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The Role of Writing Center Tutorials of ESL Students: Exploring Tutors, Tutees, and Instructors' Perceptions

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The Role of Writing Center Tutorials of ESL Students:
Exploring Tutors, Tutees, and Instructors' Perceptions

A dissertation submitted in a partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Curriculum and Instruction

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of the writing center tutorials. Based on the assumptions of the constructivist theory, this research tried to present a cognitive framework for better tutoring at the writing center and suggested better accommodations for ESL tutees. this exploratory study investigated the role of the writing center tutorials offered to ESL students through the perceptions of tutors, ESL tutees, and university instructors.

Methods. Eighty nine international /ESL students and 23 tutors were selected. They were given a survey to respond to. Afterwards ten out of the 89 students and ten out of the 23 tutors were interviewed. Volunteering ESL students, tutors, and ten university faculty were interviewed to explore their perceptions toward the writing center tutorials. Moreover, the researcher observed the two writing centers in which the study was conducted.

Data analysis. This Mixed Methods Research study combined a quantitative design using surveys and a qualitative part utilizing interviews, and non-participatory observation. Therefore, the result of the survey administered were statistically analyzed using independent samples T-tests. After the interviews, coding an analysis began to investigate similarities and dissimilarities among the participants' responses. Tables of frequency were designed to examine the range between outliers and calculate percentages of each respondent in comparison to the other group members. Each theme had a representative code, a formulated meaning, frequency of the respondent, and a significant statement asserting such theme. The themes were collected across all cases to show frequency.

Findings. The findings of this study revealed that the writing center is effective in improving ESL tutees' writing skills that may also be transferable to their future careers. Additionally, this study asserted that the non-directive tutoring approach, the commonly used in

the U.S. writing centers, is not the only effective tutoring mode for all ESL tutees. Most tutors, according to this study, may not apply this prescriptive non-directive tutoring. Consequently, the study concluded that a reasonable balance between the tutoring dichotomies can make a difference with ESL students. Furthermore, the study emphasized that tutors need specialized ESL training to better assist and accommodate ESL tutees.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Educators recently have become increasingly aware of the importance of writing centers and their tutor-tutee collaborative work in academic institutions. In the U.S., for instance, most colleges, universities, and even some high schools currently offer free-of-charge services at writing centers in order to help students improve their writing skills. Accordingly, the writing tutorials provided at the writing centers are one-to-one writing assistance by some trained consultants or trained peer tutors (Lincoln, 1991). In these writing tutorials, tutors and students collaboratively work on various aspects of writing, including both higher-order concerns, HOCs, like thesis development, organization, outlining style, and content and lower-order concerns, LOCs, like formatting, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics (Ryan and Zimmerelli, 2010). Most writing centers exert much effort and provide resources in order to assist students, whether they are native or non-native students, how to detect and correct their own errors by themselves with the goal of making them more self-confident and self-dependent future writers (North, 1984). Brooks (1991) stated that if a writer passively receives knowledge about writing from his tutor, he "may leave with an improved paper, but he will not have learned much" (p. 220) Gillespie and Lerner (2008) stated that:

> Writing centers are not about editing. We are about teaching and maintaining a much larger view than correcting the immediate paper; our goals for sessions are to help the writer learn the skills needed to improve not just this paper but subsequent papers. (p. 50).

Thus, despite all the challenges, writing centers are thriving in the U.S. at many educational institutions. The success achieved by the writing centers has become real after a struggle. For instance, Gillespie and Lerner (2008) maintained that "This relative success has come about after a certain amount of struggle, a struggle that is part of higher education's longtime unease with and sometimes outright prejudice against students who come to college underprepared." (p. 141).

One of the challenges writing centers faced in the U.S. was that some academic institutions and faculty members usually viewed writing center as a fix-it shop. Based on that misperception, some writing centers were relegated to basements or off-the-margin places in these institutions. And such a misconception was a part of higher education challenges facing the writing center. Although many faculty used to have such misconceptions that writing centers were mainly created for remediating ineffective or unskillful writers, in fact, the writing centers have mainly been established for helping all students produce better writing skills not for producing better papers (North, 1984).

Consequently, the role of the writing center is to tutor, not to teach, and help students improve their writing skills to meet the requirements of their academic institutions. Students coming to the writing center can actually write in English; however, their papers sometimes need more assistance to meet the standards of academic writing. In other words, those students need some tutoring in order to better convey their ideas in a much more academic manner. Beside students, writing center can also assist faculty who sometimes need some writing consultation. Fitzgerald & Stephen (2004) said that "Like students, faculty need lots of different kinds of help with writing (their own and their students'), and writing centers offer many kinds of help." (p. 123). In addition, Ryan and Zimmerelli (2010) summarized the role of the writing center as follows:

> Writing centers do vary, and significantly. Some offer only face-to-face sessions; others provide only online tutoring, which may be synchronous, asynchronous, or a blend of the two; and some offer a mix of face-to-face and online tutoring. Staff may be peer tutors, graduate students, professional tutors, faculty, or even community volunteers, and the population served is typically unique to a writing center's particular college or institution: undergraduates, graduate students, faculty, staff, community writers, or some combination thereof. Services include not only tutoring but also workshops, grammar hotlines, chats, and online files of handouts. Hours vary, with services available days, evenings, or even on weekends. Locations for sessions—classrooms, libraries, dormitories—vary as well. (p. 4).

The Theory Adopted by the Writing Center

According to Faigley et al. (1985), the theoretical foundations of composition include three important perspectives: "The literary view" which pays great attention to an individual writing process in which writers compose personally for the purpose of finding the truth (p. 14). The second perspective adopts "the cognitive view" according to which the composition goal is to convey a certain message to the audience (p. 15). Based on this view, writing proficiency undergoes developmental sequence because composition is a sophisticated process from which general concepts and values can be abstracted and manipulated in teaching writing. The third "social   view" considers the writer as a member of a "larger literate community" and that each act of composition is "a socially determined action" (p. 17).

Writing center theory is influenced by such theories guiding composition studies. For instance, many writing center theorists usually adopted the "social view" including Bruffee, Ede, and Hawkins. This group of theorists assumed that learning and writing are "essentially social acts and that conversation and collaboration are essential elements to promote critical thinking and good writing." (Gillespie & Lerner, 2008, p. 147). According to Ede (1989), writing development benefits from social learning. She claimed that writing learning should be a social and collaborative work. She urged writing center tutors to become "a part of this conversation" (p. 11). Based on her claim, social environment of writing learning can improve writers' skills of creating ideas, conveying messages, and using correct grammar. Writing center becomes "pedagogical fix-it shops to help those who, for whatever reason, are unable to think and write on their own" (p. 7). Consequently, collaboration can enhance writing center clientele by helping them detect errors that they may not be able to recognize by themselves. Collaboration creates new perspective, and the challenge of transforming writing from solitary to social (p. 5) should

be positively taken into consideration. Thus, social interaction plays a major role in writing learning (p. 6).

History of the Writing Center

Writing centers existed for many years as "Writing Clinics" for remediating the underprepared college students. Nevertheless, three main factors contributed to the spread of the writing center in the 1970s-1980s: declining of literacy skills, the rapid influx of immigrants who were still English language learners, and the open admission policy. The most important factor which participated in the spread of the writing center was the open admissions at many American academic institutions after the World War II and the Vietnam war. The policy of open admissions adopted by the government in the late 1960s and early 1970s contributed to the unexpected increase of students who needed more assistance outside their classrooms and the massive spread of writing centers in the 1970s and forward. Due to the exponentially increasing numbers of college students in all fields of study, writing assistance became more urgent for incorporating and accommodating those students (Boquet, 1999). Moreover, in the middle of the 1970's, the poor writing skills of college graduates were harshly criticized, foretelling a dark future for literacy in the U.S. This literacy crisis highlighted the importance of the writing center and its role in overcoming such challenges (Waller, 2002).

Thus, writing centers were actually reborn in the 1970s (Boquet, 2008; Carino, 1995). Writing Centers, at many colleges, began offering one-to-one writing tutoring to their students. During that period, writing centers and writing professionals were called on to help remediate the underprepared students; simultaneously, composition was restoring its status as an important academic discipline (Carino, 1995). Accordingly, writing center profession witnessed some "trickle-down of professional status" (Gillespie & Lerner, 2008, p. 146). Some of the writing

center directors, according to Gillespie and Lerner (2008), were at the same time faculty members or administrative staff, an idea that ensured stability for them and future for their writing centers.

Since its inception, the writing center encountered many failures and successes. The mission of the writing centers was to provide writing assistance for underprepared students (Carino, 1996). However, the writing center, at that time, was often considered by many instructors, professionals, and even students as a fix-it shop where students simply go just to "fix" and correct their writing (Harris, 1988). Consequently, writing centers were often not given considerable attention; most of them were placed in the basements and neglected areas. According to Boquet & Lerner (2008), underprepared students used to go to writing centers in order to receive one-on-one writing assistance. Nevertheless, in the 1980s, writing centers became much more popular and they witnessed great attention from faculty, university administrators, and writing professionals (Boquet and Lerner, 2008). Writing center directors began to establish local and national professional organizations. For the first time, two major journals were published: The Writing Lab Newsletter founded by Harris in 1978 and The Writing Center Journal, WCJ, founded by Brannon and North in 1980 (p. 171).

North (1984) published an article, "The Idea of the Writing Center." This article was a turning point in the writing center pedagogy. North changed the picture and the misconception about the writing center as a "fix-it shop"; he stressed the fact that the writers themselves should be changed not their writings. Boquet and Lerner argued "that no article about writing centers has been invoked more frequently to identify, justify, and legitimize the work that writing centers do (or hope to do) in their institutions" (Boquet & Lerner, 2008, p. 171). North's article has become the major reference for writing center theory and practice for any scholar. His article

created a paradigm shift in the writing center pedagogy. Boquet and Lerner (2008) viewed North's article as an inspiration for all writing center's educators, tutors, directors, or compositionists, "North's 'Idea' has been invoked more frequently than any other piece of writing center scholarship in the pages of the WCJ (Writing Center Journal), and the numbers confirm this notion" (p. 175). North dispelled many of the misconceptions and mischaracterization about the writing center; he claimed that the real role of the writing center is to produce better writers not better papers: "Our job is to produce better writers not better writing" (North, 1984, p. 438).

Thus, the purpose of North's article "The Idea of the Writing Center" was to create a "new identity for writing centers in the eyes of the English faculty who had been mischaracterizing these spaces as basement fix- it shops" (Boquet & Lerner, 2008, p. 177). North tried to depict a new dignified image for the writing center and assigned it with a new professionalized job to "produce better writing." Since North published his article about the writing center pedagogy, most of the writing centers have been currently adopting North's concepts and ideas about the writing center and its role in academia. He has been cited in most of the articles and publications made by writing center theorists as the pioneer who changed the course of the writing center by delineating the real mission of this center as a place for reshaping ideas and producing "better writing."

Some educational programs contributed to the spread of writing centers. For instance, in the 1990s, many English departments initiated programs including Writing Across the Curricula, WAC and Writing in the Discipline, WID; therefore, these programs encouraged colleges and other academic institutions to pay greater attention to setting up new writing centers in order to incorporate more students in all fields of study not in English composition only (Waller, 2002). Harris (2000) claimed that the WAC program was the main motivation behind the growth of

writing centers in North America. Consequently, writing centers were no longer marginalized academic institutions for remediation of the low-achievers' writings. Instead, writing centers became a place for shaping minds, thoughts, and producing better writers (Davis, 2006).

By the beginning of the twenty first century, the writing center field has grown as a profession. Currently, writing center profession has two academic journals, an affiliated publisher, an international professional association, and a network of regional associations. In addition, there are many writing centers on numerous campuses helping graduate and undergraduate students in all fields. As an integral part of most universities and academic institutions, writing centers have had a major growth and development. They now have a more considered position in academia.

Davis (2006) viewed the writing center as a place where tutors should help students unload their burdens, shift priorities, improve styles, restore self-confidence, reshape their minds, and become better writers. He emphasized that students should leave the writing center with a strong belief that "The bear is no longer a problem" figuratively referring to any challenges which face those students concerning the writing process. Smoothly and explicitly, Davis provided tutors with plenty of advice about the relationship between a tutor and a writer/student, which should be based on mutual respect, affection, and understanding of the real needs of the writing center's students. Such tutor-tutee relationship that Davis advocated may make the writing center a "home" for all the staff and students as well.

Davis (2006) was clear in his objectives which are mainly focused on the writing center as "home" for the students, a convenient place, and something different from the other premises of the university or any other academic setting. In addition, according to Davis, tutors should deal with the writing center's clientele as humans not as machines without emotions. Such

concepts added something new to the field of peer tutoring and writing center pedagogy which is the human side which cannot be separated from the process. Davis added an emotional perspective to the idea that the writing center should be a place for collaborative work based on an egalitarian relationship between tutors and students.

Statement of the Problem

The issue of the directive and non-directive approaches used in writing center tutorials, especially as it relates to ESL writers, has been given much attention (Harris & Silva, 1993; Harrison & Krol, 2007; Jones, Garaldo, Li, & Lock, 2006; Thonus, 2004; Williams, 2004; Williams & Severino, 2004). Many researchers emphasized that ESL students may benefit from the directive approach much more than the non-directive approach (Blau & Hall, 2002; Jones et al., 2006; Schultz, 2010; Shamoon & Burns, 1995; Thonus, 2001, 2004; Williams, 2004; Williams & Severino, 2004). During writing center training course, tutors are encouraged to use a non-directive, collaborative approach, whether the tutees are native or ESL students. In addition, tutors are encouraged to establish a good egalitarian relationship with their tutees by building rapport with them from the beginning, lowering the affective filter, and mitigating the tense atmosphere of authoritarian tutor-tutee relationship. Most writing center directors advise their tutors to urge the tutees, especially ESL students, to collaboratively participate in the tutorials.

Many writing centers training courses advise tutors to use non-directive strategies such as asking questions about the tutees' goals, overarching ideas, intended meanings, and audience in order to elicit some information about the piece of writing they are working on (Murphy, 2008). Accordingly, tutors may ask ESL tutees to clarify their ideas orally or they may ask ESL tutees questions about some structural components, style, or suitable tone. Some of these questions

about grammar, organization, and content are often difficult questions for any English language learner to answer. ESL students may not have sufficient knowledge about English writing skills; accordingly, they may not be able to respond to these questions themselves even with information-eliciting questions from the tutors. Therefore, tutors usually take a more direct approach in tutoring sessions with ESL students. Consequently, the problem is that some scholars and instructors consider this approach as a type of plagiarism done at the writing center. Ryan and Zimmerelli (2010) stated that "Directly marking the writer's paper could be misinterpreted by faculty as plagiarism." (p. 80). Some faculty think that such tutoring is quite similar to editing and proofreading. Clark & Healy (1996)   maintained that:

> The ethics of writing center assistance have always been subject to question. Even at the present time, when more writing centers exist than ever before, colleagues from a variety of academic departments continue to express concern that the sort of assistance students receive may be inappropriate, perhaps even verging on plagiarism. (p. 31).

However, tutors, in fact, do not just edit nor do they proofread the student's papers (Harris, 1986); instead, tutors help tutees identify their errors, correct them, and become better writers rather than producing better papers. Tutors are supposed to explain and model any proposed changes, i.e., they are expected to show their second language writers a pattern to follow without imposing on them (Myers, 2003). Although tutors try to apply the recommended non-directive approach, they soon find out that this approach is not always effective. Both tutors and ESL tutees express frustration about the implementation of the non-directive approach especially with the lower-order concerns like grammar and mechanics. Some tutors may break the rules and tend to use the directive approach with ESL students to mitigate the tense atmosphere of the tutorial. According to Hall (2013), some international students are asked by their instructors to visit the writing center for editing and proofreading their papers. "Of course, most writing centers' philosophies discourage such sentence-level tutoring to avoid 'proofreading' requests. But the

international students, often driven by their professors' remarks and grades, are likely going to insist on such intensive help." (p. 8). Consequently, this type of collaborative, non-directive tutorial is sometimes viewed by tutors and tutees as frustrating, ineffective, and time-consuming (Henning, 2001).

Thus, this study was designed to examine the perceptions of tutors, tutees and instructors about the role of the writing center tutorials. It was especially designed to determine the effective ways of tutoring ESL students who come from culturally and linguistically different backgrounds. The study was also conducted to investigate which type of tutorial is more effective, directive vs. non-directive approaches, for ESL students. In addition, this study examined the impact of ESL instruction on writing center tutors. The researcher assumed that the prior knowledge of ESL instruction can help tutors better understand the ESL students' academic, cultural, and linguistic needs. Most writing center tutors are recruited from the English department that includes creative writing, composition, and literature, while tutors who have any prior knowledge of ESL pedagogy are to some extent rare at the writing centers. This study aimed to investigate the impact of the writing center on improving ESL students' academic and professional writings. The researcher tried to illustrate how an efficient writing tutor dealing with English Language Learners, ELLs, should be mindful of the challenges facing any ESL writer still learning English. One of the important aspects of this study was the assumption that writing center's tutors do not have to be fluent of the student's first language; they are supposed to identify to what extent the first language may have an influence on the second language learning as well as the academic writing process. ESL students may find various difficulties in comprehending a different linguistic corpus, with different types of grammatical elements which are not similar or common in their mother tongue. Accordingly, it is necessary that tutors should be aware that knowing and recognizing the major

meeting and conflicting points between both languages-L1 and L2-can help better accommodate those students whose native language is not English.

Research Questions

The study has four major research questions as follows:

1- What are ESL college students' and writing center tutors' perceptions of the effectiveness of writing center tutorials?

2- How do instructors perceive the impact of writing center tutorials on ESL students' academic writing?

3- Do tutors and ESL tutees have differences in terms of the general perceptions of directive and nondirective tutoring approaches?

4- Do writing center tutors need to receive more specialized ESL instruction and training to better assist ESL students and understand their academic needs?

Statement of Purpose

This study examines the effectiveness of writing center tutorials on improving ESL students' academic and professional writings at a Mid-South university. The study explores ESL college students' perceptions and attitudes about the writing center, how they can take advantage of its tutorials, and the impact of such tutorials on their academic writing, as well as the tutors' attitudes toward improving their profession in order to better help ESL college students. Although there are many studies conducted on ESL students at the U.S. writing centers, there are relatively few studies investigating the perceptions of all writing center's stakeholders: tutors, ESL tutees, directors, and university instructors of writing skill improvement that can take place in ESL students' academic and professional writings due to writing center tutorials. The literature review discusses several recent studies that explore the rise of writing centers in the

U.S. and suggests that the collaborative, non- directive approach, the most common approach at writing centers, may not be the best tutoring approach with English language learners. The literature will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2. In addition, this study investigates the impact of the prior knowledge of ESL pedagogy on writing center tutors' understanding of the academic, cultural, and linguistic needs of ESL college students at the university in which the study is conducted.

Significance of the Study

Previous studies showed that both tutors and students have a positive perception toward the writing center tutorials. However, few studies have examined the effectiveness of writing center tutorials in particular with ESL students in an American academic institution from an ESL pedagogical perspective. It can be said that non-directive vs. directive approaches with ESL students have been discussed by many researchers (Powers, 1993; Thonus, 1999, 2001, 2002; Williams, 2005; Williams & Severino, 2004). However, no researcher has conducted a study, using a mixed methods research, on ESL graduate students that explores the perceptions of all stakeholders: students, tutors, and more importantly faculty members, the real audience of the students' writings, about whether they can find any improvement in their ESL students' academic writing. The importance of this study lies in the fact that it includes all parties of the writing center in one research and from and ESL perspective. Most of the previous studies focused on the perceptions of tutors and tutees toward the writing center's tutorials and neglected, or at least sidelined, the perceptions of the faculty.

Moreover, this study investigates the importance that writing center tutors' training should include ESL pedagogy in order to help tutors better understand the academic needs of the culturally and linguistically diverse students whose numbers have exponentially increased at

U.S. schools, colleges, and other academic institutions during the recent years. According to this study, the writing center must assess ESL college students' needs and assist them to make sense of their work in order to convey their message to their audience. For instance, the writing center can help some students of other cultures, ethnic backgrounds, or different dialect speakers who may be influenced by their cultures or backgrounds which are clearly reflected in their writings. Consequently, tutors should, through constant ESL training, understand such cultural divides and linguistic variations and try as much as they can to help ESL students better present their writings without being isolated from the mainstream or being oriented to a specific culture.

Thus, this study emphasizes that the writing center has to pay more attention to ESL graduate students' cultural difference and native language influence which may positively or negatively affect their English writing skills. For instance, ESL students may be influenced by their first language. This impact of the native language can be evident in their writing; therefore, the role of tutors is to pay attention to such differences in rhetorical choices since some ESL students may be confused between their first language and English rhetorical conventions. Such confusion may be reflected in writing of even the intermediate and advanced learners. Consequently, this study can attract ESL students' attention to the importance of the writing center as the best academic place in which novice and professional ESL writers can find some scaffolding to write correct English that is understandable to American readers.

Assumptions of the Study

The researcher has some assumptions of this study as follows:

1. The participants' perceptions are indicative of the reality of the writing center. Tutors, ESL tutees, and university professors will frankly and honestly express their views about the role of the writing center tutorials and the effectiveness of these tutorials,

2. The current writing center tutorials are effective and helpful to native English speaking, NES students. However, ESL tutorials are still unsuccessful and do not fit ESL tutees' academic writing needs,

3. The non-directive tutoring approach commonly used in the current writing centers is not the best tutoring mode for ESL students. Accordingly, tutors should utilize their discretion to specify the best mode of tutoring,

4. The current writing center tutors are insufficiently trained to accommodate ESL tutees. Hence, tutors need to receive some ESL training before tutoring ESL clientele.

Delimitations

The term of delimitations means what the researchers have chosen to leave out of their study and the reason behind leaving out that issue of the study. This dissertation purposefully excluded the variables of gender, age, and ethnic backgrounds as major factors positively or negatively affecting pedagogy. Instead, this dissertation focused on the role of effective writing center tutorials as a means of writing skill improvement. It is an exploratory study in which the researcher investigated the perceptions of tutors, ESL tutees, and instructors about the role of the writing center in improving the academic and professional writings of ESL writers.

Limitations of the Study

A limitation means the potential weakness in a research and the reason behind such weakness. The first limitation of this study can be attributed to the lack of a comparison between NES and ESL students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the writing center tutorials in order to better understand the real differences between the two groups and to determine the best tutoring methods and strategies to be followed with each category. The second limitation of this study is that this research assumed that there is a difference between tutors who have previous knowledge with ESL pedagogy and those who do not without making such a comparison between the two groups. Finally, the third limitation of this study is the inability to generalize the results to other ESL student populations. The results of this study may not be representative of other writing centers in the U.S.

Definitions

Bilingual: The ability to speak two languages.

EFL,   English as a foreign language: this concept is used in a country where English is taught and learned but it is not the native language of that country.

ELL, English language learner: A more general term.

Error: It occurs when learners don't know the correct form or they have the wrong knowledge or lack of knowledge.

ESL, English as a second language: this term is used in a country where English is the primary language like the U.S.A.

Fluency: The ability to speak or write easily and smoothly.

Fossilization: It occurs when an error becomes a habit of speech, and the learner's language becomes automatic before it turns to be native like.

HOCs: Higher-Order Concerns

LEP: Limited English Proficient

LOCs: Later-Order Concerns

L1: The first language, native language, and mother tongue.

L2: The second language, target language, and the language learned after acquisition of the first

language.

Language acquisition: The process by which children naturally and undeliberately learn their

native language.

Language learning: The process by which people deliberately learn a language through formal

instruction. Adult students taking English classes are learning the language, while

children acquiring it when born in a country speaking that language.

Mistake: An incorrect usage occurring when language learners know the correct form but don't

use it. Mistakes are usually like a slip of the tongue or typos.

NES: Native English Speaker

NNS: Non-native Speaker

OWL: Online Writing Lab.

Peer tutors: Graduate or undergraduate students or writing professionals who are proficient

writers or have an experience with writing pedagogy.

Target language: The language one is trying to learn or use (besides the L1).

TEFL: Teaching English as a foreign language.

TESL: Teaching English as a second language.

TESOL: Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. Refers to both the field of

study and the professional association.

Variety: A term used by linguists often instead of dialect, argot, jargon, slang, and so on. For

example, in the United States, Southern dialect, Black English Vernacular, and Standard

American English are all varieties of English.

WAC: Writing across curricula

WCJ: The Writing Center Journal.

WID: Writing inside discipline.

WLN: Writing Lab Newsletter.

Organization of the Study

The study consists of five chapters. Chapter one contains the introduction, theoretical

framework, history of the writing center, statement of the problem, research questions,

statement of purpose, significance of the study, delimitations and limitations of the study,

definitions, and organization of the study. Chapter two provides a review of the literature. It

explores the purpose of the study, the role of the writing center, observation at the writing

center, the writing center as a workplace, Peer Response and Peer Tutoring, constructivism and

writing center tutoring, directive vs. non-directive approach at the writing center, power and

authority at the writing center, ESL students at the writing center, second language acquisition

theory, differences between the NES and ESL writers, directive vs. non-directive approaches

with ESL writers, tutors-ESL tutees' interaction, cultural beliefs related to ESL writing, first

language interference, and plagiarism. Chapter three describes the research methodologies. The

chapter includes the research design, the research questions, the participants, the role of the

researcher, data collection, methods of surveying and interviewing, data analysis, and data

coding. Chapter four presents the findings of the study. The chapter includes an analysis of the

data collected and the emerging themes. Finally, chapter five concludes with a summary of the

major findings of the dissertation. The chapter discusses the emergent themes of the study. This

chapter concludes with general recommendations for writing center researchers and

recommendations for future research.

Chapter II Literature Review

Introduction

This study examines the role of the writing center tutorials and their effectiveness on improving ESL students' academic and professional writings at a Mid-South university. The study explores ESL college students' perceptions and attitudes about the writing center: how writing center tutorials help in improving their writing skills. In addition, the study investigates the tutors' attitudes toward improving their profession in order to better help ESL college students. Moreover, this study is one of the relatively few research studies investigating the instructors' perceptions toward writing skill improvement which can take place in the ESL students' academic and professional writings due to the writing center tutorials. This literature review discusses many studies that explored the history of writing centers in the U.S. and suggests that the collaborative, non- directive approach, the most commonly adopted approach at writing centers, may not be the best tutoring approach with English language learners. Consequently, this study investigates the impact of the prior knowledge of ESL pedagogy on writing center tutors' understanding of the academic, cultural, and linguistic needs of the ESL college students at the university in which the study was conducted. Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate the role of the writing center in improving ESL college students' academic writing. Based on the assumptions and structural framework of the Constructivist Theory, this research presents a cognitive framework and offers a model for academic environment in which English language learners, ELLs, can be easily assisted to improve their academic writing taking advantage of the tutorials offered at the writing center.

The Role of the Writing Center in the U.S.

Some college students whether they are native English speakers or ESL students encounter some challenges in writing especially when they are required to do professional writing such as writing for conferences, journals, or any type of academic writing. Some students may have problems with writing of regular assignments in their classes. Such challenges face many college students because the writing process requires sophisticated language skills which need much more training, practice, and constant reading in all fields of knowledge (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005). Here comes the role of the writing center as an institution that can provide writing assistance to all students including second language writers. Nevertheless, some students mistakenly think that the writing center is for the international students or the less proficient students; however, based on the studies done in the field and some theories of writing center profession, the writing center can also assist undergraduate or graduate students and faculty members relying on the fact that the role of the writing center is not editing, proofreading, or cleaning papers from grammatical errors. Instead, writing center can help with brainstorming, organization, style, and word choice. Thus, writing center is a place for producing better writers not better papers (North, 1984).

North (1984) disagreed with many scholars in his view toward the writing center. While many theorists, scholars, writing professionals, and directors of writing centers thought that the major role of a writing center is to deal with the mechanics of writing. In other words, they thought that the writing center was to clean a piece of writing from any grammatical errors. North contended that the writing center is the place to produce better writers not better papers "Our job is to produce better writers not better writing" (p. 438). He believed that the writers themselves not their texts should be reshaped, changed, and affected by the writing center's

instruction. He stressed the idea that any plan of action to be followed by a tutor should be student-centered. North argued that writing centers should be "student-centered," and tutors should also "begin where the writers are, not where we told them to be" (442).

Furthermore, according to North, there should be a good relationship and cooperation between the tutors and the writing center clientele in order to familiarize the students with the writing center's major role and policy. In addition, North, in his essay, emphasized that a successful writing center has to have good public relations between its staff and academia members. This can be easily done through teachers/students conferences, presentations, and writing workshops explaining to the instructors and students how the writing center works, and other efforts that can make the writing center reach out to its clientele.

Tutor's Role

Murray (1989) described the editors he knew as overly rigid and expected writers to jump through hoops of conventional prose. He added that editors may usurp the writer's ownership by completely changing his text. Unlike Murray's picture of the editor, the writing center tutor is a peer, writing consultant, a collaborator, and facilitator who helps "produce better writers rather than better writing." It is clear that the writing center tutor's role is to help the writers make their writing to be more academically sound, properly addressing their audience, and fully convincing to the readers. The tutor's role is not an editor who is rigid with the writers, the traditional picture usually depicted for the editor, on the contrary, a tutor is a guide who helps the writers get on the right track. According to the current writing centers' policies, no authority should be practiced by the tutor over the writer, instead, a good relationship of trust and partnership should be established by the writing center tutor (Davis, 2006). A good tutor should be helpful, supportive, and trustworthy, she should not be patronizing, authoritarian, nor adversarial. Conversely, a tutor

has to share the writer's ideas, participate in reorganizing the latter's thoughts, and pay good attention to the writer's intended goals without stifling the writer's voice.

An efficient writing center tutor should keep a balance between praising the good points made by the writer and reasonable and logical critiquing of the missing points in order to create a real partnership between the tutor and the writer. Tutors should bear in mind that meaningless praise can be conducive to the writer's mistrust of tutoring. Writers, as human beings, are usually sensitive of constant criticism and can sense false praise (Atwell, 1998); instead, tutees need honest feedback from their tutors. In addition, an efficient tutor is that person who succeeds in building rapport between her tutees and herself from the beginning after informing them of the real roles which can be played by a writing center. To strengthen such a tutor-tutee collaborative relationship, tutors should be collegial with their tutees. A writing center tutor has to stop being an authoritarian editor.

The tutor as a researcher. In addition, the current writing centers encourage tutors to act as a researcher unlike the traditional tutor who is thought to be just an editor helping the tutees do their writing assignments. As researchers, tutors can generate knowledge by discussing specific topics with the writers about their papers (Gillespie and Lerner, 2008). The tutors may analyze certain patterns in the writers' papers, and then they may discuss such analysis with their colleagues at the writing centers. Tutors sometimes discuss similarities, differences, or other key issues facing the center's work. The tutors can share such mutual issues and collaboratively work on them to achieve better results. Gillespie and Lerner (2008) believed that "all writing center workers—including directors and tutors, whether undergraduate, graduate, or professional—see themselves as engaging in an ongoing process of research." (p.128). Tutors may ask themselves about the real advantages of the writing center for the writers, how to improve their sessions, or

how to help writers enhance their writing skills and how to produce better writers rather than producing better papers.

During tutoring sessions, tutors may ask information-eliciting questions to tutees to enrich their papers and focus their themes in the correct direction. The tutors can be better researchers by probing the tutees' papers in order to reach their intended message and help them reach their readers more easily. The tutors' feedback on the writers' papers may help the writers expand on their ideas to achieve their goals appropriately. Thus, tutors can actively play the role of researchers at the writing centers.

Observation at the Writing Center

According to Gillespie and Lerner (2008), observation is the best and first step for tutors toward a professional and well-achieved tutoring. They believe that good tutoring begins with good observation, since the observant tutor can gain experience through the discussion between the tutor and the writer about a certain topic. Moreover, from such a learning experience, the observer can learn from the teaching moments she experiences. What the observer watches and learns in a writing center will be easily internalized in her mind as assets for future tutoring. It can be said that observation is a significant stage of perception in which an observer absorbs several techniques, methods, and approaches related to the writing center and the writing process (Gillespie and Lerner, 2008). Afterwards, she digests such new techniques and then, she can make good use of them in her future tutoring tasks based on her previous experiences in the writing center. Gillespie and Lerner provided two beneficial examples of tutorials in which efficient tutors could successfully manage their tutoring sessions in order to better assist their tutees. The first example emphasized that the tutor helped raise his tutee's self-confidence preparing her to be a future good writer. He asked his writer to read the text aloud, justifying his

request. Finally, he established the writer's role to interpret the book, make changes, and clarify her points. In the second example, the tutor began with familiarizing the writer with the writing center's rules by filling out a form having some information about the center and its policy. Similarly, he asked for reading aloud of the text justifying such a technique to be the best one for detecting any irregularities. Thus, it can be said that good observation equals good tutoring.

The Writing Center as a Workplace

Ryan and Zimmerelli (2010) mentioned a lot of advice helping a tutor be a good, efficient, more professional, and outstanding person. They strongly encouraged tutors to be courteous with their writing center colleagues and clientele. One of the most important qualities of a good tutor is showing respect for tutees, their schedules, the colleagues, and the writing center's policies. In addition, Ryan and Zimmerelli ascertained that a good tutor should try to build rapport with writers keeping a good balance between lowering the affective filter and preserving the atmosphere of a serious teaching situation.

However, Ryan and Zimmerelli (2010) strongly discouraged tutors from criticizing teachers' methods, techniques, or their way of grading. Such critique may be conducive to some potential conflicts between a student and teacher over mistakenly anticipated grades by tutors. Ryan & Zimmerelli (2010) contented that:

> Some writers may ask a question like "Is this paper good enough for a B?, and others may pressure you to suggest a grade. Accommodating such a request is asking for trouble. Assigning grades is a subjective matter that requires experience and training, and it is the teacher's job, not the tutor's. (p. 3).

Furthermore, any negative comment on a teacher's personality, teaching style, or anything related to classroom management may produce negative consequences or destroy the good image of the writing center as an educational institution and depict the tutor as unprofessional for passing misjudgments.

Employing International Students in the Writing Center

Some writing centers recruit their tutors from international students who are on graduate assistantship. This graduate assistantship requires those students to work about 20 hours for their departments. Those international students, according to many scholars, bring good experiences to their academic institutions especially when they work in writing centers and assist their international peers. For instance, Balestar (2012) emphasized the necessity of recruiting international tutors if possible since they can have the potentials and knowledge of successful tutors dealing with ESL/international students: "Besides offering what every good tutor does— dedication, talent, and knowledge about writing— international tutors contribute something more to the center: they bring a different perspective and serve as resources for knowledge about language." (p. 7). In addition, Balestar (2012) believed that some of the international tutors "bring a new view of schooling or literacy learning or a new way to approach academic genres." (p. 7). Furthermore, Williams and Severino asserted that international tutors can better assist the writing center tutorials more than NES tutors because "while American tutors may be good writers, they sometimes lack the metalanguage of grammar to explain what learners of English as a foreign language require." (Balestar, 2012, p.7).

The Writing Center is the Last Best Place

As Davis (2006) said in his article; it is the last best place in academia for all students whatever their races are, whatever their native language is, and regardless of any differences that can be distinctive among students. A good tutor is that person who is "color blind," as the author put it, about such racial diversities, and keeps a good atmosphere of unbiased writing center. The writing center should be a place in which all races, cultures, languages, origins, and even ideologies should meet together and respect one another. This concept of the writing center

adopted by Davis represented the real cornerstone of a peaceful writing center which assists to fully acculturate students, creating a successful academic community. The writing center, according to Davis, should be a constructive factor within a new multicultural education and a pluralistic society. This is the good example of a productive diversity occurring within a well managed writing center in order to incorporate all students with their various backgrounds.

Peer Response and Peer Tutoring

Both peer response and peer tutoring are student-centered approaches that are based on collaboration as a powerful learning instrument in order to promote interaction between reader and writer (Harris, 1992). However, both still have some differences regarding perspectives, goals, and assumptions. For instance, in peer tutoring, the tutor is a professional person who has the ability to coach, critique, and help tutees better polish their writing to sound more academic. Although tutors do not, and should not, practice the teacher's role in fixing a paper, they should collaboratively work with writers to enhance their writing skills and become better writers rather than producing better papers. Peer tutors are completely different from "same-level peers" regarding the environment where the writing process takes place. The writing center tutorial is different from that of the peer response. The writing center is more academic and more organized, and it is run according to some rules within a time framework. Consequently, peer tutoring has been employed in U.S. academic institutions since the 1970s now to the extent that it has become an important component of most U.S. writing center profession.

