1-1-1995

A Critique of Pure Tutoring

Linda K. Shamoon

Deborah H. Burns

A Critique of Pure Tutoring[1]

Linda K. Shamoon and Deborah H. Burns

In our writing center and probably in yours, graduate teaching assistants and undergraduate peer tutors conduct student-centered, one-on-one tutoring sessions. We train these tutors to make use of process-centered writing pedagogy and top-down, writer-centered responses to papers. During the tutoring sessions, tutors are always careful not to appropriate the students' writing and not to substitute their ideas for those of the students. Thus, tutors let students set the agenda, and they resist word-by-word editing of any text. While this cluster of practices has helped us establish a growing clientele and a good reputation, we have begun to wonder about the *orthodoxy* of these practices, especially as we reflect upon our personal experiences and upon stories from faculty in writing-across-the-curriculum (WAC) workshops who tell us that they "really" learned to write during one-on-one tutoring sessions which were directive and appropriative. In an effort to understand these experiences more clearly, we have turned to research on expertise, social and cognitive development, and academic literacy. These sources have convinced us that directive tutoring, a methodology completely opposite our current tutoring practices, is sometimes a suitable and effective mode of instruction. As a result, we are currently struggling with radically oppositional practices in tutoring, and we are contemplating the places of these oppositional practices in our writing center.

The Orthodoxy of Current Practice

The prevailing approach to writing center tutoring is excellently explained and contextualized in several texts, among them Irene Clark's

The Writing Center Journal, Volume 15, Number 2, Spring 1995

1

Writing in the Center: Teaching in a Writing Center Setting and Emily Meyer and Louise Z. Smith's *The Practical Tutor.* From these sources tutors learn to use a process approach, to serve as an audience for student writers, and to familiarize students with the conventions of academic discourse (Clark, *Writing* 7-10; Meyer and Smith 31-32, 47). This approach emphasizes a student-centered, non-directive method which suggests that "in order for students to improve in their writing, they must attribute their success to their own efforts and abilities, not to the skill of the tutor" (Clark, *Writing* 7). To encourage active student participation, tutors learn about "legitimate and illegitimate collaboration" (Clark, *Writing* 21). True collaboration occurs when the participants are "part of the same discourse community and meet as equals" (21). Tutors learn that illegitimate collaboration happens when the tutor takes over a student's writing by providing answers rather than by asking questions. Illegitimate collaboration, says Clark, creates dependency: "[T]utor dominated conferences, instead of producing autonomous student writers, usually produce students who remain totally dependent upon the teacher or tutor, unlikely ever to assume responsibility for their own writing" (41). These ideas and others from books about tutoring, along with related concepts from articles in *The Writing Center Journal* and *Writing Lab Newsletter,* provide the bases for current writing center practices.

Upon reflection, however, we find that sometimes these sources become more than simply the research backdrop to writing center practice; sometimes they form a writing center "bible." This bible contains not only the material evidence to support student-centered, non-directive practices, but also codes of behavior and statements of value that sanction tutors as a certain kind of professional, one who cares about writing and about students, their authentic voices, and their equal access to the opportunities within sometimes difficult institutions. These codes and appeals seem less the product of research or examined practice and more like articles of faith that serve to validate a tutoring approach which "feels right," in fact so right that it is hard for practitioners to accept possible tutoring alternatives as useful or compelling. For example, Jean Kiedaisch and Sue Dinitz, in "'So What?': The Limitations of the Generalist Tutor," note that while those tutors who know the discipline and can supply special information for students' papers may be effective, such tutors may not always be available. Kiedaisch and Dinitz conclude, "If we can't ensure that students writing for upper level courses can meet with a knowledgeable tutor, should we be alarmed about relying on generalist tutors? We think not" (73). Kiedaisch and Dinitz may be drawn to this conclusion because the alternative model examined in the study—that of a knowledgeable tutor supplying "special information"—is simply too far outside orthodox writing center practice to be acceptable.

The power of this orthodoxy permeates writing center discourse, where we sometimes find statements that come more from a range of assumed values

rather than from researched findings. For example, we read online a writing center tutor's "confession" that she showed a model essay to a student rather than let the student get frustrated at having no readily available, familiar written format to help tame his chaos of ideas. Well over a hundred entries followed assuring the tutor that models have a place in tutoring, as long as they do not transgress upon the authentic voice of the student ("Imitation/ Modeling"). These assurances could be interpreted as obviating the sin of appropriating the student's paper. In addition, Evelyn Ashton-Jones, in "Asking the Right Questions: A Heuristic for Tutors," argues that to promote cognitive growth of students, tutors must engage in a version of "Socratic dialogue" and not "lapse into a 'directive' mode of tutoring" (31-33). Quoting Thom Hawkins, she labels the directive tutor as "shaman, guru, or mentor," and Socratic tutors as "architects and partners" (31). In our culture who would not rather be an architect than a shaman? Finally, in discussing the need for students to be active learners during a tutoring session, Clark asserts that students should never be "disciples sitting in humility at the feet of a mentor" (*Writing* 7).[2] The language and tone here forbid challenge. The idea that one cannot be extremely appreciative of expertise and also learn actively from an expert is an ideological formation rather than a product of research.

