

## ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: TUTORS', SPANISH-SPEAKING STUDENTS', AND  
WRITING CENTER DIRECTORS' DISPOSITIONS TOWARD  
LITERACY AND THE EFFECT OF THEIR DISPOSITIONS ON  
TUTORING SESSIONS

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University composition classrooms and writing centers have continued to see an influx of multilingual students, particularly self-identified Hispanic students entering the academy and bringing with them a plethora of knowledge and experiences of their lived realities within and outside of academia. Yet these experiences are often overlooked for the sake of identifying one particular system for aiding them in their writing needs.

This study uses semi-structured narrative inquiry-based preliminary interviews, observations of tutoring sessions, and follow-up interviews to examine the ways in which writing center tutors, heritage Spanish-speaking writing center tutees', and writing center directors' attitudes toward language and literacy are formed from their academic, sociocultural, linguistic, and cognitive experiences to understand the effects their lived realities have on tutoring sessions. In this way, this interdisciplinary study responds to calls from researchers in education, rhetoric and composition, and writing center studies for more research and expands upon current scholarship that highlights multilingual students' lived realities as assets to the writing classroom and writing center rather than as deficits.

Results from this study highlight the ways in which tutors and Spanish-speaking tutees' dispositions toward literacy do have a positive impact on tutoring sessions, whether it is specific teaching styles the tutors have developed over time that are influenced by their own learning experiences, taking small moments within sessions to find commonalities with one another that therefore facilitate a collaborative rapport, utilizing techniques that encourage tutee agency, finding ways to empathize with tutees so that they feel comfortable enough to return to the center, and much more. These findings then have implications for improved tutor training initiatives that emphasize individualized instruction for multilingual students who attend writing center sessions, and assignments that require tutors to examine and reflect on their own literacy learning practices.

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by

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## Introduction

In the summer of 2016, I studied abroad in Costa Rica for four weeks as part of my undergraduate Spanish degree. I lived with a host family that consisted of a husband, wife, one-year-old daughter, and a puppy. Much of my time in their home and country was memorable, yet there was one particular experience I will never forget. One day my Mama Tica, as she was affectionately known to me, was in the kitchen cooking while I sat at the island talking with her. She was in the process of learning English, mostly from her entrepreneurial husband who worked with tourists in the hotels, but she would often also ask me how to say words in English, and likewise, I would ask her how to say words in Spanish. As she was cooking that day, she held up a pan and asked what the word for the item was in English. I explained it was a “pan” and I spelled it out for her. Her eyes lit up, a smile spread across her face, and she exclaimed that it was the same word as the word for bread in Spanish, *pan*. It was at that moment that I knew I wanted to teach English, and as I advanced to graduate study and learned more about literacy and language acquisition, I learned she would always be a part of my literacy narrative. She had a profound impact on my dispositions toward my literacy attainment in the Spanish language, and hopefully I had a similar impact on her dispositions toward English language literacy.

In the fall semester after my study abroad program, as I worked with students daily in the writing center as an undergraduate tutor, I wondered how that experience in Costa Rica affected my own practices as a tutor and what literacy and language related experiences affected the students I was working with. And as I moved into graduate study and learned more about literacy, identity, and second language acquisition and composition, these questions again plagued me. As I read more scholarship on working with multilingual writers, I found that while scholarship does discuss the vast experiences and expectations that tutors and student writers

bring to the center, little connects those literacy experiences to the practice of tutoring. Therefore, I created this study to seek out those connections. I wanted to find the ways in which writing center tutors', Spanish-speaking tutees', and writing center directors' dispositions toward literacy affect the writing center. This study aims to show that the attitudes and experiences toward one's own literacy and language does have an important influence on tutoring sessions in ways that have implications for tutor training initiatives, tutor recruitment, and hiring practices.

The studying of dispositions becomes extremely important to understanding students in academic contexts, particularly in university writing center contexts where students, often but not exclusively multilingual students, come to improve upon certain areas of their English literacy. In considering student literacy, this project embraces a multiliteracy framework, understanding student literacies as their abilities to read, write, speak, and listen in one or multiple languages. However, the definition is also much more complex and draws from similar definitions from many different scholars including Brian Street, James Paul Gee, and Deborah Brandt.

In tracing a bit of history of the definition of literacy, we can begin with the analytical approach to literacy known as the autonomous model of literacy from which Brian Street provided an alternative ideological model of literacy in the 1984. The autonomous model refers to literacy as a unidirectional, traceable development that distinguishes literacy from schooling. Street explains the autonomous model "isolates literacy as an independent variable and then claims to be able to study its consequences. These consequences are classically represented in terms of economic 'take off' or in terms of cognitive skill" (2). Street argues though that "literacy ... is not ... a 'neutral' technology, with 'potentialities' and 'restrictions' depending simply on how it is used. Rather it is a socially constructed form whose 'influence' depends on how it was shaped in the first place. This shaping depends on political and ideological

formations, and it is these which are responsible for its ‘consequences’ too” (65). Therefore, the ideological model of literacy focuses on the social, culturally embedded practices of reading and writing, concerned with the social spaces in which reading and writing take place, not just the educational spaces (Street 2). Further, Street quotes Shirley Brice Heath as discussing certain foundational aspects of the ideological model of literacy: “A unilinear model of development in the acquisition of language structures and uses cannot adequately account for culturally diverse ways of acquiring knowledge or developing cognitive styles” (qtd. in Street 125). She furthers:

Literacy events must ... be interpreted in relation to the *larger sociocultural patterns* which they may exemplify or reflect. For example, ethnography must describe literacy events in their sociocultural contexts, so we may come to understand how such patterns as time and space usage, caregiving roles, and age and sex segregation are interdependent with the types and features of literacy events a community develops. (qtd. in Street 125, emphasis in original).

In other words, Street’s ideological model of literacy views all contexts in which literacy takes place as important to one’s literacy development.

In his article “A Situated Sociocultural Approach to Literacy and Technology,” James Paul Gee discusses New Literacy Studies (NLS), that he named as an emerging field in the early 1990s, where scholars from a variety of disciplines such as linguistics, history, anthropology, rhetoric and composition, cultural psychology, education, and others were discussing a shared view of literacy. Rather than viewing literacy as a mental process, NLS views literacy, much like Street’s ideological model of literacy, as a “social and cultural achievement—it was about ways of participating in social and cultural groups—not just a mental achievement. Thus, literacy needed to be understood and studied in its full range of contexts—not just cognitive—but social,

cultural, historical, and institutional, as well” (Gee 2). Further, NLS argues that literacy does not just happen in a vacuum, but in specific ways which are influenced by the “values and practices of different social and cultural groups” (Gee 4). In this way, Gee argues that literacy is contingent upon the many different contexts in which students may find themselves, making the entirety of their life experiences important to their literacy acquisition.

In *Literacy in American Lives*, Deborah Brandt defines literacy “in context”, much like Street and Gee, as abilities that are integral parts of larger social and cultural activities (3).

Brandt furthers:

Reading and writing occur instrumentally as part of broader activities (for instance, working, worshiping, governing, teaching and learning, relaxing). It is these activities that give reading and writing their purpose and point ... As social groups differ in their cultural expression nor class locations, for instance, so will their preferred ways of reading and writing differ. In fact, this perspective tends to eschew references to skills or abilities at all, focusing instead on the concept of literate practices, emphasizing the grounded, routinized, multiple, and socially sanctioned ways in which reading and writing occur. (3)

This differs from traditional definitions of literacy as a neutral skill that can be acquired once and used without regard to context (Brandt 3-4).

Therefore, throughout this project, when referring to “literacy,” I will be referring to the reading, writing, speaking, and listening as part of the multiple contexts, or broader activities as Brandt and Gee explain them, in which these skills occur for students, as I see literacy as holistic. When referring to a specific context in which literacy occurs, such as academic literacy, I will define the exact terms that encompasses. On the other hand, this project also does not see these

contexts as separate entities. While academic literacy will refer to specific contexts, it is still informed by students' home literacies or social literacies. In this way, this research expands on these definitions of literacy to encompass intersecting contexts of literacy.

It is also important to have a clear definition of "dispositions." Dispositions, as defined by Pierre Bourdieu, are "a way of being ... a predisposition, tendency, propensity, or inclination" (qtd. in Horner, Selfe, and Lockridge). In other words, dispositions are one's preconceived habits of mind toward a subject. Another, simpler way to think about dispositions, and the way dispositions have presented themselves throughout this study, is to think about one's attitudes toward a subject, in this case attitudes toward language and literacy.

When multilingual students visit the writing center, they are bringing with them more than just their knowledge of another language. They are also bringing their knowledge of another culture. Specifically for multilingual students, biographical dimensions of their lives such as sociocultural, linguistic, academic, and cognitive dimensions help to define their literacy (Herrera, Perez, and Escamilla 5). Sociocultural dimensions refer to what makes students who they are as individuals: their family histories, the literacy practices conducted in their homes as children, and more (Herrera, Perez, and Escamilla 26). Linguistic dimensions refer to students' language acquisition journey in their multiple languages, and academic dimensions relate to their prior academic experiences and the types of curricula and instruction they received in the past and in the present (Herrera, Perez, and Escamilla 32-33, 35). Finally, the cognitive dimension contains details about how students know, think about, and apply information (Herrera, Perez, and Escamilla 39). The cognitive dimension also "explores the relationship between known language proficiency and applied literacy skills ... [and] examines the cognitive and sociocultural connections that exist in the ways students think about what they are reading"

(Herrera, Perez, and Escamilla 39). These biographical dimensions are what aid multilingual students in defining their literacies and are also what helps them to develop their dispositions, or their attitudes, toward literacy.

To understand the importance of learning about multilingual students' attitudes toward language and literacy, we must first understand what makes up one's attitudes. Bojana Petric cited Rokeach's theory of attitude as:

Attitudes are determined by beliefs, which, being higher mental representations are formed early based on experience. Attitudes are more affective and evaluative, and also less stable and more subject to change ... Beliefs behind an attitude are related to other beliefs behind other attitudes. Understanding this has relevance for writing instruction, as attitudes towards, for example, learning writing may be based on beliefs about language learning in general. (qtd. in Petric 10-11)

Petric then summarizes the theory in relation to language learning by saying that attitudes emerge as an outcome of language learning, are grounded in underlying beliefs, and are also formed and can change based upon new experiences (11). In other words, we can understand that attitudes, like dispositions, are formed by experiences and represent beliefs about certain subjects, making a study of attitudes and dispositions toward language and literacy vital to composition instructors and writing centers.

As writing centers and university writing programs begin to move toward pedagogies of belonging and pedagogies that elevate students' unique language experiences, studying attitudes towards language and literacy is ever more important. The debate surrounding the goal of writing center interactions is one way in which the study of dispositions is worthy of study in writing center contexts. There is an expectation from universities that writing center tutors will instruct

students on the proper ways to use Standard American English (SAE) and therefore help students to assimilate to western language norms. There have, however, been statements made over the years in support of student use of their many languages in academic contexts where SAE is typically the standard. The Conference on College Composition and Communication position statement “Students’ Right to Their Own Language,” for example, argues that students have the right to their own languages, dialects, and language varieties; that teachers must have experiences and training that will enable them to uphold their students’ right to their own languages (Committee on CCCC Language Statement 710-711). However, Laura Greenfield argues even though tutors may agree with such statements and even desire to put them into practice in tutoring sessions, they still have the charge of pushing SAE in tutoring sessions (53-54). Additionally, Nancy Alvarez argues that the Students’ Right to their Own Language resolution, while conceptually seems to be beneficial, truly isn’t. The resolution only protects those who are able to understand the language in which it is written, and because it is only written in SAE, it protects speakers of Standard English who gain nothing from it, rather than the multilingual students it claims to protect (N. Alvarez 87). Therefore, research on tutors’ and Spanish-speaking students’ attitudes toward language and literacy can give us insight into the ways composition instructors and writing center tutors and administrators understand and/or utilize these competing perspectives on language in the academy.

Dispositions are understood by many scholars in the field of rhetoric and composition and writing center studies as a kind of fluid understanding based on experiences and the ability to use language resources as needed based on the rhetorical situation. A. Suresh Canagarajah discusses dispositions as cooperative. This includes language awareness, social values, and communicative strategies all rooted in fluidity, a willingness to cooperate, and learning from

experience (Canagarajah, *Translingual Practice ...* 2013). Rebeca Lorimer Leonard has also studied dispositions through her work on rhetorical attunement. She posits that learning a new literacy is about how one becomes rhetorically attuned. It is a “literate understanding that assumes multiplicity and invites the negotiation of meaning across difference” (Lorimer Leonard 228). Lorimer Leonard explains that students are often encouraged to use their full range of literate resources but, she argues, encouragement of that type situates multilingual students’ resources as stable, moving from one language or context to the next. However, as the quoted material suggests, Lorimer Leonard believes multilingual students call upon or create their resources on the fly as the rhetorical situation calls for them in an ongoing process rather than moving from one language to another. According to Eunjeong Lee and A. Suresh Canagarajah in reference to Lorimer Leonard, “Calling such disposition as ‘rhetorical attunement,’ Lorimer Leonard emphasizes that both the dispositions and ever-evolving repertoires are developed out of ongoing transcultural experiences” (19). In other words, being rhetorically attuned is understanding the ways in which life experiences of the past and those that are still occurring affect one’s attitudes. This study aims to understand whether and how these types of evolutions are occurring in tutors, Spanish-speaking students, and writing center directors. As Brandt argues, many of the stories of her participants’ “out-of-school literacy practices provide educators with conceptual tools for bridging between the resources students bring to school and the different literacy practices they must learn to control—a model that is equally appropriate in adult and workplace literacy instruction” (8). Therefore, by examining the attitudes that influence how tutors and Spanish-speaking students conduct or participate in tutoring sessions, this study can begin to examine how dispositions are enacted through practice, in this case within tutoring sessions, as there are few studies that currently do examine this phenomenon.

Scholarship on dispositions toward literacy explains its importance in composition and communication contexts, yet there has been little work done on dispositions in writing center contexts. Lee and Canagarajah in 2019 conducted a case study outside of a writing center context of a multilingual writer, Koky, aimed to discover how transcultural dispositions shape translingual practice. Their study found that Koky “constructed a new meaning-making possibility by connecting multiple ‘differences’ and occupying this seeming ‘chasm’ between differences” (Lee and Canagarajah 24). In other words, Koky navigated language differences between academic and non-academic writers and their practices while maintaining his transcultural belonging, a space that was “contingent upon his historicities, goals, and subjectivities as a person with transcultural dispositions” (qtd. in Lee and Canagarajah 24). In another study conducted in 2016, Canagarajah examined African skilled migrants in Anglophone communities. The study found that the migrants adopted intuitive strategies to negotiate meaning with those in their communities who spoke different languages. Through everyday engagement with their neighbors, the migrants developed transcultural dispositions toward translingual practices that enabled them to intuitively negotiate within the language differences they were exposed to within the Anglophone communities (Canagarajah, *Translingual Practices ...* 2016). In these two studies the connection between dispositions and communication is clear; the participants chose to inhabit their respective spaces based on their dispositions and then use their positionalities in those spaces as a means for meaning making to aid in communication with others. In this dissertation, I focus on tutor, Spanish-speaking students, and writing center directors’ dispositions to understand the effects, whether positive or negative, in a writing center context and to expand upon calls from writing center professionals for more research on the ways multilingual students’ lives have an effect in the writing center.

Dispositions toward literacy as a whole are not the only important consideration when studying the attitudes toward language of those involved in writing center interactions; the participants' understanding of the relationship between literacy and writing specifically is important as well. Christina Ortmeier-Hooper argues that first, one must realize the way culture and the other tenets of literacy (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) affect writing literacy. Ortmeier-Hooper explains, "It's important to acknowledge that people aren't simply products of their nations. A whole range of past experiences with reading, writing, and literacy in general influences multilingual student writers" (10). In other words, as composition instructors and writing center directors/administrators/staff, we need to ensure we understand these important cultural differences and check our own assumptions about multilingual students' writing.

Paul Kei Matsuda, from studies conducted in 1997 and 2006, believes that instructors, and therefore also tutors, must consider a few important circumstances related to their own literacy and their own biases when it comes to working with multilingual writers and their texts. First, instructors and tutors have to understand how language, writing, and educational experiences may have had an impact on what multilingual students consider good writing. Next, instructors and tutors also have to become more accepting of what multilingual students bring to their writing in terms of rhetorical approaches. Instructors and tutors then have to critique their own ways of reading, reflecting on their own training and language backgrounds and the way those experiences have affected the way they read and respond to multilingual students' writing (qtd. in Ortmeier-Hooper 10). They must come to an understanding of what has formed their own dispositions as well as try to understand what could have formed their students' dispositions toward literacy in order to best help them. Once tutors and instructors complete these self-assessments, then writing centers can begin to make changes in their pedagogical frameworks

and tutor training. Doing so will foster centers that can improve upon their current efforts in supporting Spanish-speaking students and their attainment of literacy in their many languages. And composition instructors can begin to move into effective praxis that better utilizes their multilingual students' experiences as tools to aid their writing skills. Therefore, understanding the dispositions of those involved in writing center interactions is crucial for understanding and potentially further improving what occurs in tutoring sessions and in the writing center writ large when it comes to Spanish-speaking students.

Finally, research in the education field about attitudes toward literacy argues for the importance of understanding students' home, community, and school literacy practices. Mari Haneda explains:

While young students' literacy practices outside school occur as part of their family lives and are supported by others, many adolescents increasingly use literacy for their own purposes in order to meet their economic, social, emotional, and intellectual needs. In so doing, they use a variety of genres, from personal writing, including poetry, to advertisements for their business and plans for future activities, and for these purposes they draw on old and new technologies. Moreover, some adolescents deliberately use out-of-school literacy practices to create discursive spaces in which to explore possible identities. What emerges, then, is a complex picture of diverse literacy experiences that students bring to school. (342)

Because of this, Haneda argues two main points. First, she argues it is important for teachers to build on students' existing home and community literacy practices in locally relevant ways to further promote literacy in school, a term she calls *boundary crossing*; this is when students' home and school boundaries are crossed, increasing students' investment in learning (Haneda

343). Second, Haneda argues that teachers must reflect on what it means to aid in student literacy acquisition, what it means to help students feel comfortable expressing their ideas, and what it means to help students use reading and writing as tools for critical discussion and thinking (343). Haneda concludes with explaining that it is “essential that educators reexamine their own assumptions of what being literate means in order to create opportunities that enable students to master a wide range of literacy practices with which they can shape their futures in a rewarding and responsible manner” (343).

Research such as the study discussed in “Points of Transition: Understanding the Constructed Identities of L2 Learners/Users Across Time and Space” by Education researchers Anthony Adawu and Melinda Martin-Beltrán, argue for the importance of narrative as a means for examining and understanding experiences of learners. They propose three main ideas that argue for the importance of narrative: First, the way stories are shared have both temporal and spatial significance; Second, when people tell their stories they offer “points of transition,” meaning that they share insights that help to connect their stories and give meaning to their identities; Third, their narratives and identities are co-constructed because “As learners tell their stories, their present interactional experiences are in constant dialogue with their distant experiences, all of which influence and shape their narratives and identity constructions” (Adawu and Martini-Beltrán 379). Their findings revealed that what they call Points of Transition (PsoT) that students use within their narratives reveal how they make sense of their own changing identity constructions across time and space and how they link their identities to their futures (Adawu and Martini-Beltrán 396).

By exploring the connections of tutors and Spanish-speaking students’ attitudes and dispositions toward language and literacy, this study adds to the research currently available in

these many intersecting fields and provide new insights into the importance of understanding the totality of students' multi-contextual literacies.

### **Literature Review**

As writing centers have evolved over the years, so too have their attitudes toward multilingual students and their unique needs in the writing center. What follows is a tracing of the history of these changing attitudes. We will see the movement from writing centers as labs and clinics that were deemed as somewhat negative spaces for remedial writers, to the creation of peer tutoring, all the way through to the current calls from scholars of color, specifically Hispanic/Latinx scholars, for critical analysis of the harm perpetuated against students of color in writing center spaces.

