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**EXPLORING SUCCESS IN TUTORING THE NON-NATIVE ENGLISH
SPEAKER AT UNIVERSITY WRITING CENTERS**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my family and friends for their patience and support.

To Chloe, Claire, and Violet, who at all times remind me what life is all about and to Jeff who supported me throughout this process.

To my Mom and Dad who truly made this possible. You were always there when I needed to take time, and you always reminded me that I had the ability to complete this task. You taught me to believe in myself.

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To my co-workers who were also greatly supportive and who inspire me to learn.

To the local sushi house.

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**EXPLORING SUCCESS IN TUTORING THE NON-NATIVE ENGLISH
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ABSTRACT

This study examined the perspectives of both tutors at university writing centers and the Non-Native English Speaking (NNES) students who use the centers. Using qualitative methods, this study looked at perceptions of the academic writing needs of the NNES students, along with characteristics of tutoring sessions which made the sessions successful in the eyes of tutors and students. The study used interviews, observations, a survey, and artifacts to look at these topics and then compared the perceptions of tutors and students. Additionally, the study compared writing centers at two universities, one of which employs an ESL specialist, in order to learn if employing this specialist affects success for the tutors and NNES students. Results indicate that student and tutor perceptions of student needs were similar in that they expressed consistent need for grammar assistance and help with low-order concerns (LOCs). Sessions at both universities were successful, according to tutors and students, if sessions focused on these grammar and LOC needs. Employing an ESL specialist did not affect the perceptions of students or tutors nor did it seem to effect the success of sessions for either students or tutors.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

A few weeks ago a professor came by the reading, writing and study skills center where I tutor. He was with a young Asian woman, obviously one of his students. He “deposited” her in the center, claiming that she desperately needed help with her English. The woman stared into the distance with a frightened, nervous look on her face and tried to force a smile. She handed me a paper she had written on the labor union and asked if I could help her make corrections. After a short introductory discussion, we looked at the paper that we were about to revise—it was filled with red marks indicating spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors; the only written response was something along the lines of “You need serious help with your English. Please see a tutor.”
- from a Tutor’s Journal (Zamel, 2002)

Enrollment at universities of foreign-born students has increased steadily over the past two decades from the US government census website and according to census numbers in 2008 and has created a population on campus with unique needs. Over the past 25 years, the number of international students enrolled in higher education has more than doubled.

For these students, working in the context of a second language is difficult and working within this context at the university level is even more so. However, Non-native English speaking students (NNES) enrolled in universities in the U.S. do find themselves supported in various ways by their educational institution. Some universities offer specific English as a Second Language (ESL) programs, either intensive or transitional,

some offer partner-institution programs where students may go to work on their English skills, and yet others offer tutoring programs to assist NNES students. One of the most familiar programs offered is the university Writing Center or Writing Lab. These programs serve two populations, supporting and assisting native English speakers (NES) and NNES in academic activities, most specifically writing. While these programs serve both populations, it must be made clear that these populations share few similarities. Silva (1993) found through research that generally second language (L2) adult writers struggle to perform as expected in writing. Indeed, according to Silva's findings, L2 writing is distinct from that of native speakers. In his meta-analysis, Silva found that L1 and L2 writers differ in both composing process and features of their writing including fluency and accuracy, quality, and structure. Silva found these differences so significant that he believes L2 writers are best served in classroom settings specific to L2 writers.

Many studies (Barkhuizen, 1998; Daoud, 1998; Kennedy, 1993; Matsuda, 1998; Silva, 1993) have looked at the needs of the NNES student population; Leki and Carson (1994) uniquely viewed these needs as perceived by the students themselves. Teachers in Barkhuizen's (1998) study were surprised to learn that student perceptions and desires in language learning did not match the teacher perceptions in that, for example, students ranked mechanical language skills "high" as an important need and interest; teachers, on the other hand, are often encouraged to steer their classes away from mechanical language skills and toward communicative competence. Matsuda and Silva (2001) found a "pattern of neglect" regarding the writing issues and differences of second language students, and while they see some responsiveness to the unique needs of these writers, it

is found that these students continue to experience mandatory writing classes in which teachers are unaware of the needs of this population.

Problem Statement

Many institutions do not have “ESL writing specialists” on staff and the needs of the NNES students are often ignored, leading to difficulties in student achievement.

Writing centers, which may be the only support services available to tutor and assist these students, will be better equipped to help these students if there is an understanding of the needs and expectations of this population.

I have been an English as a Second Language (ESL) instructor for over 15 years and most recently have seen international undergraduate and graduate students at a small, private college struggle with the language and limited support the campus provided. At other schools, I have seen students struggle with no support at all. Often, these students will be directed to the writing center as a “quick fix” for their English language needs, and in turn, I have seen the frustration of tutors in area writing centers and writing labs when they are asked to assist these students with their writing.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify the characteristics of successful tutoring sessions for non-native English speaking (NNES) students by examining the perspectives of both tutors in university writing centers and the NNES students who use the centers. Writing centers at two universities were studied, one of which employs an ESL writing specialist. I hoped to determine what factors produce successful tutoring sessions for tutors and students and also look at the use of an ESL specialist.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study are as follows:

1. What do tutors and NNES students believe to be the needs of NNES students in regards to academic writing?
2. What characteristics of a writing center tutoring session define a successful session for tutors and NNES students?
3. How are the beliefs of tutors and students similar or different in terms of the success of a writing center tutoring session and student needs in academic writing?
4. Does employing an ESL specialist in the writing center affect success in tutoring the NNES students?

By learning more about what tutors and students define as success, as well as looking closely at the needs of the students, the results of this study suggest ways to encourage changes to current approaches used in university writing centers so as to better serve the NNES student population.

Significance of the Study

University writing centers have most often served NES students, but increased enrollment of NNES students brings these students to the writing center as well, yet writing centers may not necessarily be equipped to meet the needs of NNES students. Because L2 writing is distinct from the writing of NES students (Silva, 1993), current tutoring practices for NES students may not apply to this newer NNES student population. First, important differences in NNES students' writing need to be identified. While NNES students have the same academic writing requirements at university,

including mandatory writing classes, Matsuda and Silva (2001) find a “pattern of neglect” regarding how the writing issues of the NNES student writer at university are addressed. Instructors, along with tutors at the writing center, may be unaware of the specific needs of the NNES writers. At this time, it seems that ESL writing specialists are not common at universities. An ESL writing specialist could assist in meeting the needs of the NNES writers, deal with the NNES students directly, and help instructors and tutors learn to address these needs as well. While most studies do look at how effectively sessions address the needs through the artifacts of student papers, few if any seem to have asked students and tutors if they perceive sessions as successful. By doing so, this research study will help to negotiate the differences, if any, of perceived success in sessions by exploring both tutor and student views. In turn, this study hopes through observation to gain further insight of sessions and how sessions can be labeled directive, non-directive, or flexible. This research study will also further understanding of student needs in academic writing and look at tutor perceptions of student needs, an area that has rarely been approached in current research. In addition, this study will look at the role of ESL writing specialist in the writing center by comparing two writing centers, one with an ESL specialist and one without an ESL specialist. Together, these aspects of the research should provide a more developed view of university writing centers and their interactions with NNES students and can lead to a practical look at how writing centers, their tutors, and their NNES clients interact and achieve academic success in writing. Most importantly, this research will offer views of how to work with the NNES student and how to best address their unique writing needs. This will, in hope, work towards success for both the university writing center and the NNES university student.

Limitations

The limitations of this research study were as follows:

1. Limited generalizability. Participants are from a specific population; the schools that participated in this study were purposefully selected due to the proportion of NNES students using the university writing lab and comparability of the schools. Because participants were a convenience sampling, limited generalizability to this unique population was a limitation.
2. The data collection method involved administering self-report surveys to participants, face-to-face interviews, and observations of tutoring sessions with NNES students. Various factors could have influenced participant responses on each instrument. Presence of the researcher during observed sessions may have influenced tutor and student activity during sessions. A student's attitude and views towards the writing center or English in general may also change over time.
3. Cultural factors such as religious ideologies that were not addressed and also may influence responses. Culture may play a role in how detailed a student is with criticisms of a session (or whether they feel comfortable being critical at all) and gender of researcher may also limit the communication from student.
4. Specific writing needs may vary with native language. For example, low order needs such as spelling and wording may be a more considerable issue for native speakers of Arabic as their errors often occur as result of

translation from the L1 (AbiSamra, 2003) as opposed to higher order concerns such as organization for students whose first language is Spanish and whose writing may show digression of topic resulting from the L1 writing style (Kaplan, 1967). Isolating language groups was not approached in this study.

Definitions

The following descriptions are used for students of English for whom English is not their native or first language:

- ESL: English as a Second Language – students whose first language is one other than English
- NNES: Non-Native English Speaker – students whose first language/native language is one other than English
- NES: Native English Speaker – students whose native language is English
- ELL: English Language Learner – students studying English as a second or other language, usually for academic purposes
- L1: First Language/Native Language
- L2: Second Language

Organization of Dissertation

Chapter I introduces background information relevant to the study regarding the increased enrollment of NNES students at universities and as writing center clients along with a problem statement and purpose of the study. Four research questions are proposed along with a description of the significance of the study. Limitations of the study are also

presented and definitions of terms relevant to the study are included in Chapter one as well.

Chapter II is a review of the literature on ESL writing and the needs of this student population. With the increased enrollment of NNES students at universities, it can be expected that this population of students will be found seeking assistance at university writing centers. Because the writing of the NNES differs from that of the population with which the Writing Center usually works, it is useful to explore what is currently occurring at centers during this transitional period and it is useful to study options, such as employing an ESL specialist, in order to explore future success of Writing Centers and their students.

Thus, Chapter II, Review of the Literature, will give an overview of current practices and views on the NNES student as writer and include discussion of their specific writing needs, whether these needs are currently neglected at the university level, and how these needs can be addressed. Also discussed are two current theories of tutoring, the Directive and Non-Directive styles, and how these styles of tutoring can affect sessions at university writing centers. Also, an integrated style of tutoring is suggested from available research.

Chapter III, Methodology, discusses how this study was set up and executed. Why this worked well as a qualitative study also is discussed along with details of the universities, writing centers, participants themselves. Two pilot studies are described and instrumentation for this study is explained. The research design and instrumentation are discussed. The research design, seeking to provide for learning more about tutor and student perceptions of student needs and session success, uses a survey, interviews,

artifacts and observations to draw out data and analyze the data in order to answer the research questions. The data types, how they were coded and why are all discussed in Chapter III.

Chapter IV, Results, records the results of the study as they relate directly to the research questions. Through the use of a survey, interviews, artifacts and observations, data was provided by tutors and students and the results of the analysis of this data are presented as the research questions are answered. Themes which emerged through the analysis are presented in Chapter IV.

Chapter V summarizes and discusses these results as they relate to use in university writing centers. Limitations of the study and suggestions for future studies are also offered along with discussion of how university writing centers can better provide for the needs of the NNES students based on this study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this chapter, literature will be reviewed as it relates to this study of NNES students at university writing centers. Of importance are the needs of this specific population of students and whether these needs are being met or neglected along with previous research as to the best options for meeting the needs of these students. Also discussed are two current views on styles of tutoring. Most discussions fall on one of two styles of tutoring, Directive or Non-Directive tutoring, but also discussed is current research on an integrated style of tutoring that, in view of the needs of the NNES students, may be of use at university writing centers.

Specific Academic Writing Needs of the NNES Student

Academic success for the NNES students at American universities is tied to their writing achievement. To succeed in most courses, students must be proficient and succeed in writing regardless of their course of study. Land and Whitley (1989) found that instructor perception of “successful” writing included the fact that NNES writing needed to be impossible to tell apart from the writing of a native speaker. In her article written specifically for tutors at writing centers, Kennedy (1993) identified some of the unique needs of this population: decoding in reading; summary writing; accessing

information from native language; cultural preferences in rhetorical organization; and understanding culture-bound rhetoric textbooks. These needs refer back to Kaplan's Contrastive Rhetoric Theory and the experience of linguistic interference. Kaplan implies an interference between first language (L1) writing styles and how a student writes in a second language (L2) (Kubota, 1998). Drawing from 600 ESL essays, Kaplan made claim that there were five basic styles of writing, or rhetorical traditions, and by presenting these traditions next to the American English style, Kaplan brought to light for many why ESL students were not achieving academically in writing and presented also suggestions for how instructors can help move these students toward a more Americanized style. The Americanized style would then help these students perform and achieve academically at American universities (Kaplan, 1966). While researchers argue that there is or is not negative interference or transfer between languages, most agree there are differences in writing styles between cultures. Kaplan is most famous for his 'doodles' L2 writing styles which include a spiral which indicates the lack of directness in "Oriental" writing and the jagged line of digressing for the Russian style of writing. In contrast is the straight line, which indicates the American style of writing (Kaplan, 1966). Again, though Kaplan's claims are discussed and disputed, overall if the writing of the non-native English speaking students (NNES) differs from that of Native English speaking students (NES), the teaching/tutoring approaches to assist these students should then, too, be different. In more current research, Silva (1993) identified the following issues as needs of the NNES writer: fluency; accuracy (especially in grammar and mechanics); quality as perceived by the reader; and structure. Leki and Carson (1994) identified the needs of the NNES students as perceived by the students. The needs,

ranked in order of most important to least important, included: task management strategies (organizing, summarizing, reading, quoting, outline, drafting, revising); rhetorical skills (organization, transition, conclusions); language proficiency (grammar and vocabulary); thinking skills (development of ideas and arguments, analyzing and critiquing). When asked to rank order specific needs, the students identified the following, in order of most important to least important: vocabulary; grammar; greater challenge of their skills; organization; greater speed; discipline-specific needs. Leki and Carson concluded: “Students’ focus on the need for more language skills may be initially somewhat disconcerting for writing teachers who believe that language should not be the central emphasis of the writing course” (p. 89). Daoud (1998) also mentioned student needs early in the writing process. These needs are local focus problems, which include generalizing and using inappropriate vocabulary and expressions. Daoud saw these as specific needs of the students.

A current pattern of neglect toward NNES writer needs.

