CHARACTERIZING WRITING TUTORIALS

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

EMILY JEAN STANDRIDGE

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Jackie Grutsch McKinney

Ball State University
Muncie, Indiana
December 2011
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract................................................................................................................................iii
Acknowledgments................................................................................................................iv
Chapter 1: Introductions.......................................................................................................1
Chapter 2: Literature Review..............................................................................................17
Chapter 3: Methods and Methodologies............................................................................47
Chapter 4: Findings.............................................................................................................77
Chapter 5: Concluding Thoughts and Implications.........................................................166
Works Cited........................................................................................................................191
Works Consulted...............................................................................................................198
Appendix A........................................................................................................................203
Appendix B........................................................................................................................205
Appendix C........................................................................................................................208
Appendix D........................................................................................................................209
Appendix E........................................................................................................................211
The idea for this dissertation began in the Spring of 2010 when I conducted interviews with the tutors at the Writing Center at Ball State for a presentation on “bad” tutorial sessions at the International Writing Center Association Collaborative at the Conference on College Composition and Communication. One of my co-presenters had noted a lack of discussion of “bad” sessions in writing center studies literature, so I wanted to find out how the tutors themselves thought and talked about good and bad sessions. Almost all of them claimed that the student determined how well the session went: If the students wanted to be at the sessions, they believed that those students would get something beneficial from their sessions, and if the students actively worked with their tutors, the sessions would be “good.”

I agreed that student involvement was indeed an issue in writing tutorials. The idea that a student who wanted to be there would have a better session than one who did not correlated with my own experiences as a tutor. Sessions where students came with specific questions and a willingness to learn are almost always the best sessions I can remember. Of course I remember plenty of sessions where the student was not prepared and did not get much from the session, much like the tutors suggested as well. I remember one in particular, quite early in my career as a tutor, when a student came to the tutorial asking for “editing” help. Much bigger problems than the editing errors were
immediately apparent; the thesis was flawed and the main points did not all relate to each other, let alone the flawed thesis. As I tried to broach these topics with the student, he was less and less responsive. He finally said that he wanted editing help and nothing more. I literally threw my hands up as the student left and vented to the other tutors about my time being wasted because the student obviously did not want “real” writing help. Thus the idea that the student controlled the success of the session makes good sense based on my own experiences as a tutor.

Yet, despite my agreement with the tutors that students could very strongly impact the tone of the session, I could not wholeheartedly agree with them that students were the only ones to blame. I could not agree with the assumption among these tutors that because they were paid to be at the session, because it was their job, their role in making a session “good” was unvarying. They thought they always contributed positively to the session, but I knew that was not always the case for me. I remember one night when I was the only tutor available and I was working “drop-in” hours, time made available for any student to come with any kind of question without making an appointment. It was a Thursday night, a typically quiet time, and I expected to get some of my own studying done. As a rush of students came in, I found that none of the students were very responsive to my suggestions and that they all left rather quickly without significant improvement in their projects. I want to believe that the students that night (and in all the other bad sessions across my career) were already harried and thus were the cause of our bad interactions, but when I am truly honest with myself, I know I was the problem. Those students were disrupting “my” quiet time and I am certain that made me more brusque and less willing to engage with them than usual. Along with this reflection on the harm I certainly did in my own sessions, I casually
observed some of the tutors in our center sometimes contributing negatively to their sessions. I began to wonder why tutors are so willing to dismiss our influence on the sessions. I asked myself, “what exactly is the influence of the tutor’s participation and engagement in the session and with the student? What is the influence of the student’s participation and engagement and how can it be assessed? How do both the tutors and the students influence each other and the session?”

As I asked these questions, the role that I played in my current sessions became my focus. I wanted to examine the signs I was giving to let the student know that I was interested in what she was doing and invested in her work. It was possible to notice some patterns and to make some changes based on my self-observations and reflections, but I knew I was limited by my own participation in those sessions. I was also limited by my inability to objectively attend to the behavior of the students along with my inability to assess what the students were thinking in behaving in any particular way. I wanted to know more about how the interactions worked between students and tutor and more about what characterized “good” sessions than I was able to learn through my observations and reflections.

My next step in investigating the issue of “good” and “bad” sessions and what contributes to them, as a good scholar, was to look at the literature. In particular, I was interested in the tutor training guides made available to most tutors. These texts contain stories, transcripts, tips, and reflections on all kinds of sessions that create an image of what good and bad sessions can be. These materials were of particular interest to me because my tutors had regular access to them and I thought they might be the source of many of their assumptions about how sessions should work.

Description and discussion of “good” sessions are harder to find than bad ones in
these guides, but they do exist. Paula Gillespie and Neal Lerner in *The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Peer Tutoring* include the following written reflection from a new tutor, Caroline, after her first tutorial.

Time ran out on my agonizing, however, when she finished reading the paper and looked at me expectantly. Forced to say something, anything, I looked back down at my notes and asked the first question that came to mind, about whether some information that she had included under one point might really work better to support another point. That first question, and her ready, engaged response, was all it took, and soon we both were able to discuss ways in which she could make her three points distinct from each other, but simultaneously in support of one thesis. We also talked about smooth transitions between her arguments, and tried to think of ways in which one of the arguments could be seen as providing a different angle on another, which would allow her to move from one focus to the other with ease.

When the session ended, the student told me, “This was fun.” (95-96) This description of a new tutor's triumph despite being fearful during her first session does point to things the tutor has done well, but the tutor herself focuses more on the student's “ready, engaged response” being “all it took” to make the session a successful one. There is little discussion in this tutor's reflections about what specific characteristics identified this as being a “good” session. Gillespie and Lerner sum up this story with the simple statement “Caroline could relate well to the writer she worked with, and her session went very well” (96). Neither the tutor herself not the writers of the text look far beyond the student's input as they reflect on and/or discuss what went well in the session. Instead, they all rely largely on the student's verbal praise of the session to
identify it as successful in the first place.

Another way that “good” sessions are highlighted in the tutor training literature is seen in the tips provided for tutors to establish the groundwork for a good session. Leigh Ryan and Lisa Zimmerelli begin their text *The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors* by discussing “The Writing Center as Workplace” with pointers about what the tutor should do in a session.

Tutoring involves both responsibility and trust: therefore, you are encouraged to observe certain principles in conduct in your relationships with writers, other tutors, and teachers. To make apprehensive writers feel more comfortable, writing centers tend deliberately to project a cordial, inviting, relaxed atmosphere. Tutors reflect this ambiance through their casual friendliness. (1) This is followed by several more characteristics a tutor should embody: “pleasant and courteous,” “cheerful,” positive, and relaxed, but not too relaxed with students (1-2). They imply that with these characteristics in place, tutors will have done all they can to make the session successful. This guide gives tutors responsibility for what happens in the session, but it does not discuss how these things work in an actual tutorial or how to perpetuate these characteristics while actually in contact with a student. Also, they make the assumption that these tips are “easy” things to do every day, when, as humans, we know it can be quite hard to be cheerful, positive, and relaxed in day to day life.

Much more attention is given to the potential “bad” sessions a tutor might encounter in these tutor training guides. “Bad” sessions are not commonly described or reflected on as individual entities; rather, “bad” sessions are presented in the format of tips for working with different kinds of students or situations that create “bad” sessions. Gillespie and Lerner have an entire chapter on “troubleshooting” that discusses
problems and problem students; among their nineteen areas of concern are things like “the writer comes in and asks you to proofread” (160), “the writer won't revise” (162), and “the writer is not cooperating” (163). Ryan and Zimmerelli have a similar chapter titled “Coping with Different Tutoring Situations” where they discuss “the writer who comes at the last minute” (92), “the unresponsive writer” (93), “the antagonistic writer” (93), “the writer who selects an inappropriate topic or uses offensive language” (94), “the writer who plagiarizes” (95), and “the writer with the 'perfect' paper” (97). These chapters are spent discussing ways to counteract an attitude or behavior the student brings to the session. The tutor's job is framed as coercing the student out of these negative behaviors rather than as a cooperation with the student to negotiate productive work. Overwhelmingly, these handbooks frame “bad” sessions as the result of specific kinds of students and student behaviors.

Given this is the kind of information commonly given to new tutors (those in my center included), it makes sense that tutors would fall into the same kind of thinking. They know they have to behave in certain “work appropriate” behaviors, but they believe these behaviors are the same all day, every day and that they are always easy to enact. Despite being able to understand how tutors came to their beliefs, it does not make them any more acceptable in my view.

After talking to my tutors and looking at how their beliefs may have been founded, I still did not have any solid answers as to what makes the interaction between the student and the tutor “good” or “bad.” I still had few solid descriptors of good and bad sessions. And I still was looking for answers.

Writing Center History and Theory
These tutor training guides and handbooks give a glimpse into the rich conversation that is writing center studies. Complex conversations about approaches, methods, ideologies, and best practices abound. Throughout these complex conversations, “good” and “bad” sessions are defined in various ways, which is why I cannot commit myself to using those terms concretely. There is no consensus as to what the ideal sessions would be or how to achieve it. The lack of agreement leads to conflicting definitions. The conversation surrounding the issue of “directiveness” highlights this problem nicely.

One of the most compelling discussions of bad sessions is seen in Anne DiPardo’s “‘Whispers of Coming and Going’: Lessons from Fannie.” The sessions DiPardo studied were between Fannie, a Navajo student, and Morgan, an African American tutor. DiPardo discusses how Morgan attempted to use a specific pedagogy with Fannie usually referred to as “non-directive tutoring.” Morgan tried “to assume an even more low-profile approach, speaking only to ask open-ended questions or to paraphrase Fannie’s statements, steadfastly avoiding the temptation to fill silences with her ideas and asides” (134-135). The idea behind this approach is to make room for the students to voice their concerns and their solutions to the problems identified instead of allowing the tutor to provide most of the input in the session. DiPardo notes, though, that Morgan often “gave up” on helping Fannie and that “Fannie’s meager hints [at what help she needed] went unheeded” (133). The conclusion DiPardo reaches is that Morgan, and really all tutors, need to “listen more” and to find ways to make students able to express their concerns in ways that make sense to them. This might mean working outside a chosen pedagogy or reinterpreting that pedagogy to suit the needs of the individual student.

DiPardo is refreshing in her ability to discuss the shortcoming of both the student
and tutor (although more fault is given to Morgan here) in leading to the failure of these sessions. She is able to see how the interaction failed, rather than blaming a single party for the entire problem. DiPardo also points to one of the underlying causes of the lack of clear discussion of tutorial characteristics: there is no consensus as to the best approach to tutoring, and discussions surrounding good and bad sessions revolve tightly around the particular pedagogy to which the writer subscribes. Here, DiPardo ultimately describes the failure of non-directive tutoring as the root problem in the tutorial. Another strand of research could have interpreted it differently. The sessions could have failed, for instance, because of a failure to establish a proper idea of peerness between them, given their very different backgrounds.

Irene Clark gives an overview of this debate in her article “Perspectives on the Directive/Non-Directive Continuum in the Writing Center.” She describes the non-directive side of the debate as being “traced to the social ethics orientation of the process movement” with an approach that “characterizes the ideal interaction between a writing center tutor and a student client as one in which the tutor intervenes as little as possible” (33). Clark points to both Stephen North and Jeff Brooks as the theorists who first advocated this approach (33). On the other hand, Clark points to Shamoon and Burns’ “A Critique of Pure Tutoring” as establishing questions about the non-directive method. She claims that defining “directiveness” in tutoring is nearly impossible. Clark then goes on to point out that students, tutors, and teachers all understand “directiveness” in very different ways, though, further complicating the issue.

Susan Blau and John Hall discuss how their tutors feel frustration and guilt over “being sucked down into line editing,” a very directive practice, while tutoring non-native speakers of English (23). The tutors presented at the beginning of the article “Guilt Free
Tutoring: Rethinking How We Tutor Non-Native-English-Speaking Students” believe they should be non-directive with all students and thus feel guilt over being more directive with students who are non-native speakers of English. Blau and Hall go on to challenge the need for this feeling of guilt because they argue that this kind of student has need of more directive tutoring than non-directive tutoring. They subscribe to a different pedagogical approach, at least with this population of student, and thus do not deem directiveness as “bad” in their descriptions of session. “Good” sessions are seen very differently when one subscribes to the non-directive tradition. There is no middle ground when describing sessions concerned with this pedagogical approach.

Another debate in writing tutorial approaches that affects the description of “good” and “bad” sessions is seen in the debate over appropriate kinds of peerness in the writing tutorial. Kenneth Bruffee in “Peer Tutoring and the 'Conversation of Mankind’” and Muriel Harris in “Collaboration is Not Collaboration is Not Collaboration: Writing Center Tutorials versus Peer-Response Groups” argue that peer tutors must be more trained than students, but they must see themselves as learners along with the students for sessions to be successful. Tutors need to become more than just another classmate responding to the student's writing, but they do not need to see themselves as teachers of the student. John Trimbur argues in “Peer Tutoring: A Contradiction in Terms?” that the roles of “peer” and “tutor” are mutually exclusive because tutors are chosen from the student population because of their superior abilities in the classroom; their “undergraduate success and their strength as writers single them out and accentuate the differences between them and their tutorees – thereby, in effect, undercutting the peer relationship” (23). He believes that tutors should not pretend to be equal peers in the relationship; tutors should honor their superiority in writing skills in
order to best help the students in their sessions without, though, resorting to seeing themselves as “teachers.”

Again, it is easy to see how these differences of opinion would lead to very different descriptions and understandings of good and bad sessions. Those who think tutors and students should relate more strongly as peers would describe a session where the tutor commiserates with the student quite often as a good thing because the tutor is positioning him/herself as a fellow student. For those who think tutors should rely more on their advanced skills in the tutorial, moments of commiseration as fellow students could be a problem.

The discussions of different pedagogies and approaches to tutoring is important and should continue. I am not advocating a single agreed-upon set of “best practices” for all tutorials by any means. However, if we continue to rely on these points of contention to describe good and bad sessions, we will never have a language to discuss all sessions and to make comparisons across pedagogies. We will continue to struggle with the questions over how participants in tutorials understand and evaluate sessions that Isabelle Thompson and her research team identified in their article “Examining Our Lore: A Survey of Students’ and Tutors’ Satisfaction with Writing Center Conferences.” This article points to the fact that students and tutors find satisfaction in different aspects and determiners in a session. Students understand more behaviors to be directive than tutors do, for instance. Both tutors and students reported being happy with the level of directiveness in the session, which is a good thing. But, as they are not talking about the same things, problems arise.

**Flow Theory and Engagement Studies**
Instead of focusing on understanding tutorials through specific approaches, like directiveness or peerness, writing center scholars should look to more general evaluation criteria. Flow theory, a way of understanding how people process life events, provides an excellent theory to do this. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi is a psychologist who was studying happiness when he developed his theory of “optimal experience.” An optimal experience is characterized as a time “when, instead of being buffeted by anonymous forces, we do feel in control of our actions, masters of our own fate....[W]e feel a sense of exhilaration, a deep sense of enjoyment that is long cherished and that becomes a landmark in memory for what life should be like” (3). Flow theory discusses the characteristics of these optimal experiences as a way of helping set up circumstances where they will be most likely to happen.

I realized that flow theory would be an excellent tool to use in understanding tutorials as I read Lynn Briggs' reflection on one of her best tutoring experiences. Briggs narrates in “Understanding 'Spirit' in the Writing Center” her encounter with a student named Diane.

I began the session aware of the power hierarchies: I was the Center director and I had more institutionally important things to do than to take over for one of my missing staff members. I was annoyed at my Responder who asked to leave early and at the person who took the message that Diane would be late but didn’t make a note in the appointment book. I felt that my duties outweighed this opportunity to make contact. This didn’t seem like an environment in which I was likely to engage in a successful response session, much less become connected to a stranger. But Diane needed an opportunity to connect, and she pursued it. By insisting that someone meet with her immediately, she changed the power
dynamic. As soon as she began to read her paper aloud to me, I became engaged, focused, and that allowed me to listen to my “daimon,” “genius,” or “right brain” which changed the dynamic further. We took the session in a direction I had never prepared for intellectually or affectively. We connected as peers talking about her relationship with a colleague. That connection changed my world immediately, and had future ramifications. The connection was probably the reason I risked deviating from my usually problem-focused approach. (95)

Briggs was surprised by the fact that this session was such a good one: her attitude going in was designed for failure. The student, though, required her to work and, together, they created a strong session that ultimately helped Briggs rethink her approach to tutoring in some important ways.

This narrative of a good session is the most satisfying one I have read because it discusses how the tutor's approach to the session could have ruined it, but it also shows how the negotiation between the tutor and the student makes the session ultimately successful. It also clearly demonstrates how Briggs was able to assess her session outside of her traditional pedagogical framework. She is able to use and value a different approach to tutoring because of her “optimal experience” during this session. While not using flow theory as a practical tool here, Briggs points to the usefulness of this kind of theory to understand all kinds of learning experiences.

Flow theory has indeed been used to explicitly study many kinds of learning situations. Judy Abbott and Gina Briefs-Elgin discuss how flow theory can assist in understanding writing instruction across grade levels. In her article “‘Blinking Out’ and 'Having the Touch’: Two Fifth-Grade Boys Talk about Flow Experiences in Writing,” Abbott uses flow theory to describe what elementary students feel when they
are engaged in a writing project. Her argument is that students who experience flow are more likely to participate in school-related and independent writing projects, which ultimately leads these students to more academic success in both writing and other areas. In terms of college level writing, Briefs-Elgin discusses how using flow as an organizing idea in the classroom can help students find greater satisfaction in their own writing, and in their college experience more generally, in her article “Happiness and the Blank Page: Csikszentmihalyi’s Flow in the Writing Classroom.” She believes the principles of flow, especially having an “emphasis on the rewards of engagement with difficulty,” would benefit teachers, “particularly those who teach English composition, the subject many students consider most difficult” (82). With teachers and students aware of Csikszentmihalyi’s ideas of happiness and flow, students can “recognize what actually does make them happy rather than what their cultural programming tells them will make them happy” and will allow them “to anticipate flow in the laborious work so that they will embrace rather than dread writing assignments” (86). Briefs-Elgin believes that teaching writing along with the concept of flow will allow students to better engage in both their writing projects and their interactions with the world.

Outside of teaching writing, flow is used to understand how different classrooms work. Joy Egbert in her article “A Study of Flow in the Foreign Language Classroom” explores how flow could be used to understand how students begin to learn a foreign language. She discusses how using flow characteristics to design projects and testing for flow experiences during activities reveal the best ways of teaching students foreign languages. Don Rossin, Young Ro, Barbara Klein and Yi Maggie Guo discuss in their article “The Effects of Flow on Learning Outcomes in an Online Information Management Course” how students’ experiences of flow enhanced their perceived
learning and skill when taking an online information management course. They saw that while there was no relationship between flow and a student's performance on a test or quiz, “paying attention to the idea of flow in the design and delivery of online courses may improve students' perceptions of learning and student satisfaction” (93). Rossin, Ro, Klein, and Guo conclude that designing the course in a way that encourages students to engage in the learning through attempts at flow increase students' desire to do the work. Even if there was not an improvement in test scores because of attention to flow, the idea is that paying attention to flow will help students will be more willing to work at improving those test scores.

What all of these studies using flow in educational settings reveal is that it is a useful tool for understanding and enhancing learning experiences in a variety of situations. Flow theory is useful in describing how learning happens, creating assignments and class structures, and evaluating the success of classroom practices no matter what the subject, pedagogy, or area described is. This means it can be a useful tool in understanding and describing writing center tutorials that does not rely on the pedagogy used in the session.

Statement of the Problem

The language used to describe “good” and “bad” writing center sessions is inconsistent. Often, blame is placed solely on one of the participants, most often the student, for causing the bad session. Good and bad sessions are also described almost entirely based on the pedagogy that the author subscribes to, resulting in unmatched criteria being used to decide what makes a good or a bad tutorial session.

There is a strong need for a common language describing the attributes of
sessions that does not place blame for the session and that does not rely on a specific pedagogical approach. This common language can be found through the use of flow theory to describe writing center tutorials.

**Research Questions**

- What are characteristics common to all tutorial sessions?
  - Do differences in the experience of flow in the session by the student and the tutor (as assessed by the Flow Scale Survey) illuminate differences in those characteristics?

**Outline of Chapters**

Chapter 2, Literature Review, outlines the history of writing centers and traces conflicting understandings of the role and purpose of writing centers as the root of current difficulties in discussions of common tutorial characteristics. It then outlines the debates among writing center scholars currently exists and their limitations. The chapter then discusses flow theory, its aptness for discussing writing instruction, and its previous applications to writing centers.

Chapter 3, Methods and Methodologies, discusses the reasoning for choosing the case study method for this study, detailing the case study's ability to allow the participants to contribute to the knowledge of the event.

Chapter 4, Findings, discusses the findings of the case studies. It describes each case, then completes a cross case analysis of the verbal and non-verbal characteristics seen in sessions as well as how they differ between high flow rated session and low flow rated sessions.
Chapter 5, Implications, discusses how the characteristics discussed can be useful to writing center researchers, writing center administrators, tutors, and educational researchers.
I began to outline in the previous chapter how writing centers have not been able to define characteristics of all kinds of session. They rely, rather, on characteristics that depend on specific pedagogical or theoretical approaches to discuss sessions and techniques of limited applicability. These discussions lead to fruitful thinking about those particular avenues of interest, but they fail to describe the breadth of what can happen in a tutorial. Thus there is a need for descriptions of tutorials outside those approaches.

Flow theory, proposed by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, is used to understand how people process their life experiences. It has been useful in helping understand many different kinds of learning situations that have used many different teaching approaches. I believe that using flow theory to frame observations of tutorials will help me identify characteristics of all kinds of tutorials, no matter the approach taken.

In order to more fully understand the limitations of current discussions of tutorials as well as the possible uses of flow theory in studying writing centers, this chapter takes a closer look at writing center studies' history. It also explores how flow theory is currently being used to study learning interactions.

Writing Center History and Theory
Early in their history, writing centers were generally viewed, by the university at large and by writing center directors themselves, as a place for addressing remedial students' writing concerns outside of the classroom (Moore; Carino “Early”). Even within this concern for remedial students' writing skills, early writing centers had different approaches, as Robert Moore's 1950 article “The Writing Clinic and the Writing Laboratory” explores. He outlines the differences between the “writing laboratory” and the “writing clinic,” both of which with students who have remedial writing issues. The distinction between these two locations is in how each treats the students. “The clinic is primarily concerned with the diagnosis of the individual student's writing difficulties and the suggestion of remedial measures that might profitably be pursued” (4). “The writing laboratory on the other hand, is far more likely to work with the individual as a member of a group, usually a group with varying problems” (7). The writing clinic was focused on the individual: diagnosing individual problems and identifying individual solutions to those problems. Success in the writing clinic was thus a measure of how much individual students improved. The writing laboratory existed to work with a small group of students together on a number of issues: measuring success through aggregate improvement in the group of students over a wider range of writing skills. Both types of early writing centers dealt with students deemed deficient in some way, but they dealt with them differently. Moore’s analysis of the methods and successes of the two competing models of writing centers in his time highlights the importance of how the student is approached in understanding what makes tutorials successful.

Peter Carino believes that the concerns of these early center were all alike and those concerns mimic the concerns seen today. In his article entitled “Early Writing Centers: Toward a History,” Carino sees the main concerns of early centers being
“identify[ing] and debat[ing] issues identical and similar to those that have concerned centers in the last twenty-five years. What kind of place should the lab [or center] be? Whom should it serve? Who should work there? What kind of services should be provided? What form should tutorials take?” (15). Carino saw these questions playing out in his own center in 1995 as well as in the materials left by centers in the past. Carino’s contention that writing centers have not found solid answers to the questions asked starting in the 1950s highlights the problem identifying solid characteristics of tutorials. A long term concern with developing answers to the questions Carino points to is not a bad thing because it can lead to deeper understandings of long-standing issues present in any area of concern. As Carino points out, though, centers have been struggling since their creation to understand even the basic characteristics of tutorials. This cannot help but lead to confusion.

Beth Boquet argues in her article “‘Our Little Secret’: A History of Writing Centers, Pre- to Post-Open Admissions” the 1960s were a time in writing center history where there was a “move away from mere descriptions of their labs...and toward theoretical justifications of writing lab work.” (51). Methodological differences appear in these theoretical justifications; Boquet divides them into three “camps”: “(1) those who champion auto-tutorial methods, (2) those who critique these types of programmed instruction, and (3) those who seek alternatives to the traditional forms of instruction heretofore provided by writing labs” (51). Boquet points to a major shift in the discussion of writing centers toward an understanding of how important it is for students to be active in their learning in the writing center rather than just showing some kind of improvement in their writing skills. Again, though, this shift changes ideas of what a session should be.
The turn in the discussions about writing centers Boquet points to was further supported by Stephen North’s 1984 foundational article “The Idea of a Writing Center.” North calls for a change in the focus of writing center studies away from the idea of “fixing” students toward thinking about how to interact with the students visiting the centers in ways meaningful to the students. While practices have sometimes been slow to change, studies into writing centers have become more and more focused on the student and examining the elements of the sessions that influenced the students.

Along with this shift in concern from fixing students to creating quality interactions with them came new and different suggested methods of tutoring and critiques of those methods. Debates about methods of tutoring have fallen into three rather broad categories: the relationships among the parties involved in the tutorial, the level of active participation in the session by the student and/or the tutor, and the control the student and/or tutor exercises during the tutorial. These areas are generally broken down into opposing dichotomies: peers versus teachers, directive versus non-directive, and leading versus following. All of these areas focused on different ways of helping students be active and engaged in their writing center sessions.

**Peers versus Teachers**

The focus of one set of questions is on how the tutor and student best relate to each other. The use of peer tutors was championed because it was thought that students would be more likely to ask their peers for help than their teachers. The pressing questions that developed out of this use of peer tutors, though, involve just how closely tutors and students should relate as peers. Kenneth Bruffee argues in his article “Peer Tutoring and the ‘Conversation of Mankind’” that “our task must involve engaging students in conversation at as many points in the writing process as possible” in order to
help students think and write better (210). He argues that those selected as peer tutors must be taking the same level of classes as the students they will tutor, but they must have significant training outside those classes to make them more knowledgeable about the language of academics. This extra training for the tutors while they are still situated within the same classroom environments as the students will allow for deeper talk about a writing assignments. The tutors will be able to give better feedback and will thus help the students coming to tutorials more effectively.

Muriel Harris makes a similar argument in her article “Collaboration is Not Collaboration.” She argues that peer tutors do need some training in teaching writing, but that they need to be seen as “students, not paraprofessionals or preprofessionals” because as peer tutors “their community is not necessarily ours” (294). Like Bruffee, Harris believes that peer tutors must be more trained than students, but those tutors must see themselves as learners along with the students in order for the interactions to be successful. Tutors need to become more than just another classmate responding, but they do not need to see themselves as teachers. With this kind of relationship, tutors will be able to work with students on issues of concern to both of them, issues that teachers and writing center administrators may not be privy to. Tutors will be able to work with students on topics and in language that works for both of them, thus setting students up for a better learning and writing experience.

Not all writing center theorists, though, believe that students can be “peer tutors.” John Trimbur argues that the roles of “peer” and “tutor” are largely mutually exclusive in his article “Peer Tutoring: A Contradiction in Terms?” He sees that tutors are chosen from the student population because of their superior abilities in the classroom; their “undergraduate success and their strength as writers single them out and accentuate the
differences between them and their tutorees – thereby, in effect, undercutting the peer relationship” (23). His concern is that students selected as tutors will face a conflict in loyalty and training between understanding students on a peer level and on a “teacher level,” wanting to see their friends succeed and wanting to use their skill and training to teach other, lesser, students something. He ultimately argues that this tension can be made into something productive, something that the tutors can learn to work with and thus keep them engaged in the session.

These theorists are concerned with the relationship between the student and the tutor. They see different behaviors as noting peerness. Not only is there no agreement on what “peer” behavior is, there is no agreement on whether the tutor should consider him or herself a peer in the first place. Elizabeth Chilbert’s article “When Roles Collide: On Being a Writing Center Tutor and Composition Instructor” illustrates the difficulty in establishing a tutoring relationship with the student. She reflects on her experience being both an instructor of Composition and a “peer tutor” during the same semester. During that semester, she experienced a conflict in identities when one of her classroom students comes to her in the writing center for peer tutoring. She argues that she must interact as a peer only in the writing center because the writing center has worked hard to establish itself as a place for peer tutoring. They trained their staff carefully to relate to students as peers so that students can collaborate in learning rather than being taught. The problem, though, is that this particular student also expected Chilbert to be a teacher, instructing the student on the fine points of the assignment. Chilbert is conflicted as to how to behave in order to create a “good” session. She wants to be a “peer” but she has knowledge that a peer would not have. The question becomes should she give the student what he wants or should she follow writing center rules. One
interpretation of the fact that she cannot decide which would be better for the student or herself is that the conflict illustrates the deep confusion about what behavior makes a “good” session and the importance of identifying those behaviors more concretely.

**Directive versus Non-Directive**

Another of the dichotomies in research interest in writing centers focuses on questions of how much action students and tutors should participate in during the sessions. This area focuses on how much input the tutor should provide versus the student in order to get the student working as much as possible. The prevailing idea here is that students should put in at least as much effort as the tutor does because with higher effort comes higher learning. The question, of course, is how to make that happen.

Jeff Brooks, for example, argues in “Minimalist Tutoring: Making the Student Do All the Work” that “we need to make the student the primary agent in the writing center session” by refusing to edit the paper and instead being an interested listener and guide for the student(2). The goal of all of this is to “keep the student active and engaged in the paper” (3). In Brooks’ formulation, as the tutor does less work, the student must do more work. By doing more work in the session, it is assumed that the student will be more interested in what she is doing and will learn more.

On the other hand, Linda Shamoon and Deborah Burns argue in their article “A Critique of Pure Tutoring” that a more directive tutoring model that somewhat mimics the music master class “allows both student and tutor to be the subjects of the tutorial session” (145). This means that both the tutor and the student will take the leadership role in some aspects of the tutorial. At any given moment, one or the other may seem to be doing more of the work, but the sum of the work should be mostly balanced by the end of the session. Their idea is that allowing for more directiveness on both the tutor
and the student's parts will keep both of them more interested in the session. It will allow both of them to work in their areas of expertise and to get feedback on what they know less about. All of these things lead to more engaged working and learning.

Part of the problem with this concern with how much “work” the student and tutor should participate in during the session is in defining the word “work.” Is the work of the session the number of words said? Is it the amount of writing done? The amount of composing? There is great value in thinking about who is contributing to the tutorial in what ways, but by not giving solid definitions of “work,” confusion results.

Irene Clark points to this confusion through her discovery that students and tutors understand and evaluate “directiveness” differently as seen in her article “Perspectives on the Directive/Non-Directive Continuum in the Writing Center.” Clark's study found that students see more kinds of behaviors as directive than tutors do. The students, though, were generally satisfied with the higher level of direction in a session because they felt they were learning something. On the other hand, tutors identified fewer behaviors as “directive” but they were also satisfied with their level of participation and directiveness in the session. Clark's study points to an important issue. Ideas of “directiveness” need to be spelled out more clearly because students and tutors are understanding them differently. With these different understandings of an important idea of “directiveness,” more confusion is likely to appear in what tutorial characteristics are desirable.

