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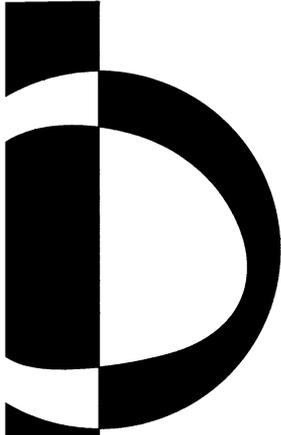
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“Challenge Accepted”: Cooperative Tutoring as an Alternative to One-to-One Tutoring

Abstract

This article reports the findings of a study on cooperative tutoring, which is a variation of the one-to-one tutoring method. Cooperative tutoring, as practiced in this study, consists of two tutors who work collaboratively with one student; however, there are other models of cooperative tutoring that could be developed. Cooperative tutoring described in this article is an adaptation of one method of training new tutors, where the novice tutor observes the expert tutor during a tutoring session and eventually participates with the expert tutor. Where cooperative tutoring differs from this training model is that it involves two tutors with a range of tutoring experiences working together with one student. This study focuses specifically on the interactions between tutors in cooperative tutoring sessions. I explain the methodology used to set up the study and to analyze the data, which is informed by grounded theory. I present an interpretation of the data from two of

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the data categories by applying Malea D. Powell's (2004) work with Native American rhetoric of reciprocity and alliance building. I also present a summary and interpretation of my findings. Finally, I discuss the limitations of the study and indicate areas for further research.

The idea for cooperative tutoring started when I first became the writing center director at University of Houston-Downtown (UHD),¹ in 2001 and was in my first year as a PhD student, at Texas A&M University.² I was training peer tutors on the fly, which consisted of a three-day blitz of information accompanied by role playing and mock tutoring before the semester began and then more training sessions on alternate Fridays. When the writing center opened for the semester, I paired novice tutors with experienced tutors, with novice tutors observing and reflecting. After a week of observation, the novice tutors then participated with the experienced tutors in the same session, both tutoring one student. I began to notice that in these sessions something different was going on. In these sessions, both of the tutors and the student created a different type of collaboration than what occurs during the one-to-one model. Observing that moment again and again planted the seed of the idea for cooperative tutoring, and I began to think about it seriously during the 2004 International Writing Centers Association Summer Institute. But really, cooperative tutoring began to be nurtured by the peer tutors. They were the ones who requested that I extend the training model into everyday practice by pairing experienced tutors together. And like any good writing center director, I responded with "Why not! Let's see what happens." This study is the result of what happened.

Introduction: Why Challenge the One-to-One Model?

One-to-one tutoring is one pedagogical model on which many writing centers in the 21st century are founded and has become a distinctive characteristic of writing centers throughout our history, ranging from the current traditional approach of the late 1970s to the 1980s expres-

1 UHD is both a federally qualified Hispanic-Serving Institution and a minority-serving institution. According to the UHD Fact Book at the time of this study (2009-2010), the total student headcount enrollment by gender and ethnicity, including both undergraduate and graduate students, is as follows: 61.5% female, 38.5% male, .3% American Indian, 9.8% Asian or Pacific Islander, 28.7% Black, 36.7% Hispanic, 2.2% International, 22% White, and .3% Unknown.

2 I wish to acknowledge that the land on which universities like UHD are built on has been stolen from Native Americans, and the laborers who built the buildings had little to no access to higher education.

sivism when the writing process movement took shape (Murphy & Sherwood, 2008). One-to-one tutoring in writing centers is thought to be exceedingly effective, is widely practiced, and is firmly immured in current practices. Most recently, Jackie Grutsch McKinney (2013) has examined the grand narratives of writing center work. In her chapter focusing on the practice of one-to-one tutoring, Grutsch McKinney (2013) observes, "Tutoring is the *sene qua non* of writing center work. A writing center is not a writing center without one-to-one tutoring" (p. 58). Prior to Grutsch McKinney (2013), it was Nancy Grimm (2011), in her essay "Rethorizing Writing Center Work to Transform a System of Advantage Based on Race," who calls for a reexamination of the current practice of one-to-one tutoring in favor of adapting a tutoring approach based on Jean Lave & Etienne Wenger's (1991) community of practice where everyone involved with the writing center would become active participants in creating and maintaining the community. Would Grimm's (2011) call for a different social structure for writing centers, which is not focused on the individual, be accepted? Could a different collaborative model for writing center tutoring possibly be implemented in answer to her challenge? I theorize that one way to bring Grimm's (2011) "different way" to fruition would be to implement what I call "cooperative tutoring."

More often than not, cooperative learning and collaborative learning are perceived as almost indistinguishable from each other. Both learning methods are based on students working together in a group-learning situation; however, Kenneth A. Bruffee (1995) and Elizabeth F. Barkley, Claire Howell Major, & K. Patricia Cross (2014) assert cooperative learning and collaborative learning are not interchangeable terms. The primary difference between the terms is based on structure, in that cooperative learning is the most structured group learning activity whereas collaborative learning is the least structured. The highly structured cooperative learning strategy works best for primary school children where adolescents and adults are more receptive to collaborative learning. Barkley, Major, & Cross (2014) further expand on the differences between cooperative learning and collaborative learning from the instructor's perspective by noting that cooperative learning relies on the instructor's content knowledge to guide students towards deeper learning, and instructors are "responsible not only for designing and assigning structured learning tasks but also for managing time and resources, monitoring students' learning, and checking to see that students are on task and that the group process is working well" (p. 6). Moreover, Bruffee (1995) shows how using the terms interchangeably will weaken the value that each learning environment offers to students.