Writing center scholars have traced attitudes toward language and literacy have traced back to the early years of writing labs, predating what we know as writing centers today. Writing centers, then called writing labs or writing clinics, were viewed with negative attitudes as spaces for “deficient” writers to receive remediation. In the 1940s, much of this stigma began with the University of Denver and the clinical emphasis pushed in their communications program. Peter Carino, in his mapping of the history of early writing centers, furthered that although the clinical nature of the Denver program was used as a means for demonstrating scientific emphasis, faculty and staff outside of the program soon used the designations to stigmatize students as “lab specimens” (Carino 110). At times, labs and clinics had to be places for remediation. Carino explained that the implementation of the GI bill following World War II and the Korean War caused waves of underprepared students to matriculate to universities, making remediation a necessity and labs and clinics were available for the task at a time when they were struggling for respect (Carino 112). However, not all labs or clinics were viewed in this way; “Texts on early

labs and clinics indicate that along with some damning attitudes, a supportive view of even underprepared students was evident as far back as the early part of this century and continued into the 1960s,” (Carino 109). Attitudes towards student literacy in writing centers continued to evolve over the years and soon the attitudes of the students themselves became pertinent to the writing center.

The importance of understanding students’ attitudes toward language and literacy became clear with the creation of peer tutoring in the 1980s. At the time, students beginning their post-secondary education, regardless of the amount of preparation they had, had difficulties adapting to college classrooms. Kenneth Bruffee explained that college faculty tried many different tactics to help these students such as creating sink-or-swim programs and mandated programs, but the programs were unsuccessful. The university faculty and staff guessed that students’ negative attitudes toward the work within these programs stemmed from the similarities those programs had to the classroom structures that left the students unprepared in the first place (Bruffee 3). In other words, the negative experiences students had in their previous education clearly correlated to their attitudes in the current contexts. Finally, faculty and staff decided to turn to peer tutoring, hoping that students’ attitudes toward language and literacy learning in an environment that did not so closely mimic a classroom setting would work. And it did. Peer tutoring provided a reciprocal learning experience, where the students learned from their peer tutor, and the peer tutor learned from the tutee as well as through the act of tutoring (Bruffee 3-4). Students’ attitudes toward language and literacy shifted with these new positive literacy experiences, causing writing centers to grow in popularity, to welcome many different communities of writers, and to begin expanding research within the field in multiple ways.

There are many writing center scholars who have begun to examine and call for more research on the ways multilingual students' life experiences influence what occurs in the writing center. In her article "Expanding the Role of the Writing Center at the Global University," Yu-Kyung Kang explained that writing centers have had to adapt their roles from writing support to international student support as the number of international students on campuses has increased; an adaptation that includes creating a new rhetoric that bolsters writing center support of multilingual students' development of literacy within and outside of academia (Kang 132-33). To do this, Kang explained that research needs to move away from explaining how to work with multilingual students and move more toward theoretical and practical examination beyond tutorials, which can be accomplished through communicating with other units on campuses as a way to provide improved and additional literacy support (Kang 136, 141). Similarly, Beatrice Méndez Newman in her article "Tutoring Translingual Writers: The Logistics of Error and Ingenuity," described that tutors need to gain an understanding of multilingual students' backgrounds to best support them in the writing center. Newman argued that if there is an understanding of multilingual student backgrounds, especially in the writing structures of their primary language, tutors can move away from identifying "errors" and move toward understanding "approximations in multilingual student writing" ("Tutoring Translingual" para. 13).

Ben Rafoth in *Multilingual Writers and the Writing Center* argued similarly to Newman that understanding the knowledge, skills, and information needed to work with multilingual students instead of automatically reverting to the comfort of methods typically used would be beneficial (Rafoth 136-137). Rafoth suggested that this knowledge, skills, and information refers to tutors being familiar with grammatical structures of other languages, being familiar with the

new faces of the students they are working with, and being familiar and comfortable with exploring the customs and backgrounds of classmates who are different from them (Rafoth 137). Learning about students' backgrounds in these ways means that rather than identifying a deficit in multilingual student writing that may push multilingual students away, tutors can use their understanding of the writing structures that the multilingual student was using from their first language to create safe pedagogical methods for teaching the new writing structures in the target language (Newman, "Tutoring Translingual" para. 7).

Scholars in rhetoric have taken up the call of thinking about how to better appreciate and utilize multilingual students' backgrounds in the writing center as well. Tiffany Rousculp's concept of "rhetoric of respect" refers to being flexible, self-aware, and attentive to the ways in which we use language with others (25). One of the ways Rousculp engages in rhetorics of respect in her Community Writing Center (CWC) is through reimagining and negotiating the definitions of "literacy" and "writing" with writers rather than relying on the institution's definitions that regulate boundaries of inclusion and exclusion; the institutional definitions "involve a set of values and viewpoints in terms of which one must speak and act, at least while being in the discourse, otherwise one doesn't count as being in it" (qtd. in Rousculp 29). Therefore, the CWC uses a rhetoric of respect to avoid telling, suggesting, or implying what is important in writing and literacy (Rousculp 29). Because of the exclusionary nature of writing and literacy that Rousculp pointed out, Julie Bokser argued that tutors need to understand and writing centers should intervene in the paradoxical ways in which writing and academic literacy are instruments of belonging that constrain as well as liberate (44). The concept of a pedagogy of belonging as it relates to multilingual students and tutors means that both should be comfortable questioning their own assumptions, understanding others' commitments, and acknowledging the

potential difficulties that may be present for others in their commitments (Bokser 46). Bokser argued that the pedagogy of belonging can be enacted through training tutors to listen rhetorically, a concept coined by Krista Ratcliffe that means listening *with* intent, not *for* intent to understand the cultural logics of claims made and to stand under the discourses that surround us, letting them inform our politics and ethics (Bokser 46; Ratcliffe 205). In other words, to listen rhetorically one must listen to others and learn from what they are listening to “to hear and imagine how [discourses] affect not only [them]selves but others” (Ratcliffe 206). Therefore, the rhetorical concept of pedagogies of belonging allows instructors, tutors, and more to accept our multilingual students and their backgrounds as assets in the writing center and composition classroom from which we may learn to better serve multilingual student needs.

Similarly, other researchers have begun to examine the idea of dispositions in relation to understanding multilingual students’ backgrounds. In their article “Doing Translingual Dispositions,” Jerry Won Lee and Christopher Jenks discussed translingual dispositions, a general openness toward language and language difference, and the importance of dispositions in composition (319). Lee and Jenks expressed, “It is crucial that compositionists understand that such dispositions are ideological: bound to and shaped by discrete social conditions, experiences, and encounters” (Lee and Jenks 320). This suggests that multilingual students’ dispositions are formed through their experiences, therefore many wonder about the connection between dispositions and writing and writing instructors. Lee and Jenks described that it is the job of compositionists to foster translingual dispositions in their students because composition is welcoming an increasing diversity of students, instructors, and Englishes within texts assigned to students; “the very linguistic and cultural ecology of composition makes it an ideal space for students to explore and encounter the different ways that people construct and mediate

knowledge beyond traditional forms of academic literacy” (Lee and Jenks 322). In this way, the study of dispositions provides a new avenue for understanding how students’ attitudes toward language and literacy are constructed and the ways in which instructors and writing center administrators can utilize those attitudes.

Finally, scholars in education have begun research into students’ attitudes toward language and literacy. Sadiq Abdulwahed Ahmed Ismail conducted a study at the United Arab Emirate University where 64 female students within the Academic Writing Course were surveyed with the goal of learning how students perceive ESL writing, how students perceive their favorite learning style, how students view their writing ability in English, and how students view the Academic Writing course (Ismail 74). First, Ismail discussed current research in the field on students’ perceptions and beliefs on language and literacy; Mazdayasna and Tahririan’s research into Iranian students found that the students’ positive attitudes toward literacy correlated to their heightened interests in improving their language proficiency (qtd. in Ismail 74). Research conducted by Xuemei found that “culture, identity and beliefs interacted together to reconstruct the learners’ beliefs and identity on the basis of writing in particular and education in general. Thus, students’ beliefs might be partially demonstrated by the kinds of strategies they employed when writing” (qtd. in Ismail 75). From the results of the study, Ismail’s major conclusion was that students often feel more positive attitudes to their writing when their writing actually needs more attention. Ismail made the call for scholars to look further into this issue to discover students’ actual writing abilities and the issues they may be having while writing in English (Ismail 80).

As writing centers moved from remedial spaces for fixing grammar to spaces where multilingual student needs have been taken into consideration, we’ve also seen even more push

in the last 20 years for multilingual students', and specifically Spanish-speaking students' rights to be present in writing centers and writing classrooms. Romeo García in his article "Unmaking Gringo-Centers" began his discussion with three *recuerdos* of his life growing up along the Lower Rio Grande Valley relating to his experiences with his tío, his grandma, and his travels to attend university. Through these recuerdos, García discussed the implications of being Mexican in academia where "the accumulation of white student protest against diversity (and students' treatment of people of color) and feedback from my professors had me thinking that maybe higher education was not meant for me" (García 31). He furthers that writing centers are complicit in this cultural violence of making students feel as though they don't belong but that there is space for writing center scholars to make and re-make themselves in productive ways (García 32). García explains that writing center anti-racist scholarship is limited by the traditional white/black paradigm that ignores the "specific needs and expectations" of Mexican American students at borderlands institutions who are not ESL speakers or writers and therefore cannot be approached with traditional writing center practices (García 32). To overcome this, "a cultural dialogue of recognition, critique, accountability, and responsibility is needed" (García 39) as well as a new practice of listening because "if we are going to talk about and attend to race in writing centers, either in the historical or contemporary sense, Mexican Americans cannot be absent" (García 47, 51).

In her article "A Need for Writing Coalitions: A (Ch)Xicana's Fotos y Recuerdos—Anticipating (Dis)Identification," Anna Treviño, like García, discussed through a *testimonio* the importance of her life and heritage in relation to the academy. She explained, "In moving from the domains of a Mexican (American?) home and white school as a child, I learned other things: English was for school and Spanish was for home, what happened at school was education and

the key to success, who I was outside of school, with my family, my culture didn't matter *as much*" (Treviño 46-47, emphasis in original). And therefore, the cultural violence that García expressed has also been historically present in writing classrooms.

One of the ways in which writing center scholars have begun to attend to Spanish-speaking students' needs in the writing center to overcome the cultural violence perpetuated there has been to tutor in Spanish. In her article "On Letting the Brown Bodies Speak (and Write)," Nancy Alvarez discussed her experiences of tutoring in English and Spanish at the Bronx Community College (BCC), a Hispanic-serving institution. She explained:

Hearing the different voices and languages at the writing center made the students at the BCC writing center feel as if their languages ... weren't strange or out of the ordinary.

Coming to the writing center made these multilingual students of color feel as if they

belonged somewhere on campus as normal students, not as *ESL* students. (N. Alvarez 84)

Therefore, writing centers should prioritize being multicultural and having multilingual tutors because, as Alvarez argued, monocultural and monolingual writing center staff will have "different concepts about what is considered *good writing*, and that affects how multicultural and multilingual *minority* students feel about their writing and their ability to do college work" (N. Alvarez 86, emphasis in original).

As a means to combat the cultural violence against Hispanic students not just in writing centers, but also writing classrooms, many scholars have begun to examine the best techniques for teaching composition to Hispanic students. In "Teaching Writing at Hispanic-Serving Institutions," Beatrice Méndez Newman explained that some Hispanic students at Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) have been raised in families that see their matriculation as delaying their entrance to the workforce. Therefore, Hispanic students at HSIs are inviting criticism from

their families and have little support from their families as the familial expectations conflict with their academic expectations resulting in attendance issues, incomplete assignments, and low participation in the classroom (Newman, "Teaching Writing" 19-20). Therefore, Newman argued that composition instructors need to have some familiarity with Hispanic students' backgrounds to understand their classroom experiences. For example, Newman explained how she had many students who missed class to assist with family obligations, and that "students would prefer to be in class attending to their education, but when family responsibilities summon them, the pull of family cannot be outdone by the pull of educational responsibilities. This preference for family should never be construed as a lack of interest in academics" (Newman, "Teaching Writing" 22). As García argued that writing center scholars need to listen to the Mexican American students in the center, Newman argues that compositionists need to listen to Hispanic students' voices to understand who they are and how to respond to their needs ("Teaching Writing" 33). Similarly, in their book *Writing Across Cultures*, Robert Eddy and Amanda Espinosa-Aguilar argued that if we start to learn about students' backgrounds, we can become "metacultural," able to understand the relationship between culture and how we are changed by culture (23). In doing so, Eddy and Espinosa-Aguilar used the rest of their text to outline a method for the ways in which composition instructors can help students learn to balance writing across their cultures called The Eddy Model of Intercultural Experience. They explained, "[The book's] primary function is teaching academic writing faculty how to use this intercultural thinking method to guide students toward critical, open-minded, and disciplined writing with multiple perspectives to the questions, problems, obscurities, debates, and dissonances of college study" (Eddy and Espinosa-Aguilar 27).

The current study seeks to make the connections across the disciplines that have been outlined here to show the ways in which Spanish-speaking students' attitudes toward literacy and language that have developed through each of their unique academic and non-academic experiences affect their writing center interactions. The goal then is to understand these experiences and their effects and then to critically reflect on the ways in which writing centers and composition classrooms can utilize this information to continue decolonial efforts, as García describes, and to embrace new tutor training and composition instructor training initiatives. These initiatives should teach tutors and instructors not how they should adapt their current pedagogies to attend to the rich experiences that affect Hispanic student writing but to look to and truly listen to the voices of each of their particular Hispanic students "to understand who their students are and how to respond to their needs" to create new pedagogies (Newman 33).

### **Research Questions**

This IRB approved dissertation project aims to answer the call from writing center scholars for more accounting of multilingual students' literate lives, and this project also aims to answer the call from rhetoric scholars for more research on the connections between multilingual students and dispositions. In attempting to answer these calls, I formed three main research questions:

1. What are Spanish-speaking tutees' dispositions toward their literacy and how do their dispositions affect their experiences in the writing center?
  - a. What attitudes do tutees' hold toward their own literacy experiences in different contexts (school, home, etc.)?
  - b. In what ways do tutees identify the connections between their own literacy experiences and their tutoring sessions?

2. What are writing center tutors' dispositions toward their literacy and how do their dispositions affect their experiences in the writing center?
  - a. What beliefs and/or attitudes do tutors have for literacy learning in the writing center?
  - b. In what ways do tutor identify connections between their own literacy experiences and the literacy experiences of their tutees and their tutoring sessions?
3. What are writing center directors' dispositions toward their literacy and how do their dispositions affect the decisions they make in the center in terms of tutor training and multilingual student initiatives?
  - a. What goals do directors have for literacy learning in their centers?

## **Methods**

This study is a qualitative case study between two universities in the United States. I chose the case study design because it allowed me to specifically focus on individual participants, and fits within a strong tradition of case study in writing center research (Grutsch McKinney 94). Additionally, the case study design is preferred for events where the “relevant behaviors cannot be manipulated” (Yin 12). Therefore, when attempting to understand a specific demographic of tutees' identities and how those identities emerge in practice, the case study design seemed to be the most effective way to highlight how Spanish-speaking tutees', writing center tutors', and writing center directors' dispositions toward literacy affect the writing center in terms of tutor training, decision making in sessions, and overall experiences. This case study design was chosen based on a similar case study design used in Nakamaru's study “Theory In/To Practice: A Tale of Two Multilingual Writers: A Case-Study Approach to Tutor Education.” In her study, Nakamaru utilized a case study approach for seven multilingual writers, observed

tutoring sessions, conducted interviews, and asked for writing samples from students from which the findings were used to create new tutor training materials (Nakamaru 103). This design was fruitful in that it allowed the researcher to effectively highlight how multilingual tutees' first language affected a session and to highlight tutoring practices, which is what I hoped to replicate in my study.

The two universities I used for my sample were chosen through an investigation into the self-reported demographic information of each university to determine those with a significant Spanish-speaking student (self-reported) presence on campus. The large state university is called Public University throughout the data and the small private university is called Private University throughout the data.

### *Recruitment*

For recruitment, I chose to engage in purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling looks at information rich cases, which are cases “from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry” (qtd. in Merriam and Tisdell 7). The criteria that I used to conduct my purposeful sampling were broad. Tutor must have been 18 years of age or older at the time of the study and they must have been employed at their respective writing center at the time of the study. With those criteria in mind, tutors at each study site were recruited via email at the beginning of the Fall 2021 semester.

When recruiting the Spanish-speaking tutees, there were also a set of criteria for my purposeful sampling. First, tutees must have been 18 years of age or older at the time of the study and they had to be a heritage Spanish speaker. A heritage language, according to Guadalupe Valdés:

Refers to a language with which individuals have a personal connection. ... Foreign language educators use the term to refer to a language student who is raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken, who speaks or at least understands the language, and who is to some degree bilingual in that language and in English. (1-2)

With this definition in mind, heritage speakers were chosen for this study because it was important to understand the ways in which the students' life experiences in learning Spanish and English had developed throughout their lives as opposed to a Spanish speaker who may not have spoken Spanish or English their whole life. At Public University, when students signed up to work with one of the participating tutors via the WOnline writing center scheduling system, they were asked to self-report if they were a heritage Spanish-speaking student. If the students self-reported as heritage Spanish speakers, they were sent a recruitment email. Of those that agreed to participate in the study, two Spanish-speaking students were chosen. At Private University, heritage Spanish-speaking students were identified by the writing center director. Those who were interested emailed me, and from there three students were chosen to participate. The writing center director and interim writing center director at each respective university also agreed to participate in the research.

According to the United States Census Bureau, the growth in college enrollment for Hispanic students has risen 1.7 million from 2006 to 2016 with an overall tripling of the numbers of Hispanic students enrolled in college in the last two decades (US Census Bureau para. 6). With this rise in enrollment in mind, many institutions have established Spanish Writing Centers on their campuses. However, digging deeper it becomes clear that these centers do not necessarily cater to the growing demographics of Hispanic students on college campuses, many of them cater to students who speak Spanish as a foreign language rather than a heritage language. For

example, according to their website, Michigan State University has a Spanish Writing Center designed to help students in one of the university's Spanish courses ("Spanish Writing Center"). Many other universities have similar centers that their websites explain focus on helping students in Spanish language courses such as the centers at The City College of New York, Northwestern University, and more. Conversely, there are a few universities that do aim to help Spanish-speaking students overall, although not specifically targeted to Spanish-speaking students only. The University of Pittsburgh's Spanish Writing Center "is intended to help students of Spanish as a second language ... the center serves any student learning Spanish" (D. Lima, personal communication, October 1, 2021). Similarly, Miami University of Ohio has an English Language Learner Writing Center that provides peer tutoring services to multilingual students to "help students whose first language is not English become more confident users of English academic language and effective, autonomous writers across genres and disciplines" ("English Language Learner Writing Center"). Regardless of their goal, it is clear that universities are starting to attend to the needs of growing Spanish-speaking populations on campuses, and this project aims to do the same at a large public university and a small private university in the state of Maryland.

### *Data Collection*

Once the tutors and Spanish-speaking tutees were recruited, preliminary interviews began. Each tutor and Spanish-speaking tutee were interviewed separately. In these audio recorded, semi-structured interviews, the participants were asked to tell stories about their experiences throughout life relating to their literacy acquisition. These questions were based on gathering narratives that related to the sociocultural, academic, linguistic, and cognitive dimensions of their literacy acquisition. The interviews lasted anywhere from 30-60 minutes. For both universities, all interviews were conducted either in person or via Zoom. Then, observations

were conducted during tutoring sessions at each university. These observations were done in person and virtually via WOnline with Public University participants and were done virtually through Zoom with Private University participants and were audio recorded with permission from the tutor and Spanish-speaking tutee. These sessions focused on whatever piece of writing the student brought to the session and lasted, at the most, 60 minutes each. Each tutee completed two tutoring sessions with two different participating tutors, except for one student who was only able to complete one session. After each session, semi-structured follow-up interviews were conducted with the tutors and Spanish-speaking tutees separately. These interviews were not done immediately after the sessions but were scheduled based upon the tutor/Spanish-speaking tutee's schedule. They were, however, done before they completed their second tutoring session so as not to confuse the two. During these follow-up interviews, tutors and Spanish-speaking tutees were asked to recall moments from the session where they felt their attitudes toward their own literacy had an effect on the session. These follow-up interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes each and were audio recorded. During this time, interviews were also conducted with the director and interim director of each writing center. These interviews lasted approximately 30-60 minutes. Directors were asked questions to determine how their attitudes toward their own literacy were formed and how those influenced the ways they created tutor training materials/modules and other multilingual student initiatives in their writing centers.