Leading versus Following

Another area of concern deals with who is in control of the session. The main concerns here are who leads the session and how that leading, and the feeling of control it gives, impacts the outcomes of the session. Theorists here generally believe that if
students feel a sense of control over the tutorial session, they will want to do more work and will learn more in the session.

For instance, in *The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Peer Tutoring*, Paula Gillespie and Neal Lerner discuss having the writer of the paper read it aloud during the tutorial. In this discussion, they argue that “when the writer reads the paper, he accomplishes several things, in addition to keeping in control” (26). The idea of the student writer feeling in control of the session is a benefit of the read-aloud technique that will encourage the student to be engaged in the session. Gillespie and Lerner also mention how “making decisions gives the writer a better sense of ownership of the paper, and more pride in it when revisions go well” (30). Again, they show a concern that the student retains a feeling of being in control of the session which will lead to more engaged students.

Similarly, Christina Murphy and Steve Sherwood show a concern with leading versus following in *The St. Martin's Sourcebook for Writing Tutors*. They spend a great deal of their instructional text discussing how tutors can be “reflective” on and responsive to the needs of individual students. This concern with dealing with individual students and with responding to diverse needs shows an underlying concern with keeping the student feeling in control of the session. Murphy and Sherwood also discuss the importance of “stimulating independent learning” beyond the bounds of the single tutorial (21). They see that helping students learn to value the work of writing will help them continue improving their writing beyond the tutorial. By helping students see the ways they can continue to learn outside the tutorial, tutors can help students feel more in control of their work as they are leaving the tutorial as well as while they are in it. This continued learning is a characteristic of engaged students in their understanding.
The concerns with methods of tutoring point again to the importance of approaching the student in ways that "work." The question they appear to be addressing can be phrased many different ways: how do students learn the most in writing tutorials? What makes a successful tutorial session? What is the best kind of tutoring? The ultimate goal, no matter how the question is phrased, has been to figure out the what and why of writing centers. This question has been pressing because any writing center scholar or tutor has seen the power of a truly effective tutorial and should consider the contributing factors in the effectiveness as well as how to replicate the experience in future sessions.

These areas of concern in writing center studies provide important information about tutorials. The debate in each area will and should continue because such debate allows for improved understandings of the areas and leads to new areas of concern. Still, having such debates leads to problems in assessing tutorials. Irene Clark points to problems in using "directiveness" as a tool to understand tutorials because students and tutors understanding the term differently. Isabelle Thompson and her research team point to similar problems in their article "Examining Our Lore: A Survey of Students’ and Tutors’ Satisfaction with Writing Center Conferences." They wanted to know what made students feel like a session was worthwhile; what would induce them to be active and willing participants in the session. What the survey revealed was that students viewed sessions as successful when they believed their papers had a chance of receiving a better grade after the work done at the writing center. Tutors felt sessions were successful when they had accomplished their goals and met some of the students’ goals as well. The language seen here did not fall into any of the areas of concern seen in the scholarship reviewed above. This points to the fact that students and tutors often want different things from the writing tutorial. The language used to discuss and measure
these differing desires needs to be carefully crafted and considered. A common language for describing tutorials needs to exist beyond the language seen in discussions of different pedagogical approaches to tutoring.

Thompson and her team approach their survey research by asking the question, roughly paraphrased, “what did you like about your session?” They then glean from the student and tutor responses what makes sessions successful for them. This information is valuable and does allow them to uncover trends within those responses. A problem exists, as pointed out in Clark's research, in this kind of loose terminology. Student and tutors have already been shown to use the same term or idea differently. The fact that Thompson et al's survey relies so much on terms that may or may not be understood in the same ways among students and tutors creates a problem. My study applies a theory that already exists, one that has a common set of language that can be assessed in individuals in significantly meaningful ways. I am able to assess how the sessions feel to the students and the tutors in the same ways through the language of flow theory. This framework for how the session feels allows me to understand the sessions in broader ways than Thompson is able to.

Csikszentmihalyi's Flow Theory

A good tool for looking at tutorials outside of pedagogical approaches can be found in Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi’s flow theory. Flow theory describes an “optimal experience,” “when, instead of being buffeted by anonymous forces, we do feel in control of our actions, masters of our own fate. On the rare occasions that it happens, we feel a sense of exhilaration, a deep sense of enjoyment that becomes a landmark in memory for what life should be like. This is what we mean by optimal experience” (3). Flow, the state
one is in during an optimal experience, is one of engagement and enjoyment. Flow can be used to understand many kinds of experiences.

Flow theory developed because Csikszentmihalyi set out to study the practices of happiness. He theorized that people were no happier in modern times than twenty three hundred years ago when Aristotle theorized that happiness is the most sought after thing in human existence. Csikszentmihalyi realized that "happiness is not something that happens. It is not the result of good fortune or random chance" (2). He found that how people interpret the things that happen to them determines their happiness in life. He believes that "happiness, in fact, is a condition that must be prepared for, cultivated, and defended privately by each person. People who learn to control inner experience will be able to determine the quality of their lives, which is as close as any of us can come to being happy" (2). Happiness is based on finding enjoyment and value in all things that are encountered in his theory. This enjoyment and value is best understood through the idea of "flow."

Flow is "the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter; the experience itself is so enjoyable that people will do it even at great cost, for the sheer sake of doing it" (Csikszentmihalyi 4). Flow does not arise from an event itself; any event from something menial, like cleaning the house, to something normally attributed great societal importance, like studying genetics, can give a person flow. The person, not the act, determines if flow will happen because flow exists only through one's understanding of an experience. Flow theory allowed Csikszentmihalyi to find and understand why some people were happier than others.

One of the most interesting things about flow is the fact that flow is something everyone can experience in meaningfully similar ways across times, countries, and
societies. "The flow experience was not just a peculiarity of affluent, industrialized elites. It was reported in essentially the same words by old women from Korea, by adults in Thailand and India, by teenagers in Tokyo, by Navajo shepherds, by farmers in the Italian Alps, and by workers on the assembly line in Chicago" (4). The activities that engender flow, the times when flow is experienced, and the response to flow may vary greatly, but the feelings of exhilaration and enjoyment that mark flow happen to people in every culture that Csikszentmihalyi studied. "In sum, optimal experience, and the psychological conditions that make it possible, seem to be the same the world over" (49). This makes flow theory a valuable tool for studying experiences across cultures or in places where many cultures come together, like educational settings.

Csikszentmihalyi determined the characteristics of flow by conducting experience sampling of hundreds of people across cultures. Experience sampling works as follows: Each participant in the study carried a pager that went off at random moments; when the pager sounded, the participants were to stop what they were doing and write what they were experiencing and their thoughts on those experiences in a journal. From these journals, Csikszentmihalyi and his research team found patterns of experiences of interest to them. They took those patterns and interviewed the participants about them and ultimately discovered eight elements of flow. I will quote from the text at length to discuss these characteristics:

When people reflect on how it feels when their experience is most positive, they mention at least one, and often all, of the following. First, the experience usually occurs when we confront tasks we have a chance of completing. Second, we must be able to concentrate on what we are doing. Third and fourth, the concentration is usually possible because the task undertaken has clear goals and provides
immediate feedback. Fifth, one acts with a deep but effortless involvement that removes from awareness the worries and frustrations of everyday life. Sixth, enjoyable experiences allow people to exercise a sense of control over their actions. Seventh, concern for self disappears, yet paradoxically the sense of self emerges stronger after the flow experience is over. Finally, the sense of the duration of time is altered; hours pass by in minutes, and minutes can stretch to seem like hours. The combination of all of these elements causes a sense of deep enjoyment that is so rewarding people feel that expending a great deal of energy is worthwhile simply to be able to feel it. (49)

These eight characteristics, put more simply are:

1. One's skills are matched to the challenges of the task
2. One has the ability to concentrate
3. One has clear goals to reach while doing the task
4. One receives immediate feedback during the task
5. One feels deep but effortless involvement in the task
6. One experiences a feeling of control over the task
7. One's concern for self is removed, but a sense of self is strengthened
8. One's sense of time is altered

It is important to note that not all of these characteristics were present in every recorded example of flow. Also, different participants felt these characteristics in different intensities. These eight characteristics, though, provide measurable and defined characteristics of engaged activities.

The first four elements are the most important for creating or understanding a flow experience. These elements are the ones that Csikszentmihalyi's participants
described creating flow most often. Flow happens most in "sequences of activities that are goal-directed and bound by rules- activities that require the investment of psychic energy, and that could not be done without the appropriate skills" (49). Activities that have structure in place are ones that are important in establishing flow. Structure alone is not enough, though. In order for flow conditions to be met, the person participating in the activity needs to have an appropriate level of skill to complete it. The balance of challenge to skill is the key to flow activities, "when the challenges are just balanced with the person's capacity to act, then the person will be most able to achieve flow" (52). Csikszentmihalyi calls this the "boundary between boredom and anxiety" (52) and working at that boundary is important for flow to occur.

Csikszentmihalyi argues that when a person is being challenged just to their skill level,

There is no excess psychic energy left over to process any information but what the activity offers. All the attention is concentrated on the relevant stimuli. As a result, one of the most universal and distinctive features of optimal experience takes place: people become so involved in what they are doing that the activity becomes spontaneous, almost automatic; they stop being aware of themselves as separate from the actions they are performing. (53)

Being appropriately challenged allows for intense concentration to happen. With intense concentration, flow is more likely to happen. Also, “the reason it is possible to achieve such complete involvement in a flow experience is that goals are usually clear, and feedback immediate” (54). When one knows exactly what to do and how well he or she is doing that thing, one is more likely to achieve flow. These four characteristics, skills balanced with challenges, concentration, and clear goals with immediate feedback, are
the core of flow experiences. Each can be measured and understood both individually and collectively. They are the ones most mentioned by Csikszentmihalyi's participants.

The rest of the characteristics, while important, occur less frequently. The characteristic of deep but effortless involvement is one of the most perplexing. Csikszentmihalyi notes that “the flow experience appears to be effortless, [but] it is far from from being so” because it can involve “strenuous physical exertion, or highly disciplined mental activity” (54). Despite this “people become so involved in what they are doing that the activity becomes spontaneous, almost automatic” (53); people are able to complete the task without worrying about the steps needed to complete it. During the experience, the task feels easy, even if it is something truly difficult.

A sense of control of the activity is important for flow conditions as well. Csikszentmihalyi argues that "what people enjoy is not the sense of being in control, but the sense of exercising control in difficult situations" (61). People want to feel as though they have affected the outcome in their situations in life. "It is not possible to experience a feeling of control unless one is willing to give up the safety of protective routines. Only when a doubtful outcome is at stake, and one is able to influence that outcome, can a person really know whether she is in control" (61). When people are able to interpret the situation as one in which they can affect the outcome, they are more likely to become engaged in the activity.

Another of "the most frequently mentioned dimensions of the flow experience is that, while it lasts, one is able to forget all the unpleasant aspects of life. This feature of flow is an important by-product of the fact that enjoyable activities require a complete focusing of attention on the task at hand- thus leaving no room in the mind for irrelevant information" (58). One is not able to focus on the problems occurring outside the flow
event because that event is so rewarding. This is an element that “deserves special
mention, because in normal life we spend so much time thinking about” our own worries
and our self (62). In flow, “there is little opportunity for the self to be threatened” (63)
because one is so involved in what is happening. Csikszentmihalyi notes that
“occasionally giving up self-consciousness is necessary for a strong self-concept” (65).
This element of flow may provide the most lasting results in an individual’s psyche.

The least important, least reported element of flow is the transformation of time.
“During the flow experience the sense of time bears little relation to the passage of time
as measured by the absolute convention of the clock” (66). This can mean that the time
seems to speed up or slow down. Csikszentmihalyi notes that “although it seems likely
that losing track of the clock is not one of the major elements of enjoyment, freedom
from the tyranny of time does add to the exhilaration” of the flow experience (67).

Flow theory provides a frame for understanding experiences, whether flow is felt
in them or not. A flow experience is a good experience, one that a person wants to have
again. This is not to say that every aspect of a flow experience is pleasant, though. The
overall outcome of a flow experience is a satisfaction and a desire to repeat the
experience again, even if elements of it were unpleasant during the course of the event
itself. If one can determine which experiences create the most amount of flow in his or
her life, one can begin to understand his or her role in situations. With these
characteristics in mind, one could evaluate any experience to see what could be changed
to improve the experience. One can also determine, to some extent, characteristics of
events completely outside the set proposed by Csikszentmihalyi by comparing examples
of that experience where people had high levels of flow versus low levels of flow.
Flow Theory as a Research Tool in Educational Experiences

Flow theory has been used to study education and educational settings almost since its inception. These studies of flow and education have taken two general paths: to use flow theory to understand current practices and to use flow theory to establish new practices.

Most articles seek to understand if and how current educational practices are conducive to flow experiences in students at various learning levels. In a 2003 article co-authored with David Shernoff, Barbara Schneider, and Elisa Steele Shernoff, Csikszentmihalyi discusses at length the issue of engaging high school students in learning through principles of flow theory. They argue in their article “Student Engagement in High School Classrooms from the Perspective of Flow Theory” that “issuing appropriate challenges and providing opportunities to enhance skills (e.g., providing immediate feedback and incrementally teaching more complex skills that build upon previously learned skills) may be one of the most ideal ways of engaging students” (160). These are certainly not revolutionary ideas in education; it seems as though these educational goals have always been in place. These researchers found, however, through experience sampling methods using flow criteria, that students spend relatively little of their time at school in activities that required active and meaningful participation. They recommend that teachers spend more time working with students on activities “that are experienced as challenging and relevant, yet also allow students to feel in control of their learning environment and confident in their ability” (173). These are usually activities where students work in small groups or individually and feel as though they have some control over the outcomes; lecturing and testing are not among these activities.

Shernoff, Schneider, Csikszentmihalyi and Shernoff argue that using flow theory and
assessing for flow characteristics in students is the best way to ensure these kinds of activities take place and work as expected. These researchers realize that “teachers succeeding in providing such engagement most likely consider not only the knowledge and skills to be learned, but also the students as learners, adapting instruction to their developmental levels and individual interests” (173). While this is neither a new idea or a new desire, using flow theory helped these scholars look at a variety of common teaching practices to understand all of them better and provide recommendations for improvement in many areas.

At the college level, flow theory has been used mostly to understand how the structure of a class contributes to (or detracts from) flow experiences. For instance, Don Rossin, Young Ro, Barbara Klein, and Yi Maggie Guo look at the setting of an online information management course in their article “The Effects of Flow on Learning Outcomes in an Online Information Management Course.” Rossin, Ro, Klein and Guo found that how students encountered information could enhance their perceived learning and skill when taking an online information management course through increased experiences of flow. They saw that while there was no relationship between flow and a student’s actual performance on a test or quiz, “paying attention to the idea of flow in the design and delivery of online courses may improve students’ perceptions of learning and student satisfaction” (93). They conclude that designing the course in a way that gets students engaged in the learning through attempts at flow increased students’ desire to do the work. Their determination to keep working on the subject seemed improved even without improvement in test scores. This study reveals that flow experiences is not a direct cause of better performance in school situations, but flow experiences do provide students with more of a desire to continue working with material,
even if it is difficult material, which is a important step in improving performance in the long run.

Yi Maggie Guo and Young Ro in “Capturing Flow in the Business Classroom” studied student experiences of flow in a more traditional class setting: a lecture-based business course. They discovered that flow can happen in traditional lecture-based methods of instructing, a bit of a contradiction to what Shernoff et al found. In order to make this atmosphere most conducive to flow occurrences, instructors must see that “providing clear and fast feedback is the most prominent and effective factor” in their lectures and lesson plans (453). Guo and Ro also saw that it is important for “the instructor to present class material in a clear manner and to be sensitive to the students’ reaction to the material and their problems” (453) so that the students will feel as though their concerns are present in the class. Finally, “the instructor also needs to be organized and knowledgeable of the subject matter” (453) or students will not be able to pay as much attention and thus won’t be as likely to have a flow experience. Their conclusion is that business educators can continue to use the lecture-based class model for effective student learning as long as they pay attention to these issues.

These two studies put together show the possibilities of using flow theory to understand learning experiences outside of pedagogical approaches. These two articles explored very different class settings, one traditional and one online, but both found flow theory to be a useful tool in understanding what happened for the students. There is a wide applicability of flow theory in studying learning situations.

Stephen Koehn and David Lowry took a slightly different approach than studying a classroom environment. The used flow theory to understand why students could put such different amounts of effort into different kinds of learning experiences in “Student
Produced Television Programs: The Relationship of Play Theory, Flow Experiences, and Experiential Learning.” In particular, they were curious about why some students were so actively involved in the production of shows for the student television station. They were not studying a class, as no college credit was offered to the students producing the shows, but the students were able to learn a great deal about their possible future careers. Students working in this environment did indeed feel flow and felt that flow allowed them more intense learning experiences, explaining their higher level of effort on the shows than in their classes: “students can be so rewarded by their own field experiences, and then apply this knowledge to the more traditional modes of instruction in a liberal arts college” (32). They do not go so far as to argue that all learning should occur in this hands-on kind of way, but they do believe that the flow principles active in this kind of learning can be duplicated in all class structures so that more effective learning can take place. Flow theory is not just for studying classrooms, it is helpful in studying learning happening outside the classroom as well.

Deane Gute and Gary Gute use flow theory to both understand how students are learning, like the other theorists, and to put a new course structure into place that follows flow theory principles. Gute and Gute studied two sections of a first-year college writing course that included flow theory as part of the content of the class and included flow-inducing activities throughout the semester in their article “Flow Writing in the Liberal Arts Core and Across the Disciplines: A Vehicle for Confronting and Transforming Academic Disengagement.” After some initial instruction in the foundations of flow theory, students were directed to reflect on their flow experiences, or lack thereof, in a class they were taking that semester that they identified as “challenging.” Through these reflections, Gute and Gute were able to assess what classes
were not triggering flow experiences in these students and to postulate, along with the
students, some solutions for the problem. Gute and Gute found that the flow markers
were indeed important in determining how these student experienced various classes.
Student writing assignments revealed that “most of the students identified trouble
concentrating as the hallmark of their experiences in classes they identified as
challenging” (200-201). Concentration is one of the most important characteristics of the
flow state for them. Teachers in this study structured the assignments following this
revelation to serve “as an instrument to help the majority of students gain control of
their concentration. With greater self-control came enjoyment of the journals for the
majority of the participants and for some students more enjoyment of the classes in
question” (201). Gute and Gute's study reveals that examining both flow and non-flow
learning experiences can reveal methods of improving the learning environment that
students find themselves in.

Joy Egbert in “A Study of Flow in the Foreign Language Classroom” used flow
theory to design a course in foreign language learning as well as using flow theory to
evaluate how students were learning in the class. This Spanish class was taught using
several specific activities thought to be most likely to cause flow experiences. After these
activities, students completed questionnaires to determine if they did experience flow.
She found that flow can exist in these conditions and that “teachers can theoretically
facilitate the flow experience for students by developing tasks that might lead to flow” in
an effort to improve learning (513). Using flow to consciously design instructional
materials and approaches can lead to more effective acquisition of a foreign language.

Flow theory has been used to study writing and writing instruction more
specifically than these more general studies of flow in education. Judy Abbott's article
“Blinking Out’ and ‘Having the Touch’: Two Fifth-Grade Boys Talk about Flow Experiences in Writing” discusses how two young elementary boy writers use the language of flow to describe their feelings during writing and how the context in which they are writing impacts their interest in the practice of writing as a whole. Abbott's case studies reveal that even young writers “periodically experience a sense of flow when engaged in activities in which they are interested, that these students can differentiate between flow experiences and non-flow experiences associated with writing, and that they describe flow experiences in terms similar to those reported in studies on adolescents and adults” (89). Her case studies also reveal that a “controlling instructional approach” “impinged the writing of these two avid writers-writers who had a history of not only embracing opportunities to write but also of self-sponsoring writing events” (89). Writing, at any age or skill level, can be a flow event and the means of instruction and the social context of the instruction can strongly impact the ability of writers to experience flow.

Gina Briefs-Elgin argues that “emphasis on the rewards of engagement with difficulty can be useful to all teachers and particularly to those who teach English composition, the subject many students consider most difficult” in her article “Happiness and the Blank Page: Csikszentmihalyi’s Flow in the Writing Classroom” (71). She recommends “a little benign tinkering with our student’s definitions of happiness” by teaching about flow theory in order to “help students recognize what actually does make them happy rather than what their cultural programming tells them will make them happy” (75). She believes that it is possible to “teach them to anticipate flow in their laborious work so they will embrace rather than dread” writing assignments (75). Her work with students illustrates that they can learn to enjoy writing classes and

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Standridge 39
projects even if they initially dislike the ideas in them rather heartily. Her work is similar to that completed by Gute and Gute, although her work focuses much more on how flow can help improve writing and students' experiences of writing, rather than their educational experience more generally.

These studies show how important flow theory could be in the study of learning experiences, especially those related to writing. We see that flow can illuminate issues in a variety of pedagogical approaches and subjects. We also see that writing is a particularly apt area for using flow theory as a tool to understand experience.

**Flow Theory and the Writing Center**

While the value of flow theory in educational research is seen in the studies I have discussed, flow theory has not been used extensively in writing center studies up to this point. Csikszentmihalyi's work is referenced with some frequency in the 2008 writing center studies book *Creative Approaches to Writing Center Work* edited by Kevin Dvorak and Shanti Bruce. Their text is concerned with “how important it is to constantly re-examine and re-identify writing center missions” through putting “creativity and serious play alongside serious work” (xii, xiii). The texts included in this collection focus on finding ways to create more experiences of enjoyment in writing center workers and visitors. It makes sense then, that references to Csikszentmihalyi and flow would appear. However, none of the texts actually uses flow theory to directly study or theorize any aspect of writing center experiences.

Richard Leahy does talk about flow in writing center experiences. He discusses how his staff “keep looking for ways to use writers' flow experiences” in order to help them revise their papers (155). By asking students questions to determine what parts of a
draft they enjoyed writing the most or places that they really liked what they had written, the tutors find places to begin revising in ways that the students enjoy more. He argues that flow may seem like a “marshmallowy term” but argues it is a concept “all writers can understand” and it is an effective “tool for helping writers discover strength and build it up” (161). Leahy sees the usefulness of flow theory in writing center work, but his discussion of it is mostly theoretic. He does not apply flow theory directly to writing center interactions, but he does outline how important flow theory could be for writers and writing centers.

While flow theory has not been used to study writing center interactions directly, the terms Csikszentmihalyi uses to describe flow experiences are very well-suited to understanding writing center sessions. The eight characteristics of flow are elements that appear constantly in discussions of best practices for writing tutorials. The main goal of the tutor is to have the students working at that point where they are challenged but not frustrated. Skills are balanced to challenges. The work in the tutorial, while it varies greatly from individual to individual, is structured around the piece of writing and the needs of each writer. Best practice in writing tutoring asks the tutor to set up, with the help of the student, an outline of the session to follow so that the session is goal directed and bound by rules as well. Sessions have clear goals. Tutors are also advised to give clear positive and constructive feedback as often as possible. Tutors work to make sure that they and the student focus only on the work at hand, putting aside worries about grades and a supposed lack of writing skills. Not only is there focus, there is a loss of concern for the “writerly self” that students bring with them. Students are asked to provide the issues to work on in a session, giving them a sense of control. The hope is that students are able to write more easily while being more aware of what skills they are
using, having deep but effortless involvement. The characteristics of flow that Cziksentmihalyi outlined seem to be directly applicable to writing tutorials.

The match between flow characteristics and writing tutorials is certainly not perfect, though. Writing centers, the places where writing tutorials typically occur, vary widely. They can happen in a small room, a specific place in the library, a coffee shop, or even in the space of an online tutorial. In each writing center, a variety of possible distractions may interfere with the concentration of the student and/or the tutor. Even more possible distractions appear when thinking about online tutoring. However, as the tutorial progresses, many writers and tutors ignore the distractions around them. They are able to really hone in on the work of the session. This concentration is not always a given in a tutorial session because there are so many factors at play, but the session is designed to keep the student and tutor engaged in the work of the session without the influence of outside distractions.

Students may be unable to forget a conviction that they are “not good writers”; this baggage that students bring with them is one of the major problems many tutors have to face. Whether they are laboring under a teacher whose instructions are unclear or unfair or they have always believed that they cannot write, many students enter the tutorial with plenty of unhappy associations hanging over them. Best practice for tutoring works to put those bad feelings away. There is plenty of advice about how to neutralize a student’s anger at the teacher or the assignment so the session can progress more easily. The same is true for feelings about a lack of skill in writing. Some common advice I give about writing is to think of it as a muscle that just needs to be developed over time. This is paving the way for students to be able to concentrate on their work and thus not get caught up in the “irrelevant information” that is provided as they write.
While students may not be able to entirely forget these concerns, tutorials are designed to help alleviate them.

The writing tutorial, for most students, and the act of writing a complete piece itself, is almost always an event with an uncertain outcome. Students often feel as though they cannot predict what kind of response a piece of writing will get. Exposing themselves to critique in the writing tutorial is a hard thing to do that takes control out of their hands, but as they progress through the tutorial they are given many opportunities to take control. They are offered choices of language to convey their messages. They are able to explore new ways of composing that allow them to achieve more writing skills. They gain a feeling that they have actively participated in this uncertain activity and made it successful for themselves. Tutors are also participating in the tutorial with a sense that there is an “uncertain outcome.” Tutors never know if students will put their advice into action, they rarely know how a student ultimately completed the paper or the assessment it received, and they do not know if the student continued applying what they discussed in the session. Still, both the tutor and the student are able to feel some control over what happens during the session, and that is often enough.

Writing tutorials, in my experience, tend to follow the same pattern. Tutors are often very concerned with the clock on the wall because they can only give students a certain amount of time. But this concern with the clock is emphasized because students and tutors often get caught up in their work and go over time. If such a focus on time was not implemented, sessions would run over the allotted time as often as they would run under it. I have to force myself to watch the clock in many sessions because I know that I will lose track of time if I let myself get too deeply into flow, being unable to tell if my allotted time is finished or not. Still, the session is driven by the goals they have
established, and those goals are often not hurried.

Despite these places where flow theory may not accurately describe a writing tutorial, overall, the description fits. Csikszentmihalyi attributes the ability to concentrate so intensely on the fact that during flow activities there are very clear goals and very clear, immediate feedback is given as those goals are met. Tutors are instructed to set clear goals and provide honest, clear, and immediate feedback about the writing students bring into the session and that they create as they work through the goals of the session.

Because of the close fit of flow theory to writing centers' existing practices, using it to evaluate sessions should provide useful information. These flow characteristics can be used to understand any kind of experience, whether flow is felt or not. By comparing sessions with different amounts of flow, characteristics of interest to writing center administrators will emerge. These characteristics will be seen across pedagogical approaches used by different tutors and will thus provide a baseline for discussing characteristics seen in all kinds of tutorials.

**Summary**

In this chapter, I have outlined the history of writing center studies' inability to determine consistent descriptors for “good” sessions, what flow theory is and how it is a useful theory for studying educational experiences generally and writing center experiences particularly.

Writing center studies has been focused, for most of its history, on understanding the best approaches to writing tutorials. These approaches have centered on three main areas: questions about whether a tutor should be more like a peer or more like a teacher,
questions about whether the tutor should be more directive or non-directive in his or her interaction with the student, and questions about whether the student’s concerns should drive the session or if the tutor should drive the session. While these discussions of approaches to tutoring have provided important understanding of how tutorials work, they have resulted in a variety of descriptions of good and bad tutorials that do not match. In addition, the various understandings of good and bad tutorials have led to differences in how students and tutors actually understand the tutorial experience.

These problems in discussing tutorials generally lead to a strong need for a common language to understand all writing tutorial experiences. Flow theory provides an language for understanding experiences that has been applied to many kinds of learning situations and that has been theorized to be useful in studying writing centers themselves. Flow theory argues that all experiences can be understood to be “optimal” if people interpret them that way. This theory postulates that the more an experience has the eight characteristics of flow, the more beneficial the experience and the more an individual will want to have that kind of experience again. Through looking for and attempting to create these characteristics in learning environments, studies have shown places where education can be improved.
Chapter 3: Methods and Methodologies

The need for a common language to describe tutorials no matter what pedagogical approach is used in the tutorial was highlighted in the previous chapter, as was the aptness of flow theory as a base for developing this language. I believe that understanding the commonalities of all tutorials is the starting point in developing this language, and to do that, one must study what is actually happening in tutorials.

The call to observe and study local occurrences in writing centers has been a steady concern in writing center studies. Anne Geller, Michele Eodice, Frankie Condon, Meg Carroll, and Elizabeth Boquet, in their text *The Everyday Writing Center* for example, call on writing center researchers to "capitalize...on the ability of everyday exchanges to tell us something about our writing centers" (6). Similarly, Nancy Grimm in her book *Good Intentions: Writing Center Work for Postmodern Times* states “For me, theorizing writing center practice is an effort to get at meaning in daily events” (xii). These theorists argue for the value of understanding what happens in the writing centers every day. There is little need to set up experiments or to create wildly new approaches to tutoring in order to understand what writing centers are and do. Looking at what is already happening is a rich field of study; through understanding what is already happening, new and better approaches and theory can be developed. These writing center scholars believe that these kinds of approaches and theories will work better for
the writing centers. My cases are examples of these “everyday exchanges;” my cross case comparison works to discern larger patterns of characteristics in writing tutorials through these individual examples.

Other examinations of these “everyday exchanges” have inspired the work done here. Terese Thonus's article “Acquaintanceship, Familiarity, and Coordinated Laughter in Writing Tutorials” looks at how laughter functions in tutorials. Through observations of several tutorial sessions as cases, Thonus found that when the student and the tutor knew each other before the session, they laugh together more often. Thonus also found, when the student and tutor knew each other, laughter could do more than save “face,” one’s sense of self pride in social situations. This study provided a kind of model for my own research. Thonus identified an issue that was of concern, looked at several tutorials, found some patterns, and discussed the larger implications of what she found.

Isabelle Thompson's article “Scaffolding in the Writing Center: A Microanalysis of an Experienced Tutor's Verbal and Nonverbal Strategies” provided an even closer model for my study. This study is described as “microanalysis” of “one tutor's university writing center conference with an experienced tutor and a student he has never met before [that] is analyzed for the tutor’s use of direct instruction, cognitive scaffolding, and motivational scaffolding” (417). Thompson records one session between an experienced tutor and a student the tutor has not worked with before. Thompson then uses several pieces of data to analyze the video. First, the student and the tutor fill out a survey containing Likert-type scale items assessing how successful they both ranked the session. Then Thompson completes an initial review of the video and creates interview questions for the tutor. This leads to what she terms a “retrospective interview” that explores both what trends she saw in the video and the tutor's recollections of the
She found specific scaffolding techniques were used and recommended ways of training to encourage the use of these techniques, as well as discussing new techniques that could be added to a tutor's repertoire.

My study takes elements of both Thonus's and Thompson's studies. I look at more than one tutorial to see patterns, like Thonus. Like Thompson, though, I have many data points, look at many characteristics, and involve my participants a great deal in understanding the tutorials observed. While I appreciate purely theoretical discussions and value what they add to fields of knowledge, I find them frustrating because they so often lack a sense of the real world. The work that Thonus and Thompson do remains in close contact with the real world. They provide deep descriptions of actual tutorials and draw their theory from those actual experiences. I find their work personally satisfying to read as well as providing me with sound theory to work with; I have thus chosen to model my work after theirs.