He points out that “an important goal of cooperative learning is to hold students accountable for learning collectively rather than in competition with one another” (p.16).

I chose the term cooperative tutoring to best represent what I observed and is based, in part, on what Bruffee (2000) recognizes regarding the makeup of collaborative groups. In his article “Consensus Groups: A Basic Model of Classroom Collaboration,” Bruffee (2000) warns that “[dyads or] . . . groups of two . . . tend to sustain levels of stress sharply higher than those of any other group size. . . . [H]owever, working groups . . . seem to be most successful with three members” (p. 90). Similar to Bruffee’s (2000) working group model of three group members, cooperative tutoring, as I refer to in my study, consists of two tutors who work in harmony with one student. I also envision other models of cooperative tutoring being applied to different configurations, such as two tutors and two students, lending itself to a group tutoring session. Cooperative tutoring would afford continuity among the pairings of tutors who work with the same student or with a group of students over the course of the semester. Finally, cooperative tutoring could be used by specialized groups of students who are working on larger projects over longer periods of time, such as a thesis-writing group or a dissertation-writing group.

My work with the diverse student population and diverse peer tutor staff³ at UHD has led me to reconsider how a one-to-one paradigm could be changed to something that more closely resembles Bruffee’s (2000) working group model and how race and agency might play out in a writing center setting. In this article, I will frame cooperative tutoring through the lens of Malea D. Powell’s (2004) work with Native American rhetoric of reciprocity and alliance building. I will then describe the methods used for the study, show how the data was analyzed, and offer emerging analysis of the data. I will also discuss the study limitations and suggestions for future research.

Fostering Reciprocity and Building Alliances as a Basis for Cooperative Tutoring

I draw on Powell’s (2004) essay “Down by the River” in which she introduces the concept of building alliances through her analysis of the

3 In Fall 2016, I became the director of first-year composition after having served as the Writing & Reading Center director from 2001–2016 at UHD. Although I have been working with the diverse student population at UHD since 1996, I am critically conscious of my own subjectivity as a cisgender, White woman.

writings and the life of the 19th century Native American doctor, Susan La Flesche Picotte (Omaha). Powell (2004) focuses on La Flesche's work because of her unique positioning in both the Native American community and the European-American community, as evidenced through her early activist writings on behalf of Native Americans and later through her work as the first female Native American doctor, employed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Powell (2004) frames alliance building based in part on La Flesche's ability to bring both cultures together in a way that not only ensured the survival of the Omaha community but also contributed to the knowledge base of Western medicine. Alliances are, Powell (2004) points out, "reciprocal relations . . . and became a way through which Europeans and Natives could imagine a *nomos* [sic] – a 'normative universe of shared meanings' (p. 42). The opportunity for *nomos* and alliance building, as Powell (2004) describes it, becomes what many writing center directors believe occurs during an ideal writing center session.

However, given the current model of one-to-one tutoring, interactions between tutors and students may not be conducive to creating an opportunity for reciprocity and alliance building. Powell (2004) notes the search for individual differences forges competitors rather than collaborators, which is similar to the critique of the one-to-one model offered by Grimm (2011). Grimm (2011) claims the one-to-one model focuses on creating competitors and contends that most of the foundational theories of tutoring are focused on the privileged student who is already acculturated to the university. For students who are underserved, the maxim of "making the student do all the work" (p. 81) can, as Grimm (2011) attests, "be perceived as insulting, frustrating, and patronizing" (p. 84). Current writing center policies that support the maxim "make the students do all the work" further serve to reinforce the type of assistance privileged students respond well to and will continue to receive. Subsequently, the tutor is inadvertently put into the position of gatekeeper by such writing center policies rather than working towards building alliances. Powell (2004) affirms that building alliances becomes a different way of coming together. She writes, "If we are to be allies, we must share some understanding of one another's beliefs. We don't have to *believe* [sic] one another's beliefs, but we do have to acknowledge their importance, understand them as real, and respect/honor them in our dealings with each other" (p. 42). Cooperative tutoring informed by indigenous notions of reciprocity and alliance building allows tutors to break from entrenched ways of thinking about one-to-one tutoring as the only way to work with students while at the same time providing opportunities for tutors to begin working with

Native American rhetorical strategies that might further resistance to hegemonic academic writing practices in both their work as tutors and in their own academic writing.