### *Rationale*

I chose this methodology as a means for comparing the dispositions of two universities' writing center tutors, Spanish-speaking tutees, and center directors toward literacy to understand how their dispositions affect what is occurring in the writing center, whether that is in tutor training, tutoring sessions, and more. By doing a comparative case study versus studying the

universities individually, I was able to see the potential similarities and differences in the participants' attitudes as well as how those affected each center in the same or different ways. I was also able to obtain data from two different types of institutions, one large, public university and one smaller, private university. Case study research is valuable because it aims to look at the "local particulars of an abstract social phenomenon" (Dyson and Genishi 3). In other words, rather than looking at dispositions in writing centers as a universal experience, I was able to look closely at the experiences of a handful of participants in two different contexts as a means for understanding and comparing a more local iteration of a larger issue.

With this methodology, I was also able to see the ways in which dispositions play into practice in differing writing center contexts. According to Haas, Takayoshi, and Carr, "Understanding everyday literacy practices can, in turn, suggest ways that academic practices and writing instruction could be modified in order to better teach students the composition and communicative skills needed in an increasingly digital world" (53). Although they are speaking of a study they conducted on the linguistic forms and discourse of instant messaging, the same principle can be applied to this study. By observing the tutoring sessions, an everyday literacy practice, I was able to understand the effects of participants' attitudes toward language and literacy in tutoring sessions from which improved tutor training and improved perceptions of the writing center may occur.

### *Data Analysis*

Narrative analysis was used to analyze the data from the interviews with participants. Narrative analysis, as described by Gabriela Spector-Mersel is based on a holistic strategy that adopts a multidimensional and interdisciplinary lens, treats the story as a unit rather than isolated segments, takes into consideration form and content, and pays attention to context (Spector-

Mersel 214). Analysis of this kind is inspecting not just the product of the narration, but also the process of narrating considering the social, cultural, political, etc. influences on the stories told, which is where multidimensional and interdisciplinary lenses are important (Striano 148). The types of stories I asked for related to the biographical dimensions that help to define multilingual students' literacy: sociocultural, linguistic, academic, and cognitive dimensions (Herrera, Perez, and Escamilla 5).

Of course, there are some critiques of narrative analysis because the researcher and the phenomenon under study are nearly inseparable in the interpretive stages of narrative analysis because the narratives are, in a way, co-created as they are reproduced in the text of the study by the researcher (Spector-Mersel 216). However, "through narratives, it is possible to construct and reconstruct not only personal life or professional and cultural experiences, but also learning experiences, considering that narrations are the main carriers of knowledge in contemporary societies" (Striano 149). Therefore, although there are some limitations to narrative inquiry/narrative analysis, this method of analysis would work best in analyzing the dispositions of the participants.

Additionally, I paired this narrative analysis with an inductive approach to coding the transcripts of the tutoring sessions. These codes were generated through the data as they emerged. Choosing codes in this way was derived from Christina Haas, Pamela Takayoshi, and Brandon Carr's article, "Analytic Strategies, Competent Inquiries, and Methodological Tensions in the Study of Writing," about a study they conducted on instant messaging. They took an inductive approach to coding their data because their project "focused on textual forms that had not been previously studied in much detail" and because they wanted their coding scheme to account for all the discourse themes they encountered (Hass, Takayoshi, and Carr 54). My

dissertation study examined tutoring sessions and conversations on the topic of tutors', Spanish speaking tutees', and writing center directors' dispositions toward literacy and the effects their dispositions have in the writing center, a site that has also not been studied in much detail.

Therefore, for my first round of coding, I selected one tutoring session from each university and created my first set of codes. During this process I read chunks of the transcribed sessions and asked questions such as, "What common tutoring techniques are happening in this session?", "What uncommon occurrences are happening in this session?", and "Where do I see explicit or implicit references to participants' preliminary interviews?" I noticed instances of the Spanish-speaking tutees relying on the tutors to be language experts, of tutors encouraging student-led learning, tutors' attitudes toward Spanish-speaking students' rhetorical choices, and more. This led to the creation of a total of 23 codes between the two transcripts. I then used those 23 codes to code the remaining session transcripts. Once that was complete, I tallied the prevalence of each of the 23 codes among all sessions, keeping track within a spreadsheet (this spreadsheet and a visual chart of the tallied codes can be found in Appendix A). I then found 11 of the most prevalent codes. An explanation of each of these codes along with examples of each are available in Appendices E, F, and G, one for each chapter in which those codes are discussed. The code with the most prevalence occurred 24 times throughout all the sessions and the least prevalent of the codes were two separate codes that occurred 9 times each within the sessions, resulting in 11 of the most prevalent codes rather than 10. In studying those 11 codes, I found three overarching themes emerged. Using those three themes, I then ran a second round of coding on the session transcripts. This inductive approach to coding was useful because it helped to develop the vocabulary needed to tell the narrative stories of the participants. The information on its own is sensible but it also contains a category of information that is relevant to the study and by using

open coding, I was able to brainstorm the possible types of relevant information (Dyson and Genishi 84-85). There was also some quantifiable data that resulted from the analysis, as was done in the Haas, Takayoshi, and Carr study. The frequencies and means of the codes from each university provides some of the comparative data between the two universities of study.

### *Reliability/Validity*

To ensure the reliability and validity of my data, I chose to triangulate the data. As Robert K. Yin explains, by using multiple sources of evidence, in my case narrative analysis, observations, and interviews, I am creating “converging lines of inquiry” (120). Specifically, I enacted data triangulation by collecting information from multiple sources and by converging these findings rather than addressing different findings for each different source of data. In so doing, I strengthened the construct validity of my study (Yin 121). I also chose to triangulate the data because I felt that one data collection method alone would not fully capture the importance of the narratives. As Spector-Mersel explains, during interviews narratives are told *for* the researcher and are influenced by the participant’s understanding of the study and the interaction between the researcher and the participant. When narratives are examined through observation, the researcher’s presence has an effect (213). Therefore, no one method would have been able to effectively capture the nuances of the effect of participants’ narratives in practice in tutoring sessions.

### *Methodological Shifts in Definitions*

It is important to note here that at the outset of this research, I thought I understood what I meant by dispositions based on Pierre Bordieu’s definition of dispositions as “a way of being ... a predisposition, tendency, propensity, or inclination” (qtd. in Horner, Selfe, and Lockridge), but as I began to work with the data, I quickly realized I needed to expand the definition a bit

further, asking the question, “How do we understand dispositions and evidence of dispositions?” I realized that what I understood as dispositions toward literacy and language focused on a combination of one’s attitudes toward the subject and how those attitudes were formed and informed by the unique experiences of my participants. This was not only present in the ways the tutors and tutees responded to one another verbally throughout the session but also at times as physical reactions, which was present in one of the sessions from Public University.

Unfortunately, most sessions occurred over Zoom so it was not possible to see all physical reactions tutees had. However, what all of these definitions, in combination with the observations of these sessions revealed was that dispositions are the ways in which a person’s life experiences and the different contexts in which they have gained acquisition of reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills throughout their lives shape who they are, what they believe, and their attitudes toward a subject, which can be present in physical embodiments, in the choices they make, in how they respond or not to others and more. With this new definition in mind, it becomes a bit clearer to understand what is meant by dispositions throughout the data.

### **Positionality**

It is important to note my own positionality in this study. I am not of Hispanic descent nor in any way a part of Hispanic culture. Therefore, I do not claim to know the lived experiences the Spanish-speaking students of my dissertation study have gone or will go through in the academy and the writing center. I spent eight years studying the Spanish language and culture through my high school and undergraduate academic careers, earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Spanish, and studied abroad in a Spanish-speaking country. However, I am a white woman whose position in life has allowed me to traverse the academy and the writing center with an ease not afforded to many others. I do feel as though I can empathize and relate to some of the participants of my

study because I was a first-generation college student like many of them are. This helped me to think about and understand how large of an influence family likely had on their attitudes toward language and literacy. Therefore, as I have witnessed the rising numbers of Hispanic students attending colleges and universities, I see an opportunity to further explore the ways in which writing centers can understand their heritage Spanish-speaking students' lived experiences and improve upon best practices in aiding Spanish-speaking students and tutors in the writing center and in composition courses. With this in mind, as Talisha Haltiwanger Morrison calls us to do, I aim to speak *with* and *to* Spanish-speaking scholars and students rather than *about* them (40). Throughout the study I have tried to elevate the work of scholars of color in the many intersecting areas of my research and to bring to light the work that has been done and continues to be done by these scholars in hopes of adding to this great body of knowledge.

### **Chapter Summaries**

Chapter 1, "Understanding Who is in the Writing Center: A Look into Writing Center Tutors', Spanish-Speaking Students', and Writing Center Directors' Literacy Narratives," describes the preliminary interviews that were conducted with each participant. I first describe the relevant literature that shaped the creation of the questions for the preliminary interviews. Then each section that follows narrates in detail the literacy acquisition journeys that each participant has taken throughout their lives that relate to the sociocultural, academic, cognitive, and linguistic elements of the biographical dimensions of literacy as described by Christina Ortmeier-Hooper. I've organized this chapter by each participant's life story rather than organizing by theme so that as readers examine the data, they may easily go back to reference that specific tutor or tutee's story. Therefore, the chapter is broken into three main parts, Public and Private University Tutors, Public and Private University Spanish-Speaking Tutees, and

Writing Center Directors. Within each section, the participants' stories are listed with their names and their university affiliations, and each section ends with an Implications section that summarizes the important connections that can be made between that participant group's narratives. Finally, the chapter ends with an Overall Implications from Preliminary Interviews section that summarizes the whole of the preliminary interviews. This chapter will enable readers to get to know each of the participants and understand the experiences that have helped to shape their attitudes toward language and literacy thus far in their academic and non-academic lives.

Chapter 2 begins the in-depth analysis of the tutoring sessions starting with the theme "Encouraging Literacy Learning: Writing Center Tutors as Literacy Mentors." In this chapter, a large discussion ensues around the ways in which tutors worked to ensure the Spanish-speaking tutees were moving the session in ways that were beneficial to their literacy learning while also showing that they, the tutors, have had similar experiences in their literacy learning journeys. Tutors worked to encourage student-led learning, challenged Spanish-speaking tutees' thinking as a non-directive tutoring method, and more. The chapter is organized according to these different moments in the session that have together created the theme of Encouraging Literacy Learning. These different moments are listed as the subheadings for the chapter that include: Encouraging Student-Led Learning by Promoting Literacy, Implications: Agenda Setting as Providing Student Agency, Challenging Student Thinking as Non-Directive Language Learning, Implications: Through Using the Leading Questions Technique, Tutors Become Teachers, Relating to Students with Similar Experiences: Creating Rapport with Students, Implications: Rapport to Break Down Barriers and Model Research Practices, and finally Chapter Conclusions: Tutors as Literacy Mentors. In discussing each moment, multiple examples from each tutoring session are broken down and discussed. The analysis of these moments

encompasses relevant literature and connections to the follow-up interviews of the participants. Overall, this chapter draws connections between these moments and each tutor and Spanish-speaking tutees' backgrounds to highlight each person's attitudes toward language and literacy and the effect it had in the session in terms of encouraging literacy learning.

The theme of Chapter 3 relates to "Seeking Academic Literacies: Spanish-Speaking Tutees and Agency in Tutoring Sessions." This chapter discusses the ways in which the Spanish-speaking tutees relied on the knowledge of their instructors and their peer tutors in the writing centers to help them continue in their pursuit of literacy, while also often seeking self-directed educational experiences. The Spanish-speaking tutees relied on their teachers as authority figures as they discussed their writing with the tutor, looked to the tutors as language experts, moved the tutoring sessions in their own ways, and more. Again, this chapter is organized according to these themes with the subheadings indicating each theme as follows: Referring to Teacher as Authority/Using Teacher Feedback to Guide Agenda of the Session, Implications: Teacher as Authority Related to Culture?, Tutor as Language Expert: Relying on Tutor Knowledge Through Directive Feedback and Asking Questions, Implications: Tutors as Experts and Cultural Informants, Tutees Taking Charge of the Session: Enacting Agency, Implications: Connections Between Repeat Session and Agency?, and Chapter Conclusions: Seeking New Academic Literacy Knowledge Through Agency, Repeat Sessions, and More. Analysis in these sections includes relevant literature and participants' follow-up interviews. This chapter draws connections to relevant literature in writing center discourse that discusses multilingual student's attitudes toward language and the ways in which attitudes toward language are important in writing center contexts.

Chapter 4 refers to “Developing New Literacies: Spanish-Speaking Tutees Gaining Tools for Literacy Learning.” This chapter’s focus revolves around the ways in which the tutors worked with the Spanish-speaking tutees to expand their literacies in different areas related to their writing. Some of the ways tutors worked with the students were categorized as attitudes toward genre conventions, attitudes toward rhetorical choices tutees made, prioritizing language as higher order concerns (HOCs) vs lower order concerns (LOCs), audience awareness and connecting the classroom to wider audiences, and more. The chapter is organized into the following subheadings: Tutors’ Attitudes Toward Genre Conventions: Teaching Tutees Genre Knowledge, Implications: Learning Genre Knowledge, Tutors’ Attitudes About Rhetorical Choices: Praise and Critique, Implications: Praise, Critique, and Confidence in Writing, Priorities Toward HOCs vs. LOCs: Negotiation Between the Two in Sessions, Implications: Grammar as Important for Tutees’ Literacy Learning, Attention to Audience Awareness: A Non-Intuitive Notion, Implications: Tutors Serve as Representative of American Academic Audience, and Chapter Conclusions: Tutors Providing Tools to Make Better Writers. Discussion of the many connections to scholarship in education and literacy will show the ways in which the writing center serves as a space of literacy learning for these Spanish-speaking tutees, creating implications for other multilingual writers who visit the writing center.

Finally, Chapter 5 details the conclusions this study has for its audiences. The chapter begins with discussion of the definitive conclusions that can be drawn from this study. Although this study is a small sample and therefore cannot be widely generalizable, there are a few clear-cut conclusions that can be drawn from this data. From there, the chapter will move into discussing the inferences that I have drawn from this research. Here I will discuss in detail the connections I found between my participants’ lived experiences and what shapes their attitudes

toward language. Finally, the chapter ends with discussion of the implications this research could have in the fields of Rhetoric, Composition, Writing Center Studies, and Education in terms of further research, pedagogy, and curriculum.

## Chapter 1

### **Understanding Who is in the Writing Center: A Look into Writing Center Tutors', Spanish-Speaking Tutees', and Writing Center Directors' Literacy Narratives**

The preliminary interviews for this study were designed to gather stories from the participants about the biographical dimensions of their lives that have shaped and helped to define their literacy attainment history in English, Spanish, and any other language(s) they may speak. According to Herrera, Perez, and Escamilla, biographical dimensions that define multilingual students' literacy are sociocultural, academic, linguistic, and cognitive in nature (5). These are also the dimensions of their lives that will influence their thoughts, feelings, and perceptions, also known as their dispositions, toward literacy.

Each of the biographical dimensions that define multilingual students' literacy have specific contextual meanings for different areas of their lives. The sociocultural dimension contains everything students love and cherish, what makes them laugh, what makes them who they are as individuals, the values and beliefs that are held within their families, and more (Herrera, Perez, and Escamilla 26). The authors explore further that the more insight instructors have into the historical backgrounds of their multilingual students, the more they will be able to understand the behaviors and learning patterns of their students (27). The linguistic dimension refers to multilingual students' home languages, the value of which is extremely important for instructors to acknowledge so as not to devalue the student's sense of self and family (Herrera, Perez, and Escamilla 32). The value of multilingual students' native languages to composition classrooms and writing centers has been studied extensively and Herrera, Perez, and Escamilla add that students' native languages have immense value for their English language attainment. Research by J. Cummins from 1981 and 2000 revealed that multilingual students' first language

(L1) development directly impacts their second language (L2) development in what they call the “interdependence hypothesis”, and Cummins’s “transfer theory” suggests that academic proficiency transfers across languages so that if literacy has been attained in a student’s L1 than they will likely make better progress in their literacy attainment in their L2 (qtd. in Herrera, Perez, and Escamilla 32). Therefore, by understanding multilingual students’ literacy attainment in their L1, instructors may better be able to support multilingual students’ attainment of their L2. In what is a similar, yet distinct dimension, the academic dimension draws attention to the importance of multilingual students’ prior and ongoing academic experiences. According to Herrera, Perez, and Escamilla taking into consideration multilingual students’ prior schooling “include[s] both experiences that student has had within the United States and those in his or her native country (if applicable)” as an insight into the literacy skills they already have from their home languages (35, 38). And finally, the cognitive dimension, which is the most complex, refers to how students think about and apply information—the relationship between the language proficiency they have and the literacy skills (Herrera, Perez, and Escamilla 39). The cognitive dimension also “explores the relationship between known language proficiency and applied literacy skills ... [and] examines the cognitive and sociocultural connections that exist in the ways students think about what they are reading” (Herrera, Perez, and Escamilla 39).

To try to understand the participants’ dispositions toward literacy, the questions I asked sought to reveal stories related to different parts of their sociocultural, academic, linguistic, and cognitive journeys through attaining literacy. I asked questions such as, “Was there a particular family member, friend, teacher, etc. who was important to your learning of how to read and/or write in particular ways or in various languages? Please tell me about this person and how they have helped your learning,” for example. These were semi-structured interviews so there was a

small set of pre-written questions. This left some availability for follow up questions as there was no way to predict what kinds of stories participants would tell and what kind of extra information would be needed for clarification purposes. Preliminary interview questions for the tutors, Spanish-speaking students, and writing center directors are available as appendices (Appendix B, C, and D respectively). All participants, five tutors, five Spanish-speaking tutees, and the two writing center directors, are referred to throughout the study by the pseudonyms they chose or gave me permission to choose. This chapter is organized by participant stories rather than by theme for ease of reference in later chapters.

### **Public and Private University Tutors**

#### *Reuben Finster – Public University*

Reuben Finster, age 74, identifies as a white, male, American with Jewish and Presbyterian heritage. Reuben grew up in New York learning English as his primary language at home and attending schools where English was the primary language. Throughout his life, Reuben also learned to speak and write in French, as he lived in France for a few years and has a bit of functionality with reading Spanish.

Growing up, Reuben's family was the last family in their neighborhood to get a television because reading was extremely important for them. His parents would read to Reuben and his siblings from the earliest age as reading was of paramount importance to both parents, but particularly so for Reuben's mother who was a homemaker. Reuben recalled, "I don't remember a time when books and reading were not important to our family—in fact there wasn't a time." As soon as all the children in the family were able to read, they began to read along with their mother and did so for years, even receiving books as presents most of the time for holidays. Reuben's mother pushed for the children to read books of value. The children read books about

the presidents, they looked at atlases and maps, but Reuben recalled that he was mostly interested in sports as a kid and so he often read sports books, even recalling that the favorite book among him and his brothers was called *The 100 Greatest Sports Heroes*.

His mother was the person who Reuben cited as being the person who had the greatest influence on his learning how to read and write. As a homemaker, she spent a great deal of her time and energy devoted to her children's education as it was extremely important to her as a college graduate with a literary and linguistic background. Her children were expected to read every day and to read things that were appropriately challenging and sophisticated. To this day, Reuben explained, he still doesn't read "trash" novels but mostly reads what he described as serious literature like biographies and newspapers. Comic books, for example, were not allowed in their house as they were considered too vulgar. "So, I think, clearly, my mother's far and away the most important in that. And I will say she was quite a bit more demanding than elementary school teachers—not in a nasty way but it was her expectation that you were a [Finster] and just cus the other kids didn't have to do that didn't mean that you didn't have to," Reuben explained.