Concerning goals, peer response like tutoring has "well-articulated goals". Peer response effectively improves critical thinking, organization, and appropriateness of writing (Harris, 1992). It helps increase the opportunity of revision, thus, decreasing apprehension. Some researchers claimed that many teachers endorse peer response since it exposes students to a

variety of styles in writing and better motivates them to collaboratively participate in this process. Therefore, it is more like a give-and-take relationship which better helps consolidate the sense of community. On the contrary, in peer tutorial, student responds only to his/her own writing, answers all the questions of his/her tutor about his/her piece of writing, and collaboratively shares with the tutor the opportunity of rewriting the work.

In addition, in writing center tutorial, setting is designed by the writing center's staff; the time is limited and scheduled prior to the session. While in peer response, the schedule is more open and flexible with no tensions over what should be fixed and left out, or such issues which may crop up between a writer and a tutor at the writing center. Moreover, Bruffee (1993) claimed that tutees will play an active role in the tutorials by responding effectively to the peer tutors who adopt a non-directive, collaborative approach. Finally, the biggest difference between peer response and peer tutoring is that tutors are discouraged from making directive comments as what happens with response group in which directive methods are more commonly used. At the writing center, tutors cannot make corrections themselves, instead, they should help tutees make the corrections without any intervention. Hence, this is the real sense of collaborative atmosphere and cooperative work which prevail the writing center (Harris, 1992).

Constructivism and Writing Center Tutoring

Constructivism is a theory explaining how students learn. According to constructivism, students construct their own knowledge by experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences. The best thing about this theory is that when students encounter the same experience they had before, they make a connection between that previous experience and what they currently have at hand (Vygotsky, 1978). Thus, students get involved and become active creators of their own knowledge. In the educational setting, the constructivist view of learning

necessitates encouraging students to use active techniques, real world problem solving, to create more knowledge and then to reflect on what they have learned.

Vygotsky is one of the strongest proponents of learning as a social act (Cole, John-Steiner, Scribner, & Souberman, 1978). According to Vygotsky (1978), students can challenge any developmental stages with the help of others including their teacher and their classmates. Vygotsky (1978) used the term "zone of proximal development, ZPD" to mean "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86).

Scaffolding, a term used by Jerome Bruner in 1978, is always associated with the term ZPD to describe situations when learners are actively involved in a supportive dialogue that helps them collectively reach higher levels of performance than they could do on their own. Scaffolding is always used in language learning in order to mean the teacher's intervention to support language learners to understand and manage the proper use of a certain language. There are two types of scaffolding: external and internal scaffolding. The external scaffolding occurs through the exploration of learning tasks by breaking them down into basic components while internal scaffolding emphasizes the learner's self-regulation during the knowledge acquisition (Kaufman, 2004). Kaufman (2004) viewed that a teacher has to be able to seize the learning moment and provide suitable scaffolding (Lantolf & Beckett, 2009). Accordingly, being a source of meaningful learning interventions, the teacher is important for students' knowledge development. It is worth mentioning that when a student, with scaffolding, can master the task at hand, such scaffolding will no longer be needed, and this student can then do the task required independently. Wood et al. (1976) offered the following definition of scaffolding: "Those

elements of the task that are initially beyond the learner's capacity, thus permitting him to concentrate upon and complete only those elements that are within his range of competence" (p. 90).

Several theorists and researchers including Oxford (1997) asserted the existence of a good relationship between collaborative learning and social constructivism. Oxford (1997) believed that collaborative learning takes place within "knowledge communities" in which the learner is contained through the acculturation process (p. 444). Oxford clearly demonstrated the role of the collaborative learning in L2 language learning environment based on Vygotsky's theory, according to which, the teacher is the "facilitator or guide or provider of assistance" for the student's cognitive development (p.448). Thus, scaffolding helps encourage language development by deepening the roots of knowledge into the learner's mind. Once the learner masters such knowledge, there will be no need for scaffolding.

Thus, the relationship between social constructivism and writing center tutoring is an inextricable one. The writing center tutoring is mainly based on collaborative learning that is the real essence of constructivism. It is crystal clear that writing center's staff strongly adopt the non-directive, collaborative approach in most U.S. writing centers (Bishop, 1992; Carino, 2003; Clark & Healy, 1996; Corbett, 2008; Grimm, 1996; Hobson, 2001). According to this non-directive, collaborative approach, tutors are not teachers but facilitators, writing assistants, and peer guides who help the writers get on the right track. No authority should be practiced by the tutor over the writer, instead, a good relationship of trust and partnership should be established by the writing center tutor (Davis, 2006). Good tutors should be helpful, supportive, and trustworthy. They do not have to be patronizing, authoritarian, nor adversarial; conversely, tutors

have to share the writers' ideas, participate in reorganizing their writers' thoughts, and pay good attention to the writers' intended goals without stifling their voice.

Directive vs. Non-directive Approach at the Writing Center

There is a big debate at the writing center and among the specialists of writing center profession about the directive vs. non-directive approaches and which strategy of tutoring is more beneficial to students. For instance, Wilder (2016) stated that "In the culture of our program, as well in the larger culture, a major topic of conversation and debate is directive and nondirective tutoring styles." (p. 533). Some constructive theorists and writing center staff who strongly adopted the non-directive approach viewed that approach as the most useful model because it helps the students construct their own knowledge and keep the ownership of their writings. In addition, this approach is thought to better assist the writing center to "produce better writers not better writing," the mantra of North's idea about the real mission of the writing center. On the other hand, those theorists who adopt the directive approach believed that this model of tutoring is the best tutoring method especially with ESL clientele and low proficient writers. However, this directive mode of tutoring should be applied only with lower-order concerns not higher-order concerns.

Non-directive approach. For instance, Brooks (1991) believed that non-directive tutoring at the writing center is effective because students best learn through trial and error method with the assistance of their tutors. With non-directive approach, writers actively participate in the tutorial and collaborate with the tutors on the work. Tutors are trained to encourage students to participate: "Make sure that writers take ownership," "Trust the writers' ideas of the text," "Ask them their plans for revision," and "Keep hands off and let writers make corrections" (Gillespie & Lerner, 2008, p. 45). The term "collaborative" is sometimes

synonymous with "non-directive" (Brooks, 1991). While the term "directive" often has the implication of "authority."

Minimalist tutoring is another form of the non-directive tutoring model according to which tutors give the tutees the full opportunity to self-correct their writings without imposing on the tutees or taking away the right of ownership from them. The minimalist tutor's role is to help the writers do the work instead of doing it for them. Brooks (1991) contended that "When you 'improve' a student's paper, you haven't been a tutor at all; you've been an editor" (p. 2). According to Brooks (1991), the tutor's role is to assist writers to own their work, to correct their mistakes, and to produce better writers not better papers. This is one of the advantages of the minimalist tutor's role. Brooks (1991) stated that if a writer passively receives knowledge about writing from his tutor, he "may leave with an improved paper, but he will not have learned much" (p. 220). Thus, the scholars who adopted the non-directive approach viewed that a writer who comes to the writing center should get out with a good learning experience rather than an edited paper. They believed that when tutors detach themselves from the writing process and just stay at the borders of peer tutors, the writer will have the opportunity to reflect on writing, better know the errors, and have a good chance of self-correction. Therefore, minimalist tutoring is a strategy of assisting tutees to be good writers.

Another advantage of the minimalist tutoring of the nondirective approach is that the more the tutors keep their hands off and just guide the writing process of a paper rather than taking away the authorship from the real writers, the more active students will be in correcting and reshaping their writing on their own. Thus, students will be more self-dependent, taking the initiative instead of sitting passively listening to a writing session. This non-directive approach can develop a kind of collaborative relationship between tutors and tutees in which they are

equal peers rather than teachers and students. Furthermore, the more students get themselves involved in their papers, the more expertise they will obtain. However, this cannot be achieved without the non-directive strategy adopted by tutors. In this situation, tutees undergo a cognitive development in which they turn from novice into expert writers by constructing their own knowledge.

According to many writing center scholars, the non-directive way of tutoring is the best strategy that can be followed at the center since this tutoring approach can easily create a good, interactive, and collaborative atmosphere between tutors and their tutees. For instance, Bruffee (1993) believed that peer tutoring is important "because it provides an atmosphere of social context, a community in which normal discourse occurs among knowledgeable peers" (p. 424). He claimed that the tutor-tutee interaction has the same dynamics and features of that interaction from which knowledge emerges. Other researchers paid great attention to Bruffee's theories to develop a collaborative, non-directive tutoring approach as the best method of establishing a successful peer interaction. Bruffee (1993) contended that writing center tutees will take advantage of that peer tutor-tutee relationship to play an active role in the tutorial and that the collaborative, non-directive approach will better assist them. Furthermore, other theorists and writing center researchers viewed that using the non-directive, collaborative strategy gives the writers the opportunity to maintain a control of their writing process and succeed in self-editing their subsequent writings (Goeller and Kalteissen, 2008). Goeller and Kalteissen (2008) claimed that the tutor's role is not a "proofreader, fact-checker, editor, ghost writer, collaborator, or human thesaurus," but the real role of the writing center tutor is a writing assistant who collaboratively works with the student to better produce a future professional writer (p.7).

Directive approach. On the other hand, according to some other researchers, who strongly embrace directive approach, tutors may sometimes resort to using directive approach in order to draw the writers' attention to a specific erroneous element of their writings at the writing center (Blau & Hall, 2002; Henning, 2001; Myers, 2003; Thonus, 2002, 2004; Weigle & Nelson, 2004). Those researchers maintained that it is illogical and unacceptable if a tutor ignores a significant textual mistake while a student is not able to recognize such a mistake. Thus, the tutor's role is to draw the attention of the student and help him/her locate and fix that mistake.

Regardless of that big debate at the writing center about the best approach to be followed with the clientele, most current writing centers strongly adopt the non-directive, collaborative approach according to which both tutor and tutee work collaboratively. However, this non-directive approach in reality is viewed as ineffective by many writing center staff including tutors and directors as well as several tutees. Among those tutees are the English language learners, ELLs, who have specific academic needs due to their language and cultural differences. In other terms, the controversial point is if tutors refuse to use directive approaches and only resort to non-directive approaches, tutees, especially ESL students, may not find suitable and necessary scaffolding that they can get from tutors. In addition, Hall (2013) emphasized that "NNES students often have different needs from NES students--both in terms of the frequency and content of their visits." (p.5) He claimed that some international students are asked by their instructors to visit the writing center for editing and proofreading their papers "Of course, most writing centers' philosophies discourage such sentence-level tutoring to avoid 'proofreading' requests. But the international students, often driven by their professors' remarks and grades, are likely going to insist on such intensive help." (p. 8). Hence, this type of collaborative, non-

directive tutorial is sometimes viewed by tutors and tutees as frustrating, ineffective, and time-consuming (Henning, 2001).

  A balanced use of directive/non-directive approaches. Therefore, some recent theorists and researchers recommend a degree of flexibility when applying that approach in order to eradicate frustration and diffuse tutor-tutee tense relations (Blau & Hall, 2002; Carino, 2003; Cogie, 2001; Henning, 2001; Weigle & Nelson, 2004; Williams, 2004; Williams & Severino, 2004). Accordingly, tutors are encouraged and urged through their writing center's training to pay greater attention to higher order concerns, including thesis, content, audience, style, organization, and development, rather than lower order concerns including grammar, mechanics, punctuation, and formatting. Higher-order concerns can be defined as "the big issues in the paper, ones that aren't addressed by proofreading or editing for word choice" (Gillespie and Lerner, 2008, p. 35). According to Williams and Severino (2004), this careful attention given to higher order concerns purposefully aims to give the writer the full ownership of his/her writing, while lower-order concerns can be improved naturally through writing practice.

  Among the advocates of a balanced use of both directive and nondirective approaches are Truesdell, Corbett, Shamoon, and Burns. For instance, Truesdell (2007) claimed that "To help negotiate this complexity, tutors need to be able to utilize both directive and non-directive approaches." (p. 11). In addition, Shamoon and Burns (1995) maintained that not all authoritative tutoring is necessarily "authoritarian" in its nature, and not all directive tutoring is absolutely "dictatorial" (p. 233). According to Shamoon and Burns, writing center tutors, novice or professional, should not completely adhere to any prescriptive tutoring method. They claimed that directive instruction can be successfully practiced by tutors through modeling, i.e., tutors should look for patterns to show to their tutees and encourage them to master such repetitive

patterns. In addition, Shamoon and Burns cautioned that the trial and error practice may not

work well with a novice student who does not have writing skill or sufficient knowledge to

follow a certain pattern. Thus, Shamoon and Burns strongly supported a kind of flexibility in

tutoring especially with the novice writers. Corbett (2008) claimed that:

> This discussion of directive and nondirective tutoring suggests that if we keep our
> pedagogy flexible and attuned to one writer at a time, we may better anticipate when to
> urge a closer rethinking of content or claim, when to pay attention to conventions and
> mechanics, and how and when to do both (p. 153).

Corbett (2008) contended that "tutors can better serve (and be better served) if they are

encouraged to broaden their instructional repertoires" without any constant commitment to either

directive or nondirective approaches of tutoring (p. 149). Consequently, all these scholars

strongly stressed the necessity of a balanced use of both tutoring modes namely directive and

nondirective approaches in order to better assist tutees based on the tutorial situation ahead of the

tutor. Accordingly, tutors can easily use their personal judgment to specify a suitable and

appropriate mode of tutoring in the opportune moment of the tutorial and based on the language

proficiency of the tutees.

Power and Authority at the Writing Center

The issue of tutorial power and authority has been heatedly debatable among scholars.

This issue of power and authority is a part of the debate which is still unresolved among writing

center theorists, researchers, directors, tutors, and tutees about the directive vs. non-directive

approaches to be adopted at the writing center. In his paper, Carino (2003), tried to figure out

why writing centers have been uncomfortable with having both power and authority over writers.

He showed how they attempted to cover such terms in the egalitarian rhetoric of "peerness,"

Carino (2003) stressed the idea that centers can benefit by refiguring authority as a "usable

descriptor" in discussing tutorial work (p. 113). He demonstrated how badly tutors need to be

trained in a different manner in order to practice their power and authority without becoming authoritarian. Carino was not against a good relationship to be established between a tutor and a writer; however, he claimed that a certain hierarchical relation should be strongly constructed in the writing center to better help tutors properly and appropriately do their jobs. Thus, Carino argued that both tutor and writer should practice power and authority in a collaborative partnership.

However, Carino cautioned that a tutor might not be an expert on some field of study and she/he may mislead the writer to a wrong result. Consequently, he asserted that the non-directive approach would help here in assisting tutors to better guide their tutees. At any rate, tutors have to have a power and authority and must have some knowledge about the topic they are tutoring. Carino strongly believed that tutors should be mindful of the degree of power they must be allowed, when they can practice it, and how to do that in a hierarchical relationship without depriving their tutees of their rights. In addition, Carino viewed that writing centers should shoulder their responsibility of training their staff on how to practice the directive technique without the fear of plagiarism. They should teach tutors how to exercise power and authority without being authoritarian or dictating. The role of the writing centers, according to Carino, is to help produce better writers not better papers.

Accordingly, there is still some controversy among scholars about the nature of the writing center concerning autonomy, empowerment, and the real role of the writing center. Boquet (2008) presented some views including Grimm's regulatory model which constructs the writing center as a place responsible for the production of literacy. On the other hand, there is another model which takes the authority away from the writing center and puts it in the hands of the students. Boquet was much more inclined to Gere's model. Although it fosters the idea of

autonomy; such extracurricular configuration   sheds light on the politics of location. Boquet

may simply mean by such expression the institutional entities being involved in the process.

Thus, there is a shift between the early and today's writing center regarding role and method.

ESL Students at the Writing Center

The numbers of ESL students have exponentially increased in U.S. academic institutions

during the last two decades. These students, who represent most of the clientele at the writing

center, have been given more attention by the writing center pedagogy since the 1990s (Williams

& Severino, 2004). ESL writers have more different academic needs than those of native English

speaking students, NES (Harris & Silva, 1993; Powers and Nelson, 1995). For instance, Raimes

(1985) contended that low proficiency second language writers need "more of everything: more

time, more opportunity to talk, listen, read, and write in order to marshal the vocabulary they

need to make their own background knowledge accessible to them in their L2" (p. 55).

Hirschhorn (2007) argued that "ESL students present some of the greatest challenges for writing

tutors. These students are still in the process of mastering written English while at the same time

learning to write academic papers." (p. 2). She contended that some of those ESL students are

still "mastering the concepts behind the fundamental rhetorical conventions of the American

academy." (p. 2).

Therefore, writing center tutoring sessions involving ESL writers should be conducted

differently than those including NES students. More importantly, the tutors at the writing center

who assist the ESL students have to have some knowledge about ESL pedagogy in order to

better understand ESL students' cultural and academic needs. This study provided some

information about the differences between the writings of ESL students and those of NES

students, general classifications of ESL students and their needs and goals, approaches tutors can

take when tutoring ESL students and some strategies to use when working with ESL students. However, each student has different ways of learning; therefore, an efficient writing center tutor should be aware of the tutees and their cultural backgrounds, first language possible interference, and their academic needs to better accommodate them at the writing center.

Classifications of ESL students. To better understand writing center ESL clientele and their goals, Leki, the director of ESL at the University of Tennessee, categorized the writing center ESL students into three groups:

- Undergraduate students who graduated from U.S. high schools,

- International undergraduate students planning to return to their home countries after completing their studies,

- International graduate students or professionals. By understanding common characteristics and goals of these categories, writing center tutors can be more prepared to help ESL students.

Concerning the undergraduate students who graduated from U.S. high schools, they may be proficient English speakers who sound like native speakers due to the long period of time they spent in a native English speaking community. They may face some difficulty with the more formal writing style necessary for academic assignments; they may feel the need to assimilate to American customs and culture or they may reject U.S. culture altogether. In some situations, they might feel ostracized and isolated by being classified as ESL students.

The other group, the international undergraduate students planning to return to their home countries, usually chooses to come to the U.S. to pursue their studies rather than immigrating with their families for financial reasons or job opportunities. They do not often experience the social pressure that students who graduated from U.S. high schools have. Interestingly, they have

a strong desire to enhance their English language skills, so they may benefit more rapidly from the help offered at the writing center. They always have a higher likelihood of interference resulting from the different writing styles and conventions between ESL students' native languages and English, i.e., the L1 interference (Wang 2014). However, they may be unfamiliar with writing conventions in English academic writing. Therefore, they struggle to clearly make their point. Furthermore, they often worry about accuracy and neglect other concerns, such as content and organization.

As for international graduate students or professionals, they often write well in their technical fields of study. They have advanced disciplinary knowledge and are, therefore, expected to have higher level writing skills than they actually have. Moreover, they may be less proficient in spoken English and may be slower to develop greater proficiency than the other categories of ESL students because they are generally older. Some of them may lack rhetorical diction or the necessary vocabulary for their papers to make sense.

Theoretical Perspectives of Second Language Acquisition

Among the most important theories of second language acquisition that can be beneficial to the writing center was that theory developed by Krashen (1982) who suggested that a new language is acquired subconsciously as it is used for various purposes. He distinguished between the subconscious acquisition of language-acquiring and the conscious and deliberate learning of a certain language. Using the language in natural situations, language learners acquire any language naturally and purposefully (Krashen, 1983). For adult students, language can be learned as they read and write, as well as through listening and speaking. People learn a language when they receive oral or written messages they understand. These messages create a comprehensible

input that eventually leads to the comprehensible output of speaking and writing (Krashen, 1982).

According to Krashen, the process of second language acquisition goes by many stages most important of which is the Monitor Model including five basic hypotheses. This model comprises the following: the Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis, the Natural Order Hypothesis, the Monitor Hypothesis, the Input Hypothesis, and the Affective Filter Hypothesis. Krashen assumed that the second language learner has two independent means of developing knowledge of learning the second language: Acquisition and Learning. He viewed acquisition as a subconscious process of learning. The language is acquired when children are at an early age, while learning is a deliberate process of knowing a language which usually occurs with adults. In his Input Hypothesis, Krashen proposed that the more the input, whether read or heard, is comprehensible, the more the output will be comprehensible. He viewed that the Input Hypothesis as central to language acquisition. Based on that, the teacher's role is to help English Language Learners (ELLs) receive a comprehensible input in order to produce a comprehensible output.

The important issue of Krashen's hypothesis was that part in which he discussed the Affective Filter concept. Krashen stated that if the Affective filter is high, the level of anxiety will be accordingly high. This high Affective filter prevents language learning from developing. It is apparent that the more the teacher boosts the students' self-confidence, the more their feelings of inhibition and anxiety are lowered; therefore, they effectively and conveniently participate in class work. Some ELLs tend to be invisible or less active at class discussions to avoid being embarrassed or due to their lack of self-confidence. Some of them may think that their participation will be less important. The teachers' role is to urge those students to

participate by building rapport with them. Teachers may utilize the cultural backgrounds of those students as a common topic which can give ELLs the opportunity to talk about their home countries, native languages, and their cultures in order to encourage them to take part in class discussions.

Krashen's theory of Monitor Model can be beneficial to the writing center when tutoring ESL college students who are still learning English. The writing center tutor can play an active role similar to that of ESL teacher by applying Krashen's theory of acquiring a second language. Another important construct of Krashen's theory was the "comprehensible input": which stipulated that the more the input, which is internalized into the learner's mind, is comprehensible, the more the output of that learner will be comprehensible. Writing center tutors, understanding this construct, can better use it in their tutorials. Through their writing assistance to ESL students, tutors can internalize correct and proper forms and structures of English in their students' mind by showing them how to incorporate these correct language elements in their writing. Beattie (2005) made a good connection between Krashen's theory of "comprehensible input" and the writing center tutorial offered to ELLs. She explained that "ESL students develop their ability to use English through the process we did when we were children." (p. 11). Thus, writing center, according to Beattie, is "a linguistic environment; writers meet with other writers to discuss writing. We're chock-full of language! Thus, all we need to do with ESL students is provide that mysterious sounding 'comprehensible input'" She believed that "The first step to providing comprehensible input is to garner an understanding of what the student already comprehends." (p. 11).

A third significant component of Krashen's theory which can be employed at the writing center is the Affective Filter. According to Krashen, the more a non-threatening teaching

environment is established for ESL learners, the more active they will be. The writing center

tutors should, according to Krashen's hypothesis, lower the Affective Filter in order to build a

good rapport with their tutees especially ESL students who extremely need a non-threatening

tutoring environment. ESL writers can be invisible or less active if the Affective Filter is high;

consequently, ESL writers will give up their ownership right to the tutor and totally submit to the

authority of the tutor who will become an authoritarian editor.

Tseng (2009) introduced four of the major theories of second language acquisition that

can be utilized in the writing center in order to provide better tutorials. She intended to help

tutors better understand the second language learning process and know to what extent ESL

students face challenges with speaking, reading, or writing sound English. The theories presented

are: Behaviorist theory, Innatist theory, Cognitivist theory, and Interactionist theory. The

interactionist theory discussed how second language acquisition mainly occurs through

interaction between ESL learners and native speakers. This theory claimed that understanding is

necessary in L2 acquisition; however, the important thing is how to make the input

comprehensible. Some scholars think that simple vocabulary and grammatical forms may

enhance comprehensibility, however, ESL learners may not learn more advanced language

constructions. Tseng believed that through conversational modification between learners and

more proficient tutors, ESL students may improve their proficiency. Thus, writing center tutors

can take advantage of this theory by using interactional tactics such as checking comprehension,

requesting clarification, confirming meaning, self-repeating, and paraphrasing (Tseng, 2009).

Differences between ESL and NES Writing

ESL and NES writers may be similar in using the same strategies in writing; however,

ESL writers have greater difficulty revising and focus more on grammar and less on style (Leki,

1992). In general, some ESL writers plan less and spend more time understanding a prompt or assignment, consulting a dictionary, and struggling with vocabulary than NES writers do (Harris and Silva, 1993). In addition, ESL writing seems to be less complex in terms of sentence structure (Williams & Severino, 2004), vocabulary, and idiomatic expressions (Minett, 2009, p. 74) than NES writings (Brien 2004). In general, ESL writers often write shorter texts, make more syntactic errors, and receive lower scores. ESL writers are still developing their second language; therefore, their lexical and syntactical production is more erroneous than their NES peers' (Myers, 2003). Concerning language, ESL texts, style, and tone, are less formal than those of their NES peers, (Silva & Brice, 2004). Besides, ESL writers sometimes feel confused about their writings and need some feedback from native speakers (Cogie, 2006). Based on that, using non-directive approach with ESL writers, especially the beginner and intermediate English learners, may be ineffective and time-consuming. According to Harris and Silva (1993), ESL writers may not have the same language sense and intuition of a native speaker to recognize and identify the irregular or erroneous patterns of a foreign language without its native speakers' assistance (p. 529). In general, there is a difference between second language writers and NES writers. Matsuda and Silva (1997) contended that ESL writers are different from NES writers. They believed that the second language writing is distinct and the needs of second language writers are neglected in higher education.

The biggest difference between ESL and NES writers which may be reflected in writing is the knowledge of both the American culture and the academic conventions followed in the U.S. Harris (1997) claimed: "While contrastive rhetoric has helped us identify some of what nonnative students may need to learn about English, it is also useful to uncover what they feel is important..." (p. 216). According to Harris (1997), the rhetorical patterns are among the major

differences between NES and ESL students. She contended that the writing center tutors should better understand cross-cultural rhetoric because each culture has its specific aspects which may have some influence on its language and its speakers' production. For instance, American writing style pays great attention to the audience-readers, on the contrary, some of the Asian languages are more content-oriented and the readers have to decipher what the writer implicitly intends to say. All such variations between American culture with its Anglo-American style of writing on one hand and the other elements of the other cultures on the other hand should be paid much attention by the writing center tutors. They need to better understand such cultural and linguistic differences in order to better direct and properly guide the writers especially ESL students to the right destination in order to be well read by the American readers. The tutors may end up neglecting such differences or trying to impose on the ESL writers to use the American style which is not quite known or accessible to some international students who are not familiar with such cultural and rhetorical conventions. In some cases, some of these students may view that tutor's behavior as an interference to acculturate them. Consequently, the important thing for the tutors is to be fully aware of such conflicts which may sometimes crop up at the writing centers. Tutors, furthermore, should be mindful of the cross-cultural differences and deal with them reasonably.

Using Directive vs. Non-directive Tutoring Approaches with ESL Writers

In the writing center literature, the issue of directive and non-directive approaches has been raising big controversies especially with tutoring ESL students. Some compositionists, theorists, and even some of the writing center staff favor using a more directive than non-directive approach with ESL students. For instance, Blau and Hall (2002) claimed that "a more directive approach, as well as an initial focus on sentence-level errors that affect the clarity and

meaning of an entire paper, can be effective tutoring practice in a session with [NNS] students"

(43). Some other scholars adopted the minimalist approach like Brooks. Brooks (1991)

contended that "When you 'improve' a student's paper, you haven't been a tutor at all; you've

been an editor" (p. 2). It is a big dilemma facing any novice and even professional tutor who

does not have any experience with ESL students, which approach to follow. Some researchers,

who advocated using non-directive approach with ESL students, contended that it is illogical for

any tutor to ask ESL students about their self-editing of something they did not know before.

Conversely, NES writers have some kind of intuition for knowing and identifying the basic

linguistic and lexical components of their first language. For instance, NES writers have a good

sense of what fits what, what collocates with what, and what sounds native or non-native unlike

ESL writers who are still developing their second language and are still identifying the main

components of   English, and who are not familiar with English rhetoric conventions. According

to Tseng (2009), even if the writing center tutors show the second language writers their errors

and ask them to self-edit such errors, they may not be able to do it because of their lack of the

native intuition of a language. Tseng (2009) claimed that:

> Some L2 learners' errors seem resistant to correction. It is possible that (1) the wrong usages have become fossilized or (2) if not, the cognitive change (in restructuring the interlanguage) is taking place but is unobservable, or the effect has not yet appeared. In addition, L2 learners, especially international students, do not have the native speaker's intuition for what sounds right or wrong. Therefore, when they do not know the grammar rules or their hypotheses of how English works are false, they will not be able to detect their errors no matter how many times they read their writing aloud, which is also a reason why their errors persist. (p. 26-27).

Some researchers proved through their studies that ESL students do not often benefit

from the non-directive and collaborative approach followed at the writing centers as much as

their native peers. This can be attributed to the different teaching methods of the U.S. educational

system most of which is mainly based on active learning. In her study, Harris (1997) concluded

that ESL participants of her survey about writing center tutorials were dissatisfied with the non-directive strategies at the writing center. Harris claimed that ESL students' dissatisfaction can be attributed to their expectations of the tutors to control the tutorial session and directly teach ESL students "how to fix their papers" (p. 225). ESL students think that since the tutors are native speakers, they should keep the floor and play the teacher's role. This reality at the writing center makes the environment of collaborative work impossible, and it may cause sometimes a kind of frustration and mistrust of the tutors. Harris strongly encouraged the tutors to be much more flexible especially with ESL students who are still unfamiliar with the American educational system.

Part of the difficulty facing the tutors using the non-directive strategy with ESL students is that some of these students are neither proficient nor fluent enough to understand the dialogic interaction taking place with the tutors. For instance, some tutors may use slang language or tend to use idiomatic expressions that are still unknown to some ESL tutees. And some tutors may speak so rapidly that some ESL students who have spent a short time in the U.S. cannot understand. Therefore, many ESL tutees are neither able to convey their message clearly nor are they able to respond to the tutors' guided questions about their writings. Williams and Severino (2004) contended that "the tutor cannot elicit what the writer does not know" (p. 167). Some ESL students struggle with spoken English to the extent that their absorption of the tutorials may be hindered. Thus, tutors have to pay special attention to nonverbal cues from ESL writers. These students may come from a culture where students should not interrupt or question teachers. Or, they may simply agree with the addressee to avoid appearing unintelligent. This explains why some ESL students keep smiling to avoid being embarrassed and show that they

fully understand what the interlocutor has said. Efficient tutors may need to rephrase their comments until the student truly understands the content.

Hence, Blau and Hall (2002) suggested that tutors working with ESL students should implement more directive approach with "lower-order concerns" in order to avoid the atmosphere of frustration (p. 41). Furthermore, they recommended that tutors of ESL writers should be trained on how to deal with ESL students' different types of communication. According to Blau and Hall, there is no fit-for-all strategy that can be followed with both ESL and NES writers; flexibility and reasonable judgment should be adopted with each tutee. Thompson et al. (2009) totally agreed with Blau and Hall that the efficient tutors are those who are more flexible with the strategies they use at the writing centers. The most important point is to help tutors achieve the message of the writing center: "producing better writers rather than producing better writing" (North, 1984). Tutors, according to Thompson et al. (2009), should "do a better diagnosis of their tutees' needs" (p. 81).

Severino, director of the Writing Center and the Writing Fellows Program at the University of Iowa, described three approaches readers may take when responding to ESL writers' texts: assimilationist, accommodationist, and separatist. No one can say which method is the best. However, it is important to consider which stance a tutor should take when working with each ESL student. Without such awareness, tutors seem to default to the assimilationist stance in order to help ESL writers adopt American writing standards so that their papers meet teachers' expectations. Which method, any tutor should take in a tutoring session, depends on the goals of the student. For instance, a student who graduated from an American high school may like more to assimilate; thus, an assimilationist approach would be an appropriate stance for a tutor to take.

On the other hand, some researchers viewed it necessary to use the same strategy with both NES and ESL students. In the Allyn and Bacon Guide to Peer Tutoring, Gillespie and Lerner (2000) claimed that "in many ways it's odd to dedicate a single chapter to NNS writers - a student population you'll generally tutor just as you do native English speaker writers!" (p. 119). Gillespie and Lerner (2000) discussed the myths about ESL students' tutoring such as "I need to clean up the grammar in NNS writers' papers before we can get to higher-order concerns" (p. 123) and "I'll need to be a much more directive tutor with NNS writers" (p. 126). According to Gillespie and Lerner, tutors sometimes feel some anxiety when tutoring ESL tutees. In their book, The Longman Guide to Peer Tutoring, Gillespie and Lerner (2008) advised, therefore, tutors to prioritize Higher-order concerns, to be patient with ESL writers, and to give ESL writers "direct or indirect articles or American idioms." They asserted that:

> If NNS writers need direct or indirect articles or American idioms, you can give them those. This is not dishonest—they simply have nowhere else to get this information. Remember to point out those occasions when they get their grammar and usage right; NNS writers can learn from those models. If they use good sentence structure or are effective with such things as subordination and coordination, tell them so. (p. 126).

These pieces of advice mainly focused on grammar-the major difference between NES and ESL writers, and the big concerns facing ESL writers.

Moreover, other researchers (Coogie et al.,1999; Harris, 1997; Harris & Silva, 1993; Powers, 1993) highly recommended that tutors should be much more flexible with ESL writers because ESL writers may have a language barrier and cultural differences. Harris and Silva (1993) advised the tutors to help ESL writers in a similar way to NES writers with "writing process, questions, reader feedback, planning conversations, and so on" (Harris & Silva, 1993, p. 525). Powers (1993) suggested that tutors should adopt directive approach and tutors should play the role of teachers or "cultural-rhetorical informants" Especially when tutoring ESL students

who are in dire need to learn the new culture which is completely different from theirs.

According to Powers (1993), tutors should be cultural informants rather than collaborators

because ESL writers come from different educational, rhetorical, and cultural backgrounds.

Powers (1993) contended that "ESL writers are asking us to become audiences for their work in

a broader way than native speakers are; they view us as cultural informants about American

academic expectations" (p. 98). In addition, tutors can help ESL writers improve their writing

skills by showing them the American rhetorical style and teach them how to be consistent with

such rhetorical conventions. Cogie et al. (1999) totally agreed with Powers and advocated the

cultural informant approach with ESL tutees. However, according to Cogie et al., some ESL

writers may only need help with lower-order concerns rather than higher-order concerns.

Consequently, Cogie et al. (1999) advised tutors to teach ESL writers self- editing strategies.

In addition, although Harris and Silva (1993) advise tutors to maintain the atmosphere of

collaborative, nondirective tutoring with ESL writers, they asserted that ESL students are still

English language learners and need the intuitive sense of the native speaker, the same scaffolding

provided by the ESL teachers. Furthermore, Harris and Silva (1993) distinguished between

global errors which are language mistakes interfering with the contextual comprehension

including vague vocabulary and local errors which are language mistakes causing no effect on

comprehension including misused prepositions (Harris & Silva, 1993). The best advice,

however, Harris and Silva gave to the tutors was to take rhetorical patterns into consideration.

They drew the tutors' attention to the fact that ESL writers come to the writing centers with

completely different rhetoric conventions from the American writing style; therefore, tutors

should help ESL writers easily get their message across to their American readers.

Furthermore, Harris (1997) discussed a significant concern that any tutor may face, when working with ESL writers, the expectations of the ESL students when they come to the writing center. Most of them expect that the tutors will act as teachers who have the authority and should work in a directive manner with the students on specific details of writing, the traditional picture of the editor. Those students quickly feel some frustration when they are informed by the tutors that the writing center is not "a fix-it shop" and they should self-correct their writings and maintain the ownership of their writings. Thus, Harris strongly stressed the idea that tutors, from the beginning, should help change these students' misperceptions about the real role of the writing center and set the agenda for a collaborative work (Harris, 1997). Accordingly, ESL students can understand the writing center's role and act as active learners.

According to Myers (2003), the syntactical and lexical components of English are the most challenging issue facing many ESL writers. She highly recommended that tutors should use more directive approach with ESL writers especially when working on grammatical elements. Myers (2003) contended that tutors should master English grammar. She advised tutors to rephrase ESL writers' sentences, to add some textual corrections, and to offer some practice on the points of weakness. Myers (2003) believed that "it is not unethical that tutors give ESL writers the language they do not know and need some writing assistance in it" (p. 66). Moreover, she claimed that tutors, when working with ESL writers, must offer both rhetorical and linguistic feedback because tutors are not only writing consultants but also cultural informants.