In these instances and others, ideology rather than examined practice ("things that go without saying") seem to drive writing center practice. First, writing is viewed as a process tied to cognitive activities occurring in recursive stages. Although these stages have been labeled in numerous taxonomies, Jack Selzer finds that most enumerations include invention, organization, drafting, and revision (280). As a result, tutoring sessions often follow a ritual that begins by noting where a writer is with a text and proceeds by "walking" through the remaining stages. Second, writing center practice assumes that process strategies are global and transferable (Flower and Hayes 365-87). The extreme nonhierarchical, presumably democratic version of this assumption is that anyone who is familiar with the writing process can be of help to anybody. In practice, tutors from any discipline who seem to be good writers help all students, allowing for peer tutoring across the curriculum (Haring-Smith 175-188). A third assumption is that students possess sole ownership of their texts ("Teaching Composition"; Brannon and Knoblauch; Sommers 149-150). In practice, then, the tutors' mission is to help clarify what is in the text and to facilitate revision without imposing their own ideas or their own knowledge and, in so doing, without taking ownership of the text. Thus, tutors follow a script that is question-based and indirect rather than directive. Fourth and closely related, the prevailing wisdom assumes that one-on-one conferencing can best help students clarify their writing to themselves (Murray, "Teaching" 144). In practice, then, tutoring is conducted in private. Finally, there is the assumption that all texts are

interpretive and that the best writing contains statements of meaning or an authentic voice (Schwegler; Murray, *A Writer;* Elbow). In practice, then, much of the tutors' discussion and indirect questioning aims at getting students to voice and substantiate overall statements of meaning. Once this has been achieved, students are often sent home to revise their texts in light of this understanding. In sum, tutoring orthodoxy is: process-based, Socratic, private, a-disciplinary, and nonhierarchical or democratic.

Many points in this characterization of writing have been challenged by social-constructionist views. Social-constructionists characterize writing as a social act rather than as a process of personal discovery or individual expression. Kenneth Bruffee calls writing displaced conversation, implying that writing occurs not in isolation but in response to ideas found in other texts and other forms of communal conversation (*Short Course* 3). Furthermore, Bruffee cites Oakeshott's belief that education is primarily an "initiation into the skill and partnership of this conversation in which we learn to recognize the voices, to distinguish the proper occasions of utterance, and in which we acquire the intellectual and moral habits appropriate to conversation" (638). Patricia Bizzell sharpens the critique by adding that students

> need composition instruction that exposes and demystifies the institutional structure of knowledge, rather than that which covertly reintroduces discriminatory practices while cloaking the force of convention in concessions to the 'personal.' The cognitive focus of process-oriented composition studies cannot provide the necessary analysis. (112)

In these ways, social-constructionists challenge the private, a-disciplinary nature of writing, but according to Robert J. Connors there is little in the *practice* of teaching or tutoring writing that has changed because of social constructionist views. Connors maintains that, in the classroom, social constructionists still base teaching and tutoring upon stages in the writing process. Thus, the social constructionist critique has broadened our understanding of the contexts of writing, but it has not formed an alternative set of practices.

The Challenge from Experience and from Writing Across the Curriculum Faculty

The more serious challenge to current tutoring orthodoxy starts for us with some of our personal experiences as we learned to write in our discipline. When Deborah Burns was completing a thesis for her M.A. in English Literature, she was tutored by her major professor. She reports the following experience.

> The most helpful writing tutoring I ever received at the university came from the director of my Master's thesis. I wrote what I thought

was a fairly good draft of my thesis, then shared it with my director for comments. I remember, at first, being surprised at the number of problems my director found with my draft. He added transitions when needed, showed me how to eliminate wordiness, and formalized my vocabulary. In addition, he offered specific suggestions for rewriting entire paragraphs, and he always pointed out areas where I had lost focus. The most important thing he did for me was to write sentences that helped locate my work in the field of Dickens studies. For example, Dickens critics had thoroughly examined family relationships in the novels, but few worked on alcoholism and its effects on children, the central idea of my thesis. My director's specific suggestions helped me to foreground my unique way of examining some of Dickens's novels. I learned that I was so immersed in the research and articulation of the new ideas I wanted to explore in my thesis, I had neither the time nor the experience to fully understand how to write an extended piece of scholarly work in the discourse community. At first, I was confused about my perceived inability to write like the scholar I was supposed to be, but I soon realized (especially at my thesis defense) that I was fortunate to have as my director a person who *showed* me how to revise my draft so that it blended with conventional academic discourse. After I watched my director work with my text, and after I made the necessary changes, my thesis and other academic writing was much less of a mystery to me.