Reuben had a lot of stories from this educational career that related to his literacy journey as well. In elementary school, Reuben remembered having to do many book reports. The teachers' goals, he recounted, were not for the students to be reading specific books, but just to be reading in general. A significant memory of a challenge from his educational career happened when he moved from his public high school to a prep school in 10<sup>th</sup> grade and the expectations of the prep school were radically different. Teachers in those days, he recalled, did not hesitate to humiliate you for your childish writing or undeveloped thoughts, and "I think I still feel the effects of those classes and those teachers. I know I do," Reuben surmised. However, in his senior year at the prep school, a French teacher finally got him to understand what close reading

was and the value of it. Reuben clarified, “The value of every word and how it fits and has meaning and has associations I think was helpful.” He explained that he doesn’t think he learned much of anything from his English teachers except for diagramming sentences which he cited as helping a little bit. The most generative experience that Reuben cited of learning English grammar came from his experiences teaching English to French students in France.

As an English as a second language instructor, Reuben found that he had to understand English grammatical structures and how they worked to teach them. Direct objects and how they work and verb tenses, were a few examples Reuben cited. “These kinds of things that we grew up without even thinking about, using a present progressive versus a simple present tense for example, nobody thinks about those things—you know them by the time you’re four. But when you actually have to explain why you use one versus another—I never really thought about it a great deal until I had to teach French people which was the right verb tense under the right conditions. So actually, it renewed my interest in the English language and gave me some insights into French as well,” Reuben recalled. Initially, Reuben went to France as part of the US Army as a draftee. He could read a lot of the great literature and although he did have about five years of experience from high school, he found that he was still unable to talk to anyone in French. His French education was not at all focused on speaking and so he felt lost in how to carry on ordinary speech. After meeting his wife, Reuben went back to France where he spent a year studying French poetry, theater, and the language. Living in France and speaking only French with his wife’s family and being surrounded by the language, he got a lot better, he recalled.

Reuben also discussed how reading, writing, speaking, and listening has affected his career throughout his life. He explained:

Because I was out in the workforce for years, worked for the federal government for 26 years, I do have a lot of insights into how you want to position the very things that we're teaching here. Audience gosh. So, I don't know if I was as conscious of those things, but just by the very act of being out and working and making my living with a written word, first, as a journalist and a reporter, you had to be conscious of who you were writing about and of course, accuracy. I took pride in being able to, and I had to work at it to make sure that you're not introducing any mistakes. I mean, it's of course not typos, but I did a lot of interviews, did a lot of covering, of lots and lots of years and years of covering congressional events and speeches and talks at think tanks and various institutional things. And so, the importance of being accurate, of being able to write succinctly, to write quickly, meet deadlines, all of these, you sort of had to work on your skills to do that.

He explains further that these skills have also carried into his home life.

Even now, literacy is still a large part of Reuben's life. "I still write most days. And I edit stuff for my wife, who is not a native speaker or my daughter who is just starting out her career—she does show me her job applications and various statements for fine tuning or comments," Reuben explained. He also explained that he taught his wife English. She barely spoke English when she and Reuben met and eventually got to the point where she was editing reports written by native speakers. Professionally, Reuben discussed that he has worked for the Writing Center at Public University for about six years, taking some time off during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, so literacy has a lot of importance in his job there. Reuben concluded his preliminary interview with saying, "Just by living in a country and being surrounded by the language, it's just the best way to learn."

Later in this research, Reuben's various literacy experiences and his attitudes toward language become clear in his tutoring techniques. Throughout the two tutoring sessions Reuben conducted, he often used references to the student's teacher as a means of authority within the session. This will later be traced back to his experiences with his mother as a strong authority figure in his own literacy acquisition. He related to the students with his own experiences of language learning and his experiences working with other students in the writing center. Finally, he was one of the only tutors who looked at the students as language or topic experts on their given paper topics.

*Miriam Rooney – Public University*

Miriam Rooney is a 64-year-old American who identifies as a female. She speaks English primarily with some facility in French and grew up in Missouri where English was the primary language spoken at home and at school. Miriam holds a BA in Linguistics, a BA in Theater, and she is currently working on a Master's in Library and Information Science at Public University.

As a child, one of Miriam's first memories associated with reading, writing, speaking, or listening was her mother's love of Christmas music with stacks of Christmas records that were on all the time in their home. Recalling these Christmas records reminded Miriam about a particular record called *Peter and the Wolf* that contained narration along with the music. Miriam remembered jumping around the living room as she listened, acting out all the different characters in the story. Her parents also got the *Reader's Digest* condensed books that were always available in the home for the children to read, and Miriam's mom would always bring the children to the library in the summertime when there was no access to the school library.

Miriam also remembered very particular aspects of learning literacy throughout her educational career. Phonics worksheets stand out in her mind from her early educational years.

She also recalled that in the fifth grade, her mother enrolled her in a program called Great Books that was essentially a book club for kids where they read the book, answered discussion questions, and then discussed as a group. Miriam joked that she thought her mother may have actually regretted signing her up for the program as she would often get in trouble for reading instead of doing chores. She also recalled learning about part singing in the fourth grade which Miriam recalled as being important to her development of listening skills. Fifth grade was very meaningful for Miriam as she recalled that when her class would come inside from recess, their teacher would read them *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe* to get the students settled back down. Miriam recounted that her and her friends really enjoyed the book—so much so that they would make up games associated with the characters of the book. High school was characterized by summer reading lists that students could choose books from. Miriam’s high school was also a college prep school so there was a large focus on writing.

In her professional career, Miriam worked as a translator. She worked mainly on translating written or recorded material into English. She never translated spoken word. “To do that [translate in general],” she explained, “you have to know the nuts and bolts of how both languages work—both the one you’re starting with and your target language. And where the similarities are or where things differ and therefore, where that’s going to affect meaning. Nuance becomes really important when you’re translating something for somebody else. You not only have to get the strict dictionary definition, you have to make sure you’re picking the right dictionary definition and the one that has the right emotional flavor to it, if you will.” Miriam furthered that just earlier in the afternoon of this interview she was speaking on this subject with one of the students she was tutoring—that English is a lot of words that multitask and paying attention to word usage in that close way is helpful so that you don’t have to double back and

attempt to say something in a different way so that the reader or listener gets the meaning the first time.

Miriam explained that literacy has had a large effect on her life still to this day. “Reading is huge. More than a few years ago now, we did some remodeling on the house and one of the things was to put in a floor to ceiling wall of bookshelves on one wall of a spare bedroom and those shelves filled up pretty quickly,” Miriam explained. And of course, working for the writing center now, literacy still has an everyday impact. Having worked as a translator, Miriam discussed, working with the nuts and bolts of language is something she really enjoys. “I use that to help the students I work with, and I can tell that it’s helped me with my own writing because I listen to all of the advice I’m telling them all day every day and it’s like, ‘Okay [Miriam] listen to what you’re telling everyone else to do!’ Seeing the commonalities and the things that everyone struggles with ... It’s just fun to do,” Miriam said.

Miriam’s personal experiences as a student helped her to relate well to the students she tutored for this study. Unfortunately, technical issues resulted in the loss of the recording of one of the tutoring sessions she conducted. Field notes of that session revealed some commonalities to other sessions such as asking the student questions to ascertain meaning of a word or phrase as a means of non-directive tutoring. A clear link between this type of tutoring and Miriam’s experiences as a translator will be discussed in more detail. In the other tutoring session, Miriam was able to aid the student by pointing her to an academic resource offered by the university library that Miriam uses herself as a student.

*Erin Jones – Private University*

Erin Jones is 21 years old from Connecticut. She identifies as a female with Irish and Swedish heritage. English is her primary language both at home and at school, and she also has a basic understanding of Spanish.

One of Erin's first memories associated with literacy is associated with her family. "I remember my mom and my daycare provider frequently taking me to our town's library to pick out books. They would take me into the children's section and patiently wait for me to scour the shelves, use the computer games, and pick out a few books to bring home. Sometimes we would borrow CDs with children's nursery rhymes, etc. from the library as well," she explained. Erin's mom also encouraged Erin's reading practices from school. "We were expected to read 20 minutes at home every night beginning in third grade, and we tracked our progress in monthly reading logs that our parents were required to sign. My mom supported this practice by purchasing books for me, taking me to the library and signing my log. We had it posted on our refrigerator. My mom supported my interest in writing for pleasure as well. She arranged for me to meet with my fourth-grade teacher over the summer to develop an idea I had for a short story," she explained. Erin further stated that her father was particularly important in shaping how she attained literacy through music. "From a young age he played Bruce Springsteen around the house and whenever we were in the car together. It wasn't until high school that I came along to actually enjoying it. It was comforting to listen to his music when I was away at boarding school because it reminded me of home and of small-town life," Erin said.

Erin has also had many experiences related to her academic life that have shaped her dispositions toward literacy. Erin remembered one memory in particular: "My elementary school teachers set aside time for creative writing within the classroom. In second grade, my teacher had

us write about our weekends in our journals every Monday morning. She always wrote encouraging feedback for me in the margins, and she prompted me to write as many sentences as I could in the time that she gave us. These assignments were just graded for effort because they were intended to get us into the habit of writing informally.” Erin also recalled that several of her teachers went out of their way to encourage her reading practices and to help her find books that she was interested in. Further, “I vividly remember being in the check-out line in Barnes and Noble, where my mom had taken me to purchase the first book in the *Little House on the Prairie* series, when I saw my current second-grade teacher in line too. I was practically starstruck when she offered to loan me her daughter’s boxed set of the series once I finished the first book,” Erin said.

However, not all of Erin’s academic experiences with literacy attainment were positive. When learning how to read in kindergarten, most of Erin’s school year was spent learning how to read. “For that entire school year, learning how to read felt like a race that I was competing in against all my peers. The ability to read seemed like an indication of intelligence and, further, it seemed to mark our transition from toddlerhood to childhood,” she explained. Thankfully, Erin’s love for reading grew and by the time she was in second grade, she was reading at a fourth grade reading level.

Erin also learned how to write more than a single word at a time beginning in kindergarten, but this experience learning to write was much more positive than her experience learning to read. Erin remembered, “Learning how to write felt more personal. I considered it a means of expressing myself, so I didn’t compare my own writing ability to that of my peers early on. Each of my classmates and I had a journal that we wrote a couple of sentences in each day in kindergarten. I remember being instructed to write about things that were important to me, and I

frequently wrote about my parents and my sister. In addition to lines for our writing, these journals contained space for us to draw. These illustrations provided our teacher with some context as to what we were writing about, which helped her decipher what words we had written if they weren't clear. We even walked through the physical act of writing in kindergarten. I remember practicing how to hold a pencil and being instructed to use a tongue depressor to leave a space after every word." These memories were vital to Erin's attitudes toward literacy as she explained, "The environments in which I learned how to read and write deeply influenced my relationship with reading and writing in the years to come. My mastery in these early years led me to consider 'reader' and 'writer' to be integral parts of my identity going forward. Once I could read a chapter book, I was excited to read independently as much as a possible both inside and outside of the classroom."

As an aspiring English teacher, Erin sees many of the experiences she had throughout her literacy journey as critical to her future endeavors. She explained, "This awareness of my own literacy lineage will be critical to developing my own practice of teaching literacy. Looking ahead, I want to emulate those of my teachers that devoted time and energy to developing my abilities as a reader and writer. I want to cultivate spaces where my own students can read and write independently without the fear of formal assessment. Ultimately, I hope that I can create the kind of collaborative, rather than competitive, atmosphere that I thrived in myself as a student."

And Erin seemed to foster those same ideals within the tutoring sessions she had with the students for this study. Of all the tutor participants, Erin was the tutor who encouraged student-led learning the most. She was also one of a few tutors who challenged her tutees' thinking as a method for non-directive tutoring. Erin's desires for students to have positive literacy

experiences because she remembers vividly her own positive and negative experiences, will be discussed further in later chapters.

*Julia Fillmore – Private University*

Julia is a 21-year-old student, who identifies as a white, American woman, from Connecticut who is studying communications with a specialization in public relations and advertising at Private University. English is Julia's primary language, is the language she speaks and writes in, and it is the only language used at home and at school.

Julia's first memories associated with literacy were shaped by interactions with her family. "I think my earliest memories of reading would often happen at my grandparents'. So, I was probably about four or five, and I spent a lot of time with them. And my grandma would read to me, and I would look at the books and try and read to myself. And then being at home, like during the school year, my mom would read books to me at night every so often. She didn't really read a lot, and I would listen to the radio in the car as early as I can remember. So probably like four or five. But I think probably the radio is like the most prominent factor in reading and listening and learning to speak and things like that. Even now I feel like listening is the most helpful tool for me," she recalled. When asked about the most important person to her learning of speaking and/or listening, Julia cited her mom. "So, my mom is definitely the winner for this because she would always say, 'Enunciate your words. Don't mumble.' I always heard that as a kid, and I don't know if it's because I talk fast because I'm thinking a lot, but I would hear myself. I'm like, 'No, I'm saying things normal.' She'd be like, 'You're always mumbling, speak up and enunciate your words. So, I always remember telling my friends, you need to enunciate. And they were like, what are you talking about? I don't know what that means. And my mom would tell me certain words to say, and I just remember always using a big vocabulary,

and my friends never knew. And it'd be like 3rd, 4th grade. And this is kind of maybe a little off topic, but I went to a Halloween party in fourth grade, and I was intimidated by all the people there. And my friend was like, what's wrong with you? And I said, Well, I'm intimidated. And she was like, what does that mean? I said, well, there's just so many people here and she's like, oh, okay. So yeah, definitely. My mom always stressing that I speak clearly.”

Julia also had some really interesting academic experiences throughout her education that have shaped her literacy. “Okay, so in second grade, we did like acting. We had to play Stone Soup, so we all had a part. And I was minestrone. And I remember I was like kind of a lead, which is really cool. And I remember practicing my parts and I had to have them really perfect when we were rolling. So that was pretty fun. And then the assignment after we recorded the whole thing, we put it on DVD. So that was awesome. But we had to write our own script, and it had to be long. Like, as a second grader, writing a full page is, like, a lot of writing. But, yeah, I got carried away. I wrote more than a page, and I loved giving people parts and giving them, like, a sentence or two to say, yeah. So that was fun. Just like the descriptive details, adjectives, verbs were all very intriguing to me in second grade,” Julia explained about her first memory associated with reading, writing, speaking, or listening in school. She also has fond memories of teachers who were influential to her literacy acquisition. Julia said, “So, my second-grade teacher is very influential. I would say also my third-grade teacher, but she wasn't like my classroom teacher. She was like the after-school program teacher. So, I would, like, write short stories and write in a composition notebook about things. And I remember always getting writer's block, but they were very helpful in just, like, giving me inspiration to write about. So, you know, telling me stories, which I really liked, and then being able to hear those stories and kind of reiterate or make my own based on what I heard, that was helpful for me to grow my imagination. It's almost

disappointing that I didn't write more, but for some reason, I just don't ever recall writing being, like, a significant thing for everyone in our class to do. It's kind of interesting.” As she got older, Julia remembered, “Well, reading was always kind of a big thing for me in high school. I remember, like, really getting into memoirs and I really liked, I guess, the narratives that people talked about through writing about their life. So those always intrigued me. And then I would listen to autobiographies about people. That wasn't until, like, you know, I was older. So definitely like the end of 8th grade into high school, I would be doing that. But before I kind of got into reading, then I don't really have a connection, I don't think, with any kind of writing or anything, just always trying to keep a journal, but I can never keep journal.”

Julia has found that listening has been a part of her literacy journey that has been the most important. She explained, “I think that listening was always, like being harped upon. Like, you need to listen to understand the directions and follow the directions. And I remember in middle school, I was just like, I can just do it. I don't need the directions. I don't need to listen to the story and find the clues. I've got it. And that really kind of just running with the idea that I don't need to listen definitely messed me up. And I learned later on that you need to follow the directions and you need to listen to the teacher when she's giving a lesson or talked to other people, like classmates and things to communicate about, things you're working on to better understand it for yourself if you're not quite understanding it from the teacher's perspective. So, I think kind of like just building, I guess, like a communication ring with my peers to better follow directions in a way that makes more sense when you're a kid rather than I don't know, I just feel like sometimes teachers talk to kids, but they don't talk at a level where kids can understand. So, I think that always lost me.” Julia furthered, “Just the idea of listening is so important to me, especially now more so than when I was younger, because I think communication is so important

and to be able to listen to other people but also assert yourself in situations that's really important, especially. I don't know. I feel like at home I'm kind of, like in a leadership position just because I'm like the oldest sibling. So, if I can't listen to people's needs, then I think that people can't understand my own needs because I'm not communicating to them clearly if I'm not listening well. So, I think kind of listening and speaking are a joint. I don't know the word, but they work together. Can't have one without the other.”

Finally, Julia described the importance of writing in her academic life. “I think writing is essential to my everyday academic life. And again, the elements of listening and communicating clearly in school, that's super important if you want to help yourself learn and maybe help your classmates learn too. I always thought that if you can explain something yourself, then you probably understand it and then yeah, writing it's always a journey, but you don't realize how much you can do with words on paper until you actually force yourself to start writing and exploring the different ways you can communicate to different kinds of people, all different age ranges. So, I think, yeah, it's really like a magical situation Where you can take your thoughts, put them on a paper. Someone can take that paper out and understand what you're saying. So, I definitely do that all the time in academia, and I try hard to keep getting better.”

Many of Julia's literacy experiences were reflected in her tutoring in this study. Julia was only able to conduct one session because the student for her second session did not want to complete a second session. However, in the one session that was conducted, Julia's active listening skills were prominent. Julia's explanation of the importance she places on listening skills that is seen in this chapter creates many meaningful connections for attitudes toward language and literacy that will be discussed in more detail.

*Emma Morris – Private University*

Emma Morris is 21 years old, identifies as a white, American female from New Jersey, and is studying psychology at Private University. English is Emma's primary language, although she knows a bit of Spanish, and was the only language spoken at home and at school throughout her life. Emma's experiences with literacy have been shaped a great deal by her family. She explained, "I remember being read to a lot as a child. Like, my brother and sister are a lot older than me, like ten and 16 years older. So, they would read to me when I was little. So, I remember my sister before I would go to bed, she would, like, read me a book." The age difference between Emma and her siblings was an advantage for her literacy acquisition. She recalled, "I kind of picked up on different grammatical rules and how sentences should be structured. And I feel like being around and being so much younger than a lot of people in my family kind of helped me as far as, like, learning how to listen and kind of pick up on what people around me were talking about." Further influence came from Emma's mother who she named as the person who was most important to her learning of how to read and write. "Well, my mom is actually a teacher. When I was younger, when I was in preschool, she taught at the preschool I went to, and then she taught elementary, like from when I was in elementary school all the way till now. And so, I feel like she always—because that's like her focus most of her time—she really instilled in me the importance of education and tried to, without being too overbearing and structured with it, tried to always encourage me to read, and we always went to the library a lot. Like, I would always want to go to the library and check out books. I feel like she really fostered that and encouraged me to read and write as much as I wanted to and talk to me about what I was reading. So, she was important in my early years of literacy."

There were many formative experiences throughout Emma's education that helped to shape her literacy journey in addition to her experiences with family. She remembered, "In first grade on Mondays, like after the weekend, we would always have to come back and write about what we did. And I just remember doing that every week and just talking about what I did with my family. Or I remember one like when we got back after Christmas break— I remember writing about how I went to my aunt's house on Christmas and everything we did just like that assignment stuck with me ... I remember doing different reading groups, like early elementary years. Yeah, I remember reading, like, reading like a little bear story with my group and doing different word activities throughout the school year." Emma also recalled that rather than one single teacher being particularly influential in her literacy journey, many were influential in her literacy journey. She detailed, "I feel like throughout my education, I've had like, a few very encouraging and helpful teachers throughout elementary and middle and high school. I've always really liked the language arts teachers I had when I was younger. I feel like they really did encourage us to read and write and they always had a class library, to like, encourage us to pick books. And I don't know, I just always thought they were so nice, and I really loved going to their classes. I feel like that definitely encouraged me to continue."