Finally, even if there is some controversy among writing center researchers regarding the best approach of tutoring ESL writers, some researchers supported the directive approach while others called for non-directive instruction, there is still a third group of writing center researchers and theorists who strongly advocated flexibility and balance between both approaches based on

the tutorial situation and ESL tutees' academic and linguistic needs (Blau & Hall, 2002; Williams, 2004; Williams & Severino, 2004). This kind of flexibility in tutoring at the writing center can better assist both the tutors and ESL tutees to achieve their tutorial goals, producing better writers. This balance and judicious combination of both directive and non-directive approaches has double benefits: assisting ESL students with the erroneous aspects of their writings which may be conducive to incomprehensibility of their production and making ESL writers keep the ownership of their work (Clark & Healy, 1996; Corbett, 2008; Shamoon & Burns, 1995).

Tutors and ESL Tutees' Interaction

According to the current writing center profession, the role of a tutor is different from that of a traditional teacher; a tutor is a peer writing consultant and facilitator. However, empirical research proves that writing center peer tutors sometimes act as teachers; therefore, their interaction with their tutees, ESL or NES students, can be described as authoritative. Tutors try to keep the floor, dominate the interaction between them and their tutees, and have longer turn in speaking (Thonus, 2001, 2002). The tutor-dominated interaction is more distinct with ESL students (Thonus, 2002, 2004; Williams, 2005). This tutor-dominated interaction badly affects the writing performance and the self-dependence of ESL students and sometimes makes some of them more invisible and less active in tutorials. Examining the tutor and ESL tutees' interaction, Williams (2005) claimed, after a study done comparing tutoring ESL with NES students, that ESL students usually spend a longer time discussing their writing concerns with their tutors. Williams (2005) explained that the long time ESL students spend can be attributed to the challenges both ESL students and their tutors face to "come to a mutual understanding of their task" (p. 60). Based on the findings of this study, tutors tend to be more directive with ESL

students than they are with NES students to the extent that tutors may end up being authoritarian

editors which contradicts with the writing center mission.

In her study, Thonus (2004) claimed that there are some differences between ESL and

NES students regarding the type of tutorials that best fits each group. According to her, there is

no "one size fits all" approach at the writing center; therefore, she strongly agreed with the other

researchers who called for a degree of flexibility at the writing center. Thonus's studies shed

some light on the nature of the tutor and ESL tutees' interaction, which is mainly dominated by

tutors who act as authority figures rather than peer tutors. Nelson and Weigle (2004) agreed with

the conclusions of Thonus's studies (2001, 2002, 2004). Weigle and Nelson (2004) concluded

that "a complex set of variables influence the roles that tutors play and that there is not a direct

connection between specific roles and the perceived success of tutoring" (p. 222). They

contended that the idea of the tutors being peers may not exist in current writing centers. They

claimed that peer tutoring can be more effective with NES students and highly advanced ESL

writers rather than less skilful writers (p. 222).

Many of current writing centers strongly adopt and urge tutors to adhere to the

collaborative, non-directive approaches; however, in reality, tutors sometimes act as authority

figures rather than peers (Hobson, 2001; Weigle & Nelson, 2004). Henning (2001) supported the

idea that the collaborative, non-directive approach is not dominant in writing centers today.

According to Henning, tutors should be informed that the collaborative, non-directive tutoring

does not fit for all tutorial situations. According to her, successful writing center tutors should

not be strictly confined to a certain type of instruction, instead, they should be more flexible in

choosing the suitable approach based on the tutorial needs. In addition, tutors should better

understand that the directive approach may sometimes be effective for some tutees, and they

should be trained to alternate between the directive and non-directive strategies in their tutorials; therefore, the important thing is to achieve the writing center mission and vision as North (1984) advocated "producing better writers rather than better writing" (p. 438).

Thus, most of the research done about ESL writers at the writing center focused on ESL students' cultural issues, instructional aspects, and the interaction between tutor and tutee (Powers, 1993; Thonus, 2001, 2004). Some of the studies demonstrated the differences between ESL and NES writers (Harris & Silva, 1993). Powers and Nelson were the pioneers in focusing the lenses of the writing center pedagogy on the academic needs of ESL students at the writing center. In 1995, they surveyed about 75 volunteers who had some relationship with the writing center and concluded that the writing center tutorials lack a lot of information about ESL writers and their academic needs. Powers and Nelson added that ESL students are more inclined to receive some assistance with lower order concerns than NES students, and that writing center tutors are not academically trained to work with ESL students. They claimed that tutors must have the sufficient training on how to accommodate ESL students at the writing center and to better understand their linguistic and cultural backgrounds. In addition, Powers and Nelson highly recommended for the writing center to have ESL professionally trained and tutors stay in their positions for a longer time in order to become much more proficient.

Cultural Beliefs Related to ESL Writing

The writing center's training of tutors should include information about cultural beliefs related to writing. ESL students often come from different cultures with different writing styles which are influenced by their first language and cultures (Matsuda, Cox, Jordan, & Ortmeier; 2012). Some cultures believe in individuality while other cultures adopt collectivity. All cultures have different concepts concerning text ownership, writer-reader relationship, structure,

rhetorical diction, thesis presentation, and the roles of research and inquiry (Harris, 1997); such factors can influence writers' composition. For instance, ESL writers' challenges with composition may include unfamiliar teaching strategies that they encounter in the English-based instructional environment in a native English speaking country, different ways of thinking, methods of problem solving, and various language barriers. These difficulties and challenges concerning cultural differences and language conventions may be reflected in ESL students' writing. Culture is a major factor in determining how a writer chooses acceptable methods of presenting information to the readers. Therefore, tutors have to acknowledge the cultural differences they usually encounter at the writing center in order to explain some appropriate rhetorical patterns. Neglecting such cultural differences may be conducive to cultural conflict, students' feeling of disappointment, frustration, and potential "hostile feeling" (Blau & Hall, 2002).

According to Ryan and Zimmerelli (2010), each culture has its specific characteristics. For instance, in some cultures, the group is more important than the individual and the concept of individual ownership may be strange in such collective cultures. The Western cultures, for example, pay great attention to the copyright and any shape of plagiarism is not accepted. While the Anglo-American culture adopts a direct approach and favors explicit style over implicit one, some other cultures prefer to convey the meaning implicitly rather than expressing it directly (Ryan & Zimmerelli, 2010, p. 65). In other words, it is the responsibility of the writer, according to the American writing convention, to convey the intended message to the readers, while some other cultures view that it is the reader's responsibility to understand the writer's intended message. Hacker and Sommers (2010) stated that:

> If you come from a culture that prefers an indirect approach in writing, you may feel that asserting a thesis early in an essay sounds unrefined and even rude. In the United States,

however, readers appreciate a direct approach; when you state your point as directly as possible, you show that you value your readers' time. (p. 26).

In addition, some other cultures may discuss a certain topic by presenting a prolonged introduction to that topic before delving into the body of that topic. In other terms, writers who are influenced by these wordy style oriented cultures may beat around the bush to get their message to the readers. Such writing style may be viewed as redundant by other readers whose writing conventions adopt the linear style. Furthermore, Ryan and Zimmerelli (2010) stated that:

> One culture may lean toward exaggeration and emotionalism; another may do quite the opposite, focusing on restraint and understatement. These cultural differences often influence the rhetorical choices second language writers make in terms of content and strategies when they are writing in English. (p. 65).

Such difficulties may be reflected in ESL students' writing. Therefore, tutors should be aware of such cultural differences and respect them and what they represent.

It is necessary for every tutor to take cultural backgrounds and social behavior into account; a tutor may meet with a writer whose cultural values are completely different from the tutor's; some cultures favor warm relations over formal ones, while some use eye contact to keep the track of communication. Meanwhile, other cultures view eye contact during communicative interaction as rude. Moreover, some cultures prefer close contact whereas other cultures keep a reasonable distance during communication (Matsuda, Cox, Jordan, and Ortmeier; 2012). Ritter (2000) stated that:

> We quickly learn to change our approaches to accommodate each student's differences. When working with English as a Second Language (ESL) students, we encounter yet another layer of differences. ESL students bring different cultural backgrounds, writing experiences, and English language proficiency to the English writing context. And because many of us are not trained to tutor writers who are working in a second language, our tutoring instincts may short-circuit. (p. 103).

Such culturally motivated behavior should be given considerable attention by any tutor (Cooper, 2000). Tutors are therefore highly advised and trained at their writing centers on

dealing with their tutees without subjectivity, bias, overgeneralization, or any arbitrary judgments. They should deal with their tutees with color blindness, and no racial, ethnic, cultural or linguistic differences should predetermine their attitudes and perceptions toward their tutees (Davis, 2006).

Thus, every culture has its specific influence on its people. ESL writers may compose their writings heavily influenced by their cultural conventions, backgrounds, and perceptions of their identity. Consequently, writing is the indicator of the interaction between writers and their culture. Such interaction is a socially constructed relation which is known as Social Constructionism in composition (Clark et al, 2003). According to these researchers, writers construct their composition in the light of their social context and based on some cultural factors. Writers produce a mental representation of their social contexts for which they compose their writing. Those writers then compose their texts in order to respond to the social requirements. Finally, writers create a kind of social meaning through consensual values which they give to their writings. This mental, social, and contextual construction of writing is evident through ESL students' writing process.

Plagiarism

ESL students sometimes come from cultures where plagiarism is not recognized as an infringement on others' right of authorship and ownership. For instance, Chinese may consider mentioning the sources they quote as a form of flattery. Deckert (1993) explored the perceptions of 110 Chinese EFL students toward plagiarism in Hong Kong and published the study in 1999. The findings indicated that these students were less familiar with the Western writing conventions regarding plagiarism. Bouman (2009) claimed that "While individuality and originality are important to many Western audiences, other societies hold different beliefs about

the purposes of writing— beliefs that may appear quite foreign to Westerners." (p. 107).

Consequently, tutors should help ESL students better organize their citations or the bibliographic

information. Acting as a cultural informant, tutors should explain American academic rules in

regards to plagiarism and using sources. They may refer ESL students to their university or

school handbook in order to help them understand better the integrity code and copyright before

considering any piece of writing as a plagiarized work (Bouman, 2009).

Bouman (2009) highly advised tutors to make sure that ESL students are fully aware of

the American writing conventions and school plagiarism policy before accusing any ESL student

of plagiarism. This can be easily achieved by asking the tutees about their home country

conventions of academic writing and whether or not the concepts of plagiarism and copyright do

exist. In addition, Bouman (2009) contended that "Most students who plagiarize do so

unintentionally." (p. 170). Bouman (2009) added that "Yet some students, native and non-native

English speakers alike, knowingly disregard citation conventions or sometimes deliberately pass

off someone else's writing as their own. This kind of plagiarism—what Rebecca Moore Howard

argues us to call "fraud"—puts writing tutors in a difficult and uncomfortable position." (p. 170).

According to Bouman, ESL writers don't usually intend to violate any rules, but unfortunately

neither their language skills nor their knowledge of proper citation conventions may help them.

First Language Interference

Some errors made by ESL writers may be transfer errors, those which result from the

influence of the students' first language-L1 interference (Wang, 2014). Tutors have to point out

these types of errors to the student and show as much as possible how to fix them or at least let

the student know how this expression is said in English. Tseng (2009) thought that "idiomatic

expression and usages cannot be explained by grammar rules but only by native English-

speaking (NES), tutor's intuition. The best way to help the learner is simply to tell her/him, 'This is what a native speaker would use intuitively'." (p. 22).

Writing tutors should be mindful of such impact caused by the first language even if they do not speak the tutee's first language; they should, however, familiarize themselves to such digressions in both pronunciation and misspelled writings. They should play a role in helping ESL students correct their mistakes, keeping in mind that such errors come under lower order concerns which have to be given a secondary interest after higher order concerns. The best method to correct such mispronunciation is recasting (Cowan, 2008). Tutors can recast or repeat what they hear from an ESL student with a corrected form; it may help to do a double benefit task: correcting the error and keeping the Affective Filter low by indirect correction in order to increase self confidence on the students' part. The more the students are self confident, the more they will be risk taking, active learners, and fluent interlocutors (Krashen, 1982). It is necessary to let the tutees know the real role of the writing center as a place for producing better writers not better papers (North, 1984). Such pre-tutorial information paves the way for a better collaborative work between the tutor and his tutees based on a clear understanding of the real message of the center. An effective tutor should be aware of L1 influence on ESL writers' academic writing process; more reasonable attention has to be given to create a non-threatening environment at the writing center by lowering the Affective Filter. Thus, the focus has to be on the concept of comprehensibility rather than accuracy.

Consequently, one of the best strategies that a good tutor can follow with ESL students is looking for patterns in the student's paper. A tutor should look for repetitive errors as well as techniques or sentence patterns the student does not use (Shin, 2002); these patterns can be used for teaching moments. Tutors can make sure to model grammatically correct or alternative

sentence patterns (Powers, 1993). In addition, tutors should stay focused on the writer's goals,

not their own goals for the writer. Besides, tutors have to make sure to address the writer's

concerns and goals (Ferris and Hedgcock, 2005). According to Ferris and Hedgcock, tutors

should also highlight other higher order concerns they may have and explain how such concerns

may be confusing to the reader.

  Finally, this literature review presented many studies that delineated the real role of the

writing center, the tutor's duty as a facilitator and writing peer tutor, and the collaborative

relationship between tutors and tutees. This literature review emphasized that the debate of the

tutoring approaches followed at the writing center—the directive vs. non-directive methods is

still unresolved in the writing center pedagogy. Furthermore, the non-directive tutoring approach,

the highly recommended approach at the writing center, is no longer useful to ESL students

whose numbers have noticeably increased in the U.S. educational institutions. The literature

review also affirmed through the previous studies presented that writing center tutors are in dire

need of receiving more specialized training in order to better understand ESL tutees' cultural

differences and first language influence. Such professional knowledge may help tutors better

assist their ESL clientele.

Chapter III: Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine the role of writing center tutorials and their effectiveness on improving ESL students' academic and professional writings at a Mid-South university. The study, therefore, explores ESL college students' perceptions and attitudes about the writing center—how writing center tutorials help in improving their writing skills. In addition, the study investigates the tutors' attitudes toward improving their profession in order to better help ESL college students. Moreover, this study is one of the relatively few research studies investigating the perceptions of all writing center's stakeholders, tutors, ESL tutees, directors, and university instructors, toward the writing improvements that can take place in ESL students' academic and professional writings due to writing center tutorials. The literature review discussed many studies that explore the history of writing centers in the U.S. and suggested that the collaborative, non- directive approach, the most commonly adopted approach at writing centers, may not be the best tutoring approach with English language learners. Consequently, this study investigates the perceived impact of the prior knowledge of ESL pedagogy on writing center tutors' understanding of the academic, cultural, and linguistic needs of ESL college students at one of the Mid-South universities. Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate the role of the writing center in improving ESL college students' academic writing. Based on the assumptions and structural framework of the Constructivist Theory, this research presents a cognitive framework and offers a model for an academic environment in which English language learners can be assisted in improving their academic writing by taking advantage of the tutorials offered at the writing center.

Research Questions

The study has four major research questions as follows:

1- What are ESL college students' and writing center tutors' perceptions of the effectiveness of writing center tutorials?

2- How do university instructors perceive the impact of writing center tutorials on ESL students' academic writing?

3- Do tutors and ESL tutees have differences in terms of the general perceptions of directive and nondirective tutoring approaches?

4- Do writing center tutors need to receive more specialized ESL instruction and training to better assist ESL students and understand their academic needs?

Research Design

The Mixed methods research, MMR, is, by definition, the practice of collecting, analyzing, and combining qualitative and quantitative data within a single cohesive study for the purpose of gaining a more holistic understanding of a specific research problem or area of study (Cresswell, 2003). MMR is a recently developed research design which was influenced by many philosophical frameworks mainly constructivism, post positivism, and pragmatism. The definition of this field of research varies from one scholar to another. However, MMR has a rising future and opens new horizons for novice researchers, graduate students, and professional scholars. The most distinctive characteristic of the MMR with its dialectic stance is that it can serve as a good step toward globalization. Using a Mixed Methods research as a way of thinking, viewing the whole world, interpreting the results of the empirical enquiry, exemplified through a dialectic stance can offer a good opportunity to novice or professional researchers or scholars, to step toward globalization (Tashakkori and Teddlie,2010). This globalization can be achieved

through getting involved in various types of constructs, cultures, concepts, values, and philosophical standpoints in a study under investigation. Such a dialectic stance can provide researchers with a remarkable multiplicity of ways of viewing and interpreting, responding to, and being engaged with the world, which is the essence of globalization. In addition, a dialectic stance of MMR legitimizes and adopts perspectives and insights of traditions of social inquiry theory and practice. Accordingly, through MMR, a researcher can probe different concepts, values, cultural diversities, traditions, and beliefs depending on various philosophical frameworks (Tashakkori and Teddlie,2010).

One of the various benefits of MMR is triangulation. Triangulation is a term that means using more than one method for data collection until a researcher achieves data saturation. Triangulation is conducted by researchers to validate the research findings by manipulating all available and accessible methods. One of the challenges facing any researcher is that using multiple methods needs more funds and time than a one-method study (Cresswell, 2003). Some researchers, therefore, tend to conduct one-method research, quantitative or qualitative, to avoid high cost and time consumption. However, a research that uses more than one method can have more robust findings and higher reliability and validity. Furthermore, one of the multiple advantages of the MMR is that the researcher can combine subjectivity and objectivity, which can be important in some studies. For instance, in case study, researchers are not completely able to detach themselves from the study under investigation. Consequently, MMR researchers can be objective in their statistical data collected and at the same time they can easily convey their observation and personal impressions without any bias jeopardizing validity of the study. Accordingly, the MMR can be objectivist and constructivist at the same time.

This study follows a mixed methods research, MMR, approach which combines quantitative and qualitative strands in a sequential explanatory design within one single study to better integrate findings (Bazeley, 2009; Cresswell, 2003; Creswell, & Piano Clark, 2007; & Lichtman, 2009). The study starts with surveys as a quantitative part, next, as a qualitative part, it uses interviews, afterwards, observation of the participants during tutorials is utilized to better understand the reality of the writing center environment, and finally, the researcher looks through samples of some participants' writing in order to identify any writing skills improved by the writing center tutorials. This triangulation of data collection methods can help better validate findings achieved by data collection instruments.

In this study, MMR is necessary to increase validity, overcome weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative research individually, and draw on strengths of the study under investigation. The research uses a sequential explanatory design to reach better results since in such a design, qualitative can explain quantitative results or vice-versa; it strengthens credibility because both approaches enhance integrity of findings, i.e., the essence of a synergistic design, argued by Nastasi, Hitchcock, and Brown (2010). While qualitative provides a specific context, quantitative provides a general one. Therefore, MMR is necessary in this study to enhance the validity and reliability which will be better served by mixing. Consequently, this application of an inclusive MMR framework, the sequential design, is necessary to achieve the research purpose.

The Researcher as Instrument

In this study, I served as the primary instrument for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting the data. Therefore, it is necessary to provide some information about my educational and professional background which may or may not influence my analysis and interpretation of data

collected. As for my education, I got my bachelors in English language majoring in Linguistics and translation. I taught English as a foreign language in Egypt for more than ten years and then, I got my Masters in ESL education from University of Arkansas. I have many experiences in various fields of work: education, translation/interpreting, assistive technology, and writing tutoring. During my study for the Ph.D., I worked as a teaching assistant at a Mid-South university. I taught Second Language Assessment, one of the classes required for ESL licensure for teaching English as a second language in one of the Sothern states. I encountered the real academic needs and challenges facing ESL students whose numbers have recently increased exponentially in the U.S.

I worked as a part-time tutor and ESL specialist at the writing center at College of Business (BCC) at that university. During this period, I found that ESL college students are the major clientele at the BCC. This category of students has different academic needs than their native peers i.e., they are still learning English and have some difficulties understanding American culture and Anglo-American rhetoric conventions. Some of them may end up dropping out of school because of the academic and financial challenges. The experience of working at the writing center was exciting as I helped students, especially ESL students, understand American English with its rhetoric conventions which are often different from those of their first language. My previous experiences as a teacher of English as a foreign language (EFL), being a non-native English speaker (NNS), training as a major in English Linguistics and Literature, and a strong interest in assisting ESL students helped me understand their real academic needs and their writing challenges. I realized how important English composition training is. I understood that culture and first language of ESL students play a significant role and have a huge impact on their language production.

The Researcher's Potential Biases

My experience as a previous ELL, an ESL teacher, and a writing center tutor may impact this study. As the only researcher of this study, I was constantly aware of the potential bias that may exist in the research because of my background as an ESL college student and teaching assistant. As a result, I was always checking the study in order to eliminate these potential biases. Yin (2003) contended that researchers often adopt roles "contrary to the interest of good scientific practice" (p. 94). Consequently, I relied on my dissertation committee members, writing center directors, peer tutors, ESL college students, and other writing professionals, to check the validity of the study and to avoid any potential biases. Moreover, I gave considerable attention to the research questions and the methodology used in this study. In addition, I was aware of my role as a researcher and not as a writing center advocate and ESL instructor. I believed that with such self-regulating techniques, potential biases that may have occurred were reduced or eliminated.

About The University of The Study

This study was conducted in a Mid-South university. This university is one of the biggest universities of the Middle South. It boasts a history of more than 140 years since it was established in 1871. More than 170,000 students graduated from it. It is ranked among the nation's top public research universities with the best academic standards. According to The Carnegie Foundation, this university has "the highest possible level of research," thus placing it among the top 2 percent of colleges and universities nationwide.

Founded in 1871 as a land-grant institution, this university in which the study was conducted is the flagship of the University System of that region. In the academic year, 2016-2017, there are about 26,000 students from all 50 states including international students

representing more than 120 countries. This university consists of 10 colleges and schools

offering more than 210 academic programs. It is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission.

The university main campus is located in a college town in the hilly part overlooking the

Ozark Mountains. This city is ranked among the country's best college towns, and one of the

best places to live in. The city has a large diversity of population and a lot of businesses.

Setting of the Study: Tutoring Places

The study took place in two writing centers in the university main campus:

1. The CLASS Plus writing center at this university has three places for tutoring: one is located within the university's major library, a tutoring place housed in the English department, and the third one is located in students' residence hall. The main center located in the students' residence has cubicle structures for holding tutorials, a reception desk, and the director's office. The tutoring area in the library is part of the space of the library. The advantage of this tutoring area is its location in the main library where approximately all the university students often go and use library computers.

2. In contrast, the BCC writing center at College of Business is housed in the main college building where the writing center has its own reception, media room, and tutoring cubicles. The reception space also includes a waiting area and the director's office. In general, the location of the writing centers is very important for tutoring sessions; the place can be either supportive or distractive.

Participants of the Study

This study investigated the perceptions of tutors and ESL tutees about the role of writing center tutorials and their effectiveness on improving the academic and professional writings of ESL college students. University instructors were also interviewed to understand how they perceive the impact of writing center tutorials on their ESL students' writings. The study employed three categories of participants who volunteered to participate willingly in this research:

- Eighty nine ESL students who are studying at this university in different majors. They are originally from different countries with different cultures and native languages;

- Twenty three peer tutors who work at the Center for Learning and Student Success Writing Support, (CLASS + Writing Support) and the Writing Center at the College of Business, the BCC at the university of the study. They are American nationals who are fluent in English and English writing composition. Most of them have previous experiences with tutoring ESL students. But none took previous classes in ESL instruction;

- Ten faculty members who have had ESL students in their classes, and who referred those ESL students to the writing center for writing assistance. The faculty members include three professors from College of Education and Health Professions, five from the English department, one professor from the Geosciences department, and one instructor teaching writing for ELAC classes.

This research is important because it is one of a few studies which investigated the instructors' perceptions of ESL students' writing improvements due to the writing center tutorials. Most of the previous studies conducted in the field of the writing center profession

focused on the perceptions of both peer tutors and tutees without deeply exploring the instructors' attitudes toward the effectiveness of the tutorials provided by the writing center and their impact on ESL writers. The researcher intended to explore the instructors' perceptions to triangulate methods of data collection provided by the participation of teachers, students, and tutors, and reduce any potential bias on the part of either the tutors, who may exert much effort in the tutorials, or the tutees who sometimes feel frustrated because tutors do not fix the paper. The teachers' perceptions about the writing center tutorials come through the final product of writing they receive from their ESL students after peer tutoring. These participants can help achieve the purpose of the study and find suitable answers to the research questions.

Surveys were posted on Qualtrics, one of the survey building domains affiliated to the university. The respondents had an access to surveys via e-mails sent to them including the surveys link as a quantitative part of this research. Each participant received a copy of the research purpose and a consent form. After collecting the survey responses, students and tutors were selected to participate in interviews to complete the second part of the study. Ten out of the 89 ESL students and ten of the 23 tutors of the survey respondents were asked to participate in the interview to complete a cross-case study for further investigation of the research questions. Interviews were conducted by face-to-face interaction and audiotaped to collect the data required. Data gathered from the surveys was analyzed statistically; furthermore, data collected from interviews was coded thematically and categorized according to frequency tables to be descriptively analyzed. Once all the data had been collected, the participants' names and any identifying information were removed and a random number was assigned to each participant. All participants' information was kept confidential to extent allowed by law of university policy.

Tutors. Most of the tutors at this university are peer tutors who are graduate students employed by the university. Tables (1-5) provide demographic information about the tutors in this study. 23 tutors volunteered to respond to the survey and participated in the whole study. There are 11 male and 12 female tutors. 17 of them were Americans, one Mexican, and five did not mention their nationalities in the section of demographic information on the survey. Tutors' experiences ranged from one to four years of tutoring. All tutors agreed that most of their clientele were nonnative English speakers, (NNES), students. Tutors' ages ranged from 22 to over 40 years old. Most of tutors were peer tutors on graduate assistantship and only three were professionals. 11 tutors held Bachelor's degree in different majors, nine had a Master's degree, and only three were doing Ph.D.

However, neither the CLASS Plus writing center nor did the BCC have any ESL Specialists employed to assist ESL students and to organize training workshops for the Writing Center's tutors. In some of the writing centers, workshops are regularly held in order to familiarize tutors with issues related to the writing conventions of ESL students. For instance, an ESL specialist can discuss with tutors how to explain the grammatical rules to ESL students and make them familiar with English writing conventions. Furthermore, an ESL specialist can help tutors better understand the process of second language acquisition that ESL tutees are experiencing. The ESL specialist's duties can also   include organizing some workshops about how to deal with students of different cultures in order to better incorporate these students.

Table 1 tutors
Age

Range	Frequency	Percentage
20-30	9	39 %
31-40	11	48 %
41-above	3	13 %

Table 2 tutors
Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	11	48 %
Female	12	52 %

Table 3 tutors
Nationalities

Nationality	Frequency	Percentage
Americans	17	74 %
Mexicans	1	4 %
Other	5	22 %

Table 4 tutors
English writing classes

Have you taken English writing classes?	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	17	74 %
No	6	26 %

Table 5 tutors
Highest education degree

Degree	Frequency	Percentage
Bachelor	11	48 %
Master	9	39 %
Ph.D.	3	13 %

It is worth noting that although 74 percent, about 17 out of 23, of tutors said that they had different classes in English writing and composition. However, none mentioned that he/she had taken any English as a Second Language, ESL, pedagogy classes. They only rely in their training on reading the articles about second language writing tutoring suggested by the writing center's director to familiarize themselves with their ESL clients who sometimes constitute more than 50 percent of the writing center's tutees.

ESL tutees. The students who participated in the study were ESL/international graduate students. Their majors were different. The students' demographics were taken into account for this study. They were good representations of typical Writing Center clients for this study. Most of those students were culturally and linguistically diverse, CLD, students. No students interviewed said that they had often come to the writing center as a mandatory part of a class; most students voluntarily consulted the writing center. In addition, most university instructors interviewed for this study mentioned that they always encouraged all students not only ESL/international students to consult the writing center.

Table 6 tutees
Age

Range	Frequency	Percentage
20-30	40	45 %
31-40	42	47 %
41-above	7	8 %

Table 7 tutees
Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Male	43	48.3 %	48.3 %	48.3 %
Female	46	51.7 %	51.7 %	51.7 %
Total	89	100 %	100 %	100 %

Table 8 tutees
Nationalities

Nationality	Frequency	Percentage
U.S. Citizen	1	1 %
Mexican	3	3 %

Table 8 (cont.)

Nationality	Frequency	Percentage
Saudi Arabian	24	27 %
Iraqi	8	9 %
Egyptian	1	1 %
Libyan	4	4 %
Kurdish	1	1 %
North Korean	1	1 %
South Korean	1	1 %
Indonesian	3	3 %
Malaysian	2	2 %
Palestinian	1	1 %
Peruvian	1	1 %
Pakistani	2	2 %
Brazilian	1	1 %
Bolivian	1	1 %
Panamanian	6	7 %
Bangladeshi	3	3 %
Indian	3	3 %
Japanese	1	1 %
Ivorian	1	1 %
Angolan	1	1 %
Uzbekistani	1	1 %

Table 8 (cont.)

Nationality	Frequency	Percentage
Dominican Republican	1	1 %
Honduran	1	1 %
Iranian	2	2 %
Chinese	3	3 %
Mongolian	1	1 %
Turkish American	1	1 %
Ethiopian	1	1 %
Latina	1	1 %
Botswana	1	1 %
Sri Lankan	1	1 %
Salvadorian	1	1 %
Malian	1	1 %

Note: It is worth noting here that the students taking the survey were of 35 different nationalities. About 24 students, 27 percent, were Saudi Arabians and the other students were representations of most ESL/international students who are studying in the U.S.

Table 9 tutees
Highest education degree

Highest education Degree	Frequency	Percentage
Bachelor	20	22 %
Master	47	53 %
Ph.D.	22	25 %

Note: In this table, 20 students, about 22 percent, mentioned that they had Bachelors in different majors, 47 students, 53 percent, said that they actually had Masters, and 22 students, 25 percent;

check marked the item "Ph.D." in the survey. This was very strange to the researcher that some students said that they actually had Ph.Ds. With further investigation by double-checking their academic status with them through e-mails provided in the demographic section of the survey, it was clear that they were still doing Ph.D. Thus, the researcher made sure that they misunderstood the survey item about the highest education degree and thus they checked "Ph.D." instead of "Master." Accordingly, it can be said that 69 out of 89 students had Masters with only 22 of them almost done with their doctoral degree.

Table 10 tutees
English writing classes

Have you taken composition classes?	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	77	86.5 %
No	12	13.5 %

The students surveyed were 89 ESL graduate students including 43 males and 46 females. Most of them, about 82 percent, were under 40 years as shown in table 6. There is a significant difference between the male and female students regarding their perceptions about the writing center tutorials and the strategies followed by tutors. However, the variable of gender was excluded from this study. This significant difference based on gender could be further investigated in a future research. Students interviewed were pre-identified by the writing centers' directors in order to insure that there were actually ESL tutees at the centers. No scores of any second language assessment or language proficiency levels of the participating students were addressed. This information of the students' language proficiency would be, if discussed, a beneficial variable for this study.

Faculty members. Ten University instructors participated in this study. All of them were interviewed by the researcher to point out their perceptions about the writing assistance offered

at the writing center. Those instructors have had ESL students in their classes. Some of them

mentioned that they refer those ESL students to the writing center for writing assistance.

However, none of the instructors said that it was a mandatory part of their classes to consult the

writing center. The faculty members included three professors from College of Education and

Health Professions, five from the English department, one professor from the Geosciences

department, and one instructor teaching writing for English Language and Cultural Studies

(ELAC) classes at the College of Education. In general, their attitudes and expectations about the

writing center were high and positive.

Table 11
University instructors

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	7	70 %
Female	3	30 %
Total	10	100 %

Variables

The two variables in this study are: the independent variable which investigates the

effectiveness reported of writing center tutorials on ESL college students, while the dependent

variable is the potential higher academic writing skills of ESL students. In this study,

effectiveness means success of the tutoring session. In writing center pedagogy, effectiveness

can be measured through exploring the stakeholders' perceptions about the success of their

tutorials.

Data Collection Procedures

      Survey. A Likert formatted survey of 38 questions was given to the respondents to collect the quantitative data. This survey begins with demographic information of the respondents including their nationalities, languages spoken at home, gender, educational levels, and majors. This demographic information is elicited from respondents at the beginning of the survey to familiarize the researcher with the respondents' information useful to the scope of the research. The 38 Likert formatted questions were used to identify respondents' perceptions and attitudes toward the writing center tutorials concerning the improvement of ESL students' academic writing. The survey was coded as categories including: strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, and strongly agree formatted questions. The participants' responses were coded in tables and analyzed to show the frequency levels of responses.

      The use of a Likert scale is advantageous because such kind of scales do two things: it can help implicitly elicit information from respondents in a comfortable way and gets them involved in the research easily (Creswell, 2003). After the demographic information, the survey questions are introduced to investigate both tutors and ESL college students' perceptions about the writing center and its role in improving writing skills, their previous experiences with the writing center, writing center tutoring strategies to produce better writers capable of more academically sound writing, and their readiness to adopt such writing techniques. The survey presented to tutees and tutors included the following:

1- Twenty questions (1-20) are first introduced at the beginning of the survey after demographic information. These 20 questions serve as an investigation of the respondents' previous experiences with writing center, writing issues, and tutor-tutee interaction. They serve as a good introduction to the academic and professional

background of the respondents. These questions explore ESL college students and

tutors' perceptions about the writing center's tutorials and the role of such tutorials in

enhancing ESL college students' academic writing skills. These survey questions are

supposed to answer the first research question about ESL college students'

perceptions and attitudes toward using and benefitting from the writing center

tutorials as a means of improving their writing skills.

2- Six questions (21-26) serve as an exploration of ESL students and writing center

tutors' perceptions about using non-directive approach. These survey questions better

help the researcher clearly view whether non-directive approach of tutoring is

effective or ineffective especially with ESL college students.

3- Five questions (27-31) serve as an exploration of ESL students and writing center

tutors' perceptions about using directive approach and its effectiveness on improving

ESL students' writing. These survey questions better help the researcher clearly view

whether directive approach of tutoring is effective or ineffective with ESL college

students.

Note: Survey questions (21-31) are supposed to answer the research question 3 asking about the

best way of tutoring: directive/non-directive tutoring approaches.

4- Seven questions (32-38) are asked to investigate ESL college students and writing

center tutors' perceptions about tutors' professional need to have some ESL training

that they do not currently receive in their centers in order to better assist ESL students

of different cultures and languages. These questions, answering research question 4,

demonstrated the strategies followed at the writing center and delineated which of

them are effective for ESL students. The data collected from this survey helped the

researcher examine the best ways of improving the university ESL students'
academic and professional writing.

Themes of the survey. The two separate surveys conducted with both tutors and ESL
college students included the same themes but with different phrasing in order to better fit the
participants. The survey items were developed in accordance with the study research questions in
order to collect the intended data. All the survey items were grouped into four categories or
subsets of questions to answer the research questions. The following themes are primarily
incorporated in both surveys:

1. Perceptions about the effectiveness of writing center tutorials: (from survey item number
   1 to number 20) it includes every aspect of the writing center tutorials that can help
   students feel confident about their writing and satisfied with the service presented. In
   writing center pedagogy, the term "Effectiveness" is synonymous with efficacy of the
   writing center tutorials and satisfaction of its clientele. Since we cannot assess
   effectiveness, we assess the tutees' satisfaction with the tutorials.

2. Non-directiveness of tutorials: (21: 26) it refers to the indirect way of tutoring used at the
   writing center. Some tutors may ask students to locate their errors of their papers and fix
   them by themselves. This nondirective approach insists on teaching tutees how to
   discover their errors and make them self-correct and self-edit them in order to be future
   independent writers.

3. Directiveness of tutorials: (27: 31) it is the opposite way of nondirective method. Tutors
   may directly show tutees their errors, correct them, and explain to them the mistakes they
   made. This directive way of tutoring makes tutees passively depend on tutors and give
   them the authority and power of teachers who have higher knowledge.