Research Questions

My research problem was to bring the theoretical model of cooperative tutoring to a practical stage. During this study, peer tutors in my writing center were trained through a three-credit, junior-level course which employed both observation of experienced tutors and mock tutorials; however, as novice tutors became more comfortable with their abilities after observing sessions, they began to actively participate in the session with the experienced tutor. It is these occasional sessions where both novice and experienced tutors are active participants in the session that I am extending into practice with tutors of various levels of experience. My focus in this study is on peer tutors and tutor development.⁴

As I began the study, I anticipated the following objections to cooperative tutoring.

- How does cooperative tutoring reify current practices?
- Will the student be overwhelmed either by too much information or by conflicting information offered by the tutors?
- How will the different tutoring styles affect the relationship between the tutors and student?

Methods

The study began on November 10, 2010, and ran through December 6, 2010. I was able to capture 20 tape-recorded tutoring sessions; however, only 18 were usable due to audiotape malfunctions and/or students who decided to opt out of the study. The study ended with tutor interviews on December 6, 2010, with 7 out of 12 tutors in the study participating.

Setting

All sessions took place in the writing center, which is one part of the university's academic support center, housing both the math center and an open computer lab. The writing center has its own receptionists and reception area, separated from the open computer lab. The primary

⁴ UHD IRB Approval: Log Number 19-11

tutoring area is also located away from the computers, where round tables and bookcases along a wall create the tutoring space. Moveable partitions are used to delineate office space, a tutor break area, and semi-private tutoring spaces. For this study, tutors chose to hold their sessions primarily at the round tables, near the reception desk.

Participants

Peer tutor staff. Registered students at my university can become peer tutors after they pass the junior-level tutor preparation course with a grade of "A" or "B." Those who are hired have a choice of becoming a peer tutor, a writing associate (writing fellow), or both. Since the course is open to any student at the university, the result is not only an ethnically diverse staff but also a multi-disciplinary staff as well, representative of the university population.

Peer tutor participant selection. As the director, I solicited tutor participants from my staff. Since I am their supervisor, I was very mindful about avoiding coercion. A separate letter of informed consent for tutors was distributed, stating that continued employment was not contingent upon participation in the study and that tutor performance would not be measured by the study. Currently, tutor performance is measured by a separate online survey, which is emailed to students after each tutoring session and by direct observation of one tutoring session in the spring semester. Out of the 14 peer tutors on staff, only 2 tutors decided not to participate in the study. All tutors who agreed to participate were trained during a separate staff meeting. The training lasted approximately 30 minutes and began with a short discussion, having the tutors recall what it was like to observe and eventually participate in a tutoring session when paired with an experienced tutor. I then explained the protocol for a cooperative tutoring session. Tutors in the study would be paired at random, depending on their availability. Tutors were to begin the session together, introduce themselves, and proceed with the tutorial, modifying the one-to-one tutoring guidelines. Since cooperative tutoring requires two tutors, they were instructed to make sure the student sat between them whenever possible. The training concluded with a mock session and a discussion of anticipated problems. The main problem brought forth was how to avoid confusing the student with too much information. We resolved the issue by discussing the importance of paying attention to the body language of the student and being aware of when the other tutor was speaking.

Student participant selection. Student participants were selected from the students who used the services of the writing center

during the time of the study. The students who participated were not required to self-disclose ethnicity; therefore, the statistics are based on my observations and may not be completely accurate.⁵ I had a total of 18 students participate: 15 female students and 3 male students. Of the 18 students, 5 were Black, 7 were Hispanic, 4 were White, and 2 were International students. Therefore, the participants for this study are representative of the student population at my university by ethnicity; however, they are not representative by gender. Since female students primarily use the writing center, as determined by a separate assessment study, the gender of writing center students is also accurately represented in this study.⁶

I recruited the student participants by either sitting on a couch located near the receptionist desk, or I filled in as the receptionist. Being present in the reception area provided me with the opportunity to introduce myself, explain the study, and describe what the student participants would have to do. I was able to recruit 20 participants using this method.

Data

Data collection. Data for the study was collected by audio recordings, direct observations, and interviews. Since I recruited the student participants, I also inadvertently created the tutor pairings. This was done as randomly as possible, based on the availability of the tutors participating in the study and the willingness of the students to be in the study. For example, if one tutor had an appointment and another tutor was free at that time, I would match the free tutor with the tutor who had the appointment. Each tutor who consented to participate in the study had an opportunity to tutor at least once.

Field notes. As suggested by Barbara Johnstone (2000) in her book *Qualitative Methods in Sociolinguistics*, Dell Hymes's SPEAKING (setting, participants, ends, act sequence, key, instrumentalities, norms, genre) paradigm is recommended for use in structuring observations and is a "heuristic, geared specifically to the analysis of communicative events" (p. 96). I modified Hymes's heuristic for structuring my observations and field notes because by sitting in close proximity to

5 I selected the pseudonyms for the student participants.

6 I based the representative sample of participants on gender from a survey on student perceptions of the writing center, which I conducted for an institutional assessment study from July 2009 until April 2010. From this study, 80.9% of writing center students who responded to the survey were female and 19.1% were male.

the session, my physical presence plus the presence of the tape recorder did not produce workable results. My presence caused noticeable stress on the tutors who were already put in a different tutoring situation. I resolved the issue by sitting further away so that I could make field notes regarding the positions of the tutors and the student as they worked at the round tables. In 15 out of 18 sessions, the student sat between the two tutors; in 3 out of 18 sessions, the two tutors sat side-by-side, with the student either to the right or left of one of the tutors.