**Design of the Study**

I use case study methods in this dissertation. Robert Yin asserts in his text *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* that case study research is best used when: “(a) 'how' or 'why' questions are being posed, (b) the investigator has little control over events, and (c) the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context” (loc. 313). My study asks “how” writing tutorials work and to answer that question I need to observe what happens “within a real-life context” without exerting any control over the events. Yin goes on to argue that “the case study method allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events” including “small group dynamics” (loc. 352). Again, the dynamics of the writing tutorial are what I seek to
better understand. This method of research allows me to look at writing tutorial
interactions as they happen.

Mary Sue MacNealy in her text *Strategies for Empirical Research in Writing*
argues that “case study research is a qualitative tool” that researchers use to “provide a
rich description of an event or of a small group of people or objects” (195). The
ultimately qualitative nature of case study outcomes does not remove that fact that both
qualitative and quantitative methods can be used. Yin sees that case studies can be
inherently mixed method. He sees that “some case study research goes beyond being a
type of qualitative research, by using a mix of quantitative and qualitative evidence” (loc.
683). Quantitative surveys, for instance, are a feature of many case studies. These
quantitative measures give a better understanding to the qualitative features being
explored.

The “rich description” of the case study fits my desires to understand more about
the interactions in tutorials. This method also fits Geller, Eodice, Condon, Carrol and
Boquet's call for “a richer accounting of the complexity of learning and producing
knowledge” that happens in tutorials (114). While a great deal of writing center research
has been theoretical or archival (see Lerner, “Dartmouth;” Abels; Powers; Walker), more
and more empirical research, both qualitative and quantitative, is appearing (see
Thompson et al “Lore;” Adams). A valuing of empirical research, especially qualitative
research that provides rich description, adds to the importance of this study.

The problem with case study research that MacNealy and others point to is the
fact that “because the scope of a case study is so narrow, the findings can rarely be
generalized” (195). The idea is that because the case study can only look at very specific
circumstances, the findings can only be applied there. Yin, though, argues that this
argument refers to “statistical generalizations” where “an inference is made about a population (or universe) on the basis of empirical data collected about a sample from that universe” (loc. 1042). Statistical generalizations work because they are based on numerical data and have formulas that match the information. He believes that thinking of case studies in terms of statistical generalizations is a “fatal flaw” (loc. 1046); instead, he argues for thinking about case studies in terms of “analytic generalizations” which are when “a previously developed theory is used as a template with which to compare the empirical results of the case study” (loc.1049). Analytic generalizations allow multiple case studies to build support for the application of a theory. In justifying the application of a theory, more is understood about the case. With that understanding, new theory can also be created.

The idea of analytic generalizations in case studies has been used extensively in studies of writing centers and of flow theory. Isabelle Thompson’s study of scaffolding techniques, “Scaffolding in the Writing Center: A Microanalysis of an Experienced Tutors Verbal and Nonverbal Tutoring Strategies,” is one example of analytic generalizations in writing center studies. She collects information into a case study through observations, surveys, and interviews. She then examines her data through the lens of scaffolding theory, looking to understand how scaffolding appears in the tutorial. She is able to see that scaffolding, something that has been theorized and understood in other contexts, is certainly a component of writing tutorials. Further, she is able to create new theory about how scaffolding works in tutorials. For instance, she shows that motivational and learning scaffolding exist separately in tutorials, but their effects on students are ultimately linked. To understand the effect of scaffolding on tutorial students in the future, researchers must account for the linked responses. Like
scaffolding theory, flow theory is an existing set of ideas that can be applied to several tutorials in order to understand better what happens there. From that understanding of the tutorials, new approaches to tutoring and to training tutors can be created.

An example of the value of applying flow theory to case study research can be found in Judy Abbott’s case studies shown in ”'Blinking Out' and 'Having the Touch': Two Fifth-Grade Boys Talk about Flow Experiences in Writing.” In this article, Abbott explores the “ways in which children who self-sponsor writing express ‘flow’ experiences” (53). Abbott wanted to figure out why some students chose to write beyond the confines of classroom assignments so she conducted case studies of two young writers. Through interviews with the students, their families, and their teachers as well as classroom observations and examinations of written artifacts, Abbott began to understand “why some children persevere when faced with challenging tasks and why they spend so much time and effort engaged in activities they find interesting” (54). She applied flow theory concepts to her data from interviews and observations and found that these young writers were very aware of the times when flow occurred for them. She also found that the classroom context is very important in contributing to flow experiences. Her suggestion is that “teachers who are interested in supporting students' personal interests, especially literacy-related interests, might consider creating a social context that is free from conflict and that promotes student-controlling aspects of learning experiences within the classroom” (89). Abbott was able to provide suggestions to all teachers about encouraging writing through her use of case studies and their analytic generalizations. Through flow theory she was better able to understand writing experiences. With that understanding, she was able to create new theories about how to best create good writing experiences in the future.
Both of these articles rely on case studies collecting data about the participants and events from a variety of sources. Thompson uses surveys completed by both students and tutors, interviews with her tutor, and recursive viewing of the session, for instance, to come to an understanding of what is happening in his tutorial. Abbott collects information on these students from the students themselves, from their parents, and from their teachers in interviews that happened several times over the course of several years. All of this data works to let the participants involved in the events contribute to the understanding of what has happened and the implications of the events. This matches John Cresswell’s definition of social construction research: “the goal of research, then, is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation being studied” (8). This approach is appealing in their research, as well as in my own, because learning to write, especially in tutorials, is about interaction. The only way to understand interaction is to seek the participants’ knowledge of the events. Without their input, the interaction cannot be fully understood.

This dissertation takes the writing tutorial as the case and inquires into both the tutor and the student's understandings of the session. While I am seeking, as Cresswell describes, “to make sense of (or interpret) the meanings others have about” the tutorial (9), I want to generate a “pattern of meaning” within these tutorials with the help of flow theory. Flow theory will be used to evaluate how the students and tutors understand their tutorial experiences. While constructivism usually does not begin inquiries with a set idea of how the results will be interpreted, like other approaches do, as the goals is to be open to how the study progresses, writing centers are not governed by only one epistemological belief system (see Hobson, “Walking”). Writing centers can subscribe to many theoretical groundings at once, making it acceptable to approach a constructivist
problem with more empiricist use of theoretical framing. Likewise, my study does apply a theory to the tutorial, but the theory is used as a common ground to assess the tutorials rather than a singular way of understanding what happens.

**Research Questions**

- What characteristics of tutorials emerge when the sessions are assessed by both students and tutors using flow theory?
- What are some common attributes of writing tutorials that can be discussion across pedagogical approaches?

**Elements of the Case Study**

**General Overview**

This study was conducted in the Ball State University Writing Center during the fall semester of 2010. The English Department at the university created the Writing Center in 1966 to supplement instruction for composition courses. Now, though, students from all majors, all class levels, and all courses are free to use the center at no cost. Students can have face-to-face tutoring or online tutoring, although this study only examines face-to-face sessions. Tutors in the center have historically been English majors or minors, but, since 1978, students from any major could be tutors. In the Fall semester of 2010, there were 16 total tutors in the center: 10 were graduate students, 9 of those were in the English department; 6 were undergraduates with a variety of majors, 3 of the undergraduate tutors had majors in the English department. Other majors were education, interior design/architecture, and Japanese.

As I began the study, my goal was to observe 10 sessions. I thought that 10
observations would lead to at least 5 student and tutor interviews, which was the minimum number of cases I thought would be appropriate based on other case study research. During the study, I observed 11 unique sessions. The battery in the camera died in the middle of one observation, so I chose to add one more observation to my original goal of 10. 6 tutors participated; each tutor, save for one, was observed twice. I had 11 student participants, each of whom I observed once. From these 11 sessions, I collected four kinds of data: observation notes, survey results, interviews, and video recordings (and the transcripts of them) of the 11 sessions themselves. The observation notes contained my original understandings of what happened and what was important during the session. The survey results gave me an impression of how the students and tutors understood the session at its completion. The interviews helped me have a more in-depth understanding of what the experience of the tutorial was like on reflection. I collected all of these pieces of information to have, as much as possible, the participants telling me what the sessions were like and meant to them. I wanted to know more of how they felt rather than just relying on my own understandings.

All of the data, except for the interviews, were collected when the tutorial happened. During the one hour interval, students had the tutorial and filled out the survey. The interview was collected at a later date. Tutors and students were selected to participate based largely on convenience, although the sample I got did turn out to be mostly representative of the students and tutors working in the Writing Center that semester (see “Participant Selection” for more details). When I was available to observe sessions, I asked an available tutor if I could observe his or her session, with the student’s consent. When a tutor and student agreed to participate and signed the Informed Consent forms, I set up the video camera. I recorded the session and made
observation notes as the tutorial progressed. This video data was the last data set analyzed. Immediately after the tutorial, both the student and the tutor filled out a modified Flow Scale Survey (FSS). Using both the FSS and my observation notes, I prepared interview questions for each participant. Once all of the interviews were complete, I reviewed my notes, the FSS, and the interviews to provide a frame for analyzing the video data. Each of these pieces of data will be further discussed below.

**Participant Selection**

All writing center tutors were asked to participate in the study. An email was sent to all tutors alerting them to the fact that I would be conducting research and that I might be asking them to participate. One tutor immediately refused to participate, but the rest noted their willingness to be included. I did not ask any tutor to commit to being observed until the few moments before the tutorial began because of the method of choosing student participants.

The selection of students was through a convenience sample. All students with an appointment made before the day of observation were alerted that I would be collecting data that day and that they might be asked to participate in my study. For instance, if I knew I would be available to observe in the Writing Center on a Tuesday from 12pm to 5pm, on Monday evening, I would email all students who had appointments in those hours with a letter informing them of my research and that it was possible I would ask them to participate. I did not want to limit myself to one particular student per hour as my only possible participant because students miss appointments and cancel at the last minute frequently. Also, many students request sessions for the same day or simply drop in for an appointment. Had I limited each hour to one student before the time of the
session, I would have missed many potential students. As the students came into the Writing Center during hours I was available for research, I would ask students to participate based almost solely on their arrival timing; I usually asked the first student to arrive at the center in a given hour.

While the student was the main determinant of which sessions I observed, the tutor of the session also became a factor. Originally, I had no plan as to whether to observe a given tutor more than once. In my first four observations, I was able to observe the same two tutors twice. I made the decision then to observe each tutor no more than twice. I felt that having two observations with a tutor could possibly give me some useful comparisons in the data but would not overtax any one tutor. More than two observations with one tutor could also have given me a false sense of patterns.

All students and tutors were contacted for a follow-up interview. An email was sent to each student participant within a week of the tutorial and a second one was sent a week after the first one if I did not receive a response. Several students never responded to any of these requests for follow-up interviews. Every student who did return my contact was interviewed before the end of the semester. Tutors were contacted for a follow-up interview either after I observed them a second time or after I completed all observations. Tutors who were participants in two observations were interviewed once over both sessions for the sake of not taking too much of the tutor's time as well as my belief that I would get more thoughtful responses if they could compare sessions. All tutors were willing to complete the interviews.

As it turns out, the convenience sample that I started with was actually a fairly representative sample of the students and tutors present in the Writing Center at Ball State in Fall 2010. I observed two graduate student tutors and four undergraduate
tutors. The tutors’ experience ranged from less than one semester of experience to more than two years’ experience.

The writing students were a mixture of undergraduate and graduate students, as shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of Student</th>
<th>% of students visiting center</th>
<th>% in my study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First-year</td>
<td>30.00%</td>
<td>27.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>12.00%</td>
<td>36.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>9.00%</td>
<td>9.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>6.00%</td>
<td>9.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Student</td>
<td>21.00%</td>
<td>18.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While there were proportionally more sophomores in my study than visited the center, the other numbers are similar.

**Initial Observation/Recording**

The research began with observations and recordings of tutorial sessions at the Writing Center at Ball State. I was a “complete observer” in Creswell's terms because I “observe[d] without participating” in the session itself (186). I did not assist the tutor in any way, which often tried my patience, as I thought that some approaches used were misguided. I did not address either the student or the tutor during the session. I also did not interact with other writing center staff while I was observing in order to maintain my focus on the session I was observing. The main benefits of observation data are that the “researcher can record information as it is revealed” and that “unusual aspects can be noticed during the observation” (186). While I did make notes about my misgivings during a tutorial, I remained outside of the interaction between the participants,
allowing things to proceed uninterrupted.

Each session was recorded on either the Writing Center’s Flip camera or my personal digital camera. At the beginning of each session, I positioned the camera to view as much of both participants as possible. I began recording when the session began and turned the camera off at the end of the session. I did not touch the camera at all during the tutorial.

While the camera was running, I sat next to it, so I was able to see the session from the same perspective as the camera. I took notes in a dual entry notebook while the session was recorded. I first became familiar with this kind of observation through Anne Berthoff’s use of the technique in teaching critical reading skills. She describes the dual entry notebook: “on the right side reading notes, direct quotations, observational notes, fragments, lists, images-verbal and visual- are recorded; on the other (facing) side, notes about those notes, summaries, formulations, aphorisms, editorial suggestions, revisions, comment on comment are written” (45). The right side, for me, were the notes on the subject matter of the session, the tutoring methods, and anything else that I found interesting, particularly body language and possible distractors. The left side of the notebook contained my thoughts on patterns seen as a whole after the initial observation was completed as well as information I wanted to ask questions about in the interview portion of my study.

While Berthoff’s idea of the dual entry notebook was as a specifically pedagogical tool, it has been used by many people as a research tool as well. Eleanor Kutz reports, in her article “Preservice Teachers as Researchers: Developing Practice and Creating Theory in the English Classroom,” for instance, how she uses dual entry notebooks with her preservice teaching students. The preservice teachers recorded their class
observations on one side of the notebook, then used the other side to point out patterns and ask questions about their observations. These questions are later addressed in a research project. The benefit of the dual entry notebook is that it allows the user focus on simple observations because there is space already allocated for reflection after the observation is over; this is the main reason I chose this method.

After the session, I looked over the materials to see if there were any patterns evident within the session that I wanted to follow-up on in the interview or that I wanted to look for in future observations. This is where I first noticed, for instance, that it was best to understand eye contact as between the student and tutor and the paper rather than between the student and tutor alone. This initial observation ultimately became an entire unit of analysis in Chapter 4.

**Survey**

The survey I administered was based on the Flow Scale Survey (FSS) originally developed by Susan Jackson and Herbert Marsh (see Appendix A). They worked “in order to develop a scale that assesses flow state in sport and physical activity and to conduct psychometric assessments to establish the validity, reliability, and factor structure of the scale” (Jackson and Marsh 18). The survey consists of 36 likert scale items. Respondents ranked their agreement or disagreement with a statement on a 5 point scale; a ranking of 1 indicated strong disagreement with the statement and a ranking of 5 indicated a strong agreement with the statement. MacNealy notes that “attitudes and opinions are often elicited with scale-type questions because the intensity of the respondents’ attitude is important” (167). The survey thus tests the intensity of flow experience in nine categories: challenge-skill balance, action-awareness merging,
clear goals, unambiguous feedback, concentration on the task at hand, sense of control, loss of self-consciousness, transformation of time, and autotelic experience.

This survey was originally used and validated in studies of athletes. Jackson and Marsh, the creators of the survey, were able to test a high level of reliability with the survey. Gerson Tennenbaum, Gerard Fogarty, and Susan Jackson did an independent study of the validity of the survey. They conclude:

The Rasch analysis of the FSS subscales demonstrated a high degree of consistency across and within samples, testifying to the reliability and generalisability of the FSS scale. The Rasch analysis has shown that the various dimensions of flow share a relatively consistent pattern that can be viewed in quantitative stages. It allows us to describe the flow state in terms of the unique experiences that are located on the linear continuum. (12)

The survey is thus supported as consistently measuring the aspects of flow, although it is important to note that both Jackson and Marsh and Tennenbaum, Fogarty, and Jackson note the difficulty of any quantitative measure of flow experience because it is felt and understood very differently by individuals.

Other studies of flow, while not always using this particular instrument, do use surveys to assess flow experiences. Joy Egbert, for instance, use similar surveys to assess flow experiences in other settings. Egbert's survey looks at flow experience in the foreign language classroom and was originally designed by her, although she cites the FSS as an influence on her design. I believe that using the FSS that has such strong support for its validity, despite not being designed for my particular situation, is better than creating a less tested and less valid survey for my purposes.

I made two important modifications to the survey for this project. I changed the
language of the items slightly in order to ensure the focus of the survey was the tutorial, not a sporting event. For instance, one original survey question stated “I was not concerned with what others may have been thinking of me.” I changed this to “I was not concerned with what my tutor/student may have been thinking of me.” This does not change the tone or the information sought, but it does mark the survey as pertaining directly to tutoring. The second key change I made was the addition of several open ended questions at the end of the survey. These questions were designed to get at the practices and behaviors the student and/or tutor participated in or observed during the tutorial. I wanted to allow them space to talk about the experience in their own words in case their experience was flow like but was not described in the wording of the survey (See Appendix B).

The purpose of collecting the survey data was to identify the level of engagement felt by both the tutor and the student during the tutorial. This is a subjective and attitudinal feeling which, as MacNealy notes, is “hard to elicit with any research method except interviews, surveys, and focus groups” (167). I chose the survey over interviews at this point because I wanted every person to respond to all of the same items. I also thought working with the modified FSS would help the validity of my study because the original has been so thoroughly tested previously and so mildly changed for my study.

At the conclusion of each tutorial session, I handed both student and tutor a copy of the FSS to fill out. The tutors usually indicated to me that the session was over by looking at me and referencing the survey to the student. I asked students and tutors to complete the survey before moving on to any other activity. I chose to administer the survey directly after the session because, as Julie Morrison and Jean-Paul Nadeau point out in their “How Was Your Session at the Writing Center: Pre- and Post- Grade Student
Evaluations,” students will answer surveys assessing their experience of the tutorial differently at different point in the writing process. Most notably, students often lower their satisfaction after having received their grades. I wanted to know what students thought of the session right after it happened since we cannot control anything that happens after the session is over. The tutors spent more time answering the survey than the students, but I was surprised that students did not seem to be rushing through the process. None seemed in an inordinate hurry to leave at the end of the session. While I did not time how long they took, most students took about 5 minutes to complete the survey. The tutors took a bit longer, around 7 to 10 minutes, to complete their surveys.

**Interviews**

Within a week of their tutorial, I requested via email a follow-up interview with each student. If the student did not respond within a week, I sent another notice asking for the interview. Seven of the eleven student participants and all six of the tutor participants agreed to the interviews. These interviews took place either in the Writing Center itself or in the faculty lounge on the same floor as the Writing Center since the Writing Center can be quite loud and busy. I audio recorded the sessions with a standard digital voice recorder and transcribed these interviews into a word processor.

MacNealy argues that interviews “vary along a continuum from informal conversations to formal surveys” (204). In “informal interviews, the researcher usually has at least one topic in mind, but the wording of the questions and the order in which topics are dealt with are very flexible to take advantage of conditions of the interview” (204). While not completely informal because I did have several questions prepared for each participant, my interviews were much closer to the informal side of the continuum.
For each interview, I had a set of fairly general questions aimed at understanding the participant's reasons for participating in the tutorial, general views of tutorials, and understanding and/or experience of flow-like feelings. For instance, I asked Rachel in Case #5 “What brought you to the center? What did you like about your tutorial session? What do you do well? How does it feel when you are participating in that activity? How does that feel compared to the tutorial?” Most questions were open-ended and I asked many follow-up questions both to further investigate participant thoughts and to understand ideas. Participants often asked me questions as well. I did not want to stick too closely to any questions that I created before the interviews because flow experiences, while having many of the same qualities, are often experienced and described differently.

Interviews are commonly used to add depth and context to other information collected when studying learning interactions. Egbert uses her survey and observation data to create interviews and then uses that information to better understand her observations, much as I do here. Also similar to this study is Isabelle Thompson’s study on scaffolding in tutorials. She observed and recorded the tutorial, surveyed both student and tutors, used both of those data sets to develop interviews for the tutor (not the student), and then returned to the recorded tutorial for further interpretation.

**Transcription**

In transcribing the tutorials, I used a version of what Magdalena Gilewicz and Terese Thonus term “close vertical transcription” in their article “Close Vertical Transcription in Writing Center Training and Research.” This method of transcription attempts to give more detail to transcripts and to better represent the kinds of
interactions that happen in tutorials than traditional horizontal transcription, which uses “play script,” showing only simple, isolated exchanges of discrete utterances between tutor and student. Close vertical transcription is indeed more complex, and sometimes harder to read, than horizontal transcriptions, but the value added by seeing more of the interaction makes up for the complexity.

Conventions in my version of close vertical transcription include indicators of back channels, nonverbal features, and overlapping utterances (See Appendix C). These are designed to show the complexity of the exchanges. Gilewicz and Thonus explain how to understand these transcripts

Close vertical transcriptions are read from left to right, top to bottom, in paired lines called turns. However, the reading of this type of transcript is linear only up to a point. Each participant’s speech occupies one or more lines that can be overlapped or cut off by the speaker on the line just below. At this juncture, the reader of a transcript must “unplug the other ear,” activate a stereo feature, and "hear" two channels at the same time. When noticing a gap in a line of speech, the reader should glance below to see how the other speaker fills it. (30).

In addition to these reading instructions, I have used all capital letters when referring to the tutor of the session in order to help my readers easily distinguish which speaker occupies which role.

A typical section of transcribed text would appear as follows:

Student: I have a question.
TUTOR: yes.
Student: Can you sign a form saying I can here ((smiles))
TUTOR: Well, we really aren’t supposed to do that. We can send an email at the end of the session to let your teacher know you were here, though.
Student: OK
You can see that the tutor's name will always appear in capital letters and the student's will not. This is for ease of keeping track of which party is speaking. This is actually a convention that I have carried over into the text of the next chapter as well for the same reason. Nonverbal features of the transcript are contained within double parentheses (( )). The “yes” the tutor has spoken is what is called a back channel, an instance where the TUTOR has spoken, but the student still has control of the conversation. This is why the TUTOR's statement is indented as it is. When participants overlap their utterances, brackets [ ] will note the beginning and ending of the overlap. (see Appendix C for more details).

**Data Analysis**

I ended my data collection with 4 sets of data: my observation notes, the surveys, the interviews, and the videos. I scored the surveys before the interviews. I added all of the Likert points together to come up with an overall score. I also looked, somewhat informally, to see if any one characteristic assessed in the survey was higher or lower than any of the others. All of the interviews were transcribed into a word processing program before any analysis was completed. As I was working through the first stage of analysis (discussed below) I was also transcribing the videos. The program Transana was pivotal in this transcription. It allowed me to view the video, a wave file of the audio, and the transcription all at once. This allowed me to time code the video to the transcript, leaving me able to point to a specific section of the transcript in order to find a specific section of video. I was also able to point to a specific section of the video and immediately see the transcript of that section.

Data was analyzed in a series of steps relying on grounded theory. Joyce
Magnotto Neff discusses the importance and techniques of using grounded theory in the writing center. She discusses the complexities she saw in writing tutorials that “cannot be reduced to Likert scales and statistical significances. Nor can they be represented adequately by simple descriptions and anecdotal evidence. Neither can writing center ideologies and institutional relationships be explained satisfactorily through deductive theorizing” (133). Instead of pursuing these other traditional methods of research she found that “grounded theory, an interpretive methodology originally developed by sociologists who wished to simultaneously describe and theorize the complexities of human interactions” was the best method for working with writing center research data (133).

Grounded theory was developed originally by Bernie Glaser and Anselm Stauss who wanted to understand “the multiple levels of interaction in the treatment of the terminally ill at the same time that they theorized about the actors, contexts, and causal agents involved in such interactions” (Neff 134). The idea was to “conceptualize complex activities” and to “develop theories about them” at the same time (134). Grounded theory works as a recursive process. “The process begins with collection, classifying, coding, and interpretation of data—with multiple opportunities for input from participants in the study. The research team also explores the larger significance of what they are describing and interpreting during theory-building phases of the process” (135). My study uses this recursive pattern. I began analyzing my notes and the surveys from the participants, I used that analysis to create interviews that allowed the participants to comment on the trends I had seen, I then used their comments to re-evaluate the survey data and the observation notes. Finally, I viewed three of the videos with this data. After the initial review, I again went back to the data to be sure of my claims. (See Appendix D for an
Neff continues to argue that “in grounded theory, the researcher looks at the phenomenon to be coded many times, considers the phenomenon from several perspectives, and asks questions of the phenomenon until a provisional name or label can be applied to it. This process foregrounds everything the researcher knows about the phenomenon, both consciously and subconsciously, in much the same way that invention exercises foreground what writers know about their subjects” (137). Obviously I became intimately familiar with my data. I often found myself coming again and again to certain scenes and events to try to understand them more fully. Through this viewing of data, I feel as if I have a stronger grasp on what happened in the tutorials in my study.

The first step in the process of doing grounded theory is open coding. Neff argues “open coding involves making comparisons and asking generative questions until the researcher is able to chunk events or interactions or phenomena in the data” (135). Open coding in this project involved the analysis of my observation notes and the survey results. The open ended questions on the survey provided my first grounds for consideration. Several issues emerged as indicators of “engaged” sessions. Tutors saw that students asking and answering questions was a sign of engagement as well as seeing the students write on their own texts. Students noted the praise they received as an indicator of a good session. Both student and tutors noted that smiling, nodding, and eye contact indicated the other participant was engaged in the session. My questions on the survey were really aimed at understanding how students and tutors experienced engagement in their session. As I looked at my notes, I wanted to know more about the interaction of the student and the tutor. I wondered about how the tutor responded when he or she did not have specific knowledge the student wanted or needed in the session;
an example of this was in a session working with APA citation style, which many of the
tutors have noted a discomfort using. I was curious about instances where the student
resisted the tutor’s suggestions as well as how the tutor and student seemed to relate to
each other. With one tutor in particular, I saw her interacting in one session as a true
“peer” and another as an “instructor,” so I wondered how those different kinds of
relationships might be playing out in the sessions.

With this information, I created interview questions and collected those
responses. What emerged from the interviews was a narrowed set of characteristics of
sessions that might be useful in understanding the tutorials. There were characteristics
of sessions concerning both the student and the tutor; understanding each other’s goals
for the session and receiving praise were the two most important of these. Good sessions
were characterized by tutors and students “being on the same page;” one tutor described
it in the interview as “you set this goal and you figure out what you want to do and how
you do it. And then you go through it. And so you know.” Good sessions contain positive
feedback from and for both student and tutor. Another tutor discusses the result of the
opposite of positive feedback: “I feel like maybe the feedback I’m getting-- they don’t,
they don’t give me like a reaction” that is positive. Another student noted that she “glad”
when the tutor “said [her paper] flowed well and that all of the paragraphs like went well
together” because she said praise of this sort was “always good to hear.”

Characteristics based on student behaviors involved writing on the text, asking
questions, and applying learning throughout the session. One tutor discussed both
writing on the text and asking questions more than once in her interview. In one
instance, this tutor lists “good” student behavior: “always writing stuff down, asking
questions, answering questions.” This tutor further discussed when “they write on the
paper themselves or they make the changes on a computer” as keys to engagement. A “worst” session was described by one tutor as one “with one [a student] who didn’t have any questions.” A good session was described by another tutor as when, during the beginning of a session she would explain a concept and “by the time I got to the end of the paper they were not even pausing when they read it. Now they were just marking it. For me that is the classic 'This is going well.'”

Characteristics of sessions based on tutor behaviors were a little more limited. Students marked the need for tutor patience and friendliness as key to good sessions. One student describes her tutor as “careful” in explaining concepts to her in multiple ways; as a non-native English speaker, she appreciated the way her tutor “uses specific textbooks to--and writing on a piece of paper to show which part of it is” important in his explanations to her. The student also describes the way her tutor “took her time...[and] made sure if I have any other concerns.” The students also described the tutors they wanted to work with as being “friendly.” Students described their tutors as “nice,” “easy to work with,” and “friendly....and they’re willing to help you like work through your different ideas.” The students, generally speaking, had not reflected as deeply on the characteristics of sessions as the tutors, but most of them had only participated in tutoring once or twice, so they had significantly less to reflect on. At the end of this stage of the analysis, my codes were “writing on the text,” “questions,” “friendliness,” and “patience.”

The next stage of grounded research involves what Neff calls “axial coding.” Axial coding looks at the data collected and analyzed during open coding and looks for connections between the categories determined there. “The connections are made when the researcher asks questions about the categories—questions that cover the conditions,
contexts, actions, interactions, strategies, and consequences surrounding the phenomenon under investigation” (136). I entered this phase of research with the characteristics of student and tutor behavior as described above. I decided that the best way to analyze the videos was to collect those characteristics into verbal and nonverbal characteristics. The verbal characteristics were praise, questions, and goals. The nonverbal characteristics were smiling, laughing, writing on the text, and eye contact. I used these characteristics to analyze the first three videos. From that work, I was able to both broaden and narrow my categories. All three of the verbal characteristics remained important, but the characteristic of “questions” were best understood through looking at student and tutor questions individually. I also added the fields of “direct instruction,” instances where tutors took on the role of dispenser of knowledge, and “postponing,” where the tutor verbally noted that a subject would be dealt with at a later time. The nonverbal characteristics grew to include eye contact, but laughter and smiling were collapsed into one category. A characteristic that was both verbal and nonverbal, noting of time, was added as well.

Finally, Neff discusses that “in grounded theory, a third process, selective coding, follows open and axial coding....Selective coding is similar to axial coding but at a higher level of abstraction. During selective coding, the researcher refines and develops provisional category relations until the core category is firmly established and other categories are placed in relationship to it” (139). Selective coding is the final phase of analysis. It is the coding of the entirety of the video collection. I coded the remaining videos in terms of verbal characteristics (questions, praise, goals, notes of time, and postponing) and nonverbal characteristics (smiling/laughter, writing on the text, and eye contact). Through looking at the differing qualities of these characteristics I was better
able to understand the tutorial I observed.

**Researcher Stance/Limitations**

I am unable to ignore what my place is in the society of the Writing Center at Ball State and the limitations it necessarily places on my research. I have been the Assistant Director of the Writing Center for the last three years. I was a part of hiring every undergraduate tutor participant. Part of my job is to observe and evaluate the tutors, and while I did not observe or evaluate any of the undergraduate tutor participants this semester, my position as “boss” certainly affected their willingness and ability to talk to me. One of the graduate student tutors was new and was my “mentee.” This relationship was about learning writing center policies and practices more than evaluation, but I did observe this participant as “boss” once during the semester. I worked hard to let the tutors know each time I asked them to participate that I was not evaluating them in any way.

My position as a “veteran” Assistant Director did give me some advantages, though. I have worked with the student populations coming through the Writing Center for three years, so I have an understanding of how and why we work with them. Some of the student participants recognized my face and name as someone to be trusted. Many of the tutor participants have had conversations with me about tutoring in the past, so we did not need to establish a common terminology or understanding. We had a common understanding of the concepts and ideas discussed, so we did not have to take time explaining any specific terminology.