4. Tutors needing ESL training: (32: 38) it refers to any skill required for the tutors to better understand ESL language, cultural, and academic needs. Tutors actually read some articles about writing center's ESL clientele during their training; however, they may need some specific training on how to deal with international/ESL students, better understand their language learning challenges, provide them with suitable language resources, and take their proficiency levels into consideration. For instance, tutors should not speak fluently or very fast with tutees, they should not use idiomatic/slang/colloquial expressions that may be difficult to ESL students, and they should be aware of the first language interference that many ESL students may experience.

Reliability check. To check the reliability and validity of this survey, the researcher designed an expert panel and invited six faculty members, writing center tutors and directors, and a statistics professor, one of the researcher's dissertation committee members, to participate in this validation process. In an excel sheet, raters had the survey items on the left side. And on the right side, they had the major perceptions of the survey. They were asked, as much as they could, to match up each item of the survey with the appropriate perception as follows:

- Visiting the writing center regularly is beneficial to ESL students. This item can be matched up with the perception of effectiveness of writing center tutorials.

- A tutor practices authority on tutees. This can be categorized under the perception of directive approach followed at the writing center.

- Tutors make ESL students fix their papers on their own. This talks about nondirective approach tutors sometimes practice with students.

- Tutors can successfully deal with ESL students' language needs. This item can be matched up with the perception of "Tutors needing ESL training."

Raters were asked to read the survey items and mark-check under the suitable **perception.** After the raters' review, a process of internal consistency check was conducted to validate use of this survey. The internal consistency test was run after collecting the raters' responses. Using Cronbach Alpha Formula, the reliability of the survey was found to be 0.9. The coefficient alpha was high. This result is robust and means that the survey is very reliable **and** valid to be used in this study. Based on this result, the researcher modified his survey taking into consideration all the edits and adjustments the expert panel suggested.

Interview. The interview is the second method of data collection, and it was conducted with three participating groups:

1. The first interview consisting of twelve open-ended questions was conducted with ten ESL college students who volunteered to participate in the qualitative part of the research,

2. The second interview was conducted with ten volunteering instructors with different specialties as follows:

- Five professors from the English department,

- Three professors from Curriculum and Instruction,

- One professor from Geosciences,

- One writing teacher.

3. The third interview was conducted with ten of the writing center's tutors who have a direct contact with writing center ESL clientele. The purpose of these interviews was to investigate the impact of the writing center tutorials on ESL students' writing.

The questions were developed by the researcher. These face-to-face interviews were conducted to represent the second instrument in the data collection. After collecting the data, responses will be coded and analyzed. These interviews were audiotaped and transcribed into a file format. MS Word was used to organize the data into coded themes and saved as a Word file.

Observation. I observed the Center for Learning and Student Success Writing Support, (CLASS + Writing Support) and the Writing Center at the College of Business, (BCC) in order to see an integral image of the tutorials and activities taking place at the two writing centers. Based on my research purpose, to investigate the effectiveness of the writing center tutorials on improving the ESL college students' academic and professional writings, I focused my observation on ESL students at both writing centers. I did not intervene with tutoring because I preferred to do a non-participatory observation in order to be more obtrusive and to avoid any bias. According to Trochim (2006), direct observation gives the researcher the opportunity to be so obtrusive that the researcher distances herself from the process in order to avoid bias with the observation. In addition, Trochim viewed that direct observation is not time-consuming as much as participatory observation in which the researcher plays a role other than watching and analyzing the phenomenon under investigation.

I spent 40 hours observing the CLASS + Writing Support and the BCC: 20 hours for each. Every time, I observed every writing tutorial session for an hour. I was keen on videotaping the tutorials to be able to take field notes later. These recorded sessions constituted the transcribed data to be used as one of the major data collection methods. I repeated this process of direct observation until I felt a kind of data saturation, which simply means that no more data could be obtained out of these observations.

Artifacts collected from the writing center. The researcher viewed some of the students' writings such as class assignments, essays, research papers, and other documents reviewed at the writing center. Other documents included writing center handouts and the training plan. In addition, the researcher paid considerable attention to policy statements, missions, visions, and goals of the CLASS + Writing Support and the BCC, at this university of the study.

Data Analysis

This Mixed Methods Research study combined a quantitative design using surveys and a qualitative part utilizing interviews, and non-participatory observation. Therefore, the results of the survey administered were statistically analyzed using SPSS. SPSS was utilized to run the independent sample t-test. The use of the independent t-test assisted in making a comparison between ESL tutees and writing center tutors in terms of their perceptions toward the writing center. After the interviews, coding and analysis were conducted to investigate similarities and dissimilarities among the participants' responses.

A simple coding system was used in this study. Each theme had a representative code, a formulated meaning, frequency of the respondent, and a significant statement asserting such theme. The themes were collected across all cases to show frequency. For instance, if the interviewees emphasized the writing center's role in giving feedback that supported students in understanding writing mechanisms, such as scaffolding, this theme was coded as instructional support and the formulated meaning was the tutor's support. Tables were organized to include themes collected across the interviewees' responses and analyzed to calculate frequency across all cases. Some significant statements were selected from all cases to illustrate similar themes.

This study used Creswell's (2003) methods to analyze qualitative data. This approach included: 1. transcribing interviews; 2. coding interviews; 3. generating themes; 4. reporting emerging themes to display findings into a sequence; and 5. interpreting the findings and describing the implications of the study. This qualitative data analysis technique was employed in order to explore the data collected via the survey and interviews. A framework was created to categorize the data into emerging themes (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). In accordance with Creswell (2003), the interpretation of the quantitative data obtained from the surveys was supported by the qualitative data obtained via the interviews in order to compare and contrast the tutors and ESL students' perceptions about writing center tutorials. In other terms, tutors and ESL students' views from the interviews were incorporated with the results obtained from the surveys for each research question. The process of analysis focused on the similarities and differences in the perceptions of both groups of participants. The findings of the surveys were analyzed in the same sequence as the four research questions of the study were posed.

Validity

My experience as a teacher of EFL/ESL and my work at the writing center may have some influence on my research. I was fully aware of the potential bias that may occur because of my different culture and my educational background as an English major; therefore, I was always checking my research to increase validity and eliminate any potential bias. To avoid any subjectivity and bias, I constantly looked for the assistance of the writing center's staff including directors, peer tutors, and other experts on writing center pedagogy in order to check my research validity. By applying these techniques, I was able to eliminate most of the biases that may have occurred.

Chapter IV Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine the role of writing center tutorials and their effectiveness on improving ESL students' academic and professional writings at a Mid-South university. The study, therefore, explores ESL college students' perceptions and attitudes about the writing center—how writing center tutorials help in improving their writing skills. In addition, the study investigates the tutors' attitudes toward improving their profession in order to better help ESL college students. Moreover, this study is one of the relatively few research studies investigating the perceptions of all writing center's stakeholders: tutors, ESL tutees, directors, and university instructors toward writing skill improvement that can take place in ESL students' academic and professional writings due to writing center tutorials. The literature review discussed many studies that explore the history of writing centers in the U.S. and suggested that the collaborative, non- directive approach, the most commonly adopted approach at writing centers, may not be the best tutoring approach with English language learners. Consequently, this study investigates the impact of the prior knowledge of ESL pedagogy on writing center tutors' understanding of the academic, cultural, and linguistic needs of ESL college students at the university in which the study is conducted. Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate the role of the writing center in improving ESL college students' academic writing. Based on the assumptions and structural framework of Constructivist Theory, this research presents a cognitive framework and offers a model for an academic environment in which English language learners (ELLs) can be assisted in improving their academic writing by taking advantage of the tutorials offered at the writing center.

This chapter provides an in-depth description of the findings obtained from the analysis of the tutees and tutors' surveys, interviews, and the observation of some tutorials along with analysis of university instructors' interviews.

The following quantitative and qualitative results were constructed to correspond four primary research questions (RQ) in orders:

RQ 1. What are ESL college students' and writing center tutors' perceptions of the effectiveness of writing center tutorials?

RQ 2. How do university instructors perceive the impact of writing center tutorials on ESL students' academic writing?

RQ 3. Do tutors and ESL tutees have differences in terms of the general perceptions of directive and nondirective tutoring approaches?

RQ 4. Do writing center tutors need to receive more specialized ESL instruction and training to better assist ESL students and understand their academic needs?

Research Question One: What are ESL college students' and writing center tutors' perceptions of the effectiveness of writing center tutorials?

This question is related to the students' perceived writing achievement and helps to guide the study. To better explore the role of the writing center and its effectiveness in improving ESL students' academic writing, the first research question of this study aimed to identify the tutors' and ESL students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the writing center tutorials. In the writing center pedagogy, effectiveness is defined as the success of the writing center in achieving its clientele's goals in order to make them satisfied with the writing assistance offered (Weigle & Nelson, 2004). In other terms, the work of the writing center is considered to be effective if it succeeds in satisfying its clients' perceptive writing needs and provides them with suitable

writing assistance. Therefore, this study investigated whether the writing center is successful in improving ESL students' academic writing by using three data collection methods: surveys, face-to-face interviews, and on-site observation, which applied triangulation for yielding robust findings and exploring the research questions more deeply. In terms of corresponding items and data collection for RQ 1, tutors' perceptions were explored through survey questions (i.e., Q1-Q20, 5-point Likert type scale) and open-ended questions (5, 6, 7, 8, and 11) in Tutor Interviews as well as on-site observations of tutoring sessions. As mentioned in Chapter 3, three items (i.e., Q2, Q3, and Q7) negatively worded were reverse scored before data was analyzed. Similarly, ESL Students' perceptions were measured through survey questions (i.e., Q1-Q20), interview questions (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11), and observations of tutoring sessions.

Quantitative Results

The sample consisted of 112 participants, approximately 80% of them were ESL students ($n = 89$) and the rest were tutors ($n = 23$) from two writing centers. Both groups had similar percentages in gender, which approximately half of them were men (i.e., ESL student: 48.3% and tutor: 47.8%). The descriptive statistics from both groups that reported the first set of survey questions (i.e., Q1 to Q20) are shown in Table 12.

To evaluate the perceptions of the writing center and its effectiveness, an independent-sample t-test was conducted. The results indicated that the mean perceptions of effectiveness for ESL students ($M = 78.88$, $SD = 7.93$) was slightly lower than the mean perceptions of effectiveness for tutors ($M = 79.78$, $SD = 6.89$) and it was statistically nonsignificant, $t (110) = -.501$, $p = .618$. The 95% confidence interval for the differences in means was quite wide, ranging from -4.492 to 2.680. The eta square index (i.e., effect size) of .002 indicated a very small effect. Figure 1 shows the distributions of the two groups. In this study, the eta square index of 0.15

indicates a small effect. Eta square index of .01, .06, and .14 are interpreted as small, medium, and large effect sizes respectively.

The majority of the participants admitted that the writing center tutorials had an effective role in helping ESL students improve their overall writing skills. For instance, ESL Students surveyed had positive perceptions about the tutorials that they received in the writing center. This group of ESL students included 46 females and 43 males. The second group of participants was 23 tutors including 12 females and 11 males. The difference between the two groups was not significant; both had high expectations and positive perceptions about the writing center tutorials. However, as shown below, the tutors' mean was a little bit higher than the students' mean. This can be indicative that tutors had higher perceptions of effectiveness about their tutorials than ESL tutees did. However, the difference was not statistically significant between the two groups of participants; both had similar perceptions of the effectiveness of writing center tutorials.

Table 12

Descriptive Statistics of 20-item Perceptions in Effectiveness for Both ESL Students and Tutors

Group	n	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
ESL student	89	78.88	7.93	-.286	-.293
Tutor	23	79.78	6.89	-.329	-.715
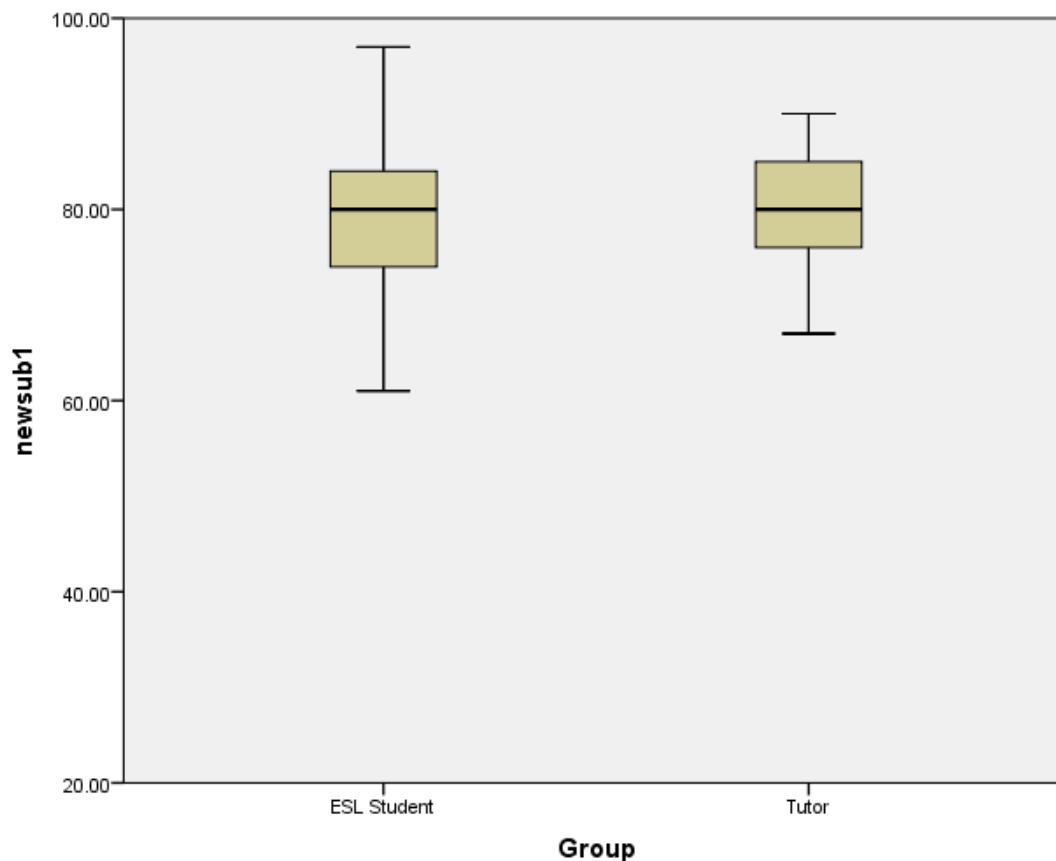
Figure 1. Boxplots of the scale scores on the perceptions of the effectiveness of writing center tutorials for ESL college students and tutors who work in the writing center. The scale included 20 items on 5-point Likert-type scale with possible score ranged from 20 to 100.

Qualitative Findings

After conducting the survey, 10 writing center tutors were selected from those 23 tutors who provided their e-mails and agreed to be interviewed with the researcher in order to deeply explore the study research questions. It was a structured interview that started with inquiring about the tutors' experiences in the writing center and eliciting information about their perceptions of the effective/ineffective strategies followed in the writing center, ESL students' most frequent writing challenges, and the tutors' views about ways of improving ESL tutees' academic writing and tutors' ESL training in order to better assist ESL clientele. Using

interviews as an instrument was important for obtaining more in-depth information from the participants. Such useful information for the study could not be obtained from the surveys only.

The ten tutors were interviewed one at a time. All tutors were given a sheet of paper with the interview questions to have a quick look at them before they began to respond to the questions. Before getting started, the researcher briefly introduced the study explaining it to the interviewees to make them familiar with the study. The interview settings differed: some in the main library or the writing center's tutoring areas. The interviews were audiotaped with consent of the participants. It was important to use interview questions that were previewed and discussed with the researcher and the writing centers' directors. However, the researcher sometimes asked follow-up questions about a new piece of information introduced by the interviewee in order to further clarify the matter. Each tutor was coded (Tu) and given a number.

Most of the tutors mentioned that they nearly always had ESL tutees in their tutoring sessions. Some of the tutors said that they frequently tutored those ESL students; they said that about 30 percent of their clients were ESL students. While others said that they weekly had approximately more than 50 percent of their clientele from ESL students. Tu1 said: "I tutor them every week, every month, every year. There are here between 25 to 30 % of students are ESL graduate students." Tu2 said: "I tutor mostly ESL students." Tu3: "All the time! I feel like approximately all of my students have been multilingual writers." The researcher explained the three categories of ESL students as Leki (1992) defined in order to familiarize the interviewees with the specific meaning of the term ESL. In writing center pedagogy, according to Leki (1992), the term ESL includes the three groups of students: undergraduate students who graduated from U.S. high schools, international undergraduate students planning to return to their home countries after completing their studies, and international graduate students or professionals.

Most of the writing center sources tend to define them as ESL students. Some sources use the

term second language writers; however, the term ESL students was adopted in this study because

it is more often used in the writing center literature. Tu7 responded to the question about

working with ESL students: "I have worked with the three categories of ESL students as a tutor

and instructor. The majority of my students were international graduate students I have about

seven, eight regular students most of them are international students."

Tutors' Perceptions

Ten tutors from both writing centers, CLASS Plus and Business Communication Center,

volunteered to have a 30-minute face-to-face interview. The researcher acquainted the tutors

with the purpose of the study and asked them to reveal their perceptions toward the role of the

writing center tutorials that were offered to ESL tutees in order to better assist these students that

represented about 30 % of the two writing centers' population. See appendix 3.

Positive perceptions. In general, tutors had high perceptions of their writing center

tutorials that benefit ESL tutees. Most tutors thought that ESL students did find writing center

tutorials very effective for their academic writing and language levels. Thanks to the tutor-tutee

relationship and the rapport established early in the beginning of any writing session, tutees

especially ESL students can however feel more self-confident and alleviate their language

anxiety. Thus, it would be a good learning moment when ESL tutees can learn in a tutoring

session what they could not know in the mainstream class. According to tutors, the writing center

is effective in improving all tutees, especially ESL tutees' academic and professional writing.

The emerging themes below delineated how effective the writing center was to ESL students.

Writing assistance. The first research question was investigated through the interview

questions (5, 6, 7, 8, and 11). Tutors assured the researcher that the writing center tutorials were

effective in improving ESL students' academic and professional writing. Asked about the writing assistance that ESL students often hope to receive from the writing center tutorials, tutors' responses varied according to their perceptions and experiences with those students. However, a major theme of tutors' perceptions of the effectiveness of writing center tutorials was "A-Z writing assistance." Students often sought for help at all stages of writing process ranging from brainstorming to style and organization issues. Tu1 said: "I think, back to your question, students come for all kinds of issues." In an interview conducted in CLASS Plus Writing Center, a tutor claimed that most researchers speculate on students say that they need grammar. He thinks that those students lack some terminology to express their intended meanings. They lack vocabulary to say for instance topic sentences, thesis sentences, paragraphs, coherence, development organization etc. In other terms, according to this tutor, most students do not know the terms for each aspect of writing. But when he explained that to them they would choose exactly the point they need some help with. Tu1: "So that is why you may read that most students just go to the writing center for help with grammar."

     Lower-order concerns. Interestingly, tutors interviewed believed that ESL tutees' most challenging writing needs were lower-order concerns, LOCs, including vocabulary, grammar, mechanics, and formatting. Tu2 said: "In my experience, most students come primarily for help with grammar." Tu7 strongly agreed on that point: "ESL students struggle with the various grammatical, mechanical, and syntactical rules of English. These struggles inhibit their ability to articulate the thoughts that are going on in their heads. I imagine this is an incredibly frustrating experience that leads several of them to resent writing." Tu3 maintained that "Often, ESL students seek help with 'grammar' Usually, what this means is addressing subject/verb agreement, article usage, and preposition usage." In addition, Tu3 believed that even the students

who are excellent in grammar often find English idiomatic expressions hard to understand

making "their work sound stilted." Moreover, another major challenge facing second language

writers, according to this tutor and others, comes from "understanding the flow of academic

English syntax, which we teach should alternate between long and short sentences connected

with many transitional elements." (Tu3).

This perception of tutors about the importance of lower-order concerns, including

particularly grammar, was in agreement with Blau and Hall's theory (2002) that LOCs are the

major writing needs of ESL students; the fact that necessitates using more directive style of

tutoring with those ESL students. All tutors interviewed confirmed that the lower-order concerns

are the major writing challenge facing ESL students, see appendix 6. For instance, one of the

tutors, Tu1, emphasized the challenge facing ESL students from the pressure they experienced

from their instructors: "The biggest challenges of ESL students that they are getting pressure

about their surface level errors from their professors." Furthermore, tutors perceived that ESL

students had different writing needs from their native peers and accordingly tutors should have

different agendas of tutoring those students. For instance, Tu1 said about that difference:

> The presumption is that the students we are sitting down with have never been to the
> writing center before and the student does not know what we do and why we do it and the
> role of the writing tutor is. And the student may come from an educational setting and
> tradition where whenever and whoever the tutor is, the tutor-student relationship may be
> different in the international students' mind than it is in the typical native speakers or
> American students' minds.

But Tu4 was the only one who opposed that difference existing between NES and NNES

students regarding their writing needs met in the writing center:

> ESL students, like mainstream students, often phrase their concerns in terms of grammar
> and flow. But I think they want the same kind of assistance that all writers want: for their
> voices to be heard and their ideas to be understood.

Higher-order concerns. On the contrary, despite such vigorous focus on the LOCs especially grammar in the writing center tutorials, most of the writing center manuals stressed that tutors should work on higher-order concerns first and they should not work first on grammar because they may end up editing ESL students' papers. According to those manuals, tutors need to work on HOCs including organization, coherence, and style first because those are the major writing problems that may hinder comprehensibility of a text. The director of the CLASS Plus writing center strongly agreed on this point (personal communication, December, 13, 2016):

> We always tell our staff if you have an ESL student who has a paper full of surface level errors, do not allow yourself to be distracted by those; read the paper first and look for the rhetoric of the paper and look at the organization of the paper and begin there. There is nothing to begin by spending a lot of time cleaning the errors and then look for the paper. Regarding grammar, when you keep reading the paper, you can get a pattern of grammatical errors and decipher those complicated errors. Because when you get to grammar, you need to address grammar mistakes that are frequent and you want to address grammar errors that interfere with conveying meaning-comprehension.

Asked about the benefits that ESL students could gain from the writing center tutorials, many tutors, about eight out of ten, maintained that such tutorials were effective in addressing most of ESL students' writing HOCs and helped to improve their writing skill. Explaining how those tutorials were effective, Tu2 said: "I address grammatical issues, because I know that this is usually their highest concern; however, I also try to explain higher-order concerns as well, pointing out the need for cohesion and clarity that go beyond grammar and punctuation." Tu4 also emphasized that the writing center was effective for ESL students in helping them overcome their grammatical challenges but she also stressed the importance of writing assistance offered in the writing center to both NES and NNES students in order to make tutorials more effective. This writing assistance is teaching ESL students how to get their message across to their readers and to pay considerable attention to American writing conventions: "all writers want: for their voices to be heard and their ideas to be understood."Another tutor, Tu3, focused on the writing

assistance offered to ESL students and helped to improve their future writing: "I believe that

ESL students' writing improves with our extra, focused instruction that is not possible in the

classroom."

Thus, most of the tutors interviewed perceived that the writing center tutorials were effective in

helping ESL students fix their grammar and other issues of LOCs. Tutors believed that this was

one of the benefits ESL students could gain from such tutorials. For example, Tu6 said:

> The international graduate students tend to struggle mostly with the surface level things.
> When I worked with undergrad, they tend to have difficulties mostly with organization as
> well. And that creates an additional challenge because they know that they need to work
> on their grammar. But they may not realize that they need to work on other thing too. So,
> I have to convince them to work on these more substantial matters of content and
> organization.

While some other tutors emphasized that ESLs may also struggle with writing in the

brainstorming stage. But this is not necessarily related directly to being ESL students. Assistance

with brainstorming is one of the services offered in the writing center because a lot of students

find it hard to come up with ideas and organize these ideas in a well interwoven and coherent

text.

Knowing new writing genres. According to many tutors, about 7 out of 10, writing

center tutorials were effective in assisting ESL students with "Adapting new genres to their own

needs as writers and meaning-makers, fear of long or complicated assignments (often unable to

break them down into manageable tasks), and writing with sources." (Tu4). Knowing the

challenges facing ESL students during the stages of the writing process can describe how the

writing center is exerting efforts to help those students overcome their challenges. In addition,

writing center tutorials, according to many tutors interviewed, were effective in assisting many

ESL students to overcome a huge language ability deficit in English especially with new genres

of writing that ESL students did not know before. Tu5 said: "Often, the students we saw couldn't

express themselves either in speaking or writing of English to make much sense." Some tutors

working in the Business Communications Center confirmed that the writing center tutorials

successfully improved ESL students' academic writing because these tutorials help the students

understand different genres of business writing that they may not be familiar with or did not

learn before in any of their previous English learning classes. For example, Tu3 contended that

"In a business context, common writing challenges facing ESL students include: 1) learning the

writing style—clarity, formality, etc.--appropriate for business communication, which probably

was not the language initially taught as "English" or "English writing," 2) learning the genre

expectations of business applications, such as memos, letters, and briefs, and 3) learning

confidence in talking about their writing."

Learning American writing conventions. Most of the tutors, nine out of ten, agreed

with the study assumption that writing center tutorials were effective in teaching ESL students

how to write in accordance with American writing conventions. For instance, Tu7 pointed out

that:

> ESL students usually want assistance with grammar and mechanics so they can convey
> their meaning effectively. They may also want help understanding the argumentative
> customs in the United States, as there are often cultural differences in how one should
> present his/her argument.

Due to the cultural differences and language variations, ESL students may struggle with the

English writing conventions that are different from their first language rules. The writing center

tutors efficiently help those students write academically and linguistically sound papers. Still, the

major mission of the writing center is, according to all tutors, to produce better writers rather

than better papers. This supported North's axiom: Our job is to produce better writers not better

writing." (North, 1984, p. 438).

All writing center tutors strongly agreed that the tutorials offered in the center were effective for any student of any academic and language background especially ESL students who are still learning English rhetorical conventions. Some of tutors supported the concept of the tutor being a "cultural informant" who helps her tutees better understand academic writing in general and American English writing style in particular. Accordingly, they believed that ESL students do actually benefit from those tutorials that assist them to improve their writing to meet the requirements of their majors. Tu4 said: "I think ESL students come away from effective writing center tutorials with more confidence and agency as writers. An incredibly successful tutorial will also arm them with strategies to thoughtfully deploy in the future." In addition, writing center tutorials can develop a wider lexicon on writing within the community of the writing center. They can also bring in concepts of genre and modeling of genre for students to consult (Tu5).

Individualized instruction. What made the writing center tutorials more effective was the individualized instruction that many tutors asserted. "Writing center tutorials have an advantage that regular classroom instruction does not: the tutor can individualize his/her instruction to each student that makes an appointment." (Tu7). As mentioned before, the the service offered at the writing center is a one-to-one writing assistance. The tutor can also assess ESL students' individual goals, writing challenges, and the relevant academic needs. Moreover, tutors can provide reasonable feedback that well fits those goals, challenges, and academic needs. Tu7 added that "The tutor can also provide a friendly, empathetic resource for ESL students, who often feel too intimidated to seek help from their teachers."

Regularity. One of the important emerging themes that most of the tutors emphasized was regularity. It is important factor that can help students improve their writing noticeably.

Nearly all tutors and writing center directors interviewed emphasized that regular tutoring

sessions could make a difference in ESL students' writing skill. Tu6 said:

> Two things: regularity which allows them to do that work in advance and it is also
> expectations, when your regular students develop reasonable expectations. If you do not
> have that anchor then whatever expectations you come with may or may not be met. So,
> both things are important.

Tu10 strongly agreed on the importance of regularity of attending writing center tutorials: "I

think that over repeated visits, they improve their skills in communication overall." Thus,

according to tutors, regularity, timely consulting the writing center, and having reasonable

expectations of what exactly the writing center can and cannot help with can surely make some

considerable improvements in ESL students writing skills.

ESL Students' Perceptions

After responding to the survey, 10 ESL graduate students were selected from those

students who provided their e-mails volunteering to sit with the researcher for an interview in

order to more deeply explore the study research questions. It was a structured interview;

however, the researcher sometimes asked a question for further clarification. The interview

started with inquiring about the students' experiences in the writing center and eliciting

information about their perceptions about the effective/ineffective strategies followed in the

writing center, their most common writing challenges, and their views on ways of improving

ESL tutees' academic writing and tutors' training in order to better incorporate ESL clientele.

Interview responses were added to the survey responses to understand the similarities and

differences between the two groups of participants in terms of their perceptions about writing

center tutorials. The first research question was investigated through the student interview

questions: (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11, see appendix 4).

The ten ESL students were interviewed one at a time and face-to-face. All students were given a sheet of paper with the interview questions to have a quick look at them before they began to respond to the questions. Before getting started, the researcher briefly introduced the study explaining it to the interviewees to make them familiar with the study. The interview settings were in the main library and the students' union. These interviews were audiotaped with the full consent of the participants. Each student was coded as (St) and given a number.

Regular consultation of the writing center. Most ESL students interviewed, about nine out of ten, said that they always go to the writing center to seek some writing assistance regarding grammar and other LOCs. The reasons for their visits varied based on their writing assignments during a semester. Some of them mentioned that they go there once a semester, some said twice, and some of them said that they go twice every week seeking assistance with their assignments. St1 said: "Yes, so many times let's say in 3 years about 50 times." St2 said:

> Yes, I almost go there every week. In fact, it depends on my courses' assignments. Some weeks, I go there 2-3 times, while in others I just go once. So I think it depends on how much homework I have in a single week.

St3 made it much clearer: "Yes, I did. In fact, I have never turned in a paper before attending a tutorial."

Lower-order concerns - grammar. ESL students' perceptions of effectiveness of writing center tutorials were in agreement with their perceptions explored through the student survey and were also in line with those of the tutors. Students thought that those tutorials were effective in improving particularly their grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary, the LOCs and organization, style, and coherence, the HOCs generally. ESL students reported the same writing issues that the tutors discussed as the writing assistance they frequently needed in the writing center. Asked about the most frequent writing assistance that they sought to receive from the

writing center, most of the students, about 9 out of 10, indicated that grammar was the most important writing issue or challenge they faced. St2 emphasized that writing center tutorials were so important to her academic success. She explained:

> I think I want them to assist me in my academic writing. Specifically, I need them to check some of the grammar errors I might have in my writing. Also, I sometimes ask them to check whether or not my sentences are clear and to the point.

St3 mentioned that "Grammar and construction issues" were more important to his academic writing than anything else.

Similarly, some ESL students saw a strong connection between grammar and clarity. They thought that if their grammar was correct, their ideas would be quite understandable. That was the reason why they consulted the writing center. St6 explained: "Checking for grammar and ideas if they are connected to each other. Also, sometimes, I ask for new words I am provided by tutor and how to use them." Another student indicated that:

> I usually want them to check my paper for any structural or cultural mistakes. To clarify, sometimes a sentence may sound correct in my head when in fact it delivers a meaning that is not similar to what I want to say.

She believed that the writing center tutorials were effective in helping her correct the structural mistakes of her paper.

However, some students criticized the tutors' focus on grammar neglecting other writing issues. For instance, St1 said: "The most important thing they do not care about improving your writing skills they focus on grammar mistakes most of the time. Rarely, I find one who thinks of what I am reading with him." St9 added something to grammar: "To correct the mistakes grammatically and to fix the meaning from my own language to the English." This student indicated that he had some influence of his first language on English writing but he did not use the term negative influence. I discussed this point with a tutor who pointed out that some ESL

students are not quite familiar with writing terminology like topic sentence, coherence, thesis sentence. So they always say that what they need some assistance with is grammar while they mean some other writing issues. Based on that assumption, the researcher tried to be sure that he knew what each participant meant. St5, being a graduate of the English department, well understood writing terminology and correctly used them, said about what she needed from those tutorials: "I want them to point out my surface level errors as well as giving me suggestions on topic sentences and my arguments." Another ESL graduate student doing a Ph.D. in English added something important that can be categorized under LOCs: idiomatic expressions. He explained how the writing center was effective because: "I talked to the mentors about developing my ideas, about writing mechanic, [sic] about grammar, and also about idiomatic expressions (especially when I translate literary works into English)." Using proper idiomatic expressions is one of the biggest challenges facing English Language Learners. This level of collocation meaning is difficult to any ELLs to understand without consulting a dictionary or asking a native speaker.

Self-correction. Most of the students interviewed emphasized that tutors helped them achieve their objectives regarding writing academically sound papers on one hand and improving their writing skills on the other hand. For instance, St3 admitted that his writing had improved as a result of the effective tutorials he received in the writing center: "Yes, I have exceedingly improved my writing. They help me to correct my mistakes and to rewrite the incorrect sentence or paragraph in better way." He did not indicate how they helped him rewrite his paragraphs. This can be considered as sort of editing or proofreading that is not a part of the writing center service. Thus, many students indicated that the writing center helped them achieve their writing goals by making them learn from their mistakes and showing them how to self-correct them; that

is the real role of the writing center. St6, however, criticized the tutors' role as a mentor not a teacher. He thought that tutors should answer all of his questions and correct all of his mistakes: "Sometimes, I did not achieve my work because tutor was not good for explaining my errors. He should help me by answer all of my questions, and by re-explain what I did not understand."

Effective writing strategies. Beside their satisfaction and positive perceptions of the writing center tutorials and the writing assistance offered, including LOCs and HOCs, ESL students favored some strategies that were followed by tutors and students and considered these strategies as effective and helpful to second language writers. These effective strategies, according to ESL students, included reading aloud, asking tutees information-eliciting questions, allowing tutees enough time for self-correction, reorganizing ideas, and paraphrasing. St1 explained: "I like reading aloud and discussing the ideas not just the grammar, Is the best methods." St2 reiterated the same idea: "For me, the most useful part is the reading aloud part. When the tutor read my paper aloud, I usually find the errors before correcting it. I can figure out these errors when the sentences sound off. Another helpful part is explaining the writing errors to me after correcting it. This way helps me a lot in not only identifying the problem but also understanding it. Also, this way allows me to avoid having the same mistakes in my writing." In addition, St6 added something essential: "Sometimes my tutor helps me improve my writing by providing suggestions on how to construct a sentence or by writing a sample sentence to show how the writing can be improved." She was probably depicting when a tutor may utilize what is called modeling that simply means a tutor may help a tutee understand a flawed part of a paper, an incorrect sentence for instance, and write a similar one with a correct form so as to help the tutee learn that pattern.

Furthermore, the students interviewed had positive perceptions of the strategies followed in the writing center such as self-correction and paraphrasing. They thought that such strategies were what made those tutorials successful because the strategies engaged tutees more and made them equal peers collaborating with their tutors on their own papers without giving up the right of their authorship to tutors. For instance, St7 explained why he liked the self-correction strategy: "Allowing tutees enough time for self-correction is the helpful strategy because it can give the tutor an opportunity to check my progress and correct me if I need any correction." Paraphrasing was also considered to be a good strategy to ESL students. St8 indicated: "For me, I like paraphrasing. They are really helpful strategies because they allow me to observe my own mistakes." Many students agreed that paraphrasing was a good strategy. The writing center tutors can paraphrase any part of a text in order to help students better understand, for instance a professor's assignment prompt or to assist tutees to convey their ideas in another way that is more appropriate and understandable. However, such paraphrasing should be carefully used because it may confuse some ELLs.

Ineffective writing strategies. Nevertheless, some students had negative perceptions and attitudes toward some strategies followed by tutors. For example, some students did not consider reading aloud as a successful strategy of tutoring. They thought that it was wasting time of the tutorial. St8 explained: "I think reading aloud is not an effective technique when the tutors start to read aloud, this makes me nervous because I don't want to share my writing with everybody in the room." This perception of reading aloud followed in the writing center was also viewed by some tutors as time consuming. Tu1 explained:

> I think that reading aloud that all writing centers are using is not effective in some situations. But working with students who have not spoken English for very long, reading aloud is not an effective strategy because of language anxiety. And NNES may stumble over some words and they think that NES are listening to their mistakes and

mispronunciation right now. So it is very hard to them. So it is a waste of time. However, if there is someone who is a little further along, reading aloud is effective to them.

Regarding the strategy of information-eliciting questions, some students liked this strategy and believed that it was helpful while other students thought that it was time wasting. For instance, St2 said:

First, they tend to ask me questions about the assignments. This usually takes more than 10 minutes of the tutoring time. The tutors ask questions about the course, the instructors and sometimes the class itself. They can find this information on my appointment request.