I conducted follow-up interviews with 7 of the 12 tutors who consented to participate in the study. Five tutors were not interviewed due to circumstances associated with the end of the semester, such as final exam scheduling conflicts and graduation. The seven tutors interviewed self-identified their ethnicity and gender in addition to creating their pseudonyms.⁷ Each interview session was held in my office at the university and was audio-recorded. The tutors were asked the same questions during each interview and were then offered time at the end to contribute additional commentary.

Data analysis. My method of data analysis is informed by grounded theory, developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss. Grounded theory, as advocated for use in writing centers by Joyce Magnotto Neff (2002), allows the researcher to draw on experience in a particular field while developing and interpreting findings. The limitation to grounded theory, as identified by Neff (2002), is time and collaboration. As part of the theory's recursive process, it is understood that the researcher may have to revisit the original study, make revisions, write memos of field notes, and gather additional data as preliminary categories, ideas, and theories emerge.

For this study, I applied a coding methodology that is similar to Neff's (2002) use of grounded theory and Lisa Zimmerelli's (2015) methods described in her article "A Place to Begin: Service Learning Tutor Education and Writing Center Social Justice." Zimmerelli (2015) describes how she used the inherent recursive nature of grounded theory to work through her data, reading through her tutor reflections numerous times, categorizing and rethinking her criteria each time. My coding methodology was similar; however, I did not utilize writing memos for my notes. I started with open coding to look for and develop emerging categories.⁸ I used Transana (qualitative analysis software),

7 The tutors interviewed consisted of 3 Black females, 2 White females, 1 Hispanic male, and 1 White male.

8 In grounded theory, data is coded in three phases, through open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Neff (2002) likens open coding to invention strategies

which allowed me to upload the digital voice recordings and then later transcribe the sessions so that the written transcription would match as the audio played, similar to closed-captioning. I listened to the digital recordings of the sessions many times over a period of three months, letting the data “speak” to me so that I could be open to any analysis without a preconceived notion or theory. I began coding by creating an outline of what occurred during each session, looking for familiar patterns of tutor behavior that should occur in a typical one-to-one session and noting if and where the patterns of behavior diverged during these cooperative tutoring sessions.

During the first round of open coding, I focused on which tutor started the session, spoke more, and/or explained strategies. I also listened for a demonstration of a particular tutoring style and for how engaged the student was during the session. I looked at what the student’s concerns were and created two possible organizational categories by dividing sessions into first draft sessions and revision sessions. I defined a first draft session as one where the student’s concerns are focused on issues found in the early stages of a writing process. The revision sessions were defined by students who had an entire paper written and wanted feedback on how to finish the paper or how to incorporate professor feedback towards revision. In this first phase of coding, I found I focused too much on the students and not enough on how the tutors interacted. I returned to the data and shifted my focus to tutoring strategies, listening for how the tutors specifically interacted with each other and then how they focused on the student’s concerns. From this round, I was able to refine my preliminary categories for further analysis.

From there, I moved to axial coding and listened to the audio files again, making notes on the strategies the tutors used to engage and whether the tutors were primarily using tutoring strategies that were directive, nondirective, or a combination of both. I focused on how they related to each other and the student by noting specifically the overlaps in conversation, interruptions, contradictions, and turn-taking. I devised three provisional categories: Equal Partners, New Alliance, and Trainer/Trainee. After reviewing the data within the provisional categories and rethinking the definitions I was beginning to form for the

in the writing process where the researcher searches for emerging patterns and develops possible organizational categories for the data. In axial coding, she explains, the researcher returns to the data to refine the provisional categories and looks for relationships. Selective coding further refines the process by solidifying a primary category and demonstrating a relationship between the primary category and sub-categories.

categories, I revised two of the categories so as to solidify the integration of Native and Indigenous rhetoric into my analysis. Of the 18 sessions, 10 are categorized as Fostering Reciprocity, 2 as Building Alliances, and 6 as the Trainer/Trainee. For the purpose of this article, I will focus on the Fostering Reciprocity and the Building Alliances sessions.⁹

Results and Discussion

Fostering reciprocity through cooperative tutoring. Fostering Reciprocity sessions are characterized by a strong sense of camaraderie between the tutors. This is represented by a willingness to work together and to share individual tutoring strategies and academic writing strategies with each other and the student. During a Fostering Reciprocity session, tutors acknowledge each other's tutoring styles and strategies and incorporate parts of these into their own tutoring style. These sessions take on characteristics of a directive tutoring style in that tutors focus on teaching specific strategies applicable to academic writing as well as passing on college survival lore. While these sessions resemble more closely what occurs in a one-to-one tutoring session with the focus primarily on the individual student/tutor relationship, Powell's (2004) work comes into play when analyzing the new/different relationship that develops during a cooperative tutoring session. In fact, Powell's (2004) notions about forming allies contains ideas that are similar to the ideas found in Grimm (1996)'s article, "Rearticulating the Work of the Writing Center." Grimm (1996) writes about four axioms for helping writing centers move towards adopting postmodern theories and practices. Grimm (1996) states that writing centers should "give up the protection of old beliefs, understand history, focus change on the self, and share more" (p. 528). The last suggestion of asking writing centers to "share more" is akin to Powell's (2004) idea of reciprocity and creating alliances. When tutors practice cooperative tutoring, perceiving tutoring as a reciprocal process where students and fellow tutors become allies changes the relationship as well as the social dynamic of the overall tutoring session. Reciprocity affords the opportunity for tutors to be more receptive to the home languages students bring to the session, to share more of themselves as fellow students, to be someone