Finally, Emma felt as though her literacy journey has been impactful for her current everyday life in several ways. She described, "When I was younger, I was encouraged to listen to those around me. I feel like also I tend to just, like, as a personal, like, personality wise, I prefer to, like, listen rather than talk a lot of the time, so that's been something I've noticed. So, I like to hear people's different perspectives before I make a decision. I feel like that's like an important thing." Her literacy journey also led to her interest in the writing center. Emma recalled, "I've done a lot of tutoring in high school and college, and I've always really enjoyed that and working

with people and just, like, helping people improve their writing and their academic work. I got involved in the writing center. I took an intro writing class and ended up talking to my professor about taking a class to start tutoring there. Yes, I'm a psychology major, but I have always just enjoyed writing. And it's something that I'd prefer to do for fun rather than, like, I don't know, pursue a degree in or something, but that's helped me enjoy it still. And I really like to read a lot, so I like to read other people's papers and just, like, see, I think it's interesting to see their perspectives and how that goes through the writing. I learned so much from all the papers. I read so many different topics and like people's lives and I just find it, like, super interesting and enjoyable to connect with people and read with the writing.”

Emma’s attitudes toward language and literacy shine through prominently from her preliminary interview and were as clearly prominent within the two tutoring sessions she conducted. Along with Erin, the other tutor, Emma was the other tutor who most commonly encouraged student-led learning within her sessions. Her interests in understanding others’ perspectives through reading their writing have led to productive and truly collaborative moments of literacy learning that will be explored further.

#### *Implications Based on Tutors’ Preliminary Interviews*

These preliminary interviews revealed a number of commonalities across tutors’ narratives that included the importance of music, maternal support of literacy development, tutor experiences with teaching, and libraries. Music has played a large part in many of the tutors’ literacy acquisition journeys and often seemed to be the most influential to their literacy attainment. There are studies (Gordon, Fehd, and McCandliss; Slevc and Miyake) that support music as correlational to literacy skills for both L1 and L2 and discuss the ways in which music impacts children’s phonological awareness and reading fluency in their L1 and sound structure

acquisition in their L2 (Gordon, Fehd, and McCandliss 2). Slevc and Miyake discussed that “being skilled at music means having a ‘good ear’ for analyzing and discriminating foreign speech sounds, so that musically talented individuals are better equipped than other people to pick up various aspects of an L2, especially pronunciations of L2 sounds” (675). While nearly all studies on the subject discuss the lack of a causal relationship versus a correlational relationship, there at least seems to be a connection for the participants of this study between music and the development of their attitudes toward English language literacy.

Parental involvement, particularly mothers or maternal figures, was also a significant factor for nearly all the tutors. Studies such as the one discussed by Lay See Yeo, Winston W. Ong, and Charis M. Ng in their article “The Home Literacy Environment and Preschool Childrens’ Reading Skills and Interest,” found that active parental involvement in children’s reading and writing practices were the best predictor for children’s emerging reading skills and reading interest (Yeo, Ong, Ng). They discussed the concept of the home literacy environment (HLE) as “a multifaceted and complex concept that transcends socioeconomic status or any single literacy activity. It embraces a variety of attitudes, activities, and resources that are interlinked” (Yeo, Ong, and Ng 791-792) that “encompasses variables such as literacy artifacts, functional uses of literacy, verbal references to literacy, library use, parental encouragement and value of reading, parental teaching of skills, child interest, parental modeling of literacy behaviors, parental education, and parental attitudes toward education” (qtd. in Yeo, Ong, and Ng 792). Their findings showed that parents who were involved in home literacy activities and held beliefs about reading appropriate to the child’s age, had children who showed higher reading capabilities, and their findings also showed that literacy activities done in the home were

more important to children's literacy development than their parents' reading beliefs (Yeo, Ong, and Ng 806-807).

And finally, as seen through the experiences of the two non-peer tutors at Public University, extensive experience with teaching language has significant effects on tutors' dispositions toward literacy. This, of course, brings attention to one of the significant debates in writing centers about the use of generalist versus specialist tutors. Sue Dinitz and Susanmarie Harrington discussed this debate in their article "The Role of Disciplinary Expertise in Shaping Writing Tutorials." Dinitz and Harrington outlined the generalist versus specialist debate as relating to the directive versus nondirective tutoring strategy debate because early scholarship worried that those tutors with disciplinary knowledge would dominate the session, causing them to focus more on the evolution of the paper than on the evolution of the writer (75). Dinitz and Harrington concluded that:

Without knowledge of the conceptual framework, key terms, and disciplinary expectations for the paper—and without the confidence and authority linked to that knowledge—tutors seemed both less able and less willing to identify global issues, to evaluate the writer's statements, to challenge the writer's point of view, to formulate questions that would push the writer's thinking and extend the conversation, and to draw general lessons. (85)

However, within the current study there was no evidence that the non-peer tutors necessarily tutored in more effective ways than the peer tutors. The difference was more related to the ways in which the non-peer tutors' ages gave them more life experiences that have informed their attitudes toward literacy and language. And those experiences and dispositions seemed to be

more prominent within their sessions than the experiences and dispositions of the peer tutors in their sessions.

### **Public and Private University Spanish-Speaking Tutees**

#### *Frida- Public University*

Frida is a 20-year-old American Latinx student who identifies as non-binary and is from Maryland. Frida can speak and write in English, Spanish, French, and is learning Chinese. English and Spanish are their native and heritage languages, and French and Chinese are formally taught languages. English was their primary language growing up, but they learned English and Spanish at the same time and those were the languages that were spoken at home and at school.

One of Frida's first memories associated with literacy comes from a time when it was just them and their mother at home. Their mother would have a cleaning session where she would be playing music aloud and singing along in Spanish and then switch to really smooth 2000's R&B. Frida explained, "Listening to my mom sing, you know, Spanish songs that I love and then hearing her go to Jennifer Lopez—yeah that was a really big one [memory]. I always loved listening to her sing ... I didn't really separate the songs by language, it was just the songs that my mom listened to and the songs I listened to." However, Frida remembered that at times there was a divide between their two languages. Many things that related to the family, home life, culture, even cooking were spoken about in Spanish. In fact, Frida described that there are words related to cooking that they don't even know how to translate into English.

Frida's family had a significant impact on their literacy attainment. Although literacy wasn't directly promoted in the home, Frida remembers always listening to cultural music and listening to conversations in Spanish. Eventually speaking English became easier as well for

Frida. And finally, Frida was always encouraged to read. At the time, there were not many options for Spanish reading, so Frida became very literate very fast when it came to reading in English. They were very interested in reading and immersing themselves in what they were reading. Frida recalled that they loved learning the vocabulary. The family would go to the library at least once every two weeks to check out books.

Frida recounted some of the struggles they had with literacy throughout their educational career. In preschool, Frida recalled that their teacher picked up on some of the difficulties they were having. In particular, the teacher noticed Frida had a lower word count compared to the other students. Frida recalled, “Rather than thinking it was because I was behind developmentally or anything like that, she realized it was because I spoke Spanish. And rather than correct me when I spoke Spanish, she prompted me. Although I didn’t think about it until much much later, I had a lot of people who would tell me, ‘That’s not right,’ or, ‘You need to say this,’—whenever I misspoke, she would say, ‘That’s good. Can you try it here?’ or, ‘Can you try it this way?’ That was a pretty important one,” Frida reminisced when asked about who in their life had a formative role in their literacy development. Their experiences with this teacher gave them the opportunity to feel comfortable in what they were doing.

Frida recalls having issues with the approximations between the Spanish and English languages that caused trouble for them in classrooms. “In kindergarten I had a hard time expressing myself in English, not because I didn’t know the words, but in Spanish you don’t need a subject always. So, people would ask me, ‘How are you?’ and I would say, ‘Am tired,’ ‘Am bored,’ or, ‘Am hungry,’” Frida said and explained that the teacher would always press them to explain who was hungry or who was tired. They always felt as though context was implied in English like in Spanish, although it is not. They also remembered consistently reading

below grade level until something shifted and they began to read at advanced levels. Frida related this shift to when they started pronouncing words better. Once others understood Frida's pronunciation, they began to realize that they were reading correctly. Frida also remembered a formative conversation with their seventh-grade English teacher about the word "stupider." Frida recalled that learning written English was hard because in Spanish the conjugations and adaptations of words are relatively consistent whereas in English there are conjugations, but they deviate quite often so the word stupid does not become "stupider" but becomes "more stupid." Frida remembered being frustrated about that because there are many words that follow the same rule as "stupid," and their teacher, rather than telling them they were writing the words wrong, she explained to Frida that how they said something was not as important as what they were trying to say. "That experience was really comforting," Frida said, "because I've had people tell me throughout my entire life that, 'That's not proper English,' or, 'You sound stupid,' but in that situation just that acknowledgement of something that was more descriptive rather than prescriptive that was a big one [memory]."

There was no promotion of Frida's Spanish language literacy in the academy outside of the foreign language courses they eventually took during their first year of college. "Outside of those courses [foreign language courses] it was very rare that it was promoted for me to speak, read, think Spanish," Frida explained. However, Frida had a much different experience with the promotion of English language literacy in the academy. Library time was built into the curriculum throughout Frida's elementary and middle school experiences and in high school there was even time set aside in classes every semester to visit the library. There was constant promotion of writing in all of their classes as well. However, Frida recalled that as they got to know more of the staff at their high school, there were teachers who spoke Spanish that Frida

would speak with in Spanish. Frida reminisced that they felt as though once the teachers learned they spoke the same language, there was encouragement to do so, “maybe for them, maybe for me,” they explained, “it was comforting.”

As an adult, literacy still has everyday effects on Frida’s life. In terms of their home life, speaking in English has made it extremely difficult for Frida to express themselves in Spanish because it is not nearly as specific as English and is more context oriented. So sometimes, when Frida wants to talk with their family and discuss how their day went, they can’t find the right words to truly describe how they were feeling. The encouragement of writing and speaking in English with very descriptive words rather than simple words causes immense frustration because there is simply no equivalent for the words Frida is accustomed to using in English. Additionally, Frida admitted that there are times when they feel left out because their family will speak more English to them on purpose so that when they see their family speaking in Spanish it makes them feel awkward because they have a higher speaking ability in English and cannot always describe things in Spanish.

In their academic life, rubrics have been an area of high contention due to the assumptive nature of the document. “Rubrics!” Frida exclaimed. “It [being multilingual] has made rubrics—reading rubrics, understanding rubrics, writing rubrics so complicated,” they explained. Frida furthered that growing up they did a lot of translation for their family and therefore from a young age they had to learn how to translate, describe, and explain things to someone in another language in the simplest or most efficient way possible, whereas in English specificity is key but when the context is not there, the specificity is confusing. “It’s upsetting because if one teacher says, ‘I want you to write an academic summary,’ and another teacher tells you the exact same thing, ‘I want you to write an academic summary,’ they don’t inherently mean the same thing.

What one teacher interprets as one might be more akin to analysis. But one might be more akin to an actual academic summary, and it comes from: one, personal context so how we use the word *summary* in colloquial speak and how we use the word *summary* academically. It causes a lot of conflict,” Frida explained. They furthered, “When I see these rubrics, they confuse me because they use a lot of terms that contradict with A) the colloquial or B) I just feel like they’re explained in too convoluted of a way. And it’s a big sour spot for me because I just hate reading to rubrics because I feel like they’re not described well. At the end of the day, I would rather you tell me I need to write four pages and that page one should be this, and page two should be this because that’s how I would describe things to my parents in Spanish... When you translate, efficiency is key. As long as the key details are there, the point is made. It makes writing, especially in academic settings really, really, really hard because I just feel like things aren’t directly explained to people because they assume you have the context. There are just too many assumptions.”

Quite a few experiences that Frida described in their preliminary interview were present within their tutoring sessions because the topic of the paper Frida brought to both sessions related to bilingual education. Because of this unique situation, Frida was able to describe and discuss some personal situations related to bilingual education within the sessions that helped to make connections between the tutor and tutee while also giving Frida the ability to showcase their attitudes toward language and literacy. Additionally, there were moments within the sessions where Frida needed clarification on word choice and expressing their ideas, which is an issue they expressed within their preliminary interview. These instances will be discussed in more detail in later chapters.

*Georgia Allasi- Public University*

Georgia Allasi, who identifies as a woman, is Peruvian and is 23 years old. She grew up in Peru, living there until she was 19 years old, and she can speak and write in Spanish and English, learning Spanish as her primary language.

Georgia recalled her family being important to her literacy journey as a child. “My mom would just try to tell me words in English and make me repeat so I can learn that language,” Georgia explained. She elaborated, “the one who was there caring about my education was my mom. Yeah, I just can remember her. My dad was always working. I guess my siblings were at school at that time. My mom was the one who had the interest in me to go learn Spanish, like doing good at school, and also, she wanted me to start learning English. So, I guess her interest was because we were from like small town and then she moved to the city. The education is different from the town. City, like in the city have more advantage to learn more things. I guess when I was just like four years old, she knew that everyone here is learning English and so she started teaching me saying words or buying books that I could learn by.” Further, Georgia explained that as the youngest in her family, she was always taught that she had to listen to her elders, so she always listened to her siblings, parents, and other relatives. In her culture, she said, “for respect, you always have to listen to the other person.” From this listening, Georgia recalled, “Everyone speaks Spanish, so I just sorta learn by the environment, repeat and all that. What I can remember is for English. Well, the first memories I have learning English that I have to repeat how I said, my mom is the one who started teaching me some words.”

Also, as the youngest, Georgia learned a lot from her older siblings. “Now I remember my sister is the one who was trying to push me to get better in English because she came here [United States] first, she studied and everything. But she had this experience when they make fun

of when you pronounce something wrong, or a person went and told her that she has to go back to her country. She got that those words hurt her, and she tried to practice and practice and getting better. Well, she advised me, 'Okay, you need to learn because nobody's going to help you. You have to do it by yourself.' What she told me is, 'Okay, you need to watch everything in English, change everything you're found in English so you're going to know the words. And if you are watching the movie with the subtitles in English, also you know what word they are saying. Every time that you don't know how to pronounce, go to your translator, and listen how you have to say it. Usually, the words have this, I think like the pronunciation, the words is supposed to say that word. And she was the one who pushed me here and start speaking English and start getting out of my comfort zone because it's kind of difficult. But once you start practicing, it's getting easier every time. I guess she was the one who pushed me speaking in my second language," Georgia said. Further, Georgia explained that her sisters set a precedent for her when it came to getting an education in the United States. "I would say that my elder sisters were good at school. So, they set that [indistinguishable] for me that if they did it, I supposed to do the same and they pushed me. Like, 'You have to pay attention, you have to sit in front of the class. You need to be listening because you are learning. You have everything. You don't have any disability or something that is stopping you to learn it.' So, you have to learn because I guess also there is this proud that they feel when your children is doing good at school, and you can tell everyone that she's doing good at school. Mostly they did that because both of my parents, I think they finish high school. And after that, they didn't get like the bachelor. So that was one main reason you have to do this because you need to get better opportunities for English. Since my sister was here, she tried to offer that opportunity to me. So, my parents said, 'Yes, you need to go there, and you can learn more things there.' That was the reason that also they were

supporting me in going to taking English classes over there, and also to send here until now. It's like, 'How are you doing your classes? Are you doing good?' Sometimes it's this pressure. Yeah. You have to get A's; you have to be the best. But I will say that I was good at school. I always get A's. When, I got here [Public University], and I got my first B in English, I was like, okay, now English, I will allow myself to get a B because I'm not good at it. But I'm going to practice. And I was telling her, okay, I'm doing the best I can do here with English, but I don't promise to get an A," she explained.

Georgia's educational experiences have also been influential in her literacy journey. She remembered that although Spanish was the primary language in her schools growing up, that there was an hour every week that students were taught English. She furthered, "So I just remember having kind of an idea of the basic information for the language, for introducing myself and certain vocabulary. Uhm, I guess in school was where I was starting learning words and writing. I guess because it was just one hour it wasn't that difficult for me to learn because they didn't, like, make us speak in English so it was mostly writing and knowing the words. And when I came here to United States I started listening because now I can tell there is a lot of accents in English and I would say, 'I guess I didn't learn nothing' because I couldn't understand what they were speaking." Georgia also explained that her parents put her into a Catholic school when she was in high school, which she felt was a positive change as the Catholic school seemed to focus more on a well-rounded education. "So, for writing and speaking, the difference is over there we don't have like a speech class. But what we do have is like for every course we have to go in front of the class. And if they assign any homework and you have to talk about that, you can go in front of the class and speak your homework to your classmates. That's the way that they prepare us how to speak. Well, in those classes, they tried to welcome us and understand

that English is not our first language.” She elaborated, “The professor was good because she always tried to make us relate stories and all that and practice so far with speech. Both professors that I had were very welcoming. They pushed us to speak, to lose the fear to be in front of everybody because everyone can feel like that nervous for writing in school.”

Georgia also found that her part-time job created many opportunities for her to advance in her English literacy. “My sister got me a job in a pet dog hospital, and I started there as a receptionist. I was starting to listening people talking. So, I get used to differentiate certain accents, and it helped me to have a repetitive vocabulary. So, the first vocabulary that I was learning, it was really all about dogs and cats and how to do appointments. So, I think I start with the repetitive language, so I kind of learn that part. But then when I started school, it was difficult for me to have a normal conversation with everybody because I just knew about dogs and cats and vaccines.” She also explained that her job gave her the opportunity to help other Spanish speakers with their literacy, “When I started working in the veterinary office every time I got a phone call that it was a person speaking Spanish, and I feel relieved because I know that Spanish is my first language, and I can talk and express better. So, I was always excited to have the Spanish phone calls, and also, help me because I guess I will say people that are older and they didn't have a chance to learn English here in the United States, it's like a way that I can help them and understand better because sometimes they need directions or how to get a place, I don't know. But I just always found people that just speak Spanish and I can feel that I can understand and help them there. Even if I'm not very fluent in English, at least we can do something here.”

Finally, Georgia felt as though the writing center not just at Public University, but also at the community college she attended, significantly aided in her writing abilities. She said, “I went to the writing center when I was learning here because I didn't know that the community college

offer also writing center is also like surprise for me. They're offering help to do your homework. And I was like, okay, I'm going to take advantage of that. So, when I went there and I showed them my paper because they will ask you to bring your essay or their homework, they are going to look for the errors for you. And I found that I have lot of errors and I guess because it was the first time I was trying to learn how to write academic English. So, every time that I went there, there was this phrase, 'What are you trying to say with this?' I was like, okay, if I write, I think I'm trying to say that, but I have to think again and try to explain them. What is the idea that I want to express? It's like I have that memory that I have those errors. So, every time that I had an assignment, it's like, okay, there must be errors here. Every time that I have any assignment, I will go to the writing center ... That's the primary reason that I use the writing center. It's because I think writing in some sentences that doesn't make sense in English ... I want to try the best sources that I have. Is there to help me to get better. I won't be the only one because when I went there, I would say I went there like three to four times. If I'm not wrong, they tell me that even students that speak English, they have also errors there. So, I don't have to feel bad because it happens. The only way that I can get there is just practicing and practicing." And over time, Georgia explained, her writing began to improve. "When I went there, I was surprised that they didn't find so many errors how I had the first time. So, every time, now, I was asking, okay, is the grammar good? And they say, 'Yeah, everything's right. I don't see anything that you have to change.' I was like in my mind, it's like, are you sure that there is nothing there? Because I can't believe it. I still think there is things to change there." Georgia concluded her preliminary interview with saying, "English is a challenge for me because I'm not good at it, and also, I have this thing every time they say something to write and then say I don't have the words to write it or type in the computer, I think the writing center. It's the place I can go and see what I'm

missing and try to improve that because I just want to get better in English. That's my primary reason to go to the writing center.”

Georgia was one of the more passive tutees in the study which can be traced back to her culture. As she explains in her preliminary interview, she was taught that you must listen to your elders and people of authority to show respect. This, in fact, is not uncommon for multilingual students. According to Cynthia Lee, “L2 learners who come to seek language advice are not proficient in language and they perceive themselves as less knowledgeable than tutors who have higher status, subject knowledge and authority,” (53). Therefore, because Georgia may have seen her tutors as authority figures, she simply accepted what they said about her writing. A deeper examination of Georgia’s and others’ passivity will be discussed.

*Lily Avera – Private University*

Lily Avera identifies as a Dominican American woman and is 20 years old. She is originally from the Dominican Republic but spent most of her life in the Bronx, New York. Her primary language is Spanish, which was the only language spoken at home, and over time, she learned English as it was the only language spoken at school. For a long time, Lily was the only one at home who spoke English. Lily is majoring in Psychology with a focus on Clinical and Health Psychology at Private University.