For many years Burns puzzled over the direct intervention made by her director while she composed her Master's thesis. The intervention had been extremely helpful, yet it went against everything she had learned in composition studies. Her director was directive, he substituted his own words for hers, and he stated with disciplinary appropriateness the ideas with which she had been working. Furthermore, Burns observed that other graduate students had the same experience with this director: he took their papers and rewrote them while they watched. They left feeling better able to complete their papers, and they tackled other papers with greater ease and success. Clearly, several features of this graduate director's practice violated current composition orthodoxy. His practices seem authoritative, intrusive, directive, and product-oriented. Yet these practices created major turning points for a variety of writers. For Burns and for others, when the director intervened, a number of thematic, stylistic, and rhetorical issues came together in a way that revealed and made accessible aspects of the discipline which had remained unexplained or out of reach. Instead of appropriation, this event made knowledge and achievement accessible.

This challenge to current tutoring practices has been further extended by conversations with faculty from a variety of disciplines during our WAC

workshops. We have held faculty workshops semiannually for the last three years, and it is not unusual for faculty members to remember suddenly that at some point late in college or in graduate school, during a one-on-one conference, a professor they respected took one of their papers and rewrote it, finally showing them "how to write." During our first workshop, a colleague from animal science reported that in graduate school his major professor took his paper and rewrote it while he watched. In the colleague's own words, "He tore it to shreds, but I sure learned a lot." When he made this statement, there were looks of recognition and sympathetic murmuring from others in the room. Just recently, in a WAC faculty writing circle, a colleague from nursing reported that in order to complete her doctoral proposal she has sat through numerous revising sessions with the most accessible member of her doctoral committee, each time learning more about writing, about critical theory, and about how to tie the theory to her research methods. In these examples and others, professors were acting like tutors, working one-on-one with student authors to improve their texts, but their methods were hardly nondirective. Over and over in the informal reports of our colleagues we find that crucial information about a discipline and about writing is transmitted in ways that are intrusive, directive, and product-oriented, yet these behaviors are not perceived as an appropriation of power or voice but instead as an opening up of those aspects of practice which had remained unspoken and opaque.

While we do not pretend that these informally gathered stories carry the same weight as research data, we are struck by the repeated benefits of a tutoring style that is so opposite current orthodoxy. As we discuss these revelations further with WAC faculty, we find that the benefits of alternative tutoring practices are frequent enough to make us seriously question whether one tutoring approach fits all students and situations. Surely, students at different stages in their education, from beginning to advanced, are developing different skills and accumulating different kinds of information, thus making them receptive to different kinds of instruction and tutoring. In fact, in "The Idea of Expertise: An Exploration of Cognitive and Social Dimensions of Writing," Michael Carter sets forth a five-stage continuum of cognitive learning that characterizes the progress from novice to expert. Carter explains that novices and advanced beginners utilize global, process-based learning and problem-solving strategies; that intermediate and advanced students shift ʾ hierarchical and case-dependent strategies; and that experts draw intuitively upon extensive knowledge, pattern recognition, and "holistic similarity recognition" (271-72). If students are exercising different cognitive skills at different stages in their learning, it makes sense that they may be responsive to different kinds of information and tutoring styles at different stages, too. Our personal and WAC experiences suggest that, at the very least, for intermediate and advanced students, and perhaps on occasion for beginners, too, one tutoring approach does not fit all.

An Alternative Mode of Practice: Master Classes in Music

Since we have encountered so many positive alternative representations of the tutoring of writing, we have started to ask ourselves when such practices are helpful and exactly how they can be best characterized. Interestingly, in order to find answers we have had to look outside the discipline. This is not surprising since, according to Michael Agar, most of us sometimes have difficulty seeing alternatives to our own ways of thinking, especially to everyday notions that seem based on common sense.

> There are two ways of looking at differences. . . . One way is to figure out that the differences are the tip of the iceberg, the signal that two different systems are at work. Another way is to notice all the things that the other [system] lacks when compared to you[rs], the so-called *deficit theory* approach. . . .   The deficit theory does have its advantages. But it's a prison. It locks you into a closed room in an old building with no windows. . . . (Agar 23, emphasis in original)

In other words, within a strong system generally held notions and behaviors so permeate our lives that only they seem legitimate or make sense, while all other notions and behaviors seem illegitimate. In order for alternative practices to look sensible, they must be appreciated from within another strong system. One such system that may be found outside of writing instruction is the practice of master classes in music education. Master classes are a form of public tutoring that is standard practice in music education (Winer 29). The circumstances and conduct of master classes are almost totally opposite those seen in nondirective tutoring practices.[3]

During a master class an expert music teacher meets with a group of students studying the same specialty, such as piano, voice, strings, brass, etc. The students vary in their achievement levels, from novice to near-expert. Several students come to the session prepared to be tutored on their performance of a piece or a portion of a piece, while others may come as observers. The tutorial typically begins with one student's performance; then the master teacher works over a section of the piece with the student, suggesting different ways to play a passage, to shape a tone, to breathe, to stand or sit, or even to hold an instrument. On occasion, the master teacher will play the passage herself and ask the student to play it with her or immediately after her. Then, as a typical end-of-the-tutorial strategy, the master teacher has the student play the whole passage or the piece again. At this time it is not unusual for those who are observing to respond with a new sense of understanding about the music or the technique.