⁹ For the purpose of RAD research, especially in the area of replicability, my study results indicate that cooperative tutoring can fail, especially when one tutor is unable to abide by the protocols due to an entrenched tutoring style. This occurred in six of the sessions categorized as Trainer/Trainee sessions. These sessions are not addressed in this article.

who is knowledgeable in academic discourse and as someone who has specific tutoring skills, thereby reinforcing the practice of being allies.

The writing center session in this segment below is required by the professor, and the student, Alma (Hispanic, female, non-traditional), has been to the writing center previously. The assignment is for a business course, and since Alma has worked with Xavier (Hispanic, male, philosophy major) during her last visit, Alma is the one who starts the session, readily identifying her issues with writing introductions. In this session, she wants to look specifically at her paragraph organization and transitions. When Alma expresses her concerns about whether the paper makes sense or not, Patrice (African-American, female, psychology major) joins the session by providing a specific tip on how to begin a paper that may help Alma with organization. This is an example of Patrice's explanatory tutoring style, which is to listen to the concerns of the student and then to provide a detailed suggestion for addressing the concern. Xavier's tutoring style is primarily nondirective, based on Jeff Brooks's (1991) concept for tutoring using a Socratic method.

In this excerpt from their session, Xavier and Patrice discuss how to create a transition with Alma.¹⁰

Alma: Like, if you can, give me an example of, you know, [the wording.]

[Xavier: Right.]

Xavier: Just focus on the link, right? The connection right here. Or, what is the connection? Like this, that relationship between suppliers?

Alma: That they have a relationship, an outsourcing relationship between the supplier?

Patrice: Alma, maybe, let's brainstorm about it. What would you say about that?

Alma: Their relationship, maybe?

Xavier: Maybe that's what the beginning of the sentence, and then, so, or what would the rest of the sentence look like, right?

Alma: OK?

¹⁰ For Jeffersonian Transcript Notation conventions, see Appendix A.

Xavier: No, actually, you don't have to, like, /give/ the answer right now, but I mean, you know, when you're thinking about it, think those things.

Alma: OK.

Patrice: Like what a transition sentence does is bridges the gap, between two, so you want to bridge the gap between the [outsourcing.]

[Alma: Um-hmm.]

I'm sorry, the suppliers and the bargain power. Like Xavier said, it's like a

leap, kind of, so you want something that's going to bridge the gap, so Xavier suggested, you know, looking into the fact that they have relations. It has to do with their relationship of the consumer, I'm assuming.

Alma: Um-hmm.

Patrice: And the buyer?

Alma: And the buyer. [OK.]

[Patrice: OK.]

Patrice: Where you're saying, OK, it's gonna move. Now, you're telling the reader, basically you're telling the reader, I'm moving forward now. From here to [here.]

[Xavier: Right.]

Alma: OK. I just talked about one topic and [I'm going to move forward to

another topic.]

[Patrice: I'm going to move to

another topic.]

[Xavier: Yeah, yeah.]

Patrice: But they have something to do with each other.

Alma: OK.

Alma asks that Xavier provide her with the sentence she should use. Rather than give her the words, as he would craft the sentence, Xavier moves back to Brooks's (1991) nondirective tutoring approach and asks her to describe the link between the two ideas. This is Xavier's primary tutoring style; however, Grimm (2011) emphasizes that this kind of entrenched writing center practice "does harm because it discourages tutors from offering useful information, even ideas, to a writer who is working to bridge the literacy he or she brings from home with

the literacy expected in the academy” (p. 84). In this case, Xavier holds on to his nondirective strategy, preventing Xavier from helping Alma. His strategy only serves to confuse her, and Alma does not understand where he is trying to lead her with his questions.

Patrice sees Alma is struggling with creating a transition. Patrice tries to help by first suggesting they brainstorm and taking her cues from Xavier’s style, she begins by asking specific questions about how the ideas are related. Patrice’s suggestion to start brainstorming at this point is unconventional. She uses the principles inherent to brainstorming as a way to ask questions and draw on what Alma has already said previously. When Alma is unsuccessful in coming up with her own sentence, Patrice, in her explanatory tutoring style, provides the function of a transition, while referring to what Xavier said previously. At that point, Xavier re-enters with affirmations that Patrice is correct. Once Xavier re-enters the discussion, Alma shows that she now understands how a transition functions by her overlapping dialogue with the tutors, saying the same thing as Patrice and being encouraged by Xavier. As a result, Alma will probably be able to craft her own sentence once the session has ended.