A weakness of the study does lie in the use of the survey items. Because it is a written tool, issues of language understanding did emerge in a few cases. One
international student realized during the interview that she had filled out the Likert items backward. She thought 1 was a high rating and 5 a low rating. Because the survey contains more than one question assessing a characteristic, one tutor and one student consciously chose to change their ratings on one or more of those questions to ensure they were the same throughout the survey. For instance, one tutor mentioned to me in passing as she filled out her survey that she needed to make sure she had the same Likert score on all the “time” questions so that my study would be “reliable.” One student scored issues of control significantly lower on 3 items; he erased those scores and put a higher score in to match the others. Several participants noted that their rating would have been different at different moments in the tutorial. I believe that these issues were addressed through the interview process, though. I was able, for instance, to question the student with the backward scores and the students with the erased scores about why that happened and to push for further information about their experiences.

Another limitation of the FSS was in my use of it. The FSS does function to quantify the experience of flow in an event as a whole, but, as Tennenbaum, Fogarty, and Jackson point out, it is stronger in measuring the individual elements of flow. I was less interested in the appearance of flow characteristics than the overall experience of flow, so I used the FSS in that capacity only. There is data here, though, to discuss which elements of flow are more likely to appear in a tutorial.

I was also limited by the scope of the dissertation. There are more characteristics that could have been explored and different approaches to discussing the data that could have been used. I thought very carefully, for instance, about discussing each case individually instead of presenting my comparison of the cases. I could have featured a very detailed description of each case, pointing out the characteristics and talking more
deeply about the interactions in each tutorial. This would have given more of a narrative to each case than I have chosen to include.

I chose to talk about my cases more in the collective than in the individual because I think the characteristics seen come across more clearly this way. I think the patterns seen across the cases are more important and deserve more attention than a close rendering of each case. This limited me in describing the things I saw to those characteristics, excluding some interesting information, but I realized I could not cover everything.

**Summary**

This chapter has reviewed my collection and analysis of data as well as some of the limitations of the current study.

My study uses case study methods to collect both qualitative and quantitative data about each of the 11 tutorials I observed. I collected observations in a dual-entry notebook, survey results from both students and tutors, interviews with both students and tutors, and video recordings (including transcripts) of each tutorial. My participants, while originally collected in a convenience sample, were actually a good representation of the students and tutors who populated the Writing Center at Ball State during the Fall semester of 2010.

I analyzed my data in sequence, beginning with my notes and surveys, using them to create interview questions. After the interviews, I used all of my data in grounded theory methods of coding. Through open, axial, and selective coding, I came to analyze all of the videos with the verbal (questions, praise, mentions of time, establishing goals and expectations, and postponing) and nonverbal (writing on the text, smiling/laughing,
and gaze) characteristics.
I have discussed in chapter 1 and 2 that I became curious about ways of evaluating sessions without relying on pedagogical considerations because I saw inconsistent definitions of “good” and “bad” tutorial sessions. It seemed to me that sessions were discussed only in terms of how the tutor approached the session, rather than how the student and tutor experienced the session. The purpose of this study was to see what characteristics of writing center tutorials were uncovered through the use of an evaluation tool that did not rely on any one pedagogical approach to tutoring. My research questions asked what characteristics of tutorials exist independent of any specific tutoring method. I have found that flow theory is a good tool for researching how people experience educational experiences. I have used flow theory to have students and tutors evaluate their sessions through the Flow Scale Survey. Each of these tutorials has become a case, as discussed in Chapter 3.

The data for each case included the video-recorded tutorial along with its coordinating transcript, student and tutor Flow Scale Survey results, interviews with tutors, and interviews with some students. While I analyzed each case separately, the data discussed here will be a cross case analysis. I will show how each characteristic discussed is seen across the cases in order to look at emergent patterns in the data.

The Cases
As was noted in Chapter 3, I had 11 cases at the end of my data collection period. I chose to only examine 6 of those cases here because of the sheer amount of data I had. I made these selections based largely on the score on the modified FSS. With the modified FSS, I scored each survey individually. The results can be seen below in Figure 1. Figure 2 represents the mean scores for students and tutors and the overall mean of all scores.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter assigned to case</th>
<th>Student FSS Score</th>
<th>Tutor FSS Score</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>Categorized</th>
<th>Case Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Case #3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Case #4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>Different</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Case #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Case #5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Case #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Different</td>
<td>Case #6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. Modified FSS Scores and Categorizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean Tutor Score</th>
<th>Mean Student Score</th>
<th>Mean Total Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>110</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. Mean FSS Scores

After completing individual scores, I made several different comparisons. In the first comparison, I looked at how the student and tutor scored each session. I wanted to see how widely the scores ranged from each other. D,G, and K had the least different between the cases, indicating that these students and tutors understood their sessions
very similarly. A, F, and I also had quite close scores, although there were more
differences than in the D, G, and K. E and J had the highest differences, indicating that
the student and the tutor in those sessions disagreed quite strongly in their
understandings of the session. That leaves B, C, and H with a moderate amount of
agreement in their cases. Students and tutors did not disagree on their understanding of
the tutorial, per se, but there was a moderate degree of difference in opinion.

After categorizing the sessions into these sections based on the participants' level
of agreement in assessing the session, I looked to see whether their assessments were of
the session being high in flow or low in flow. Of those with mostly agreeing scores (A, D,
F, G, I, K), A, F, I and K had High levels of flow reported. D and G reported low levels of
flow experienced. B, C and H, the sessions with moderate agreement, all showed the
students rating the sessions higher than the tutor, which is consistent with all of the
scores seen in the study. In thinking about these 3 sessions, I chose to mark them as
“middle” because, although the student score may be higher than the mean, overall,
considering both student and tutor rating, and their level of agreement, they seemed less
extreme than any of the other sessions.

I narrowed the 11 sessions down to 6 based on these categories. I chose 2 high
rated sessions, 2 low rated sessions, 1 session that had different ratings, and 1 middle
session to cover all of my data categories. These final selections were made largely based
on the quality of the video available. I evaluated each one in terms of the angle of the
camera, making sure I had the best view of both the student and the tutor, and the
quality of the audio, making sure the background noise least interfered with the voices of
the student and the tutor. Ultimately, I ended with Cases 1 through 6, numbered from
highest scores (Case #1) to lowest scores (Case #5), with the session with differing scores
ending the group as Case #6. (See Appendix E for list of cases with numbers and names)

**Case #1: JAMIE and Stacy**

Case #1 occurred on October 20, 2010 at 3pm. JAMIE, the same tutor as Case #4, is the tutor. Her student is another sophomore named Stacey working on a project for her education major. The assignment required her to name and interpret the ten InTASC principles and provide an example of how she performed them. These are short principles that educators believe all new teachers should follow as set out by Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC). JAMIE had never heard of these principles before, but Stacey was well versed in them and was able to share her knowledge with JAMIE appropriately. I have actually worked with Stacey myself previously, so I was somewhat familiar with the kind of work she was doing and with the kinds of questions she usually asks.

JAMIE and Stacey had good chemistry from the beginning of the session. Stacey was a frequent visitor to the center, so she was familiar with the practice of reading aloud.

JAMIE:  Ok, And then have you been here before?
Stacey:   mmhmmm
JAMIE:   You know we usually like read through it together and talk about it as we go. Ok, just checking. Um, alright well, then we can just go ahead and get started, if you want to start reading.
Stacey:  Do you want me to read?
JAMIE:  Yeah, unless you are uncomfortable.
Stacey:   OK No that's fine. I've done it both ways like with you the third person, instructor, whatever read or like I've read so. Ok.

From the beginning, Stacey knows what to expect, is ready to work, and makes informed choices. This sets up the session to be a productive one.
Stacey's ability to identify and, often, correct her own errors certainly adds to the positive tone set early in the session. After reading the first principle, the following exchange occurs:

Stacey: Ok, what I've noticed so far which is driving me nuts is that I say "teacher" in every sentence, so I'm thinking like use “educators” or...  
JAMIE: Uh huh  
Stacey: or not starting with “teachers”  
JAMIE: or even just um, like this sentence for instance, you say “the teachers must be confident when teaching.” “Teachers should be prepared and ready for the lesson.” You could probably put that together or maybe there might be areas where you can rearrange the sentence so it doesn’t start with teacher every time.  
Stacey: yeah  
JAMIE: Um, "he or she is teaching then she is better able to relay the information. Teachers must be confident when teaching and prepared for the lesson". ((reading very quietly))  
JAMIE: You could do it that way and just sort of blend these two together.  
Stacey: So, “teachers must be confident and should be prepared”

Without being prompted, Stacey is able to identify a problem in her wording. She immediately jumps in with two possible solutions to the problem. I noted throughout the session that Stacey was quick to note her own errors and find ways to correct them.

The other important thing seen happening in this exchange is how Stacey and JAMIE build on each other. They take turns suggesting revisions to the sentence, with each revision resembling but improving upon the one before it. By the end, the sentence Stacey uses is a true hybrid of both their ideas. This suggestion of an idea, some back and forth, and Stacey ultimately choosing one of the revisions happens repeatedly in the session. In my notes, I was curious as to how Stacey was able to decide which one she liked best. I was also curious to know how JAMIE felt as Stacey built on her suggestions, something that is rather unusual in my own tutorial experiences. JAMIE too noted in her survey that Stacey “always made notes, changes, and comments on her work instead of waiting for me to do it” as a marker in this session that things went well. JAMIE also
described the session as “almost having a conversation” with Stacey in her interview. She clearly valued the interaction that characterized the session.

This session ran longer than the 50 minutes allotted. JAMIE, though, has to end the session before they have looked at all of Stacy’s text.

JAMIE: Yeah, so we are out of time. But I think we made good progress. We just didn’t get as far into it.
Stacy: What we did, I feel better about it.

JAMIE is unable to continue working with Stacy through the end of her paper, which she clearly regrets. Stacy, though, is still pretty satisfied with the work they did.

Both Stacey and JAMIE rated this session quite highly. Other students rated their session higher, but this one had student and tutor in this highest range of scores. Stacey gave the session a 144 overall and JAMIE gave it a 126 overall.

Case #2: Rachel an NANCY

I observed case #2 November 16, 2010 at 11 am. The tutor of this session is NANCY and this is her first semester tutoring. The student in this session is Rachel; Rachel is a first-year student working on a paper for her first-year writing course. The paper makes an argument about an issue that is of concern in Rachel’s life and relates to her major. She chose to write about how advertising affects children.

This session begins with NANCY figuring out where in the writing process Rachel is; Rachel is writing a first draft of the paper with many opportunities to revise before a final submission at the end of the semester. The student readily agrees to read the paper aloud, but, I noticed that she is nervous; I have noted several places in my observations when her face turns red. For instance, when she begins reading aloud, she flushes. Her color changes again as NANCY gives the first of her critiques. I did note fewer and fewer
instance of Rachel's color changing as the session progressed, possibly indicating an increase in her comfort during the session.

This case focuses on a mixture of editing issues and considerations of bigger picture problems. The tutor notes at the beginning of the session, for instance,

NANCY: When you say things like US children are spoiled,
Rachel: mmhmm
NANCY: it’s a really big generalization right?
Rachel: Yes
NANCY: So and you go on in to the next paragraph and you really focus on that particularly here, right?
Rachel: mmhmmm
NANCY: Since that’s a big generalization you might want to add in a little counter argument there. Obviously not all children but do advertisers expect, um, are there any facts or figures maybe that you found in your research that show that children are able to persuade their parents? Cause you might find a lot of statistics.
Rachel: Yeah I found that, I can agree with that.

There are several exchanges like this one that show NANCY pointing to a big picture issue and helping Rachel see ways of solving the problem. This sort of learning can be applied to not only this paper that Rachel is working on, but to future projects as well. Rachel noted in her interview that she was “glad [NANCY pointed out the generalizations] because the teacher had actually mentioned things like that. You don’t want to have generalizations....so I was glad that she was able to help me.”

Case #2 is also marked by the specific praise NANCY gives Rachel on several occasions. After reading one paragraph, for instance, she says:

NANCY: OK Um, I think these statistics are awesome
Rachel: mmhmm
NANCY: I love how you incorporated that because that’s really eye opening
Rachel: Yeah
NANCY: to your topic and I think that um once you kind of tied that in a little bit with the first part, um, just backed down just a little bit from everybody’s but then you go to these statistics
Rachel: yeah
NANCY: and those were really powerful. So, um, that was an awesome paragraph. Um, I really and I liked this too, how you related to...

NANCY finds something specific in each paragraph to praise. She notes what the student does well very specifically. I think this is aimed at helping Rachel be able to apply what she has done well to future papers.

NANCY concludes the session by complimenting Rachel's work and inviting her to return to the center.

NANCY: But, you have a great start.
Rachel: Oh, thanks.
NANCY: It's a--good writer.
Rachel: Oh, thanks.
NANCY: Is that all? Is there anything else that you want to talk about?
Rachel: I don't think so, I think that is pretty much it. I think that's all I have.
NANCY: Good, well feel free to come back in too.
Rachel: OK
NANCY: When you get further along, if you have any MLA questions or things like that.

Both Rachel and NANCY rated this session fairly high. NANCY rated the session 126 and Rachel rated it a 140. NANCY described the session as “really comfortable” and “so kinda from the start of that session” it was “good.” Rachel noted that NANCY “was really nice and you know, I thought she really helped” with the paper.

**Case #3: Ben and MATT**

I observed Case #3 October 18, 2010 at 2pm. It was my first observation of the day, but it was the third observation I completed overall. The tutor in this case, MATT, is one with whom I am very familiar. He had been working in the center for more than two years at this point; he was one of the most experienced and strongest tutors in the center. The student in this case, Ben, is a junior student who has never been to the writing center before. The assignment Ben brought in was to summarize articles in preparation
for a larger research paper later in the semester for a 300 level psychology class.

The session begins rather routinely. MATT asks several questions about Ben’s assignment and what he is hoping to get from the session.

Ben: Um, it’s just supposed to be a summary of different um articles and stuff for a research type thing, and putting it all together. And saying how I’m gonna use the articles and stuff.

MATT: OK. So the basic idea with our system,- usually, as you might be able to tell from the other sessions. Otherwise, its, um, basic idea is to talk through your paper. It’s like a conversation more than me just saying comma here, fix this. that kind of thing.

Ben: yeah.

MATT: It’s for you to practice and us to work together to improve your paper, and improve your writing in general

Ben: mmhmm

MATT: so that when you go out of here, it’s not like a one time thing. You are like kinda learning something to. We are improving your writing.

MATT: Um, so what we normally do to, kind of, accomplish that... The best way we have come up with, is to read aloud.

Ben: all right

MATT: Typically, I read just because it kind of helps me to, kind of concentrate. And I’m sure you have read it multiple times. So you can hear it, instead of just looking at it.

I noted the fact that MATT was doing the reading aloud because MATT and I had previously spoken at length about the practice. I was curious as to how Ben would respond to MATT reading aloud. Ben was more than willing to follow MATT’s lead and they began working. After each paragraph, MATT stopped. His general practice was to ask Ben if he noticed anything in the paragraph read before pointing to anything he thought might need addressing. After the first paragraph, for instance,

MATT: Did you notice- did anything pop up there?

Ben: Um, all the sentences are long.

After Ben suggests a problem, both participants discuss the issues and develop ways of dealing with them. MATT then usually points to a problem that he noticed that Ben did
MATT: OK. Um, did you did anything pop up in here while we were reading through it? It’s OK if you didn’t. I was just wondering. If you have anything to talk about That’s great.

Ben: Well, um. I get the one turn off in there.

MATT: Yeah, so... The style, that’s fine.

Ben: I just wrote it down like she had it, in sections. So I tried to focus on how she did it.

MATT: Yeah, that’s fine. Um. It’s a good way to start.

Ben: Did you see something?

MATT: Yeah, just a couple of things. One thing was I was a little confused over this sentence “Other advantages were for certain children of single or divorced parents is the separation allows for healthier living conditions than those with deceased.”

In this example that happens later in the session, Ben anticipates MATT's typical move of asking for his opinion then contributing more, which is why he asks for MATT's opinion after what he noticed has been discussed. They go on to discuss several problems MATT has in understanding Ben's sentences.

The session is a mix of concerns over the lower-level issues like commas and word choice and bigger picture issues like content, organization, and detail. MATT makes an effort to de-emphasize the grammatical and wording concerns by not making them the sole focus of the session, but he also makes a strong effort to ensure that Ben understands the issues that did arise.

MATT: Um, one thing I would think, Or I think I would, this is the facts like the noun, so the effect is usually the verb. With the “e.”

Ben: yeah

MATT: Yeah. ok whatever

MATT explains a misused word here, but he notes that this is not the most important issue with his “whatever.” When MATT is working on larger issues, like structure, he does not back off of the issue like he did here.

MATT: so I see here, and its going to continue here,

Ben: mmmmm
MATT: and you're talking about the articles in general.
Ben: mmmhmm
MATT: Is that something, is that the method you're going for or is it the method you're instructed to go for?
Ben: Um, it's the method I was instructed to go for. Where I would just first have the introduction, and tell how have kind of a broad overview of what the articles were about.
MATT: OK.
Ben: And then I'm saying how they are linked and go through.
MATT: OK.
Cool.
Ben: Well, we'll see.
MATT: OK. We'll see. OK.

Here MATT is not correcting Ben; he notes a concern, lets Ben explain his position, then notes that they will look at the issue throughout the rest of the paper. MATT has noted the importance of the organization but trusted Ben's understanding of the assignment enough to believe the organization is what is asked for.

The session concluded after 32 minutes. MATT closes with an overview of the work done and what he likes about Ben's paper.

MATT: But no, your sentence writing is good. Um. And I actually, I mean, I really have no problems with anything you do. Again, as you go back over it, and start looking at all your... Look at your contents, start looking at different things. Be careful with all those commas. right at the beginning of sentences
Ben: Yeah.
MATT: Be careful maybe with word choice not to be repeating the same words.
Ben: yeah
MATT: Or using really simple words like “very” or...
Ben: Yeah.
MATT: So, yeah.

MATT reminds Ben what he needs to keep working on and what went well.

Throughout the session, I noted that Ben and MATT were both quite physical in their interaction. Both talked with their hands, for instance. Both also were arranged fairly close to the paper. MATT described Ben as sitting “closer than most males do and
talked in a friendlier manner than expected” on the survey. MATT also noted, in both the survey and his interview, that Ben was “surprisingly catching his own mistakes, which is not something a lot of times happens.” MATT’s descriptions of Ben indicate that he was pleased with how the session went.

Despite MATT's memories of the session being positive, he scored the session only 104 on the flow scale survey, which was right in the middle of the scores received. Ben scored the session a bit higher at 148. While Ben's score is a bit higher than the average score given to students, when added to MATT's score, and when looking at their level of agreement, I categorized the session as 'middling' in flow experienced.

**Case #4: Anna and JAMIE**

I observed Case #4 directly after Case #3 on October 18, 2010 at 3p.m. This was my fourth overall observation and the second in a day. The tutor in this case is JAMIE. She is a tutor with about two years of experience, and she is a strong and thoughtful tutor. For this study, I believe she took the most time of all the tutors in filling out the surveys and gave me some very thoughtful responses in my interviews. The student JAMIE is working with is Anna, a sophomore with a proposal for a sophomore level communications class. This was not Anna's first time at the writing center, but she brought an entirely new project to this session.

A defining feature of this tutorial can be seen in the initial exchange between them as they decide who will read the paper aloud.

Anna:  And you can read it, cause I don’t want to read it but you can read it out loud.
JAMIE:  Ok, so would you say your main concern would be looking at sort of your argument
Anna:         mmhmm
JAMIE:         your support and then we’ll look at some of the
citation stuff.
Anna: OK.
JAMIE: Are-- looks like they’re all sort of um pamphlets and brochures.
Anna: Yeah, I did some Internet stuff like scholarly journals but I know how to cite those.
JAMIE: OK, yeah.
Anna: I just want to know what I did wrong like.
JAMIE: Sure And it has to be six; five to six pages, my paper.
JAMIE: ((looking at pamphlets)) Yeah. It looks like it has information we can use.
JAMIE: Ok, we’ll look at this first. So you don’t *laugh* you don’t want to read aloud?
Anna: Huh uh *emphatic*
JAMIE: ok
JAMIE: Um, are you sure because
Anna: mmhmmm
JAMIE: You might find some things that you
Anna: You can read it
JAMIE: Ok, if you’re-- we can
JAMIE: another option is we could take turns.
Anna: Ok.
JAMIE: Would that be ok? I’ll start out if you want.
Anna: I’ll start out.
JAMIE: Oh, Ok. That’s fine.

Before JAMIE is satisfied she understands what the assignment is and what Anna wants to get from the session, Anna has refused to read aloud. JAMIE had not even mentioned that she wanted to use that technique before Anna refuses to use it. JAMIE persists in asking Anna to do the reading aloud until Anna agrees to do so. This sets up a dynamic that continues throughout the session. JAMIE and Anna never seem to agree on what the most important thing to do in the session is and how to approach that.

Anna states at the beginning of the session that one of her concerns is to look at her use of citations. She lists other concerns at the beginning of the session as well, but she actually has the sources she is confused about citing with her. She pulls these out of
her folder at the very beginning of the session. It is clear through this action that those citations are one of her most pressing concerns.

JAMIE’s approach to dealing with the citation concerns is to wait to deal with them all at the same time. She notes each time a citation issue arises; instead of dealing with them immediately, she marks the places in the text to return later in the session. In my observation notes, I noticed that the student would “look away” from the session when that happened and that she crossed her arms under the table. JAMIE noted in her interview that Anna “lost interest a little bit and was less active about it” when they were Anna’s comments tell me that she knew she was less interested in some of the work being done.

Even when they eventually move into working with the citations, they have a hard time getting to what actually concerns Anna. JAMIE begins by looking at the References page citation for one of the pamphlets that Anna has brought.

JAMIE: Oh here we go. This is to show you got it online but I believe the difference is just that you have this
Anna: The retrieved...
JAMIE: Yeah so um.
Anna: I can not do it like in the paper.
JAMIE: Ok, well in the paper would depend on what you are citation is in the back. So like, if it has an author, it’s probably going to be the author’s name

JAMIE’s approach of looking at the references information first is sound, as is her explanation of why she is doing that when Anna interjects. Still, Anna is frustrated by the approach. She knows what she wants, but she does not seem to feel like she is getting it. She repeats two more times after this, though, that she is “fine” with the references citation and just wants to work on the in-text ones. JAMIE and Anna just cannot get on the same page as far as working on the citations. This is not to say that there are no moments when they work well together. As they were reading through the text, there
were certainly some moments where their interaction was seamless. Overall, though, neither thought the session was especially good. Anna rated the session 109 and JAMIE rated it 117, putting both their scores well below the average scores for students and tutors.

Somewhat surprisingly, the session lasted more than the allotted 50 minutes. After finishing their discussion of the citations, Anna asks for JAMIE to continue looking at her text.

Anna: I want to make sure this sounds ok.
JAMIE: Ok, yeah um, we are technically out of time but if you want to just look at that paragraph and you don’t have a class
Anna: yeah
JAMIE: we can just go a couple of minutes over.
Anna: Thank you
JAMIE: Oh, no problem.

Anna clearly valued the work they were doing in the session even if she was a little bored doing it. JAMIE was willing to continue the work since only a small amount of text remained. Anna showed no more signs of interest in the remaining work, but she was there and did want to keep working.

**Case #5: Megan and TANYA**

I observed Case #5 the same day as Case #1, October 20, 2010 at 5pm. The tutor in the case is TANYA, a veteran tutor of just about two years. The student in this case is Megan, a first year student at the university working on an assignment for her first-year composition course. The assignment Megan brought was an argument analysis; the debate of nature versus nurture in the development of humans was the subject of this analysis. Megan has her assignment on her computer; this is the only session where the student wanted to work on her personal computer. In all the other sessions, the students
brought hard copies of their work to look at.

This session begins like most of the other sessions; TANYA and Megan discuss the assignment and what Megan hopes to achieve in the session. TANYA decides to read the paper aloud herself. Just a few minutes into the session, though, TANYA's cell phone rings. She asks another of the tutors on duty to answer it, but ultimately steps away from the tutorial for less than a minute to deal with it. TANYA admitted in her interview that the ringing cell phone impacted most of the session for her. “I just felt bad after my cell phone rang. Cause that like was just on my mind the whole time.” Despite this interruption, they move through the rest of the session without further incident.

This case saw a lot of small editorial corrections, largely pointed out by TANYA as she reads aloud. For instance:

TANYA: “Feral children do not know human language and human behaviors.”
TANYA: Umm.... maybe instead of "and" maybe use "or". Ummm. Yeah..
TANYA: "They do not know human language or human behaviors.
*****
TANYA: “Because of Genes age”
TANYA: um, apostrophe s , yeah
TANYA: “Because of Gene's age, she will continue to have difficulties learning any kind of language or communication, she understands very little communication.”

Megan does make the changes on her computer when TANYA suggests them, but she points to very few errors of her own during the tutorial.

TANYA does raise bigger picture concerns, like what she sees as Megan's over reliance on one example.

TANYA: Ok. So in this paper, you're-- the main thing you're talking about is nurture right?
TANYA: How long--your paper's 4 pages?
Megan: Yeah but it’s only *** words
TANYA: Right, umm so, well for those 4 pages almost 1 is off of one example.

TANYA is concerned that Megan has written dis-proportionally too much about one
example. Megan is able to address this concern, though, by noting she has another example for the other side. She assured TANYA that her approach this is meeting the assignment.

Near the end of the session, Megan does reveal a strong frustration with the work she is doing on the project generally and, to an extent, in the session. After reading through the entire draft and noting concerns, TANYA points out that they have some time remaining and asks Megan if she would like to spend some time writing about some of the areas that were lacking information.

Megan: I'd like to say “yes,” but No.
TANYA: ((laughs))
Megan: I really really just don't wanna write anymore.
TANYA: Ok. Well. Ok.
Megan: I've been doing this all day
TANYA: Hopefully when you feel like you can at least working this in.

TANYA is surprised by Megan's assertion that she just wants to be done with the project, but I was not surprised because my notes during the session revealed my awareness that Megan was looking away from the tutorial and was playing with her cell phone more than once. I suspected that the session was not a particularly interesting one to Megan.

Megan rated the session 98 and TANYA rated it 95. This was the lowest set of agreeing scores. Neither Megan nor TANYA felt much flow in the sessions; it was ultimately unsatisfying for both.

Case #6: Tara and CASEY

Case #6 occurred on November 16, 2010 at 2pm. The tutor is CASEY; this was her second semester tutoring at the writing center. The student, Tara, is a first-year student working on a paper for her first-year composition class. This session was a bit different,
though, because Tara had already turned in the paper she brought to work on and received both a grade and comments on it. Tara “just wanted I can figure out like um what I can still do to improve this one, it could help me on the other one.” She wanted to learn what had gone right and wrong on this paper in order to apply that knowledge to the next one that was due soon. CASEY noted that “that session threw me for a loop because I don't usually start out with a project that we're going to work on for the future. This was all about explaining the past.”

They began this session reading through the draft aloud, as did all the other sessions. Instead of looking at any of the lower-level concerns, CASEY goes directly into bigger picture things that could possibly help Tara do better on the next paper. For instance, she starts with the observation “One thing I notice that you do is introduce the topic almost too broadly.” CASEY then goes on to instruct Tara as to how to introduce something in a better way.

CASEY: In an introductory paragraph, I would recommend giving some background, but not in a necessarily global aspect.
Tara: OK
CASEY: Kind of more specific background

Another example shows CASEY instructing Tara about using both research and personal experience:

CASEY: And it is great to use your own experiences in research, but I'm not sure if you want to put it together in the same paragraph and directly after what you talk about research saying.
Tara: OK
CASEY: It's kinda like--
Tara: Different focuses. Yeah I see the point

CASEY really does work with Tara to give her ideas about how to use what she has already done in order to do well on the next paper. CASEY did note in her interview that she thought Tara “came to the tutoring session for a teacher's perspective” rather than a
The way that CASEY instructs Tara in the writing process continues the idea of CASEY acting as a teacher rather than a tutor in this case.

CASEY: So does your professor talk to you about like the process of writing?
Tara: No
CASEY: OK.
Tara: Not really. She's the teachers who is like oh papers due here. ((Laugh))
CASEY: OK. Well the first thing you do is to sit down to invent, and it's also called brainstorming.
Tara: OK
CASEY: Invention or brainstorming. This is when you sit down and just write what comes to mind.

CASEY walks Tara through invention/brainstorming, draft, revising, and editing. She tells her about how the process is recursive and how this knowledge would help her to create better papers. After the explanation, CASEY asks Tara to participate in some of the beginning stages of the writing process. Tara commits to creating an idea map, which she completes on her own. CASEY leaves the table for a few minutes to let Tara work. They both work together, from that idea map, to create an outline for the upcoming paper. Tara refuses to start creating a draft with the time remaining at the end of the session, but she does have ideas for what to work on.

CASEY and Tara understood this session quite differently. Tara rated the session very highly, with a 138. CASEY, though gave it the lowest rating out of all the sessions; she gave it an 82. CASEY notes that she “didn't feel like the session was going that well” and she was surprised how “at the end [Tara] expressed learning something and being glad that she came in. She was all smiles.” Tara noted in her survey that she asked a lot of questions and thus felt like she got a lot out of the session. This lack of common understanding is much rarer in tutorials than I thought it would be. I wonder if the lack of agreement happened because CASEY acted as teacher rather than tutor. She chose to
inhabit that role, meeting Tara's needs and leading her to be satisfied with the session. In that choice, though, I think CASEY was not able to do the best work she is capable of, which contributed to her own dissatisfaction.

Verbal Characteristics

The verbal characteristic both students and tutors mentioned most often in the survey data is the posing and answering of questions. Praise was another important verbal characteristic seen mentioned in the survey data. Based on my analysis of the sessions, mentions of time, how goals are established, and the act of postponing work during a session are also verbal characteristics that deserve attention.

Questions

The questions posed by both students and tutors were one of the most important verbalizations in the sessions. Questions, as I am using them, are best understood through “verbal response modes” as outlined by William Stiles in *Describing Talk*. This system of understanding verbalizations was designed to get a better understanding of psychotherapy sessions. I found this approach appealing because, like therapy sessions, tutorials are intense interactions between two individuals. Ultimately, questions were the only classification of verbalizations that I was able to use in understanding my own data.

In short, Stiles frames his understanding of all verbal responses through “source of experience” and “frame of reference.” In asking a question, a person is seeking information from another source but is framing it in terms of his or her own use. I wanted to know what my tutors thought of their tutorials, for example, but I came to understand their responses in order to work on this dissertation.

Linguists understand questions in a variety of ways, but here, based on Stiles'
definition, questions are speech events that “request information or guidance” (16). The form the question takes, then, does not MATTer so much as the seeking of information or guidance. Not all of the questions addressed here will be in the typical “question” grammatical form, but all of them will be seeking information or guidance.

Both **students** and **tutors** posed questions and the questions received specific kinds of responses. The way the questions were asked, the kinds of information being sought, and kind of response required were the most important attributes of this characteristic of tutorials.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Tutor Questions</th>
<th>Student Questions</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>High Rated Sessions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case #1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case #2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low Rated Session</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case #4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case #5</td>
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<td><strong>Other Sessions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case #3- Middle Ratings</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case #6-Differing Ratings</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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For the most part, **student questions** were seeking two kinds of information. The first concerns changes in wording or other editing concerns that the student believes need to be made. These questions happen in all of the sessions, except for Case #6, but the student in Case #6 was not revising a draft for submission or resubmission. No matter what else was going on in the session, students wanted to know if they were editing appropriately.