Students did not understand those questions were posed for establishing rapport between the tutors and their tutees.

Brainstorming is an important writing assistance that can be offered in the writing center. However, no student mentioned that she sought to receive that kind of assistance. Most of the students, according to tutors interviewed, came to the writing center when the assignment was due and they had passed the stage of brainstorming. St5 added something that was a part of the tutor's role but no one else had mentioned about brainstorming as an effective tool in the writing center: "The tutor's comments motivate me to review my arguments and help me to improve my writing. They also help to me come up with new ideas." Most of the students complained that they did not find sufficient time to consult the writing center earlier. According to them, professors may add or remove any part of their assignment or change a part of their schedule before submission. That was probably the reason that made some of them make last-minute appointments in the writing center.

The tutors as a cultural informant. Some students added something important; the cultural issues that influence writing. They emphasized that the role of a tutor is not an editor but a cultural informant. They were in agreement with what the tutors mentioned that

any tutor should be a "cultural informant" who is able to help ESL students better understand the American culture that is related to writing and also affects clarity of a text written by a nonnative speaker. This supports what Blau and Hall (2002) confirmed that a tutor can be a mentor of the American culture. In addition, Blau and Hall (2002) claimed that the tutor being a "cultural informant" can meet the needs of the students. According to Blau and Hall's study, this tutor's role of "cultural informant" motivates students of different cultures and increases collaboration.

Writing improvement. In general, most of students interviewed, about 90 %, had positive perceptions of writing center tutorials. They believed that those tutorials were helpful in improving their writing generally and academic writing particularly. Some of them thought that the writing skills that they gained from these tutorials would be transferable and would help their future careers. For instance, St1 emphasized: "My writing has improved a lot. Finally, this place is really a good place for all international students." Although St2 had a somewhat positive perception of the writing center: "To some extent, yes. The tutors have helped me improve my overall academic writing." she added that she sometimes felt that she did not obtain any benefits from the writing center: "Because of the lack of experience some tutors might have." This point will be discussed in detail when talking about research question 4. Nearly all students' perceptions of effectiveness of the writing center tutorials were concentrated around the concept of writing improvement that they experienced after a "regular" consultation of the writing center. For instance, St4 emphasized: "Of course my writing has improved due to learning from mistakes and providing me with new ideas that are appropriate in the context. In addition, I did not have tutorials in the writing center because I just go there to edit my papers for a short time."

Thus, the ten ESL students interviewed were on the same page with their tutors regarding their perceptions of the real improvement that occurred in their writing as a result of the assistance that they received in the writing center. Asked about such improvement, St5 explained: "Yes, I think my writing has improved due to the tutorials. The tutor's feedback on cohesion and development of ideas have helped me to write better papers." Even if each student focused on a certain type of that writing assistance, most of them admitted that they were experiencing some improvement in their academic writing. This improvement included grammar, mechanics, clarity, coherence, and some culture-based writing issues. Many students favored a lot of tutoring strategies such as paraphrasing, modeling, reading aloud: "The reading aloud strategy, which is not always effective, apparently has made me realize the correlation between writing and speaking. On my own, I often use this strategy to detect problems in my writing." and "Of course, many mistakes disappeared. I review the paper after I corrected it with tutor in order not to make same mistakes next time." (St6). The same idea was reiterated by other students: "I think my writing has enhanced so far because as I mentioned I usually learn from my mistakes and not making the same mistakes again." (St7).

Collaborative learning environment. According to all students, the writing center is a collaborative learning environment as was discussed in the literature review. All students including ESL students can construct their learning in a peer tutoring setting where tutors are peers not teachers. Most of ESL students thought that the writing center was a good place that well incorporated international students and better accommodated them: "…a very important part at any university because of helping internationals or natives." (St9). The same attitude was adopted by approximately all interviewees:

> Although I have not used the writing center to its full potential, I believe it is a critical center to have in any department that have international students. Because from a personal experience, no matter how many times I revise my paper, it won't sound genuine and minor mistakes will be there. The writing center does help with this issues. (St10).

Thus, most of ESL students confirmed that the writing center was an important part of academia. They believed that it was not only for fixing their composition but also for reshaping their ideas and minds.

Summary of Research Question One

The first research question of this study was intended to explore the tutors and ESL students' perceptions of the effectiveness of writing center tutorials. After analyzing survey responses, results indicated that there was no significant difference between tutors and ESL students in terms of their perceptions of the effectiveness of writing center tutorials. In other words, tutors and ESL tutees had similar perceptions of the effectiveness of the writing center tutorials with a few exceptions.

ESL students and tutors' perceptions of effectiveness of writing center tutorials were consistent and were in agreement with their survey responses. Students and tutors believed that those tutorials were effective in improving grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary and organization, style, and coherence. ESL students and tutors indicated that grammar was the most important writing issue or challenge for which ESL tutees often sought to receive assistance from the writing center. In addition, ESL students and their tutors expressed that writing skills gained from writing center tutorials could be transferable and helpful to ESL tutees' future careers. Most tutors emphasized that ESL students benefit by the writing center tutorials in all stages of writing from brainstorming to style and organization issues. Furthermore, nearly all tutors and writing center directors interviewed emphasized that regular tutoring sessions could also make a difference in ESL students' writing skills. Accordingly, regularity, timely consulting the writing center, and having reasonable expectations of the writing center can surely make some considerable improvements in ESL students writing. Thus, most of the students and tutors

interviewed had positive perceptions of writing center tutorials. They believed that those tutorials were helpful with improving writing skills.

Research Question Two: How do university instructors perceive the impact of writing center tutorials on ESL students' academic writing?

The perceptions of the university professors who volunteered to participate were investigated to better explore the role of the writing center and its effectiveness in improving their ESL students' academic writing. Professors' perceptions were investigated through a 12-question structured interview, see appendix 5. An invitation was sent to more than 20 university professors to participate in the study. Only ten out of the 21 professors who received invitations agreed to participate. Five of them were professors of the English department, three from College of Education, Curriculum and Instruction department, one professor from the Geosciences department, and one instructor teaching English Language and Composition. Those university professors actually had ESL students in their classes before. Fortunately, three of them were former writing tutors and then directors in different writing centers. So their experiences were good assets to the study. The professors were provided with a packet of a consent form, the purpose of the study, and the research questions attached to the interview questions. Table 13 provided the summary of the demographic information of the university professors who participated in this study.

Table 13
Demographic Characteristics of Participating Instructors

Characteristics	*n*	%
Gender		
Female	3	30

Table 13 (Cont.)

Characteristics	*n*	%
Gender		
Male	7	70
Specialty		
English	5	50
Curriculum and Instruction	3	30
Geosciences	1	10
English composition	1	10

Perceptions of University Instructors

The researcher chose the ten university professors because they accepted the researcher's invitation to participate in the study. The researcher was quite sure that those professors had ESL students in their classes before. Each professor was coded (Prof) and given a number.

   Positive perceptions of the writing center. All professors were enthusiastic about the study and expressed their strong desire to help to provide the researcher and the writing center with their views, suggestions, and even their participation in any workshops or any cooperative work that can better accommodate ESL students. They had good attitudes toward the writing center and high expectations of their ESL students. However, some of them mentioned that they did not receive any invitation to attend any workshop or presentation about the services offered in the writing center. For instance, Prof3 indicated: "No, never. I've never received any sort of notice. I've never seen an advertisement on the Newswire or any kind of feature on the Newswire or like someone talking about the work they are doing at the writing center." But all the professors said that they sometimes received reports from the writing center on their NES and ESL students' tutoring sessions: "No, I

have just received reports. I did not have anyone from the writing center contacted me." (Prof5).

Some professors viewed such reports as productive: "Excellent. They are useful to me" (Prof6).

Some ESL students interviewed admitted that they even refused to inform their professors of their

writing center tutorials fearing that their professors may consider that as plagiarism or devaluate

their writing.

Most of the professors pointed out that they did not refer any of their ESL students to the

writing center. They explained that they had never made that a requirement of their classes.

Because they felt really uncomfortable about making any requirement for the international

students to go to the writing center. To some of them, this referral could be a form of racism.

One of the professors said that he used to refer students when necessary but in an implicit way:

"I refer all my students at University of Arkansas to the writing center not individually but I

make that as a blanket statement; I say that when you need help, this is where you need to go."

(Prof9). While Prof4 had a different view about the role of the writing center. She strongly

believed that this center was important for both NES and NNES as well: "To be honest with you,

I do not recommend the writing center only for the nonnative speakers, I also recommend it for

people that simply need writing assistance and getting some of their technical writing up to

standard." However, only one professor mentioned that he made consulting the writing center a

class requirement for ESL students. He justified that required referral to the writing center saying

that ESL students needed writing assistance as their native peers did. They also needed,

according to this professor, constant feedback and that feedback was better to be received

through an individualized instruction that was an integral part of the writing center. Prof4 stated:

> If the students demonstrate considerable deficiencies in their writing, then they would
> benefit from the feedback of a tutor. So you would do the same thing you would develop
> an individualized instruction plan and make the writing center visits an integral part work
> for the course.

Lower-order concerns. Asked about the most common writing challenges that encountered ESL students and required writing assistance from the writing center, the professors' views considerably varied. Some professors claimed that grammar and other LOCs were the most challenging writing issues to ESL students and that was probably the main reason that could be behind their referral to the writing center. Prof7 pointed out: "I have seen the support the writing center has on student papers. It helps students with structure, grammar errors, and composition of research papers."

Rhetorical conventions. Some other professors about 50 % confirmed that the writing center is successful in the rhetorical conventions that represented big concerns to some ESL students. According to these professors, rhetorical conventions were problems to ESL students more than grammatical structures. The professors that adopted this view maintained that such rhetorical conventions are different from those of ESL students' own first language would have larger impact on   the quality of their writing. Prof2 explained: "The problem of English writing and rhetoric conventions is that in English we need to stay with only one theme within the same paragraph. On the other hand, it is not the case in other languages."

In addition, some professors, who formerly worked as writing center's directors, emphasized that there is a general perception that all ESL students' need is the grammatical help. In fact, this is a false perception as was discussed with one of the two writing centers' directors before. According to those who adopted this view, ESL students tend to say "My only problem is grammar." Because that is all they only know to talk about. But there is really frequent larger issues and that most ESL students, some professors and tutors believed have slightly more problems with conventions than NES have. It is quite evident that it is a misconception to think that most of ESL students' only problems are conventions and grammar. They have some

problems with those but that is not the only problem. Prof1 explained: "But I would not say that their errors are exclusively involved in conventions that they are. They are not equally balanced- the balance between rhetorical conventions concerns and grammatical issues." However, their major problem has to do with the notion of indirectness of discourse rather than directness of discourse. This concept of different discourse was discussed in detail in the literature review. American academic prose uses direct discourse; the American writers make their point and then they prove that point. In general, many ESL students are sort of circular in their writing or some of them are back and forth around their point. Prof1 claimed:

> Frequently, that will be politeness conventions. They feel as they need to kind of be in the background of their prose rather than in sort of forceful indirect and in the front of their prose as American academic discourse tends to value.

Nonthreatening learning environment and writing improvements. In general, all the professors interviewed were in agreement with the tutors in terms of having high and positive perceptions of the effectiveness of the writing center tutorials offered to ESL students. Most of the professors about 90 % believed that there was a certain kind of improvement that occurred in their ESL students. For instance, Prof5 had high expectations of the writing center and its role: "I think that the service is effective; I've seen tremendous improvements." The professors also added that the writing center can help create a nonthreatening environment in which ESL students in particular can better learn. "So they can feel safe about learning without being judged." (Prof6). This was in line with Krashen's Affective Filter according to which an ELL can learn better when the Affective Filter is low or in other terms, when the atmosphere of instruction is not tense. Prof9 commented that the tutor-tutee relationship can be better than that between a teacher and her students: "So, it is a wonderful relationship much better than that in a class."

Regular visits and writing improvement. Moreover, most professors agreed that what really helped ESL students was repetition. In other words, usual or repeat visits to the writing center really help improve ESL students' writing skills rather than any individual visit. According to them, what really helps ESL students is regular visits and getting the same feedback on how to improve their writing with more details, offering more evidence, avoiding particular syntactic errors, increasing their vocabulary, being more mindful of audience, using formal language etc. Whatever advice they will get from their tutors, it should be consistent and tutors should have the students exposed to that feedback. Thus, it eventually succeeds in enhancing ESL students' writing. "I say that repetition is a key. But students should make themselves available at the writing center more regularly." (Prof4). Another professor explained:

> Yes, I can see improvement in my students. Maybe at the end of the semester and you will see that your students have learned something. It's very encouraging to see at the end of the semester a great change compared to the first draft of the first project you gave to your students. I think that is exactly the realistic way of real-world learning or hands-on learning. They actually do improve but it's a matter of time.

However, the professors interviewed thought that such improvement was gradual and most of it was still related to grammar and LOCs issues more than HOCs like organization, style, and other major writing conventions that made second language writers distinct from their native peers. That was why Prof2 and others suggested that there should be more focus on rhetorical conventions:

> I would say we need more focus on rhetorical structures, you know, grammatical errors are much smaller. Tutors should pay attention to grammatical errors but rhetorical structures will make a huge difference. And once students improve rhetorical structures, they will be better writers.

Summary of Research Question Two

The ten university professors interviewed were in agreement with ESL students and tutors having positive perceptions of the writing center tutorials. Most of the professors pointed

out that they did not refer any of their ESL students to the writing center. Yet, they recommended them to consult the writing center. To them, the writing center is a good learning environment for ESL students where they can learn what they cannot learn in the mainstream classes. Some professors emphasized that the writing center was important to ESL students who needed writing assistance as their native peers did. They also needed constant feedback from an individualized instruction that was an integral part of the writing center.

The professors confirmed that they found some improvements in their ESL students' writing. Still, this improvement was slow and concentrated on grammar and LOCs more than HOCs issues like organization, style, and other major writing conventions that distinguish ESL writers from their native peers. Although some professors stated that grammar was important to ELLs, some other professors confirmed that English rhetorical conventions were problems to ESL students more than grammatical structures. They maintained that such rhetorical conventions that differed from those of ESL students' first language would influence the quality and comprehensibility of their writing. Thus, the professors suggested that there should be more focus on rhetorical conventions. Moreover, some professors, who formerly worked as writing center's directors, refuted the misconception that all ESL students' need is grammatical help. According to those professors, ESL students may not know the other writing terms to better describe their writing problems. Thus, they may say that their only problem is grammar. Consequently, there should be, according to those professors, a good balance between grammar and rhetorical conventions when assisting ESL students in the writing center.

Research Question Three: Do tutors and ESL tutees have differences in terms of the general perceptions of directive and nondirective approaches?

This question is related to the tutors and ESL students' perceptions of the best tutoring approach that should be followed with ESL students. The perceptions of tutors and ESL students were investigated to better decide which tutoring approach, directive or non-directive, is the best tutoring method that should be followed with ESL clientele. For instance, tutors' perceptions were explored through survey questions (i.e., Q21-Q31, see appendix 1) and three questions (i.e., 9, 10, and 12, see Appendix 3) in Tutor Interviews as well as on-site observations of tutoring sessions. For survey questions, there were 6 items (i.e., Q21-Q26) related to non-directive tutoring approach and 5 items (i.e., Q27-Q31) related to directive tutoring approach. Only one item (i.e., Q29) was negatively worded. Therefore, it was reverse scored before data was analyzed. ESL Students' perceptions were studied through survey questions (21-31, see appendix 2), interview questions (4, 5, 6, 7, and 8, see appendix 4), and observations of tutoring sessions.

Quantitative Results

Non-directive tutoring approach. The same sets of participants (i.e., 89 ESL students and 23 tutors) were analyzed. The descriptive statistics from both groups that reported the set of survey questions (i.e., Q21 to Q26) which related to non-directive approaching method are shown in Table 14.

An independent-sample *t*-test was conducted to evaluate the perceptions about non-directive tutoring approach between ESL students and tutors. The results indicated that the mean perceptions of non-directive approaching method for ESL students ($M = 24.146$, $SD = 2.998$) was slightly higher than the mean perceptions for tutors ($M = 23.217$, $SD = 3.190$) and it was statistically nonsignificant, $t(110) = 1.307$, $p = .194$. The 95% confidence interval for the

differences in means was quite wide, ranging from -.479 to 2.337. The eta square index (i.e.,

effect size) of .015 indicated a small effect. Figure 2 shows the distributions of the two groups.

Table 14

Descriptive Statistics of 6-item Perceptions about Non-directive Approaching Method for Both ESL Students and Tutors

Group	n	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
ESL student	89	24.15	3.00	.120	-.663
Tutor	23	23.22	3.19	.602	-.814

Figure 2. Boxplots of the scale scores for ESL students and tutors on the perceptions about tutors applying nondirective approaches in tutoring session. The scale included 6 items on 5-point Likert-type scale with possible score ranged from 6 to 30.

Directive tutoring approach. The descriptive statistics from both groups that reported

the set of survey questions (i.e., Q27 to Q31) which related to directive approaching method are
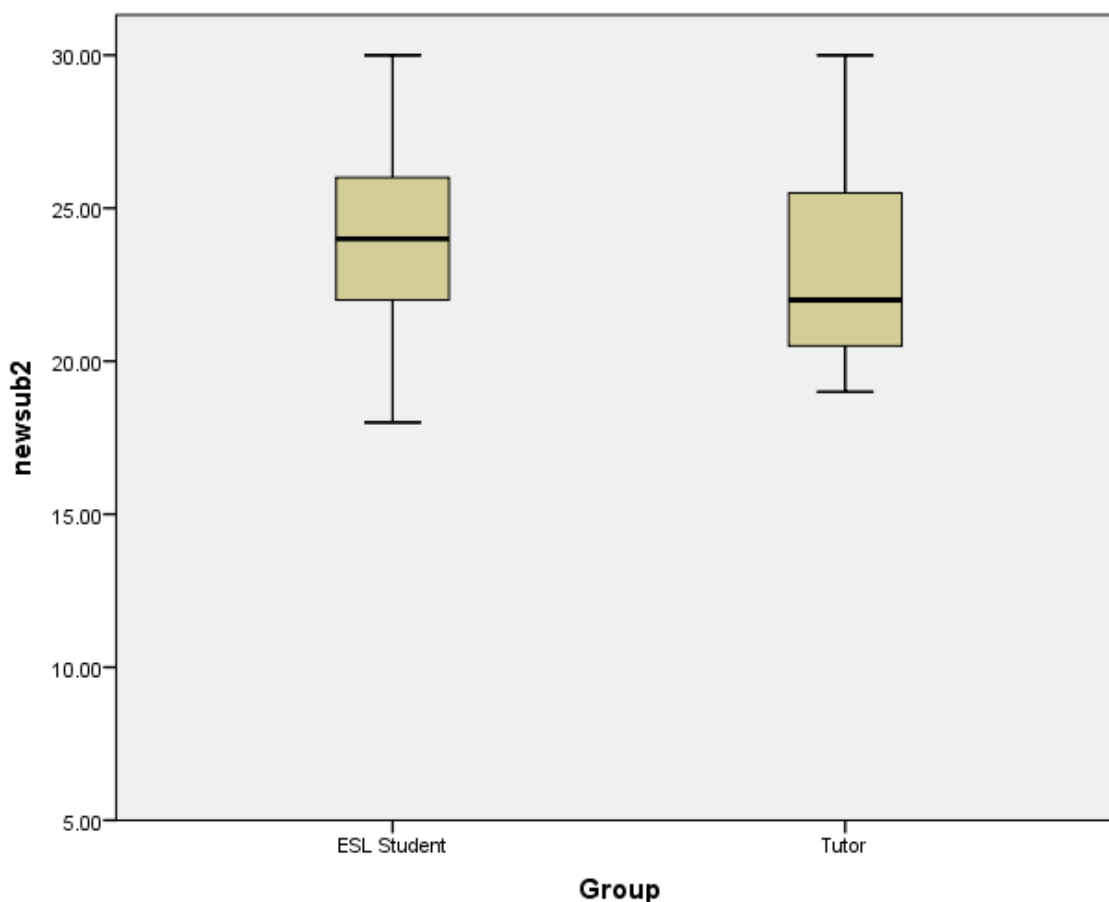
shown in Table 15. To evaluate the perceptions about directive tutoring approach between ESL

students and tutors, again, an independent-sample t-test was conducted. The test was significant,

t (110) = 6.481, p < .001. The perceptions of directive tutoring method in ESL students' group

(M = 17.663, SD = 2.747), on average, were higher than the tutors' mean perceptions (M =

13.217, SD = 3.580) in using directive tutoring approach. The 95% confidence interval for the

differences in means was quite small, ranging from 3.086 to 5.804. The eta square index (i.e.,

effect size) of .276 indicated a very large effect. Figure 3 shows the distributions of the two

groups.

Table 15
Descriptive Statistics of 5-item Perceptions about Directive Approaching Method for Both ESL Students and Tutors

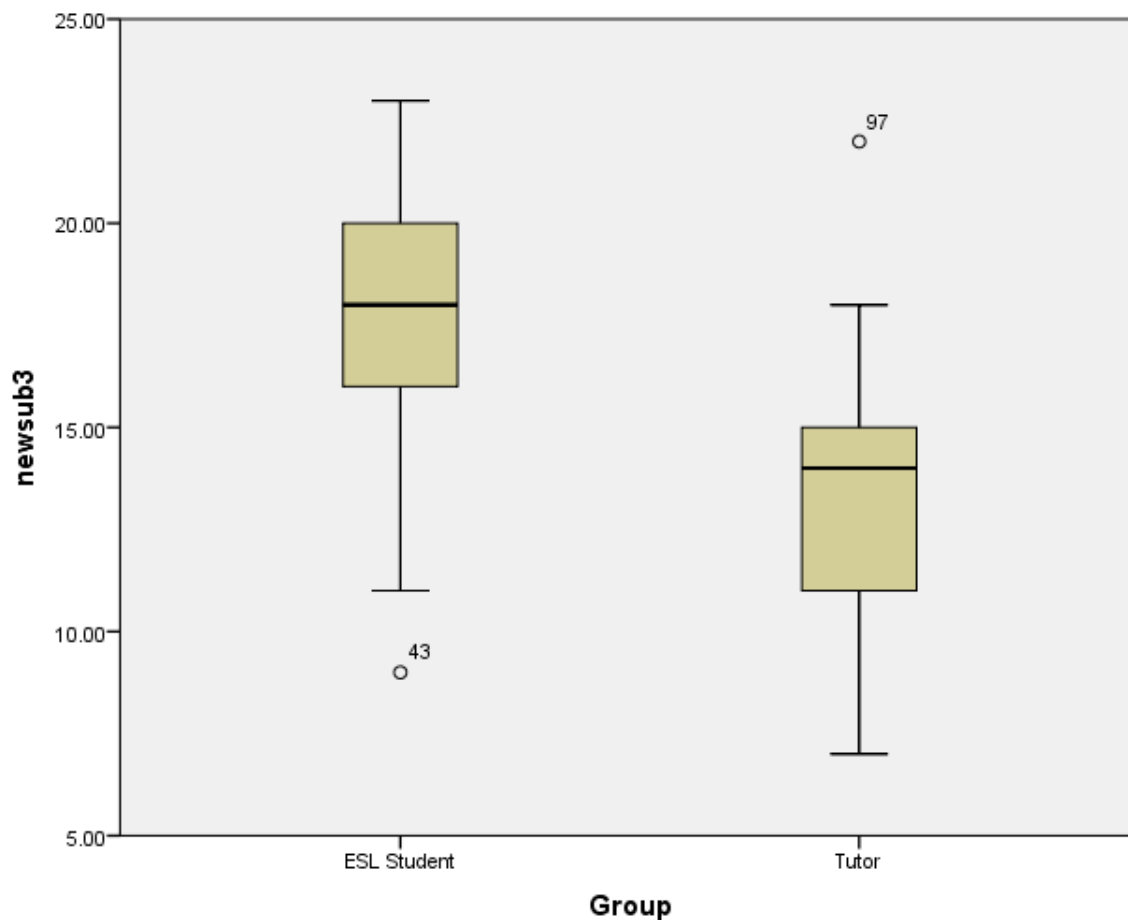| Group	n	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
ESL student	89	17.66	2.75	-.581	.321
Tutor	23	13.22	3.58	.261	.557

Figure 3. Boxplots of the scale scores for ESL students and tutors on the perceptions about tutors applying directive approaches in tutoring session. The scale included 5 items on 5-point Likert-type scale with possible score ranged from 5 to 25.

Qualitative Findings

The researcher utilized face-to-face interviews in order to obtain more in-depth findings from the participants. Ten tutors and ten ESL students were randomly selected from those participants who were willing to have a 30-minute structured interview with the researcher.

Tutors' Perceptions of Directive and Non-Directive Tutoring Approaches

Apart from the debate at the writing center about the necessary commitment to the non-directive tutoring approach with ESL clientele, according to which both tutor and tutee should work collaboratively, this non-directive approach in reality was viewed as ineffective by many

writing center tutors and directors as well as ESL students who have specific academic needs due to their language and cultural differences.

Balance between directive and non-directive tutoring approaches. Most of the tutors interviewed, about 80 %, recommended a degree of flexibility and reasonable balance between directive and non-directive approaches to better help ESL students. Accordingly, tutors interviewed in this study who adopted this balance were in line with Blau & Hall (2002) and the other advocates of a balanced use of both directive and nondirective approaches like Truesdell (2007), Corbett (2008), and Shamoon and Burns (1995). Those scholars encouraged and urged tutors to pay greater attention to higher order concerns rather than lower order concerns. During interviews, most tutors emphasized that directive instruction can be effectively practiced through modeling. Therefore, tutors should look for patterns to demonstrate to their tutees and encourage them to learn such repetitive patterns.

Directive/non-directive approach based on language ability. Although tutors supported the non-directive way of tutoring through their survey responses, in their interviews, most tutors emphasized the necessity of a balanced use of both tutoring modes to better assist ESL students based on the tutorial situation ahead of the tutor. For example, Tu6 asserted that:

> That's a difficult question because I think any tutoring session should have some balance between directive and nondirective tutoring behavior. And with my regular students, there is another component we have a relationship, we have expectations so it is very easy to switch from being directive to nondirective and back again.

Thus, tutors explained that they used their situational judgment to specify a suitable mode of tutoring in the proper time of the tutorial and based on the language proficiency of the tutees. This view was in agreement with the literature review when suggesting that the non-directive approach was not always effective and stressed a degree of flexibility between the two modes of

tutoring. For instance, Tu1 emphasized that: "I think that it just depends on the situation and the

need within a particular session." The same concepts were adopted by Tu5:

> Direct vs. non-direct depended on the language ability in English of my students. Also playing a factor was a student's willingness to discuss rhetorical concepts. This willingness meant exposure to and interest in discussing. Whether I was direct or indirect in my tutoring depended largely on the language ability of students as well as their goals in the session. If the level was low, there was little I could do to explain why something needed to be fixed I don't speak Arabic.

Consequently, tutors clarified when exactly they could make a switch between a directive

and non-directive approach. They emphasized that the students' skills and language abilities

were important factors that specify the mode of tutoring. If tutees, especially ESL students,

according to tutors, struggled with something related to a linguistic or cultural issue that they

were not familiar with, here the tutors should step in to help those students out. Tu1 explained:

> I always try to when I am going to move in the directive space; I move there when I feel like the student I am tutoring is sort of stalling or does not seem to be reaching his/her ideas because the well of ideas is dry so I need to help provide some water.

Nearly most tutors emphasized that their big concern was helping their tutees get their message

to their readers. If ESL students failed to come up with an understandable message, tutors tried to

switch to the directive mode in order to help them put their tutees back on the right track again.

Tu7 explained:

> Which approach I take depends on what I perceive to be the student's relative skill level. If the student struggles to form a coherent sentence, I will take a more directive approach. If the student has only minor errors, I will take a more nondirective approach. With either approach, however, I always try to give the student multiple options and allow him/her to make the final decision.

However, tutors asserted that they were also committed to the ethics of the writing center;

they did not take the authorship right away from their tutees: "I think that during the session the

goal is for the student to maintain control of the writing, to keep the ownership, and maintain

control of decision making, to maintain voice. My big concern when helping any student is these ideas still yours or yours and mine?'" (Tu1).

Among the interviewed tutors, a couple of tutors adopted the directive approach completely. They believed that such type of tutoring was effective for ESL students. Their philosophy behind this belief was that ESL students were still learning a language that probably was different from their own home languages. And based on that view, ESL students needed to receive a direct explanation of any piece of information that they struggled with. "The directive approach is most effective when the individual tutee is very insecure about his or her language or writing capabilities." (Tu2). According to those tutors, the directive mode was most effective with limited time and more errors in a single paper: "The directive approach is more effective when time to revise is limited and when the majority of the sentences feature numerous errors in punctuation, grammar, and spelling." (Tu3). But this last view was unethical and considered to be a sort of violation of the writing center rules and regulations.

In addition, those few tutors who adopted the directive approach thought that this mode of tutoring was much better when students had written a piece of writing that was full of grammatical issues blocking comprehension. However, they believed that directive approach was needed only in the beginning. Later on when tutors are sure that ESL students have made progress in their learning process, they can use nondirective approach. Tu6 affirmed:

> If you gradually wean ESL students away from the directive approach, for instance, in the beginning of the semester, you are directive with them, as you see them drive away from the directive approach. At the end of the semester, or at the end of the year, they're more able to look at their own work and figure out their own errors.

Non-directive approach is ineffective for ESL writers. However, none of the tutors interviewed mentioned that the non-directive approach that is strongly recommended by most of the writing center pedagogical manuals was effective to ESL students. Tu8 viewed that: "In

theory, nondirective tutoring is wonderful but not for nonnative speakers because they do not

know how it would look like anyway. So what is better for NES may not be as the same for ESL

students." Thus, tutors thought that if ESL students know what to do, then they will do it

properly. Furthermore, tutors emphasized that they should not treat ESL writing problems as

errors but as differences. Accordingly, ESL students can be easily provided with suitable

services. Thus, according to the tutors interviewed, the non-directive tutoring approach that was

pedagogically recommended for the writing center was not fully followed in reality. Most tutors

mentioned that they either used the directive approach or they made a balance between the two

modes of tutoring.

ESL Students' Perceptions of Directive and Non-Directive Tutoring Approaches

ESL students' perceptions were in agreement with their survey responses. The students

interviewed can be categorized into two groups regarding their perceptions of the two modes of

tutoring approach: the first group, about 60 % of the interviewed students, perceived the non-

directive tutoring approach and the second group, 40 % chose the directive approach. This result

indicated a difference between students and tutors in terms of the perceptions of tutoring

approaches. While tutors were supportive of creating a balance between the two modes of

tutoring, ESL students chose the two extremes of the directive/non-directive continuum.

Non-Directive tutoring approach. As for students who chose the non-directive

approach, they believed that tutors were equal peers not teachers. Accordingly, they should have

an egalitarian relationship with tutors. For instance, St9 put it: "Their role is to achieve their goal

which is helping students not teaching them." While St10 emphasized that the tutors' role was

insignificant; they only show tutees minor mistakes: "Usually I revise my paper many times

before I take it to the writing center therefore when I go there, there are few mistake that I miss

so they tend to underline it and we change it together." So it was clear that the more the students

consider tutors as peers, the more they prefer the non-directive tutoring approach.

   Self-correction. Many ESL students interviewed, about 60 %, supported the non-

directive approach. They asserted that what they needed from tutors was to give them enough

time to find out their mistakes and try to self-correct them. This concept is the real sense of non-

directive tutoring approach according to which a tutor is a facilitator, an equal peer, and a writing

assistant rather than a teacher, a grammar checker, or an editor. St2 indicated:

> I usually go to the writing center to learn from my mistakes. The best way for me learn is
> to find the error before someone else can find it for me. This way increases my self-
> confidence and motivates me to write more.

Students also pointed out that they preferred that tutors underline the errors and give their tutees

some time to try to fix such errors. For example, St8 emphasized:

> Most helpful part is the underlining part. The tutors underline the mistakes and ask me to
> find the errors. This helps me see my mistakes and learn from it. It is similar to grammar
> checker programs. They underline the words and you have to find the answers.

St9 also explained: "Allowing tutees enough time for self-correction was the most effective

methods because the tutor used to point to the wrong sentence and gave me enough time to

rethink about the sentence. This developed my self-correction technique." Furthermore, students

believed that this tutoring strategy would help them benefit from the tutorials because they

learned from their mistakes. "In this way, I am not a passive learner." (St2).

   Information-eliciting questions and paraphrasing strategies. In addition, the students

who adopted the non-directive approach thought that the strategy of asking tutees information-

eliciting questions that was followed in the writing center would help ESL tutees improve their

writing. Although such a strategy sometimes did not work well with low proficient ELLs due to

their lack of communicative skills, ESL students interviewed emphasized that such techniques

facilitated conversation between tutors and tutees and helped tutors better understand the students' assignments and the real message that tutees wanted to get across to their readers. St9 explained: "There are many effective strategies during the tutorial periods such as asking tutees information-eliciting questions, reorganizing ideas, and paraphrasing." And St10 also favored that strategy: "I think the strategies that helped me the most were asking information-eliciting questions and reorganizing ideas." St8 also favored the strategy of "paraphrasing" that is common in the writing center: "For me, I like paraphrasing. They are really helpful strategies because they allow me to observe my own mistakes."

Therefore, most students who preferred the non-directive approach liked tutors to give them enough time to detect errors and correct them on their own. Some of them considered any direct correction from the tutors as "Spoon feeding" St10 pointed out that he did not prefer that tutors directly showed him the errors and fix them without negotiating those errors with him: "That would be like spoon-feeding, and I will not learn to spot my own mistakes." The same idea was emphasized by many other students. For instance, St7 indicated: "When they asked me to do corrections without any feedback from tutors." Thus, most students were fully aware that they were ELLs, they needed some more time, they had some language issues and they needed some help in this respect. St6 explained: "What I like most when people in the writing center allow me to recognize the ideas myself and give time to make paraphrasing. Since my English isn't my first language I need time to do paraphrasing." Asked about what he meant exactly here by "paraphrasing," the student clarified that he meant more explanation that he should provide his tutor about his intended meaning.

Using the directive approach. On the other hand, there were those students who chose the directive tutoring approach. Some students justified that the tutorial time was very limited

and tutors were busy tutoring other students. "That what I'm looking for but could not find in writing center. I think the times is short for tutors since other students are waiting to check their papers." (St5). St1 added: "We do not have enough time 2 hours a week are not sufficient especially for fields that required writing assignments so weekly." Therefore, they preferred that tutors directly show them the errors and fix them. "Yes, I think this strategy is helpful." (St5). Asked if he preferred to have enough time for fixing the errors on his own, St3 rejected the idea: "No, I think that would be a waste of time."

Although some students believed that the directive approach of tutoring was a time saving strategy, they did not think that it was a productive way of tutoring since it made students dependent on their tutors. St9 put it: "Some tutors used the traditional methods of fixing errors. In this case the tutees didn't know why there is an errors here or there. This is considered a time-saver for both tutors and tutees but ineffective way of tutoring." Thus, most students favored collaboration with tutors when correcting their errors. Even those who preferred directive tutoring wanted to keep their rights of authorship. The biggest concern for those directive approach supporters was time constraints that did not allow them to go over the whole paper. In both writing centers, each graduate student is allowed two hours a week for tutoring. During the two hours, students need to fix all the mistakes and resolve the LOCs and HOCs issues. In view of that, some preferred the directive tutoring approach to ease some of the professors' pressure concerning their writing.

Summary of Research Question Three

This research question investigated the tutors and ESL students' perceptions of the best tutoring approach, directive or non-directive that should be followed with ESL students. The results of survey analysis showed that there was no significant difference between tutors and

ESL students in terms of the perceptions of using non-directive tutoring approach. While the survey results indicated that there was a significant difference between the two participating groups in terms of using directive tutoring approach. In addition, ESL students had a higher mean than tutors in terms of using the directive tutoring approach. Comparing each group within each subset of survey, it was clear that both ESL tutees and tutors favored using a different tutoring approach than each other. This finding will be discussed in detail in chapter V. Concerning the non-directive tutoring mode, tutors did not have positive perceptions of using this method of tutoring. While ESL students were divided into two groups and each group advocated one or other type of tutoring approaches. However, the majority of ESL students favored collaboration with writing center tutors to keep their writing ownership.