When a master class is at its best, the emotional tone is compelling. The atmosphere is charged with excitement, with a sense of community, and with successive moments of recognition and appreciation. Excitement comes from the public performances, which are often anxiety provoking for the performer; but there is relaxation, too, for no one expects the perfection of

a formal performance. Instead, a sense of community animates the participants, who are willing to have their performances scrutinized in order to improve, and everyone recognizes those moments during the tutorial when increased mastery passes into the hands of the student. Indeed, all the participants have a sense of high expectation, for they have access to someone who has mastery, who wants to share this knowledge with them, and who, by showing them about a limited passage of music, reveals a world of knowledge, attitude, and know-how.

Examples of such master classes can be found in the documentary *From Mao to Mozart: Isaac Stern in China*, a film about violinist Isaac Stern's 1979 visit to China. The film, which won an Academy Award for the best documentary of 1980, includes several excerpts from master classes on the violin offered by Stern to a variety of students in China. In one scene, Stern works with a young, extremely able violinist who is having trouble following his precise suggestions. Suddenly, Stern says he will share a secret with her. He plays a passage from her solo piece and then pulls out an extra shoulder pad hidden under his suit jacket. This extra padding enables him to hold his violin in a position that facilitates his playing. Later, the student replays the passage while Stern pushes up and positions her violin as if she, too, were wearing the secret padding. Her performance suddenly improves so much that the audience recognizes the change and bursts into applause. Throughout this episode, there is a sense of delight, of the sharing of important information, and of appreciation.

What strikes us as important about master classes is that they feature characteristics exactly opposite current tutoring orthodoxy. They are hierarchical: there is an open admission that some individuals have more knowledge and skill than others, and that the knowledge and skills are being "handed down." This handing down is directive and public; during tutoring the expert provides the student with communally and historically tested options for performance and technical improvement. Also, a good deal of effort during tutoring is spent on imitation or, at its best, upon emulation. Rather than assuming that this imitation will prevent authentic self-expression, the tutor and the student assume that imitation will lead to improved technique, which will enable freedom of expression. Finally, there is an important sense of desire and appreciation. The students have sought out the expert because they already have recognized the value of her knowledge and skills, and because she seeks to share this expertise with students, both to preserve and to expand the discipline and its traditions. Mutual appreciation and mutual desire seem to be at the center of this kind of teaching. In music master classes, sitting at the feet of the master is one way of learning.

Reflections upon Alternative Tutorial Practices

Although the master class model has much to offer writing centers, it is not immune to abuse. History is littered with examples of directive,

authoritative "tutoring" gone awry, from sports coaching to religious cults. Nor are all music master classes as successful as those portrayed in the documentary about Isaac Stern. The famous German conductor Wilhelm Furtwangler, for example, was known to belittle and physically abuse his students and orchestra members (Fenelon 116). But such cases represent alternative practices run amok, when authoritative has become authoritarian, when directive has become dictatorial, and when imitative has become repressive. The challenge for writing centers is to know the best features of these alternative pedagogies in order to broaden current practice. We need to know enough about these practices to prevent abusive application and to secure their benefits for students and their tutors.

Music is not the only discipline to use alternative tutoring practices. In art education, the studio seminar is an important and widely practiced form of public tutorial. According to Wendy Holmes, a professor of art history at the University of Rhode Island, studio seminar is the crucial intermediate course for art majors, when they start exploring, locating, and solving artistic problems on their own, whether in sculpture, painting, or other media. During studio time, students work on their own projects, and the instructor "visits" and tutors each student individually, suggesting ideas, options, or techniques for the project; and during seminar time, students display their work to each other and to the instructor for public commentary, analysis, and reflection. Studio seminar is a mix of private and public tutoring that is directive. In pharmacy practice internships, senior pharmacy majors are placed in real-world settings to observe their professors in action, to apply their own newly acquired professional knowledge, and to receive guided practice in a mix of private and public tutoring (Hume). Nursing students take "clinicals," courses which provide the same combination of observation and guided practice as do medical internships and residencies (Godfrey). All these examples include practices that are more similar to the music master class than to nondirective writing tutoring. Emulative learning is conducted in a hierarchical environment to facilitate new information or masterly behavior within a domain. While these examples of alternative practices are most commonly found at intermediate or advanced levels, they are sometimes usefully applied with novices, too (as we explain below).