For successful teaching and tutoring to occur, L2 writer needs should be identified along with their perceptions of writing. Braine (1996) discussed the fact that NNES students see writing, and the mandatory writing courses, as an obstacle, a difficulty which makes overall academic success hard to achieve. L2 writers have a desire to feel their writing skills are improved; in addition, they also have specific notions as to what elements of writing should be approached in order to improve their skills in writing. First, important differences in NNES writing need to be identified. In their research, Silva and Matsuda (2001) found a “pattern of neglect.” As part of this pattern of neglect, Land and Whitley (1989) found that instructors’ perceptions of NNES writers were problematic.

According to Land and Whitley's study, instructors indicated that in order to be considered "fluent" writers, NNES students must write with concern for grammar and syntax, and their texts need to be "indistinguishable from those written by NES." However, Matsuda reported that NNES writers produce texts that are far from "indistinguishable" from NES writing. Matsuda reported that NNES writers produce texts that are shorter, contain more errors, and contain structures distinct from those of NES writers. The theory of Contrastive Rhetoric claims that each language, each culture has its only logical system of writing, and therefore writing exactly like a native speaker of another country would be quite difficult. Kaplan (1966) suggests that part of learning a language is the mastery of its specific system. In order to provide help to NNES writers, two approaches to tutoring have been suggested: the Directive Approach and a Flexible Directive Approach.

The Directive Approach is much different from the approach instructors and tutors at universities most often use – the Non-directive Approach. A Non-Directive Approach, according to studies by Blau and Hall (2002) is one which is highly collaborative, with tutor and student engaging equally in the session. A "Socratic Questioning Method" is also used in which tutors refrain from giving direct answers and instead question the student in order to elicit the answer from the student. A Non-Directive Approach would also favor focus on High Order Concerns (HOCs) over Low Order Concerns (LOCs); HOCs include organization and development while LOCs include vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. In contrast to the Non-Directive Approach, the Directive Approach is one in which the tutor takes on more of the speaking during the session, Socratic Questioning techniques are not used, and tutors provide clear, direct

answers to address issues in the writing, for example, directly changing incorrect verb tenses. In addition, a Directive tutoring session would be one which is time consuming because it addresses more LOCs and may do so using a line-by-line editing approach. The additional Flexible Approach, discussed later, incorporates elements of both Non-directive and Directive tutoring styles.

Meeting the needs of the NNES student.

For second language learners and students studying English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Daoud (1998) discussed the most beneficial tutoring practices for assisting and working successfully with this student population. The role of the teacher, according to Daoud, was most important. Teacher intervention, starting with identifying the needs of the second language learner as well as their expectations, was necessary. Harvey (1986) took the success of working with these students a step further with claims that the teacher must help the learner to focus on specific learning activities to fulfill specific needs. Directive approaches to teaching and tutoring focus on the specific, more local, writing needs. Harvey delved further, mentioning that while second language learners are highly motivated by the fact that English is for them an important means for communication, at the same time they may not have positive “emotional attitude” (p. 32) toward the language. Two factors, then, may negatively affect motivation in second language writing. First is the fact that learning a language and working in that language is time-consuming. Second is the fact that English itself may be viewed from a perspective of “cultural dominance” (p. 32). Both of the factors are addressed in discussions on directive tutoring. Spending more time with a NNES student is part of directive tutoring, which may require the tutor to go line-by-line with the student. Also, the tutor may take on the

role of “cultural informant” (Blau and Hall, 2002) and act as a mentor of American Culture. By addressing these two factors, the directive approach may attend to these factors of motivation.

Blau and Hall (2002) also mentioned that the tutor will take on this role of “cultural informant” in order to meet the needs of the students. Blau and Hall’s study found that not only was this a student need, but it was also a common occurrence in the tutoring sessions. The exchange of cultural information went back and forth between tutor and tutee, and the exchange successfully motivated the student in that it created rapport, collaboration, and helped tutor and tutee relate to different ways of thinking.

Conteh-Morgan (2001) also looked at factors of success for ESL students and found that a low-anxiety environment and sustained-learning practices (more time) were conducive factors for second language acquisition as well as for academic success for these students. These factors can be addressed by directive approaches as discussed later and thus motivate the student and increase academic success. Conteh-Morgan also saw the need for collaboration between ESL teachers and others working with the students, implying the need for an understanding of ESL student needs and the theories and factors that influence these students of English as a Second language. This is also echoed by Blau and Hall (2002).

Tutor Training

While not all tutors refer to handbooks, such as the Allyn and Bacon guide, tutor training in general is of interest. Powers’ 1995 study of 75 writing centers across the US looked specifically at how tutors were being trained and how they were additionally being trained to adjust their tutoring for their NNES student clients. Of these writing

centers, only 8 had staff members with any ESL experience. “In-house training” was the method used by most writing centers to improve tutoring for the NNES student writers, but even so, 14 centers had no ESL or L2 writing training. In an open-ended question on the survey, most centers revealed that they felt the training they did provide for tutors was minimal. Solutions to this issue, as provided by the writing centers on the last question of the survey, included: more workshops and training in ESL; more knowledge on the part of the university faculty in the area of ESL writing; administrative funding for more training for tutors; improved student attendance.

Few studies were found which evaluate tutor training as it applies to the success of sessions. Peer tutoring in general was looked at by Topping (1996) and he found that the style of tutoring was more influential and that the experience or background of the tutor was merely one of many characteristics that led to success in tutoring. Nevertheless, the training and experience of the tutor is an element of the success of a tutoring session.

Aspects of the non-directive approach in tutoring.

The approach typically used by tutors in university writing centers is a Non-Directive Approach. According to Blau and Hall (2002), leading tutor-training handbooks for university writing centers consistently advise a Non-Directive approach. This approach includes: collaborative tutoring in which tutor and student work together as if they are peers; avoidance of proofreading; and putting High Order Concerns (HOCs) over Low Order Concerns (LOCs) during the tutoring session. HOCs include working on the organization, development and focus of the essay while LOCs include focusing on grammar and mechanics. These suggestions in the handbooks are made regardless of who

the tutor is working with. Though handbooks often briefly recognize differences between NES and NNES, the advice for tutoring practices remains the same. Indeed, Blau and Hall quote the Allyn and Bacon *Guide to Peer Tutoring* as including the following as “myths” of tutoring: “I need to clean up the grammar in NNES writers’ papers before we can get to higher-order concerns and I’ll need to be a much more directive tutor with NNES writers” (p. 24). These suggestions seem to go against NNES student perceived needs, which will be discussed later.

Blau and Hall (2002) also discussed the non-directive technique of “Socratic Questioning,” the use of asking skillful, open-ended questions to help students “find their own answers” (p. 32). However, this style of questioning is problematic in that the tutor and tutee relationship (regarding language) is unequal. Idiomatic language caused difficulties and, in Blau and Hall’s study, tutors who started using the questioning technique often found that they ended up asking many questions that did not lead to an answer and eventually ended in using questions that were merely yes/no questions. Again, this was a fruitless endeavor especially if the student’s comprehension was limited and tutors felt unconnected to the student.

Aspects of the directive approach of tutoring.

In contrast to the advised Non-directive style, the Directive Approach to tutoring may be of use for the NNES writer. Directive style will include a focus on grammar, punctuation, idioms and word usage (LOCs) along with a more “unbalanced” collaborative experience, in which tutor and tutee are not on equal ground, and may even include the time-consuming practice of looking at the text for the student line-by-line. Powers (1993), when looking at a university writing center, noticed that as a result of

educational, rhetorical, and cultural contexts of ESL writers, the tutors often took on a directive style; however, though the students were satisfied, the tutors found it difficult to move away from their non-directive approach even though there seemed to be an almost natural progression toward the directive.

Studies of the directive approach with NNES students.

In her recent study of students at a Midwest university, Xu (2006) found that most NNES students showed satisfaction with their tutoring experiences and that these experiences included Directive Approach elements. While tutors in her study may have felt uncomfortable using direct methods, they found that they indeed were meeting the needs of the students. Thus, she concludes, “directive” and “negative” are not synonymous. Xu pointed out that it is believed that “directiveness” is on a continuum; therefore, it would be unlikely to find a purely directive tutoring session. This continuum was first suggested by Clark (2001) whose important paper has given measures for directiveness. These measures include: how often the tutor/tutee speak/contribute; how many corrections the tutors made; and how much influence the tutor had over the session.

In another study on the directive approach in tutoring, Weigle and Nelson (2004) mentioned the benefits of directive tutoring as they applied to student role and perception. For one tutor/tutee set in her study, Weigle and Nelson found that the student’s perceived and actual lack of oral proficiency was an issue that, when dealt with using a directive tutoring approach, allowed for an efficient and satisfying tutoring session. A focus on grammar and vocabulary addressed a genuine need for information, and although the tutor may worry about being too “controlling” during a session, in this case the student was appreciative and felt that knowledge was received. This is also mentioned in

Williams (2004), who found that during a non-directive style tutoring session, non-directive tutoring led to almost absurdly circuitous interactions, in which the writer engaged in a sort of guessing game. This was viewed negatively by students who wondered why the tutor knew the answer yet would not directly tell the student. When looking at directive tutoring, some will disagree with the local, sentence-level format of this approach. Henning (2001) found that this is not necessarily of importance for the success of a session, and stated three factors that will contribute to the success of the session. These factors are: tutor and tutee negotiating the agenda of the session; whether or not the writer can receive and then apply the information from the tutor; rapport between tutor and tutee. Weigle and Nelson's data in a study of tutors (2004) supported these factors.

An integrated non-directive/directive approach for tutoring the NNES student.

Clark (2001), using the directiveness continuum, suggested that tutors not take up a more directive approach but become aware of the directive/non-directive continuum and focus on human interaction with the student. Clark strongly suggested a flexible approach that is at neither end of the continuum, but lies somewhere in the middle with a strong sense of awareness of student needs. Xu's study ended with a discussion of the common strategies that created a successful environment. These strategies included: understanding student needs; eliciting needs/desires from the student; addressing student needs; adapting tutoring approaches to the student needs and gauging the success of a session through student-need satisfaction. Xu concluded that, while the tutors find their approaches more aligned with the non-directive end of the continuum, findings indicate

that the directive tutoring style is “more successful with many ESL students,” (p. 21) and thus the tutors should move along Clark’s continuum to satisfy student needs. Blau and Hall (2002) also focused on flexibility, a characteristic already in play at most writing centers, and suggested guidelines that move along the continuum to create a flexible plan for working with ESL students. Blau and Hall’s guidelines included: gaining a practical grounding in Contrastive Rhetoric Theory; tutors becoming cultural informants; comfortable use of the directive approach; use of the time-consuming “line-by-line” approach to working on a paper; and an interweaving of global and local concerns (HOCs and LOCs). Blau and Hall suggested making a realistic plan with the student for the agenda of the tutoring session and reading slowly and carefully through papers for a thorough approach to a session.

Thonus (2004) also looked at the use of a more directive style when tutoring NNES students and found that this approach better met student needs than the more typical non-directive style. While tutors work with the Socratic Questioning method with which they are familiar in order to “draw out” knowledge from novice writers, Thonus noted that there is a lack of knowledge base with NNES tutees that is not served well with this method. Thonus looked at four areas in tutoring: (a) communicative dominance by tutors, (b) conflicting perceptions of tutor roles among participants in the tutorial, (c) tutor involvement, and (d) variability and uncertainty in tutor–tutee behavior and found directive approaches more useful. Indeed, tutees expected directive approaches. In interviews, students said that it was the tutor’s job to be talkative because the tutor’s role was to give advice. Another commented that “of course” his tutor spoke more than he did because she was answering the questions he asked of her. Numerous reports on

writing center tutees show that NNES tutees often expect and want their tutors to act as authorities. Therefore, integrating directive approaches is again commended.

Most of the current studies on directive/non-directive tutoring and the NNES student show significant differences between NES and NNES students in academic writing. The needs of NNES students in academic writing have been carefully explored both through the use of student papers and self-reports by students themselves. Directive tutoring seems, through limited research, to address more of the student needs than non-directive tutoring, which seems to present the students with frustrating sessions. However, as Williams (2004) points out, there remains a large gap in research on writing centers and their NNES student clients, and Thonus (2004) states that tutors at writing centers are still searching for techniques in tutoring these NNES students. This research study will address perceptions of students and tutors in terms of the success of sessions, an element of tutoring sessions that has not been touched on in recent research.

Summary

From the literature, it can be seen that NNES student writing, from research, differs from the writing of NES students. In addition, the needs of the NNES student are unique and, according to some, neglected. Thus, for successful tutoring to occur, the needs of these NNES students in writing must be identified and then addressed. How they are addressed can be looked at through views of whether to use a Directive or Non-Directive tutoring approach or whether to research use of an integrated approach in order to meet the varied needs of these students. The identification of these student needs and discussion of how the needs may be best addressed may lead to more success in tutoring sessions with NNES students at university writing centers.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The literature review chapter puts forth research that has been conducted on the needs of the NNES students and the use and theories of directive and non-directive tutoring. The purpose of this study was to identify the characteristics of successful tutoring sessions for non-native English speaking (NNES) students by examining the perspectives of both tutors in a university writing center and the NNES students who use the center. It is hoped that this study will add to the body of extant research on effective tutoring for NNES students.

While researchers in studies of tutoring the NNES student have examined student needs and basic characteristics of directive and non-directive tutoring, they have not answered the question of how tutors and students perceive and negotiate success in tutoring sessions. This research is designed to answer research questions and promote further understanding of student needs and student and tutor perceptions by comparing two university settings that offer assistance to NNES writers through different models.

Qualitative Study

This study lent itself to qualitative methods as it fit clearly Merriam's (2002) description of a basic interpretive qualitative study: "...you seek to discover and

understand a phenomenon, a process, the perspectives and the worldviews of the people involved, or a combination of these...data are inductively analyzed to identify the recurring patterns or common themes that cut across the data” (p. 6). Because the researcher through this study sought to answer the research questions based on the phenomenon of a NNES student seeking assistance in a specific context -- a writing center -- a qualitative study is more conducive to pursuing the answers to the study questions. Indeed, because students seek assistance at writing centers voluntarily, and because this study sought to identify conditions of a successful session using survey, interviews, and observations, more thorough and in depth answers were able to be collected.