Most of the tutors interviewed recommended a degree of flexibility and reasonable balance between directive and non-directive approaches to better help ESL students. Tutors interviewed explained that they may make use of directive approach when ESL tutees struggle with something related to language ability or cultural issues to speed up the rhythm of tutoring. However, none of the tutors mentioned that the non-directive approach was completely effective especially for ELLs. Thus, the non-directive tutoring approach, pedagogically recommended for the writing center, was not fully followed with ESL tutees in tutorials. Most tutors mentioned that they either used the directive approach or a balance between the two modes of tutoring.

On the other hand, about 60 % of the interviewed students preferred the non-directive tutoring approach. And 40 % chose the directive approach. This result indicated a difference between students and tutors in terms of the perceptions of tutoring approaches. While tutors were supportive of creating a balance between the two modes of tutoring, ESL students chose the two ends of the directive/non-directive continuum. Regarding the students advocating the non-

directive approach, they believed that tutors were equal peers not teachers. Therefore, they preferred to collaborate with tutors. On the contrary, those students who preferred the directive approach believed that the tutors' role was to teach writing. This finding will be discussed in detail in chapter V.

Research Question Four: Do writing center tutors need to receive more specialized ESL instruction and training to better assist ESL students and understand their academic needs?

The fourth research question investigated how the writing center tutors were sufficiently trained and capable of assisting ESL students by exploring tutors' and ESL students' perceptions of the tutors' need of receiving a special ESL training. This question depended on surveys, interviews, and some observation of some writing tutorials in order to evaluate tutors' training to incorporate and accommodate ESL students. Tutors' perceptions were explored through survey questions (i.e. Q32-Q38, see appendix 1) and three questions (3, 4, and 7. See appendix 3) in Tutor Interviews as well as observations of tutoring sessions. ESL Students' perceptions were studied through survey questions (i.e. Q32-Q38, see appendix 2), interview three questions (3, 9, and 10. See appendix 4), and observations of tutoring sessions. Only two items (i.e., Q35 and Q36) were negatively worded. Therefore, they were reverse scored before data were analyzed.

Quantitative Results

The descriptive statistics from both groups that reported the last set of survey questions (i.e., Q32 to Q38) are shown in Table 16. To evaluate the tutors and ESL students' perceptions of the need of writing center tutors of receiving special training on ESL instruction in order to better assist ESL students, an independent-sample t-test was conducted. The results indicated that the mean perceptions for ESL students ($M = 25.618$, $SD = 2.661$) was slightly higher than the mean

perceptions for tutors (M = 24.870, SD = 2.029) and it was statistically nonsignificant, t (110) =

1.256, p = .212. The 95% confidence interval for the differences in means was quite small,

ranging from -.432 to 1.929. The eta square index (i.e., effect size) of .014 indicated a small

effect. Figure 4 shows the distributions of the two groups.

Table 16
Descriptive Statistics of 7-item Perceptions about Tutor's Expertise for Both ESL Students and Tutors

Group	n	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
ESL student	89	25.62	2.66	.160	.050
Tutor	23	24.87	2.03	-.235	-.706
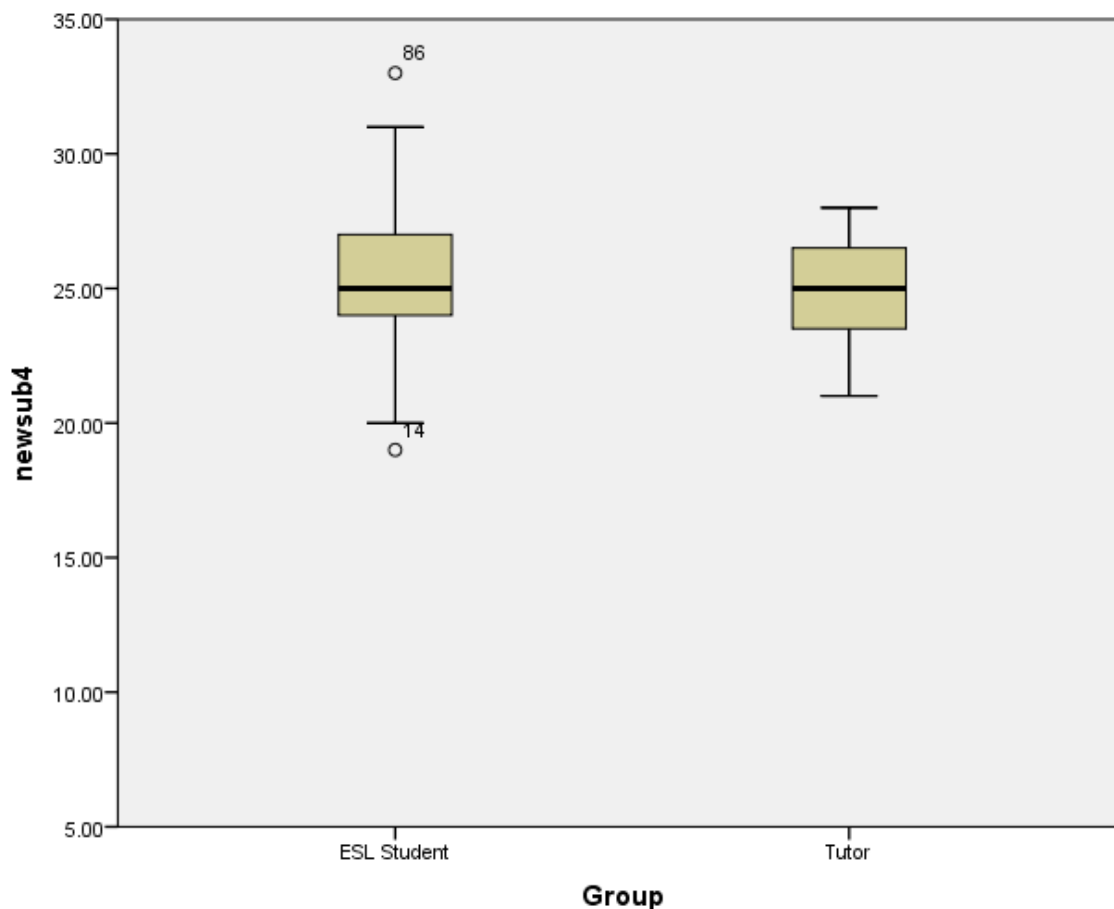
Figure 4. Boxplots of the scale scores for ESL students and tutors on the perceptions about tutor's expertise and training. The scale included 7 items on 5-point Likert-type scale with possible score ranged from 7 to 35.

Qualitative Findings

Tutors' Perceptions of ESL Training

All tutors interviewed positively perceived the need of receiving specialized ESL training in order to better assist ESL clientele. The tutors' perceptions were consistent with their survey responses. Tutors during surveys viewed that they were not sufficiently trained to accommodate ESL students. Most tutors interviewed, about 90 %, expressed their strong desire to receive ESL instruction and training inside or outside the writing center. They believed that their current training was not sufficient to meet ESL students' cultural and linguistic needs. Many tutors did not have any experience with ELLs before working in the writing center. Consequently, some

tutors recommended the writing center to hire an ESL specialist if providing them with suitable

ESL training was not available due to some logistic issues.

No prior ESL instruction. Asked about their prior knowledge about English teaching to

ESL students, all tutors emphasized that they did not have any prior knowledge about ESL

instruction nor did they attend a single class, seminar, or workshop about how to teach or tutor

ELLs specifically. For instance, Tu1 pointed out: "Everything I know about ESL pedagogy and

teaching of writing to students in that realm-I have read and taught myself. I have read and self-

directed my own instruction because there was not an instruction available here." Most tutors

affirmed that they needed some specialized ESL training to know how to tutor ESL students

properly and efficiently. Tutors clarified that they only relied on the knowledge that they

obtained from their majors of linguistics, creative writing, or English composition in tutoring

ESL tutees: "I had a background in linguistics, however, which I drew upon when working with

ESL students" (Tu2). Furthermore, some tutors mentioned that they tried to teach themselves

how to tutor ELLs. For example, Tu6 confirmed:

> I never took any classes or former instruction. I had to teach myself how to work with
> ESL students. I received a little bit of instruction or training at the writing center. What I
> have found much useful though is my efforts to learn other languages. But I have
> admittedly not gotten so far. But the experience of learning a second language made me
> fully aware of the issues they may struggle with when they are learning a second
> language. It made me aware of the technical issues and emotional difficulty. So, this was
> the most useful experience for me. So, I draw on that a lot when I am working with
> international students. I have never actually studied in a second language medium myself.
> But I have been in a close contact with people doing that.

Lack of writing center ESL literature. In fact, the writing center pedagogy rigorously

lacks focus on second language writers' needs. Most writing center manuals and tutoring guides

discuss peer tutoring in general including writing issues, writing center rules and regulations, and

any composition related issues. A few works discussed ESL population in particular. The

CLASS Plus director explained that issue in detail (personal communication, December 13,

2016):

> In the existing tutor-training manuals, there is not a lot there that is why I am trying to find a little bit more to fill in these blanks too. For example, the Bedford St Martin's manual that we used in the past in the writing centers all across the country for years is a hundred and fifty page book and it covers a numbered different issues that try to prepare writing tutors for the very wide varieties of issues that they are going to encounter in tutoring. However, that 150-page book only has six pages on working with ESL writers. The newest book in the field, the Oxford Guide, is a 530 pages or so. It is the most comprehensive training manual available for directors and writing tutors. It has nine pages on working with multilingual writers.

Thus, many tutors and writing center directors complained about the lack of scholarly works

combining both English composition and ESL pedagogical issues that can better assist tutors to

understand ESL students' academic writing needs.

ESL training program needed. When asked about the type of ESL training tutors feel

that they need to better assist ESL students, most of the tutors interviewed emphasized that all

tutors should have a brief training program related to teaching ESL students. This ESL training

program should cover, according to Tu2, the common mistakes that are particular to speakers of

certain language groups and cultural issues as well. Tu2 described that in more detail:

> For example, the customs of the tutor's home country may be very different from the customs of the tutee's home country, leading to misunderstandings. For example, American men may not know it is rude to touch women from certain Muslim countries. Also, tutees from East Asia will very often say that they understand when they do not, simply to avoid offending the tutor.

This focus on cultural issues in ESL training needed for tutors was highlighted in the literature

review. An efficient tutor, according to many studies, is that person who can work as a "Cultural

informant." Such role of a tutor was supported by Powers (1993).

Knowledge of second language acquisition and writing. Many tutors interviewed expressed their strong desire to have more ESL training specifically in second language acquisition and second language writing. Tu4 clarified:

> Now, I wish I'd had more training in second language acquisition and more familiarity with the ways that English is taught around the world. I went into tutoring thinking that the only English language teaching model was the one I had seen in Spring International and in U.S. high schools, and now I know that's not the case.

While Tu6 added two important factors, experience and practice, to ESL training:

> I think that more training would be helpful. We receive a little bit but I think more would be useful but at the end of the day, experience is the most useful. You can go over a class over and over again but you have to practice it before you become good at it. But I think that first and foremost it is very important that tutors have some training and have some experience themselves, because they are the first people that most students are gonna interact with.

Some other tutors stressed the importance of knowing the influence of the first language on second language writer's production. Tu10 stated: "Possibly more information on their native language would be relevant. So that I could see how they naturally process language and tenses."

Hiring an ESL specialist. A couple of tutors suggested that the writing center hiring an ESL specialist to help tutors understand the second language writing issues that may stumble upon them during tutorial. But they explained that this service cannot be currently offered because of some administrative and funding issues. Tu3 pointed out:

> I would say if you have the resources to hire an ESL specialist and this specialist should be doing more than responding personally to every individual case. That person should be responsible for training the tutors to be mindful about these things instead of depending on one person.

However, according to some tutors, in order to have a good number of efficient tutors familiar with all these linguistic and cultural differences, their graduate programs should offer them a degree program that is relevant to the cultural differences namely TESOL program. Having achieved that, there will be no need to hire an ESL specialist for the writing center.

"Let's say it would be better if we somehow have a graduate program that would primarily like recruit either international students or students who already have taught English overseas before to have a truly effective writing center." (Tu9).

Students' Perceptions of Tutors' ESL Training

Most of ESL students interviewed were in line with tutors regarding their perceptions of tutors' need of ESL training. ESL students believed that tutors had low proficiency and were in serious need of receiving ESL training to better assist their ESL tutees. This group of students was in agreement with their survey responses when they emphasized tutors' need to receive specialized ESL training. The results showed a nonsignificant difference between students and tutors' survey responses in terms of the perceptions of tutors' training. As indicated in the surveys, tutors had lower perceptions of their current ESL training than ESL students did. Furthermore, tutors and ESL students, during interviews, also agreed on the necessary need of providing tutors with a special training regarding ESL instruction and multicultural education.

Positive perceptions of tutors' composition proficiency. Most of ESL students interviewed, about 7 out of 10, had positive perceptions of tutors' proficiency in English writing and composition. To them, tutors are native speakers who know English well and can teach it. St1 indicated that: "I worked only with a few of them and they were very good." St5 emphasized that writing center tutors were qualified to tutor all students: "I think they do have sufficient training because they are able to help everyone out with their needs." Some students praised the fact that tutors had a useful conversation with their tutees to better diagnose their writing problems: "They would listen to me, ask me questions to identify my problems, and suggests some solution." (St9). While other students liked the various majors of writing center tutors that helped diversified knowledge and enriched the writing center with useful experiences: "I'm

actually really happy about the fact that there are people from various fields in the Writing

Center, which makes it possible for me not only to have my language checked, but also have my

content discussed." (St7).

Tutors insufficiently trained to assist ESL students. However, ESL students

interviewed were consistent with their survey perceptions that tutors were not sufficiently trained

to assist ESL students. They believed that tutors were proficient in English writing but they

lacked some knowledge of ESL pedagogy. ESL students confirmed that most of the tutors did

not know how to accommodate and assist ESL tutees.

Raising tutors' awareness of cultural differences. Tutors, according to most ESL

students interviewed, knew little about their tutees' cultural differences. That may sometimes

cause a tense atmosphere in the writing center. For instance: St2 pointed out:

> In all honesty, no. I think most of the tutors don't have sufficient training to meet ESL
> students' academic needs. To illustrate, they lack the cultural knowledge that enables
> them to effectively communicate with students. In other words, most of them do not have
> information about other culture besides American culture. For instance, male tutors do
> not know that they cannot shake Muslims' women hand. This situation has had happened
> many times as I was told by my friends.

St8 reiterated the same points with more clarification:

> Some tutors shouldn't be in the writing center because they don't have much experience
> about international students' cultures because they should understand their ideas quickly.
> I always have this problems with the writing center. I mean, some of the tutors do not
> know about Arabic culture and that makes me nervous. For examples, some of them try
> to shake my hand that is not allowed in our religion and culture. I think some of them
> need to takes some cultural classes before working in the writing center.

Thus, students stressed the importance that tutors should have some knowledge about other

cultures that they meet in the writing center so as to avoid any potential cultural conflicts.

Furthermore, students expressed their need of having a "cultural informant" who would

introduce the American culture to ESL students.

Differentiating tutoring techniques between ESL and NES students. In addition, ESL agreed that tutors should apply different tutoring strategies and techniques with ESL students; they are not like native speakers who naturally speak English and are exposed to more language sources than ELLs. For example, St4 explained: "They need more training to help ESL students with their academic needs effectively. I would say that some tutors need more training and time in order to push and assist the ESL students effectively toward a better writing." Furthermore, most students focused on the necessity of differentiating tutoring techniques between NES and NNES students. St6 asserted: "They should treat international students not like native speakers because some students find difficulties to understand them when they explain."

Avoiding slang and idiomatic expressions. Moreover, ESL students asserted that tutors sometimes used slang and idiomatic expressions that are hard to understand. During observation, the researcher noticed that some tutors spoke fluently with ESL students as they did with native speakers. With rapid speech and slang language, some ESL students especially those who lived for a short time in the U.S. cannot follow tutors that use them and that makes them end up misunderstanding what the tutors say: "Sometimes, I did not achieve my work because tutor was not good for explaining my errors. They should answer all of my questions slowly, and re-explain what I did not understand." (St6).

Providing tutors with special training on ESL pedagogy. Finally, all ESL students interviewed agreed that writing center tutors needed some ESL training in order to better assist ESL tutees and better understand their writing needs: "…sometimes I feel that they are not suitable to assist international students. They need more ESL writing training." (St10). Some ESL students even suggested what the tutors needed to take to be more prepared for assisting ESL students: "Sometime I think they need to take specific training in order to meet international student's

expectations. I would like to address some issues with writing center. Tutors need to be more

patient with international students. Since most of the international students have difficulties with

writing due to less exposure to insufficient input during their studies. (St2). Thus, ESL students

emphasized that tutors were proficient in writing but they needed some special ESL training in

order to better help ESL clients. In addition, students assured the researcher that tutors should be

patient with their ESL tutees because those students are less exposed to language than their native

peers. St8 explained:

> The writing center is a great place to go but need people of more experience how to deal
> with non-native speakers (ESL). Also focusing on teaching tutees how to fix them errors
> will be a big asset to the center and the tutees themselves.

Both students and tutors interviewed concluded that the writing center had to provide its tutors with

special training on ESL pedagogy: how to tutor students of diverse linguistic and cultural

backgrounds in order to better incorporate those students in the writing center.

Summary of Research Question Four

The fourth research question investigated whether the writing center tutors were

sufficiently trained and capable of assisting ESL students by exploring tutors and ESL students'

perceptions of the tutors' need of receiving a special ESL training. The results indicated a

nonsignificant difference between students' and tutors' survey responses in terms of the

perceptions of tutors' training. As indicated in the surveys, tutors had lower perceptions of their

current ESL training than ESL students did. On the other side, tutors and ESL students, during

interviews, agreed on the necessary need of providing tutors with a special training regarding

ESL instruction and multicultural education.

Most of the tutors interviewed emphasized that all tutors should have a brief training program related to teaching ESL students. This ESL training should cover the first language interference and cultural issues as well. Their views were in line with the literature review that emphasized the importance of the tutor's role as a cultural informant. A few of them suggested that the writing center hire an ESL specialist to train tutors in order to better assist ESL tutees.

Nearly most of ESL students interviewed were in agreement with tutors' perceptions of their need of ESL training. The students thought that tutors were low proficient and were in serious need of receiving ESL training to better assist ESL tutees. This group was also in line with their survey responses when they emphasized tutors' need to receive specialized ESL training. They emphasized that most of the tutors did not know how to assist and incorporate ESL tutees. According to most ESL students interviewed, tutors knew little about their tutees' cultural differences. The fact that may sometimes create a tense atmosphere in the writing center. Consequently, students stressed that tutors should have some knowledge about other cultures that they meet in the writing center to avoid any potential cultural conflicts. Furthermore, students expressed their need of having a "cultural informant" who could be able to introduce the American culture to ESL students. Thus, both students and tutors interviewed concluded that the writing center had to provide its tutors with special training on ESL pedagogy.

Chapter V Discussion, Conclusion, Implications, and Future Studies

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine the role of writing center tutorials and their effectiveness on improving ESL students' academic and professional writings at a Mid-South university. The study, therefore, explores ESL college students' perceptions and attitudes about the writing center—how writing center tutorials help in improving their writing skills. In addition, the study investigates the tutors' attitudes toward improving their profession in order to better help ESL college students. Moreover, this study is one of the relatively few research studies investigating the perceptions of all writing center's stakeholders, tutors, ESL tutees, directors, and university instructors, about the perceived effectiveness of the writing improvements that can take place in ESL students' academic and professional writings due to writing center tutorials. The literature review discussed many studies that explore the history of writing centers in the U.S. and suggested that the collaborative, non- directive approach, the most commonly adopted approach at writing centers, may not be the best tutoring approach with English language learners. Consequently, this study investigates the perceived impact of the prior knowledge of ESL pedagogy on writing center tutors' understanding of the academic, cultural, and linguistic needs of ESL college students at the university in which the study is conducted. Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate the role of the writing center in improving ESL college students' academic writing. Based on the assumptions and structural framework of the Constructivist Theory, this research presents a cognitive framework and offers a model for an academic environment in which English language learners can be assisted in improving their academic writing by taking advantage of the tutorials offered at the writing center.

This chapter provides an in-depth discussion of the findings obtained from the analysis of the tutees' and tutors' surveys, interviews, and the observation of some tutorials along with analysis of university instructors' interviews. The chapter also provides a conclusion for the study and clear implications for the future.

Summary and Analysis for Research Question One

The first research question of this study explored the tutors' and ESL students' perceptions of the effectiveness of writing center tutorials. After analyzing survey responses, results indicated that there was no significant difference between tutors and ESL students in terms of their perceptions of the effectiveness of writing center tutorials. In other words, the majority of the participants agreed that the writing center tutorials had an effective role in helping ESL students improve their overall writing skills. For instance, ESL students surveyed had positive perceptions of the tutorials that they received in the writing center. This group of ESL students consisted of 46 females and 43 males. The second group of participants was composed of 23 tutors including 12 females and 11 males. The difference between the two groups was not significant; both had high expectations and positive perceptions about the writing center tutorials. However, as shown in chapter four, the tutors' mean was a little bit higher than the students' mean. This can be indicative that tutors had higher perceptions of effectiveness about their tutorials than ESL tutees did. However, the difference was not statistically significant between the two groups of participants; both had similar perceptions about writing center tutorials.

ESL Students' and Tutors' Perceptions-Interviews

ESL students' and tutors' perceptions of effectiveness of writing center tutorials were consistent and were in agreement with their survey responses. The survey results and the

interview findings reinforced the idea that writing center tutorials were effective in improving

ESL students' LOCs and HOCs. The findings indicated that grammar was not only the most

important writing issue or challenge for which ESL tutees often sought to receive assistance from

the writing center but also rhetorical conventions represented a bigger challenge for second

language writers. In addition, the researcher concluded that the writing skills learned from

writing center tutorials could be transferable and helpful to ESL tutees' future careers. This

finding was in agreement with Henning (2001) that transferable knowledge is an indicator of

effective writing center tutorials. Most tutors emphasized that ESL students benefit by the

writing center tutorials in all stages of writing from brainstorming to style and organization

issues. Furthermore, all tutors and writing center directors interviewed emphasized that repeat

tutoring sessions could make a greater difference in ESL students' writing skills. They strongly

believed that such repeat visits can help improve tutees' writing skills. This finding supported

Carino and Ender (2001) when they emphasized that regular attendance of writing center

tutorials can increase tutees' self-confidence and make them have higher perceptions of their

writing improvements. Moreover, Thonus (2008) asserted that repeat visits can help build

rapport between tutors and tutees. the same concept confirmed by Weigle and Nelson (2004)

who stated that the writing center should make the same pairs of tutors and tutees work together

in order to achieve more benefits in a certain period of time. Accordingly, the study found that

participants believed that regular and timely consultations of the writing center with reasonable

expectations of tutors can make improvements in ESL students writing.

    In the writing center pedagogy, effectiveness is defined as the success of the writing

center in achieving its clientele's goals in order to make them satisfied with the writing

assistance offered (Weigle & Nelson, 2004). Such effectiveness was examined in this study

through investigating the perceptions of all stakeholders. The themes emerged from the study

proved how effective the writing center tutorials are according to the participants' perceptions.

All participants believed that those writing center tutorials were helpful and effective in

improving writing skills. Their perceptions were consistent with the literature review that

discussed the role of the writing center and its tutorials as effective in improving NES students in

general and ESL students' academic and professional writing in particular. All participants

reported the same writing issues that ESL students frequently needed in the writing center such

as grammar. Although these surface level errors are not the most important writing issues

challenging second language writers, findings emphasized that such errors may sometimes

hinder ESL students from reaching their readers. Consequently, some ESL students, under the

pressure of their professors, seek help only with grammar to make their papers more

comprehensible.

This finding of the importance of grammar, as the most challenging writing issue to ESL

tutees, was in line with the views of many scholars presented in the literature review. According

to Leki (1992) ESL writers have greater difficulty revising and focus more on grammar and less

on style in general. Some ESL writers plan less and spend more time understanding a prompt or

assignment, consulting a dictionary, and struggling with vocabulary than NES writers do (Harris

and Silva, 1993). In addition, ESL writing seems to be less complex in terms of sentence

structure (Williams & Severino, 2004), vocabulary, and idiomatic expressions (Minett, 2009, p.

74) than NES writings (Brien 2004). Generally speaking, some ESL students make more

syntactical errors and receive lower scores since they are still developing their second language.

Therefore, their lexical and syntactical production is more flawed than their NES peers' (Myers,

2003). Thus, all participants confirmed that the writing center tutorials were effective in helping

ESL tutees fix surface level errors that hinder comprehension. This perception of both tutors and tutees of the importance of lower-order concerns, particularly grammar, was in agreement with Blau and Hall's theory (2002) that LOCs are the major writing needs of ESL students. Based on that finding, the writing center tutors should use directive tutoring approach especially with low proficiency ESL clientele.

Although most of the writing center policies stress the necessary work on higher-order concerns first before grammar, the findings of this study confirmed that the writing center tutorials in reality focus more on the LOCs especially grammar. The writing center policy underscores the HOCs instead of grammar because working on grammar within time-limited tutoring may result in tutors ending up editing ESL students' papers. In addition, tutors need to work on HOCs including organization, coherence, and style first because those are the major writing problems that may hinder comprehensibility of a text. Consequently, tutors should keep a balance between HOCs and LOCs in order to make the writing center tutorials more effective in improving ESL students writing.

Furthermore, according to many tutors, writing center tutorials were effective because it assists ESL students in "Adapting new genres to their own needs as writers and meaning-makers…" (Tu4). Therefore, writing center tutorials were effective in helping many ESL students face a huge language ability deficit in English. The researcher found that this point was strongly emphasized by tutors because they claimed that the writing center could teach ESL students new writing genres of their study fields. In fact, most ESL students are knowledgeable about the jargon used in their majors. However, they consult the writing center for broader issues of writing including organization, style, and American writing conventions. This belief was supported by Leki (1992). She maintained that international students often write well in their

technical fields of study. They have advanced disciplinary knowledge. However, they may be

less proficient in spoken English and may be slower to develop greater proficiency than the other

categories of ESL students because they do not have the native familiarity with English.

According to Leki (1992), some of these students may lack rhetorical diction or the necessary

vocabulary for their papers to make sense. Findings indicated that some ESL students were

critical about writing center tutors because many tutors, according to these students, were not

familiar with the students' field of study. Consequently, some tutors tend to help the students fix

the surface level errors rather than working on the higher-order concerns such as style and the

other writing conventions.

In addition, Learning American writing conventions was one of the major benefits that

the writing center can provide ESL students with. Most tutors' opinions were consistent with the

literature review that writing center tutorials were effective in teaching ESL students how to

write in accordance with the American writing conventions. Due to the cultural differences and

language variations, ESL students may struggle with the English writing conventions that are

different from their first language rules. Moreover, cultures and languages differ in their writing

styles. For instance, some languages may tend to use a wordy style while other languages

affected by their cultures may use a linear one. Second language writers who are influenced by

these wordy style oriented cultures may not be explicit enough to get their message across to the

readers. Such a writing style may be viewed as redundant by other readers whose writing

conventions adopt the linear style. Ryan and Zimmerelli (2010) stated that "One culture may

lean toward exaggeration and emotionalism; another may do quite the opposite, focusing on

restraint and understatement. These cultural differences often influence the rhetorical choices

second language writers make in terms of content and strategies when they are writing in

English." (p. 65). According to Harris (1997), the rhetorical patterns are among the major differences between NES and ESL students. She maintained that the writing center tutors should better understand cross-cultural rhetoric first and teach ESL students the Anglo-American style of writing in order to be well read by the American audience. Harris (1997) stated that if tutors neglect such writing conventions and focus only on surface level errors, those tutors will end up editing ESL students' papers without benefiting their tutees. In so doing, this finding raised the writing center tutors' awareness of the cultural differences and negative influence of ESL students' native languages. Therefore, tutors should be conscious of such cultural differences and respect them and what they represent.

In this study, the researcher concluded that the participants perceived that the tutorials were effective in teaching ESL students not only English writing conventions but also the American culture. Based on the participants' perceptions, a tutor should be a "cultural informant" who helps ESL tutees adapt well to the American society, better understand academic writing in general, and write proper American English style in particular. As a result, ESL students can benefit from writing center tutorials to improve their writing in order to meet the requirements of their majors. These tutors' and tutees' perceptions of the role of the tutor as a cultural informant were in agreement with Powers. According to Powers (1993),   tutors should be cultural informants rather than collaborators because ESL writers come from different educational, rhetorical, and cultural backgrounds. Powers (1993) claimed that "ESL writers are asking us to become audiences for their work in a broader way than native speakers are; they view us as cultural informants about American academic expectations" (p. 98). Cogie et al. (1999) strongly agreed with Powers   and advocated the cultural informant approach with ESL tutees. The findings of this study confirmed that the writing center tutors help ESL writers

improve their writing skills by showing them the American rhetorical style and teach them how

to be consistent with such rhetorical conventions. This finding supported what Blau and Hall

(2002) emphasized that a tutor can be a mentor of the American culture. Furthermore, Blau and

Hall (2002) contended that the tutor being a "cultural informant" can meet the needs of the

students. According to Blau and Hall's study, this tutor's role of "cultural informant" motivates

students of different cultures and increases tutor-tutee collaboration.

What made the writing center tutorials more successful was the individualized instruction

that many tutors described. "Writing center tutorials have an advantage that regular classroom

instruction does not—the tutor can individualize his/her instruction to each student that makes an

appointment." (Tu7). This finding supported Grim (2007) when she described that relying on the

individualized instruction in the writing center was effective for making the work successful:

> If writing centers across the country have any one theoretical underpinning in common, it
> is the emphasis on individualized instruction. The one-to-one relationship is often thought
> to be the most important contributor to writing center effectiveness because one
> knowledgeable tutor is able to address one student at a time. (p. 19).

However, the use of the term instruction was inappropriate here because the mission of the

writing center is tutoring not teaching with its literal meaning. Tutoring is different from

teaching that usually enforces some power and authority on the teacher's part while tutoring, as

previously mentioned in the literature review, occurs in a collaborative learning environment. In

addition, tutors and tutees should have an egalitarian relationship that is different from that

between a teacher and a student. Many tutors stated that they can also assess ESL students'

individual goals and writing challenges and accordingly provide the relevant academic

assistance. Moreover, tutors can provide reasonable and friendly feedback that well fit those

goals, challenges, and academic needs. Such peer feedback may be better for ESL students than

that they receive from their professors. Thus, the writing center provides a collaborative learning environment in which the ELLs' affective filter is lower than a classroom setting. This supports the egalitarian relationship between tutors and tutees. Based on this relationship, the tutors are peers not teachers who have some authority on their students. Consequently, this study found that ESL students find writing center tutorials effective for their academic writing and language levels partly because of the tutor-tutee egalitarian relationship. The relationship makes ESL students, according to most participants, feel more self-confident, relieving their language anxiety.

Additionally, the findings showed positive perceptions of the strategies followed in the writing center such as self-correction, information-eliciting questions, and paraphrasing. Most participants believed that such strategies made those tutorials effective because such strategies made the tutees more engaged and made them equal peers collaborating with their tutors on their own papers without appropriation. For instance, paraphrasing was considered to be a good strategy to ESL students. The writing center tutors paraphrase any part of a text in order to help students better understand for example a professor's assignment prompt or to assist tutees to convey their ideas in another way that is more appropriate and understandable. Yet, such paraphrasing should be carefully used because it may confuse some ESL tutees. In other words, tutors should utilize the paraphrasing strategy when ESL tutees get stalled and cannot understand their assignment prompts. The researcher noticed during observation of some tutorials that some ESL tutees did not understand tutors when they paraphrased some utterances. This could be attributed to the lack of vocabulary, limited exposure to spoken English, or the excessive use of slang that some tutors may use. As mentioned in their interviews, some tutees were critical about this paraphrasing strategy because they noticed that some tutors used new vocabulary or difficult

expressions. Hence, in order to better use paraphrasing, tutors should use simple vocabulary to facilitate ESL tutees' understanding of their writing assignments. Accordingly, this may indicate a need for ESL tutors' training program to better assist their ESL tutees.

Participants, however, disagreed about some effective and ineffective strategies followed in the writing center. For instance, some students and tutors viewed the reading aloud, information-eliciting, and paraphrasing strategies as effective ways to make students listen to their mistakes and give them the opportunity to self-correct them. Others considered these strategies time-wasting techniques. For example, some ESL students found the reading aloud a hard strategy to follow in front of a native speaker; they were inhibited by the feeling of having an accent or they were fearful of being misunderstood. Therefore, some students had negative perceptions toward the reading aloud strategy. During his observation, the researcher noticed that some ESL tutees lowered their voices in order not to be heard by the other people in the center. This may be attributed to the tutorial setting of cubicles at the writing center that sometimes made some students uncomfortable when feeling that people around them could hear their speech. This is something related to cultural differences and should be considered by writing centers. This attitude toward the reading aloud strategy followed in the writing center was also viewed by some tutors as time consuming. This finding was in line with William & Severino (2004) who stated that reading aloud may not be an effective strategy with second language writers since they are not familiar with the language and due to the "excessive cognitive load of reading aloud and monitoring at once" (P.167). Tseng (2009) claimed that:

> L2 learners, especially international students, do not have the native speaker's intuition for what sounds right or wrong. Therefore, when they do not know the grammar rules or their hypotheses of how English works are false, they will not be able to detect their errors no matter how many times they read their writing aloud, which is also a reason why their errors persist. (p. 26-27).

Concerning the strategy of information-eliciting questions, findings indicated that some students had positive perceptions of this strategy while some did not. Some writing center theorists contend that asking an ESL student a question without providing the suitable props may be a time-wasting technique since these students are still developing the second language and do not have the sense and intuition of a native speaker. The researcher concluded that tutors should consider the tutor-tutee dialogical interaction because some ESL tutees, new to the U.S. or those international students who are less exposed to English, may not be able to follow a native speaker using a rapid speed of conversation or having a certain accent.

Summary and Analysis for Research Question Two

The second research question explored the faculty members' perceptions of the effectiveness of writing center tutorials. The university professors' views about the writing assistance offered in the writing center, especially to ESL students, were important for this study because their perceptions added another perspective to the research. The other groups of participants including ESL students and tutors may be biased since they are the principal stakeholders of the tutoring process. However, university instructors should not be biased for or against the writing center; they just want to improve their ESL students' writing skills in order to help them meet the requirements of their courses. The ten university professors interviewed were in agreement with ESL students and tutors in having positive perceptions of the writing center tutorials. Most of the professors stated that they did not force any of their ESL students to go to the writing center. However, they recommended them to consult the writing center as a service available on campus. Nevertheless, the professors believed that the writing center is a good learning environment for ESL students where they can learn what they may not be learning in the mainstream classes. Some professors emphasized that the writing center was important to ESL

students who similarly needed writing assistance as their native peers did: "To be honest with you, I do not recommend the writing center only for the nonnative speakers, I also recommend it for people that simply need writing assistance and getting some of their technical writing up to standard" Prof4. They also needed an individualized instruction that was an integral part of the writing center.

These findings indicated that the writing center is a good learning environment especially for ESL students where they can learn collaboratively and in a friendly manner what they cannot learn in the mainstream classes. Such opportunity of individualized tutoring offered by the writing center is quite beneficial to ESL tutees' language learning and acculturation process since it may lower the affective filter. However, it seemed that many professors were sensitive of referring their ESL students to the writing center while the center is not just for low proficiency writers or the international students; it is for students who need to improve their writing. Moreover, in some universities, referral in certain courses to the writing center is mandatory before submitting any written assignments. This finding revealed how some university professors are not fully aware of the writing center's mission. Although in other academic institutions, instructors are invited to attend workshops about the writing center or regularly receive tutors to make a presentation about the benefits of the writing center, no instructor interviewed in this study said that she had done that before. The findings also showed that ESL students needed constant feedback and that feedback was better to be received through individualized instruction which was an integral part of the writing center. This finding supported Severino (2009). In addition, this finding revealed that the writing center must reach out to the faculty in order to make them acquainted with the services offered.