By taking cues from each other’s tutoring styles and verbally acknowledging what each brought to the tutoring session, Patrice and Xavier were able to foster reciprocity through cooperative tutoring in a way that complemented and enhanced each other’s tutoring style without overwhelming the student with too much information. They refer back to each other, demonstrating each has heard and respected the other. Together, they helped Alma to understand an essential skill, forming effective transitions, thus giving Alma agency and access to academic discourse.

After the study, I was able to interview Patrice and Xavier. Both remarked feeling an initial hesitation or awkwardness when getting started in the session. There was some question as to which tutor should start the session and that aspect of the tutoring cycle could have been worked out before the session began. Xavier remarked that it was much easier to figure out who would start the session when the student knew one of the tutors previously. Xavier noticed it took effort, though, to achieve a balance between the two different tutoring styles and commented that cooperative tutoring really works best when the two tutors have a good rapport with each other. Cooperative tutoring, he noted, added to his confidence as a tutor. Patrice was nervous about overstepping her boundaries with the other tutor but found that once into the session, she was able to blend her tutoring style with the other tutor very well. Both Patrice and Xavier used the term “piggy-back” in

the interview not only to define specific strategies for tutoring that they learned from each other during the session but also as a way to name what was going on during the interactions between the student and with each other, which could also be interpreted as reciprocity.

Powell's (2004) idea of reciprocity may help tutors break from entrenched ways of thinking about one-to-one tutoring as the only way to work with students. Powell (2004) turns to reciprocity as a way of coming together, of understanding and respecting each other's beliefs. Powell (2004) defines her key terms, alliance and allies as follows: "we become allies, not competing individuals, working toward the survival of our shared community, for if my scholarly survival depends upon you, then, surely, yours must also depend on me" (p. 42). When tutors practice cooperative tutoring, perceiving students as allies changes the relationship between tutors and students as well as the social dynamic of the overall tutoring session. Reciprocity allows tutors to share more of themselves, thereby reinforcing the practice of being allies.

Building alliances through cooperative tutoring. In a Building Alliances session, the tutors work differently than in a Fostering Reciprocity session. Both of the tutors and the student become personally involved by sharing their experiences that are oftentimes outside the realm of academia, thus validating each other as individuals who just so happen to all be students attending the same institution. They establish *nomos*, a commonality with each other and are building alliances through shared stories and experiences (Powell, 2004). But they are also building identities apart from that of student and tutors. Harry Denny (2010) discusses how writing centers can serve to help students see how language constructs identity and to come to terms with the many identities students bring with them to the university. Denny (2010) brings this to light when he writes, "Tutorials become spaces where students and tutors alike shore up, build anew, and deconstruct identities and the ways of knowing that are sutured to them" (p. 269). Like Denny (2010), Powell (2004) understands that identity is important in building alliances through stories; she sees our stories of who we are as our identities, relying on the interconnection between each other's stories. Powell (2004) adds:

we must be willing to adapt to different beliefs, different practices. That means that we must be willing to go beyond the page upon which our scholarly essays are printed, we must be willing to forego the pretense that each story exists all by itself . . . (p. 57)

All participants in the Building Alliances sessions tell stories about themselves and willingly share their identities, some of which become infused with what is learned in a course. During the Building Alliances

sessions, tutors and students are able to say their ideas aloud freely and see how those ideas resonate with the polyphonous identities each carries with them.

The writing center session in the segment below features the student Luis (Hispanic, male), and tutors Ginger (Korean/White, female, bilingual education major) and Lara (Hispanic, female, journalism major). Luis is working on a paper for his sociology course and begins the session by sharing his classroom knowledge about old and new immigrants. This prompts Luis, Ginger, and Lara to interject their personal stories with being second-language speakers, which connects the tutors and the student together through a common variable: they are all second-language speakers and first-generation students. When the discussion turns to the topic of immigrants holding onto their culture, all three, beginning with Luis, add their local Houston-area experiences with the topic. Both the tutors and the student engage in a frank and open discussion about their ethnicity and their intimate relationship with immigrants in the Houston area. Some information in this session is based on the course material supplied by Luis, and some of the discussion is based on their experiences.

Ginger: Ok. Different ethnicities hate each other?

Luis: Basically. Don't really . . .

Ginger: Dislike each other? Not really hate, but . . .

Luis: I think different ethnicities want to keep.

Ginger: Want to be superior?

Lara: Want to be?

Luis: Not superior but

Lara: No, want to keep their ethnicity?

Luis: Pure.

Lara: Without being? (*understanding*) Ohhh.

Ginger: Wanting to stay pure.

Because that's true, because I mean

Luis: Ginger: [That is true.]

[Lara: That's a good /point there/. I like that.]