When asked about her first memories of the English and/or Spanish languages, Lily instantly began to laugh. “The first memory that I have – this is really weird. So, it's actually in Pre-K, because that's the only memory I have of Pre-K, is getting bitten by this kid. And like, the bite lasting like a whole week. And I vividly remember because it hurt and the bite was there for a week, but also because my mom was just yelling in Spanish the whole time and she went to the teacher, and she was yelling at the teacher, ‘Why is my kid basically bitten?’ But yeah, that's my

first memory of language is just my mom yelling in Spanish of why I was bitten in the arm,” she explained. Lily then recalled her first memory of the English language, “Okay, people find this adorable, but I’m like, oh, my God. So cringy. When I was a kid growing up, I heard a lot of people speak English because I mostly grew up in New York. So, at that time, all I spoke was Spanish, and I will be crossing the street and I will be hearing people. But to me, what English sounded was like just a bunch of babble. I would try to imitate it and literally me imitating will be like, let’s speak English, ‘Blahdy blahdy blah.’ Yes, that was English to me. And they were like, oh, that’s so cute. And I’m like, that used to be English. That’s like my first experience. I used to be hearing the language. It sounds like baby talk when you don’t know what’s going on.”

Lily’s family has had a large impact on her literacy acquisition. She explained, “I have this, I call her an aunt. She’s 20 years older than me, but she’s still my cousin. She kind of was the one who for a while picked me up from school just because at the time she went to University and I was like, right there. So, she will try to make conversations with me or just correct me in English a lot. The same thing still happens to me with Spanish. I get corrected in my Spanish just because my brain sometimes gets mixed up with the language. So, it definitely still does happen. But that helped a lot. Like during those walks home from school where she would correct me or be like, while I was in the middle of a story, she’d be like, ‘Oh, by the way,’ she’ll let me finish and be like, ‘By the way, this is how you actually say this. Or did you mean this?’ So, she will let me process it and then correct me. So, I feel like that helped me get the actual language down.” Lily also explained that she has some trouble with Spanish at times but that her family often makes a game out of trying to help her. “Everyone, no matter who it is in the family, if I say something, pronounce it wrong or can’t come up with the word, we’ve literally made a game out of it. So, if I can’t pronounce it, they correct me. But if I can’t think of the word,

they just kind of throw words at me. Like, is this it? I'm like, wait a second. So that way I'm like, 'Wait, what is that? That wasn't even part of the thing I was thinking about.' Like, I know what it's not, but they throw words at me and I'm just like, wait, what is that exactly? Then there's, like, certain words that they say that I'm just like, completely in the air and they're like, 'You know what that means?' And I'm like, no, because sometimes it's like Spanish, like Dominican slang. And like, I know some Dominican slang, but sometimes I'm just like, what does that phrase mean in terms of English?" Lily recalled. Although there is some confusion there when she tries to pick up on the language, Lily has found that she can broker the English language in the same way for her family. "It's actually me doing the opposite for them. So, the way I better my translation is by helping them figure out how to say certain words in English or certain phrases,' she explained.

Experiences in classrooms throughout the years have also really had an impact on Lily with her attainment of English. She recalled, "I remember the first time going to class and the teacher had refused to let me say anything in Spanish. It was like, no, you have to say it in English. And I couldn't like, if I have to go to the bathroom, English. If I needed something, English. And it kind of forced me to have to learn it. So, the way I would do homework, or I would do anything in class will be having this notebook beside me no matter what class I was in. And anytime they say something that I don't understand, I will ask them to repeat it, write it down, and then ask them what it means and write down the meaning. And I will do that for homework, too. So, I just have this huge notebook full of phrases and words that I wanted to learn, and I needed to learn." When asked about the ways in which reading, writing, speaking and/or listening were promoted in schools throughout her educational career, Lily explained, "Well, in English, it's just kind of like you're forced to do it. You have to do it or you're going to

fail. So, it's just kind of like something essential. But with Spanish, it's kind of like, oh, you can take this language course. Or I know that in school because of how I struggled a little bit with English, I had to take extra courses just to comprehend what I was reading or just to get a little bit more help with that. So that's one way they did it, but also just because it was so essential. But in terms of Spanish, it's just kind of like, take the course or it's a mandatory language course, like it was in high school and now in university. So, I have my fair share of Spanish.”

In much the same way as she used a notebook to record phrases and words as a child, Lily now uses voice memos on her cell phone to keep track of her ideas. She explained, “Sometimes when I have like—this happens a lot when I do projects or essays – where I have this amazing idea and I just can't write it down because my brain is like half thinking in Spanish and half thinking in English, and I just like, half the idea I thought about it in Spanish and the other half the idea I thought about it in English and I'm like, wait. But if I wait I lose the idea so I often have to voice memo and just get everything out and it's just like a huge mess of English and Spanish and then I have to sit down, replay it, write what I wrote, like write what I spoke in English then translate what I spoke in Spanish and I'm like, oh, that's what I was thinking, but in that moment I can't translate it. My brain can't catch up with all my ideas. It's also a little bit difficult. It doesn't happen as often in tutoring but there are certain times in tutoring, I just have a word that I want to put into the essay or phrase, and I understand what I mean and then I have to explain to them I understand what you mean, but there's a word for that. I'm just like I know but I can't think about it. Please give me the word. I don't know what it is.”

Finally, one of the major effects that literacy has on Lily as an adult has been in making and understanding jokes. She detailed, “Now as an adult, I still get confused sometimes when there's an inside joke or like, I'm supposed to be part of that inside joke, I'm supposed to get it.

But I don't like, you were there and I'm like the phrase you're using. I don't even understand what's going on. Or like, I said something in English, and I try to translate it in Spanish and it's very technical. Or I do Spanglish because I have no clue how it's done. So, they're like, 'What?' And then I'm like, okay, well, let me just Google it. And they're like, 'Didn't you take eight years of Spanish, Spanish?' And I was like, 'Yes, I did, but still my brain can't process it, but to actually say it, it takes a while for my brain to get there. So, I'm just like, give me a second. I don't know. So, Google translates sometimes is very needed in conversations, which I'm just like, give me a minute. And then they just sit there while I spend like two minutes trying to figure out what it's going to say. But definitely a difficulty sometimes, especially when I found something funny during the day or I have a story I want to tell the effect of the story, or the joke gets lost in translation and they're just like, 'what was so funny about that?' or, 'I don't understand.' And then they turn it into a lesson and I'm just like, it wasn't supposed to be like, a lecture, it was supposed to be something funny, but it got lost in translation. So now it seems like this horrible thing, which is not.'"

Lily's literacy experiences led to a much more of a student driven experience during her tutoring sessions. Within her preliminary interview, Lily explained extensively about the issues she has with articulating her thoughts both in English and Spanish, even explaining how she has used resources such as voice memos and notebooks to record words and phrases that she thinks of so that she can try to find the appropriate words in the target language. Therefore, Lily seemed to use this as an impetus to engage in her tutoring sessions more actively than the other Spanish-speaking students within the study. In this way, as will be discussed further, Lily has more of a unique experience than most.

*Olivia Sisco – Private University*

Olivia Sisco identifies as a Cuban woman and is 18 years old. She is from Cuba where she lived until she was ten years old, and then lived in Panama and Miami before beginning undergrad at Private University where she studies psychology. Her primary language is Spanish, and it was the only language spoken at home. She learned English when she moved to Panama.

One of Olivia's first memories associated with literacy is listening to music and watching television with her father. "He used to listen to a lot of like, English music, and we used to watch I remember like a lot of movies but like in English. And he didn't want me some of them. He didn't want me to watch them in Spanish. And just like we used to watch, like with subtitles so I could get, like the flow of things, I guess. But yeah, I remember that." Later in the preliminary interview, Olivia detailed one show in particular she used to watch with her father that has had a significant effect on her. "We used to watch a lot of *Saturday Night Live*," she said, "and since there's no like subtitles, it's like I have to do it. I should try to listen to it like a lot of late shows and music I don't know. I listen to a lot." And when I asked Olivia if she still watches the show to this day she replied, "Oh yeah. I'm the weird kid who watched *Saturday Night Live*."

Olivia's family have made an impact on her literacy attainment. She cited her mom as being the most important to her learning of how to read and write. She explained, "I don't know. I guess when I had to do homework or whatever, she used to help me go over things a lot, like repetition and reading because I used to read a lot in Spanish and that helped me with my vocabulary in Spanish, which I hate because now I feel like my vocabulary in Spanish is so advanced. And then when I go to English, like baby vocabulary, I'm like, no." She explained that there wasn't really a family member who was significant in her learning of how to read or write in English because her family only spoke Spanish. In fact, when I asked her how reading,

writing, speaking, or listening have been promoted in her home throughout her educational career in Spanish or English, she responded that with English, no one in her home really pushed her to learn English. When I asked her if it was more of a goal that she wanted to achieve for herself, she responded, “Yeah, I think so. Definitely.”

There have been a few impactful moments throughout her educational career that have contributed to Olivia’s literacy acquisition. First, she explained that her only memory of her education in Spanish was, “In Panama, I was in a bilingual school, so I had to look like presentations in English. So, the one I remember right now is what I did about self-esteem. And that was the biggest thing for me because I had the whole presentation in English, and it was good. Well, for English, I think more like speaking, I had to do a lot. I don't know how many presentations like memorized English presentations in English and for Spanish I guess it was just like reading a lot of readings to improve vocabulary and writing. But for English it was more like oral skills.”

Finally, Olivia expressed that much of her literacy acquisition journey has influenced her everyday life today. She explained that she writes for a blog on campus called *Her Campus* where she writes articles about women’s empowerment and other topics related to artists or celebrities. She also likes to read. “I think I read more in Spanish than English actually,” she said. She doesn’t like to pick a particular genre as her favorite to read but recalled that the last book she read was biographical.

Unfortunately, Olivia only participated in one tutoring session so there is a bit less that we can deduct from her tutoring experience. However, within the session she completed, there were a few valuable insights. She was a very passive participant within her session, to the point that the session can be deemed as unsuccessful. This lack of participation could have been the

result of any number of variables, but it is important to note that Olivia was one of the few participants who was never pushed to learn English. She really took it upon herself to use music or television shows to promote her literacy learning and that was something a bit unique to her throughout the study.

*Sadie Monroy – Private University*

Sadie Monroy identifies as a cis, Latina, Guatemalan American and is 19 years old. Sadie studies communications at Private University and is from Maryland. Her primary language is English currently, but she learned Spanish first as it was the only language spoken at home, while English was the only language spoken at school.

One of Sadie's first memories associated with literacy as well as the person that Sadie cites as being the most important in helping her advance her literacies was her mother. She recalled her first memory, "I used to watch anime with my mom, and it was like dubbed in Spanish. And my mom would also order Spanish writing books for me. So, I would learn how to write just starting how to write in general. And I started to learn how to write in Spanish first when I was younger. And then I guess also growing up, I went to Church a lot, so I would read the Bible in Spanish, and it was Bible school and stuff. It was always reading it in Spanish." Her mother also helped her a lot with grammar and speaking. Sadie detailed, "My mom in Spanish, she's helped me ever since I was younger. Whenever I would say something and it wasn't like in the correct tense or I didn't say something correct or couldn't pronounce something, she's always been the one to correct the way I would pronounce things. So, I give a lot of credit to her for correcting, especially with a word that is feminine. When I was younger, I would use the wrong like *el* or *la*. I would use the wrong ones and she would correct that. So now I know and learn through that."

Sadie also has very fond memories of her education that have shaped her literacy acquisition. “I had ESOL in first grade, and I remember very vividly my ESOL teacher explaining how ‘i’ and ‘e’ works and how if there's an ‘e’ at the end of a consonant and there's an ‘i’, that the sound that ‘i’ make is different. And she used my name as an example in our ESOL class. Writing, I remember trying to write like a little paragraph in fourth grade talking about my experience going to Shenandoah Caverns. And I tried to tell my teacher there was like a hole in the wall, but I didn't know what kind of hole to use. And it was really hard for me to explain my mental image to my teacher when I was writing because I didn't know there was two kinds of holes, like whole as in the whole part or hole, like in a wall. Reading, I read a lot of short novels in third grade in fourth grade and fifth grade and listening to a lot of reading by my fifth-grade teacher during downtime in fifth grade. She would read to us, and we would just have to listen, and it was really nice,” Sadie explained. She also credited some of her English teachers as being the most important people to her learning of how to write, “My 8th grade writing English teacher. She was my 7th grade and 8th grade English teacher. She taught me a lot of writing skills in English. I didn't learn how to write properly in Spanish until now that I'm in college. And I'm like seeking out tutoring to know grammar and sentence structure and conjunctions because I have no clue what they all mean in Spanish. I have more practice in English, and I'd say my 7th and 8th grade English teacher helped a lot with learning how to make topic sentences and how to find correct quotes. And I think someone else would be my 10th grade English teacher for again, like writing essays. She would tell me that not to focus too much on the quotes, but on the explanation that you can give because the quotes, you can kind of work them in a way that could work in your favor. And so that helped a lot in just deepening my explanations and analysis for the rest of it. And it's helped me now in college as well. Definitely just teachers that

I've had because at home my parents didn't finish, my mom finished high school and my dad didn't even go to middle school. So, they don't have any knowledge of actual grammatical or like sentences. They have no idea. It was mainly just like teachers in English, but nothing in Spanish up until now.”

Sadie also recalled the many ways in which reading and writing were promoted throughout her education within schools. She said, “They focused a lot on reading and writing through having us read like 30 minutes every day and mark on a calendar in elementary school to promoting us to do—to enter to poetry slams in middle school. In high school, a lot of upper-level academic writing. And so having to read a lot for those writing assignments, I had a lot of writing assignments in all my classes, even in like science or math. So, it was always something that was important. Reading, not so much if it wasn't for school in high school. So, leisure reading, not much. So, I haven't read something for fun in a while. Lots of writing, though. So, my writing skills are a lot better. But because I didn't read that much as I kept growing up, comprehension has been hard for me. In English, in Spanish, surprisingly, it makes sense when I read things, but in English, it takes a while for me to understand things and I have to keep rereading things. And I'm a slow reader in English, too, so comprehension is hard.”

Because Spanish was the only language spoken at home, Sadie explained that learning English was a goal she set for herself. When asked if her family pushed her to read or write in English at home, she explained, “I think not much. Only when it came to helping them with paperwork. Ever since I was younger, I would have to do things for them. And so, because of me having to help them, I would again teach myself how to what does this word mean? What does this have to do? Stuff like that. But if it's not for something they needed, education really wasn't stressed by them. It was very my self determination to get myself through. They didn't really

know much about how the educational system works, so they weren't too attentive to it.” She furthered, “I think when I was growing up it was very self-determined for myself to learn on my own. So, a lot of watching shows. There's also PBS shows that talked about a lot about like there were educational English words. So, there's like world learning, different words, shows like that that were educational helped me in my learning and writing and speaking in English because they didn't have that support at home.”

Finally, Sadie explained that she has continued to develop her literacy skills into her college years. “As an adult now, I've been writing a lot for my school's newspaper. So that's like, writing has helped me a lot in being able to write in a way that is informative. Yet I still have my voice through writing. Not much reading still. College has been hard but definitely because I write about events happening at school. My listening skills have been more like on point and I'm catching on to things because I have to write them down and then because I am taking finally my first Spanish class in my life. That's helped me in Spanish as well. Like really understand Spanish and reading a lot of the Spanish literature helped me expand a lot more on my vocabulary and my way of expressing myself in Spanish as well.”

Sadie was the other participant whose experiences in attaining literacy in English were self-motivated. She explained that only in situations where she served as a language broker was English really encouraged by her family. This self-motivation was present within her sessions as well. Sadie often helped to push her sessions in the direction that she wanted. She would respond to tutors' non-directive methods and ask questions throughout. This will be discussed more in corresponding chapters.

*Implications Based on Spanish-Speaking Tutees' Preliminary Interviews*

There are a number of interesting implications that arose from the preliminary interviews of the Spanish-speaking tutees that I will touch on briefly here that are present in the tutoring sessions that will be discussed in later chapters. First, similar to the tutors' interviews, there is a strong trend of mothers and maternal figures as the most important people to these tutees' literacy acquisition. Steven Alvarez in his research into Mexican immigrant families translanguaging homework literacies found that, "For Mexican immigrant families, the role of seeking help for children with their schooling and scouting for educational resources largely falls upon the shoulders of the mothers" (xiv). More broadly, Alvarez discovered that "language-minoritized parents seek resources to participate in their children's schooling, influence their learning and understanding of concepts, and help them achieve their full academic potential" (xxii). He also found that "these same mothers often set very high goals for themselves and their family, partly in hopes of securing better lives for their children and future grandchildren, and also out of fear that coming generations might experience the same difficulties in life" (S. Alvarez 31) like the lack of education they received themselves as was mentioned by two of the tutees in their interviews. While the population of the current study is a bit different than Alvarez's, we can see the similarities between many of the participants' experiences and what Alvarez discovered. Most often, the people who were most influential to the participants were their mothers, other maternal figures, fathers, siblings, cousins, etc. Some participants' families did not necessarily push them to learn English or to get an education, but they still participated in their child's literacy learning in some significant way therefore supporting their child's literacy attainment.

Another interesting finding from these preliminary interviews that has implications for the tutees' literacy acquisition throughout their lives was the phenomena of child language brokering. Child language brokering, as defined by, Kaia Simon is, "an unofficial interpreter or translator," and that "often children in migrant families assume the role of language broker for their parents and other community members in any situation when English is necessary, and the parents have just begun to acquire English" (Simon 61). Language brokering can have both positive and negative overall effects on the child and their relationship with language and literacy. According to studies conducted by McQuillan and Tse in 1995 and Orellana in 2009, the brokering experience expands the brokers' world knowledge and cultural awareness, enhances listening and communication skills, and improves academic performance (qtd. in Martínez-Gómez 130). Adversely, the brokering experience has also been linked to a number of familial, academic, and cultural stressors as well as depression and anxiety symptoms (qtd. in Martínez-Gómez 130). It is important to account for the ways in which the participants of this study are relied on by their family members to serve this brokering role. Many of the tutees who detailed experiences with brokering discussed the difficulties of the brokering activity because of competing levels of literacy between English and Spanish. Because of the grammatical differences, contextual differences, specificity differences, definitional differences between the two languages, many of the participants noted their issues with brokering. Therefore, language brokering, while forcing these participants to be better listeners and communicators, also complicates their attitudes toward their language learning.

Finally, there is a connection for nearly all tutees to music or subtitled television shows or movies as means of acquiring English literacy. In their article "Captioning and Subtitling: Undervalued Language Learning Strategies," Martine Danan discusses the benefits of subtitles.

Danan explains, “Subtitles are commonly viewed as distracting: They are accused of encouraging viewers to rely on the written text, taking attention away from the actual spoken language, and even fostering a form of laziness bordering on cheating. Yet, many Europeans have claimed to learn English from their regular exposure to subtitled American films and television programs” (para. 1). With this in mind, Danan begins to investigate previous studies done on the benefits of captioning and subtitling. In one study Danan discusses that was conducted by Markham, ESL participants’ responses to a multiple-choice comprehension test based on the vocabulary and syntax of the captions within two American educational program clips were more accurate when captions were available (qtd. in Danan para. 7). Danan discusses another study conducted by Neuman and Koskinen found that “captioning was more beneficial to vocabulary recognition and acquisition than traditional television watching or reading while listening” (qtd. in Danan para. 8). Studies such as J. Birulés-Muntané and S. Soto-Faraco’s research into whether English-spoken films with subtitles help foreign language learning, found that participants’ listening skills improved significantly more from watching English television shows with English subtitles than after watching Spanish subtitled or non-subtitled versions (7). Overall, there are clear benefits to multilingual students’ literacy acquisition through captioned or subtitled television programs as was demonstrated through the importance nearly all participants placed on these key memories of their literacy narratives.

### **Writing Center Directors**

*Dr. Smith-Public University*

Dr. Smith has been the writing center director at Public University for six years. She does not have a primary language as she grew up speaking Bulgarian but now primarily English. She speaks and writes in English and Bulgarian, is functional in reading and writing in Russian, has

some knowledge of Spanish and French as they are languages she has studied but has not been able to maintain, and can read classical and medieval Greek, Latin, and Old Church Slavonic. She received a combined Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degree in Philology as well as a Master of Arts degree in the Humanities and a PhD in Comparative Literature.