The professors agreed with the perceptions of tutors and ESL students about the effectiveness of the writing center tutorials. According to most professors, grammar and other LOCs were among the most challenging writing issues to ESL students and that was probably one of the reasons that they could require ESL students to consult the writing center. This finding was consistent with Leki (1992) when she stated that ESL writers have greater difficulty revising and focus more on grammar and less on style. In addition, Williams & Severino (2004), explained that ESL writing seems to be less complex in the sentential structure than NES writings. The major benefits of the writing center were, according to the professors, grammar and style of research papers. However, it was an unpredicted finding that some professors pressured their ESL students to consult the writing center about the surface level errors to the extent that some students insisted only on having their papers edited and their grammatical errors fixed. As a consequence, writing centers may become an editing/proofreading center or a fix-it shop, thus, changing its mission. This may explain why some tutors paid more attention to surface level errors than rhetorical conventions. This emphasizes the attention to the importance of a balance between HOCs and LOCs in the writing center tutorials if the writing center is to maintain its mission as more than a place for editing papers. On the other hand, there is a misconception that ESL students' major need is grammar. In fact, this is a false perception as discussed in chapter 4. According to those who adopted this view, ESL students tended to say "My only problem is grammar." That is the only thing they know to talk about. But there are frequent larger issues for ESL students. Hence, findings proved that ESL students have more problems with writing conventions than NES do. For instance, it is evident that ESL students' major writing challenge has to do with indirectness of discourse rather than directness of discourse. This finding of different discourse was in line with the literature review. The

American academic prose uses direct discourse; the American writers make their point and then they prove that point. While many ESL students are sort of circular in their writing or some of them are back and forth again in their point.

The most important finding was that the writing center is effective for such rhetorical conventions that are the major concerns of some ESL students. In addition, such rhetorical conventions represent writing challenges to ESL students beyond grammatical structures that can be learned by practice. However, any grammatical mistakes made by ESL students may be attributed to either the negative influence of their L1 or to their limited exposure to English. Wan (2014) stated that the American rhetorical conventions that differed from those of ESL students' own first language may have a bigger impact on   the quality of their writing. This is not often accepted by many ESL students influenced by their different cultural and rhetorical conventions. Hence, Ryan and Zimmerelli (2010) stated that cultural differences often influence the rhetorical choices second language writers make in terms of content and strategies when they are writing in English." (p. 65). Consequently, based on that finding, tutors need to be conscious of such cultural differences and their relevant linguistic variations, and should keep a balance between HOCs and LOCs.

The findings proved that the writing centers do improve ESL students' writing. For instance, Prof5 explained: "I think that the service is effective; I've seen tremendous improvements." Most of the professors attributed the effectiveness and success of the writing center to the egalitarian relationship between tutors and tutees. Such a collegial relationship can help create a nonthreatening environment for ESL students to better learn. "So they can feel safe about learning without being judged." (Prof6). Findings also described the tutor-tutee

relationship as better than that between a teacher and her students. This finding was in agreement with Krashen's idea that the lower the affective filter is, the better ELLs learn.

In addition, the study established a strong relationship between repeat visits and writing improvements. Most professors agreed that what really helped ESL students was repeat visits to the writing center. In other words, frequent or regular visits to the writing center really help improve ESL students' writing skills more than intermittent visits. Constant exposure to the writing center tutorials and getting feedback about the recurrent mistakes from more than one tutor and using more than one method better assists ESL tutees to internalize corrections and make them acquainted with sound linguistic constructions. Nevertheless, the researcher observed that the writing center repeat visits comprised of various factors: the type of the writing assignment, the due date of submission, and the availability of tutors. In general, the professors emphasized that they found some improvements in their ESL students' writing thanks to the writing center tutorials. But such improvement, according to the instructors interviewed, was gradual and focused on grammar and LOCs more than HOCs and other major writing conventions that make ESL students' writing distinct from that of their native peers. The researcher's observation confirmed this. Furthermore, grammar is important to ELLs; however, rhetorical conventions are more important for ESL students to know in order to write in accordance with the American academic writing style. Thus, according to faculty perceptions, the writing center should pay more attention to rhetorical conventions and keep a balance between HOCs and LOCs.

Summary and Analysis for Research Question Three

This research question investigated the tutors' and ESL students' perceptions of the best tutoring approach, directive or non-directive that should be followed with ESL students. The

results of survey analysis showed that there was no significant difference between tutors and ESL students in terms of the perceptions of using non-directive tutoring approach. However, the survey results indicated a significant difference between tutors and ESL tutees in terms of the directive tutoring mode. Though, the researcher concluded that both groups of ESL tutees and tutors respectively had higher perceptions of the nondirective tutoring approach than the directive one based on the analysis of the quantitative data. In other words, this finding meant that ESL tutees and their tutors favored one tutoring approach over the other method.

These survey results were not consistent with the findings of the interviews. While tutors during the surveys adopted the non-directive mode as prescribed by all of the writing center manuals; during the interviews, they strongly advocated a balance between using the two tutoring modes. On the other hand, most ESL students, during the surveys, favored the directive mode; however, during interviews, they were divided into two groups and each group advocated one type of tutoring approach.

Most of the tutors interviewed recommended a degree of flexibility and reasonable balance between directive and non-directive approaches to better help ESL students. Tutors interviewed explained that they may utilize directive approach when ESL tutees struggle with something related to language ability or cultural issue in order to speed up the rhythm of tutoring. However, none of them stated that the non-directive approach was effective especially for ESL tutees. Thus, the non-directive tutoring approach, pedagogically recommended for the writing center, was not the preferred tutoring mode and was not fully followed with ESL tutees in reality. Most tutors confirmed that they either used the directive approach exclusively or they made a balance between the two modes of tutoring.

In contrast, about 60 % of the interviewed students chose the non-directive tutoring approach. And 40 % preferred the directive approach. This result indicated a difference between students and tutors in terms of the perceptions of tutoring approaches. While tutors were in support of creating a balance between the two modes of tutoring, ESL students preferred the two extremes on a directive/non-directive continuum. The students, who adopted the non-directive approach, believed that tutors were equal peers not teachers. Therefore, they preferred to collaborate with tutors. On the contrary, those students who favored the directive approach believed that tutors' role was a teacher of writing.

The literature review proposed that the collaborative, non- directive tutoring approach, the most commonly used tutoring mode at writing centers, may not be the best tutoring approach to be followed with English language learners. The findings of the surveys and interviews showed that the majority of the participants agreed that the writing center tutorials had an effective role in helping ESL students improve their writing skills. However, their perceptions of using either directive or non-directive tutoring approach were notably different. Each group of the participants chose one end of the continuum during the surveys. But during the interviews, each group expressed their views without any reservation. For instance, tutors automatically chose the non-directive tutoring mode during the survey; however, most of them during interviews strongly advocated a balance between the two modes. This finding indicated that tutors appeared to be more traditional when asked about their tutoring methods in a formal survey that they were asked to evaluate their writing center. But when some of them personally sat with the researcher for a face-to-face interview, they were more open to express what they really believed to be more suitable for their ESL tutees.

Tutors' Perceptions of Directive and Non-Directive Tutoring Approaches-Interviews

Most current writing centers adopted the non-directive, collaborative approach according to which both tutor and tutee work collaboratively in an egalitarian relationship. However, the study findings suggested that the non-directive tutoring is sometimes an ineffective and inapplicable tutoring method. This finding was in line with the literature review that suggested that non-directive tutoring may not be the best method to be followed with ESL students in all tutorials. Most tutors asserted that this non-directive tutoring mode was not appropriate for ESL tutees because of the linguistic and cultural challenges that they encountered in the U.S. Consequently, this prescribed non-directive mode of tutoring may not always be helpful to ESL students who have specific academic needs and encounter writing challenges due to language and cultural differences. In other terms, the controversial point is if tutors refuse to use directive approaches when needed and utilize only non-directive approach, ESL students may not find suitable and necessary scaffolding that they need from tutors. This finding was consistent with Hall (2013) who emphasized that "NNES students often have different needs from NES students--both in terms of the frequency and content of their visits." (p.5) He contended that some international students are pressured by their instructors to visit the writing center for editing and proofreading their papers "Of course, most writing centers' philosophies discourage such sentence-level tutoring to avoid 'proofreading' requests. But the international students, often driven by their professors' remarks and grades, are likely going to insist on such intensive help." (p. 8). This was the same notion confirmed by several tutors of this study. Tutors explained that they felt like they were caught between a rock and a hard place; ESL tutees, pressured by their instructors, push their tutors to help them with surface level errors and the writing center policy does not allow that. Hence, such a type of collaborative, non-directive

tutorial is sometimes perceived by tutors and tutees as frustrating, ineffective, and time-consuming (Henning, 2001).

Based on this important finding, the researcher was in agreement with most of the participants who recommended a degree of flexibility and reasonable balance between directive and non-directive approaches to better help ESL students. Accordingly, this study finding was similar to Blau & Hall (2002) and the other who advocated a balanced use of both directive and nondirective approaches like Truesdell (2007), Corbett (2008), Shamoon and Burns (1995). Those writing center theorists and researchers recommended a degree of flexibility by applying the directive tutoring approach in order to eliminate frustration and diffuse tutor-tutee tense relations (Blau & Hall, 2002; Carino, 2003; Cogie, 2001; Henning, 2001; Weigle & Nelson, 2004; Williams, 2004; Williams & Severino, 2004). According to Shamoon and Burns (1995), writing center tutors, novice or professional, should not completely adhere to any prescriptive tutoring method. They claimed that directive instruction can be successfully practiced by tutors through modeling, i.e., tutors should look for patterns to show to their tutees and encourage them to master such repetitive patterns. In addition, Shamoon and Burns (1995) strongly supported flexibility in tutoring especially with the novice writers. Corbett (2008) claimed that:

> This discussion of directive and nondirective tutoring suggests that if we keep our pedagogy flexible and attuned to one writer at a time, we may better anticipate when to urge a closer rethinking of content or claim, when to pay attention to conventions and mechanics, and how and when to do both. (p. 153).

Corbett (2008) contended that "tutors can better serve (and be better served) if they are encouraged to broaden their instructional repertoires" without any constant commitment to either directive or nondirective approaches of tutoring (p. 149).

Therefore, Tutors should use their situational judgment to apply a suitable mode of tutoring in the proper time of the tutorial. In addition, tutors should take into account the

students' language abilities. According to tutors, if ESL tutees struggled with something related to a linguistic or cultural issue that they were not familiar with, the tutors intervened. This switch to the directive approach when ESL tutees stalled to create a comprehensible text was similar to Gillespie and Lerner (2008) who advised, therefore, tutors to prioritize higher-order concerns, to be patient with ESL writers, and to give ESL writers "direct or indirect articles or American idioms." Gillespie and Lerner (2008) emphasized that:

> If NNS writers need direct or indirect articles or American idioms, you can give them those. This is not dishonest—they simply have nowhere else to get this information. Remember to point out those occasions when they get their grammar and usage right; NNS writers can learn from those models. If they use good sentence structure or are effective with such things as subordination and coordination, tell them so. (p. 126).

These scholars advocated using the non-directive tutoring mode with HOCs, the major issues of any writing and using the directive mode with the LOCs issues. According to this view, it is not unethical to provide especially ESL tutees with some assistance with local issues because ESL tutees who were still learning English need this direct language assistance but without appropriation.

This finding of utilizing the directive approach only with ESL tutees is consistent with Myers (2003). According to her, the syntactical and lexical components of English are the most challenging issue facing many ESL writers. She recommended tutors use a more directive approach with ESL writers especially when working on grammatical elements. Myers (2003) contended that tutors should master English grammar. She advised tutors to rephrase ESL writers' sentences, to add some textual corrections, and to offer some practice on the points of weakness. Myers believed that it is not unethical that tutors give ESL writers the language they do not know. Moreover, she claimed that tutors, when working with ESL writers, must offer both

rhetorical and linguistic feedback because tutors are not only writing consultants but also cultural informants.

Thus, the non-directive tutoring approach that was pedagogically recommended for the writing center was not fully followed. Most tutors mentioned that they either used the directive approach or a balance between the two tutoring modes. This suggests the writing center may need to reconsider its policy mandating tutors to use non-directive tutoring mode because the exclusive use of the non-directive approach is not in fact followed in writing centers.

ESL Students' Perceptions of Directive and Non-Directive Tutoring Approaches

ESL students' perceptions were consistent with their survey responses. The students interviewed were divided into two groups regarding their perceptions of the binary modes of tutoring: the first group, about 60 % of the interviewed students, chose the non-directive tutoring approach and the second group, 40 % advocated the directive approach. This finding demonstrated a difference between students and tutors in terms of the perceptions toward tutoring approaches. While tutors were supportive of a balance between the two modes of tutoring, ESL students advocated the two ends of the directive/non-directive continuum.

The researcher concluded that there was a strong relationship between students' expectations of their tutors as peer writing assistants and students' tendency to prefer the non-directive approach; the more students consider tutors as peers, the more they prefer the non-directive tutoring approach. This finding was asserted by the interviewed students who considered writing center tutors as equal peers not as teachers. On the other hand, those students who favored the directive approach believed that those tutors had power and authority as writing teachers. According to many writing center theorists, the writing center tutoring should be mainly based on collaborative learning—the real essence of constructivism. The current writing

center policy in most U.S. writing centers strongly prescribes the non-directive, collaborative approach (Bishop, 1992; Carino, 2003; Clark & Healy, 1996; Corbett, 2008; Grimm, 1996; Hobson, 2001). According to this non- directive, collaborative approach, tutors are not teachers but facilitators, writing assistants, and peer guides who help the writers get on the right track. No authority should be practiced by the tutor over the writer, instead, a good relationship of trust and partnership should be established by the writing center tutor (Davis, 2006).

Surprisingly, some ESL students preferred the directive approach during the surveys and about 60 % of them during interviews supported the use of the non-directive approach. The researcher expected that all students would advocate the directive tutoring mode since they were still learning English and they often encountered some writing challenges to keep up with the writing assignments of their mainstream classes. Interestingly, most of them during interviews emphasized that they requested tutors to give them enough time to find their mistakes and try to self-correct them. This concept is the real sense of non-directive tutoring approach according to which a tutor is a facilitator, an equal peer, and a writing assistant rather than a teacher, a grammar checker, or an editor. Furthermore, students believed that this tutoring strategy would help them benefit from the tutorials because they learned from their mistakes. "In this way, I am not a passive learner." (St2). This finding of the non-directive mode of tutoring favored by 60 percent of interviewed ESL students was not consistent with the literature that suggested that ESL students always prefer the directive approach. However, the study affirmed that tutors often favored using either a directive mode or a balance between the binary tutoring methods.

Moreover, the findings showed that the writing center tutors utilize some strategies such as paraphrasing, reading aloud, and asking information-eliciting questions. These strategies help ESL tutees improve their writing. However, such strategies sometimes did not work well with

low proficient ELLs due to their lack of communicative skills and lack of native familiarity of English. Through observation, the researcher found that paraphrasing was helpful to many ESL students. Tutors stepped in to make some ESL tutees understand the assignment requirements by reading aloud the prompt and explaining to the students what the instructor exactly required them to do. This part is one of the more effective tutoring methods and writing assistance offered at the writing center. However, at the same time, the students who preferred the non-directive approach stressed that they requested tutors to give them enough time to detect errors and correct them on their own. Some of them considered any direct correction from the tutors as "Spoon feeding." (St10). This finding supported the egalitarian relationship that non-directive-approach supporters favored and believed that tutors were equal peers not teachers. This finding was not consistent with the literature that asserted that ESL students often give their authorship away to tutors whom they believe to be writing teachers not peer tutors. This was an important finding that ESL students preferred to work collaboratively with tutors and they seldom let tutors dominate the tutorials as teaching figures that have power and authority.

On the other hand, about 40 % of students, who chose the non-directive tutoring approach during surveys, supported the directive mode during interviews. This finding was predicted because most of the literature review discussing the tutoring approaches suggested that most ESL students favor the directive tutoring mode since they are still learning English. The tutorial time was limited and tutors were unable to review the students' whole paper. This finding indicated that a big challenge may face some graduate students who have long papers or need to review their papers just a few hours before submission. Consequently, the researcher concluded that some students favored collaboration with tutors when correcting their errors. Those students who preferred directive tutoring still wanted to keep their rights of ownership.

The major reason for those directive approach supporters was time constraints that did not allow them to go over the whole paper. So they wanted to "fix" their writing in their tutoring sessions.

Regardless of the debate about the directive vs. non-directive approaches, most of the tutors and ESL tutees during the surveys agreed on the non-directive approach and disagreed on the directive one. However, during interviews, tutors supported keeping a balance between the two modes of tutoring while ESL students were divided into two groups. Each group favored one approach. This difference between tutors and ESL students was not predicted by the researcher; however, it was consistent with the literature review. Wilder (2016) affirmed that "In the culture of our program, as well in the larger culture, a major topic of conversation and debate is directive and nondirective tutoring styles. " (p. 533). Some constructive theorists and writing center staff strongly advocating for the non-directive approach viewed that approach is the most useful model because it helps the students construct their own knowledge and keep the ownership of their writings. In addition, this approach is thought to better assist the writing center to "produce better writers not better writing," the maxim of North about the real mission of the writing center. In contrast, those theorists who adopt the directive approach believed that this direct mode of tutoring is the best tutoring method especially with ESL clientele and low proficiency writers. However, this directive mode of tutoring should be applied only with lower-order concerns not higher-order concerns. ESL tutees were in serious need to know the surface level errors especially those errors that may sometimes hinder comprehension. However, regarding the HOCs including style, content, organization, and coherence, it is the students' duty as academic writers to pay attention to such issues without passively relying on tutors.

Perhaps a balance between the two tutoring modes should be reasonably applied in the writing center. Tutors should be judicious about utilizing each approach depending on the

tutoring situation. The most important finding was that there is no one single approach that "fits" all. It is left to the tutors' experience and discretion, and judgment to alternate these modes of tutoring. It is important that tutors be well trained on how to tutor culturally and linguistically diverse students because they represent more than 30 % of the writing center's clientele.

Summary and Analysis of Research Question Four

This question investigated the tutors' and ESL students' perceptions of the need of writing center tutors of receiving special training on ESL instruction in order to better assist ESL students and understand their academic needs. The current writing center training of tutors does not provide special training program for tutoring ESL students nor does it require tutors working in the writing center to have received any ESL instruction. Most of the tutors were majoring in English, creative writing, and composition. None of the tutors who participated in this study had received a degree in ESL pedagogy nor did they take any ESL classes. But they depended, to understand the realm of second language writing and ELLs, on reading articles suggested by the director on second language writing in order to familiarize themselves with ESL clients who sometimes constituted 50 % of the writing center's population.

The literature review discussed many studies related to tutoring ESL clients and emphasized that tutors should understand the influence of first language on second language writing, impact of cultural backgrounds, and other academic needs of ESL students. In other words, tutors are not required to speak the tutee's first language but they should be conscientious and responsive to any possible influence that the first language or culture may have on English writing. Any potential first language interference of a second language writer may obstruct comprehension. In addition, the literature review affirmed that the tutor's role is a "Cultural informant" who facilitated the process of acculturation taking place with ESL students.

Accordingly, this study tried to offer a role model for the writing center in which ESL students'

linguistic, cultural, and academic needs can be satisfactorily met. This study is one of the

relatively few research studies that investigated the impact of the prior knowledge of ESL

pedagogy on writing center tutors' effectiveness. The researcher concluded that the prior

knowledge of ESL instruction could better assist tutors to understand the academic, cultural, and

linguistic needs of ESL college students and make tutors better provide these students with

suitable tutorials.

The results showed a nonsignificant difference between ESL students' and tutors' survey

responses in terms of the perceptions of tutors' need of receiving ESL training. As indicated in

the surveys, ESL tutees had higher perceptions about their writing center's tutors' preparedness

than tutors did. Conversely, both tutors and ESL students, during interviews, agreed on the

necessary need of providing writing center tutors with special training including ESL instruction

and multicultural education.

All tutors interviewed emphasized that they needed a concise training program related to

teaching ESL students. They believed that this ESL training should cover first language

interference and cultural issues as well. This was in line with the literature review that stressed

the importance of training tutors in assisting ESL tutees by providing tutors with required

knowledge about ESL instruction in order to make them efficient ESL tutors and cultural

informants. A few tutors suggested that the writing center hire an ESL specialist to train tutors so

as to better assist ESL tutees. The literature review discussed the idea of hiring some

international students, who are interested in writing tutoring and academically eligible, to work

as tutors. This would help to transfer their experience of second language acquisition to the

center. Some writing centers in the U.S. actually hire an ESL specialist to assist tutors in meeting the challenges of second language writing.

Most ESL students interviewed were in agreement with the interviewed tutors about the need of future ESL training. The students confirmed that the writing center tutors that they encountered were low proficiency tutors and were in real need of ESL training to better assist ESL tutees. This group was also in line with their survey responses when they emphasized tutors' need to receive specialized ESL training. They emphasized that most of the tutors did not know how to assist and accommodate ESL tutees. According to most ESL students interviewed, tutors knew little about their tutees' cultural differences. That may sometimes cause a tension in the writing center. Consequently, students confirmed that tutors should have some knowledge about other cultures that they meet in the writing center to avoid potential cultural conflicts. Furthermore, students expressed their need of having a "cultural informant" who could introduce the American culture to ESL students. Thus, ESL students and tutors interviewed concluded that the writing center had to provide its tutors with special training on ESL pedagogy. This was a surprise finding since the literature agreed that ESL tutees may express their satisfaction of the tutors' training and proficiency accordingly, ESL tutees consider tutors as writing teachers.

Tutors' Perceptions of ESL Training-Interviews

This study found that tutors seriously need specialized ESL training to understand second language acquisition that may impact writing. The current training was perceived to be not sufficient to meet ESL students' cultural and linguistic needs. However, the unpredicted finding was that tutors did not have any prior knowledge about ESL instruction. In addition, tutors did not take any class or attend a seminar or workshop on how to tutor ESL students. Findings indicated that all the knowledge that tutors had about ESL tutees was obtained from the limited

readings assigned by their directors. Additionally, tutors confirmed more that they only relied on

the knowledge that they obtained from their majors of linguistics, creative writing, or English

composition in tutoring ESL tutees and they did not have any research sources of investigating

that realm of ELLs. The theoretical framework of second language acquisition, first language

interference, the cultural impact on second language writing, and other relevant issues of second

language writers' challenges are principal themes in the literature review. Furthermore, tutors

should be conscious about writing challenges that ESL students sometimes encounter may hinder

their language fluency and may sometimes make their writing vague and unintelligible. All

participants complained about the lack of scholarly sources addressing both English composition

and ESL pedagogical issues that can better assist tutors to understand ESL students' academic

writing needs. It appears that the writing center pedagogy needs to focus on second language

writers' needs. Most writing center manuals and tutoring guides discussed peer tutoring in

general including writing issues, writing center rules and regulations, and any composition

related issues. A few sources of writing center pedagogy specifically discussed ESL population

that represents more than 30 % in the writing centers where this study was conducted.

Thus, an important finding of this research was that tutors need some ESL training and

ESL tutorial sources to better help them understand such second language writing issues. Tutors

needed a training program about ESL instruction including second language acquisition, second

language writing, methods of teaching American rhetorical conventions, and L1 interference.

This finding was consistent with Canavan (2015) who stated:

> Providing tutors with specialized training in issues of second language acquisition and
> providing longer times for consultations can lead to an improved tutoring center for the
> clients. These improvements simultaneously reduce the frustration of tutors who might
> otherwise feel they are faced with situations for which they have not received enough
> training (p. 3).

In addition, this ESL training program should cover common mistakes that are particular to non-native English speakers of certain language groups as well as cultural issues. It is clear that tutors mainly focused on their need to better understand their ESL tutees' cultural differences that may cause some conflicts at the writing center.

The literature review and the study findings agreed that tutors need knowledge about ESL students' cultural and linguistic issues by providing the tutors with an ESL training program prior to their employment in the writing center. An efficient tutor, according to the study findings, is that person who can work as a "Cultural informant," and recommended by Powers (1993). According to Powers (1993), tutors should be cultural informants because ESL writers come from different educational, rhetorical, and cultural backgrounds. Besides, Powers (1993) explained that "ESL writers are asking us to become audiences for their work in a broader way than native speakers are; they view us as cultural informants about American academic expectations" (p. 98). Furthermore, tutors can help ESL writers improve their writing skills by showing them how to incorporate the American rhetorical style in their writing. Cogie et al. (1999) agreed with Powers and advocated the cultural informant approach with ESL tutees.

Thus, tutors need to receive more ESL training specifically in second language acquisition and second language writing because these are, according to them, the major fields they feel considerable deficiency with when they tutor ESL students. Some tutors emphasized that experience and practice are two important factors to ESL training. The researcher deduced from the tutors' views that the influence of the first language on second language writing was one of the major challenges that ESL students encountered and were reflected in their writing. Therefore, tutors stressed their need to know how to neutralize such challenges or at least alleviate its impact.

Some tutors agreed with the researcher that hiring an ESL specialist can help tutors understand the second language writing issues that they may encounter during tutorials. Among the ten tutors interviewed were three writing centers' directors. They welcomed the idea of either providing tutors with ESL training or hiring an ESL specialist. They agreed that the current training of tutors was not sufficient especially with the exponentially increasing numbers of ESL clientele. Nevertheless, they confirmed that this service cannot be currently offered due to some administrative and funding issues. Discussing the idea with the CLASS Plus writing center's director, he highly welcomed the idea but he contended that the writing center tutors were graduate students hired by the university administration and they were chosen from different majors. This finding was consistent with the literature review that suggested that the writing center should hire some international students who have the knowledge, experience, and practice of second language learning. However, according to some tutors, in order to have a good number of efficient tutors who will be familiar with all these linguistic and cultural differences, their graduate programs should offer them an ESL program that is relevant to the linguistic and cultural differences such as TESOL program.

Students' Perceptions of Tutors' ESL Training-Interviews

Most of ESL students interviewed adopted the same view that tutors needed ESL training. ESL students believed that tutors were in serious need of receiving ESL training to better assist their ESL tutees. These students' interviews were in agreement with their survey responses when they stressed tutors' need to receive specialized ESL training. As indicated in the surveys, tutors had slightly lower perceptions of their current ESL training than ESL students did. On the other hand, tutors and ESL students, during interviews, agreed on the need of providing tutors with a special training regarding ESL instruction and multicultural education.

This was a surprise because many ESL students especially the international students consider tutors as teachers. It is a misconception that the tutor's role is a writing teacher not a peer tutor. According to the literature review, some ESL students passively receive information from American tutors based on the misperception that since tutors are native speakers, they are teachers with power and authority. However, the findings of this study were different from previous studies conducted on the same construct. This data revealed that writing center tutors need specialized ESL training and ESL tutees needed alternation between non-directive tutoring approach and directive one. Most participants favored a collaborative and egalitarian relationship between tutors and ESL tutees as well.

ESL students interviewed were consistent in their beliefs that tutors were not sufficiently trained to assist ESL students. Students claimed that tutors were proficient in English writing but lacked knowledge of ESL pedagogy. They emphasized that most of the tutors did not know how to accommodate and incorporate ESL tutees. The demographic information revealed that most tutees had ESL and composition classes before enrolling in their majors. Accordingly, they knew how an ESL teacher deals with ELLs that have specific language needs. Some of these students said that they had ELAC classes as an introductory course. But no tutor surveyed or interviewed mentioned any class related to ESL pedagogy. This indicated to what extent the writing center tutors should have some ESL training in order to be able to better assist ESL tutees.

Another important finding of the study was that tutors knew little about their tutees' cultural differences. This misunderstanding of the cultural differences may sometimes cause a tense atmosphere in the writing center. Neglecting such cultural differences may cause conflict, students' feelings of disappointment, frustration, and potential "hostile feeling" (Blau & Hall, 2002). Ryan and Zimmerelli (2010) asserted that each culture has its specific characteristics and

tutors should respect such characteristics. Thus, the study emphasized that tutors were proficient in English writing but they needed some special ESL training in order to better help ESL clients.

In addition, the study stressed the necessity of differentiating tutoring techniques between NES and NNES students. Students that agreed with the researcher on this view claimed that it was difficult for them to understand tutors who did not differentiate between them and NES students in tutoring. At any rate, tutors should apply different tutoring strategies and techniques with ESL students because they are not native speakers. For instance, some ESL students expressed their dissatisfaction that many tutors used slang and idiomatic expressions that they could not understand. The researcher observed that tutors did speak quickly with ESL students as they do with native speakers. With rapid speech and slang language, some ESL students especially those who lived for a short time in the U.S. could not follow tutors that made them end up misunderstanding what the tutors say. This important finding emphasized the necessity of the tutor's role as a facilitator. But to achieve this, tutors need to have more training on ESL pedagogy. It is not necessary for tutors to be ESL specialists, but they should be aware of the cultural and linguistic needs of ESL students. Any negative influence of the first language should be paid attention to avoid vague and ambiguous writing style. Moreover, tutor/tutee's interaction should be given attention. Many ESL students, especially the international students included in this study, have not mastered slang. Although they had English classes either in their home countries or here in the U.S. before starting their programs, their previous English classes focused on standard English, i.e., the academic and formal variety of the English language. They are less exposed to slang than the other categories of ESL students who immigrated to the U.S. since they were young children or at least lived for longer time in an English speaking community. Another important point related to tutor/tutee's interaction, all tutorials were held in

cubicles. This setting is open area surrounded by other tutors and tutees that does not allow tutors to raise their voices to articulate or stress key words in order to help low proficiency students understand the tutors. Some tutors lowered their voices in order not to distract others. ESL tutees especially the low proficiency English speakers sometimes did not understand what tutors said. Raising and falling of tone with alternating stress and rhythm during interaction is a good technique to be followed with ESL tutees. All these techniques related to ESL instruction should be taken into account with ESL tutorials.

Conclusion

This is an exploratory study that investigated the perceptions of tutors, ESL tutees, and university instructors toward the role of the writing center tutorials and their effectiveness in improving ESL college students' writing skills. The study utilized mixed methods research combining quantitative and qualitative research methods in order to validate the findings. In the writing center pedagogy, effectiveness is defined as the success of the writing center in achieving its clientele's writing goals in order to make them satisfied with the writing assistance offered (Weigle & Nelson, 2004). Thus, the effectiveness of the writing center is often examined through the perceptions of the stakeholders that are involved in the writing center's work. In other word, the degree of satisfaction of tutees about their writing skills after consulting the center, tutors' perceptions of their assistance to ESL tutees, and instructors' perceptions of their students' writing improvement, was the measurement of that effectiveness. The researcher chose four major research questions for this study:

1. What are ESL college students' and writing center tutors' perceptions of the effectiveness of writing center tutorials?

2. How do instructors perceive the impact of writing center tutorials on ESL students' academic writing?

3. Do tutors and ESL tutees have differences in terms of the general perceptions of directive and nondirective tutoring approaches?

4. Do writing center tutors need to receive more specialized ESL instruction and training to better assist ESL students and understand their academic needs?

Since the topic of this study was the role of the writing center tutorials in improving ESL students' writing, the researcher chose three dominant constructs to examine that role: the effectiveness of the tutorials from the perspective of the participants, the binary modes of tutoring followed at the writing center, and the preparedness of tutors to assist ESL tutees.

The importance of this study lies in the fact that its findings may be helpful to more than 30 % of the writing center's population. Writing sometimes represents a road block to some of ESL students especially the international students who need English writing in their fields of study. Some people may argue that international students may not need English when they return to their home countries. This is a misconception because those students will continue using English in their professions since English is a dominant language in many fields.

The findings of surveys, interviews, and the observation in general revealed that all writing center stakeholders--ESL students, tutors, and university professors perceived that the writing center tutorials were effective and helpful to improve ESL students' writing skill. Some writing improvements include LOCs and HOCs. The findings showed that most participants emphasized that grammar was the most important writing issue or challenge for which ESL tutees sought assistance. However, many tutors assured the researcher that grammar was not the only writing assistance ESL students requested some help with; some other LOCs issues were

also offered like word choice, mechanics, and formatting. Furthermore, among the HOCs issues

representing a challenge to ESL students was rhetorical conventions. In addition, one of the most

interesting themes to emerge from this study was that ESL students and writing center tutors

believed that writing skills obtained in the writing center were transferable and helpful to ESL

tutees' future careers. This is the major goal of the writing center that its role should not be

limited to fixing a paper but instead shaping minds and ideas for a better future: "Our job is to

produce better writers not better writing" (North, 1984, p. 438). Most of the participants

emphasized that ESL students benefit by the writing center tutorials in all stages of writing from

brainstorming to organization issues of the final draft. Moreover, most participants confirmed

that usual and repeat visits to the writing center could also make a difference in ESL students'

writing skills. In other words, they emphasized that if tutees especially ESL students frequently

consult the writing center, they can notice constant improvement in their academic writing. In

addition, tutors believed that ESL students should have reasonable expectations of the writing

center. The same concept was emphasized by the instructors. These perceptions were consistent

with the literature review that discussed the role of the writing center and its tutorials in

improving NES students in general and ESL students' academic and professional writing in

particular. Many important themes emerged through analyzing the data gathered from the

surveys, interviews, and non-participatory observation. Those themes proved how effective the

writing center is from the perspective of the participants.

The researcher investigated the tutors' and ESL students' perceptions of the best tutoring

approach: directive or non-directive that should be followed with ESL students. The survey

findings were not consistent with the findings of the interviews. While tutors during the surveys

endorsed the non-directive tutoring approach as prescribed by all of the writing center's policy,

during the interviews, they strongly advocated a balance between using the two tutoring modes.

On the other hand, most of ESL students, during the surveys, favored the directive mode;

however, during interviews, they were divided into two groups with each group advocating one

of the two types of tutoring approaches: 60 % preferring the non-directive tutoring approach and

40 % advocating the directive approach. During the interviews, most of the tutors emphasized

that the writing center should have a degree of flexibility and reasonable balance between

directive and non-directive approaches to better help ESL students. Tutors interviewed asserted

that they sometimes utilized the directive approach when ESL tutees struggled with something

related to language ability or cultural issues to keep the smooth rhythm of tutoring. But none of

tutors said that the non-directive approach, the highly recommended approach of writing center

tutorials, was especially effective for ELLs. Thus, the non-directive tutoring approach,

pedagogically recommended for the writing center, was not fully followed with ESL tutees.

Although most writing center training manuals in the U.S. advocate a non-directive,

collaborative approach for tutoring (Ryan & Zimmerelli, 2010), most tutors who participated in

this study affirmed that they either utilized the directive approach or a balance between the two

tutoring modes.

This study is one of the relatively few research studies that investigated the impact of the

prior knowledge of ESL pedagogy on writing center tutors' efficiency. The researcher concluded

that prior instruction in ESL pedagogy would better assist tutors to understand the academic,

cultural, and linguistic needs of ESL college students, and to make tutors better provide ESL

students with appropriate tutorials. The findings indicated a nonsignificant difference between

students' and tutors' survey responses in terms of the perceptions of tutors' required ESL

training. Tutors had slightly lower perceptions of their current ESL training than ESL students

did. On the other hand, tutors and ESL students, during interviews, agreed on the necessity of providing tutors with a special training in ESL instruction and multicultural education.

The findings of the study showed that all tutors interviewed emphasized that they needed a training program on ESL. According to tutors, the proposed ESL training should cover the first language transfer and cultural issues as well. Their perceptions were consistent with the literature that stressed the necessity of training tutors on assisting ESL tutees by providing tutors with required knowledge about ESL pedagogy in order to make them efficient ESL tutors and cultural informants. A few tutors suggested that the writing center hire an ESL specialist to train tutors in order to better assist ESL tutees. Many writing centers in the U.S. actually hire an ESL specialist to assist tutors in the tutorial issues related to second language writing. The literature review discussed the idea of hiring some of the international students, who are interested in writing tutoring and eligible for that, to assist in the writing center. This suggestion would help to transfer the international students' experience of second language acquisition to the center's staff.