This kind of question ranged from the fairly simple, yes/no question type, “that
should be a comma there?” (Case #5), to the more complex, opinion seeking question type, “should I say 'by writing out'??” (Case #1). Responses to these questions, especially the yes/no type of question, were often characteristically short. Sometimes, the tutor did not even respond verbally, giving a short nod rather than a “yes,” for instance. When opinions were requested, the tutors either confirmed that the choice the student offered was acceptable or the tutor proposed an alternate revision. Case #3 shows an example of alternative revisions being proposed:

Stacy: Like, should I say like “when writing out my lesson plan, I will write out what I plan on saying” and, I don’t know, something like that
JAMIE: Yeah. There’s a couple of ways you could do that.
Stacy: So, like, “when writing out my lesson plan I will write out what I”...ugh
JAMIE: What about um. Ok, let’s see. “I need to know what I am talking about so that when a student asks me a question I can answer the question without hesitation.” Um, Yeah we sort of need a way to like lead into the explanation of the lesson plan. something, um
Stacy: Ok, like “my lesson plan would consist of”
JAMIE: Yeah that would work and then the next sentence explains why it is important for them

This kind of exchange shows the student and tutor suggesting several possibilities that all build on each other.

The second set of these student questions revolve around requests for the tutor’s opinion on something other than editing in the text. An example of this kind of question happens in Case #1. The student has written two examples for one of her InTASC principles even though she only needs one. She thinks that one of the two examples may work for another of the principles, but she is not certain. She asks the tutor: “so if you read it and I can tell you if I think it fits like under that one as well.” The student is asking the tutor to evaluate where the example she is about to read works best in her paper. Stacy also asks for JAMIE’s opinion on bigger picture issues. For instance, she asks “Ok, do you think- so far does it seem like I am answering the prompt?” during
the later part of the tutorial. The student wants to know if she is meeting what is expected of her. The student in Case #3 asks a similar question. Ben asserts that he believes he is following the assignment by not describing a particular article in depth, but, shortly after this explanation, he asks MATT “do you think I should add?” Despite his previous assurance that the level of detail is what the assignment asks for, the student is uncertain about his work and wants the tutor's opinion. When students ask for tutors' opinions on something larger in the text, they most often want to know if their work fits with “the big picture,” indicating that students might often be unsure of how well they are actually meeting assignments. This might be a motivator for seeking tutorials in the first place.

There was a much greater variety of tutor questions during the tutorials. These questions fell into five general categories: questions about the assignment, questions about the content of the paper, questions seeking clarification of what was communicated, questions about editing choices, and questions to assure that the student understood an explanation given. These types of questions happened throughout any given tutorial.

Tutors asked questions about the assignment in order to understand what the student was required to do. These are questions like NANCY’s “And is there supposed to be research anywhere?” or MATT's “is that something, is that the method you're going for or is it the method you're instructed to go for?” Students answered these questions, by and large, from their own thinking. They did not refer, as a rule, to any materials given by the teacher. This type of question often occurred only at the beginning of the session and established what the work of the session would be.

Tied to questions about the assignment are questions about the content of the
paper. These questions happened far more frequently than questions about the assignment and occurred throughout the tutorial. These questions required students to refine their thinking or argument. For instance, JAMIE asks Anna: “Um, the only the only thing, the only question I guess I have about that is what--saying that it’s familiar. I’m not sure if it’s necessarily positive or negative.” While not phrased as a question, the tutor wants more specific information and opinions from the student about the topic. Similarly, MATT asks Ben: “And are you supposed to talk about, or do you talk about how you are going to use these, or um, perhaps will use these in you paper?” This tutor is asking the student for more information about the sources the student has mentioned. And, again, in Case #2, we see NANCY ask Rachel: “Ok, so advertising manipulates kids, so?....So kind of a so what?” Here the tutor wants the student to deepen her argument and discuss the importance of what she is talking about. All of these questions are aimed at getting the student to add to the paper under consideration.

Both of these types of questions elicit information from the student to guide the tutorial. The questions about the assignment direct the tutor’s attention to specific concerns in the session. These types of questions help both the student and the tutor by getting them on the same page, so to speak. The questions concerning the argument elicit deeper thinking about the topic, argument, and assignment from the student.

The types of questions about what a student meant to express and the types of questions about how the student understood the tutor really function in the same way. Both serve to ensure that the student and the tutor are on the same page. Questions about meaning feature the tutor seeking confirmation of a reading of the text or the writing process. An interaction in Case #6 shows this nicely.

CASEY: You are doing research and then how your own experiences kind of echoes the research. Right?
Tara: mmhmm
CASEY: so you are saying “ok what the research says is validated
Tara: mmmhmm “by your experiences”?
CASEY: yeah

In this exchange, the tutor points to a characteristic of the text and asks the student (in
two linked questions) if she is understanding this characteristic appropriately. Similarly,
tutors ask students if they understand an explanation or suggestion. In Case #5, for
instance, TANYA asks:

TANYA: Did that make sense at all?
Megan: yeah
TANYA: Cause I thought that may be confusing.

This question is posed after a long exchange of content questions where the tutor was
trying to help the student deepen her understanding of a difficult example. These
questions highlight the importance of the exchange of ideas between the tutor and the
student. If they cannot understand each other, cannot be on the same page, the tutorial
cannot proceed successfully.

The final set of questions is the most common. Questions about revising
happened most frequently in all the tutorials observed. These questions are similar to the
editing questions the students posed. For instance, “So what if you say ‘I walk into the
classroom prepared and ready to teach with confidence?’” (Case #1). These questions
give the students options for rewording or rephrasing things. They function very
similarly to the student’s own questions about revisions. I believe, based on my
experience tutoring, that they are designed to get students to be more engaged. They
either get the student out of a rut, suggesting something helpful to jump-start the
student’s thinking or to provide a model solution to the problem under consideration
that the student can use in later instances. Whether successful or not, I believe these kinds of questions to students are meant to increase engagement in the session.

Other kinds of questions to students about revisions are not as straightforward. In Case #3, for instance, MATT asks “Are these long for the way this seems to be set up? Is that, do you think they work?” The tutor thinks that the quotes being used are, proportionally, too long for the paper and he wants Ben to revise them. Instead of suggesting this directly, though, he asks Ben to explain the reason for the way he composed the section of text originally. This kind of questioning can serve several purposes. The tutor is giving the student the chance to understand a choice made on his own. The student could either have a good reason for what he has done, so the tutor can be assured by the answer that the student has made an appropriate choice. The student could not have good reasoning, could recognize that, and could decide to change the problem on his own. This scenario would provide more useful learning from the student, rather than having the tutor explain it directly. In both of these scenarios, the tutor is being “non-directive” in his tutoring, and he wants the student to think for himself. The fact that this happens in a middle-rated session means that this approach could be off-putting to both the student and the tutor.

**Student Questions**

**High Rated Sessions**

In Case #1, the session with the highest rating, responses to student questions were often lengthy and involved a series of exchanges between the student and tutor. One example can be seen in the instance where both the student and the tutor give several possible revisions, each one building on the last. Another example from Case #1 shows the same pattern. Stacy has asked about revising another section of text and
JAMIE responds:

JAMIE: Let's see. And you could always sort of like write the opposite of this. Like instead of “so he is not bored”, “extra work for him to like stay busy” or to be occupied.

Stacy: [engaged]

JAMIE: or engaged, engaged is a good word. Or challenged. But you also talk about challenged later.

Stacy: So, if I said, “I have this student in my group.-- I will be teaching this student” should I say that?

JAMIE: Uh huh

Stacy: [(writes)] “Teaching the student” um.

JAMIE: Now that we have “since,” if you look at this you have “I will” and “I need” so you could probably just go “and I need to make sure” and it’s just one complex sentence.

Stacy: “I need to make sure I have extra work to keep him engaged.”

JAMIE: mmhmm

Stacy: “I may even try to give him more difficult problems to try and challenge him.”

Again, a relatively simple question about revising a sentence turns into a complex exchange between the student and tutor.

What I find interesting and problematic is the fact that the other high rated session, Case #5, contains no example of these complex exchanges after student questions. In fact, there is only one student question in the entire session. I am forced by these facts to remember that sessions are idiosyncratic. Student and tutors want to get different things from their sessions. Rachel is just about as happy with her interactions with NANCY as Stacy is with her interactions with JAMIE.

As a tutor trainer, though, I do think that creating room for exchanges like those between Stacy and NANCY is important in improving tutorials. Those exchanges make both the student and the tutor actively consider the issue at hand, which should engender more investment in the session.

Low Rated Sessions

The presence of exchanges between student and tutor based on student
questions certainly does not necessarily mark a high rated session. Exchanges based on student questions do appear outside the highest rated sessions, but the content of them tends to differ. From Case #3, which is neither high nor low, we see:

Ben: Does that sound about right?
MATT: Um, “Other advantages were for certain children from single parents...
Living conditions before they separate.”
MATT: OK. But this would be a thing where, um, where you have a comma before whose and after conditions. Because we’re talking about other advantages for certain children of divorced parents to... Right. Um...

The tutor gives a very short opinion on the revision, “OK.” The following exchange does not suggest more revisions, building on what Ben wrote. Instead, it edits the revision. MATT does not engage with creating the revision, like I saw in the high rated session. Still, MATT does respond to the revision and does suggest improvements to it, even if the improvements are grammatical. While Case #3 is not a low rated session, it does show some similarities to the lower rated sessions. The fact that MATT does respond, but does not respond substantively, could explain that middle rating.

Most of the lower rated session show very short responses to student questions. Tutors respond with “Ok,” “Good,” and “Yeah” more often than anything else. They do sometimes provide short explanations of these evaluations, but they are not substantive. For instance, in Case #4, Jaime responds to Anna’s rearranging of words in a sentence with “Yeah. It might make more sense to flip it, but. um.” JAMIE approves the revision, but it is not a strong approval and it is not a collaboration on the revision. Both JAMIE and Anna just seem less into the work in these kinds of exchanges.

Tutor Questions

High Rated Sessions

Just like with the student questions, high rated sessions saw longer interactions happening in response to tutor questions. The example from Case #2 begins to show this
pattern.

NANCY: And is there supposed to be research here anywhere?  
Rachel: Yeah. I've got a couple of things but 
NANCY: Oh I see  
Rachel: I'm going to have to go back and like I mean obviously make them better and stuff.

While not as lengthy as the exchanges seen in Case #1 (below), this exchange does show Rachel willingly answering NANCY's questions and adding her own understanding of the issue. She points to the research she has done and evaluates it on her own.

A longer exchange can be seen in Case #1:

JAMIE: Ok, um, so are you currently doing observations?  
Stacy: We just finished observations and we're writing our lesson plans for what we are going to teach.  
JAMIE: OK.  
Stacy: and I got to talk to my students for like five minutes and I got to like I knew who my students were when I was observing  
JAMIE: yeah  
Stacy: but I --like a lot of classes got to like work with their kids like for a whole day. We didn’t really get to work with our kids much.  
JAMIE: Ok. Um, I was just making sure that like tense as far as when this is happening compared.  
Stacy: yeah  

In this exchange, Stacy understands JAMIE's concern with the example right away. She immediately is able to explain her thinking. From here, they go on to find a way to incorporate this information into the draft.

Part of this interaction is the student's willingness to disagree with what the tutor has suggested. Students in the higher rated sessions do not accept the revisions suggested immediately every time. They also feel authorized to build on what the tutor has mentioned in the higher rated sessions. This sense of authority and control must contribute to the higher ratings.

Low Rated Sessions
There seem to be more tutor questions happening in the lower rated sessions. This
indicates that the tutors in lower rated sessions may be working harder in these sessions.
As Jaime points out, with Anna “I had to like push a little” to make her work. These
question are a way of pushing the students to work. It seems as though tutors were using
questions to build student engagement in the session.

The higher number of questions could also be attributed to the fact that students in
the lower rated sessions generally provided shorter answers. Megan answers some of
TANYA's questions, for instance, with “Yes,” “Basically,” “It was my opinion.” Anna
responds to many of JAMIE's queries with nothing more than an “mmhmm.” These
answers do address what was asked at some level, but in such a short manner that the
tutors may have felt driven to ask more questions.

Questions in tutorials indicate how the session is progressing. In the higher rated
sessions, responses to questions became lengthy, with both students and tutors
participating in many conversational turns before a new topic was introduced. The lower
rated sessions showed shorter responses with fewer turns by either the student or the
tutor. Looking at the questions asked and how they are responded to helps me understand
how the tutors and students are working in the session

Praise

Unambiguously positive feedback is generally agreed to be an important feature
of writing center tutorials. While not going into depth about what that praise should be
over or how it should be conveyed, the writers of both The Bedford Guide for Writing
Tutors and The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Peer Tutoring mention praising the student as
part of the tutor's job. Leigh Ryan and Lisa Zimmerelli discuss how one part of the
tutor's job is to be “sympathetic, empathetic, encouraging...and supportive and helpful”
(28). Being encouraging and supportive certainly includes giving praise. Paula Gillespie
and Neal Lerner note that it is the tutor's job to “find something positive” in the student's
work and comment on it (42). Seeing praise in the tutorial is certainly expected.

The large majority of the praise came from the tutors and was about the student's
work. Tutors praised students for the work they had already done. In Case #2, NANCY
compliments Rachel on the ways she was using statistics in her draft, for instance.

NANCY: OK. Um, I think these statistics are awesome
Rachel: mmhmm
NANCY: I love how you incorporated that because that’s really eye opening

Praise also occurs for work completed during the tutorial. In Case #5, TANYA praised
Megan for her work revising a confusing sentence during the tutorial.

TANYA: She learned best by visual and written learning?
Megan: Yeah. I don’t know. I don’t know what that
TANYA: mmhmm
Megan: “through observation”?
TANYA: Yeah, that’s good.

Tutors praise both the work the students have done before coming to the writing center
and the work they do while there.

Tutors' praise is aimed at both general qualities of students’ work and at more
specific actions, behaviors, or revisions from students. NANCY in Case #2 provides some
general praise for Rachel's text:

NANCY: Um, I think that you have definitely met the goals of the assignment
from what you’ve.....You’ve included your own interests.
Rachel: mmhhmm
NANCY: It’s very smooth, it’s held together by you know, and it transitions nicely, except for that
one little part we talked about.
This praise is general in that it is about the work as a whole. Similarly, Case #3 has several points of general praise including “so yeah, good introduction” and “They’re [your sentences] all strong though, um, are really, are um, good.” General praise is also seen in Case #4 as JAMIE praises a particular section of Anna's text.

JAMIE: One thing that I’m seeing here that is good, is that um you do; you’re saying it’s familiar
Anna: mmmhmm
JAMIE: and then you are giving some sort of data or evidence that’s supporting it.

Here JAMIE's praise is more specific in that she is pointing to a specific paragraph rather than the entire paper. While some examples of “general” praise are quite in-depth, discussing just why the tutor likes that section of text, this is still about a larger quality of the text rather than pinpointing something much smaller.

Very specific praise about small scale issues does happen. This kind of very specific praise usually refers to revisions made in the tutorial itself. For instance, TANYA tells Megan that her revisions are “good.” Jaime tells Anna that her revisions are “clearer.” Specific praise tends to be short and straightforward because it is about smaller instances of something praiseworthy.

There were also very rare instances where the student praised the tutor. In Case #1, Stacy praises JAMIE's suggested revisions, for instance.

JAMIE: So what if you say “I walk into the classroom prepared and ready to teach with confidence”?
Stacy: Oh, that’s nice

Other kinds of student praise for tutors happens after the tutor mentions their hope that the session has been helpful for the student. This can be seen in Case #6.

CASEY: Well, I hope that this helps.
Tara: Yeah, it definitely helped.
CASEY: OK. Good. Excellent.
CASEY's statement is a pretty common one seen at the end of a session. All tutors hope that they have helped the student in some way. Students are almost always willing, like Tara, to say they thought the session was helpful, whether they actually thought it was or not.

Tutors made a strong effort to commend the students for the work they saw as positive. The difference in high rated and low rated sessions centers around the general and specific nature of the praise given.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Praise</th>
<th>Specific</th>
<th>General</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>High Rated Sessions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td><strong>Low Rated Session</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Other Sessions</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Case #3- Middle Ratings</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case #6- Differing Ratings</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*High Rated Sessions*

In the higher rated sessions, there were more examples of general praise than specific praise. Case #2 with NANCY and Rachel shows this particularly well.

NANCY: Um, I think that you have definitely met the goals of the assignment from what you’ve….You’ve included your own interests.
Rachel: mmhmm
NANCY: It’s very smooth, it’s held together by you know, and it transitions nicely, except for that one little part.
Rachel: yeah
NANCY: we talked about yeah
Both of these examples are near the end of the session. NANCY is reviewing what Rachel has done that she thinks is good. Rachel, in her interview, discussed the effect of this praise on her. She remembered “She [NANCY] said it like flowed well together and that all of the paragraphs like went well together, which is always good to hear that it works. So, um, you know, I was glad that happened.” Rachel, while not overwhelming in her appreciation of the praise, did remember exactly what NANCY commented on. She kept that praise with her, which probably built her confidence in her writing skills. She also mentioned that she “would definitely-probably-come back” to the writing center to work on her writing again. While not directly linked to the praise she received, she clearly felt that tutoring was a positive experience that benefited her work.

Case #1 offers very few instances of praise from the tutor to the student. Two of the four instances are from the student to the tutor. Of the two examples of JAMIE praising Stacey, one is general and one is specific.

General praise seems aimed at building the overall confidence of the student in her ability to write. Most examples show the tutors noting what big chunks of text have been done well. This is not to say that general praise happens only in high rated sessions. I also do not intend to imply that specific praise does not exist in high rated sessions. Rather, the pattern shows more general praise in high rated sessions.
In the lower rated sessions, more specific praise was given than general praise. A good deal of this kind of praise was very short. In Case #4, TANYA repeatedly says things like “Ok. Good.” and “Ok. That sounds better” when the student proposed a revision of the text that she thought was better than what already existed. These compliments are on very specific pieces of work, but they are not long or in-depth. They convey that the tutor is pleased with the work that the student is doing and that the work should continue. They do little to explain why the work has improved, though.

Not all of the praise in the low rated sessions is this brief, though. In Case #4, JAMIE offers some in-depth, specific praise to Anna.

JAMIE: Ok, so, I think that this I think you did a good job here of um, explaining what depression is cause I agree that people get confused.
Anna: mmhmm
JAMIE: Well, you hear people just say that
Anna: mmhmm
JAMIE: like “I am so depressed.” But are they really depressed or are they just sort of feeling down that day.
Anna: mmhmm
JAMIE: and then this is the same sort of ---this sounds a lot like a definition or an explanation of depression

JAMIE is pulling out a specific section of text and detailing her appreciation of the explanations and definitions seen there. She explains why, as a reader, she needed those explanations to give Anna something to be confident about in her writing.

The purpose of praise in any instructional setting is to point to what is working well, to encourage continued work. This happens in both high and low sessions.

Students do not seem to worry too much about their work being critiqued. Rachel noted “I'm glad [NANCY] did [point out problems] because the teacher had actually mentioned” the problem as well and Rachel “was glad that [NANCY] was able to point those out to me and I was able to change them.” Another student (not in Cases 1-6) noted
in her interview that “I bring my paper to the writing center because I knew [sic] that it’s not perfect. There’s something to be improved, so I want [it] to be directly pointed out which parts needs to be improved then I can get-get it revised.” This backs up Jill Burkland and NANCY Grimm's finding that “students expressed a strong preference for criticism and an ambivalence about praise” in teacher comments on their papers as presented in their article “Motivating Through Responding.” While Burkland and Grimm are talking about teacher comments on drafts, the kind of responses received from tutors seem to be classified the same way.

There are relatively few examples of general praise seen in any of these tutorials, but, when present, it seems directed at building students’ confidence in their writing skills. Tutors recognize that they do not need to do much in this area. The specific praise seems aimed at keeping students working during the tutorial. The specific praise is either, “good work on that revision, keep going” or “don’t worry, you are doing some things right.” The prevalence of specific praise in the lower rated sections could be seen as the tutor responding to the student’s low engagement. The relatively larger number of examples of praise in lower rated sessions could also have contributed to those lower ratings—if students distrust praise, more examples of it could put them off the session.

**Time**

The timing of a tutorial is very important to the tutor. Paula Gillespie and Neal Lerner note in their *The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Peer Tutoring*:

A good session will fly by, so you'll have to be very aware of time. If there's no clock where you tutor, have a watch handy. It's often a good idea to offer the writer something such as, 'We have ten minutes left; do you still want to talk about the five pages we haven't looked at or is there another priority we should
address?” When time is almost up, it's a good idea to get a sense of what the
writer got out of the session. (35)

At Ball State, there are only 50 minutes in a session, and a great deal must be covered
during that time. Tutor training materials generally break the session down into a
beginning, middle, and end. The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors describes the
beginning as “Setting the Agenda;” “During the first several minutes, you and the writer
will be setting at least a tentative agenda for the tutoring session” (19). After that initial
setting, they describe ways of approaching items in that agenda, ways of filling the
“middle” of the session. Finally, they discuss “Wrapping up a Session;” “a good way to
handle wrapping up a session is to watch the clock unobtrusively and announce when
there are five to ten minutes left. You and the writer can..finish what you are working on,
plan the writer's next steps or next session, and answer any last questions” (27).
Throughout this language is a concern for time. Tutors are taught to pay attention to
their timing in order to make sure that they allow adequate time for each part of the
session as well as to make sure they cover as much of the student's material as possible.
Keeping accurate track of time during the tutorial is thus important for tutors.

In my original observation notes, I was looking at mentions of time in tutorials as
an observable aspect of flow theory. I noted how tutors mentioned time in hopes of a
possible contradiction to what Csikszentmihalyi writes about time: "although it seems
likely that losing track of the clock is not one of the major elements of enjoyment,
freedom from the tyranny of time does add to the exhilaration we feel during a state of
complete involvement“ (67). As I saw tutors mentioning time in their sessions, I thought
I could make an argument that an obsession with time can be present in high flow
situations, something quite at odds with Csikszentmihalyi’s arguments. What I realized
as I viewed the videos, though, is that mentions of time here are not about the quality of
the experience of time, like flow theory discusses. There was no argument to make about
awareness of time as it relates to flow. The mentions of time are, rather, indicators of
how the session is progressing.

Time was not noted in every session; NANCY in Case #2 did not mention time
once in her session. The rest of the cases had no more than three total mentions of time
each. Still, I was intrigued by how time worked.

Time was noted most often by referring to how much time remained in the
session.

JAMIE: Ok, well, we'll keep going. We still have a good twenty minutes.
*****
JAMIE: We've got like five minutes, so we can start working on the next one but
we are not going to be able to get through all of it unfortunately.
*****
TANYA: We have like 20 minutes do you wanna work on that now?

Tutors clued students in as to how much time remained to work on their project. In the
first example, JAMIE is simply acting as time keeper for both herself and the tutor. In
JAMIE's second example and TANYA's example, the advice seen in The Bedford Guide
for Writing Tutors is followed almost to a tee. Both note that the end is nearing and
solicit the student's input as to how the rest of the session should work.

JAMIE in particular, of all the tutors, noted the restrictions of time when working
with Anna. She knew that Anna wanted to look at citations, so she feels the need to move
to that concern despite not having looked at the entire draft.

JAMIE: um all right let's see we've got two more pages  
Anna: mmhmm  
JAMIE: but let's go ahead and look at some of the citations and then that would be done with we
have time for and if we have more time we can keep going. Is that cool?  
Anna: mmhmm  
JAMIE: I
don’t want to, I hate to neglect anything but we only have so much time.

This exchange follows the discussion of citations:

JAMIE: Ok, yeah um, we are technically out of time but if you want to just look at that paragraph and you don’t have a class
Anna: yeah.
JAMIE: we can just go a couple of minutes over.

JAMIE is sensitive to the time she is allotted, but she is also willing to continue working to address all the concerns the student brings. These mentions of time show how tutors can be constrained by time but find ways to work around those constrictions.

<table>
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<th>Mentions of Time</th>
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<th>Non-Reassuring</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Case #4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case #6-Differing Ratings</td>
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</table>

**High Rated Sessions**

In the higher rated sessions, the tutors refer to time largely in encouraging ways. MATT tells Ben in Case #3, “we have plenty of time left” to work on the project. Jaime tells Stacy in Case #1 “it’s fine” and “we still have a good ten minutes” of session time left. These are moments of encouragement; the tutors are reassuring the students, and themselves, that the work will get done.

Even when Jaime is not certain the work with Stacy will get done, she is still
encouraging, letting her know “we can start working on the next one” to get an idea of what work needs to be done, even if they “are not going to get through all of it.”

In the higher rated session, tutors seem less worried about the time. This is not to say that they are not focused on how much time has passed; rather they are less concerned with how the time has been filled. They seem more confident in their abilities to fill the time appropriately and in ways that will satisfy both them and their students.

Low Rated Sessions

In the lower rated sessions, the tutors are far less reassuring about the amount of work that will get done in the remaining time. JAMIE tells Anna that she “hate[s] to neglect anything” as she switches the focus of the session from Anna’s written text to the citations. Still, JAMIE does not promise to look at all of the text. Her only concession is “if we have more time [after working on the citations] we can keep going” with the text. This is a generous offer, but it differs pretty significantly from her promise to “start working” on Stacy’s next paragraph; here there is no promise.

Another difference that appears in the lower rated sessions is in the confidence of the tutor that the student will complete work once the session is over. Case #5 illustrates this:

TANYA: we have like 20 minutes do you wanna work on that now?

The tutor has pointed out several missing elements in the student’s work and is asking if the student would like to use the remaining time to complete that work. This could indicate that the tutor is less confident that the student will complete the work on her own after the session has ended. Another understanding of this exchange could be that the tutor is attempting to fill the time remaining with anything. The tutor could be recognizing that she has not given the student all the time she is allotted and is seeking
to fill that time up.

I lean toward the understanding that the tutor does not trust the student to complete the work, or at least complete it satisfactorily, because of an exchange that happens in Case #4, a similarly rated session.

   JAMIE:  Ok, yeah um, we are technically out of time but if you want to just look at that paragraph and you don’t have a class
   Anna:    yeah
   JAMIE:  we can just go a couple of minutes over.

The tutor here is offering to continue reviewing the written text even though the session has ended. This implies that, despite the tutor modeling the kind of work that needs to be done, she does not believe the student can or will continue that work outside the bounds of the session or that the work the student might do would not be of the quality of the work from the rest of the session. The fact that these similar exchanges happen in both of the lower rated sessions demonstrates that these sessions do not inspire belief in the tutor that the student will or can continue the work after the session is concluded.

The way that tutors see time in all of the sessions, based on their continual reference to it, is what Anne Geller refers to as “fungible” time in her article “Tick-Tock, Next: Finding Epochal Time in the Writing Center.” Fungible time is time that is measured in units and is opposed to epochal time which is time measured by events (8). The tutors, in general, see their sessions as units of time; 50 minutes to fill. JAMIE shows hints of understanding her session as an event unto itself when she offers Anna more time to work after the time limit on the session has elapsed. Anna responds by seeing the session as an event when she agrees to continue working until they have reviewed the entire paper.

   TANYA and CASEY, in offering their students the remaining time in their
sessions to continue working, show a more fungible understanding of the session. They know that sessions should last 50 minutes. Despite the fact that they have covered everything they feel that they need to, they know there are more units to fill. Their students, though, recognize the session as epochal. They have done the work of the session and are done. TANYA's student Megan says she “I really, really just don't want to write anymore.” I think this is because her body or her mind recognizes it is time to work on something else. There is more work to do on the project, but this phase is done. Similarly, Tara does not see the need to continue working with CASEY because she has gotten what she needed for this phase of the project. She is happy to start the next “epoch” of time on the project when she begins drafting in her dorm room.

Geller ultimately champions thinking about tutorials in epochal time. She believes that with this kind of thinking, tutors will be able to better assess and meet student needs. In this study, though, none of the tutors here exhibit strong signs of viewing the session epochally. When they believe that the session is going well, though, they seem to feel the way Geller describes tutors who work epochally. For me this really complicates Geller's statement. When training tutors, I think we should focus more on creating a feeling in the session than on having them understand time in any specific way, especially since tutors will always have some limitation on their time with the student.

**Negotiating an Agenda and Expectations**

Thomas Newkirk discusses the importance of the beginning of a “writing conference” in his article “The First Five Minutes: Setting the Agenda in a Writing Conference.” While Newkirk is discussing conferences between students and their
teachers, his discussion is an important one that is often shared with writing tutors. He concludes that “the opening minutes of the conference are critically important in giving the conference direction—they act as a kind of lead. The student’s contributions in these opening minutes need to be used to give the conference a mutually agreeable and mutually understood direction” (313). Leigh Ryan and Lisa Zimmerelli note in their *Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors* that spending a few minutes in conversation at the beginning of the session “allows you to learn fairly quickly about the assignment and the student, and about his or her approaches to and concerns about the task and about writing in general” (19). Clearly, the first few minutes of the session are important because of how they prepare both participants for the rest of the session.

It is important that the student and the tutor understand the work that is to happen in the tutorial. Tutors need to understand what the student wants to work on. Students, upon entering the Writing Center, are given an information sheet that asks them to check boxes next to their concerns. While I did not collect these sheets for the study, the information sheets help the tutors begin the conversation about what the session will be about. In Case #2, NANCY prompts Rachel to outline her concerns by looking at this sheet.

NANCY: Alright so you want to look mainly at your topic, your thesis, and.....
Rachel: Yeah.
Rachel: I just want to make sure they all like go together, and like that they work.

This sort of general listing of concerns usually led to further questions concerning the assignment. NANCY follows up Rachel's request to make sure things “work” with a question about the assignment and elicits this response:

Rachel: There was never really an assignment thing but the assignment is we had to pick like an argument that helps or like that has something to do with our identity and like just talk about it like argue it and stuff so.
This provides the tutor with more knowledge about the assignment so that she knows how to proceed with the rest of the session. Similarly, the student and tutor in Case #3 work to understand what to focus on during the session.

MATT: Um. All right. What are we working on today? A summary?
Ben: Yeah, Going over it, making sure I have everything OK.
MATT: OK. Cool. Um, so what kind of, um, summary?
Ben: Um, it’s just supposed to be a summary of different um articles and stuff for a research type thing, and putting it all together. And saying how I'm gonna use the articles and stuff.

The students usually did not have a language to express very concrete concerns in their writing. The idea of having the paper “work” was seen very often. Still, students did sometimes ask for more specific help. In Case #4, for instance, Anna asks for help with “transition- organization, right, and then am I citing my sources right.” This listing of specific concerns was much rarer than more general requests to “make it work” or look at “grammar.”