Dr. Smith grew up in a family that appreciated reading and book culture, which had a profound effect on her literacy journey. Dr. Smith explained, “We had an extensive library at home,” Dr. Smith told me, “and I read a lot of the books in the library. Bulgaria has traditionally subscribed to the eastern, that is, Byzantine ideal of education, which is that education is something that lifts up a person’s life and soul. During the socialist regime between 1944-1989, the attitude toward education was ambivalent; intellectuals were dealt with suspicion because the worry that they might fall for “subversive” western ideas. The intellectuals were not seen as the working class. They were a class of their own and always suspect. Therefore, books were dangerous.” Furthermore, Dr. Smith remembered, “Secret police raided our home and removed books one time.”

Dr. Smith recalls many instances throughout her education that affected her attitudes toward literacy. She detailed that her training was similar to the ways in which students are trained in the US. “You begin with writing short compositions in grade one or grade two and the compositions get longer. Then different genres are introduced, generally related to the study of literature. I went to a foreign languages high school, where, in the first year, we dropped all subjects except for math and the target languages. After the first year all subjects were taught in English except for math.” She explained further, “My English teacher in my last two years of high school was an amazing, lovely human being and was an excellent English speaker; she helped me prepare for my university entrance exams. She had such a high degree of myopia that,

occasionally, I would walk her back to her apartment because she couldn't see well." Finally, Dr. Smith recalled, "We studied foreign languages according to the latest recommendations in second-language acquisition research, so, for example, when I got to university, we would study English phonetics, then record ourselves to try to attain the standard British pronunciation. People studied British English in eastern Europe, since the British has a well-developed system of teaching English as a foreign language – which is understandable, given the extent of their former colonies. We tried to approximate a native-like fluency as much as possible. I dropped my British accent when I got here [the U.S.]."

Dr. Smith has seen a gradual change in literacy concerns during her time as director of the writing center. "In the last ten, fifteen years, there has been more of an emphasis on multilingualism, understood in many ways, in writing and discussions around what it means to write in a foreign language. We have witnessed more attention to non-standard dialects: AAVE as one of the distinct languages as well as other dialects like Chicano English that are starting to individuate themselves. In general, there has been more attention to the language backgrounds students are bringing to the writing center. With that has come more acceptance of multilingual and multidialectal speakers. I've tried to respond by offering modules, training sessions, talks on varieties of Englishes. In the writing center it is my great desire to see a multilingual writing center, staffed with tutors in languages other than English. Hopefully, with time and persistence chances will open up; for example, students in Spanish classes getting tutored in Spanish. We have a thriving School of Languages and Literatures, and I hope we can build bridges there. It would go a long way toward helping people to acquire more languages and become more world-wise. Where I come from foreign languages are always seen as a huge asset and people are encouraged to learn as many as possible." Dr. Smith has responded to these changes in a number

of ways. She detailed, “We do ask people what their home language is [when they sign up for a tutoring session] but it is not a mandatory question. If you look at the names of students who visit the Writing Center, I have been seeing fewer and fewer recognizably Anglo names, and more and more names that suggest that the student or their parents may be immigrants or whose grandparents may be. We’ve addressed these changes through the Tutor Internship course with extensive ESL training modules. We’re developing mandatory training for tutors to complete after the internship course, intended to bring meta-language awareness and understanding how language works in principle, in order to have some of that comparative syntax knowledge so that when questions arise, tutors have the competence to offer an explanation. That sort of knowledge enables tutors to judge what kind of help is best needed in certain situations, and how to navigate between syntax that may come from a variety of English or issues of idiosyncratic usage. In addition, in the past we used to note whether tutors had foreign language competencies and offer tutoring in different languages for a paper written in English. But students generally don’t request that type of help. Might be more useful to offer tutoring in Spanish for Spanish composition courses than to offer tutoring in another language about a paper in English.” Finally, Dr. Smith expressed hope that one day, the writing center at Public University can become a multilingual writing center to further aid multilingual students.

*Dr. Donald-Private University*

Dr. Donald, who identifies as a white, American male, has been the interim director of the Writing Center at Private University for two academic years. He has a Bachelor of Arts degree in English Literature, a Master of Arts degree in English, and a Master of Fine Arts degree in Creative Writing. Dr. Donald’s first, and only language, is English, although he has

been teaching himself Italian for approximately three and a half years and has some ability to read in the language.

One of Dr. Donald's first memories associated with reading, writing, speaking, or listening outside of academia is related to his family. "Well, I think that the first thing that I think of is, I don't know how old I would have been exactly, but probably going to my grandmother's house. She used to live in the suburb that I grew up in and then moved up to Northern Wisconsin, which was about six or seven hours away from where I lived. So, this might have happened before they moved or it might have happened after, but I distinctly sort of remember sitting next to her, sitting on her lap while she read to me and that being a pretty formative experience. I think my parents did that, too. We would read at night before I went to bed, things like that," he explained. A large part of his love for reading came from his grandmother. Dr. Donald furthered, "My grandma was a huge reader, and she basically in the last 15 or 20 years of her life, she wasn't a recluse or anything, but she didn't really leave the house. She just kind of stayed home with her books when my grandpa did all the kind of outside stuff, the shopping and all that stuff. So, I think part of it was the sort of memories of being with her and reading. But part of it is also just kind of the mystique of a house full of books that she had. When you'd walk in, there'd just be books everywhere. And she had all the classics and all these books I hadn't heard of, and it became a kind of feeling of safety or safe haven or something like that."

When asked how he was trained in literacy concerns, Dr. Donald recalled some unpleasant memories from his childhood. He explained, "I guess in elementary school, pretty typically for what happened in the place that I grew up, we started kind of learning the alphabet in first grade and kindergarten and then moving on from there. I remember thinking I was a pretty good reader, but being placed in the lower reading group, mostly because I think that I was

kind of quiet and took longer to kind of process things than maybe some other students did. But I remember being kind of bummed by that and thinking like I'm just as good a reader as everyone else who was put in the higher group. And I think that kind of, I don't know, motivated me to read more probably.” However, that did not sour his experiences with reading as he recalled that it motivated him to read more. And by the time he was in junior high school, he was reading books above his level. He recalled that people even mentioned to his mother that maybe he shouldn't be reading certain books, and she responded that as long as he was reading, she didn't care what he read. He eventually even majored in English literature during his undergraduate studies because “it was my favorite thing to do was to read and to talk about stories,” he said.

When asked in what ways he has witnessed literacy concerns change over his time as the center director, because he has only been the interim director for a short time, he described the ways he has witnessed it change within composition classrooms. When he started teaching in 2005, Dr. Donald explained that a lot of time was spent focusing on grammar, marking comma splices and pronouns that didn't match antecedents. Over time, he has witnessed the change from grammar concerns to main idea concerns. Even more recently, he has seen the change move into more inclusivity for people with linguistic diversity. He said, “I think when I started, I was definitely teaching just kind of like Standard Academic English, and now I feel like I'm not teaching that as much anymore. I'm teaching voice, and I'm teaching personal perspective and critical thinking and things like that.”

Coming into his role as interim director, Dr. Donald recognized the growing conversation about literacy concerns for multilingual students on campus. “Even in the year that I took over or started, the stuff that we're doing with multilingual learners and stuff like that, people were talking about it, but we weren't doing it at [Private University].” He explained further, “The

whole thing started because professors came to us in the other place where we do tutoring [on campus] and they're like, I don't know what to do. I don't know how to teach these students. The writing center is not teaching them, and the study is not teaching them. And they just didn't know what to do. So, we're like, we need to come up with resources. And then we also started to learn, like, how many multilingual speakers we actually had at [Private University]. People just weren't reporting or there was no real resources for them, so nobody was paying attention. And so, we started kind of learning all that as well. And I just think that as [Private University] becomes a place that's more intent on actually becoming diverse and prizing that diversity, then it's going to become more and more important.” With this in mind, Dr. Donald explained some of the resources he has gathered in the writing center to help multilingual students. They have put together lists of resources compiled in a university website where they can direct instructors. The website also contains testimonials from other instructors who work with multilingual students and embrace multilingualism in their classes. Their goal was, “First of all, getting people talking about it. And second of all, getting people to move from this idea that these students aren't bad writers, they are bringing other great strengths to campus. And then we have to teach them somewhat differently, too.”

In addition to these initiatives, one of the writing center tutors conducted a study on linguistic diversity at the university and “found that a large number of students of color felt like they weren't allowed to write in their own voices in their classes. And I think that's going to be a pretty eye-opening thing for everybody at our school because I think we've diluted ourselves into thinking we're pretty Liberal and pretty eyes wide open, that kind of thing. But I don't think that's the case, or at least our students don't think it's the case,” Dr. Donald described. However, Dr. Donald has spearheaded some initiatives within his short time as interim director to help the

writing center at Private University become a place where students feel as though their unique experiences are valued. During the 2020/2021 academic year when the university's classes were still held virtually because of the Covid19 pandemic and few students were utilizing the writing center, Dr. Donald's tutors were assigned "professional development" projects. The tutors each received a question based on inclusivity and social justice that they needed to research to learn how to apply these important topics in the writing center. He explained that the tutors "came up with a bunch of really good ideas for what we can do in the writing center. Ideas like potentially putting together panels where we talk about writing with different groups on campus like the writing center would team up with the LGBTQ community and with Alana which is the BIPOC group on campus. So, trying to bring more people in because I think one of the problems that we noticed is that we're seen as a whiter space on campus by many students and so we're trying to combat that as much as we can, and I think that might affect a lot of multilingual students as many of them probably aren't white." In the end, Dr. Donald explained, "So not that I think that everyone has to express themselves through writing, but I do think that everyone can. So, I try to help every student that I have do it."

#### *Implications Based on Writing Center Directors' Interviews*

There are many interesting implications that can be drawn from the interviews with each director at a university level as well as at the individual writing center level. First, it seems significant to note the way in which Private University responded to the shift overall. While Dr. Smith did not mention how Public University as a whole reacted to this shift, Dr. Donald's interview highlighted the ways in which Private University seemed to struggle finding resources to best help their multilingual students. There is no way to know why this occurred, and maybe because Dr. Donald has limited knowledge of the center's history, there is more to the story, but

it's interesting to wonder if the size of the university contributed to a lack of resources. For example, in the 2021/2022 academic year, the same academic year this study was conducted, Private University reported having 3,787 undergraduate students of which 28% self-reported as "Students of Color" and 2% self-reported as "International." Public University reported having 30,921 undergraduate students of which 3.6% self-reported as "Foreign", 24.9% self-reported as "Other Minority", and 22.1% self-reported as "Underrepresented Minority." Dr. Donald's efforts to overcome this issue are notable, but more research needs to be done as to ways in which universities can aid their writing centers in creating these resources and preparing faculty for changing populations of students as this should be seen as a university wide issue, and not just a writing center issue.

Individually, each writing center has responded in a similar way to each other. As teachers of English with different specialties and as individuals whose attitudes toward language and literacy were shaped in many different ways, they learned to adjust to the times and respond accordingly for the students they serve in the writing center. The connections they have to literacy learning, Dr. Smith's unique educational experience and background of being multilingual herself and Dr. Donald's love of reading and writing that eventually blossomed despite early setbacks, seem to have created attitudes toward literacy that aim to have a positive impact on the attitudes toward literacy and language of their writing center students. More research into writing center directors' attitudes toward language and literacy needs to be done to show in any definitive manner the positive effects those attitudes may have on multilingual students themselves, but for now, it seems clear that these two writing centers are moving forward with multilingual students' unique needs in mind.

### **Overall Implications from Preliminary Interviews**

These preliminary interviews showcase a wide variety of narratives in which no two stories are the same. Each participant has had both positive and negative experiences that have shaped their literacy acquisition in their L1 and L2 which over time crafted attitudes toward language and literacy. These attitudes, whether participants are conscious of it or not, have an effect on their continued literacy experiences. The next chapter begins the analysis of tutoring sessions between the Spanish-speaking students and the writing center tutors. Here the connections between students' past experiences and their ongoing experiences will become clear.

## **Chapter 2- Encouraging Literacy Learning: Writing Center Tutors as Literacy Mentors**

During analysis of the data three main findings emerged, the first of which will be discussed in this chapter, referring to the ways in which the tutors encouraged literacy learning for the Spanish-speaking tutees they worked with. Throughout the tutoring sessions, there were a variety of instances that led to the overall concept of encouraging literacy learning. These instances can be summarized as instances of encouraging student-led learning, questioning student thinking as a non-directive technique for language learning, and relating to students with similar experiences<sup>1</sup>. What these instances showed, and what I will demonstrate in detail within this chapter is the way in which tutors own literacy experiences both implicitly and explicitly influenced their tutoring, helping them to serve as literacy mentors for the Spanish-speaking tutees they worked with in these sessions.

### **Encouraging Student-Led Learning by Promoting Agency**

Encouraging student-led learning was the second most common occurrence within all of the tutoring sessions. And particularly, Erin, one of the tutors for Private University, was the person to use it the most out of all the tutors, having used it five times in her session with Lily and five times in her session with Sadie. In the session with Lily, the two worked on Lily's theology research paper. Lily explained at the beginning of the session that she needed to add her works cited page to the essay and that her professor kept discussing concepts in class that she felt were necessary to incorporate into the paper, leaving her feeling as though the paper did not "flow." After setting these expectations at the beginning of the session, the following exchange occurs in which we see Erin giving Lily the opportunity to lead the session:

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<sup>1</sup> Encouraging student-led learning, questioning student thinking as non-directive technique for language learning, and relating to students with similar experiences are all codes gathered from the data that are discussed in detail throughout the chapter. The explanations of these codes are easier to distinguish by reading through the description of codes within Appendix E to help frame your understanding as you move into the chapter.

Erin (02:12): Cool. And how long is this? Is there like, any guidelines on that?

Lily (02:20): I think he said, I know I wrote it down. He said that he gave us the paper for it, but then he forgot and then he said he was going to upload it and then he forgot to do that, so I had to write it down. But five pages later, due December 9, I have a tab. Let me see. I think he said definitely less than ten pages. That's all we're aware of. Okay. Yeah, five to seven pages. So, I hit the mark.

**Erin (03:12): All right, perfect. So, is there a specific section you'd like to start with or anything in particular you like me to look at or look for?**

Lily (03:24): No, I just had those three major points like I said that go back to the situation with reference to class or anything that we've learned in class why he died and why is it, like, important. I know he said to give a little bit of a background, but more connecting to class and why it's important, but mostly it's grammar. Like, sometimes I forget because I write the way I think, which leads me to recording myself. It doesn't translate well sometimes.

In the highlighted section, Erin asked Lily what exactly she wants to focus on in the session. This is what many would deem as a typical writing center interaction of setting the agenda at the beginning of the session. It gives tutors an idea of what the student's needs are and helps them to focus the session on specific goals. This gave Lily the ability to lead the session where she wanted it to go. As she mentioned at the end of this exchange, she often has trouble articulating her thoughts so she records her ideas and translates them later, which she explained in her preliminary interview, and which will be discussed as a significant moment in their interaction in a later chapter. In this way, Lily was able to direct attention to the areas of her literacy learning that she already knew she needed to work on.

There were other areas within the session between Erin and Lily where student-led learning was encouraged as well. Many times throughout the session, Erin would check in with Lily such as:

Erin (04:54): Okay, cool. **Would you prefer to read? Would you like me to? We can alternate whatever you think.**

Lily (04:59): I always prefer someone else to read just because. Not that I don't mind reading. It's just that it helps me catch mistakes quicker.

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Erin (07:35): Okay. Yeah, that looks good. **Did you have any other specific questions about the section at all you want me to look at?**

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Erin (12:48): That makes sense? Okay, cool. Awesome. And then let's look at the last little paragraph. It might just be one sentence you have at the very bottom here. I want to make sure we clarify that one, too. All right. "The Buddhist canon is constantly developing as new text is added and is considered a source of authority because it provides a record of Buddhist teaching, therefore providing an understanding of Buddha himself." Okay, cool. **I think this is all good information, but I feel like it might need to be two sentences. So where do you think we should break it up?**

Lily (13:23): Maybe here.

Erin (13:27): That could work to make that one a full sentence. You'd have to say, therefore it provides instead of providing. Cool. Yeah, I think that clarifies it. All right.

\*\*\*\*\*

Erin (24:33): I think those three are really strong. Some of the strongest ones I read so far. I think you tie it back to the class work really well. You tie it back to like you make good connections between the different kinds of martyrs. And I think it's really well written, too. **Do you have any specific questions on those ones at all?**

In the highlighted section from 4:54, Erin asked how Lily wanted to move forward in the session in terms of reading her essay. This gave Lily the opportunity to explain that she prefers someone else to read aloud as it helps her to catch mistakes quicker. The exchange showed Erin's attitudes toward literacy because she prioritized Lily's needs and by asking, gave Lily the ability to express those needs. It also allowed Erin some insight into Lily's literacy background and learning style so that Erin knew how to best help Lily, which was by reading it aloud for her. Additionally, by negotiating the agenda in this way, it helped to keep the focus on the writing. Jennifer Ritter explains, "When a student has a low level of English proficiency, reading aloud may focus attention away from the writing and onto pronunciation, which is not our goal" (105). Therefore, Erin provided a space where Lily could best learn.

Erin also continued to check in on Lily throughout the session as shown in the next three segments highlighted above (7:35, 12:48, and 24:33). She asked if Lily had any questions so that

Lily had the opportunity to express her needs again throughout. She also, when providing specific feedback as in the example at 12:48, used a non-directive method to approach her suggestion.

Non-directive approaches to peer tutoring have been a subject of much debate in writing center scholarship. Peter Carino discusses the history of the debate in his discussion of power and authority in the writing center. On the one hand, scholars Irene Clark and David Healy speculate that within the peer tutoring interaction tutors must be doing some of the work for students (Carino 115). Other scholars such as Nancy Grimm believe that nondirective methods withhold insider information from students making them guess what is expected (Carino 115). As Carino argues, there are inadvertently moments where power and authority are present within sessions but “non-directive tutoring can cue students to recall knowledge they have and construct new knowledge that they do not ... [Therefore,] both student and tutor share authority and engage in collaborative operations to improve the text” (Carino 118-119). With this in mind, we can understand the ways in which Erin served as a literacy mentor to Lily, letting her take charge in where she thought the sentence needed to be separated. At the same time, Erin was also balancing her feedback by providing some direct instruction when she explained there would need to be a change in the grammatical structure of a word in the following sentence. Lily then was able to explore her own literacy knowledge with the open-ended question Erin posed, while also learning from the direct instruction Erin followed up with.

Erin’s attitude toward language and literacy that have been informed by her experiences clearly had a positive effect in her tutoring style. Erin mentioned in her preliminary interview that she hopes to one day emulate the positive literacy attitudes that her teachers had and helped to foster in her in her own classrooms, which she seemed to have done within the session with

Lily. In Erin's preliminary interview, we learned that her elementary teachers set aside time for writing every day, and in second grade, she wrote in a journal where the teacher would write encouraging feedback in the margins and grade the journals for effort. In this way, Erin's non-directive tutoring methods provide the same encouraging feedback model to Lily, creating for her a positive literacy learning environment. In fact, Lily mentioned in her follow-up interview that she was "really comfortable" working with Erin and that, "I actually forgot that we were almost out of time." In her follow-up interview, Erin said, "One of the things I really appreciated during the session was like [Lily]'s willingness to share with me from the beginning of the session, like the things that were challenging for her and the difficulties that she had had with organizing the paper and structuring the paper. I thought that she was really vulnerable going into the session and honest about what she wanted to work on, which I appreciate." Although Erin seemed unaware of it, one can surmise that Lily's bravery in making herself vulnerable came from the encouragement Erin provided early on in the session, making for an exchange that benefited both participants.

In Erin's session with Sadie, Erin also encouraged student-led learning many times throughout. In this session, Sadie brought an analysis of a poem for her English class within which she needed to better incorporate imagery, word choice, and poetic devices as ways to discuss the poem. Much like in her session with Lily, Erin began the session with setting the agenda and asking what Sadie wanted to work on and if there was anything in particular that Sadie wanted Erin to pay attention to as they read through the essay, which you can see in the following excerpts:

Erin (00:28): Cool. And have you been to the writing center before? Either like in person or over Zoom?