Moreover, ESL students interviewed agreed with tutors' perceptions of providing tutors with some ESL preparation. The students were critical of the tutors' preparedness to assist ESL tutees. In addition, they asserted that they met some low proficiency tutors who were in dire need of ESL training to better understand their cultural and linguistic needs. They believed that most of the tutors did not know how to assist and accommodate ESL tutees and knew little about their tutees' cultural differences. The fact that may sometimes create a tense atmosphere in the writing center. Students stated that tutors should have some knowledge about other cultures that they meet in the writing center to avoid potential cultural conflicts. Furthermore, students expressed their need of having a "cultural informant" who could not only understand and respect their

cultures but also could introduce the American culture to ESL students. Thus, ESL students and tutors interviewed concluded that the writing center had to provide tutors with special training on ESL pedagogy.

Finally, this exploratory study investigated the role of the writing center tutorials offered to ESL students. The effectiveness of the writing center tutorials was examined through the perceptions of tutors, ESL tutees, and university instructors. The findings of this study confirmed that the writing center is effective in improving ESL tutees' writing skills that may also be transferable to their future careers. In addition, this study emphasized that the non-directive tutoring approach, the commonly used in the current writing centers, was no longer effective for all ESL tutees, and most tutors, according to this study, did not follow this prescriptive tutoring approach in their writing centers. Consequently, the findings of this study stated that a reasonable balance between the two modes of tutoring can make a difference with ESL students. Furthermore, the study asserted that writing center tutors may lack some specialized ESL training in order to better assist and accommodate ESL tutees.

Implications

The study had some important findings that can better assist writing centers to provide ESL tutees with appropriate tutorials. For instance, the recent writing center literature focuses on the need of utilizing the non-directive tutoring mode with NES students and using more directive approach especially with ESL tutees (Jones et al., 2006; Shamoon & Burns, 1995; Thonus, 2004; Williams, 2005). However, the study findings confirmed that a good combination between non-directive and directive tutoring modes may better assist tutors to provide ESL tutees with some solutions for their writing challenges (Blau & Hall, 2002; Carino, 2003; Henning, 2001; Shamoon & Burns, 2001; Thonus, 2004; Williams & Severino, 2004). The study affirmed that

the alternation of the two modes of tutoring based on the judicious judgment of a tutor who has been well trained to assess the tutee's linguistic needs is a good strategy to double the benefits of the writing center: helping ESL students with their writing assignments and creating a new non-threatening learning environment for these students who are in terrible need of that collaborative learning. In addition, this study recommends that writing centers change their strategies and tutoring techniques in order to better assist ESL students in these ways:

1. As mentioned in the literature, ESL tutees may sometimes need some different methods of tutoring from those followed with NES students. And ESL students do not have the sense and intuition of a native speaker. Thus, tutors should provide the suitable scaffolding to these students when necessary.

2. A strategy such as reading aloud, the commonly used in the writing center, may not well received by many tutees.

3. The study revealed an important finding that the current writing center tutors lack some qualifications of tutoring ESL tutees. They may be proficient in composition but ESL tutorials need some knowledge of multicultural education and second language writing. Knowing the challenges that ESL tutees encounter with English writing requires providing these tutors with ESL training program and immersing them in this field of second language pedagogy. The study emphasized that 30 % of the writing center's population of ESL students deserved a constant preparation and training by the writing center practitioners.

Limitations of the Study

The first limitation of this study can be attributed to the lack of a comparison between NES and ESL students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the writing center tutorials in order to

better understand the real differences between the two groups and to determine the best tutoring methods and strategies to be followed with each category. The second limitation of this study is that this research assumed that there is a difference between tutors who have previous knowledge with ESL pedagogy and those who do not without making such a comparison between the two groups. Finally, the third limitation of this study is the inability to generalize the results to other ESL student populations. The results of this study may not be representative of other writing centers since this study was limited to one region of the U.S.

Suggestions for Future Research

The study directed the attention to further future research studies that can be beneficial to the writing center profession. The following recommendations are based on the findings of this study.

Empirical study needed to determine effectiveness. Effectiveness is often defined in the writing center pedagogy as the success of achieving tutees' goals by providing them with required writing assistance. Accordingly, this study tried to explore the participants' perceptions of the effectiveness of the writing center tutorials offered to ESL tutees. However, empirical studies are still needed to determine that effectiveness through prolonged studies that utilize the empirical research. For instance, more in-depth studies are needed to yield more statistic findings to better reflect how the writing center can be effective in improving ESL tutees' writing skills. In this study, the researcher utilized the mixed methods in order to triangulate data collection methods and validate the study findings for yielding robust results. Nevertheless, a longitudinal study is needed to follow up on the progress that ESL tutees can achieve after receiving the writing center tutorials. In a future study, a case study or across case study can be utilized to determine that progress.

Discourse analysis. Writing center future studies should utilize Discourse Analysis in order to help researchers analyze some ESL tutees' papers after and before the tutorials to specify the weaknesses, strengths, and the possible writing improvements. The process of document analysis using discourse analysis or conversational analysis will help researchers recognize the linguistic features of the target language namely English that may sometimes reflect the negative influence of ESL tutees' first language. According to Tannen et al. (2014) knowledge of Discourse Analysis will assist researchers to: "Demonstrate how to analyze spoken and written discourse, explain the relationship between structure and function in discourse, and explicate the relationship between text and context." (p. 2). Accordingly, the use of document analysis will also enable researchers to analyze and examine ESL tutees' papers to locate the interference between the home cultures of these tutees that has an impact on their second language writing. In addition, future researchers can therefore recognize the repetitive flawed patterns of ESL tutees' writing and introduce the model forms without appropriation. In writing center profession, appropriation means taking away the right of authorship from tutees by editing their papers that may end up changing the content. This appropriation can occur when tutors try to exploit their authority as writing consultants and impose their edits on their tutees. This practice is unethical and unaccepted in the writing center since its job is "to produce better writers not better writing." (North, 1984, p. 438). So as a writing center consultant, a tutor can show the tutee a pattern and ask that tutee to follow the model offered by the tutor. This is the real mission of the writing center.

The impact of ESL training. Any future researcher can conduct an explanatory study to compare between tutors who received a special ESL training and those who did not. The purpose of this recommended study is to examine the real professional requirements of the writing center

tutors who deal with ESL tutees. This proposed study can implement a case study research design to investigate the impact of ESL instruction on the proficiency of the writing center tutors to better assist ESL clientele.

Writing center future studies determine ESL training programs. Finally, this study recommended that future research is important to writing center profession. Any future study should assist writing center practitioners to determine the best methods of tutoring ESL students in order to accomplish their academic goals. In addition, future writing center research can help address the pedagogical, academic, cultural, and linguistic needs of ESL students in more details. Research in the field of writing center pedagogy can help determine ESL training programs required to help tutors better understand second language writing and better accommodate ESL students. Furthermore, future research can make tutors more capable of utilizing the most effective methods of ESL pedagogy in their tutorials to help ESL tutees feel more self-confident in English writing. Moreover, writing center staff, faculty, and university administrators must be made aware of the latest developments in writing center pedagogy. More importantly, they must be well prepared to incorporate the growing population of ESL students in the U.S. academic institutions and do their best to better accommodate these students and provide them with equal opportunities like their native peers.

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Appendix 1: Tutors' Survey

The Role of Writing Center Tutorials on ESL Students
Exploring Tutors, Tutees, and Instructors' Perceptions
A Survey conducted by
Ibrahim Mazen
University of Arkansas

Introduction

This study investigates tutors, instructors, and ESL tutees' perceptions about writing center tutorials and the effectiveness of such tutorials on improving ESL college students' academic and professional writing. The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of the writing center on ESL college students' academic writing. Based on the assumptions and structural framework of the constructivist theory, this research presents a cognitive framework for improving instruction at writing centers and accommodations for English language learners.

This survey will help educators maximize the benefits of writing centers to improve the academic writing of ESL graduate students.
Please take a few minutes to complete this survey. You are encouraged to complete the survey in one sitting, which typically takes about 20-30 minutes. Your time is valuable to us. Your participation is confidential to the extent allowed by law and university policy. You may choose to answer only some questions, or refuse to participate in the survey.

Directions:
When you are presented with a scale next to a question, please put an X over the number that best corresponds to your answer. For example, if you strongly agree with the following question, you would put an X through the number 5. If you moderately agree, you would put an X through number 4. If you neither agree nor disagree, you would put an X through number 3.

Example Question:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Writing center tutorials can impact ESL graduate students' academic writing.	1	2	3	4	5

Taking the survey, you agree to participate and you acknowledge that you are 18 years of age or older. If you have any questions regarding the survey, please contact Ibrahim Mazen at imazen@uark.edu or my dissertation director, Dr. Felicia Lincoln at flincoln@uark.edu.

Thanks very much for your time and help!

Demographic Information		
Name	Age	
Gender	□ Male	□ Female
First Language	Nationality	Second language
The highest education degree	Previous ESL classes	

Perceptions about writing center	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Consulting the writing center is helpful with any writing assignment.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The writing center is only for students who struggle with writing skills.	1	2	3	4	5
3. ESL students consult the writing center after having a low grade on a paper.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Face-to-face tutoring is more useful to ESL tutees than online tutoring.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Writing center helps international students of all majors.	1	2	3	4	5
6. The writing center assists ESL students in creating ideas and brainstorming.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Writing center tutoring is time-consuming	1	2	3	4	5
8. The tutoring time is sufficient for reviewing the entire paper.	1	2	3	4	5
9. After visiting the writing center, ESL students' academic writing improves.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Writing center tutorials will be helpful to ESL students' future career after graduation	1	2	3	4	5
11. Writing center effectively assists students to integrate quotations and cite sources.	1	2	3	4	5
12. ESL students frequently apply the strategies they learn from the writing center.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Writing center tutorials help ESL students convey their message clearly.	1	2	3	4	5

14. Writing center tutorials help ESL students understand American academic writing style.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Writing center tutors help ESL students improve their papers organization and cohesiveness.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Writing center tutorials make ESL students more confident about their writing.	1	2	3	4	5
17. ESL students benefit from the writing center tutorials to correct their grammatical errors.	1	2	3	4	5
18. ESL students benefit from the writing center tutorials to correct their formatting and mechanics.	1	2	3	4	5
19. One-on-one assistance of the writing center is more useful to ESL students than a composition class.	1	2	3	4	5
20. ESL students feel comfortable consulting writing center tutors at any stage of their writing assignment.	1	2	3	4	5

Perceptions about tutors applying nondirective approaches	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
21. Tutors always give ESL students the opportunity to self-correct and self-edit their papers.	1	2	3	4	5
22. An effective tutor is that person who helps ESL students correct their papers by themselves.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Tutors often like to ask some questions to urge ESL students to participate in tutoring discussion.	1	2	3	4	5
24. Tutors like discussing the assignment requirements with ESL students at the beginning of	1	2	3	4	5

the tutoring session.

25. Tutors often share their thoughts with ESL students about their papers without imposing any views on them.	1	2	3	4	5
26. Tutors are peers with whom ESL students like to collaborate on their papers.	1	2	3	4	5

Perceptions about tutors applying directive approaches	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
27. The writing center tutor's role is to proofread or edit students' papers.	1	2	3	4	5
28. A tutor is like a teacher who has higher knowledge.	1	2	3	4	5
29. ESL students often make all the edits, corrections, and revisions tutors suggest.	1	2	3	4	5
30. Tutors should fix the grammatical errors in ESL students' papers.	1	2	3	4	5
31. Tutors should directly show ESL					

Perceptions about tutors' expertise	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
32. Tutors often provide ESL students with English learning sources.	1	2	3	4	5
33. Writing center tutors need some training to better assist ESL students.	1	2	3	4	5
34. Writing center tutors are aware of ESL students' native language influence on writing.	1	2	3	4	5
35. ESL students sometimes have difficulty understanding the tutors' spoken English.	1	2	3	4	5
36. Tutors sometimes use slang and idiomatic expressions which many ESL students do not understand.	1	2	3	4	5

37. Tutors sometimes rephrase their explanations to help ESL students understand them.	1	2	3	4	5
38. Tutors respect ESL students' cultural differences.	1	2	3	4	5

- Please check if you would be willing to have a 30-minute follow-up interview with me.

  ☐

  & provide your university e-mail:…………………………………….

Both your time and participation are very valuable to the researcher. Please feel free to contact the researcher or director if you have any questions or need further clarifications.

Thank you for your valuable time and useful cooperation!

Ibrahim Mazen

University of Arkansas

Appendix 2: Tutees' Survey

The Role of Writing Center Tutorials on ESL Students
Exploring Tutors, Tutees, and Instructors' Perceptions
A Survey conducted by
Ibrahim Mazen
University of Arkansas

Introduction

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Please take a few minutes to complete this survey. You are encouraged to complete the survey in one sitting, which typically takes about 20-30 minutes. Your time is valuable to us. Your participation is confidential to the extent allowed by law and university policy. You may choose to answer only some questions, or refuse to participate in the survey.

Directions:

When you are presented with a scale next to a question, please put an X over the number that best corresponds to your answer. For example, if you strongly agree with the following question, you would put an X through the number 5. If you moderately agree, you would put an X through number 4, if you neither agree nor disagree, you would put an X through number 3.

Example Question:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Writing center tutorials can impact ESL graduate students' academic writing.	1	2	3	4	5

Taking the survey, you agree to participate and you acknowledge that you are 18 years of age or older. If you have any questions regarding the survey, please contact Ibrahim Mazen at imazen@uark.edu or my dissertation director, Dr. Felicia Lincoln at flincoln@uark.edu .

Thanks very much for your time and help!

Demographic Information		
Name	Age	
Gender	□ Male	□ Female
First Language	Nationality	
English Classes taken		

Perceptions about effectiveness of writing center tutorials	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Consulting the writing center tutors has been helpful with all my writing assignments.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The writing center is only for students who struggle with their writing skills	1	2	3	4	5
3. I only go the writing center after my teacher gives me a low grade on a paper.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Face-to-face tutoring is more useful to me than online tutoring.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Writing center tutorials can help with writing in my major.	1	2	3	4	5
6. The writing center assists me in creating ideas and brainstorming.	1	2	3	4	5
7. My writing center tutorials are time-consuming	1	2	3	4	5
8. Tutoring time is sufficient for reviewing my entire paper.	1	2	3	4	5
9. After visiting the writing center, my academic writing improves.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Writing center tutorials will be helpful to my future career after graduation	1	2	3	4	5
11. Writing center effectively assists me in integrating quotations and citing sources.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I often apply the strategies I learn from the writing center.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Writing center tutorials help me convey my message clearly.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Writing center tutorials help me understand American academic writing style.	1	2	3	4	5

15. Writing center tutors help me improve organization and cohesiveness of my papers.

1	2	3	4	5

16. Writing center tutorials make me more confident about my writing.

1	2	3	4	5

17. Writing center tutorials help me correct my grammatical errors.

1	2	3	4	5

18. I benefit from the writing center tutorials to correct my formatting and mechanics.

1	2	3	4	5

19. One-on-one assistance of my writing center tutorials has been more useful than my composition classes.

1	2	3	4	5

20. I feel comfortable consulting writing center tutors at any stage of my writing assignment.

1	2	3	4	5

Perceptions about tutors applying nondirective approaches	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
21. Tutors always give me the opportunity to self-correct and self-edit my paper.	1	2	3	4	5
22. An effective tutor is that person who helps me correct my papers by myself.	1	2	3	4	5
23. I like the questions asked by tutors to urge my participation.	1	2	3	4	5
24. I like discussing the assignment requirements with tutors at the beginning of the tutoring session.	1	2	3	4	5
25. I like tutors to share with me their thoughts about my paper without imposing them on me.	1	2	3	4	5
26. Tutors are peers with whom I like to collaborate on my papers.	1	2	3	4	5

Perceptions about tutors applying directive approaches	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
27. The writing center tutor's role is to proofread or edit my papers.	1	2	3	4	5
28. A tutor is like a teacher who has higher knowledge.	1	2	3	4	5
29. I make all the edits, corrections, and revisions tutors suggest without negotiation.	1	2	3	4	5
30. Tutors should fix the grammatical errors in my papers.	1	2	3	4	5
31. Tutors should directly show me word choice errors and how to correct them.	1	2	3	4	5

Perceptions about tutors' ESL expertise	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
32. Tutors often provide me with English learning sources.	1	2	3	4	5
33. Writing center tutors need some training to better assist me.	1	2	3	4	5
34. Writing center tutors are aware of my native language influence on writing.	1	2	3	4	5
35. I sometimes have difficulty understanding the tutors' spoken English.	1	2	3	4	5
36. Tutors sometimes use slang and idiomatic expressions which I do not understand.	1	2	3	4	5
37. Tutors are willing to provide multiple explanations to help me understand different concepts.	1	2	3	4	5
38. Tutors respect my cultural differences.	1	2	3	4	5

- Please check if you would be willing to have a 30-minute follow-up interview with me.

  ☐

  & provide your university e-mail: ……………………………………..

Both your time and participation are very valuable to the researcher. Please feel free to contact the researcher or director if you have any questions or need further clarifications.

Thank you for your valuable time and useful cooperation!

Ibrahim Mazen

University of Arkansas

Appendix 3: Tutor Interview

The purpose of this interview is to obtain clearer understanding of your perceptions of the role of writing center tutorials and its effectiveness on ESL college students' academic writing. Your time is valuable to us. Your participation is confidential to the extent allowed by law and university policy. This interview will take 30 minutes. You may choose to answer only some questions, or not participate in the study. Your responses will help the writing center staff provide the most effective services to ESL college students.

1. How long have you been tutoring at the Writing Center?

2. How often do you tutor ESL students?

3. What assistance do ESL students hope to receive from the writing center tutorials?

4. Did you have any prior knowledge about English teaching to ESL students?

5. If not, do you feel that you need some training on ESL teaching?

6. Do you think that you always achieve what ESL students want?

A. If yes, how do you address ESL tutees' academic writing concerns during the tutorial?

B. If not, what do you think you could do to help ESL tutees better improve their writing?

7 What are the most common challenges facing ESL students?

8 Which approach, directive/non-directive, do you think is effective with ESL students and why?

9 What other strategies do you find effective/ineffective with ESL tutees?

10 Do you believe that ESL students' writing has improved as a result of the writing center tutorial and how?

11 Do you believe that ESL tutees acquire skills which can be transferable to future independent writing?

12 Is there anything else you would like to add about your tutoring experience with ESL students?

Thank you for your time and cooperation!

Appendix 4: ESL Tutee Interview

The purpose of this interview is to obtain clearer understanding of your perceptions of the role of writing center tutorials and their effectiveness on ESL college students' academic writing. Your time is valuable to us. Your participation is confidential to the extent allowed by law and university policy. This interview will take 30 minutes. You may choose to answer only some questions, or not participate in the study. Your responses will help the writing center staff provide the most effective services to ESL college students.

1. Did you go to the Writing Center before? If yes, how many writing tutorials have you attended?

2. What assistance do you often want to receive from the writing center tutorials?

3. Do you think that you usually achieve your goals?

a. If yes, how does the tutor help you achieve what you want?

b. If no, what would you like the tutor to do to better assist you?

4. What are the most useful parts of your tutorials? And why?

5. What strategies do you think they are helpful, e.g.: reading aloud, asking tutees information-eliciting questions, allowing tutees enough time for self-correction, reorganizing ideas, and paraphrasing?

6. What ineffective strategies do you encounter at the writing center?

7. Do you prefer that tutors directly show you your errors and help you correct them?

8. Do you like tutors to give you time to detect errors and correct them on your own?

9. Do you think that tutors have sufficient training to meet ESL students' academic needs?

10. If not, what aspects do you think that they need some training on?

11. Do you believe that your writing has improved due to writing center tutorials and how?

12. Would you like to add anything else about your experience in the Writing Center?

Thank you for your time and participation!

Appendix 5: Faculty Interview

The purpose of this study is to investigate the role of the writing center tutorials and its effectiveness on ESL college students' academic writing. Based on the assumptions and structural framework of the constructivist theory, this research presents a cognitive framework for a better instruction at the writing center and suggests better accommodations for English language learners. The study investigates tutors', instructors', and ESL tutees' perceptions about the writing center tutorials and the effectiveness of such tutorials in improving ESL college students' academic and professional writing.

This interview will help writing center staff and researchers maximize the benefits of writing centers to improve ESL graduate students' academic writing.

Your time is valuable to us. Your participation is confidential to the extent allowed by law and university policy. This interview will take 30 minutes. You may choose to answer only some questions, or not participate in the study. Your responses will help the writing center staff provide the most effective services to ESL college students.

Thanks very much for your time and help!

1. Did you have any previous experience with the writing center?

2. Did you refer any of your ESL graduate students to the writing center?

3. Why do you often refer ESL graduate students to the writing center? Please check all that apply:

☐ brainstorming ☐ proofreading/editing ☐ revision ☐ composition assistance
☐ spelling checking ☐ grammar correction ☐ organization ☐ writing style
☐ other (please explain)

4. Do you usually receive any tutorial reports from the writing center?

5. If yes, how do you rate such reports?

6. Did you attend any workshops, presentations, seminars about the writing center?

7. Did you communicate with anyone from the writing center about what writing assistance you like them to offer to your ESL graduate students?

8. Do you think that the service presented at the writing center is effective to ESL graduate students?

9. What other services do you recommend for the writing center to offer?

10. Did you find out any improvement in your ESL students' writing after consulting the writing center and how?

11. Do you think that the writing center tutorials are effective to ESL graduate students' future career?

12. What other feedback or comments would you like to share?

Thank you for your valuable time and helpful participation!
Ibrahim Mazen
University of Arkansas
imazen@uark.edu

Appendix 6: Tutors' Perceptions

Table 17 Tutors' Perceptions

Question 1

Theme	Code	Formulated Meaning	Context	Frequency	Percentage
A-Z Writing Assistance	Tutorial Support	Students sought for help at all writing stages	Students come for all kinds of issues	10	100%
Lower-order Concerns	Local Concerns	Students look for help with grammar	most Students come primarily for help with grammar	10	100 %
Higher-order Concerns	Global Concerns	Organization, Coherence, and Style	I tried to point out the need for cohesion and clarity	8	80 %
Knowing New Writing Genres	Different Writing Style	Business Jargon, Literary Diction	Students learn appropriate writing ways in their majors	7	70 %
Learning American Writing Conventions	Rhetorical Conventions	Writing in accordance with the American writing conventions	Students learn linguistically sound writing	9	90 %
Individualized Instruction	Customized Tutorial	Helping each tutee overcome her writing challenges	Tutors can provide a friendly, empathetic resource for ESL students	6	60 %
Regularity	Repeat visits	Students often consult the writing center	over repeated visits improve their skills	9	90 %

Appendix 7: Tutees Perceptions

Appendix 8: Instructor' Perceptions

Table 18
Question 1
Tutees
Perceptions

Theme	Code	Formulated Meaning	Context	Frequency	Percentage
Regularity	Repetitive Tutorials	Students visit the writing center regularly	I never turn in a paper before visiting the writing center	9	90 %
Local Concerns	Grammar	Students look for help with grammar	I need them to check some of the grammar errors I might have in my writing	9	90 %
Self-correction	Self-editting	Students found it as an Effective Strategy	They help me to correct my mistakes	6	60 %
Paraphrasing	Simplification	Effective Technique	For me, I like paraphrasing.	7	70 %
Reading aloud	Verbalization	Effective Strategy	I like that tutors read aloud	5	50 %
Information-eliciting Questions	Enquiry	Effective Strategy	The tutors ask questions about the course	5	50 %
Individualized Instruction	Customized Tutorial	Helping each tutee overcome her writing challenges	Tutors can provide a friendly, empathetic resource for ESL students	6	60 %
Writing Improvement	Mastery	Tutees' writing improves	My writing improved a lot	9	90 %

Appendix 8: Instructor' Perceptions

Table 19 Instructors' Perceptions

Question 2

Theme	Code	Formulated Meaning	Context	Frequency	Percentage
Lower-order Concerns	Local Concerns	Students need some help with grammar	It helps students with structure, grammar errors, and composition of research papers	9	90 %
Writing Improvement	Sound writing	Students' writing improved due to writing center	Their writing has improved a lot	9	90 %
Rhetorical Conventions	Directness	Students have to stick to one theme in one paragraph	their major problem has to do with the notion of indirectness of discourse rather than directness of discourse	5	50 %
Nonthreatening Learning Environment and Writing Improvements	Affective Filter	Tutees' writing improved due to the good tutor-tutee relationship	it is a wonderful relationship much better than that in a class	9	90 %
Regularity	Repetition	Students' writing improves over repeated visits	Students should make themselves available at the writing center more regularly	6	60 %

Appendix 9: Tutors' Perceptions

Table 20 RQ3
Tutors' Perceptions

Theme	Code	Formulated Meaning	Context	Frequency	Percentage
Balance between directive and non-directive tutoring approaches	Tutorial Alternation	Tutors favor a balanced use of the tutoring dichotomy	I think any tutoring session should have some balance between directive and nondirective tutoring behavior	8	80 %
Language Ability Determines Tutoring Modes	Proficiency	Tutors alternate tutoring modes based on tutees' proficiency	most Direct vs. non-direct depended on the language ability in English of my students	8	80 %
Keeping the Ownership of Students' Writing	Appropriation	Tutors do not take the authorship away from their tutees	The goal for the student is to maintain control of the writing	6	60 %
The non-directive Mode is Ineffective	Ineffective Approach	Tutors do not favor the non-directive tutoring mode	The nondirective tutoring is wonderful but not for nonnative speakers	10	100 %

Appendix 10: Tutees Perceptions

Table 21
Question
three
Tutees
Perceptions

Theme	Code	Formulated Meaning	Context	Frequency	Percentage
Non-Directive tutoring approach	Collaboration	Students prefer to collaborate with tutors	They only show tutees minor mistakes	6	60 %
Directive Tutoring Mode	Directness	Students prefer that tutors fix their errors	I like them to fix my mistakes	4	40 %
Self-correction	Self-dependence	Students self-edit their mistakes	I am not a passive learner.	6	60 %
Information-eliciting Questions	Enquiry	Tutors ask tutees some pre-tutorial questions	The tutors ask questions about the course	5	50 %

Appendix 11: Tutors Perceptions

Table 22 Question 4

Tutors' Perceptions

Theme	Code	Formulated Meaning	Context	Frequency	Percentage
No Prior Knowledge of ESL Instruction	ESL Knowledge	Tutors do not have ESL teaching experience	I never took any classes or former ESL instruction.	10	100%
Lack of Writing Center ESL Literature	ESL Resources	The Writing center lacks ESL training resources	In the existing tutor-training manuals, there is not a lot.	10	100 %
ESL Training Program Needed	ESL Training	Tutors strongly desire to receive ESL training	I wish I'd had more training in second language acquisition	9	90 %
Hiring An ESL Specialist	Facilitator	The writing center needs to hire an ESL specialist	I would say if you have the resources to hire an ESL specialist	2	20 %
Tutors Must have An ESL Degree	ESL Degree	Tutors should have an ESL degree	The graduate programs should offer us an ESL degree program	3	30 %

Appendix 12: Tutees Perceptions

Table 23
Question
Four
Tutees
Perceptions

Theme	Code	Formulated Meaning	Context	Frequency	Percentage
Tutors' Composition Proficiency	Proficiency	Tutors have mastery of English composition	I worked only with a few of them and they were very good	7	70 %
Providing Tutors with Special Training on ESL Pedagogy	ESL Training	Tutors badly need ESL training to better assist ESLs	They are proficient in English writing but need some ESL pedagogy	10	100 %
Raising tutors' awareness of cultural differences	Diversity	Tutors have to respect cultural differences	They lack the cultural knowledge that enables them to effectively communicate with students	8	80 %
Differentiating tutoring techniques between ESL and NES students	Alternation	Tutors should change their strategies when tutoring ESLs	They should treat international students not like native speakers	7	70 %
Avoiding slang and idiomatic expressions	Standard English	Tutors should use standard English when tutoring ESLs	They should answer all of my questions slowly	5	50 %

Appendix 13: Tutors Informed Consent

INFORMED CONSENT: TUTORS

The Role of Writing Center Tutorials of ESL Students:

Exploring Tutors, Tutees, and Instructors' Perceptions.

Researcher(s):

Ibrahim Mazen
Faculty Advisor's: Felicia Lincoln
University of Arkansas
College of Education
Department of Curriculum & Instruction
109 Peabody Hall (PEAH)
Fayetteville, AR 72701- 1201
479- 387- 6020

imazen@uark.edu
flincoln@uark.edu

Compliance Contact Person:

Ro Windwalker, CIP
IRB Coordinator
Office of Research Compliance
109 MLKG Building
University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, AR 72701
479-575-2208
irb@uark.edu

This research study is conducted by Ibrahim Mazen. The study will take place at the Writing Center of the University of Arkansas.

Purpose: The purpose of the study is to investigate the role of writing center tutorials and its effectiveness by exploring perceptions of ESL students, tutors, and instructors in order to find out better tutoring strategies to improve ESL students' academic writing.

Procedures: You will be asked to do the following:

- Respond to a survey conducted by the researcher exploring your perceptions about writing center tutorials,
- Participate in a 30-minute audio recorded interview with the researcher about your experience with ESL graduate students as a tutor in the Writing Center,
- Allow the researcher to audiotape/videotape at least a couple of your writing center tutorials during a non-participatory observation,
- Allow the researcher to take notes about your comments, suggestions, and the tutorial report you submit to the writing center administration.

Potential Risks: There are no anticipated risks associated with this study.

Benefits: The study may not directly help you. However, the information to be obtained may help writing center researchers better understand ESL students' academic needs thus improving the peer tutoring training and practice.

Confidentiality: Your privacy will be protected. Your participation is confidential to the extent allowed by law and university policy.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation is voluntary in this study. You can withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

This informed consent document explained what will happen during the study. Your signature means that this study has been discussed with you and that you voluntarily agree to take part in the study.

Printed Name

Signature

Appendix 14: ESL Tutees Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT

Tutees

The Role of Writing Center Tutorials of ESL Students:

Exploring Tutors, Tutees, and Instructors' Perceptions.

Researcher(s):   *Compliance Contact Person*:

Ibrahim Mazen   **Ro Windwalker, CIP**
Faculty Advisor's: Felicia Lincoln   **IRB Coordinator**
University of Arkansas   **Office of Research Compliance**
College of Education   **109 MLKG Building**
Department of Curriculum & Instruction   **University of Arkansas**
109 Peabody Hall (PEAH)   **Fayetteville, AR 72701**
Fayetteville, AR 72701- 1201   **479-575-2208**
479- 387- 6020   **irb@uark.edu**

imazen@uark.edu
flincoln@uark.edu

This research study is conducted by Ibrahim Mazen. The study will take place at the Writing Center of the University of Arkansas.

Purpose: The purpose of the study is to investigate the role of writing center tutorials and its effectiveness by exploring perceptions of ESL students, tutors, and instructors in order to find out better tutoring strategies to improve ESL students' academic writing.

Procedures: You will be asked to do the following:

- Respond to a 30-minute survey conducted by the researcher exploring your perceptions about writing center tutorials,
- Participate in a 30-minute audio recorded interview with the researcher about your experience with the Writing Center tutorials,
- Allow the researcher to observe and audiotape/videotape at least a couple of your writing center tutorials,
- Allow the researcher to take notes on your drafts of papers, tutor's feedback, and notes made during the tutorial.

Potential Risks: There are no anticipated risks associated with this study.

Benefits: The study may not directly help you. However, the information to be obtained may help writing center researchers better understand ESL students' academic needs thus improving the peer tutoring training and practice.

Confidentiality: Your privacy will be protected. Your participation is confidential to the extent allowed by law and university policy.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation is voluntary in this study. You can withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

This informed consent document explained what will happen during the study. Your signature means that this study has been discussed with you and that you voluntarily agree to take part in the study.

Printed Name

Signature

Appendix 15: Instructors Informed Consent

INFORMED CONSENT

Instructors

The Role of Writing Center Tutorials of ESL Students:

Exploring Tutors, Tutees, and Instructors' Perceptions.

Researcher(s):	**Compliance Contact Person:**
Ibrahim Mazen	Ro Windwalker, CIP
Faculty Advisor's: Felicia Lincoln	IRB Coordinator
University of Arkansas	Office of Research Compliance
College of Education	109 MLKG Building
Department of Curriculum & Instruction	University of Arkansas
109 Peabody Hall (PEAH)	Fayetteville, AR 72701
Fayetteville, AR 72701- 1201	479-575-2208
479- 387- 6020	irb@uark.edu
imazen@uark.edu	
flincoln@uark.edu	

This research study is conducted by Ibrahim Mazen. The study will take place at the Writing Center of the University of Arkansas.

Purpose: The purpose of the study is to investigate the role of writing center tutorials and its effectiveness by exploring perceptions of ESL students, tutors, and instructors in order to find out better tutoring strategies to improve ESL students' academic writing.

Procedures: You will be asked to do the following:

- Participate in a 30-minute interview with the researcher about your experience with ESL graduate students who consult the writing center,
- Allow the researcher to audiotape/videotape the interview,
- Allow the researcher to take notes about your comments, suggestions, and perceptions about the writing center tutorials.

Potential Risks: There are no anticipated risks associated with this study.

Benefits: The study may not directly help you. However, the information to be obtained may help writing center researchers better understand ESL students' academic needs thus improving the peer tutoring training and practice.

Confidentiality: Your privacy will be protected. Your participation is confidential to the extent allowed by law and university policy.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation is voluntary in this study. You can withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

This informed consent document explained what will happen during the study. Your signature means that this study has been discussed with you and that you voluntarily agree to take part in the study.

Printed Name

Signature

IRB #16-09-075
Approved: 10/05/2016
Expires: 10/04/2017

Appendix 16: IRB Approval

UNIVERSITY OF
ARKANSAS

Office of Research Compliance
Institutional Review Board

December 13, 2016

MEMORANDUM

TO: Ibrahim Mazen
                                 Felicia Lincoln

FROM: Ro Windwalker
                                 IRB Coordinator

RE: PROJECT MODIFICATION

IRB Protocol #:   16-09-075

Protocol Title: *The Role of Writing Center Tutorials of ESL Students Exploring Tutors,*
                                 Tutees, and Instructors' Perceptions

Review Type: ☒ EXEMPT   ☐ EXPEDITED   ☐ FULL IRB

Approved Project Period: Start Date: 12/08/2016 Expiration Date: 10/04/2017

Your request to modify the referenced protocol has been approved by the IRB. **This protocol is currently approved for 140 total participants.** If you wish to make any further modifications in the approved protocol, including enrolling more than this number, you must seek approval *prior to* implementing those changes. All modifications should be requested in writing (email is acceptable) and must provide sufficient detail to assess the impact of the change.

Please note that this approval does not extend the Approved Project Period. Should you wish to extend your project beyond the current expiration date, you must submit a request for continuation using the UAF IRB form "Continuing Review for IRB Approved Projects." The request should be sent to the IRB Coordinator, 109 MLKG Building.

For protocols requiring FULL IRB review, please submit your request at least one month prior to the current expiration date. (High-risk protocols may require even more time for approval.) For protocols requiring an EXPEDITED or EXEMPT review, submit your request at least two weeks prior to the current expiration date. Failure to obtain approval for a continuation *on or prior to* the currently approved expiration date will result in termination of the protocol and you will be required to submit a new protocol to the IRB before continuing the project. Data collected past the protocol expiration date may need to be eliminated from the dataset should you wish to publish. Only data collected under a currently approved protocol can be certified by the IRB for any purpose.

If you have questions or need any assistance from the IRB, please contact me at 109 MLKG Building, 5-2208, or irb@uark.edu.

Appendix 17: IRB Modification

UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS

Office of Research Compliance
Institutional Review Board

September 21, 2017

MEMORANDUM

TO:	Ibrahim Mazen
	Felicia Lincoln
FROM:	Ro Windwalker
	IRB Coordinator
RE:	EXEMPT PROJECT CONTINUATION

IRB Protocol #:	16-09-075
Protocol Title:	*The Role of Writing Center Tutorials of ESL Students Exploring Tutors, Tutees, and Instructors' Perceptions*
Review Type:	☒ EXEMPT
New Approval Date:	09/21/2017

Your request to extend the referenced protocol has been approved by the IRB. We will no longer be requiring continuing reviews for exempt protocols.

If you wish to make any modifications in the approved protocol that may affect the level of risk to your participants, you must seek approval *prior to* implementing those changes. All modifications should be requested in writing (email is acceptable) and must provide sufficient detail to assess the impact of the change.

If you have questions or need any assistance from the IRB, please contact me at 109 MLKG Building, 5-2208, or irb@uark.edu.