The general rationale for a qualitative study can be based on many elements. The national Research Council categorizes qualitative research as one that produces descriptive or procedural knowledge; it is research which answers questions about “what is happening?” and “why or how it is happening?” (Shavelson & Towne, 2002). Because settings and the people studied are dynamic and diverse, qualitative research allows the researcher and instruments to evolve, as this study did through its pilot studies. Because qualitative research produces evidence based on the exploration of specific contexts and particular individuals, according to Brantlinger et al (2005), it is “expected that readers will see similarities to their situations and judge the relevance of the information produced to their own circumstances.” This study seeks to do just that: take specific contexts and show research that will then allow other writing centers to focus on their own NNES student circumstances.

In addition, Bogdan and Biklen (1998) note that qualitative researchers have concern for participant perspectives. Meaning is of essential concern. Because the focus of this study was to look at perceived success of sessions and the meaning of success as identified by students and tutors, the definition of a successful tutoring session for a NNES student can be studied in more depth through a qualitative study because of the inductive and naturalistic nature of qualitative study. While a quantitative study may be able to survey and indicate whether a session was successful or not, the qualitative observations in this study allowed for a thorough exploration of the reasons tutors and students feel sessions are successful and whether this success includes elements of directive and non-directive tutoring. The characteristics of a session were fleshed out through the variety of methods used and allowed participants to discuss, reflect on, and move toward a deeper meaning of success through the process.

Approach.

Because the study explored the NNES students' use of a university writing center, which can be viewed as a unique phenomenon, and because the study sought to identify elements of student and tutor perceptions of success using descriptive and exploratory questioning, individual lived experience, and a specific context/setting was seen as the most useful methodology to pursue.

This study, a basic interpretive study, had characteristics of a phenomenological approach. Its design allowed the research to develop a deep understanding of how tutoring sessions with NNES students took place in terms of directive and non-directive styles of tutoring by examining characteristics impacting the phenomenon of successful or unsuccessful sessions through the experience of participants (Bogden & Biklen, 1998,

p. 23-4). This study was not necessarily testing any one specific theory but rather attempting to gain a deeper understanding of directive and non-directive practices and the directive continuum through perceptions of both tutors and students.

Marshall and Rossman (2006) found that three elements lead to the most compelling argument for qualitative inquiry; these elements are: research that is exploratory and descriptive, research which accepts the value of context and setting, and research which searches for a deeper understanding of a participant’s lived experience of the phenomenon. Through the methodology of this study, these elements can be approached (see Table 1).

Table 1

Qualitative Strategy

Element	Method	Focus
Exploratory/Descriptive	Survey	Tutor/Student perceptions
Individual Lived Experience	In-depth interviews	Individuals
Context/Setting	Observations	Session context; writing center setting

Pilot Studies

Two pilot studies were undertaken, one in the fall of 2006 using interviews of tutors and students, and one in the summer of 2007 using a web-based survey of tutors only. The first study was undertaken under strict classroom deadlines; in order to facilitate speedy IRB review and a deadline of the end of the semester, this study took

place in only 10 weeks. Thus, only three tutors and three students were interviewed. A semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix C) was used and the data collected was analyzed first to look for characteristics of directive and non-directive tutoring which included what needs were addressed and how tutors and students interacted. The data was open coded regarding session success first and student needs second. Open coding identifies, names, categorizes, and describes the data initially. Then, axial coding was used to focus on main categories within the directive/non-directive framework. Axial coding relates these categories. Directive was coded as any mention of grammar, vocabulary, or extra time needed to work on student essays. Non-directive tutoring was coded as any mention of thesis, organization, or development in student essays. At this point, additional characteristics emerged such as the limitations the host institution set for writing centers as well as time made available for sessions. Student papers were used as artifacts and coded for High Order Concerns (HOCs) and Low Order Concerns (LOCs) as well. High Order Concerns mainly focus on development and organization of the content of the paper while Low Order Concerns include grammar and sentence level concerns. From research, Low Order Concerns are common in writing for the NNES student. Finally, selective coding relates other categories to the core categories that emerged, and overall issues such as power and equity were considered for future research. Selective coding is the process in which the researcher draws out one core category and then relates all others to this core and discusses how they relate using this core category as the one driving the research. Findings of this study included tutor definitions of success for NES and NNES students. When looking at the success of a session, for NES speakers, tutors reported that participation and discussion were factors

of success. Tutors listed aspects of a successful session as including: (a) a good amount of communication; (b) talkative student; (c) student eagerness to make changes; (d) interest in discussing content. A new characteristic of interest appeared at this point - discomfort. Discomfort was considered a motivator that made the student seek assistance and look at the session in a formal light. Discomfort became a new category.

For a tutoring session with NNES students, however, tutors based success on a very different list of characteristics and seemed to focus more on what the tutor felt than what the student did, as opposed to encouraging the active participation of the NES students. For the NNES tutoring session, tutors mentioned patience with students because communication and terminology became problems

Overall, tutors defined success as the patience they needed in dealing with students as well as the easing of student anxiety. Students defined successful tutor characteristics as clear explanations, time, and having a close relationship with the tutors. These definitions are not wholly different, as patience and time overlap as do the easing of anxiety and relationship with tutors to some extent. While the literature seems to suggest that student and tutor perceptions are at the opposite ends of the Directive/Non-Directive spectrum, in this study an overlap of characteristics became clear.

While simple, this study was a solid base for further research. The findings of this study agree with the literature which claims that the needs of NNES students are most often LOC needs. In addition, according to this study the success of a tutoring session relies on factors such as time and relationship, a theory supported in the literature by Kennedy (1993), Blau and Hall (2002), and Henning (2001) who claim that a directive approach, possibly using the time-consuming line-by-line editing style and working on

the assumption that the tutor/student relationship will be unequal, is more useful in tutoring the NNES student.

The second pilot study in the summer of 2007 used a beta version of the current survey (see Appendix B). To test validity, an initial survey was used as a class project to learn web-based survey techniques. The first survey asked respondents for feedback on the survey. Respondents found the survey questions to be too broad. The questions were made more specific and the beta version was used in the summer of 2007. This version also included a text box for respondents to comment on the survey. Of the 100 respondents, 58 commented on the survey. Most responses were positive commenting on the variable nature of tutoring students in general. Five respondents commented on questions 2 and 3 being too general. One suggested that a distinction be made between tutoring undergraduate or graduate NNES students. One commented that the survey was too short to gain enough insight. Questions 1-3 were changed in the versions that were used in this study. In addition, questions were added, and an area to discuss undergraduate versus graduate NNES students was also added. Overall, the initial version and the beta version returned results that were similar and results which agreed with the literature reviewed. For the beta version, seventy-one tutors reported that participation of both NES and NNES students during a session was a characteristic of a successful session. Other characteristics included “Tutor provides detailed explanations of corrections (50), “students participate fully in discussion” (47), “student is relaxed” (45), and “focus on development and organization” (40). These findings agree with those of Blau and Hall (2002) who discuss the non-directive use of “Socratic questioning” in sessions, finding it problematic in that the tutor and tutee are in actuality on unequal

ground when it comes to language skills. Blau's study showed that tutors using the questioning technique actually found that it ended up as a fruitless endeavor leaving tutor and student unconnected.

In terms of student needs, tutors surveyed reported that tutor focus was on "wording" (65) and "clarity" (65); however, these terms were undefined. Other areas of focus were "specific grammar issues" (62), organization (49), "general grammar issues" (48), and "focus/thesis" (47). For the current study, the terms "wording" and "clarity" will be discussed and defined by tutors and students as well. In addition to tutor focus during sessions, tutors were asked to comment on what tutors perceive to be the needs of the NNES students. Tutors tended to comment that students needed confidence in their writing abilities, increased vocabulary, improved spoken skills, and time. Other characteristics that lead to successful sessions tutors noted as student participation and willingness but these characteristics also ran the gamut to faculty perceptions of the NNES students and student perception of the goals of the writing center. These findings are in agreement with the literature, for example Blau and Hall (2002), Clark (2001), and Xu (2006).

These two pilot studies allowed for clarification of terminology and a deeper understanding of tutor perspectives which allowed the researcher to clarify questions and wording for tutor respondents participating in the final study.

Setting and Participants

Participants in the current study were tutors at two university writing centers chosen by convenience sampling and NNES students at the same universities who use the writing centers. Five tutors and five students at each university were identified. Tutors

were identified through contact with the directors of the writing centers and students were identified either through the directors of the writing centers or the directors of the ESL programs at the universities.

Both universities are Midwestern state universities with the writing centers serving NNES students as approximately 25% of their clients each year. University One does have ESL courses offered at the university but does not offer special tutoring for NNES students through the writing center. This university offers an intensive English language program (IELP). In this IELP, students on an F-1 visa receive 20 hours of intensive English language instruction per week. The core courses of the program are: an integrated reading and writing course, an integrated listening and speaking course, and a grammar course. Other courses, called support courses, are offered in vocabulary development, pronunciation, and conversation. There are three levels of instruction: elementary, intermediate, and advanced. The students in the IELP are not necessarily students of the university and receive no credit for the IELP course; however, students enrolled at the university may enroll in the IELP courses if they need help. This is at an additional cost to the university student. In addition to the IELP, students who enroll as undergraduate university students are tested using a computerized, standardized test after which the ESL director places them in one of three undergraduate courses or passes them through to mainstream classes. The three courses are: Intermediate ESL, Advanced ESL, and Advanced ESL II. Students receive between 2-4 credit hours for these courses which focus on grammar and academic writing skills.

Graduate students entering the university are tested using an on-campus administration of a spoken English test (SPEAK test). This testing is focused on NNES

students who wish to become teaching assistants. Results of the SPEAK test place the student in one of two graduate ESL courses. The courses are: ESL Graduate 1 and ESL Graduate 2. Each course is 2 semester credit hours and focuses on only spoken English specifically recognition and production of sounds, intonation patterns and speech skills. The course meets 2 hours per week. For businesses employing NNES people, the university also offers ESL workplace courses. Students of these classes are employees of specific companies and not university students. Short term programs of 10 weeks can be organized. Students in these courses may or may not be university students. Most likely, students in this program will be with groups visiting from international schools for the summer. In addition to these programs, this university offers a Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Second or Other Language (MA TESOL) program for NES or NNES students who wish to become ESL teachers. There is no specific support for NNES students in this program. Also, this university does not have tutoring within the writing center specifically for NNES students.

University Two also offers ESL courses; however, the writing center at this university employs a tutor to work specifically with the other tutors in order to assist with NNES student sessions. This employee, who has specific ESL background and experience, also tutors most NNES students who come to the writing center. Courses offered for ESL students are undergraduate and graduate courses. Undergraduate courses include: ENG 1 and ENG 2. These courses are both intensive grammar and sentence structure courses. Each class is 3 credit hours. The graduate courses include: ENG Composition, Composition 2, General 1, General 2, General 3, General 4, Advanced Composition, Advanced). Of these courses, three are composition courses. ENG General

1 is a reading for research course and ENG General 2 and Advanced are listening and speaking courses. ENG General 3 and General 4 are courses specific to international teaching assistants. Pronunciation and fluency are the focuses of these courses. (see Table 2).

The populations of the ESL programs at the universities vary throughout the year. University One did not report numbers of students who were enrolled in undergraduate and graduate courses. University Two has 59 students in undergraduate and 103 in graduate courses. Five tutors and five students from each university participated, for a total of 20 participants.

Of interest is the fact that University One offers more programming; however, the students in the IELP and other programs were not necessarily mainstream students of the university and did not visit the writing center because they received assistance within the IELP for their writing needs. The students at University Two have more graduate ESL courses available to them. Students enrolled in the undergraduate and graduate courses were the students most likely to visit the university writing center.

Table 2

University Programs

	University One	University Two
<i>ESL Programming</i>	IELP Undergraduate courses Intermediate ESL, Advanced ESL, Advanced ESL 2 Graduate courses ESL Graduate 1, Graduate 2	No IELP Undergraduate courses ENG 1, 2 Graduate courses ENG Composition, Composition 2, General 1, General 2, General 3, General 4, Advanced Composition, Advanced
<i>Other ESL Programs</i>	Workplace ESL Short-term ESL MA TESOL	None
<i>Writing Center</i>	No ESL specialist/staff	ESL specialist

Procedures

The head of the writing centers at two Midwestern universities were contacted and preliminary approval was given pending the prospectus hearing of the current research study. In addition, the tutors at the writing centers were also contacted and

asked for their participation in the study along with any NNES students that could be identified at the time. A request for permission to conduct the study was submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Cleveland State University at that time. The request for approval was also submitted to both research sites at that time as well.

Upon full approval from both universities, all participating tutors and students were provided the following items: a letter explaining the purpose of the study as well as procedures and confidentiality of participating in the study. All of these items were provided in English. Copies are provided in Appendix A.

Research Design

The research study was primarily qualitative. The research design for this study (see Figure 1) included the following elements in order to look at tutor and student perceptions in an in depth manner:

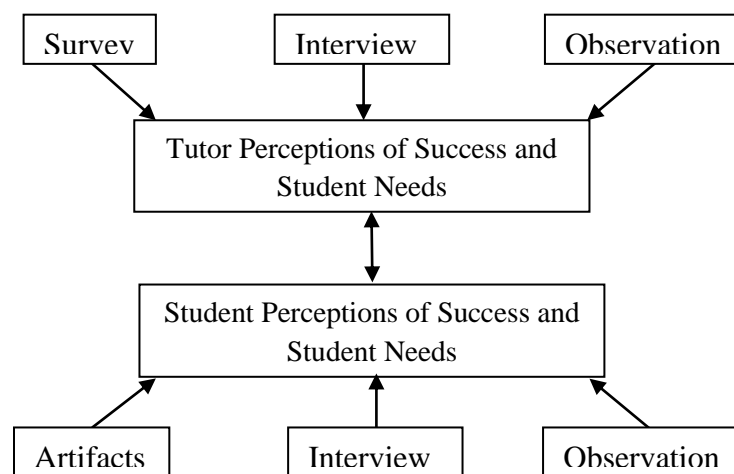


Figure 1. Research Design. This figure illustrates the research design used for this study.

