: 9-19-18

Print Full Name: Debra Murphy

Institutional Title: Institutional Official

**NOTE: The IRB of Institution A may need to be designated on the OHRP-approved FWA for Institution B.**

**Signature of Signatory Official (Institution B):**



Date: 9/18/18

Print Full Name: Alan R. Harker, Ph.D.

Institutional Title: Associate Academic Vice Pr