These instances of public tutoring that are the norm within certain disciplines provide an opportunity to reflect upon the constellation of conditions that make directive tutoring fruitful. Three strands of research are important: research on the development of expertise (including connections to imitation and modeling) helps explain the links between directive tutoring and cognitive development; theoretical explanations of subjectivities help us understand directive tutoring and social development; research on academic literacy helps us understand directive tutoring and disciplinary development.

As we have already noted, research about expertise helps elucidate the

connections between cognitive skills development and alternative tutoring practices for all learners, from novice to near-expert. Specifically, Carter explains that experts have extensive "repertoires" for problem solving, repertoires built on domain-specific knowledge and experience. He points out that chess grand masters have about "50,000 meaningful chess configurations in their repertoires" (269). Carter argues that novices in all domains build up such repertoires, gradually shifting their modes of thinking from global, general purpose strategies to the hierarchical, domain-specific strategies used by experts in the field (269). Similarly, in her review of the literature on the cognitive aspects of expertise, Geisler points to students in physics solving "thousands of word problems" as they build up domain-specific problem solving repertoires (60). Geisler explains that the changes which characterize the cognitive move from novice to expert include the development of abstract representations of specific cases, the replacing of literal description with abstract discourse, and the rehearsal of extended arguments to support solutions to problems (9-54).

With this research in mind, we turn first to intermediate stages of development, followed by a look at the needs of novices. We find that master classes, studio seminars, clinicals, and other representations of directive tutoring enable committed intermediate and advanced students to observe, practice, and develop widely valued repertoires. When the studio instructor turns the student's attention away from the student's own painting and toward the painting of a master, the student sees how an expert has solved the same problem of light, color, and form. When the studio instructor dabs some pigment on the student's canvas and transforms the impact of the picture, the student observes how experts handle the major elements of the discipline. Throughout the studio seminar, the student has time to practice similar solutions and try out others. Thus, directive tutoring provides a particularly efficient transmission of domain-specific repertoires, far more efficient and often less frustrating than expecting students to reinvent these established practices. At its best, directive tutoring provides a sheltered, protected time and space within the discipline for these intermediate and advanced students to make the shift between general strategies to domain strategies. This cognitive shift seems to depend upon observation and extensive practice—often in emulation of the activities of the tutor-expert—leading to the accumulation of expert repertoires and tacit information.

Novice writers can also benefit from observing and emulating important cognitive operations. In "Modeling: A Process Method of Teaching," Muriel Harris explains that for novice writers, too, composing skills and writing behaviors may be learned through imitation, and that productive patterns of invention or editing may come to replace less useful ones through observation and "protected" practice. In fact, using some of the same techniques that we are arguing for in this article, Harris reports a case study in which she turned

to modeling after observing the nonproductive composing habits of a novice writer named Mike.

> Scrambling for a better technique [than free writing], I seized on modeling. . . . In preparation I explained [to Mike] the strategies we would use for the next few sessions. We would begin by having him give me a topic to write on for fifteen to twenty minutes. I would begin by thinking about the rhetorical situation, the "who," "what," "why," plus a few operators to achieve my goal. After these few minutes of planning, I would start writing and keep writing. . . . When I was done, we would reverse roles, and I would give him a topic. As much as possible, he would try to copy the behavior he had observed. All of these instructions were preceded by brief explanations of what he would observe and the principles he would try to use. My intent was to model a pattern of behavior for Mike to observe and try out and also to monitor his attempts by listening to his protocol and observing his actions. (78)

After three such sessions, Harris reports that "Mike's writing improved noticeably." We note that in these sessions Harris was being directive, telling the student what to observe, what topics to write on, and what behaviors to imitate. We note, too, that the modeling continued for several sessions, with Harris providing a repeated, fixed focus upon specific writing repertoires, and that the student engaged in several learning activities—observing, imitating, and practicing—always guided by Harris' supportive words. We take this to be a version of directive tutoring at its best, with periods of observation and protected practice focused upon important skills development. As Harris says, "And what better way is there to convince students that writing is a process that requires effort, thought, time and persistence than to go through all that writing, scratching out, rewriting and revising with *and for* our students?" (81, emphasis ours).