Instrumentation and Instrument Reliability

Interviews.

To offer an in-depth view of tutoring sessions, both tutors and students were interviewed face-to-face regarding the success of the sessions and the needs of NNES students in writing in English (see Appendix C). Both tutors and students were interviewed once. Interviews took place on campus at locations convenient to tutors and students.

From the information gathered through the pilot surveys, a semi-structured interview instrument was created. A study in 2006 with three tutors and three students used the interview instrument (see Appendix C) and the results were peer reviewed by the professors (a team-taught class) and other students in the class. Feedback was positive so the instrument has not been changed. Results of the interviews were consistent with the purpose of the study and research questions. Therefore, the simple questions are deemed dependable and reliable.

Data from the Interviews were open-coded for success and also student needs. Answers from tutors and students were named and categorized. To learn more about perceptions of success, answers were categorized in order to look for emerging themes. For student needs, information was coded as either LOCs or HOCs in order to determine tutor and student perceptions of student needs in writing. In general, HOCs include a focus on the organization, development and focus of the essay while LOCs include grammar and mechanics

Survey.

While there is no specific instrument on directive and non-directive tutoring, most studies in this area agree on certain characteristics of directive and non-directive tutoring. Kennedy (1993), Blau and Hall (2002), and Powers (1993) agree on the elements that characterize directive and non-directive tutoring. According to these studies, directive tutoring includes: a focus on grammar, punctuation, idioms and word usage (LOCs) along with a more “unbalanced” collaborative experience, in which tutor and tutee are not on equal ground. It also includes the time-consuming practice of looking at the text for the student line-by-line. In contrast, non-directive tutoring includes: collaborative tutoring in which tutor and student work together as if they are peers; avoidance of proofreading; and putting High Order Concerns (HOCs) over Low Order Concerns (LOCs) during the tutoring session. HOCs include a focus on the organization, development and focus of the essay while LOCs include grammar and mechanics. Instruments which have been used in studies before include a brief survey by Clark (2001) and a study on number and type of utterances by Thonus (2004). With this information in mind, the following instruments were created specifically for this study.

The Survey of Directive and Non-Directive Tutoring (SDNT) has been adapted using characteristics from the studies above. The SDNT (see Appendix A) was first created as a classroom project in 2006. Again, at the time, responding tutors (50 reports) were asked to comment on the survey itself. Feedback was incorporated into the next phase of the survey which was distributed via web during the summer of 2007. Over one hundred tutors responded but the software limited reports to 100. These tutors were also

asked to provide feedback on the survey itself which was incorporated into the final version of SDNT being used for this study.

The 2008 survey was first sent to three experts who assessed the survey for content validity. These experts were asked to assess the relevance of the questions in the survey and the extent to which the survey captured the perceptions of tutors. Then, ten random tutors were asked respond to the survey itself for face validity. The survey for the current study also requested demographic information from tutors including: years of experience, experience with NNES students. This allowed for greater comparison of tutors based on additional factors. Comparison can be made within group or between groups.

Overall, data from the survey was open coded for success, again looking for emerging themes, and coded as focusing on LOCs or HOCs when asking about student needs, again to determine if tutor and student perceptions of student needs fell into either of these categories.

Observations.

Observations of tutoring sessions were held to determine what student needs were addressed. The researcher observed and audio taped sessions and, using a coding instrument (see Appendix D), attempted to view what needs were addressed in sessions. Additionally, the researcher used observations to determine whether sessions tended to be more directive or non-directive. The rubric for this coding instrument is based on description of directive and non-directive tutoring from Blau and Hall (2002), Powers (1993), Xu (2006), Weigle and Nelson (2004), Williams (2004), and Clark (2001). This coding instrument was used in the fall 2006 pilot study when analyzing data. As the

system of coding to determine if a session was directive or non-directive was a simplified version of Thonus' coding system (see Appendix D), no peer checking for this was used. In addition, observations were coded as focusing on LOCs or HOCs. This coding was used to determine what the focus of a session was (LOC or HOC) and how tutors addressed this focus (directive or non-directive). In this way, the researcher was able to see, in practice, the needs of the NNES students in a session. Though this data was collected on how directive sessions were, because these results did not address directly any of the research questions of this study, the results were not included. Volubility and use of directives in the language of the session did not address the student needs or perceptions of the success of a session. Data on focus of a session, whether or not LOCs were addressed, did help to answer the research questions and was used. For future study, these elements (focus of session, volubility, directive types in utterances) can be used to assess directiveness of sessions. Because directiveness was simply a lens for the researcher to use when viewing this study, this data was not incorporated at this time.

Artifacts.

Students were asked for copies of papers. These artifacts allowed the researcher to view what specific writing needs the students had and which needs were addressed. The researcher specifically identified needs as HOCs or LOCs as described by Blau and Hall (2002). Within a paper, errors were noted and then identified as either LOCs or HOCs. Papers were read through and first grammatical and vocabulary errors were circled. Then, papers were read again to determine if they were organized in a clear manner. Papers were read through a third time to determine if ideas were sufficiently developed using examples, facts, and statistics. Then, it was noted whether a paper contained more LOC

errors (grammar, vocabulary, punctuation errors) or more HOC errors (unclear organization, digression from main topic, sufficient development of ideas). This research of the artifacts allowed for a brief view of the student's writing and their real, not simply perceived, needs.

Validity and Reliability

In order to address concerns of trustworthiness of the study, procedures were set in place. Validity, or credibility, can be established through triangulation. In this study, data and methodological triangulation (use of interviews, observations, surveys, and artifact analysis and the data from these methods) allowed for triangulation of both tutor and student responses. Tutor responses were triangulated through interviews, surveys and observations; student responses were triangulated with interviews, observations, and analysis of artifacts (student papers). Reliability that research can be replicated can be assessed by the pilot studies as well as the triangulations mentioned above. The interviews as a method also allow for a greater collection of details and field notes clearly kept track of how the study proceeded. In this study, triangulation, prolonged engagement in the field, and member checks were employed to meet Marshall and Rossman's (2010), standards of trustworthiness. In addition, rich data and comparison allow for good research practice. Interviews, detailed surveys and observations allowed for the use of rich, or triangulated, descriptive, data. Also, two writing centers were compared, along with comparison of tutors/students within the universities as well. Finally, field notes were kept in order to provide for reliable collection of data and consistency of the study.

The interviews, observations, surveys and artifacts of this research study provided triangulation in order to confirm emerging findings. The researcher also had prolonged

engagement in the field. The beginning of the semester involved visiting the writing centers, shadowing tutors and directors in their daily work at centers. In the middle of the semester, observations began and continued through the academic year. Interviews, surveys, and collection of artifacts followed the observations. Member checks of data by participants provided validity to the study as well as attempted to better capture the perspectives of tutors and students. Participants were asked to comment on data and interpretation of data throughout the course of the study. Peer examination also assisted with the validity of the study as it went along as three tutors who are peers of the researcher were also asked to comment on the findings through the process of collecting and analyzing data. Alternative explanations for the success of tutoring sessions became evident throughout the study as the nature of the study itself sought to describe all characteristics of success, not simply whether the use of an ESL specialist did or did not create success.

The rich data for this study included: surveys, interviews, observations, and student papers. These data allowed for triangulation of the study, allowing one to see from different viewpoints the characteristics of success and student needs.

Data Analysis

Survey data.

Data from the survey fell into two categories: multiple-choice type questions and open-ended questions. The multiple-choice questions allowed the participant to select characteristics they felt were of importance to tutoring sessions. These data were simply rank-ordered using percentages of how many respondents selected the offered answers. The other questions allowed the respondent to elaborate in their answers by writing one

or more paragraphs describing their answers or perceptions of the questions. These data were analyzed through a content analysis which attempted to pull out relevant themes and then, again, rank ordered these themes using percentages of respondents who selected such themes.

Qualitative data.

In addition to the coding described above, an additional view of the data looked at how data fell, or if it fell, into the categories of directive or non-directive styles of tutoring. From the Blau and Hall (2002) research, directive was coded as any mention of:

- grammar
- vocabulary
- extended time
- consultant contributions
- consultant corrections
- number of consultant utterances vs. student utterances
- consultant influence on direction of session
- attention to low order versus high order concerns

From the research of Clark (2001), non-directive was coded as:

- thesis
- global organization
- global development
- student contributions
- student self-corrections
- number of student utterances vs. consultant utterances

- student influence on direction of session
- attention to high order versus low order concerns – high order concerns include organization/development and global concerns of the essay while low order concerns focus on grammar, vocabulary, and punctuation.

The same coding schema was used to view tutor perceptions of session success.

Summary

Chapter III described the methodology, procedures and instrumentation and data analysis for this study. Interviews, observations, and artifacts were used to explore perceptions of tutors and NNES students on student needs and success of tutoring sessions. Also described in the chapter were the settings and participants along with details of pilot studies which tested research and instrument design; reliability and validity of the instruments and design along with a description of data analysis were also included. In general, from interviews, tutor and student perceptions of success in sessions were determined by looking for emerging themes in these answers. Tutor and student perceptions of student needs were determined by categorizing their answers as focusing on either LOCs or HOCs and looking for mention of new characteristics. From surveys, the data was analyzed to also look for emerging themes of success and focus on LOCs or HOCs in terms of student needs. Data from observations was coded in terms, again, of focus on LOCs or HOCs and then also coded in terms of whether a session seemed to be directive or non-directive in style. Artifacts were coded to determine if the actual needs of the students, in these specific papers, fell into the categories of LOC or HOC needs. Once data was analyzed in this way, the researcher was then able to discuss these findings in Chapter V.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Chapter IV provides description of the findings from the analysis of the student and tutor interviews along with description and analysis of session observations, a tutor survey, and artifacts. The results are discussed in terms of the following Research questions: 1) What do tutors and NNES students believe to be the needs of Non-Native English Speaking (NNES) students in regards to academic writing?; 2) What characteristics of a writing center tutoring session define a successful session for tutors and NNES students?; 3) How are the beliefs of tutors and students similar or different in terms of success and student needs in academic writing?; 4) Does employing an ESL specialist in the writing center affect success in tutoring the NNES students?

Participants and Setting

Tutoring space.

The Writing Center at University One is located within the university's library. The office itself is a cubicle structure with one space including: a reception desk, the director's office, and a space for tutors to wait for their clients. When clients arrive, the tutoring 'area' is part of the public space of the library. Tutors often use tables close to

the Writing Center, but have access to the entire library space and use of library computers.

In contrast, the Writing Center at University Two is housed in a classroom building where the Writing Center has its own rooms for reception and tutoring. The reception room also includes a small computer lab, waiting area, and the director's office. These are all separate rooms. The tutoring area is a large classroom equipped with tables and chairs and a few computers, but isolated from public traffic. This isolation can allow for a more focused session, one in which public distractions and noise are more limited. This space also allows the Writing Center to set its own hours and not be subject to the hours of the library as at University One. With both more space, more time, and isolation from public distractions and noise, University Two's writing center location can have an impact on sessions. A session with few public distractions could be more successful than a session set in the center of a public space. On the other hand, a center located in the library allows for quick access to materials and is, in terms, a way to advertise use of the writing center by placing it where students can easily walk in and meet with tutors. The location of the writing center, though determined by the host institution, can potentially effect sessions and use of the writing center.

Tutors.

The tutors at University One were all peer tutors employed by the Writing Center. Table 3 provides demographic information about the tutors in this study. The tutors had MAs in English with one tutor holding a recent PhD in Electrical Engineering. Their experience ranged from one to four years of tutoring. Most tutors agreed that about 40% of their clients were NNES students. In age, tutors ranged from age 26 to 40; three tutors

were women and two were men. At University Two, two tutors were peer tutors and three were professionals. One professional was a director, another was an ESL specialist, and the third was a writing specialist employed by Academic Success. Two held Master's Degrees (MAs) in English and Teaching English as a Second or Other Language (TESOL) and the third held a PhD. The peer tutors were both undergraduate students. Experience ranged from one to six years, and tutors believed that 50% of their clients were NNES students while the English as a Second Language (ESL) specialist worked with 100% NNES students.

Table 3

Tutor Demographics

Tutor	Professional/Peer	Degree	Years Tutoring	% of NNES students
<i>University One</i>				
Tutor 1	Peer/female	MA English	1.5	20
TUT1-UN1		pending		
Tutor 2	Peer/male	MA English	2	uncertain
TUT2-UN1		pending		
Tutor 3	Peer/female	MA	4	40
TUT3-UN1		English/Library Science		
Tutor 4	Peer/male	PhD Electrical	1	40
TUT4-UN1		Engineering		
Tutor 5	Peer/female	MA English	3	40
TUT5-UN1		pending		
<i>University Two</i>				
Tutor 1	Professional/female	MA English,	3	100
TUT1-UN2		TESOL and		

Tutor	Professional/Peer	Degree	Years Tutoring	% of NNES students
		Applied Linguistics		
Tutor 2 TUT2-UN2	Peer/male	BA pending	1	Uncertain
Tutor 3 TUT3-UN2	Professional/female	MA English	Not answered	Not answered
Tutor 4 TUT4-UN2	Professional/female	MA English/TESL	6	N/A
Tutor 5 TUT5-UN2	Peer/female	BA Language Arts pending	1	50
Total	7 peer/3 prof		22.5/Average 2.5	Average 48.3

Source: Geither, (2009).The Survey of Directive and Non-Directive Tutoring (SDNT)

ESL specialist.

The ESL Specialist was employed at University Two. The duties of the ESL Specialist included working exclusively with NNES students and presenting workshops for the Writing Centers tutors. The workshops included weekly workshops which were presented during every staff meeting. These workshops were 10-15 minutes in length and presented specific grammar issues related to the writing of NNES students. For example, a 10 minute workshop might focus on the vocabulary of grammar (“present continuous or present progressive” verb tense) and the rules of that grammar (how the verb tense is constructed and when it should be used). Additionally, the ESL Specialist presented two-hour workshops once a semester. These workshops focused on how to talk about writing with NNES students, including topics such as avoiding the use of slang during sessions, the use of repeating statements, vocabulary choice when discussing writing, and re-

wording information to check student comprehension during sessions. These sessions also included information on how various cultures perceive academic honesty/plagiarism along with presentation of sample papers from NNES students so tutors can view the student needs. Also, the ESL Specialist might include simulated sessions with NNES students during this workshop time.