Students also need to understand how the tutors will be approaching the session. The first few minutes of the session thus also see the tutors outlining their goals and expectations for the session. The tutors express the procedures they would be following, explaining what they would be doing and why in order to get at the student's expressed concerns. The most in-depth explanation comes from MATT in Case #3:

MATT: So the basic idea with our system,- usually, as you might be able to tell from the other sessions. Otherwise, its, um, basic idea is to talk through your paper. It’s like a conversation more than me just saying comma here, fix this. that kind of thing.
Ben: yeah.
MATT: It’s for you to practice and us to work together to improve your paper, and improve your writing in general
Ben: mmhmm
MATT: so that when you go out of here, it’s not like a one time thing. You are like kinda learning something too. We are improving your writing.
MATT: Um, so what we normally do to, kind of, accomplish that... The best way we have come up with, is to read aloud.
Ben: all right
MATT: Typically, I read just because it kind of helps me to, kind of concentrate. And I’m sure you have read it multiple times. So you can hear it, instead of just looking at it.
Ben: Excellent.

MATT explains very clearly what Ben can expect and why the procedure works for him.

The other explanations of how the tutorial will work have varying details and explanations. A more typical example is seen from NANCY in Case #2:

NANCY: and what we usually do is to read out loud because it kind of helps to hear, so either you could read or I could read whatever you’re most comfortable with.

Every tutor had some sort of explanation of what the student could expect.

While the great majority of the expressions of expectations or goals happen in the first few minutes of a session, there are some examples that happen outside those first few minutes. These instances are just as important to the session as the ones at the beginning of it. In Case #1, JAMIE sees that Stacy is not consistently using the plural or the singular when using the word “teacher.” After pointing out the issue once early in the session, the tutor points it out again near the middle of the session.

JAMIE: Um, and then I don’t know we talked about this up here where you are switching between the teacher and teachers. I don’t know if that’s a big issue
Stacy: Oh.
JAMIE: But here you were pretty consistent. So, I don’t know, it’s up to you.
Stacy: Ok, um, let me try to look at maybe, see like every other one I change it.
JAMIE: Yeah, I don’t know, it’s like I said before it’s not like the biggest issue.
Stacy: I’ll probably just change it cause if I tried to go off the principle and say the teacher. So what you’d say I was to do that. I doubt my teacher is really going to care.
JAMIE: Yeah, that’s sort of like it’s like maybe something to think about and it might be a way to help you deal with some of the things like he or she or deal with consistency but there might be other areas where consistency would be more important than like what subject you use. You know what I mean?
Stacy: What?
JAMIE: Like if you were um, like I think it would be a bigger concern to look at like all the repetition.
Stacy: [Yeah, Yeah let’s not focus on this.]
JAMIE: [then to worry about this.]
Stacy: I’m just gonna, I just wrote a note at the top.

Stacy ultimately concludes that this issue of pluralization is not what she wants to spend her tutorial time on. JAMIE also agrees that there are larger issues to be addressed. It is important, though, that the student does “[write] a note at the top” to mark that the issue exists and to examine it further after the tutorial. This is not an example of a tutor asking the students to work on something the student sees no value in or to do something the student does not want to do. Rather, it is an example of the students and tutor working together to determine the scope of issues covered in the tutorial as they appear during the course of the work.

While the student and the tutor both need a chance to express what they want from the session, a tutorial is based on interaction. The responses of one party to the other are an important part of the first few minutes of the session. I find it interesting that, while the tutor usually pushes the student for further explanation of the assignment or his/her concerns, the student rarely pushes the tutor for further explanation of the tutor’s approach. The students’ lack of questioning may happen because all of the tutors give some reason as to why they have their approach and because most, like NANCY in Case #2, offer the student some sort of choice in the MATTer. Still, none of the students question the act of reading aloud itself. The tutors, though, do question the students’ concerns and assignments. Differences in the ways these negotiations happen are what actually distinguish high rated sessions from low rated sessions.

*High Rated Sessions*

High rated sessions are characterized by successful negotiations of goals and expectations between students and tutors. Case #1, for instance, saw instances of the
student and tutor negotiating the goals of the session throughout their time without lowering either participant’s rating, as quoted above. Stacy ultimately decides that focusing on pluralizations is not as important to her as looking at other concerns, despite JAMIE’s remarks. JAMIE raises this concern because Stacy does ask for and expect help with grammar concerns. They are both figuring out what that means. Stacy is not eliminating grammar as a concern for JAMIE, and JAMIE has a better understanding of what Stacy wants from the session. I believe both understood each other’s point of view. Stacy made a decision and JAMIE agreed with that decision.

This is the best example of this kind of refining of student and tutor understandings of expectations. Case #2 does show the student repeating, near the end of the session, her expectation that the session ensure her paper “fits together well.”

NANCY does ask

NANCY: Is that all? Is there anything else that you want to talk about? Rachel: I don’t think so, I think that is pretty much it. I think that’s all I have.

This is a refining of understanding of what Rachel wants in the session. NANCY asks to ensure that she has gotten what she wants. Both agree that this goal has been met because the session ends directly after these comments.

*Low Rated Session*

Refusals to meet one or more of the tutor’s expectations, creating tough negotiations, characterize low rated sessions. Anna, in Case #4, strongly challenged JAMIE’s request that she read aloud. Before JAMIE can even explain why she has students read their papers aloud, Anna states emphatically “And you can read it, cause I don’t want to read it. But you can read it out loud.” JAMIE asks the student three times to read aloud, despite this defiant refusal to do so from the outset. On her fourth asking, JAMIE suggests that they take turns reading. It is here that Anna finally agrees to read...
the paper aloud in turns with JAMIE, even though the agreement is clearly not what the student wants, as she sighs as she agrees to the tutoring method.

JAMIE has an approach to the session, reading aloud, that Anna does not want to follow. Neither participant is initially willing to change her position. While they ultimately come to a compromise, I believe that JAMIE “won” in the situation because Anna clearly gave in to her requests. When comparing this negotiation of expectations to the one that happens between JAMIE and Stacy, there is no “winning” when Stacy finally chooses to not look at the pluralization issue. There is an agreement to focus on other things. Here, the tutor's desires ultimately trump the student's.

Similar examples of balking at tutor's agendas are seen in both Case #4, the session with the lowest rating, and in Case #6, where the ratings disagree. Both of these student refuse to meet the tutor's expectations near the end of the session. In Case #5, after discussing the entire paper and some of the things it was lacking, TANYA asks Megan to use some of the remaining time to work on filling in some of the gaps. Megan refuses to do any more writing during the tutorial and requests that the session be over. In Case #6, again after discussing the project in depth, CASEY asks Tara to begin drafting her paper. Like in Case #5, the student refuses to draft in the writing center and ends the session there. Both the tutors comply with the students' requests for the session to be finished.

Students refusing to meet tutor's expectations like this happens only in the lower rated sessions. CASEY, the tutor in Case #6 laughs off Tara's refusal to do more writing; she says “what else can I do?” JAMIE also writes off Anna's resistance: “I think there could be so many reasons for being resistant. I usually just don’t make a big deal of it.” Despite the tutor's lack of concern with the students' response in these situations, I
believe that these refusals may have left bad impressions. Not only did all of these students, excepting Tara in Case #6, rate the session low, they also refused to do a follow up interview. While not following what the tutor wants to do exactly is not an immediate cause of a low-rated session, the inability to come to a consensus seems to be related to the lower ratings.

The negotiating of goals and expectations in the session show the understanding, or lack thereof, between the student and the tutor. Higher rated sessions showed more negotiations over a broader time frame in the session. This indicates a constant desire between tutor and student to understand each other. The negotiations in the higher rated sessions also show a more equal dynamic between tutor and student desires. They both listen, understand, and choose together. The lower rated sessions show the tutor ruling over the student more often. The tutor may be attempting to force a good dynamic or, with the best intentions, be attempting to lead the student to an area where better engagement could happen. In the lower rated session, though, that fails. Clearly better understanding leads to better sessions.

**Postponing**

While most of the verbal characteristics were seen in all the sessions, no MATTer what the rating, Case #4 with JAMIE and Anna, one of the lower rated session, did show a largely unique characteristic. JAMIE used a technique of waiting to deal with a specific concern until the end of the session. At the beginning of the session, Anna showed particular concern with citing her sources.

Anna: I just like want to make sure like it sounds like a proposal.

Anna: And then it’s like it’s a transition, organization right and then am I citing my sources right, and
then used, like, I looked through here and I used some stuff but I don’t know how to cite these pamphlets

JAMIE: OK. Sure.
JAMIE: And I’m guessing is it APA?
Anna: Uh huh.
JAMIE: Ok. Just checking.

Anna makes her concern with citations clear despite listing it among several other concerns by having her sources with her and putting them on the table at the very beginning of the session.

As JAMIE came across any issues with citations, she made a note, sometimes verbally, sometimes on the text itself, to come back and deal with that issue later. At the first instance, Jaime says “well I’ll just put a little ((writes on text)) and we’ll keep going.” She does not want to interrupt their work on the text of the project to deal with the citation issues. Beyond a desire to keep the focus of the session on the text Anna brought in, JAMIE expressed a concern about her lack of knowledge on citations. In her interview, JAMIE notes that she has “maybe more anxiety about citations. And like I’m flipping through the book making sure I get it exactly right for them. I don't want to tell them the wrong thing and I don't—I'm not confident enough to be like 'Oh, yeah- you just do this and this.' I want to refer to the [hand]book.” This anxiety comes through in the session when she says “we can take a look in there ((referring to a handbook)), I did that recently but I don’t remember off the top of my head.” She does not want to stop the session to look things up. And even when she does stop to look things up, she is still anxious.

This characteristic of putting off dealing with an issue until the end of the session is termed “postponing” here. There are logical reasons to choose to postpone in a tutorial. Citations follow very specific patterns; when dealing with patterns of errors, it is usually recommended to teach an example then let the student apply what was learned
in that example with less and less guidance throughout the session. Looking at all of the examples of citations throughout the piece at once could be a more effective way of practicing what is learned. It is also awkward to reference the citation handbooks during the session. If the tutor cannot work without the handbook, or chooses not to in order to model how to use the handbook with the student, it makes sense to not use it during the course of the session. I am not condemning the use of postponing in general.

In this case, though, I do not think it was the most beneficial technique. Given that the student specifically asked for help with citations and that she wanted help on some specific kinds of citations, it is possible that the tutor postponing work on those issues frustrated her. Anna was the most visibly animated during the portion of the session dealing with citation. She repeats, again and again, that she wants help with the in-text citations, saying “I just want to know how to do it in the paper;” “I can not do it like in the paper;” and “I just like- I’m fine on that on cite, ending stuff.” She knows what she wants help with and she is animated in asking for the help. JAMIE noted that “if I started talking about things that maybe she wasn’t as concerned about then she lost interest a little bit... I had to like push a little.” During the session, JAMIE was able to see a difference in Anna's interest as well, and that interest happened the most when talking about citations, whether for good or for bad.

This characteristic is interesting to me because it is very common for students to come to the writing center asking only for “editing” or “citation” help. The tutor's job is often framed as helping students see beyond those lower level concerns in the tutorial. Isabelle Thompson notes how the tutor in her case study deals with this issue. The student in that case came in asking only for proofreading help. “Trevor[the tutor] does not entirely accept this student-established agenda because he knows that students are
not always aware of their own needs” (429). By looking for cues as to what the student might need to work on more than proofreading but still proofreading while doing that, Trevor is able to work with the student in a way they both find productive. Normally, going beyond what was specifically asked for helps the student and has them leaving happy, like in Trevor's tutorial.

Looking for those deeper concerns does not mean that the initial concerns should be ignored. Based on Case #4, I am not sure postponing those issues, even with the continual promise to deal with them soon, is the best approach. Both the student and the tutor rated this session very low. Neither found it satisfying. While the tutor does not mark this as one of the reasons for the low rating, and the student refused to be interviewed, I do believe this has something to do with the dissatisfaction of the session. Thompson’s survey in “Examining Our Lore” does postulate that students need to feel like their questions have been answered and tutors need to feel like they have served their own goals and the student’s goals in order for a session to be completely satisfactory. It seems as though both parties here were not able to meet that goal. Postponing, in this session, was not a successful technique.

**Nonverbal Characteristics**

Students and tutors felt that there were many non-verbal characteristics that defined sessions. Tutors believe, based on their answers to the survey question, that how and when a student writes on the text is important. Both tutors and students thought eye contact was an important characteristic of the tutorials. The surveys also revealed the importance of non-verbal markers of approval, largely smiling.
Writing on the Text

There are three kinds of writing on the text happening in these sessions: editing, revising, and taking notes. An edit is the correction of something small like a typo or a grammatical mistake. A revision is a rephrasing or reworking of a larger section of text. A note was a marking on the text of something to do “later.” Because I did not have the students' texts to look at, I relied on how long they wrote as well as the talk surrounding the event to classify the markings. The edits took the least amount of time. Revisions took longer and required more creation of text. Notes also took longer than edits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing on the Text</th>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>Edits</th>
<th>Revisions</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Rated Sessions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case #1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case #2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Rated Session</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case #4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>43</td>
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<td>Case #5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
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<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Sessions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case #3- Middle Ratings</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case #6-Differing Ratings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Edits are relatively short markings on the text changing, a single word or marking a grammar or punctuation error. These changes were proposed by both the student and the tutor. For instance, in Case #2, Rachel stops as she is reading aloud, says “could use another word,” marks on her text, then continues reading. Examples like this

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1 The kind of work Case #6 does is inherently different than the work in the other sessions. The student is not there improving a draft for submission, so she does not mark any edits, revisions, or notes. Her writing on the text is characterized by brainstorming and drafting, things not seen in any other session.
are seen in all of the sessions. Another way that edits are made come from tutor prompting; TANYA provides an example of this kind of edit when she reminds Megan that she needs an apostrophe and an “s” when making possessives.

**Revisions**, those longer additions or changes to the text, were significantly less frequent in all of the tutorials than editorial marks. Unlike editorial marks, revisions were almost never done by the student alone. Also unlike the editorial marks, there appears to be no real pattern in who identifies or proposes a correction in making revisions. The students and tutors were fairly equal in pointing out the need for and in suggesting possibilities for revisions in all kinds of sessions. What is telling, though, is the turn taking that happens when revisions are happening.

**Notes** were most often about something to do later. When the students were writing notes, it was to remind themselves of information that was lacking. Information regarding secondary research was often a topic of the notes. In Case #3, for instance, the tutor questions the student about some information in the secondary research.

MATT: And are there any conclusions that it makes?  
Ben: Um, I don’t have it with me.  
MATT: Yeah. Right. Right. It’s just a question. I guess you can think about as you go on.

After this question, the student writes on the text for several seconds, most likely noting that he needs to look at the sources to find the conclusions and add that information to the text. Case #2 shows Rachel writing down places where secondary research could improve her draft.

NANCY: I think, um, the only thing that might help is maybe a little bit more research  
Rachel: Ok  
NANCY: in some of those targeted ways that we talked about.  
Rachel: yeah.

Again, after this discussion, the student takes several seconds to write on her text.
While not all of the notes students take regard research, most are indeed about things the student will need to work on after the end of the session. Stacy in Case #1 makes a note on her text to deal with the issue of pluralizing “teacher” or not after the session is over once she and the tutor determine it is not an issue they want to focus on during the session itself. These reminders to do work later do not happen terribly often. They do indicate an intention to work on the text after the session is over.

Case #4 does show a very different kind of note taking occurring. Notes in this session were taken by the tutor far more often than the student. The tutor frequently marked the text near citation problems she wanted to deal with later in the session. The tutor’s approach to the session was to deal with writing and language issues first then moving on to the citation issues. The tutor marked notes to “come back to” 10 times during the session. While the tutor did take time at the end of the session to deal with these citation issues, the fact that this was one of the lowest rated sessions and one of the only ones to even use this technique suggests that students do not respond well to postponing discussion of issues. Both the student and the tutor may have felt pressured to get back to those concerns in their remaining time, making the experience less engaging overall.

Edits

High Rated Sessions

With editorial markings, while the student almost always wrote the change, there was some variation in who noted a change was needed. In the higher rated sessions the students were most often responsible for recognizing the need for and completing these changes. Tutors rarely needed to prompt students to make this kind of change. In both of the highest rated sessions, the student was responsible for reading aloud, and in
reading aloud, the students identified many of these editorial changes. Many times the student made the change with only a brief pause in the reading. The first instance of this kind of change in Case #2 is the only time this student even verbalizes her thinking. As she is reading aloud, she stops, pauses, says “could use another word,” writes on the text, and continues reading. Most of the time, not even that much verbalization is needed though.

Unlike the student in Case #2, Stacy in Case #1 often stops to ask for the tutor's approval of a correction she wants to make before committing it to writing:

Stacy: “If the teacher knows the content of what he or she”
Stacy: Should I have the dash or should I say like people?
JAMIE: Um, I've see it both ways, although I mean, I might suggest that you do it this way because that's how it's done here but um, I think it would be up to you.

Stacy: Create drawings for her in order to-can I say-to help her?

The student is still identifying and correcting the error she sees, but she is involving the tutor in the correction. This inclusion of the tutor might be important in increasing the tutor's engagement while maintaining the student's engagement through identifying her own errors.

Low Rated Sessions

In the lower rated sessions, this identification of errors by the student is not nearly as common. The tutor is responsible for pointing out the problem far more often in these sessions than in the higher rated ones. In Case #5, for instance, the tutor points out the need for an apostrophe in the forming of possessives twice. The tutor, who is the one reading aloud, stops to note the need for the change:

TANYA: “Because of Genies age” um, apostrophe S. yeah. “Because of Genie's age, she will continue to have difficulties learning any kind of language or communication.”

*****
TANYA: “From Genies story”, umm, sending that you forward your apostrophe S. While the student makes the change, it is the tutor who notes the problem. The tutor also has to point to verb tense problems several times during the tutorial. The tutor points out “So, umm, I think you need to decide in the paragraph what tense you want to use.” The student, in a very defeated tone, responds “OK. I didn't notice that either.” The student is clearly upset by her lack of ability to find the errors the tutor sees, possibly contributing to her lower rating of the session. After going through the paragraph and making the changes, the student still has trouble identifying the same problem in later paragraphs. When she is made aware of the problem, the student is then able to change the verbs appropriately. She is not able to see the problem originally nor is she able to see the problem once it has been pointed out.

Similarly, in Case #4, there are many instances where the tutor needs to prompt the student to identify existing problems. The tutor stops her reading aloud to point out a missing word.

JAMIE: I think we are just sort of missing the word of right here.
Anna: Where?
JAMIE: Like if you look at these we have “53% sample students”
Anna: ok but we are missing “of”
Anna: “About 42.5% of college students.”

In this exchange, the student does not notice the problem initially, does not know where in the text the tutor is referring, and needs the problem to be explained before she can correct it.

While the students in the lower rated sessions did need more help identifying and correcting these editorial issues, students in these sessions were able to pick out some of their own errors. The student in Case #2, for instance is able to note that she
“probably forgot” to add a word in her text as she was reading aloud. Students in the higher rated sessions did need help identifying some of their errors as well. Students being unable to identify every editorial error is to be expected. Still, if the student does not see any errors or is unable to find new instance of those errors after they have been pointed out, there would seem to be some problems in the session.

It is important to note that as writers, we are often unable to see our own texts as they actually exist because we know what we mean for the text to say. Not seeing errors could be attributed to this phenomenon. Also, I am not arguing that being able to immediately identify and correct one's own errors immediately leads to better sessions. This would imply that better writers would be the one most likely to have highly rated sessions, and I just do not believe that is the case. Instead, I am arguing that being attuned to the tutorial, working with the tutor to understand the errors in the paper that are discussed is key to highly rated session. Students should be able to learn, at least by the end of the session, to apply knowledge of an error to an instance of that error. If students cannot see patterns of errors as they are pointed out, I believe that they are not as likely to have strong flow experiences. Whether or not the student has the knowledge to see errors from the beginning of the session is less important than having the student learn how to see the errors by the end of the session.

Revisions

High Rated Sessions

During the higher rated sessions, both students and tutors took more turns verbally before any writing on the text took place. The students and tutors negotiated what the revision would be before the students wrote anything. After reading a section of her text aloud, Stacy suggests a revision, and a longer exchange takes place.
Stacy: Write um, like “I spoke in their language”?
JAMIE: No, I think it translates that you’re coming down to their level. Um, you
could say—instead of their—just saying “their language” which might make me
think—oh, we’re working with Chinese children” or something like that, which
was sort of my thought like for just a second and then I was like oh no she means
like on their level
Stacy: Yeah
JAMIE: on like vocabulary and how they interact. Um, so
there might be a way to sort of um
Stacy: “On their level.” should I just say “on their level?”
JAMIE: You could say like “at their language level” or at their cause you’re sort of
talking about different words so maybe “at their vocabulary level”
Stacy: OK ((writes on text)) So “they spoke at their vocabulary level”

While the student identifies that there might be a problem to revise, the student and the
tutor comment on the problem and suggest revisions for it. They build on each other
until they come to a final revision. Only after the full exchange has taken place does the
student write down the revision on her text.

Low Rated Sessions

The exchanges concerning revisions in the lower rated sessions involved less give
and take. The tutor often proposed a revision, the student wrote their version of that
revision and then the tutor suggested further revisions. For example, in Case #5, TANYA
spends a good amount of time explaining a flaw in the reasoning of the paper. After
making sure TANYA is certain Megan understood the flaw, Megan makes a revision.
TANYA then reads the revision and makes some comments on it.

TANYA: Ok, maybe if you, ummm, I think that’s fine, I think it’s just umm, kinda
off because the structure of it. So maybe you said “So with That, I leave you to
decide.” Do you pick a side, or believe both make us who we are?

The student then makes edits to the revision she has written down already. While both
kinds of exchanges involve turn taking and the revision is ultimately agreed to be an
improvement, the process takes much longer in the lower rated session with, somewhat
paradoxically, fewer turns by the student and the tutor. The exchange in the higher rated
session is also more collaborative; the lower rated session shows the tutor correcting what the student has done rather than both parties working together.

Notes

High Rated Sessions

The notes taken in the higher rated session were all indicators of things to work on outside the session. Stacy noted that she needed to look at issues of pluralization. Rachel and Ben both write notes to keep looking at their research sections when they are able to access the research itself.

This note marks a willingness for the students to keep working on the text beyond the time of the tutorial. Rachel did mention that she made substantive changes to her paper after her tutorial and was pleased with how those changes improved her paper. A looking forward to more work on the paper like this is indicative of how well the session is going. This indicates that they are finding what they are doing valuable and are willing to come back to continue that experience.

Low Rated Sessions

The notes that characterize Case #4 were largely the ones taken by the tutor. JAMIE made multiple notes in Anna’s text as reminders of sections to examine later in the session. These were examples of postponing that is discussed later in this chapter.

Case #4 has the tutor writing on the text more than any other session because of these notes. While the notes were not substantial, simply a means of reminding where to return, I think the writing on the text may have been part of the problem in the session. Without the text right in front of her, Anna would be even more inclined to not pay attention.

Examining when and how students and tutors writing on the text during a
tutorial highlights student involvement in the tutorial and the quality of the interaction between the student and the tutor. The mere act of students writing on their texts does not indicate the student is necessarily involved. Tutors thought that writing on the text alone really indicated an investment in the session. It is not the writing on the text, but who notes the need to write on the text that really indicates something about the session. The more the student is able to recognize the need to write on the text, the more the session was enjoyed by both students and tutors. The more the student and tutor talked before any writing happened also indicates high levels of flow, which is often aligned with more enjoyment, in the session.

Gaze

I repeatedly saw eye contact as a marker of good sessions in both the surveys and interviews from both students and tutors. As I approached the video data, I expected to find much more direct eye contact than I found. Instances of prolonged, direct eye contact were very rare. In fact, the main visual focus of the session was the text itself. All of the tutors employed some form of the reading aloud technique, so it makes sense that the text is looked at a lot in the sessions. No MATTer who was reading aloud, tutor or student, both looked at the text consistently throughout the session. Gaze in the session was characterized by looking away, either the student or tutor, one party looking at the other, and meeting of gazes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gaze</th>
<th>Away</th>
<th>One Party at the Other</th>
<th>Meeting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>High Rated Sessions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case #1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>S:16 T: 25</td>
<td>64</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case #2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>S: 25 T: 3</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low Rated Session</strong></td>
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</table>
While not common, both student and tutors did look **away** from the session. In Case #5, the student looks away from the tutorial quite often as the tutor reads aloud. As TANYA reads the beginning of the paper, where the student explains her purpose in writing, for instance, Megan looks toward the door of the writing center. Three times throughout the session, while TANYA is reading, Megan breaks her gaze away from the session by looking at her cell phone.

Anna looks away from her session with JAMIE, when JAMIE asks her to explain a choice she had made in the paper. After receiving her answer, JAMIE takes a moment to process the answer and then to decide how to proceed from there. In the moment, Anna looks away from the text at several unfixed points around the room. Later in the session, JAMIE is explaining how the citation for one portion of the text works in another and Anna again looks away from the session, this time looking toward the corner of the room then at the camera for a moment.

The tutors rarely look **away** from the session. There were some examples in a few of the sessions, though. In Case #3, MATT has a tendency to look away from the session while the student works on things by himself. After explaining why something needed to be revised, MATT allows Ben to write on his text to make the necessary revisions. During this time, MATT does look away from the session to another part of the writing center. When the student is done, though, his attention is back at the table. Other instances of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>21</th>
<th>S:24</th>
<th>T:22</th>
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<td>Other Sessions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case #3- Middle Ratings</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>S:24</td>
<td>T:6</td>
<td>27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case #6-Differing Ratings</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>S:1</td>
<td>T:7</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
tutors looking from the session involve the tutor searching for an answer. For example, when Stacy asks JAMIE how to rephrase one section of the text, JAMIE replies “Um, well it’s sort of- let's see- you could find another word than draw, um for instance like-” while looking up and away from the session. While this is a break in gaze with the session, looking up and away is a common practice when pondering answers to questions.

Distractions can also cause both the student and the tutor to look away from a session. This happens in Case #1, for instance. A student is entering the writing center and talking with the tutor at the font desk. Both the student and the tutor look at this student and then go back to their session. This kind of interruption is likely to happen frequently in a writing center. With people coming in and out of the center as well as other sessions occurring in the same room, it is common to have something distract the student, the tutor, or both during the session.

Gaze in the tutorial is also characterized by one party looking at the other. It is more common for the student to look at the tutor, but there are examples of both in these sessions.

**Students most often look up to the tutors** when they want some sort of feedback from the tutor. One instance of this that is seen repeatedly is when students looked up after suggesting a change or revision but wanted the tutor to evaluate it before fully committing to it. In Case #4, Anna is struggling with revising a section of text.

Anna: “He explains in his research.”
JAMIE: Uh huh.
Anna: No. “He explains research that indicates that loneliness may be coming” ((looks at JAMIE))

The student suggests a revision, the tutor mildly approves of it, then the student suggests a revision that she thinks is better than the first suggestion. It is at this point that the student looks up to the tutor, seemingly for her approval of the second revision.
Suggestion.

Students also look up from the text when they want to explain something about what was just read or that is going to be read. A good example of this happens in Case #1 before she reads the section of her draft that has two examples instead of one for a single InTASC principle.

Stacy: OK. This, is like, I had this example before I put this one but um and then, I don’t know, I couldn’t decide which one I wanted for sure but then I thought I might use this one later
JAMIE: OK
Stacy: so if you read it and I can tell you if I think it fits like under that one as well. ((looks at JAMIE))
JAMIE: Sure.

In this exchange, Stacy looks up at the very end, when asking JAMIE for her evaluation regarding which example would be the best selection for the principle. Students most often look away from the text in order to request or receive feedback from the tutor.

Tutors most often gaze at the students to gauge how much a student understands about a particular issue. Tutors often looked up, for instance, when they were explaining themselves about a revision or change they wanted the student to make. This is seen as TANYA explains and suggests a revision for a comma splice in Case #5.

TANYA: Ok that sentence maybe could be reworked because your comma there, it's umm, used incorrectly. it's a comma splice. So. They also taught her through games <comma> this taught her how to construct sentence. ((looks at Megan))

Another example is seen as JAMIE explains why she wants Anna to add material to her draft.

JAMIE: Another I guess another thing-- we go straight from this long list of types of depression back to college students, so we might need something at the end of this or the beginning of this to connect it back to college students individually instead of just all of these different terms. ((looks at Anna))

Tutors also looked up from the text when they saw something that needed correcting; it seems like these looks were to assess if the student noticed the problem, knew a solution,
or if the student was completely unaware of the problem.

These characteristics are true whether or not eyes were met. But there are some interesting things to be said about when students and tutors did meet eyes. Student and tutors maintaining joint eye contact for more than a few moments was rare. Longer exchanges with a series of brief meetings of the eyes, glances away, re-meetings of the eyes, etc were much more common.

A good example occurs in Case #5. TANYA is discussing a possible revision that would help the paper meet the assignment more fully.

TANYA: So, maybe if you split up her story, so you have her story ((looks at Megan)), did you talk about how they were speaking to her? That's the communication side
Megan: ((looks at TANYA))
TANYA: you can go into your opinion of what the communication does. ((looks at Megan)) Because that would be the psychological needs and that will help them actually learn how to ((looks at Megan)) up]communicate and know what's right and wrong.
Megan: ((looks away from TANYA))
TANYA: And the physical needs are more of a comfort and knowing that someone is there. So if you split it [[(looks to Megan)]
Megan: [[[looks at TANYA)]
TANYA: up that way, then you could talk about umm, like communication, no one would talk to her, how they were just barking at her. So she couldn't learn how to express herself. [[[looks at text)] right?
Megan: [[[looks at text)]
TANYA: right
Megan: mmhmm

During this exchange, the student looks at the tutor continually from when the tutor says “communication side” through “what's right and wrong.” During that time, the tutor looks back and forth from the text to the student 3 times. The student and tutor have sustained eye contact throughout the time the tutor says “if you split it up” through “express herself.”

Another example of this repeated meeting of gazes occurs in Case #2:
NANCY Since that’s a big generalization
Rachel:       ((looks at NANCY))
NANCY: you might want to add
in a little counter argument there. Obviously not all children but do advertisers
expect, um, are there any facts or figures
NANCY: ((looks at Rachel))
NANCY: maybe that you found in your research that show that
children are able to persuade their parents? Cause you might find a lot of
statistics.
Rachel: Yeah I found that, I can agree with that [glances to NANCY
NANCY: ((looks to Rachel))
NANCY: But, you may just want to think about making blanket statements like
that
Rachel: OK ((looks at NANCY))
NANCY: because probably a lot of people in your
audience, maybe they grew up very deprived of things too
Rachel: Yeah ((looks at
NANCY))
NANCY: so that could kind of offend them
Rachel: True ((looks at NANCY))
NANCY: and go, ”hey I wasn’t
allowed to get everything”
Rachel: Right so make sure that its not general ((glances at NANCY))
NANCY: I would suggest that more for kind of
for that paragraph that you have that sentence in the intro.
Rachel: Yeah
NANCY: ((looks at text))

This exchange shows the tutor doing most of the talking. The tutor begins with a large
explanation of the problem. During that explanation, the student looks at the tutor from
“big generalization” to “fact or figures” when the tutor looks to the student.

Away

*High Rated Sessions*

There are relatively few examples of looking away from the session in higher
rated session. When students or tutors do look away in these higher rated sessions, they
are usually of short duration. The distraction that happens in Case #1, when both the
student and the tutor are distracted by someone entering the room, is very brief. JAMIE
is able to say “I’m-was- just distracted” and then continue with the tutorial without any
problems.

JAMIE also has a tendency to look away from her session with Stacy (and Anna) when she is pondering an answer. This kind of looking away seems very different from what happens when there is a distraction or when the student looks away from the session. She is still “in” the session when she does this; she is not looking at something else. Rather, she is not looking at the session in order to concentrate on her thoughts about the session.