Cognitive development, however, is not the only change students undergo as they engage in formal education. Recent work in cultural criticism suggests that as students strive to attain academic knowledge or a new understanding of a profession or career, they inevitably occupy a new subject position, one that may be well-served by directive tutoring practices. These points are most easily explained with respect to intermediate and advanced students, but the ideas apply to beginners as well. Most intermediate or advanced students are highly motivated, active learners, already working with a significant amount of domain knowledge and with the representations of the field given to them by their instructors. As they master this information, they typically start to see themselves as members of a domain community. For example, Faigley and Hansen note that students who successfully completed an advanced course in psychology "felt confident that they could write a publishable report, suggesting that they viewed

themselves at the end of the course as fledgling members of the field, able to think and write like psychologists" (144). Similarly, Geisler states, "Professional identity becomes part of personal identity" (92). Bizzell notes that admission to the "academic discourse community is as much social as cognitive, that it is best understood as an initiation" (125). In other words, as intermediate and advanced students get a sense of a domain, they start to occupy a subject position as a *participant* in the domain that is both confirmed by others and assumed by the student. But, as Robert Brooke suggests, this experience of shifting subjectivities and the transformation of identity is *not* necessarily limited to intermediate or advanced students. Brooke found that students in an *introductory* level English class who were encouraged to imitate the drafting processes of their teacher were also receptive to other aspects of being a writer, including the expressions of attitudes, values, and stances towards experiences that lie at the heart of a writer's identity. By the end of the semester several of the students in Brooke's study came to view themselves as writers, and they accepted this identity as new and exciting (32-5). All of these researchers draw attention to the social dimensions of learning and to the important connections between domain processes and social identity.

Directive tutoring supports these connections. Not only does directive tutoring support imitation as a legitimate practice, it allows both student *and* tutor to be the subjects of the tutoring session (while nondirective tutoring allows only the student's work to be the center of the tutoring session). For example, when the master musician rephrases a passage for the intermediate or advanced violin student, the tutor's phrasing, tone, and body language become the subject of the session—her skills *and* her way of being a musician—but the student does not necessarily feel that his musicianship has been appropriated. Instead, the student, too, will have his turn as musician in this master class, and this confirms his musicianship. The interaction with the master teacher establishes that he, too, is a musician. The social nature of directive and emulative tutoring serves to endorse the student's worth as an emerging professional. Similarly, directive tutoring of writing presents more than a demonstration of steps in the writing process. It models a writer's attitudes, stances, and values. In so doing, it unites the processes of writing with the subjectivity of being a writer. As Brooke points out, not all students, particularly not all novices, would choose to assume the subjectivity of their writing tutor or teacher, but when they do, they encase writing processes in the values, attitudes, and acts of interpretation that make writing a socially meaningful experience (37-8). There is much to be gained by unifying the processes of writing with the writer herself. Directive tutoring displays this unity, even for novices.

Finally, in light of research on academic literacy, we speculate that directive tutoring lays bare crucial rhetorical processes that otherwise remain hidden or are delivered as tacit knowledge throughout the academy. Accord-

ing to Geisler, academic literacy and achievement of professionalism are tied not only to domain content and personal identity but also to mastery of rhetorical processes (88-92). These processes of reasoning, argumentation, and interpretation support a discipline's socially-constructed knowledge base. Those students who learn to recognize these rhetorical processes seem also to come to understand a discipline. Geisler argues that the current system of education is constructed to keep these rhetorical processes hidden from students, usually until sometime during graduate school, thus creating a "great divide" among those who have mastered such processes and those who have not (89-90). Geisler charges that academicians and professionals are complicit in hiding these crucial rhetorical processes from most students and the public, thus ensuring their own social status and power over others. Her book is an attempt to place before the public the argument that rhetorical processes must be made more prominent in education if we are to give all students access to academic literacy and a share in the wealth of our society. Although Geisler does not present a method for revealing rhetorical processes earlier in education, she does present a fascinating case study in which such processes were made public (214-29). In a philosophy class, students had a chance to hear their instructor build an argument for a comparative reading of several texts, tear down that structure, and then rebuild it. When the teacher honestly shared his rhetorical processes in this manner, Geisler found that the students gained both a wide appreciation of a discipline and also an ability to express themselves within it (226-227).

We argue that directive tutoring, at its best, is similarly empowering. Directive tutoring displays rhetorical processes in action. When a tutor redrafts problematic portions of a text for a student, the changes usually strengthen the disciplinary argument and improve the connection to current conversation in the discipline. These kinds of changes and the accompanying metalanguage or marginalia often reveal how things are argued in the discipline. Thus, directive tutoring provides interpretive options for students when none seem available, and it unmasks the system of argumentation at work within a discipline. In fact, we speculate that when faculty have not developed an appreciation of the connections between the social construction of disciplinary knowledge and related rhetorical processes, they treat knowledge of the discipline as self-evident and absolute rather than as changing and socially negotiated. Directive tutoring is based upon the articulation of rhetorical processes in order to make literate disciplinary practice plain enough to be imitated, practiced, mastered, and questioned.

Implications for the Writing Center

Alternative tutoring practices are provocative for the writing center, especially if it is to develop into the kind of writing community Stephen North calls for in "The Idea of a Writing Center," a place where all writers—

novices and experts— receive support for their writing. We need to keep in mind the crucial cognitive, social, and rhetorical changes students undergo as they strive to become proficient writers in the academy. The writing center could better help to facilitate these developments by serving as a site where directive tutoring provides a sheltered and protected time and space for practice that leads to the accumulation of important repertoires, the expression of new social identities, and the articulation of domain-appropriate rhetoric. Furthermore, if the crucial difference between novice and advanced expertise is the development of rhetorical practices, then writing centers could be the site where instructors from a variety of disciplines articulate and demonstrate these practices, so that students may observe, emulate, question, and critique them.