Students.

The students interviewed at University One were all undergraduate NNES students, one being enrolled in an ESL course. At University Two, all students were undergraduate students and all were enrolled in one or more ESL courses. The demographics of the students were not taken into consideration for this study. As clients, the students were good representations of typical Writing Center clients – most clients have varied backgrounds and most often voluntarily visited the writing center. However, it was the demographics of the tutors that were considered because the institutions may have the ability to control who they hire and on what criteria tutors are hired whereas the institution does not or may not have control over which students seek out assistance at writing centers. No students interviewed had come to the writing center as a mandatory part of a class; all students had voluntarily at one time sought help from the writing center. Students may have been encouraged to visit the writing center, but attendance was in no way mandatory. The students interviewed were not the same students who were observed, though the students interviewed had used the writing center. Students who were interviewed had been a pre-identified group by the directors of the writing centers in order to insure that there were indeed NNES students being served by the center and that these students would be available. Of the NNES students observed in sessions, though

asked to participate in interviews, they claimed they did not have time or simply refused the request for an interview, thus the pre-identified students were valuable and were used for the interviews. The TOEFL scores and language skill levels of the students were not addressed. This lack of knowledge of the students' language levels was a limitation of this study.

Research Questions

Research question 1.

Tutor and Student Perceptions of Needs of the NNES Student

Research aim one was to identify the perceptions of both tutors and NNES students when describing the needs of the NNES students in academic writing. Tutor perceptions were looked at through observations of tutoring sessions as well as question 3 in Tutor Interviews and questions 3,4, and 5 on the survey (SDNT). Student perceptions were studied through observations of tutoring sessions, question 3 in the Student interview, and through artifacts, actual student papers and the academic writing needs in these papers.

Tutor Perceptions. Tutors generally indicated that they perceived student needs to be LOC needs and tutors consistently mentioned grammar as a student need. This supports Blau's and Hall's theory that LOCs are a main area of student needs and that the implementation of a more directive style of tutoring more thoroughly addresses these concerns (2002). In addition, tutors perceived that NES students and NNES students had different needs. These were the two main categories that emerged when looking at how tutors perceive student needs.

Tutor 1 at University Two summarized the perceptions of most tutors. When asked “How might you describe the needs of the NNES students that come to the center?” she replied:

“Oh, they are vast. (laughs) They are vast! [There are] problems that any student, NNES or NES, will have but he (a particular NNES student) has these compounded with issues like grammar and spelling and punctuation so I think their writing concerns are the same but magnified compared to what an NES would have” (TUT1-UN2-INT).

Tutors at both universities mentioned grammar repeatedly in interviews and on the survey, often specifying articles, plurals, prepositions further supporting the perception by tutors that students need more grammar and LOCs. As examples, tutors said that:

Overall, NNES students request and require help with grammar. They are rarely interested in receiving help with the general construction of their papers simply because this is an area in which they generally tend to excel. (TUT1-UN1-SU).

So much of one tutoring session has to do with expert grammar/clarifying grammar. (TUT3-UN1-SU)

Like native speakers, they need assistance in organizing and developing their ideas, but they often require more help in grammar, vocabulary, and academic style. (TUT1-UN2-SU).

To develop further this focus on LOCs as a need, during observations, the types of corrections were marked as either HOC concerns or LOC concerns. Again, though tutors

may discuss and prefer a non-directive focus during sessions (Blau and Hall 2002), these observations were clearly sessions which leaned toward directive on the continuum. In these sessions, focus tended to be on LOCs, illustrating that student needs were actually in the area of LOCs. Because of the focus on LOCs, these sessions, then may have required, and therefore received, a more directive approach during tutoring sessions. In observations of sessions, the researcher noted a focus on LOCs such as verb tense and vocabulary. In all but one session, correction of LOCs was the main focus, with the bulk of the time, or all of the time, geared toward correcting the LOCs in the paper. In one session at University Two, the student, though identified as NNES, had attended high school in the US and, if not bilingual, was very skilled in written and aural skills in English. In this session, most of the tutoring focused on HOCs of content and development. As further support results of question 3 on the survey can be found in Table 4, showing that most tutors believed that student needs fell into the categories which are indicated as LOCs:

Table 4

Tutor Perception of Student Needs: Survey

Need	Tutor Response (10 Total)	HOC/LOC
Specific Grammar Issues	7	LOC
Clarity	7	LOC
General Grammar Issues	6	LOC
Punctuation	6	LOC
Re-explanation of Assignment	6	N/A
Vocabulary	5	LOC
Spelling	4	LOC
Focus/Thesis	4	HOC
Organization	4	HOC
Argumentation	4	HOC
Style	3	HOC
Expression of Unique Ideas	3	HOC
Pronunciation	2	N/A
Fluency	1	N/A
Creativity	0	N/A

Source: Geither, (2009).The Survey of Directive and Non-Directive Tutoring (SDNT)

In addition to tutor focus on grammar and LOCs as needs, tutors also agreed for the most part that the needs of the NES student and the needs of the NNES student were different. As examples, Tutor 1 at University One noted:

With the ESL students it is always a situation where...it is a lot more basic issues with grammar like you just saw; they always have problems with articles, plurals, and prepositions...that's the big issues I see that ESL students have whereas regular, American students have other...issues. Generally they have their articles, plurals and prepositions down. (TUT1-UN1-INT).

Tutor 2 at the same university concluded:

With the NES it tends to be more how to structure and organize essays and research and how to go about doing that and with the NNES we have issues more with subject-verb agreement, articles, that I think more NES are familiar with at the college level” (TUT2-UN1-INT).

Matsuda (1997) would concur that NNES writers are different from NES writers and that the writing of the NNES student is distinct and, in his opinion, the needs of these students are neglected in higher education. Only one tutor indicated, on the survey only, that the NNES student needs were the same as NES student needs.

Students request and require help with grammar. (TUT1-UN1-SU).

Although these results represent just a small number of writing center tutors, it is clear that the need for “grammar” is a repeated perception by seven out of the ten tutors and all ten make some mention of LOCs as a need. This is in line with Silva (1993), who focused on LOC and grammar, and Leki and Carson (1994) who discussed the need of

language proficiency (grammar and vocabulary). In addition, Land and Whitley (1989) express the need for students to be concerned with grammar needs, as good grammar use is a signal of a “fluent” writer. In other words, tutor perceptions that grammar is a significant need reflect the research specifically the beliefs that grammar and mechanics are a important to the quality of writing as perceived by the reader (Silva, 1993), by the student (Leki and Carson, 1994), and by instructors (Land and Whitley, 1989).

While it was clear that most tutors answered that student needs were grammar or LOCs, tutors also believed that HOC needs were present. HOCs such as organization, argumentation, and development were mentioned but by fewer tutors whereas all tutors made some mention of grammar as a student need.

Additional characteristics in tutor perceptions of student needs that emerged included tutor desire to discuss the importance of HOCs during a session, avoiding plagiarism as a student need, and the ability to express one’s thoughts intelligibly, which could encompass many needs from grammar to organization and argumentation. Of interest is that one tutor made mention in the interview of what s/he believed to be student needs, but on the survey wrote about what s/he liked to teach during a session:

Students only want grammar, spelling, mechanics, but I like to teach why high order concerns such as organization and development are important (TUT4-UN1-SU).

This is of interest because no other tutor mentioned what he/she “likes” to teach and also that this is not a direct addressing of HOCs in a paper but rather more of a desire for discussion of HOCs during a session. This could certainly be a topic to look at further in future research.

Tutor perception of students' needs. In interviews, all tutors tended to discuss NNES student needs with some relation to grammar. Whether the needs were “compounded with issues like grammar” (TUT1-UN2) or were simply noted as “grammar usually is their main problem” (TUT3-UN1), it is clear that the issue of LOC grammar as a need was repeated. Of interest was the comment that, “...but a lot of times they will also need the higher level things, but we just don't get to that because they are struggling with the lower level things” (TUT5-UN2). In both the interviews and on the SDNT, tutor replies focused on LOCs-- especially grammar needs-- when asked what they believed to be student needs; also, on the SDNT, when asked about the focus of the session, tutors also overwhelmingly noted LOCs, especially grammar issues, over mention of HOCs such as organization and development. All sessions observed also focused on the LOC needs of students.

Student perceptions of students' needs. Students at both universities also participated in an interview in which they were asked in question 3 to describe what they believed to be their needs in academic writing. In addition, student papers were looked at to assess needs and observations were again used to look at student needs as approached during sessions. The student perceptions of needs were also in line with those of the tutors, with a focus on LOCs and grammar-based needs. When asked “In general, what are your English language needs while studying at the university?” students reported the following needs: ability to interact with locals; proofreading; prepositions, comma rules, transitions, practice in reading; grammar check; citation format; better standard English usage; vocabulary; timed writing; stronger oral language. Student 3 at University Two noted simply that her needs were: “Prepositions! Commas! Transitions!” (ST3-UN2-

INT). Student 4 stated : “I need more practice and chances to read and write and how to express myself efficiently on my papers” (ST4-UN2-INT). Another student said : “Grammar check.” (ST5-UN2-INT). At University One, Student 1 said: “I have had a lot of ESL and reading help in the past, so I think that I have only a few English language needs at the university. My English language needs mainly concern vocabulary and timed writing.” (ST1-UN1-INT).

Students’ written papers were also used to assess student needs. Upon analysis, only one of eight papers had weak organization and all papers contained extensive LOC issues, including errors in capitalization, pronoun form, articles, punctuation, word form, spelling, subject-verb agreement, prepositions, missing words, verb tense, incorrect relative clauses, missing subjects, vocabulary, wrong words, and lack of transitions, supporting student claims that needs are grammar- and LOC-based. Additionally, two papers contained very good organization, yet overall, LOC errors made it difficult for a reader to think about the HOCs of the paper, so extensive were the LOC errors. All papers followed the guidelines of the given class assignment. All papers were well developed. Claims were supported with facts and examples appropriate to the assignment. All papers but one were organized in a logical manner with an introduction, well-organized body and a conclusion, which met the requirements of the paper. One paper was poorly organized. Written as a report assignment, the paper consisted of only three paragraphs and ideas were not logically organized. The large paragraphs needed to be broken down into smaller sections and then these sections needed to be organized in a manner that would allow the reader to follow the instructions. The paper would benefit from having been organized into chronological order, but the order in the paper as read

was confusing. As Tutor 5 at University Two stated: "... a lot of times they will also need the higher level things, but we just don't get to that because they are struggling with the lower level things."

In terms of LOCs, along with the grammar concerns mentioned above, papers also included errors such as fragments, unquoted citations, and general formatting errors. However, of interest are four papers for which it was noted that the LOC errors (grammar errors) were so extensive that they greatly impeded the general understanding of the paper. Missing objects, subject-verb agreement errors, vocabulary and word sequencing did not allow the reader to gain a clear understanding of the paper. Indeed, on one paper noted to have excellent organization, development, and vocabulary usage, the LOCs were so extensive as to detract from the excellence of those HOCs. Generally, all papers contained extensive LOCs while the HOCs were usually of sufficient or even excellent quality, displaying very good skills in organization and development of the papers.

To illustrate this phenomenon further, a simple self-evaluation assignment contained the following errors (corrections in parentheses):

The first reason that I came to study at <school name> is because I want to improve my English skills. When I get (got) here, in (at) the beginning of the week, we had a meeting about our English classes(,) and I asked which things we are (were) going to learn in ENG 111. Although (Since) the answer was write about day life things (daily life), and I know that is a weakness (for me),so (x) my goal for this course is (to) learn how to write about me. I hope to accomplish in this class how to write a good essay

(and) learn (more about writing.) I do believe that I can write some very interesting things about me and (as) well.

Summary. Again, the results of the interview and review of the artifacts and observations are in line with research that suggests the NNES student need help with LOCs over HOCs (Harvey, 1986; Blau & Hall, 2002; Weigle & Nelson, 2004). Leki and Carson's study (1994) asked students to rank their needs, to which the students ranked: vocabulary, grammar, greater challenge of their skills, organization, and greater speed as the top five. Student perceptions in this study seem to agree with those above – there is a desire for focus on more LOC needs for students, and review of artifacts and observations show that LOCs are indeed a need in reality.

No major differences existed in the perceptions of students regarding writing needs between Universities. Students at University One, which does not employ an ESL Specialist, list their needs as: grammar check; citation format; better Standard English usage; stronger oral language; vocabulary; timed writing. Students from University Two, where an ESL Specialist is on staff, list the following needs: able to interact with locals; proofreading; high skills in spoken, written English and listening; prepositions; comma rules; transitions; practice in reading and writing. Both groups of students list LOCs as needs.

Research question 2.

Characteristics of Success

Tutor Perceptions of Success. Tutor perceptions of success were looked at through questions 1 and 2 in interviews and questions 2, 6, and 7 on the survey. Tutors also participated in the survey to gauge perceptions of success. The survey required

tutors to choose from a list of characteristics in question 2 that could define a successful tutoring session with NNES students and for questions 6 and 7, tutors indicated characteristics of success in text boxes.

In interviews, while tutor responses were various, tutors reiterated two factors of successful sessions: 1) the importance of focus on grammar issues together with the ability of the student to self-correct grammar, and 2) participation of students. Tutors indicated additional characteristics for successful sessions as: regular weekly meetings; teaching APA style; tutor familiarity with the subject of the paper; and structure of a session. One tutor expressed that sessions were often simply frustrating. Tutors felt that if the student received help with what they wanted, if the student's needs were met, the session was successful. These needs focused on grammar. However, tutors noted that it was important that students learn to identify and deal with these LOCs, to self-identify and self-correct errors.