- Because I know like, for example, with an old minorities, like when you see Blacks and Latinos. Latinos and Blacks sometimes they don't
- [Lara: Want to cross]
- they don't [want to cross.] Their parents won't let them.
- [Ginger: Um-hmm]
- [Lara: Um-hmm.]
- Luis: Especially more [on one end.]
- [Ginger: Um-hmm.]
- The same thing with [Asian culture, or especially Middle Eastern culture]
- [Lara: and Ginger: *((together, enthusiastically))* Um-hmm!]
- They usually stick / that's it/.
- [Ginger: Definitely, definitely.]
- [Lara: Yeah.]
- Ginger: OK.
- Even though they still, I mean, even though they are in the same
- Luis: American society, they aren't inferior, but even with that I think, OK
- Ginger: OK. Very cool. Alright.
- But, yeah, that's basically how immigrants get accepted. Eventually they might but [they won't 100 percent]
- Luis: [Lara: *((whispers))* Yeah.]
- be accepted. You know what I mean?
- Ginger: Um-hmm.
- Luis: Act, or dress, talk, to write, to speak, but you will never be 100, fully 100 percent accepted.
- Ginger: It is a pretty
- Luis: Because if you don't look it
- Ginger: Dismal
- Luis: I mean
- Ginger: Conclusion to your paper. It is pretty depressing.
- Yeah, basically, because in this class we actually, and this rings true, because if you talk to a lot of the ummm *((hesitant, uncomfortable, laughter))* how do I, um, yeah, they don't accept you that much. No matter.
- Luis:
- Ginger: Now, do you think it's, the old, the older?

Luis: If it comes, it comes.

Ginger: The older generation?

Luis: It is always gonna be.

Lara: Um-hmm.

In this segment, Luis is comfortable sharing his viewpoints about being a minority in America and discussing the topic of ethnicity. Ginger, Lara, and Luis all have a shared understanding about immigration. Luis talks freely and openly about his experiences with interracial relationships between Blacks and Hispanics as well as how he perceives overall acceptance of minorities by the dominant race. This is indicated by his hesitant speech and uncomfortable laughter when identifying the dominant race in America, probably Caucasian, indicated by the pronoun “they.” Both Ginger and Lara show Luis that they understand his point of view and tacitly agree with him through their overlapping acknowledgement in key areas of Luis’s speech about interracial interactions. Lara consistently validates his ideas by her agreement throughout the conversation. While Lara’s role in the alliance seems minimal, it becomes crucial in that she provides the confirmation that the ideas for both Luis and Ginger are being heard. While Lara may not actually agree with Luis and Ginger, she is willing to consider their stories and identities.

The discussion in the writing center becomes a safe space for Luis to make sense of the generalized information about immigration from his course and the ways that information plays into his own sense of identity. When Ginger steers the conversation to writing the conclusion of the paper, she voices her opinion that his ending for the paper could be perceived as depressing, but not by the professor: Ginger’s opinion reflects her worldview. However, Luis feels comfortable enough to defend his position, but not in a hostile way. Rather, he opens himself up as he continues to build the alliance with the tutors by expressing his observations about how he has personally experienced immigrants being treated in America. This allows for all ideas to circulate and play off of more than one person in an atmosphere of trust and genuine interest. Through forming an alliance in the session, participants discovered ways in which the ideas about immigrants and/or stories resonated for them as individuals and through the sharing of ideas and beliefs, this alliance helped to make academic discourse a little less intimidating.¹¹

¹¹ I was unable to interview Ginger and Lara after the study.

The Building Alliance session, through cooperative tutoring, can become one practical application of what Grimm (2011) is suggesting should happen in writing centers if they are going to address the issues of race and social justice. In this session, students and tutors opened up possibilities for a deeper discussion of these ideas. The tutors and the student also brought in their personal connections to mainstream ideas conveyed through a college course; the cooperative tutoring session offered different perspectives that refracted hegemonic ideas instead of reflecting them, and through forming an alliance, participants discovered not only the ways in which the ideas resonated for them but also how those ideas could be expressed through academic discourse.

Answering Objections to Cooperative Tutoring

Does cooperative tutoring work or does it reify current practices? After I conducted this study, the data indicates that cooperative tutoring does work, but only under specific circumstances. Tutors have to agree to support working with another tutor in the same session, and both have to be willing to accommodate and adjust their tutoring styles to include the other tutor in the interactions with the student. Tutors have to make a conscious effort to allow the collaboration to occur. This may not always be easily accomplished, especially if a tutor is resistant or entrenched in their tutoring process. If carried out as intended, cooperative tutoring shows a direct benefit to the tutors involved. It builds camaraderie amongst the tutors and serves as immediate professional development. Tutors are able to reflect on their tutoring performance from two sources of feedback, self-reflectively and from a peer's outsider perspective.

The larger issue of whether cooperative tutoring reifies the current one-to-one practices still deserves further study, especially from the student's perspective. There is concern regarding student agency in cooperative tutoring sessions. With two tutors in the same session, student agency could be impacted negatively through a strict adherence to one-to-one practices by both tutors. Nevertheless, I can infer from the data of the Fostering Reciprocity sessions that current one-to-one practices are modified rather than reified. During both sessions described, tutors were able to adjust their individual tutoring styles to create new ways to work with students. Both of the tutors synthesized techniques from the current one-to-one practices with the other tutor's tutoring style to create new tutoring practices. If cooperative tutoring were to become an accepted practice within the scope of the daily operation of a writing center, tutors would have the potential to create unique tutor-

ing practices by altering the use of directive and nondirective tutoring methods, thereby working to give agency to both tutors and students.