Many writing centers are already providing elements of these practices. For example, Muriel Harris reports that professors from across the curriculum participate in writing centers, talking about the features of domain-specific writing ("Writing Center and Tutoring" 168-69.) Kiedaisch and Dinitz, as well as Leone Scanlon, supply examples of knowledgeable students from a variety of domains tutoring in writing centers. At the University of Rhode Island a writing center tutor is present during a physics laboratory, on hand for conversation and consultation as students gather and record data in their lab notebooks, as they write up their lab reports, and as they revise their drafts in light of the instructor's responses. Finally, Louise Smith describes two writing programs that draw on experts for writing instruction. One program at Queens College pairs faculty members with advanced undergraduates, and another at the University of Massachusetts/Boston fosters collaboration between faculty and tutors to disseminate theory and research about composition.

Although these applications of public and domain-based tutoring are interesting and impressive, they are piecemeal and seem prompted by concerns other than critically broadening orthodox tutoring practices. We probably do not know the best systematic application in the writing center of directive, public, and emulative tutoring; we probably do not yet know the writing center equivalent of master classes. We do know, however, at least some of the features that should be part of this application. The writing center can be a site where ongoing conversation about the rhetoric of a domain occurs *in* the rhetoric of the domain. For example, the writing center can be a site where professors work occasionally and *publicly* on their writing and on others' writing. Also, the writing center can be a site where the proficient (such as graduate students and seniors) and the novice converse about "intersubjective knowledge" (Geisler 182), or that kind of discourse which externalizes and argues for domain-appropriate abstractions, which externalizes and argues for domain-appropriate linkages to case-specific data, and which provides opportunities for reflection and critique. This is exactly

the kind of discourse now hidden from novices; the writing center is the place to make it public, directive, and available for imitation, appreciation, and questioning. Finally, the writing center can be a site where experts and novices meet often to externalize tacit information—those values, assumptions, and options that inform all texts within a discipline.

Unless writing center research and methods are enlarged to include these practices, writing centers are in danger of remaining part of the social arrangements which, according to Geisler, encourage the a-rhetorical accumulation of domain knowledge and which keep expert rhetorical processes at a distance from the lay public and the novice:

> Our current educational sequence provides all students with a naive understanding of the more formal components of expertise but withholds an understanding of [the] tacit rhetorical dimension. In this way ... a great divide has been created—not a great divide between orality and literacy as literacy scholars originally suggested, but rather a great divide with experts on one side with a complete if disjoint practice of expertise, and lay persons on the other side. (89-90)

Current writing center and tutoring practices support this social arrangement by making an orthodoxy of process-based, Socratic, private, a-disciplinary tutoring. This orthodoxy situates tutors of writing at the beginning and global stages of writing instruction, it prevents the use of modeling and imitation as a legitimate tutoring technique, and it holds to a minimum the conduct of critical discourse about rhetorical practices in other fields. If writing center practices are broadened to include *both* directive and non-directive tutoring, the result would be an enrichment of tutoring repertoires, stronger connections between the writing center and writers in other disciplines, and increased attention to the cognitive, social, and rhetorical needs of writers at all stages of development.

Notes

[1]The authors wish to thank Meg Carroll, Rhode Island College, and Teresa Ammirati, Connecticut College, for the use of selected resources from their writing centers .

[2]Clark does not universally dismiss imitation, modeling, or other directive techniques. In "Collaboration and Ethics in Writing Center Pedagogy," she suggests that "imitation may be viewed as ultimately creative, enabling the imitator to expand previous, perhaps ineffective models into something more effective which ultimately becomes his or her own. . . . Sometimes a suggestion of a phrase or two can be wonderfully instructive" (8-9).

[3]The term "master class" may lead to some confusion about the differences between teaching and tutoring. We are referring to "tutoring" as one-on-one instruction, coaching, and responding; and "teaching" as one-to-whole group instruction, coaching, and responding.

Works Cited

Agar, Michael. *Language Shock: Understanding the Culture of Conversation.* New York: Wm. Morrow, 1994.

Ashton-Jones, Evelyn. "Asking the Right Questions: A Heuristic for Tutors." *The Writing Center Journal* 9.1 (1988): 29-36.

Bizzell, Patricia. "College Composition: Initiation Into the Academic Discourse Community." *Academic Discourse and Critical Consciousness.* Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 1992.

Brannon, Lil, and C. H. Knoblauch. "On Students' Rights to Their Own Texts: A Model of Teacher Response." *College Composition and Communication* 33 (1982): 157-166.