As example, Tutor 4 at University Two said:

Umm...Ok, those ones tended to be more focused on small issues, like a lot of issues with articles in front of words....umm...their sort of success sort of came in their being able to say, there is some issue going on in this sentence, can you tell me what it is? And having them pick out and Oh we need an article here and oh we need a comma here. So, I think that it's similar in that this success is coming from getting people to identify their mistakes on their own and that different kinds of mistakes are different.

Tutor 1 at University 2 described a successful session in similar terms:

On Monday he came in with a journal, and the journal article, what he wrote, and it was about a trip he took it was a page and the whole page had 6 periods on it. So I just pulled out a highlighter and asked him to highlight all the periods. So he did that. And then we stumbled through it and talked about sentence boundary and periods and where they should go. Then I pulled out a different color highlighter and then go back and highlight ever period, that had been added. So he was able to see every line or line and a half had a period and where they were and we were seeing visually how they worked and I think the reason why this was particularly successful was not because of the paper on Monday but because the paper he brought in today had a lot fewer errors in the sentences with periods. I felt really good about Monday but (laugh) you can never tell if it is going to take.

Tutors at both universities also believed that a part of session success fell to the student in terms of student enthusiasm, attitude, participation, openness, willingness and commitment. Tutors at University Two believed that the student perception of the session and of the writing center itself led to success of a session.

A tutor at University One believed that structure and student attitude complemented success:

I think again here, what made it successful was that I managed to structure what needed to be done in a clear way. Usually I find that hard, especially in the limited amount of time we have with the students. I usually find that a familiarity with the subject the student wants to work on definitely helps.

It gets you quicker through the paper and allows you to give more advice on the actual content. I feel like the student's attitude also plays a role, if the student's not interested in hearing my advice it won't be a successful session. (TUT3-UN1-INT).

Table 5 shows how tutors noted characteristics of success from the survey, focusing on student participation. From the table it is clear that the participation of the student during a session was important for success along with the student talking and responding to comments. Student enthusiast was also noted by more tutors at University One. Tutors also made note that the tutor providing detailed explanations was important.

Table 5

Tutor Perceptions of Success - Survey

Characteristic	Univ 1	Univ 2	Total Tutors
Participation of student	5/5	4/5	9
Tutor provides detailed explanations of corrections	5/5	3/5	8
Student is talkative	4/5	2/5	6
Student responds favorably to comments	3/5	2/5	5
Student is enthusiastic	4/5	1/5	5
Tutor provides general explanations of corrections	3/5	1/5	4
Tutor is talkative	3/5	0/5	3
Tutor and student have a strong relationship	2/5	1/5	3

Source: Geither, (2009). The Survey of Directive and Non-Directive Tutoring (SDNT)

A new characteristic that emerged was simple frustration. Tutor 2 at University One expressed frustration with working on English language skills:

Actually I think this student I just worked with is the first student this semester. I've been in this writing center for two prior semesters and worked with ESL students, but I guess it is tough for me to remember details ... I felt this went pretty well but how much help I was actually able to give.... I don't know how much help. I think I was able to help improve the paper but this is tough. I don't know if I am actually improving someone's English. It's frustrating (TUT2UN1INT).

Tutors were also asked to indicate what characteristic made sessions unsuccessful. Tutors at University one noted that if the student were unwilling or confrontational, and not enthusiastic, the session was unsuccessful. Tutors at University Two noted that if tutor participation was not supportive or active, the session would be unsuccessful. It was only in this area that tutor replies clearly differed. University One tutors focused on the participation of the student as the element of an unsuccessful session, while tutors at University two focused mainly on tutor participation as the important characteristic.

Summary. When asked what the characteristics of a successful session were, tutors noted that if a session focused on LOCs along with providing that the student learn to self-correct these LOCs, then it was a successful session. In addition, if students positively and actively participated, the session was successful. One tutor indicated clear frustration in tutoring the NNES students.

Elements that led to unsuccessful sessions were noted as negative student participation by tutors at University One and negative tutor participation by tutors at University Two.

Student perceptions of success. Students were interviewed to assess their perceptions of success. In the interview, questions 1 and 4 asked students about a successful session and what could make a session more successful. The theme that emerged, once again, was that if a session focused on LOCs, most specifically grammar, the student felt that the session was successful. Seven students mentioned that a focus on LOCs such as grammar, thesis revision, citation style, and vocabulary led to a successful session.

Student 1 from University One described a successful session:

The session specifically talked about a synthesis paper, but we went on to talk about the differences and similarities between all types of college papers. I felt that I had a much better understanding of the different types of college paper. It was a very good overview. I think that we should practice timed writing. Also, I think that we should practice grammar and citations in order to reinforce and memorize the concepts. My English language needs mainly concern vocabulary and timed writing (ST1-UN1-INT).

Other characteristics which were mentioned included regular weekly appointments, more time for sessions, and patience on the part of tutors.

An example from Student 4 from University Two reads:

I went to writing center to find help on my personal statement for application of my PhD and the tutor gave me many helpful suggestions. Not only the language I need to improve but also how to express myself efficiently on my personal statement. Extension of the time limit, from one hour to two hours [would be helpful] (ST4-UN2-INT).

This student response reflects on Kennedy's (1993) suggestions regarding an increase in the amount of time needed for NNES students in a directive style tutoring situation. This extra time would allow for the chance that students would need line-by-line assistance with their papers. Student replies also reflected the focus on LOCs which was mentioned by Cumming and So (1996) and Kennedy (1993) who suggested that LOCs were the basis for success for NNES.

Student replies at University One differed little from student replies at University Two. All students mentioned the correction of grammar and citations as a characteristic of success in a session.

Research question 3.

How tutor and student perceptions are similar or different?

Research question 3 compares the responses from tutors and students in research questions 1 and 2. Again, interviews, surveys, observations, and artifacts were used to assess tutor and student perceptions of student needs and success in sessions.

In terms of needs, tutors believed that NNES student needs included LOCs such as: ideas; paragraph transitions; thesis; grammar; spelling; punctuation; articles; plurals; prepositions; plagiarism; sentence logic; and few HOCs such as: focus; organization; assignment comprehension. Tutors at both universities mentioned grammar repeatedly,

often specifying articles, plurals, prepositions. Students agreed that their needs were in the area of LOCs: proofreading; prepositions, comma rules, transitions, grammar check; citation format; better standard English usage; vocabulary; timed writing; and they also included a need for stronger oral language, ability to interact with locals and practice in reading.. Tutors' perceptions of student needs fell mostly in the area of LOCs. Students also focused on LOCs such as vocabulary and proofreading as needs and, instead of HOCs, mentioned more global language concerns such as the need for stronger oral language, better Standard English usage, and interaction with locals. This is in line with Leki and Carson (1994) who reported that students rank as very important vocabulary and grammar as first and second (respectively). Weigle and Nelson (2004) also report that student needs were satisfied when sessions focused on grammar and vocabulary. In summary, student and tutor perceptions of student needs were in agreement.

In terms of success, tutors believed that success of a session was based on grammar, a student's ability to self-correct errors, and participation of student. Students were in agreement that a session's success was related to a focus on grammar. An additional characteristic of success that tutors and students agreed upon was the use of regular weekly meetings. In general, tutors and students were in agreement. Other characteristics mentioned by tutors were a tutor's familiarity with the subject matter of the paper and the structure of the session, while student's noted that extended time and the patience of the tutor led to success. One tutor mentioned that sessions with NNES students were frustrating, but all students seemed satisfied with sessions they had attended. In summary, tutors and students agreed that addressing LOCs during a session

made the session successful, though the tutors would like to teach the students to self-correct these errors and, when students do so, tutors feel sessions are successful.

Research question 4.

The effect of employing an ESL specialist on the perceptions of success.

Research question four was studied by looking at differences in responses between tutors and students at the two universities. Again, both universities served the needs of the NNES students but only University Two employed an ESL specialist. The ESL specialist, as noted in previous chapters, was responsible for working directly with NNES students in the university writing center as well as for creating and running workshops for all tutors on how to best serve the NNES student population. From comparing tutor and student responses, there was no clear indication that employing an ESL specialist, as does University Two, made sessions more or less successful for tutors or students.

Tutors at University One believed a focus on grammar made a session successful, as did tutors at University Two. Tutors at University One, though, did mention that they needed more time to address grammar in sessions. This complaint in no way relates to the employment or lack of employment of an ESL specialist but would rather be an administrative issue. As example, in the interview with Tutor 1, s/he noted:

Interviewer: Ok, is there anything you would change about tutoring the non-native English speaking students?

Tutor: Umm, off the top of my head, no. I feel that ummm, yeah, sometimes I feel like we can't help them enough or that they need more help than we are able to give here at the writing center—it outside our power. And I mean, I wish we could give them more time...I mean we are

trained really well here, and everybody does a good job, but there is only so much we can do when one of our students can barely...it's tough, cause you...when someone can barely speak the language...it's tough to try to tell them...I feel like it would be so much better if we could have a translator...but of course we would need so many translators it would be impossible...

Tutor 2 also mentioned:

Interviewer: What would you change about current tutoring for your NNES students?

Tutor: Many need more than a 30 minute tutoring session.

Tutor 4 noted:

Interviewer: What would you change about current tutoring for NNES students?

Tutor: I definitely think appointments for non-native speakers should be extended to more than a half hour. It is difficult to deal with the larger issues in appear in only a half hour, and I don't feel that I does the student any justice to rush through a paper only focusing on grammar/mechanics because of time constraints.

In addition, Tutor 5 also stated:

Interviewer: What would you change about current tutoring for NNES students?

Tutor: Spending more time....

At University Two, however, all tutors discussed that success in a session included student awareness of their own errors. A student's ability to identify his or her own mistakes or errors and then self-correct was important. Student engagement and participation in planning session agendas was also mentioned as contributing to a successful session. Overall, again, it was unclear whether tutors at one university over the other felt that sessions were more or less successful, but the tutors at University Two, where an ESL specialist is employed, seemed to be more united in their thoughts on tutoring the NNES students, most mentioning that students learning to self-correct was important. As support, Tutor 5 discussed:

One thing that shows me that...is when I can see that they actually learned something. Like if we talk about something in the first part of their essay, whether it's English 112, and we talk about something in the first part of their essay and we talk about it and then we get to the last part of their essay and they can see that problem and bring it up before I can say anything...then I know they've learned to look at that. (TUT5-UN2-INT).

Tutor 1 mentioned awareness as well:

...on Monday he came in with a journal and the journal article...what was the journal he had wrote for his class...and it was about a trip he took and it was a page...and the whole page had six periods on it....So, I just pulled out a highlighter and I asked him to just go through and highlight every period....So we stepped through it and we talked about issues and sentence-boundary and added punctuation where they needed to go, and then at the end of it asked him to pull out a different colored highlighter

and I asked him to go back through it and highlight every period that had now been added...So he was able to see that usually every line, to line-in-a-half had a period, and where they were; and to see visually how they worked. And I think the reason that was particularly successful is one of the things that we did, on Monday, because we brought in the paper today...he had a lot fewer errors with sentences and periods. You know, I feel pretty good about Monday, but you can never tell if it's really going to take. (laughs)...(UN2-TUT1-INT).

Tutor 2 also noted student awareness or self-improvement was important:

I think some of those recent successful sessions were ones where people were beginning to pick out areas where they could improve on their own. Or with very little prompting I was able to get them to figure out, well maybe with this paragraph in this place as opposed to this place with more organizational, structural, and stylistic kinds of issues....they were able to sort of hear themselves.....umm...their sort of success sort of came in their being able to say, there is some issue going on in this sentence, can you tell me what it is? And having them pick out and Oh, we need an article here and oh, we need a comma here. So, I think that it's similar in that this success is coming from getting people to identify their mistakes on their own and that different kinds of mistakes are different (TUT2-UN2-INT).

Tutor 4 discussed this awareness as empowering the students:

The way I would define a successful session would be where the student leaves the session, not only with a smile on their face, but also saying ‘Yeah, I get it.’ So, most of the students I work with they are either in English [1, 2, 3]...so some of those are developmental writing courses; some are college writing courses; some are research and so on...and so, let’s say they come in for one of their assignments...so, most of them struggle, right now at the beginning of the semester, with constructing a thesis statement, developing a counter argument, focusing their paragraphs. Or many of them struggle with understanding the requirements of the assignment. And so when we go over the assignment, and I explain to them what the assignment is asking them to do and then we’ll read their paper to see if they are doing what the assignment is asking them to do. And we go over ways of focusing a thesis, or focusing a paragraph and creating stronger transitions and everything that goes on with that...you just see their faces all of a sudden light up; they say, ‘Oh, I get it now.’ And then after I give them an example and then we move on to the next paragraph and I ask them, so how do you think we should go about this one? And then when they go and fix sentences and conflicts of sentences with overused wordiness—fixing sentence fragments and comma splices; and when they are the ones who are saying ‘Oh, I should put a semi-colon here.’ Or a period, right? It’s just so..I feel those are the sessions that are successful, ‘cause I know that I empowered them. Then,

they leave more powerful than they were when they came in (TUT4-UN2-INT).

Though part of the role of the ESL specialist is to provide workshops to tutors on how to best work with NNES students, the cause of tutor agreement in this case can in no way be attributed to the presence of the ESL Specialist and, thus, this phenomenon needs to be further explored.

Summary

In summary, tutors generally agreed that success in sessions and the needs of the NNES student at a university writing center included grammar and LOC needs. Students were also fairly consistent in expressing their needs as LOCs and success in a session as one which addressed those needs. The artifacts also support this perception of student needs. Student perceptions between the universities did not differ, and the tutor perceptions were also in agreement that LOCs were a greater need.

Students displayed no differences in determining the attributes of a successful session regarding whether they attended University One or Two. Students at University One wanted their grammar, citations, and vocabulary corrected during sessions. Students at University Two wanted their grammar, citations, and vocabulary corrected. Sessions were successful if these elements or needs were addressed, and only one student indicated that possibly more time would be useful. This student attended a session at University Two, where sessions are typically one hour; the student believed that a two hour session might be more useful and lead to further success.