The low number of examples of looking away in the high rated sessions as well as their short duration and quick recovery make looking away much more characteristic of the lower rated session, possibly indicating a lack of engagement.

Low Rated Sessions

The difference in the way distractions are dealt with in low rated sessions can be seen in TANYA's response to her cell phone ringing during the tutorial. TANYA is explaining a concept when she looks up and gets an embarrassed look on her face; a cell phone is heard ringing in the background. She asks another tutor to get the phone, but, moments later, she leaves the session to turn the phone off. After the phone is off, the tutor jumps back into the session very determinedly. She gives a very short apology, focuses on the text very intensely and continues the session. TANYA remarked at how embarrassed she was by the ringing of the phone in her interview and she noted that it affected everything she did in the session. While she thought that the session was eventually able to recover from this distraction, it did impact everything that happened.

A difference in the response here can be attributed to the fact that TANYA felt responsible for the distraction whereas JAMIE did not. It was her phone ringing, a phone she forget to mute. She also has to physically leave the tutorial to deal with the
situation. While TANYA, like JAMIE, apologizes and moves on, her determined stare at
the screen and her recollection of the event both mark that she did not move on
immediately.

There was a greater frequency of students looking away in the lower rated
sessions as well. Anna, especially, but also Megan, had more difficulty keeping their
gazes in the tutorial than the students in the higher rated session. Anna looks away
frequently while JAMIE is reading aloud, thinking about responses, and looking up
answers to citation issues. Megan checks her cell phone several times throughout her
session. There is just an air that neither is as focused on the work being done as the
students in the higher rated session.

One Party Gazing at the Other

Unlike all of the other characteristics, I can see no patterns where one party looks
at the other that distinguish high rated sessions from low rated sessions. The number of
examples in each case are remarkably similar. The kinds of things looked up at are the
same as well. No matter how well the session is progressing or how poorly, students are
going to want the tutor to approve their revisions. Tutors are going to gauge how well the
student is understanding the session.

I have struggled to find a difference in this area. I looked to see if there were
different kinds of inquiries accompanying these gazes, but there were no patterns
evident. I looked to see if tutors or students seemed to be purposefully not responding to
the gaze of the other person, but I could not distinguish any pattern there as well.
Ultimately, this is not a mark of interaction. It seemed as though when one party looked
up and the other did not, it was a case of being unaware of the look.

I do wonder if, given a larger sample, there might be more examples of missed
looks in lower rated session because they do seem to be cases where interaction just is not working as well. With this data, though, I cannot conclude that.

Meeting of Gazes

High Rated Sessions

The meeting of glances seen in the higher rated session shows the student becoming more and more engaged in the discussion as the exchange continues. This is seen in the example quoted from Case #2 and in the example below from Case #1.

JAMIE: Yeah, it’s difficult, especially when this, considering what you’re talking about it’s going to be really difficult not to sound like you are saying teacher a hundred times or teaching.
Stacy: I mean unless I use words like educate.
JAMIE: Well, and sometimes it goes beyond teaching and educating, Like what are you doing when you are teaching someone? ((looks at Stacy)) Like what are the different
Stacy: Explaining. ((looks at JAMIE))
JAMIE: Yeah. explaining [((looks at Stacy))]
Stacy: [((looks at JAMIE))]
JAMIE: that’s a better alternative, um, explaining or describing. There’s a lot of words that maybe are not direct or exact synonyms for teaching but might um, be useful depending on what the sentence is.

As the conversation develops in both Case #1 and Case #2, the students are providing answers and looking at their tutors while doing so. Rachel's answers are indeed shorter than Stacy's, but both respond readily and easily to the questions being asked. Both meet the tutor's gaze and are not hiding from what the tutors want them to think about.

Low Rated Sessions

The lower rated sessions saw fewer examples of gazes meeting, though the significance of that cannot be determine with this data. I do not know whether this is because the students did not want to be there, whether they were afraid of not knowing the answer the tutor was seeking, or not wanting to face what the tutor thought of them or their writing. These students did not complete interviews with me. Still, the fact that
there is less eye contact seems to indicate less involvement in the session and less
connection between the student and the tutor.

The fact that the text was a major focus of gaze during the tutorial is important.
Students and tutors spent more time in any tutorial gazing at the text than anything else.
This highlights the importance of the text as an entity in the session. I have found it easy
to ignore the importance of the text in a tutorial, possibly because of Stephen North's
iconic call to work with the writer instead of the writing. Without that piece of writing,
though, sessions do not work very well. Case #6 illustrates this very well. CASEY is at a
loss as to how to work with Tara because she does not want to improve an existing draft
and because she is resistant to creating new text within the session. The same can be
seen in Case #5 when Megan refuses to create new text as well. Without text to create or
improve, the sessions come to a halt. While I would never argue that the goal of a tutorial
should be to improve only the text the student brings with no concern that the student
learn and retain something in the tutorial, more importance does need to be given to the
role the text plays in the session itself. The text is more than just a blank canvas whole
only role is to provide room for teaching the student; it is an element of the tutorial that
actively contributes to the flow experience of the session in ways that I do not yet
understand.

**Smiling/Laughter**

Smiling and laughter are important components of good writing tutorials
according to students and especially according to tutors. TANYA wants “a little laughter”
in a session to mark it as a good one. Generally speaking, tutors thought if laughter was
present in a session, something, must be going right. Laughter and smiling are two
different but related events, but they will be treated as the same thing here because I coded this characteristic without sound. A silent laugh often looks just like a smile.

Several different patterns of smiling did happen during the tutorials. There were **individual smiles**, where either the student or tutor smiled alone. **Responsive smiles** happened when one party smiled first and the other party responded. Both the tutor and student could smile at (nearly) the same time, resulting in **coordinated smiling**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Smiling/Laughter</th>
<th>Individual</th>
<th>Responsive</th>
<th>Coordinated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>High Rated Sessions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case #1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case #2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low Rated Session</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Case #4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case #5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Sessions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case #3- Middle Ratings</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case #6-Differing Ratings</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Individual Smiling** happens in most sessions. JAMIE, the tutor, smiles at Anna quite a bit in Case #4 without Anna smiling back. For instance, JAMIE smiles alone while Anna is reading aloud. The text being read states that “college is a stressful time for students” and JAMIE has a brief, ironic smile after that statement. She seems to be responding to the claim being made there because it possibly its true in her own life. This smile seems to be more about JAMIE’s response to the statement rather than
anything going on in the interaction with Anna.

Examples of **responsive smiling** often happened when the student suggested a revision or edit. As the suggestion is made, the student smiles and the tutor smiles in response. An example from Case #1 shows this happening:

Stacy: Like, should I say like “When writing out my lesson plan, I will write out--what I plan on saying and” I don’t know, something like that ((smile))
JAMIE: Yeah there’s a couple of ways ((smile)) you could do that.
Stacy: So, like, “when writing out my lesson plan I will write out what I” …ugh
JAMIE: What about um, Ok, let’s see. "I need to know what I am talking about so that when a student

Here the student smiles while saying “something like that” and the tutor begins smiling in response as she say “a couple of ways.”

Another example of responsive smiling happens when both both the student and the tutor show some uncertainty. This shows up when, for instance, NANCY in Case #2 starts asking questions about some material possibly missing from the student’s paper.

The tutor asks some questions to start out.

NANCY: How are you going to address that when you are put in a position of marketing something? ((smile)) Right?
Rachel: Yeah ((smile))

As the tutor says “right” she begins to smile; as the student says “yeah” she smiles as well. NANCY is clearly pointing to something she sees as missing; she wants the student to add more information about marketing, the student's major, to the paper. Still, the tutor phrases it as a question only the student knows how to answer, ultimately. This questioning helps the student to begin to identify, like the tutor, as someone with knowledge to share. It also highlights the student and tutor's shared position as people uncertain about the outcome of the revision.

**Coordinated smiling or laughter** happens at several points in the tutorials.
Both the student and the tutor smile at every instance of specific praise given during the session. When Stacy in Case #1 praises a revision the tutor has suggested with “Oh, that's nice,” both of them smile together. Similarly, when JAMIE praises a particular paragraph Stacy has written, saying it “doesn't seem to have the same, you know, repetition we were seeing before,” both smile in response.

Other examples of coordinated laughter happen when the tutor or student makes a bit of a joke. MATT, in Case #3, for instance, had been listing different ways the student might conclude the paper, but he was speaking in very informal language. At the end of his explanation, though, MATT reminds Ben to write the conclusion, “You know kind of in a more academic way.” MATT wants to remind Ben that talking in a tutorial is different from writing a paper. Both laugh at this funny reminder. The comment is clearly meant to be amusing and both respond to that.

Terese Thonus discusses what different types of laughter in a tutorial session could mean in her article “Acquaintanceship, Familiarity, and Coordinated Laughter in Writing Tutorials.” Her main argument is that laughing in a tutorial can mean different things. There are many kinds of laughter than can indicate many things. Ultimately, though, Thonus argues “the purpose of laughter, then, is to ’create the shortest distance between two people’” (337). Laughter is meant to be more than a stimuli (the creation of a “laughable”) and a response (laughter). She concludes the best use of laughter in a tutorial is when it draws the student and tutor closer together through an understanding of their similarities. I believe that when similarities are acknowledged and built upon, more flow will result which will also lead to better experiences in the tutorials.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual Smiling</th>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Tutor</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
</table>

*Individual Smiling*
High Rated Sessions

There are relatively few examples of individual smiles in the higher rated sessions. In Case #2, the student smiles alone once. Rachel smiles as NANCY gives an example explaining the difference between marketing and branding, a topic NANCY thinks might be useful to cover in the paper. This smile seems to be Rachel acknowledging that NANCY has made a good point about her paper that deserves consideration.

In Case #1, the tutor smiles at the student individually, but the student never does. Instances where the tutor smiles alone often happen when the student is pointing out errors in her own writing. After reading the first paragraph aloud, Stacy has the following revelation:

Stacy: Ok, what I’ve noticed that so far which is driving me nuts is that I say teacher
JAMIE:  ((smile))
Stacy: in every sentence so I’m thinking like use
educators or
JAMIE:  ((smile broadens))
Stacy: or not starting with teachers
JAMIE smiles as Stacy realizes a problem in her own text, and that smile broadens as Stacy starts thinking about solutions to the problem. This pattern is seen again as Stacy corrects her own editing or wording errors while reading aloud.

Smiling in this manner is an outward expression of the tutor's pleasure that the student is able to see her own problems. The student often does not see these smiles as she remains focused on her text. Still, they are a physical sign that the sessions is going well.

**Low Rated Sessions**

Certainly not all instances of individual smiling are good. The exchange between Anna and JAMIE in Case #4, where JAMIE is pushing Anna to read aloud is a good example of individual smiling indicating a problem. The tutor here smiles as she says “you don't want to read aloud” and again as she offers the option of taking turns reading aloud. In both of these instances, she is trying to build the shared understanding of how the tutorial will work, but the student does not participate. She refuses to read aloud.

After much cajoling, though, the student does finally agree to read the paper aloud in turns. The student smiles here, but it is a resentful smile, a smile that says “I'll only do this because you made me.” Later in the session, a similar smile happens. JAMIE points out that it is Anna's turn to read, and Anna smiles but also rolls her eyes. She is again agreeing to do the work, but only because the tutor is making her. In all of these, the student is responding to the tutor's authority. She is noting that she respects what the tutor wants, but she ultimately does not like it very much.

These examples of smiling alone denote tension in the lower rated sessions; this is not to say that all individual smiling in these sessions indicates problems. In Case #5, for example, we see the tutor smiling as she offers praise to the student on her revision of
a sentence. TANYA also smiles individually as she points out another example of a repeating error in the paper. These smiles show the tutor wanting to keep motivation up. Individual smiling is an interesting characteristic because the other participant rarely sees it. The only time these individual smiles are really noted by the other person are, like in Case #4, when an active disagreement is happening. Individual smiling is very loosely indicative of how the individual, especially the tutor, is evaluating what happens in the session.

**Responsive Smiling**

<table>
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<th>Tutor Started</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case #1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case #2</td>
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<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low Rated Session</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Case #4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case #5</td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case #3- Middle Ratings</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case #6-Differing Ratings</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**High Rated Sessions**

Responsive smiling in high rated tutorials is characterized most strongly by Thonus' idea of “sharing similarities.” This can be seen in an example from Case #1 where both the tutor and the student are uncertain about how to solve a problem in the paper. JAMIE does not know how the student's teacher will respond to the use of examples based on observation rather than experience. As she lists the possible reactions
the teacher might have in including an observational example, JAMIE smiles at Stacy, and Stacey smiles in response.

Stacy: Like these are my experience but some of them I talk about observing like the teachers. So that’d be kind of my experience observing the teachers using that principle not necessarily me using that principal because I haven’t gotten like teaching like things that much because I am second or I’m only a sophomore you know I haven’t really taught yet. ((smile))

JAMIE: Yeah, um well I mean, I consider even if it isn’t first hand experience like learning from others I consider it experience.

Stacy: Ok. that’s what I thought

JAMIE: But you can talk to you professor about that

Stacy: See that’s why I emailed him but it’s due I think tomorrow

JAMIE: mmhmm

Stacy: I emailed him but I don’t know. ((smile))

JAMIE: I mean if it’s something where you’re in the situation and you’re learning,

Stacy: mmhmmm

JAMIE: I consider that experience. ((smile))

Stacy: I reflect on it I think. Like if it was me as the teacher I’d be like yeah, you’re learning, you’re realizing.

The tutor is just as uncertain as the student how the teacher will respond to the paper, but both smile at each other as they talk about this issue. They are smiling at shared uncertainty and I think it makes them both more willing to work in the session. There is not enough of a pattern here to be able to expand beyond this simple conclusion, but I think that, with more information, this trend could lead to some interesting conclusions about flow and tutorials.

An example of student-led smiling happens in Case #3; Ben smiles first and MATT responds in kind when Ben admits he has not done some needed work. MATT points out that Ben has not included the conclusions from the studies he used. Ben admits that he had “skipped that” step because he did not want to do that work. He then laughs and MATT laughs in response. Here, Ben is admitting that a problem MATT identified was made purposefully. As MATT laughs in response to Ben, it communicates
that MATT is not angry about the omission made in his work. They are able to move right into fixing the problem, rather than dwelling on why it happened. While not exactly a “sharing of similarities,” this exchange helps the work of the tutorial proceed.

Low Rated Sessions

In the lower rated sessions, responsive smiling and laughter do less to move the tutorial forward. In Case #4, JAMIE smiles in admitting her lack of knowledge in the subject area of the paper and Anna smiles in response. Anna is attempting to rework a section of text and she struggles to find a revision that she likes. She looks to JAMIE for suggestions, but JAMIE can really only admit: “I think I maybe don’t know enough about depression to know the right words to use.” She smiles as she says this, and Anna smiles afterward, but she does not meet JAMIE’s eyes. She continues to look at her paper, struggling with the revision.

Unlike the example in Case #1 where JAMIE and Stacy are able to discuss their lack of knowledge together and think through the implications of that lack of knowledge, in this case, Anna does not respond to JAMIE’s admission. They do not engage in discussion of the issue. They do not think of any solutions for the problem. They simply move on after this has happened. The smiling does nothing to make the session work better. The opportunity to work together and build an understanding of their similarities is missed, to the detriment of the session.

There are instances where the sharing of similarities is built in the lower rated sessions. Anna is able to point out some of her own errors, for instance, which causes her to smile and JAMIE to smile in response. Similarly, when Anna suggests some revisions, she is able to smile and JAMIE responds. Smiling is generally thought to be a positive thing, so it would be hard to imagine all examples of smiling in the low rated sessions to
be bad. However, there seems to be less depth in the connections made in these lower rated sessions than in the higher rated ones.

**Coordinated Smiling**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coordinated Smiles</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>High Rated Sessions</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case #1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case #2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low Rated Session</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case #4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case #5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Sessions</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case #3- Middle Ratings</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case #6 - Differing Ratings</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**High Rated Sessions**

Coordinated smiling happens in the high rated sessions with great frequency in Case #1 and not at all in Case #2. In Case #1, both smile at common mistakes; for instance, both smile as Stacy stumbles over a word in her reading. This marks that the mistake is not a big one and they should just move on. Both smile at instances of praise, as is commonly expected: people enjoy hearing that what they are doing is good.

The most common kind of shared smiling happens around different kinds of explanations in Case #1, though. The following extended example shows a nice example of this kind of exchange:

JAMIE: Yeah, some of the things because that happens a lot in writing. If you have one thing that you do you probably do it all the time. So, and it's always good just to have someone read through your paper ((smile)) with you or read through your paper.

Stacy: yeah

JAMIE: because if you do them all the time then you are
probably used to reading them. Like I do the same thing. ((smile))
Stacy: yeah ((smile))
JAMIE: Like I tend to write really long complex sentences and I write them all the time and that’s just as boring as writing a bunch of choppy sentences and you get lost. ((smile)) So like, in the complex ones you get lost. So, if I have someone read it they’re like I don’t even know what this sentence is saying but to me it made perfect sense. So
Stacy: yeah
JAMIE: it’s just like that having someone to go through it with you or even just read through it that’s not your thought process I guess.
Stacy: Yeah ((smile)), cause sometimes I’ll read my writing and like I’ll read a word like it’ll be spelled wrong and I’ll like not even notice cause.
JAMIE: Cause you know what you want it to say, yep ,exactly. ((smiles)) Well, Like we have that on the first page it says my and it was supposed to say may. It just like, I didn’t even notice it initially until we went back through it the second time. So, even I didn’t notice it.
Stacy: yeah
JAMIE: It’s easy to just sort of your brain like puts in words where you expect them to be even if they’re not there.
Stacy: Yeah, you know like the email you where it’s like the first and last letters of the word and you like.
JAMIE: yeah yeah yeah ((smile))
Stacy: You know what I’m talking about ?
JAMIE: Something that our minds just do.

The smiling that happens in this exchange is all about building shared understandings. JAMIE is choosing to share characteristics of her own writing with Stacy in the hopes of relating to her as peer and in the hopes of helping her understand her own writing issues more completely. The smiling that happens builds the sense that they understand each other as writers.

A shift in how smiling works does seem to happen around Case #3. Case #3 still shows plenty of shared laughter. For instance, the student and tutor both laugh when the student reveals that his internet searches resulted in hits on the topic of children getting married rather than the impact of marriage or divorce on children. Both participants laugh after this revelation because the tutor had previously pointed out how he misunderstood the text in the same way. This laugh creates a bond of similarity. Both
the tutor and the student saw the result of some unclear wording the student created. This similarity is weaker than other examples in higher rated sessions. This laughter was not about similarity in personality; it was similarity in a single tutorial related experience.

Low Rated Sessions

There are certainly a few examples of the kinds of smiles and laughter that indicate a building of understanding based on similarity in the lowest rated sessions. The student and tutor in Case #5 both smile as the tutor is unable to pronounce the word “hereditary” as she reads near the beginning of the session. Their shared laugh indicates neither is comfortable with that word. In another example from Case #5, the tutor has asked a series of questions to help the student see that her logic was not quite sound in one section of the paper. Near the end of this series of questions, the student smiles and the tutor smiles in response. The student seems to be smiling in order to show her understanding of the line of questioning and the underlying flaw in the paper. This shows a coming together of the student and tutor—both understand the problem. While neither of these examples displays an example of a deep understanding of similarities between the student and tutor, it is there.

Most instances of coordinated smiling or laughing in Case #4 and Case #5 show no building of “shared understanding,” though. In one example in Case #5, smiling happens around student resistance to the work. TANYA has asked Megan to create a revision, but, after a few seconds’ pause, the student says “I had something and I lost it.” Both the student and the tutor smile at this statement. I do not know if the student really had a block or if she was simply unwilling to do this kind of work, but the smiling around the situation remains the same. The tutor does not commiserate with the student, giving
an example of a time when she too was blocked. Rather, she smiles and then moves
directly into helping the student figure out how to solve the revision problem. This is not
building shared understanding.

In another example from Case #5, Megan flatly refuses to continue creating text
during the session.

TANYA: Do you know how maybe you can put the nature side?
Megan: Umm, I think well I'm pretty sure I can just put a paragraph of my own like
TANYA: ok
Megan: thoughts of it
TANYA: yeah
Megan: Because It's pretty much just straightforward
TANYA: Ok, that's good. Umm. We have like 20 minutes do you wanna work on that now?
Megan: I'd like to say yes but No
TANYA: (laughs)
Megan: (laughs)
Megan: I really really just don't wanna write anymore.

The student is unwilling to do what the tutor has asked, so she laughs to soften the blow
of this refusal. The tutor laughs in return because it is an expected response.

In both of these examples from Case #5, Megan is not doing work. While TANYA
may be sympathetic to Megan's struggles and desires, her smiles are not followed with a
building of understanding. They are not meant to assure Megan that she is justified in
her denials. They do not share experiences where TANYA felt the same. TANYA feels she
must respond, and this seems to be the only option.

Smiles in higher rated sessions do indicate, as Thonus discussed, more of a
building of understanding between the student and tutor than in the lower rated
sessions. This is especially true of responsive and coordinated smiles. Unlike many of the
other characteristics, smiling is one that I would use with tutors to understand a session that has already occurred, but I would not want tutors to be overly aware of their patterns of smiling during their sessions. This might force smiling in an attempt to build a better relationship; the forcing could, ironically, do more to destroy the relationship than to build it. As an evaluative characteristic, smiling is indeed useful, though.

**Summary**

This chapter discusses the cases that form my study. I start by outlining each of the sessions, discussing the student and the tutor, the assignment, the student’s concerns, the tutor’s approaches, and the outcomes of the session. I then go into the description and analysis of the characteristics seen across the cases.

The verbal characteristics, those coded without audio data, are questions, praise, mentions of time, negotiations of goals and expectations, and postponing. The nonverbal characteristics, those coded without sound, are writing on the text, gaze, and smiling/laughter.

Questions are posed by both students and tutors, with higher rated sessions being marked by more exchanges between student and tutor happening before the question is resolved. Lower rated sessions were marked by more tutor posed questions and fewer exchanges in addressing the questions. Praise is seen most often given by the tutor to the student and can be both general, dealing with broad aspects of the student’s text, and specific, dealing with narrow aspects of the text or with specific student behaviors. More examples of specific praise was seen in the lower rated sessions, seeming to indicate that praise there was more about encouraging students to continue the work of the tutorial rather than building their confidence in their writing skills, as in the higher rated
sessions. Mentions of time in higher rated sessions assured the student that the work of the session would be completed in the time available; mentions of time in lower rated sessions either noted time left to be filled or expressed concern that work would remain for the student to do after the session ended. Goals and expectations were negotiated in all sessions, with most of these negotiations happening in the early minutes of the session. Higher rated sessions were marked by returns to the goals of the session throughout the time. Lower rated session saw students and tutors not reaching strong agreements in what they goals of the session were. Postponing was seen in only one session; a low rated session saw the tutor waiting to deal with a specific issue until late in the session.

The nonverbal characteristic of writing on the text is a key issue in tutorials. Students did most of the writing on the text, making edits, revisions, and notes. Higher rated sessions saw students notice the need for these marks more often and saw more exchanges between student and tutor before any writing happened, especially with revisions, than the lower rated session. Gaze most often was on the text in the session, but students and tutors looked at each other with some frequency. Often, those glances were missed, one party continued looking at the text. When eyes met, most often it was for brief moments, although longer exchanges of these brief meetings were more characteristic of higher rated sessions. In lower rated sessions, students were more likely to look completely away from the tutorial. Smiling and laughter could have individually, with one party smiling alone, responsively, with one party smiling and the other returning the express, and in coordination, with both parties smiling at the same time.
Chapter 5: Concluding Thoughts and Implications

Summary of Findings

I had two research questions in this dissertation. The first asked: What characteristics of tutorials exist across all pedagogical approaches? I have identified seven characteristics that appeared in all of the cases studied here. All of the characteristics revolve around the complex interaction of student, tutor, and text that is the writing tutorial. I have classified them as verbal and nonverbal since my inquiry and coding began with items that could be heard and/or read (verbal) versus items that could be visually observed without any sound (nonverbal).

The verbal characteristics of writing tutorials found to be important in this dissertation are the posing of questions by students and tutors, praise given by students and by tutors, mentions of time, and the establishing of the agenda and expectations for the session. Questions varied from simple inquiries into what the other party meant to convey in a piece of writing or in an utterance, to questions probing for more thoughtful responses to the assignments brought in or the arguments being made in the written text. Examples of praise were offered as a means of building confidence in writing skills and as a means of encouraging specific behaviors in the tutorial. Time was mentioned most often by tutors to indicate either how much time was used up or left remaining. Underneath the surface of this time keeping, though, is an interesting understanding of
whether the tutorial is an event unto itself or a collection of moments on a ticking clock. The first part of the session is devoted to a determination of what the student and tutor want to get from the session as well as to determining and explaining the approach taken in the tutorial. Sometimes this negotiation continues throughout the session.

The nonverbal characteristics of writing tutorials are writing on the text, gaze, and smiling and/laughter. Students are the participants most likely to write on the text, making edits, revisions, and notes. Gaze, where a participant’s eyes are focused, centered on the text the student brought to the tutorial, but participants did look away from the session and toward each other, sometimes with gazes meeting and sometimes without them meeting. Smiling and laughing happened in most sessions, with individual participants smiling, participants smiling in response to the other participant smiling, and coordinated smiles by both participants.

These characteristics appeared in all of the sessions with differing qualities and in differing quantities. They occurred in sessions with different approaches to tutoring. While I do not want to analyze tutoring approaches in too much detail, since that is not the purpose of this dissertation, I will say I noticed more and less directive moments in these cases, moments where the tutors behaved more and less like peers, and moments where the student led more and moments where the tutor led more. In short, I saw at least some of all of the pedagogical approaches currently under consideration and debate in writing center studies across these cases, along with the characteristics I have identified. More research would need to be done to look at how the pedagogical approaches and characteristics correlate, but I can say, with the work done here, that these characteristics do appear across approaches and will thus provide interesting points of discussion for tutors, administrators, and researchers.
In addition to these characteristics seen across all cases, I have also identified one further characteristic, postponing, that only appeared in one of my cases. While this characteristic is not common to all cases, it could be present in many cases. The approach of waiting to deal with a specific issue at a future point is one that many tutors do use and is applied in many different situations, even though I did not observe those in this set of data. The fact that the approach is such a failure here points to more interesting and in-depth research concerning sequencing of teaching writing concepts and in approaching what students want to accomplish in their tutorial sessions.

My second research question in this dissertation asked: What differences in the characteristics discussed appear given different levels of flow felt as assessed by the modified Flow Scale Survey (FSS). I expected the FSS to reveal very distinct high and low rated sessions; while the results of the FSS did allow me to make distinctions between high rated sessions and low rated sessions, I did not see the many very polarized ratings like I expected. With the differences in FSS scores that I did see, differences in the characteristics discussed did appear, to an extent.

Taken together, the characteristics build a general description of sessions with higher flow ratings for both the student and the tutor. These sessions are marked by collaboration. This collaboration begins with the establishing of goals and expectations for the session. Students and tutors both describe what they want to get from the session, and both are willing to negotiate with the other on those goals and expectations. This negotiation of expectations is not limited to the opening moments of the session, rather it is seen to occur throughout the session. The collaboration continues through student and tutor questions. Questions are posed more often by the student than the tutor, although both pose questions. Responses to these questions, no matter which party
posed them, consist of several turns by both parties. If the question is about a revision, for example, then both the student and the tutor suggest possibilities for that revision, building on each other’s suggestions until both are satisfied. The student in a high rated tutorial writes on the text often, but mostly after these kinds of long exchanges. The student is able to point out his or her own editing errors with a large amount of regularity, often marking corrections on the text without vocalizing a concern. If the tutor makes note of an editing issue, the student is more likely to be able to catch that kind of editing error on his or her own after that. Students and tutors share smiles fairly often, which provides an outward indicator of their building of shared identities. One of the shared identities built in the session is that of “competent writer;” tutors build this in students by providing (a relatively few number of) compliments about the students’ abilities as a writer in general, detailing what works in the writing the student has produced.

Low rated sessions are marked by failures to collaborate. Students and tutors fail to agree on the best issues to deal with as well as the best approaches for dealing with issues. This failure to agree may be exhibited through the student’s looking away from the session repeatedly or lack of long responses to questions posed by the tutor. Tutors ask the majority of the questions, and all responses to questions remain short and to the point. Relatively few turns are taken when working through answers to questions about revisions and students often write their revisions down first, then ask the tutor to correct them rather than building up a satisfying revision before committing anything to writing. These sessions are marked by a lack of sharing of similarities as marked by coordinated smiles and laughter. Praise is also a place where similarities are not shared as often; praise in these sessions is usually given in response to very specific behaviors performed
during the session. These sessions could also be marked by a tutorial approach (such as postponing) that, for whatever reason, is simply unsuccessful for either the student, the tutor or both parties.

My cases have revealed that there are characteristics common to all tutorials, no matter what pedagogical approach is used. They have also revealed that there are some differences in the quality of those characteristics between highly rated sessions and low rated sessions.

**Discussion**

I am quite satisfied that the characteristics I have uncovered have some lasting implications for a variety of parties involved with writing centers, as will be discussed shortly. There were a few disappointments I came across in this study, though.

I had hoped to be able to create clear descriptions of “good” and “bad” sessions generally, but I was unable to do so. “Good” remains a slippery term, as does “bad,” when discussing tutorials. There are many determiners of session that could place a single tutorial in either category. Just because there are higher levels of flow in sessions where connections are emphasized, as is seen through the characteristic of coordinated smiling and laughing, that does not necessarily mean that those sessions improve the piece of writing or the student’s understanding of writing. Those sessions create high flow, but they may not be “good” sessions.

Also, there is no “typical” writing tutorial. I am reminded of this most forcibly by the differences seen in Case #1 and Case #2. Both of these sessions are highly rated, but they are very different from each other. Case #1 shows a great deal of collaboration, which would mark it as a “good” session for me. Case #2 shows a good deal of building of
the student’s confidence in her writing, which marks it as a “good” session as well. But what Case #1 is strong in, Case #2 seems to lack, and vice versa. Both students, though, remarked on how happy they were with the work done and the approach taken. “Good” and “bad” sessions are thus so strongly tied to the expectations of both parties in the tutorial that “good” and “bad” can hardly be thought of in global terms.

While I believe the characteristics I have discussed here have use in discussing all kinds of tutorials, with all kinds of approaches, marked as good or bad in a situation, I have to accept that it is impossible to concretely nail down what a good session looks like. This is, of course, the problem in all of the assessment work that I have looked at thus far (see Clark; Thonus et al; Bell; Morrison and Nadeau). We need to determine what we see as good and bad sessions in order to determine our success and worth in the university, but good and bad are so contextual that they mean next to nothing when we begin to look at sessions more closely.

I would like to argue, though, that using flow theory to assess sessions is useful. It has been shown that students change their feelings about the tutorial’s success based on things well outside the control of the writing center (Morrison and Nadeau). Even student and tutor expectations about what the work of the writing center is are influenced by things we cannot control. We can, though, measure, with the FSS, the level of flow felt immediately after the session. With that information, we can think about how much the students and tutors want to recreate that experience. With that information, we can create stronger pedagogies and discuss the success of our work when dealing with things we can control. That is a more solid marker of success than any I have seen thus far.