Brooke, Robert. "Modeling a Writer's Identity: Reading and Imitation in the Writing Classroom." *College Composition and Communication* 39 (1988): 23-41.

Bruffee, Kenneth A. "Collaborative Learning and the 'Conversation of Mankind.'" *College English* 46 (1984): 635-52.

---. *A Short Course In Writing: Practical Rhetoric for Teaching Composition through Collaborative Learning.* 3rd ed. New York: HarperCollins, 1993.

Carter, Michael. "The Idea of Expertise." *College Composition and Communication* 41 (1990): 269-86.

Clark, Irene. "Collaboration and Ethics in Writing Center Pedagogy." *The Writing Center Journal* 9.1 (1988): 3-11.

---. *Writing in the Center.* Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt, 1985.

Connors, Robert. J. Address. URI/Trinity College Second Summer Conference on Writing. Kingston, May 1994.

Elbow, Peter. *Writing Without Teachers.* New York: Oxford UP, 1973.

Faigley, Lester, and Kristine Hansen. "Learning to Write in the Social Sciences." *College Composition and Communication* 36 (1985): 140-49.

Fenelon, Fania. *Playing for Time.* New York: Atheneum, 1977.

150 *The Writing Center Journal*

Flower, Linda, and John R. Hayes. "A Cognitive Process Theory of Writing." *College Composition and Communication* 32 (1981): 365-87.

Geisler, Cheryl. *Academic Literacy and the Nature of Expertise: Reading, Writing, and Knowing in Academic Philosophy.* Hillsdale, N J: Erlbaum, 1994.

Godfrey, Deborah. Professor of Nursing. University of Rhode Island. Personal interview. 29 July 1994.

Haring-Smith, Tori. "Changing Students' Attitudes: Writing Fellows Programs." *Writing Across the Curriculum: A Guide to Developing Programs.* Ed. Susan H. McLeod and Margot Soven. Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1992. 177-88.

Harris, Muriel. "The Writing Center and Tutoring in WAC Programs." McLeod and Soven. 154-74.

---. "Modeling: A Process Method of Teaching." *College English* 45 (1983): 74-84.

Holmes, Wendy. Professor of Art History. University of Rhode Island. Personal interview. 15 July 1994.

Hume, Anne. Professor of Pharmacy Practice. University of Rhode Island. Personal interview. 15 July 1993.

"Imitation/Modeling as a Teaching Method." Writing Center Discussion List [Online]. 19-30 May 1994. Available e-mail: WCENTER@UNICORN.ACS.TTU.EDU

Kiedaisch, Jean, and Sue Dinitz. "So What? The Limitations of the Generalist Tutor." *Writing Center Journal* 14.1(1993): 63-74.

Meyer, Emily, and Louise Z. Smith. *The Practical Tutor.* New York: Oxford UP, 1987.

Murray, Donald M. *A Writer Teaches Writing.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1968.

---. "Teaching the Other Self: The Writer's First Reader." *College Composition and Communication* 33 (1982): 140-47.

North, Stephen. "The Idea of A Writing Center." *College English* 46 (1984): 433-46.

Scanlon, Leone. "Recruiting and Training Tutors for Cross-Disciplinary Writing Programs." *The Writing Center Journal* 6 (1986): 37-41.

Schwegler, Robert A. "Meaning and Interpretation." URI/Trinity College 2nd. Summer Conf. on Writing. Kingston, May 1994.

Selzer, Jack. "Exploring Options In Composing." *College Composition and Communication* 35 (1984): 276-84.

Smith, Louise Z. "Independence and Collaboration: Why We Should Decentralize Writing Centers." *The Writing Center Journal* 7.1 (1986): 3-10.

Sommers, Nancy. "Responding to Student Writing." *College Composition and Communication* 33 (1982): 148-66.

Soven, Margot. "Conclusion: Sustaining Writing Across the Curriculum Programs." McLeod and Soven. 189-97.

Stern, Isaac. *From Mao to Mozart: Isaac Stern in China.* Dir. Murray Lerner. Harmony Film Group, 1980.

"Teaching Composition: A Position Statement." *College English* 46 (1984): 612-14.

Winer, Deborah G. "Close Encounters: Pros and Cons of Master Classes." *Opera News* 54 (1989): 28-31.

Linda K. Shamoon is Associate Professor of English, Director of the College Writing Program, and Director of the Faculty Institute on Writing at the University of Rhode Island. She has published articles on the research paper, on writing across the curriculum, and on writing in sociology, and she has two articles forthcoming this spring on the place of rhetoric in composition programs, one in *JAC: Journal of Advanced Composition* and one in *WPA: Writing Program Administration.*

Deborah H. Burns has taught writing for over twelve years and is Director of the Writing Center and the Communications Technology Classroom at the University of Rhode Island. She received her Ph.D. in English at the University of Rhode Island.