Overall, the theme that emerged for all research questions was that the main need of the NNES student in academic writing is in the area of LOCs. Tutors and students agreed that this was the main student need. They also agreed that the success of a session related to the addressing of these LOCs. Tutors, however, also believed that student participation was a factor while students stayed focused on these LOCs. Employing an ESL Specialist did not seem to affect the perceptions of the tutors or the success of sessions for tutors or students.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

This study investigated the perceptions of tutors and NNES students at university writing centers in terms of the needs of the NNES students in the area of academic writing; perceptions of the characteristics of success of tutoring sessions; whether tutor and student perceptions differed; and whether there appeared to be an effect of employing an ESL specialist at one of the universities studied on perceptions of success. The following discussion will summarize the results as well as focus on implications of employing an ESL specialist, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research in this area.

Summary of Results

Needs of the NNES student.

Tutors at both universities mentioned that grammar and LOCs are needs of the NNES students in the area of academic writing. Students at both universities also believed that LOCs, such as grammar, vocabulary, proofreading, prepositions, were their needs. Included in student perceptions of needs were oral components and a desire for better spoken English skills and the ability to “interact with locals.” Session observations also showed much greater focus on LOCs and sentence level grammar as did artifacts.

These results are consistent with Blau and Hall (2002) and Weigle and Nelson (2004) among others who report that NNES student needs focus on LOCs over HOCs. Student needs identified in this study mirrored those in a 1994 study by Leki and Carson.

Session success.

Tutor perceptions of session success focused on the area of grammar again. If student LOC needs were addressed, this led to a successful session. However, tutors also believed that students needed to learn to self-correct these errors and if they did so, a session was successful. In addition, student participation was important for session's success. Student perceptions of success again reflected back on whether or not LOCs were addressed. Most students focused on this need to address LOCs. One noted that extended time would also be helpful. Others mentioned that weekly appointments and patient tutors were characteristics of successful sessions, but again, a focus on grammar and LOCs led to success for both tutors and students. These results, are consistent with Kennedy's (1993) suggested increase in the amount of time needed for a successful, directive style tutoring session and also the focus of LOCs mentioned by Cumming and So (1996).

Tutor vs. student perceptions.

Tutor and student perceptions were similar. Few tutors found that, for a successful session, there needed to be focus on both LOCs and HOC while students tended to note that a focus only on LOCs created success. This is in line with Matsdua and Silva's (2001) "pattern of neglect" in which they found some responsiveness to NNES student needs but not a consistent responsiveness. Student perceptions are in line with Kennedy (1993) and Carson (1994)'s discussion of NNES student needs as focused on LOCs,

while Blau and Hall (2002)'s study is reflected in the differing perceptions of tutors and students, with tutors maintaining the focus on HOCs. This important, yet not blatant, desire by tutors to turn focus back to HOCs will be discussed.

The ESL specialist.

It can be noted that employing an ESL specialist did not dramatically affect the perception of success of a tutoring session, either by tutors or students. Tutors who did not have access to an ESL specialist came to their own, varied conclusions as to what promoted success in a session. Tutors who did have access to workshops from an ESL specialist seemed to be more unified in their perceptions. Students showed no difference in their perceptions between the universities and instead seemed to agree on the fact that if their needs (LOCs) were met, they were satisfied.

Directive and non-directive – perceptions and practice.

In addition to answering the research questions, the researcher also looked at responses through the lens of the Directive/Non-Directive tutoring continuum. To determine Directive and Non-Directive perceptions and practices of tutors, responses were coded as either Directive (including mention of grammar, vocabulary, extended time, consultant contributions, consultant corrections, consultant influence on direction of session, and attention to LOC versus HOC concerns) or Non-Directive (including mention of thesis, global organization, global development, student contributions, student self-corrections, student influence on direction of session, and attention to HOC versus LOC concerns).

Tutors at University One were more Directive in their perceptions of NNES students. Only Tutors 3 and 4 made any mention of Non-Directive concerns. Tutor 3

mentioned that “student attitude” affected the success of the session (student influence), and Tutor 4 also mentioned that listening to student concerns and issues “that the student wanted to focus on” determined the success of the session. This tutor also wanted students to self-correct and mentioned that HOCs were included in student needs. Other tutors at University One discussed only Directive concerns, such as grammar, the need for more time, and the need for formatting issues as part of success and student needs. Two tutors, Tutor 1 and Tutor 2, expressed desire for more ESL training or other ESL services:

Question 4. What would you change about current tutoring for NNES students?

University One

Tutor 2: That’s a difficult one. I don’t think so really. I think the way we got it set up right now..it might help if we had, in terms of our own, you know, with training sessions with ESL students, what we have when you’re first entering the Writing Center – a training session that dealt more specifically with problems that are related to ESL students as opposed to native speakers, and I think beyond that we’ll just have to go into the tutorial session and take it as it comes...I mean, you don’t know when you sit down exactly what the issues are going to be. So.

Tutor 3: May need more than a 30 minute tutoring session.

Tutor 4: I definitely think appointments for non-native speakers should be extended to more than a half hour. It is difficult to deal with the larger issues in a paper in only a half hour, and I don’t feel that it does the student any justice to

rush through a paper only focusing on grammar/mechanics because of time constraints.

Tutor 5: Spending more time.

In contrast, Tutors at University Two had a more balanced perception of session success and student needs. All tutors mentioned aspects of both Directive and Non-Directive sessions as indicators of success. Tutor 1 discussed “increased awareness” by students (student self-corrections) along with a need for LOCs such as grammar and spelling. This tutor also expressed the desire for more time during a session. Tutor Two also wanted students to be able to “identify their own mistakes” but commented, like Tutor One, that student needs were mainly LOCs: “articles...commas...minute little details.” Tutor Four heavily focused on HOCs as a student need and a need of which students themselves may not be aware. Student empowerment (student self-correction and student influence) were key to success for this tutor: “But I think in order for the session to be successful, the student-writer needs to feel that we negotiated so they are able to speak up throughout the session.” While this tutor recognized the student need for LOC concerns (fragments, comma splices, semi-colons, articles, prepositions, grammar), s/he also believed that it was a student misconception to believe that all Writing Center sessions would focus only on these LOCs. And although she believed that negotiating the student needs during a session were important, she also made note that ESL students are “not <always> able to express themselves the way they would in their native language.” Tutor Five expressed similar perceptions in that she believed that successful sessions were ones in which students were engaged and that talking about writing was important for success, yet she “...fear<ed> that so much of the Writing Center <session> is me

talking...” She also made note that she had experienced “a lot” of unsuccessful sessions with NNES students because they are not engaged, only wanting their grammar checked, and that they mainly struggled with LOCs. Two of the tutors mentioned a desire for further training even though they had an ESL Specialist at the center already teaching workshops for tutoring the ESL student. Tutor Four was unique in that she wanted students to better understand the Writing Center’s policy, yet never explained what exactly the policy was. Because these tutors benefited from workshops by the ESL Specialist (who was also one of the tutors in this study), it may be assumed that through their interactions and education from the ESL Specialist that their perceptions had become similar and that they were approaching tutoring the NNES students in similar ways. However, the perceptions of these tutors did not differ so dramatically from those of tutors at University One. Thus, how did the ESL Specialist effect the tutors at University Two if at all? It would seem that the tutors, through training or experience, learned the needs of the students and how to create a successful session for the students.

Discussion

Studying the effectiveness of a writing center can be difficult because of the turnover of peer-tutors and the voluntary status of the students who visit the center. Additionally, in this study, the lack of knowledge of the students’ language levels was a confounding element. However, this study can provide some useful information for creating a template for successful tutoring sessions for NNES students. The findings from this study are of interest for addressing the academic writing needs of the NNES university student.

Tutors and NNES students together see grammar and LOCs as an academic writing need for this population of students. Many studies, most notably Leki and Carson (1994),

identify student needs as primarily LOCs, and this study supports this perception from the views of both tutors and students. Most notably, in student artifacts, actual texts, it is clear that LOCs continue to be a main concern for students and, before HOCs can be addressed, a tutor or instructor must wade through the sentence level problems in student essays. Presented with such essays in sessions, tutors noticed the need for LOCs. Students also were familiar with their weaknesses and believed that addressing these LOC issues in tutoring sessions created a successful session.

A successful session for both tutors and students carries a variety of characteristics but may focus back to the LOC needs of these students. This is consistent with the Leki's and Carson's (1994) findings that students require more assistance with LOCs, such as vocabulary and grammar, as well as Daoud's (1998) more generalized theory that students' needs are more locally focused. Weigle and Nelson (2004) also establish the fact that sessions may focus on grammar and vocabulary in order to meet student needs, which in turn are satisfied with a more directive tutoring approach. All sessions contained some or much focus on LOCs. Taking into account that an integrated approach is a viable format for a session, tutors can begin to explore creation of sessions with both directive and non-directive aspects.

In order to address these sentence level errors, amount of time for sessions may also be an issue. The claims, then, of Harvey in his 1986 study are supported in that a session becomes most successful when the focus of a session is specific to the learner needs, in this case the student perceived need for help with LOCs. Harvey additionally notes that working in a second language is time consuming, and indeed Blau and Hall (2002) also note that line-by-line editing of LOCs may be necessary in sessions and that

this practice is time consuming. The 30-minute sessions of University One, and even the 60-minute sessions of University Two, may not be enough time to address these LOCs. In terms of the HOCs in academic writing, some tutors believe that HOCs are important while students may only see the need for LOCs. Silva and Matsuda's 1997 discussion of "a pattern of neglect" can be part of the explanation for this finding. This pattern explains that instructor (or for this study, tutor) perception of what NNES student papers should be is not in sync with what student papers actually are. Instructors (and tutors in this study) want NNES texts to be "indistinguishable" from those written by NES students, though Matsuda reports that NNES texts are riddled with more errors and structural differences, enough to make them always different from the NES student texts. In addition, tutor handbooks, such as those discussed by Blau and Hall (2002), continue to preach a Non-Directive tutoring approach, one which may not meet the needs of these NNES students. Additionally, from this study it can be noted that employing an ESL Specialist may not necessarily have a noticeable impact on the success of sessions unless it is further studied. Other factors may carry more weight in determining the success of a session such as negotiation of sessions and an unbalanced discussion style in sessions.

Implications

If American universities wish to best serve the needs of the increasing number of NNES students at both the undergraduate and graduate level, it would be best to consider student academic writing needs and the success of the writing center, which often serves this population of students. If academic success is tied clearly to writing achievement, then the academic writing needs of the NNES students need to be addressed. Whether a directive or non-directive style is more beneficial is not clear necessarily because of the

variety of students, skills, and needs, but the study seems to indicate that NNES students do have or perceive certain needs which tutors perceive as well.

Because the student needs in this study, both perceived and actual (in artifacts), fell into the category of LOCs, it would be beneficial for tutoring sessions to maintain a focus on these needs and change their procedures appropriately. Though NNES student populations vary greatly, Writing Centers may consider creating a process to assess the main needs of the student population in order to focus on the specific needs of students.

Additionally, it was unclear in this study whether or not students were registering for ESL writing classes which were offered at each university. Because the TOEFL scores for admittance to the universities were set at the lower end (between 500 and 525 on the paper-based TOEFL), it may be considered that students should be taking more ESL classes where their writing and grammar needs can be directly addressed. Also, universities may need to reconsider their TOEFL score requirements, setting the required score for admittance above 525 in an effort to admit students whose skills in English are more advanced.

Of great interest in this study was that, although sessions were either 30 minutes or one hour, neither time limit seemed to be sufficient, as tutors at both universities as well as a student expressed desire for more time. Through university policy, raising the time limit for NNES students would be of use and should be pursued. Unlimited time for NNES students during sessions is unrealistic, but time-and-a-half or up to double time would be of use. Because line-by-line editing, which seems to present itself as a necessity in order to meet these LOC needs, is time consuming, a session would need to be longer. If a tutoring session could focus on these needs line-by-line, only then could content and

HOCs be addressed. If grammar and structure impede the reader from understanding, then how can content and HOCs be addressed unless these LOC issues are cleared up first? Thus, tutors should be encouraged to assist students in line-by-line editing so that work on HOCs can then be pursued next.

In this study, employing an ESL Specialist did not seem to affect the success of sessions, but instead seemed to make the tutors of one mind in their perceptions of how sessions should be approached. If a better type of session format could be developed, one in which LOCs are addressed and time limits are not barriers to the progress of the session, then an ESL Specialist as a unifying force in the center could be of use. But until a better system is in place to create sessions which are more successful, it is unclear as to whether the ESL Specialist position would be needed at this time. However, in order to understand the needs of the NNES student population, tutors would benefit from workshops on this topic. Also, an introduction to the Directive/Non-Directive continuum would be of benefit as it could free the tutors from their handbook beliefs that Non-Directive tutoring is the only appropriate type.

Tutor Training

Neither university used one set handbook for tutor training. Instead, “in-house” training of tutors was the norm. At University Two, tutors attended training sessions, met with mentor tutors but quickly began tutoring, at first receiving feedback from the mentor, more experienced, tutors. The ESL Specialist was on hand to provide workshops as needed and to answer questions during weekly meetings. At University One, tutors again attended initial training sessions that included information on techniques to tutor the ESL student. At weekly staff meetings, ESL authentic texts/papers were used to

illustrated the needs of the students and how to address these needs. The Bedford Guide to Tutoring is a common reference source for new tutors here. In addition, a subset of tutors attends a class on practicum in teaching English. These tutors are able to work with the five university approved writing handbooks and choose one which they feel will be of most use for them. The goal of this class is to prepare these students to not only tutor but to teach Basic English Composition courses for the university.

Additionally, tutor training can be discussed by looking at the backgrounds of the tutors. At University One, tutors were all peer tutors. At University Two, three tutors were professionals holding MAs in TESOL, TESL, or English. This additional training can also affect how tutors perceive and engage in tutoring.

Despite this training, tutors did note some frustration. However, tutors were able to perceive and address student needs and create successful sessions but it was unclear as to whether this was because of training or simply through experience. If further training is the answer to providing better yet success in tutoring sessions, it would be of use to include discussion of the directive and non-directive tutoring styles in training sessions. Research presents tutors who feel frustration with NNES student needs and tutoring, tutors who cling to Socratic Questioning and non-directive tutoring. If tutors were given instruction in the directive/non-directive continuum and the freedom to move along the continuum as they need, without worry that leaning toward LOCs does not meet the policies of the writing center, then tutors may feel less frustration as they work with these students.