I also wanted to create a common language to discuss all tutorials, terms that
would mean the same thing to all parties invested in writing centers, especially students and tutors. Good and bad were only the first words of the language I wanted to create. I was not able to create this language, though. Too many factors impact the use of language to make that feasible, especially with the information I have gathered here. Had I used the modified FSS to look more closely at the individual flow characteristics seen in tutorials, more of this kind of vocabulary could be built. Without that, though, I have found characteristics with fairly narrow definitions that can be used to talk about all kinds of tutorials. This is a success and a valuable addition to writing center studies.

I do want to talk about one individual element of flow theory here. Csikszentmihalyi noted that the most perplexing and most important element of a flow experience is the losing of the sense of self during the flow event with the result that self-image or self-concept is built and/or strengthened at the end of the flow event. He discusses how this building of self-concept is most likely what makes people strive to recreate the feeling of flow events.

One of my biggest goals as a tutor is to make the student I am working with forget, even for a short time, the idea that they “cannot write,” or whatever negative belief they have about themselves as writers. If I can help them to function outside that belief during the tutorial, I know that I can convince them, by the end, that they are better writers than they originally thought. They may not believe they are good or strong writers, but they can believe they are better than they thought. The characteristics seen here point to the fact that, in higher rated sessions, this building of self-concept is happening.

Through the characteristic of smiling most notably, but also through all of the kinds of exchanges seen in the higher rated sessions, the idea is being built that the
student is, if nothing more, a competent writer for this assignment/project. As discussed, coordinated smiling, as well as responsive smiling, to a lesser extent, indicate a building of understanding between student and tutor of the ways they are similar. The similarity that is most often built upon is that of uncertainty: tutors in higher rated sessions shared smiles with students when they both were uncertain about something in the tutorial. The fact that students smile at this indicates, at some level, they are recognizing that the tutor, someone identified as superior in the area of writing, is uncertain. If a superior writer can be uncertain about something in the area of writing, it is perfectly acceptable for the student to be uncertain. This could ultimately lessen the belief that they are bad writers if it is based on that uncertainty.

Smiles are also shared when the tutor is noting that the student has knowledge that he or she does not have. This happens when the tutor asks questions about the assignment or the expectations from the teacher. Part of those exchanges is indeed uncertainty, but another part of that exchange is a recognition of the student as a knowledgeable person. Giving students room to make those contributions, and seeing the smiles that result, show that students are building their sense of themselves as competent and knowledgeable.

The building of self-confidence that happens in these kinds of exchanges seems to be key in getting students to return to tutoring. It also seems key in improving the student's writing in a particular project as well as more generally. While more work needs to be done in order to better understand this phenomenon and its importance, I find this one of the most fascinating areas of future flow theory research.

Another contribution of the work done here is seen in how the text in the tutorial is treated. Through the characteristics of gaze, especially, and writing on the text, the
importance of the text within the tutorial is emphasized. Based on tutor and student indications that eye contact was an important characteristic of the tutorial, I expected there to be long moments of intense eye contact throughout the session. This was just not the case. Tutorials were marked by gaze almost exclusively on the text of the session. Writing on the text was also an important marker for tutors that students were participating. Again, this notes the importance of the text within the tutorial.

The importance of the text itself changes some of my thinking about tutorials as a whole. I have always framed tutorials as complex interactions between two parties: students and tutors. This idea came to me largely unquestioned based on the literature that focuses on those two parties within the session and because of the iconic statement from Stephen North that we work to “improve the writer, not the writing.” I should have been questioning this idea as students have been shown to assess their tutorial’s worth based on the grade their paper received or that they thought the paper would receive. Still, the idea that the text is an important entity to consider in discussing tutorials was not in the forefront of my mind.

I am not arguing that the piece of writing should become the focus of all writing center studies, but I do believe it deserves more attention than it is currently getting. We have recognized, to an extent, that all writing is contextualized in a certain place and time. We have also recognized that people are similarly contextualized. We tend to assume, though, that the writing the student brings in to the tutorial shares much the same context as the student does. This may not be the case because students may value writing generally but not see the value of a given writing project. Students, like the one that Lynn Briggs discusses, may be constrained in their assignment in ways that have nothing to do with their attitudes about writing in general. These differences in general
views held by the student and those created by the context of a particular assignment can really change the dynamics of a tutorial.

The interactions seen among the student and the tutor do show me that growing the knowledge of the writer is a priority in the sessions, but so is improving the writing under consideration. What happens to that paper cannot be ignored or pushed away, and I think it has been for too long.

**Implications for Interested Parties**

The characteristics I discovered exist no matter what pedagogical approach the tutor uses and are best categorized as “verbal” and “non-verbal.” The verbal characteristics (questions, praise, mentions of time, establishing goals and expectations, postponing) and nonverbal characteristics (writing on the text, gaze, smiling/laughter) happened in all sessions, no matter the how they were rated. One verbal characteristic, postponing, happened only in one low rated session. In very general terms, the higher the level of flow reported in the session, the more the student and tutor seemed to be collaborating; the lower the session rated on flow, the more the characteristics showed a lack of collaboration.

The mere fact that I was able to find these characteristics presents some interesting implications for a variety of parties associated with writing centers. The characteristics themselves add to those implications for writing center researchers, writing center administrators, tutors and educational researchers.

**Writing Center Researchers**

Writing center researchers are those people actively seeking knowledge in the
field of writing center studies. These are the people creating studies and making theory about writing centers and how they should work. The identification of “researcher” may overlap with other identifications; writing center researchers are often tutors and administrators themselves. In this role, though, they are studying writing centers empirically and theoretically.

The current focus of most writing center researchers is on the debates between certain pedagogical approaches, as I have mentioned elsewhere. The ideas about whether the tutor should relate to the student as peer or as a teacher (Bruffee; Harris; Trimbur), about whether the tutor should be directive or non-directive (Brooks; Shamoon and Burns; Clark) and about whether the student should lead or follow (Gillespie and Lerner; Murphy and Sherwood) in the session have resulted in conflicting understandings of what makes a tutorial work. Questions remain, like, if the tutor shares her own struggles with writing, will that help or hinder the tutorial? If the tutor talks for more than half the session, has he done poorly? If the tutor lets the student dictate the work of the session entirely, even if it means ignoring possibly important problems, is that the best approach?

Recent survey work has indeed pointed out some flaws in working from these approaches. Irene Clark’s survey points to the differing understandings of the term “directive” among tutors, students, and teacher, for instance, in her article “Perspectives on the Directive/Non-Directive Continuum in the Writing Center.” Isabelle Thompson and her research team also found that students and tutors valued different things in a tutorial in their article “Examining Our Lore: A Survey of Students’ and Tutors’ Satisfaction with Writing Center Conferences.” Students valued sessions where they thought they would receive a higher grade when finished and tutors valued sessions
where both their own and the students' goals were met. Neither of these concerns is pedagogically driven which calls into question the strong focus on such pedagogical issues. Both of these surveys point to the fact that thinking only in terms of pedagogical moves is problematic when examining real sessions.

My study shows that characteristics do exist in all sessions outside these pedagogical dichotomies that drive so much of writing center studies' conversation. What is more, the value in using an evaluation tool measuring quality of experience, flow theory, is established.

These characteristics can have many uses in writing center scholarship. One can use these characteristics in discussions of the pedagogical concerns in writing centers. Take the concern with how tutors and students relate to one another. The prevailing idea is that peer tutors must somehow be both a teacher and a peer (Trimbur; Harris). What this actually looks like, though, is only to be theorized. In the characteristic of postponing, though, the negotiation of these identities is seen. JAMIE is seen to feel very much like a peer to Anna. In her interview, JAMIE notes that when a session revolving around citations, like the one with Anna, starts, she feels “like, where do I begin?” This is exactly the attitude than many of the students come in with when working on citations. In the moments of thinking about working on citations, she worries that she is too much like her peers to be useful in the session. In dealing with them, she feels like she should be able to “get it exactly right for them.” The pressure, whether from herself, the student, or even the administrators, is to be the teacher, to know the information and to teach it to the students accurately. In response to this tension, at least in part, she postpones the work on that issue until the end of the session. And this harms the session. The characteristic of postponing, then, is able to highlight the concerns that scholars
concerned about the peer relationship have discussed in action. The results of this interaction are also seen to be poor, so alternative solutions could be theorized. For instance, what would have happened if the tutor had owned up to her anxieties in working with APA citations and had the student help her with them? It may or may not have been more successful, but, with my research we can see at least one response to the anxiety of being a peer tutor that does not work.

The characteristics seen in this study are not just useful in better understanding a single one of the current pedagogical concerns. These characteristics show how those concerns can meet and inform each other. Keeping with the same example, postponing can shed light on issues of directiveness versus non-directiveness as well as leading versus following.

Concerns over directive versus non-directive behaviors in a tutorial look at how much of the tutorial shows the student dictating what happens and being the main contributor in whatever is of concern (Brooks; Shamoon and Burns). In the context of the characteristic of postponing in Case #4, the student has dictated the subject to be covered. Anna wants to deal with citations. However, the tutor is dictating when it will be addressed; JAMIE will not talk about them until the end of the session. This might be considered a satisfactory negotiation of directiveness but for the fact that the tutor takes the lead in instructing the student when they eventually do begin to discuss those citations. The student may have asked to cover the material, but she is far from “doing all the work.” The discussion gets even more complicated, though, when we see Anna directing what JAMIE talks about. As Anna repeats that she knows how to do References page citations and wants help only with in-text citation, direction seems to be more in her court. JAMIE takes directiveness back, though, when she informs Anna that
Reference citations do dictate in-text citations. The struggle with who will be giving instruction over what and when that instruction will take place is very complex here. Those who are concerned with directiveness would have plenty to glean from the exchanges that happen in the characteristic of postponing.

Those interested in the leading versus following area of writing center studies would also find plenty to analyze here. Anna attempts to lead JAMIE by directing her to concerns with citations both generally at the beginning of the session and more specifically later in the session. When discussing those specific concerns, Anna is the most animated. She asks the most questions, pays the most attention, and really seems to want to lead what is happening. JAMIE, though, takes the lead. She postpones discussion of citations. She will not talk about them at all until the end of the session and she will only talk about in-text citations after References citations. Critiques of JAMIE’s approach could be made by those who see Anna’s active interest as the necessary thing to improve the session.

It is easy to see that each area of common concern could be addressed through just one of these characteristics. What is even more interesting about the characteristics I have developed is their usefulness in examining the patterns amongst the differing camps. Just in writing this, I noticed how the tutor gets more directive and takes more control when she feels uncertain about her own knowledge in the session. Studies looking into how mastery of materials on the tutor’s part dictates approaches in the session would be very well timed and could be conducted using these characteristics I have developed.

While any of the characteristics I have outlined could indeed be seen through any kind of observation, the fact that I know, based on the information given by the FSS,
when these characteristics are most likely to encourage or discourage flow makes them even more valuable. For instance, we know that the postponing activity is detrimental to the session. We thus have an idea that when tutors are uncertain of their knowledge, the session suffers. And that detriment is felt by both the student and the tutor.

Applying flow theory directly to the session as ways of evaluating them also shows good potential for writing center research. I was able to see differences in sessions with different levels of flow reported. This means that flow is indeed something that can be seen in tutorials. And since flow experiences, especially as related to learning writing skills (Abbott; Gute and Gute), tend to be beneficial for the students involved in them, entire new areas of research are open. What flow characteristics are most common in writing tutorials? How do those characteristics help the session? Can a knowledge of flow theory help tutors do their job more effectively? Can knowledge of flow theory help students learn more in the tutorials? These areas are ripe for inspection.

**Writing Center Administrators**

I am defining “writing center administrators” as those people responsible for the running of writing centers on a daily basis. These are the people who make decisions about hiring tutors, training tutors, interaction with the larger university structure, and so forth.

I am convinced, through the process of observing and analyzing these tutorials, that the best method of training tutors is through observation of their own and others’ tutoring methods. Richard Leahy discusses all of the good things that can come from tutors recording and reflecting on their own tutorials in his article “Using Audiotapes for Evaluation and Collaborative Training.” Leahy argues that tutors are able to see both
their own flaws and improvements in their tutoring through recording sessions. He notes that “sessions that don't go so well make better material” for analysis and discussion because the tutor has more to see about his/her performance (3).

I agree that simply reflecting on a tutorial can give a tutor ideas for improvement, but reflecting on a tutorial where both the student and the tutor have assessed the tutorial in the same terms would provide even more useful grounds for training. The tutors here were able to point to single tutorials that had elements they thought were good and elements they thought were bad. For instance, the tutor in Case #6, CASEY, described a session she felt was very unsuccessful at length. She discussed a session where the student was very resistant to the work of the tutorial. She thought she “went into it as sort of a normal tutoring session working just on the paper and he had issues with the entire university structure.” As the tutorial progressed, she realized “I suppose, so I kind of read him wrong, and he was getting frustrated with my opinions” on his paper. Despite her complaints that this student was resistant to all of her suggestions and was actually somewhat combative during the session, she notes at the end, “I did manage to get him to break his entire paper into paragraphs.” The tutor realizes “see, I can find something” to see as successful in the session. With an assessment of where the student thought things went wrong and right, like what the FSS provides, the tutor would have even more food for considering what makes her tutorials successful.

The tutors involved in the lowest rated sessions also saw redeeming features of their sessions. TANYA notes that “I think I did better toward the end when I was talking about the major things in her paper” after a rough start with her cell phone ringing. The tutor in D3 notes that, despite her low rating of the session “I don’t recall it being a bad session....Maybe I just don’t recall the bad things.” With this kind of reflection, tutors will
be able to look at their tutorials in sections, seeing things to praise themselves for and things to improve upon. Not only will this provide tutors with more opportunities to learn about tutoring techniques, it will help them to understand that no session has to be “bad” just because one element of the session is not going well. This will ultimately lead the tutors to be stronger and more successful in their work.

My study here relies on a small number of cases in a specific location, so the characteristics seen here cannot be assumed to be things seen in all tutorials. Still, these characteristics can provide new ways of talking to tutors and students about what to expect in a tutorial and how to respond to certain signs of high or low levels of flow. For instance, creating in tutors an awareness of how many turns are taken before something is written down could help them gauge how well the session is going. A discussion along these lines would help tutors develop techniques for pulling more responses from students, which would increase the likelihood of more flow being experienced.

In addition to discussions based on specific things to attempt to recreate in tutorials, the characteristics here can be used to spark more general discussion in my own tutor training. Tutors could reflect on how the characteristics appeared in their own sessions and reflect on how their experiences match or differ from those seen in these cases. They could discuss what they liked and disliked about those interactions and postulate ways to improve their tutoring. This opens discussion beyond the simple approaches used. It would allow them to think about their behaviors and the student’s behaviors in the session.

Many writing center administrators create materials to prepare students for what to expect in the tutorial. The characteristics seen in this study could be used to help students prepare for their tutorials. I would include information on praising the tutor,
for instance. Tutors need to know they are doing well, like the students, so I would include information to encourage students to praise their tutors when they feel the session is helping. I would also use these characteristics to encourage students to wait to write revisions on their text until, for example, both the student and the tutor have expressed something about that revision. This would help them to emulate the exchanges that happened in the higher rated sessions.

**Tutors**

Writing tutors are those people actually working with students in writing centers. Through this dissertation, I have developed some specific concerns about some of their approaches to working with those students.

The practice of reading aloud in the tutorial, for example, comes into question based on my findings. I am invested in discussions of reading aloud because I have had long discussions with one of the tutor participants in this study about the issue. That tutor and I even presented a round table on the issue at a recent conference. He likes to read the text aloud rather than the student, which he readily explains in his tutorials. For instance, he tells Ben, “Typically, I read just because it kind of helps me to, kind of concentrate. And I’m sure you have read it multiple times. So you can hear it, instead of just looking at it.” TANYA claims the same thing in her session with Megan: “Then I’ll read it out loud. It helps me pay attention.” During these sessions, TANYA's and MATT's, the students show more signs of disengagement and disinterest in the session. Megan looks away from the session more than most students, for instance. She is also the only student in this study to play with her cell phone during the tutorial. In sessions where the students read aloud, a great deal of those signs are missing.
I am hesitant to make a strong claim that reading aloud is best done by the student, though. Still, in this limited sample, the sessions where the tutors read aloud do generally have lower flow scores than the ones where the students read aloud. The students in the sessions where tutors read aloud also rated their ability to concentrate lower on the FSS. However, a corresponding drop in tutor concentration was not seen when the student read aloud. It appears that having the student read aloud really benefits the session more than when the tutor reads it aloud.

Case #4, though, keeps me from being completely convinced that having the student read aloud is always the best idea. Anna very much wants JAMIE, the tutor, to read the paper aloud, but JAMIE very much wants Anna to do the reading. JAMIE eventually coerces the student to read the text aloud in turns. While the student ultimately does read aloud, this session has one of the lowest flow ratings in both the student and the tutor's eyes, of all my cases. The student's absolute aversion to reading aloud counteracts, I believe, any benefit that may happen in that act. With most elements of tutorials, there are no hard and fast rules. It seems like allowing the student to read aloud builds a better session, but some students do not fit into this mold.

The use of the FSS was very important in helping tutors make these kinds of discoveries. JAMIE states that she does not “make a big deal” of instances when students resist her desires because “I think there could be so many reasons for being resistant.” This is not what happens in the session. While JAMIE is not forceful in her interaction with Anna, she is determined to get Anna reading. An outside observer of the session would have seen the coercion there with or without the FSS. With the FSS, though, JAMIE could be able to see her own contrasts in thinking and approaches. She can see, in a numerical rating, Anna's frustration with the session. The low flow rating should
allow her to see that she did coerce the student and it did affect the session. I think if JAMIE did not have the FSS with both her own and Anna's low rating of the session, she would have continued to think her “gentle” pushing on Anna as a great approach.

The characteristics in this study should also ask tutors to pay attention to common things they are already doing in their tutorials. They should pay attention to the way they ask and answer questions. They should be aware of the way they give positive reinforcement to the students. They should gauge how the student is responding to the work by their gaze and the way he or she is writing on the text. While the data here is not enough to make claims about what should happen in sessions, I think it does demand attention be paid to these concerns as a way of thinking about improving a tutor’s practice.

**Educational Researchers**

Flow theory has, of course, been used to study many areas of life outside of the writing center. One of the most important ones, in terms of this dissertation, is in educational research. Flow theory has been applied to many learning situations in order to understand better ways of teaching students. Csikszentmihalyi himself applied flow theory to literacy education in his article “Literacy Education and Intrinsic Motivation.” In this article, he argues that students do not pay attention in school because “science and mathematics are generally overwhelming, and students tend to feel anxious when these subjects are being taught. Humanities and social sciences, on the other hand, are more likely to be experienced as boring” (134); if students are anxious or bored, they are less likely to pay attention to what is going on. They will be dis-engaged from their learning. He argues, though, that “the major impediments to literacy, and to learning in
general, have little to do with the logic of packaging information; if anything, the aesthetics of it are more important. This is because the obstacles that stand in the way of learning are primarily motivational, not cognitive in nature” (118-9). His belief is that students are capable of learning anything if only educators can keep them interested.

More recently, Deanne Gute and Gary Gute make a similar argument in their article “Flow Writing in the Liberal Arts Core and Across the Disciplines: A Vehicle for Confronting and Transforming Academic Disengagement.” They argue "anxiety, boredom, and apathy appear to be much better represented in college classrooms than full concentration and enjoyment of learning” (192). Because students are either too challenged by the work they are doing in classes or not challenged enough, the lack of engagement, let alone flow experiences, has become "epidemic" in modern colleges (191). They hypothesized that writing to learn and writing across the curriculum assignments within their composition courses could identify places where students had less motivation and help them improve that motivation. Gute and Gute realized, through these students’ writing, that the elements of flow are indeed necessary in order for students to engage in their classes more effectively. They also found confirmation for their assumptions that “if students enjoyed the writing tasks and perceived a benefit from them, they might pursue further opportunities to write to learn” (193). These researchers realized the importance of getting students into flow in educational settings and saw that writing with specific kinds of feedback helps students become more likely to be engaged in their work.

Flow theory is a major component in understanding how methods of helping students learning more effectively in both of these studies. Csikszentmihalyi and Gute and Gute rely on the presence of flow characteristics to determine how students are
learning in their classroom environments. While my dissertation does not directly look at how elements of flow appear in writing tutorials, my study can have some implications for those seeking to use flow theory to understand other educational experiences.

Gute and Gute, as well as other researchers (Egbert; Guo and Ro; Block; Koehn and Lowry), rely largely on the presence of the specific characteristics of flow in seeking to understand learning experiences. This mimics writing center studies' reliance on the presence of specific pedagogical markers to understand tutorials. If educational researchers were able to evaluate learning experiences through the feeling of flow, like I did in my study, even more characteristics of engaged learning could emerge.

This study also could benefit engagement researchers by pinpointing the exact interaction between the student and the teacher. Most educational researchers must deal with the interaction of a single instructor with a large class. This complicates an understanding of how the engaged students interact with engaged teachers. In writing centers, there is only one student and one “instructor.” While writing tutorials are certainly not a small scale equivalent of a classroom, the interactions there do have some similarities to classroom interactions. By being able to look at this “simplified” interaction, educational researchers could find paradigms for understanding larger group learning dynamics.

Concluding Thoughts

At the end of this study, I am satisfied with the results. I was able to see some interesting characteristics in these tutorials that will move discussions of tutorials forward in the future. The information provided by the FSS helped me in understanding how the characteristics differ in sessions in which students felt high levels of flow and
low levels of flow, so I was satisfied that this tool aided my understandings.

I was frustrated by my lack of ability to make strong claims based on the FSS, though. A flow experience is a good experience in that it is something that people want to repeat. The goal of tutoring is to encourage students to want to repeat close work on their papers, whether in the writing center or on their own. I wanted to be able to use the FSS to claim that high rated sessions were good sessions. The link between those idea, though, is just not strong enough at this point. I believe my work here validates the need to study the FSS and other measures of flow in tutorials further, but I was frustrated by my lack of ability to do so here.

I was sometimes frustrated by my own methods of collecting data. As a novice at filming anything, I sometimes did not get the best camera angle to examine, for instance, eye contact. While I improved over the course of the data collection, my first case was ultimately not usable because my camera angle did not show enough of the student's face. In future studies, I will take more care in how the camera is placed. I was also frustrated by my lack of access to views of students and tutors writing on the texts. I was not able to video the paper directly and I did not collect copies of the work at the end of the session. I chose not to make copies of student drafts because I thought that might feel too invasive to them. And videoing the writing that happens during the session would require camera placement that would probably make any kind of “normal” tutoring impossible. Still, I wanted to be able to see more of what the actual writing looked like in the sessions.

I mentioned at the beginning of this process that studies, like those conducted by Thonus and Thompson, that have concrete descriptions of real sessions as the basis for their research and theory were the most personally satisfying to me. I have often
wondered why more people do not conduct that kind of research. Now that I am completing this process, I feel like I have a better understanding of both why these studies are so satisfying and why they are not as prevalent as other kinds of studies.

The level of detailed work that goes into this kind of study is daunting, to say the least. There are so many factors that can be teased out of a tutorial it can be challenging to even begin considering which ones are of value. Beyond that, making sure the factors you tease out are shown in a way that makes sense to someone who has not viewed the cases repeatedly is a conceptual and methodological challenge. People do not take on this kind of work because it is a huge challenge to understand what you are looking at and to convey what you find. But the information is so satisfying because it allows you to make real claims about things you have always noticed on a subconscious level but been unable to verbalize satisfactorily.

I was able to point to the things that happen across sessions; things that happen no matter how the tutor or student approaches the session. I knew that I consciously varied my approach to different kinds of tutoring sessions, but I could not name what made them all feel the same. Now I have a beginning of that naming process. I am deeply content in knowing, for the moment, that my intuition about those characteristics was correct. And I am excited about future research that will allow me to further understand these characteristics and to help others understand them as well.


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Rose, Mike. “The Language of Exclusion: Writing Instruction at the University.”

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Appendices
**APPENDIX A**

*Flow Scale Survey (Original)*

Please answer the following questions in relation to your experience in the event you have just completed. These questions relate to the thoughts and feelings you may have experienced during the event. There are no right or wrong answers. Think about how you felt during the event and answer the questions using the rating scale below. Circle the number that best matches your experience from the options to the right of each question.

**Rating Scale:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree or disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. I was challenged, but I believed my skills would allow me to meet the challenge.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. I made the correct movements without thinking about trying to do so.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. I knew clearly what I wanted to do.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. It was really clear to me that I was doing well.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. My attention was focused entirely on what I was doing.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. I felt in total control of what I was doing.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. I was not concerned with what others may have been thinking of me.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Time seemed to alter (either slowed down or speeded up).</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. I really enjoyed the experience.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. My abilities matched the high challenge of the situation.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Things just seemed to be happening automatically.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. I had a strong sense of what I wanted to do.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. I was aware of how well I was performing.</td>
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14. It was no effort to keep my mind on what was happening. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
15. I felt like I could control what I was doing. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
16. I was not worried about my performance during the event. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
17. The way time passed seemed to be different from normal. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
18. I loved the feeling of that performance and want to capture it again. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
19. I felt I was competent enough to meet the high demands of the situation. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
20. I performed automatically. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
21. I knew what I wanted to achieve. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
22. I had a good idea while I was performing how well I was doing. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
23. I had total concentration. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
24. I had a feeling of total control. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
25. I was not concerned with how I was presenting myself. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
26. It felt like time stopped while I was performing. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
27. The experience left me feeling great. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
28. The challenge and my skills were at an equally high level. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
29. I did things spontaneously and automatically without having to think. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
30. My goals were clearly defined. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
31. I could tell by the way I was performing how well I was doing. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
32. I was completely focused on the task at hand. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
33. I felt in total control of my body. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
34. I was not worried about what others may have been thinking about me. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
35. At Times, it almost seemed like things were happening in slow motion | 1 2 3 4 5 |
36. I found the experience extremely rewarding. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
Flow Scale Survey (Modified)

Please answer the following questions in relation to your experience in the tutorial session you have just completed. These questions relate to the thoughts and feelings you may have experienced during the session. There are no right or wrong answers. Think about how you felt during the session and answer the questions using the rating scale below. Circle the number that best matches your experience from the options to the right of each question.

Rating Scale:

<table>
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<td></td>
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<td>5. I felt in total control of what I was doing.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. I was not concerned with what my tutor/student may have been thinking of me.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Time seemed to alter (either slowed down or speeded up).</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Overall, I really enjoyed the experience.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. My abilities matched the high challenge of the situation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Things just seemed to be happening automatically.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. I had a strong sense of what I wanted to do.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. I was aware of how well the session was progressing.</td>
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13. It was no effort to keep my mind on what was happening.  
14. I felt like I could control what I was doing.  
15. I was not worried about getting things right the first time during the session.  
16. The way time passed seemed to be different from normal.  
17. I loved the feeling of the session and want to capture it again.  
18. I felt I was competent enough to meet the high demands of the situation.  
19. I worked automatically.  
20. I knew what I wanted to achieve.  
21. I had a good idea while I was working how well the session was going.  
22. I had total concentration.  
23. I had a feeling of total control.  
24. I was not concerned with how I was presenting myself.  
25. It felt like time stopped during the session.  
26. The experience left me feeling great.  
27. The challenge and my skills were at an equally high level.  
28. I did things spontaneously and automatically without having to think.  
29. My goals were clearly defined.  
30. I was completely focused on the task at hand.  
31. I felt in total control of my writing during the session.  
32. I was not worried about what others may have been thinking about me.  
33. At times, it almost seemed like things were happening in slow motion.  
34. I found the experience extremely rewarding.

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<td>17. I loved the feeling of the session and want to capture it again.</td>
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<td>18. I felt I was competent enough to meet the high demands of the situation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>19. I worked automatically.</td>
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<td>20. I knew what I wanted to achieve.</td>
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<tr>
<td>21. I had a good idea while I was working how well the session was going.</td>
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<tr>
<td>22. I had total concentration.</td>
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<tr>
<td>23. I had a feeling of total control.</td>
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<tr>
<td>24. I was not concerned with how I was presenting myself.</td>
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<tr>
<td>25. It felt like time stopped during the session.</td>
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<tr>
<td>26. The experience left me feeling great.</td>
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<tr>
<td>27. The challenge and my skills were at an equally high level.</td>
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<tr>
<td>28. I did things spontaneously and automatically without having to think.</td>
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<tr>
<td>29. My goals were clearly defined.</td>
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<tr>
<td>30. I was completely focused on the task at hand.</td>
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<tr>
<td>31. I felt in total control of my writing during the session.</td>
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<tr>
<td>32. I was not worried about what others may have been thinking about me.</td>
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<tr>
<td>33. At times, it almost seemed like things were happening in slow motion.</td>
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<tr>
<td>34. I found the experience extremely rewarding.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How would you describe your participation in the session?
How would you describe the tutor's/student's participation in the session?

What (if any) signals did you notice from the tutor/student that indicated interest in what you were working on?
APPENDIX C

Transcription Conventions


**Overlap**  Start shown with ( [ ) placed vertically. Overlaps between participant contributions are marked using brackets aligned directly above one another. Overlaps continue until one interlocutor completes his/ her utterance.

**Nonverbal Features**  Shown in double parentheses ( ( )

**Emphatic Language**  Shown in **bold** lettering

**Indecipherable**  Shown by ***

**Tutor Name**  All caps

**Backchannels**  Contributions made by other participants while the first speaker maintains the floor. mmhmm, yeah, o.k., (all) right

Further Instruction:
“Close vertical transcriptions are read from left to right, top to bottom, in paired lines called turns. However, the reading of this type of transcript is linear only up to a point. Each participant’s speech occupies one or more lines that can be overlapped or cut off by the speaker on the line just below. At this juncture, the reader of a transcript must "unplug the other ear," activate a stereo feature, and "hear" two channels at the same time. When noticing a gap in a line of speech, the reader should glance below to see how the other speaker fills it.” (30)
Appendix D

Table of Coding Process and Codes Developed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Coding (in order performed)</th>
<th>Open Coding</th>
<th>From Surveys and Observations</th>
<th>Tutors for students:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>From Interviews</td>
<td>-Asking Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Answering questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Writing on the text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Eye contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Smiling</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>From Me:</td>
<td>-Praise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Smiling and nodding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Eye contact</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Open Codes</td>
<td>Axial Coding</td>
<td>Verbal</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Praise</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Questions (Student and Tutor)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Goals added: direct instruction postponing references to time

| Nonverbal       | Smiling | Laughing (later combined with Smiling) | Writing on the Text | Eye Contact |
| Selective Coding| Questions| Praise | Establishing Goals | References to Time | Postponing |
| Nonverbal       | Smiling/Laughing | Writing on Text | Eye Contact |
# Appendix E

## Table of Cases with Numbers and Names

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Tutor</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case #1</td>
<td>Stacy</td>
<td>Jamie</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case #2</td>
<td>Rachel</td>
<td>Nancy</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case #3</td>
<td>Ben</td>
<td>Matt</td>
<td>Middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case #4</td>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>Jamie</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case #5</td>
<td>Megan</td>
<td>Tanya</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case #6</td>
<td>Tara</td>
<td>Casey</td>
<td>Different</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>