Will the student be overwhelmed by either too much information or conflicting information offered by the tutor?

Overall, students in the Fostering Reciprocity and Building Alliances sessions appeared not to be overwhelmed by too much information. The tutors in these sessions learned to watch for both verbal and visual cues from each other so as not to confuse the student. The data indicates that when it appeared that one tutor was not communicating a concept effectively to the student, the other tutor would enter into the conversation, providing an alternative way of explaining the concept. When tutors disagreed, it showed the student that there can be many interpretations to any given text and that to always achieve consensus will not allow for other ideas to be heard. When conflicting information was given, it was discussed amongst the tutors and with the student so that ultimately it was the student who had the choice to follow what would work best for them.

How will the different tutoring styles affect the relationship between the tutors and students?

In most of the Fostering Reciprocity and Building Alliances sessions, the different tutoring styles served to complement each other. This study also showed how tutors could adopt specific components of each other's tutoring style into their own. Through working together, the tutors who were interviewed claimed that the experience helped them grow and develop as tutors. They learned techniques from each other as well as alternative ways to explain academic writing to the student. In the Building Alliances sessions in particular, the relationship between the student and the tutors was strengthened and changed from a hierarchical relationship that can sometimes occur in a one-to-one tutoring session to a relationship that was more egalitarian. For the students, both the Fostering Reciprocity and Building Alliances sessions presented an opportunity to receive feedback from two tutors during one session, and for some students, receiving feedback from two tutors could become a timesaving feature.

Implementation of Cooperative Tutoring

The feasibility of cooperative tutoring is difficult to determine because it is not designed to be a replacement for the one-to-one tutoring model. Therefore, I cannot recommend cooperative tutoring as a direct replacement for the one-to-one model. It would be economically irresponsible to pay two tutors where one tutor has already proven to be effective through the current practice of one-to-one tutoring. However,

where cooperative tutoring can become part of a writing center is to complement the current practice of one-to-one tutoring by augmenting the training of tutors in cooperative tutoring techniques, adding cooperative tutoring to the daily operation of the writing center to maximize tutoring resources, and developing cooperative tutoring for ongoing professional development and/or mentorship. Cooperative tutoring could be enacted as a part of a tutor preparation program because it helps tutors to be more aware of a wider variety of tutoring styles. Once tutors are trained in cooperative tutoring techniques, directors could add cooperative tutoring to the daily operation of the writing center to utilize tutor resources more effectively. Additionally, cooperative tutoring could be applied to asynchronous and synchronous online tutoring in similar ways.

Cooperative tutoring can also be used to create professional development opportunities and/or mentorship programs, which could work to retain tutors. Frequent use of cooperative tutoring sessions could facilitate a mentorship program by connecting tutors to each other in ways that build solidarity amongst tutors and go beyond team building exercises or staff meetings. Cooperative tutoring could provide more opportunities for tutors to gain further agency and become stakeholders in the growth and development of their writing center.

Ultimately, it is through cooperative tutoring that I see tutors and directors becoming active participants in the current movement in writing center studies to bring issues of race and language diversity to the fore. Together, tutors and directors could design research studies using cooperative tutoring to further interrogate race and language awareness issues at the university level. The discussion about language diversity amongst writing center tutors and staff is encouraged by Grimm (2011) when she writes, "Within the social model of learning, writing centers can be understood as the social structures designed to facilitate deeper learning and fuller participation in the academic community rather than as places for students who 'need help'" (p. 90). She calls for moving writing centers beyond the current practices to become a place where writers and tutors can both learn how best to negotiate academic discourse while at the same time understand how language can shape identity through the rhetorical choices writers make. If writing centers are going to move in the direction of taking the lead regarding issues surrounding language diversity, then new models for tutoring must be considered. Cooperative tutoring is one of those new models, creating opportunities for tutors to start thinking about how this discussion might be incorporated into the work they do with students to further awareness of language diversity

and academic discourse.¹² Cooperative tutoring is versatile and offers a practical approach to what current writing center scholars advocate as the future for writing centers, a community-of-practice approach, which will re-theorize writing centers.

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12 What I am advocating for here can be seen in the recent work that Asao Inoue is doing as the writing center director at the University of Washington-Tacoma: <https://www.tacoma.uw.edu/news/article/putting-writing-center-inclusivity>

APPENDIX A

JEFFERSONIAN TRANSCRIPT NOTATION CONVENTIONS

<i>((words))</i>	Double parenthesis enclose transcriber's comments, in italics.
/words/	Slashes enclose uncertain transcription.
. .	Dots indicate silence (more dots indicate a longer silence).
CAPS	Capitals indicate emphatic stress.
<manner>words>	Angle brackets enclose descriptions of the manner in which an utterance is spoken, e.g., <i>high-pitched, laughing, incredulous</i> .
<laughs>	Angle brackets enclose descriptions of vocal noises, e.g., <i>laughs, coughs</i> .
words [words] [words]	Square brackets enclose simultaneous talk.

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