In general, tutors and students, whether through training or experience, agree that student needs fall in the area of LOCs and that addressing these needs leads to session

success. Employing an ESL specialist does not change perceptions of needs or improve success of sessions.

Limitations of Study

When interpreting the results of this study, the following limitations should be considered:

1. The sample was not randomly selected from the population and was a small sample, so the ability to generalize the results is limited. A larger sample can be drawn to move toward greater generalizability of the population. The sample was limited to two universities with one university employing an ESL Specialist so a comparison could be made. Tutor experience varied as some writing centers employ professionals while others focus on employment of peer tutors only.
2. The sample of students in observations was limited to students who sought out the writing center for assistance.
3. The sample of students for interviews was limited to students who not only sought out the writing center but who were also identified by the directors for the purpose of this study.
4. Specific cultural factors of NNES students in the sample were not addressed.
5. Level of language skills of students, as well as academic level (undergraduate, graduate), were not addressed.
6. Additionally, the instrument was used only in this study and, despite face- and content-validity verification, caution must be taken in interpreting the

results until the instrument is used more frequently.

7. The level of ESL student support varies from university to university and it may be unclear whether students engage in support services such as available tutoring, ESL courses, or Intensive English Language Programs (IELPs).

Suggestions for Future Research

1. Focus of the study on a unique student population (based on skill level or native language) can improve the study and the use of the implications of the study in writing centers. A case study method may prove useful to study tutors more closely, though this study gave a clear view of the nature of the writing center as one which employs both professionals and peer-tutors and a place on campus where students go voluntarily.
2. Demographics of tutors can be a focus to determine if experience of the tutor or type of tutor (peer or professional) is a factor.
3. Negotiation of sessions can be focused on to determine if greater student input and student negotiation of the focus of a session results in a more successful session for student.
4. The amount of time allotted for a session can be isolated and studied as a factor of session success.
5. Study the professional development that tutors receive to serve NNES clients.
6. A study of student perceptions of success as related to their perception that their needs have been met would be of use.

7. Various studies have looked at whether a session tends to be directive or non-directive, yet with the introduction of Clark's (2001) integrated approach, research should now look at this integrated approach, both directive and non-directive, and try to assert whether this integrated approach is indeed better at meeting student needs and at producing better academic writing. Again, possibly case studies of sessions using the integrated approach would be of great use to study these tutoring styles.
8. While session success as perceived by tutor and student is important, perception of instructor should be touched upon as well. After sessions which tutors and students find successful, the grade the paper receives from the instructor should be looked at. Thus, what could be explored is whether or not papers, after they are worked on in writing center session, are truly better or not.
9. In this study, it was unclear whether employing an ESL Specialist would be useful. Further research is needed in order to pursue policy development for employment of ESL Specialists.
10. The job requirements of the ESL Specialist need to be explored. What does the Specialist need to do in order to promote the success of the writing center for the NNES student? For this study, the ESL Specialist ran short and longer workshops as well as worked with NNES students. Does the job of the ESL Specialist need to go beyond these duties?

Conclusion

In conclusion, the consensus of both tutors and students perceptions was that NNES student writing needs were in the area of LOCs over HOCs. Students expressed success of tutoring sessions as related to whether these perceived needs were or were not met. It was unclear in this study whether employing an ESL Specialist at a writing center was a significant factor in determining session success. More elements of writing center sessions need to be isolated to determine their weight as characteristics of session success. In terms of the use of directive or non-directive sessions, according to research, directive sessions, which focus on the LOCs of student papers, may be characteristic of successful session, but further research will need to be pursued focusing only on this characteristic. Many factors are involved in writing center sessions with NNES university students and further research should isolate certain factors, such as time during sessions, tutor status (peer or professional), and directive or non-directive session style, in order to determine better what characteristics lead to successful sessions.

Because writing skills are important for academic achievement at universities, and because the writing of NNES students differs significantly from the writing of NES students, it is important to address the needs of these students. As the NNES student population continues to grow on campuses in the US, this population will create the need for policy change at universities. The university Writing Centers now seem to be the locations where students and instructors are turning for assistance and thus, the Writing Centers would be appropriate places to start change. Identifying the needs of these students and their perceptions will lead, as in this study, to the perceptions and practices of the tutors assisting these students. By further understanding these needs and

perceptions, programs to address these needs and promote successful tutoring sessions can be developed. This study and future research in this area can start this process.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CONSENT FORM

My name is Elise Geither, and I am doing research on university level writing centers. I can be contacted at: egeither@bw.edu or (440) 748-1582 at any time.

Introduction: The purpose of this research/observation is to collect information on tutor perceptions of the tutoring sessions which take place in university-level writing centers with non-native English speaking students. Because you are a tutor or non-native English speaking student, we are interested in your thoughts on this issue. The data will be used to begin research on tutoring approaches for non-native English speaking students at the university level. Your response will be kept strictly confidential. Only I will have access to your response. Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw your response from the study at any time.

The risks of this study are not unusual to those of daily life wherein tutors/students may be asked or surveyed regarding their experiences at the university.

The benefits of participation would be the contribution of the tutor to the field of study in which they are an expert and, for student and tutor, a better understanding of successful tutoring sessions at the writing center.

Your time commitment to this study will be a 10-20 minute interview or passive observation by myself of a tutoring session.

Should you have any questions, please contact me at (440) 748-1582 or my advisor Dr. Maria Angelova at (216) 687-2000.

“I understand that if I have any questions about my rights as a research subject I can contact the CSU Institutional Review Board at (216) 687-3630.”

Your email:

Name:

Signature:

Date:

APPENDIX B

SURVEY OF DIRECTIVE AND NON-DIRECTIVE TUTORING (SDNT)

Introduction: The purpose of this internet survey is to collect information on tutor perceptions of the tutoring sessions which take place in university-level writing centers with non-native English speaking (NNES) students. This is a short survey asking for your reaction to questions and statements regarding tutoring. Because you are a tutor, we are interested in your thoughts on this issue. The data will be used to begin research on tutoring approaches for NNES students at the university level. Your response will be anonymous. The survey should take you about 15 – 25 minutes. Once you hit the “submit” button, the survey is complete.

Demographic information:

Gender:

Age:

Are you a peer/student tutor?:

Level of education:

Major:

Years of tutoring:

Years of teaching:

Percentage of NNES clients you see per month:

Number of students seen per month:

Location of writing center: (Midwest, each, west, south, central)

Type of university: (private, public)

Survey Questions

Use the text boxes or multiple choice options below to answer the questions as fully as possible.

1. Describe a typical tutoring session with a NNES student: text box
2. What characteristics of a tutoring session define a successful session with NNES students. Check as many as apply:
 - Participation of student
 - Student is fluent
 - Student is talkative
 - Tutor is talkative
 - Student responds favorably to comments
 - Student is relaxed
 - Tutor provides detailed explanations of corrections

- Tutor provides general explanations of corrections
- Tutor and student have a strong relationship
- Tutor and student know each other as acquaintances
- Tutor and student have not met before
- More than one hour is available
- One hour session
- 30 minute session
- Student is enthusiastic
- Student is anxious or worried about paper
- Student reads paper aloud
- Line-by-line editing
- Focus on development and organization
- Focus on grammar and vocabulary
- Other (please specify)

3. Which of the following NNES needs are focused on during a tutoring session?

- Focus/thesis
- Organization
- Argumentation
- Specific grammar issues
- General grammar issues
- Punctuation
- Re-explanation of assignment
- Style
- Clarity of words/phrases
- Vocabulary
- Pronunciation
- Fluency of spoken English
- Spelling
- Creativity
- Expression of unique ideas
- Other (please specify)

4. How often does a session focus on the above needs?

Focus on this need:	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Very Often	Always
Focus/Thesis	()	()	()	()	()
Organization	()	()	()	()	()
Argumentation	()	()	()	()	()
Specific grammar issues	()	()	()	()	()
General grammar issues	()	()	()	()	()
Punctuation	()	()	()	()	()
Re-explanation of assignment	()	()	()	()	()
Style	()	()	()	()	()
Clarity of words/phrases	()	()	()	()	()
Vocabulary	()	()	()	()	()
Pronunciation	()	()	()	()	()
Fluency of spoken English	()	()	()	()	()
Spelling	()	()	()	()	()
Creativity	()	()	()	()	()
Expression of unique ideas	()	()	()	()	()
Other (please specify)	()	()	()	()	()

5. What do you perceive to be the overall academic writing needs of the NNES student? (text box)
6. What other characteristics or forces influence a successful tutoring session? (text box)
7. What other characteristics or forces influence an unsuccessful tutoring session? (text box)
8. Comments: (text box)

APPENDIX C
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

TUTOR

Tutoring Practices and the Non-Native English Speaking Student

Introduction: The purpose of this interview is to collect information on tutor perceptions of the tutoring sessions which take place in university-level writing centers. This is a short interview asking for your reaction to questions and statements regarding tutoring at a university level writing center. Because you are a tutor or ESL teacher, we are interested in your thoughts on this issue. The data will be used to begin research on tutoring approaches for students at the university level. Your response will be anonymous. A snack is provided as a "thank you" for your participation.

Directions: Please answer the following questions.

1. Thinking back to a recent, successful tutoring session with a Native English Speaking (NES) student, could you describe the tutoring session?

What made it successful?

2. Thinking back to a recent, successful tutoring session with a Non-Native English Speaking (NNES) student, could you describe the tutoring session?

What made it successful?

3. Thinking back and comparing the two sessions, how might you describe the needs of Native English speaking students (NES) who come to the writing center?

4. Thinking back and comparing the two sessions, how might you describe the needs of Non-native English speaking students (NNES) who come to the writing center?

What would you change about current tutoring for NNES students?

Other comments or questions:

STUDENT

Tutoring Practices and the Non-Native English Speaking Student

Student Questions

Introduction: The purpose of this interview is to collect information on the tutoring sessions which take place in university-level writing centers. This is a short interview asking for your reaction to questions and statements regarding tutoring at a university level writing center. Because you are a student, we are interested in your thoughts on this issue. The data will be used to begin research on tutoring approaches for students at the university level. Your response will be anonymous. A snack is provided as a "thank you" for your participation.

Directions: Please answer the following questions.

1. Could you please describe a successful tutoring session which you had in the recent past at the Writing Center?
2. How did you feel during and/or after the session?
3. In general, what are your English language needs while studying at the university?
4. What could make a tutoring session more useful or successful for you?

Other comments/questions:

APPENDIX D
OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Coding Instrument

Utterances	Count
Tutor	
Student	

Types of Utterances

	Type
Tutor	
Student	

Types:

- based on the classifications by Thonus (2004): *discourse phases, volubility, overlaps, backchannels, directive frequency, directive type, mitigation frequency, mitigation strategy, negotiation*
- additional types based on actual data

Needs Addressed

Need	Description	Other:
Organization		
Development		
Focus		
Grammar		
Mechanics		

APPENDIX E

TUTOR PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT NEEDS

Tutor	Interview	Survey – text box	Survey – check box	HOC/LOC
Tutor 1	<i>University One</i> A lot more basic issues with grammar; articles, plurals, and prepositions	Students request and require help with grammar	Specific grammar issues; general grammar issues; re-explanation of assignment; clarity; vocabulary; pronunciation	Focus on LOCs
Tutor 2	Subject-verb agreement, articles	Formal academic writing: (plagiarism) thesis, style, documentation	Focus/thesis; organization; argumentation; specific grammar issues; punctuation; style; clarity	Both LOCs and HOCs
Tutor 3	Grammar is usually their main problem	How to structure the essay; sentence structure; explaining and clarifying grammar	Focus/thesis; organization; argumentation; specific grammar issues; general grammar issues; punctuation; re-explanation of assignment; clarity; vocabulary; spelling; expression of unique ideas	Focus on LOCs
Tutor 4	Students request grammar/mechanics, but I often find that there are high order concerns ;	Students only want grammar/spelling/mechanics but I like to teach why high order concerns such as	Focus/thesis; organization; argumentation; specific grammar	Focus on LOCs and tutor “likes to teach” HOCs

Tutor	Interview	Survey – text box	Survey – check box	HOC/LOC
	focus, organization, assignment comprehension	organization and development are important	issues; general grammar issues; punctuation; re-explanation of assignment; style; clarity; vocabulary; spelling; expression of unique ideas; other: citations	
Tutor 5	Sentence logic issues	Ability to express one's thoughts intelligibly	Specific grammar issues; general grammar issues; punctuation; re-explanation of assignment; clarity; expression of unique ideas	Focus on LOCs and possibly HOCs
Tutor 1	<i>University Two</i> Vast needs; needs compounded with issues like grammar and spelling and punctuation	Like native speakers, they need assistance in organizing and developing their ideas, but they often require more help in grammar, vocabulary and academic style.	Other: it depends on the student	More focus on LOCs and some HOCs
Tutor 2	Minute little details (article, comma)	Transitions	Focus/thesis; organization; argumentation; specific grammar issues; general grammar issues; punctuation; re-explanation of assignment; style; clarity;	Focus on LOCs

Tutor	Interview	Survey – text box	Survey – check box	HOC/LOC
Tutor 3	n/a	n/a	vocabulary; spelling;	n/a
Tutor 4	Negotiating needs; students want articles, prepositions, grammar	Cultural differences that apply to academic writing; after that, their overall academic writing needs are the same as native English speaking students	Other: what the student wants to work on	Focus on both LOCs and HOC
Tutor 5	What they come in asking for; need higher level things but we don't get to that...because they are struggling with lower level things	Each student is different. Some have excellent ideas but poor organization or grammar. Some have a very fluent grasp of the language and struggle to articulate or organize ideas.	Specific grammar issues; general grammar issues; punctuation; clarity; vocabulary; spelling	Focus on both LOCs and HOCs
Total:				
10				

Source: Geither, (2009).The Survey of Directive and Non-Directive Tutoring (SDNT)