Sadie (00:32): Yeah, I've been twice.

**Erin (00:35): Oh, nice. All right, so what would you like to work on?**

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**Erin (02:02): Was there anything in particular that you wanted me to look out for as we're reading through?**

Sadie (02:08): I think I've been having an issue with tying my thesis statement to the rest of my essays. So, I'll start off with a thesis statement and my conclusion is not the same.

Erin (02:20): Okay.

Sadie (02:21): It won't really match up, so just looking out for that.

Much like in her session with Lily, Erin encouraged Sadie to guide the session in the ways she needed it to go. She also continued to check in on Sadie and her understanding throughout to ensure Sadie did not have any questions. In one of these exchanges in particular, Sadie did have a question that Erin was able to guide her through:

**Erin (13:30): Yeah, of course. Do you have any specific questions about that one?**

Sadie (13:38): I think as a whole, these paragraphs start with always ending with ninth stanza or like sixth stanza and stuff. And I don't know if that is strong in papers or if it's like, kind of just sounds like repetitious or if it's okay that it always does that.

**Erin (14:02): I see. Okay. Yeah. So, I think that it wouldn't be a bad thing to leave it the way that it is, but if you wanted to kind of challenge yourself to change it up so you weren't repeating yourself, I think that definitely could help. One way to do it is just kind of to still mention the specific stanza number like you do, but kind of wait until the second stanza. Sorry. The second sentence in your paragraph to mention that. So, you could say, like, "Word choice is another way that the author describes the divide between them and the other generations. This is most noticeable in the ninth stanza," or something like that. Just so you have one sentence before it.**

Sadie (14:44): Okay. Yeah. Because I read this a few times, and I was always like, it's fine, but I feel like I think this is the third paragraph of me using 4th, 7th, and the 9th, and I want to work on my topic sentences to make them better.

**Erin (15:06): Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. And I think that's another way, like you said, that you can kind of tie it back to the thesis. It's like telling people or whoever is reading it, our professor, right? When you start that paragraph, like, this is how this paragraph is going to tie back to the thesis. And just doing that in your first sentence before you get into the specifics can be helpful.**

Sadie (15:25): Okay. Thank you.

In this exchange, Sadie worried that in her analysis she was being too repetitious by saying the stanza number at the beginning of each sentence. Erin provided two options to Sadie, letting her

know that it was fine as is but if she wanted to change it, she could, and Erin provided an example. As Sadie mentioned, she wanted to improve her topic sentences, and Erin helped her to understand how improving those topic sentences helped to tie the information to her thesis.

Overall, in relation to her session with Erin, Sadie felt, “Very comfortable. I liked her and the insight that she gave me. Sometimes Zoom can be intimidating, but she made it really simple.” Sadie also felt as though her past literacy experiences with the writing center helped her literacy learning as she explained:

Since I've been to the Writing Center more times before with what I learned going into this essay, I had more of a grasp on what to do and what not to do. But, yeah, I generally think that just having that experience with going and learning more with what I have already written has helped because in the past, there really wasn't that kind of resources at my school. So, it was just like, you look over it and you turn it in and get the grade you get. But here is like another set of eyes. I learn from the sessions, and then I keep improving. And I've noticed my writing improved from my first essay to now my third essay.

Erin noted in her follow-up interview for the session with Sadie that she makes it a goal to ensure students are getting what they want and need from their sessions. She explained:

I think that one of the things I mentioned before is like the minimalist approach to tutoring, and that's something that we covered in one of our readings in our class to become a tutor. And I think I definitely use that approach in my sessions and in this session as well, where I'm not trying to nitpick everything that my tutee could improve on in the session, and I want to focus more like I said on empowering the students as writers. And so, I know in this session in particular, I stopped after each paragraph and made sure

that whatever I was highlighting for [Sadie] was what she wanted to get out of the session. So, I asked if she had any specific questions about the paragraph that we had read through. And I also, at the very beginning of the session asked her what she wanted me to look for going through. So, I know that there was probably a handful of grammatical errors or smaller things that I could have nit-picked throughout. But I try to really focus my attention on the things that are important to the tutee that comes in, and I guess that's related to my own experience with the writing in that it was a very personal process for me and like an empowering form of expression.

Erin's experiences with and attitudes toward literacy, as she explained, have a clear impact on the ways she encourages her tutees to guide their literacy learning.

The only other tutor who used this technique often throughout their tutoring was Emma in her session with Sadie at Private University. In this session, Sadie brought two poems that she needed to compare in terms of their themes, but she also needed to include the theme of her freshman seminar, "self and other." After setting the agenda for the session, Sadie read the first paragraph aloud and then they stopped to talk about it, which you can see in the following excerpt:

**Emma (03:44): Okay. How do you feel about your opening paragraph?**

Sadie (03:51): A little like iffy I don't know if it's like just because it kind of threw me for a curveball, having to incorporate [freshman seminar] into a poem. Like, tie those together. But let me try it.

Emma (04:10): Yeah. I think you do a really good job at the end. Kind of like introducing your topic and the poems. Let's see what your kind of, like, thesis is. "The metaphor of life being a journey shapes the way the speakers in Facing West from California Shores and Escape from the Old Country share their perspective regarding their personal identity and how their behavior shapes their life experience." I think that's really good. One, like, little like, random little typo, I noticed, is just like Facing West from California Shores, I think there should be a double quote at the end when you're, like, kind of putting the name of the poem in quotes. But the first time, it's just like by Walt Whitman right after.

Sadie (04:55): Oh, I see. That was just a small like, I didn't even notice that. Thank you.

**Emma (04:57): Yeah. So, I think you do a good job introducing the theme of self and other. One thing that you might want to consider, I don't think you necessarily have to connect it directly to college life, college students. It is like an option, and I feel like it's very relevant to you.**

Emma, rather than pointing out anything that might have caught her eye, first let Sadie guide what they talked about within the first paragraph. This gave Sadie the ability to express the issues she felt she was having with the paragraph and from there, Emma was able to provide some suggestions to help tie in the 'self and other' theme into the paragraph. This type of exchange happened later in the session as well.

**Emma (10:33): Okay, I think you do some good analysis in that paragraph about the whole circle. Let's see, there was a couple of things. Okay. How do you feel about the beginning of it?**

**Sadie (11:09): I like the topic sentence. However, the phrase like life is a journey is such like, I feel like I have to keep repeating it. And also, it's kind of like uncomfortable saying the metaphor life is a journey and the way it's like because it's as verbally speaking, it sounds fine, but then it's like putting it into the sentence kind of feels weird because it's kind of like just a saying.**

Emma (11:41): Yeah. Life being a journey over and over.

Sadie (11:46): Journey, journey, journey. Yeah. And it's a little too much.

Emma (11:54): "Life being a journey is a common metaphor used to explain the human experience. The speaker in Facing West from California Shores describes his life journey as a circular path." Yeah. I think maybe the last sentence on that page. I feel like by then it is a lot of the speaker is writing about his own life journey and how the journey was meant for self-discovery.

Again, Emma asked for Sadie's opinion before listing her own thoughts on the paragraph. In doing so, Sadie was able to express the concerns she had for her own writing and received feedback on areas that she had identified in her own writing as areas for improvement. From her preliminary interview, we learned that Sadie's desires to learn English were self-motivated as her family really only encouraged English when they needed her to translate. Therefore, Emma's techniques aided Sadie in her self-motivations and desires to further her literacy attainment. In fact, Sadie mentioned the importance of this technique in her follow-up interview, saying:

I really like her in the way that she asked me, do you think this would be something you want to add? Like, when we were going through sentences that she not only was pointing me in the right direction and also like, do you think it would fit if you said this or this way or both of these things can work out. And I really like that. With other tutors I've had, it's going to be like, oh, you can say this. And I like that [Emma] allowed me to have my input, and then we could work with what I would think would work best.

While on the surface this seems like a simple occurrence that could have been taught to Emma during tutor training, what was especially interesting was that Emma was the only tutor who did stop to ask the tutee's opinion before giving her own. So, I think it is possible that Emma's life experiences related to listening influenced her values in tutoring, making listening a more important part of her tutoring pedagogy than it might be for other tutors.

In her preliminary interview, Emma mentioned a number of experiences that were present within her session with Sadie. First, Emma mentioned that her mother was the most influential to her learning of reading and writing. As a teacher, it was important to Emma's mother that she read, and Emma described that her mother was never overbearing or too structured with how she pushed literacy. As a result, Emma mentioned that she tends to be more of a listener than a talker as she likes to hear other people's perspectives before she makes a decision. This was something very clear that Emma carried out in her session. She waited to hear Sadie's perspective before she gave her opinion. But again, is this necessarily tied to Emma's dispositions toward literacy, or is she simply demonstrating good tutoring?

Writing center theory has historically highlighted the importance of listening. As early as 1984, we can find discussion of listening within Stephen North's "Idea of a Writing Center" where he explained, "Nearly everyone who writes likes—and needs—to talk about his or her

writing, preferably with someone who will really listen, who knows how to listen, and knows how to talk about writing too” (North 439-40). And the idea of listening has continued to be vital to writing center theory and tutor training. In Leigh Ryan and Lisa Zimmerelli’s *The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors*, arguably the most commonly used text for tutor training, they discussed the many roles tutors play within their positions in the writing center. Specifically, they detailed the role of “The Counselor” who they described as someone who “listen[s] to writers’ concerns and deal[s] with such issues as attitudes and motivations” (Ryan and Zimmerelli 7). Further in the guide, they explained that active listening is one of the four powerful tools at the disposal of tutors. Ryan and Zimmerelli defined active listening as “making a conscious effort not only to hear another person’s words, but also to understand the complete message being sent” (16). Therefore, some might push back on the idea that Emma’s experiences related to her mother and to listening skills are what made these moments successful for the tutee. However, because Emma was the only tutor who created these moments for the tutee to express their opinions on each paragraph before giving her opinions, it seems Emma’s attitudes toward listening helped her to elevate this important part of her tutor training more so than other tutors and were very meaningful to Sadie and her overall attitude toward literacy learning in the writing center.

#### *Implications: Agenda Setting as Providing Student Agency*

What is important to note from this section of encouraging student-led learning is the reframing of what we typically see as agenda setting or simply asking clarifying questions in a session. While on the surface, that is what is happening in these different moments in each session, a deeper assessment reveals the ways in which the tutors are really creating opportunities for student agency. By asking questions, they allowed students to drive the session

and be agents in their own learning. While this is often taught in tutor training, it also is driven by the experiences each tutor had throughout their lives. If Erin and Emma had not had the positive experiences they had, would they have been as successful in their sessions as they were? Would they have been such active listeners without the previous experiences they have had, therefore allowing the tutees to exercise and advocate for their literacy learning? One can surmise then that literacy mentorship works best when the tutors utilize their experiences, that include their tutor training, to encourage students to become agents of their own learning.

### **Questioning Student Thinking as Non-Directive Language Learning**

Another part of encouraging literacy learning that happened in the tutoring sessions surrounded tutors questioning student thinking as a means for non-directive language learning. This often resembled tutors asking the Spanish-speaking tutees questions that the tutors themselves might have already known the answers to or questions about differences in genre to help gauge the tutees' knowledge before providing feedback. This happened most often in the session between Reuben and Georgia from Public University. In this session, Georgia brought a literature review for an essay on eyeglasses as an assistive technology that she was working on for her English class. After they talked a bit about the literature review, Reuben suggested they read over the assignment sheet, and the following interaction occurs:

**Reuben (02:26): So there may be information in there that I want to make sure that you've seen it all, explore research. Right. About. I love this. The literature review asks as if the literature review was a real person who asked you something. It's called personification. Not necessary in this assignment. But there you have it. Yeah. Scholarly, popular, multimedia, print text. Yeah. So how is this different from your annotated bibliography? Have you done that?**

Georgia (03:08): He made us complete a table where we put our sources.

Reuben (03:14): Did you write about them in the annotated?

Georgia (03:17): Yeah. The first one was like to find sources and try to see what the alter is and see if they are credible or not to talk about the topic.

Reuben (03:27): All right. Yes. All right.

Georgia (03:28): And then the other were to try to look information that we can use in our paper.

**Reuben (03:34): Okay. Does that make sense? That's good. All right. Okay. Yes. Your research is evolving, right. So, the more you look, probably the more you find or the more potential sources you find, hopefully. Yeah. So, this is going to be you will use old and new right to identify various intersecting and conflicting positions. What do they mean by that?**

Georgia (04:07): What I understood is like he tried us to see there is like an issue with the topic and to find information out there, support one side and others what they don't agree with us.

Reuben (04:21): Exactly. So, like anything that may be new or controversial, there may be at least two sides to it. Right. And so, as you develop your paper, you're going to first look seriously at what the information tells you, what the literature tells you. Then you're going to be able to add you're going to try and convince people that one view is better than the other. It's not perfect, and it will enable you to discuss why you think those are important or right and why some of the critiques may have weaknesses or maybe wrong or false assumptions. Right. Makes sense. Yeah. Because you got to deal with the people that say, no, that's not true. The moon rises out of the ... you know people. They got some sort of weird ideas. All right. You're going to develop a thesis. You need a thesis for your literature review. I don't understand that, but that's what you're supposed to do. Okay. **So, a thesis really you're going to identify are you comfortable with this? Have you done theses before? Theses?**

In this exchange, Reuben challenged Georgia's thinking to find out what she did or did not know about the topic before they even began to read what she had written so far. In this way, Reuben seemed to have tried to gauge Georgia's genre knowledge a bit to be able to explain the important concepts before moving into the actual content of her essay. This also may have provided an opportunity for literacy learning had these concepts been unknown to Georgia. In a similar exchange, Reuben used the technique of challenging student thinking as a way to start a brainstorming session with Georgia as seen in the following excerpt:

Georgia (19:17): Yeah. At the beginning what attract me to this topic is because there was this video talking about eyeglasses were just first like medical device, but then they become a fashion item. So that was first the topic. And then when I was researching, I found that it's also not assistive technology and has more improvement compared to other assistive technologies.

**Reuben (19:46): Okay. So, you're going to be talking about those two things and perhaps other things the more research you do. So, your thesis is going to have to talk to those main points. So, what are the main points that you are going to talk about?**

Georgia (20:15): I'm going to talk about the design? So how-

**Reuben (20:18): Do you have a piece of paper or something? How do you brainstorm? Because that's what we're going to try and do, a little brainstorming so that we can try and help shape a possible thesis for you because you're about where you need to get something in there. You've given us an introduction to your ideas, which are good. How far back in time are you going to trace eyeglasses?**

Although he does cut Georgia off in her attempt to respond to the first set of questions he asked, he seems to have been challenging her thinking on her topic and teaching her some techniques to help with her brainstorming process. Education research has shown that this way of interacting with students during the writing process can be very fruitful as a way to teach and assess with equity. Sarah Beck, Karis Jones, Scott Storm, and Holly Smith discuss that:

Dialogic writing is an approach to conducting writing conferences that unites conversation with what is traditionally known as thinking aloud. It foregrounds students' composing processes to reveal and address the obstacles that interfere with those processes: The teacher encourages the student to verbalize their composing processes and then attempts to support those processes with prompts and questions. These prompts and questions, along with written materials that the teacher offers during the session, act as scaffolds for students' writing processes. (651)

They discuss further that it is important for White, English-dominant teachers to keep in mind the inherent power differentials that could complicate this work. Teachers working with multilingual students would need to investigate what the student's writing goals are and create their instructions accordingly (Beck et al. 658). With this in mind, a technique such as the one Reuben exhibited in the session with Georgia, could help tutors in teaching students with equity,

especially multilingual students whose familiarity with different genres and writing conventions may be very different from others' familiarity.

This technique was also really helpful for Georgia. She explained in her follow-up interview that this was her third time working with Reuben at the writing center and:

I like how he works with me because at the beginning I didn't give much importance to reading, like the whole assignment because it's really wordy, the assignment. But when he makes me read and understand each part, he helps me to understand what the professor is asking. So, it makes easier the assignment so he tried to explain me in an easy way, I can understand what I have to do. And also, he gives me suggestions how can I do my work in certain areas of my paper. That's very helpful. And also, he's a person that gives you conversation and tries to give you a more perspective of what you're talking about.

Although there was not a moment mentioned in Reuben's preliminary interview that we can specifically point to, it seems clear that Reuben's vast experiences with tutoring, teaching, and language have fostered knowledge of what typically works best for students. In his role here as a literacy mentor, Reuben taught scaffolded reading practices. In his article "Interactional Scaffolding for Reading Comprehension: A Systematic Review," Dan Reynolds defines scaffolding as a "process that enables a child or novice to solve a problem, carry out a task or achieve a goal which would be beyond his unassisted efforts" (qtd. in Reynolds para. 2). When combined with reading practices for the sake of comprehension, Reynolds quoted research conducted by Frey and Fisher which explains that teachers will use a "comprehension as outcome" approach which is:

A four-step process by which the teacher elicits student knowledge, judges whether it is appropriate reading of the text, and, if it is not, prompts students to reconsider. If the

prompts do not lead students to appropriate answers, the teacher steps in to model and demonstrate the correct answer. Overall, in this pedagogy, the scaffolder's role is to provide prior knowledge and explain the typical meanings of vocabulary words to help the reader comprehend the meaning embedded in the text. (qtd. in Reynolds para. 10)

Reuben's use of this scaffolded reading has been helpful for Georgia as they have continued to work together, and as Georgia mentioned in her follow-up interview, it has helped to make the assignments easier for her.

A few other tutors also used this technique, including Emma and Erin, who we discussed earlier. In Erin's session with Lily that was discussed earlier, there were also a few moments where the non-directive technique was used to advance the student's literacy learning. In the following excerpt, Erin noticed a word that she thought might not fit with the meaning of the text, so she asks Lily if she meant to use a different word, using a non-directive tutoring technique, the leading question technique, to indicate that Lily's word choice might not have been the best option:

Erin (09:26): "It was the composition of the higher Dharma that caused disputes among the community. During the meeting of the Second Council in 383 BCE, a group of monks were reprimanded for disobeying the Mosaic laws. Later on, this group held their own meeting where they decided to split from the community and call themselves Mahasinga Hika. This group was characterized by a progressive approach to Buddhism. Instead of meditation, they emphasize the importance of meditation." **Did you mean to add a different word in there?**

Lily (10:00): **Wait. Instead, pattern rules, I guess, like discipline instead of.**

Erin (10:20): **That sounds good. Discipline.** "Additionally, they were more accepting of women and left gifted." Okay.

In this exchange, we can see that Erin does a nice job of using the leading questions technique to inquire about the use of the word without directly saying she thought the word was incorrect. This gave Lily the agency to express the meaning she hoped to convey in her writing. As we learned in Chapter 1, Lily often has difficulty finding the correct word to convey her meaning in

the target language, often using notebooks or voice memos to record her thoughts in Spanish to translate to English later on. Erin's approach gave Lily the ability to think through her word choice a bit more to ensure the meaning she wanted for her sentence and therefore providing a positive moment for literacy learning.

In "Questioning in Writing Center Conferences," Isabelle Thompson and Jo Mackiewicz found that leading questions made up 41% of the questions that were asked in the sessions they studied (53). Thompson and Mackiewicz describe leading questions as known-information questions. These questions aim for a limited range of responses already known to the teacher, that require a yes/no answer, that mitigate directness, and help students with the rough spots in their thinking (53-54). From analyzing student satisfaction surveys, the authors found that students expect to leave the session with ideas about how to move forward with their writing—ideas that they gain from tutors' leading questions (Thompson and Mackiewicz 54). Therefore, this technique is particularly effective, especially for Spanish-speaking tutees such as Lily who typically has trouble sorting through her thoughts as she attempts to negotiate her ideas between English and Spanish.

Emma, in her session with Olivia at Private University, had to use a similar questioning technique because the student was very quiet within the session. Olivia was working on an essay in which she needed to pick two texts her class read throughout the semester, choose a theme that pervades the two texts, and analyze the treatment of that theme. Since Olivia was still in the brainstorming phase of the essay, Emma used the common-ground questioning technique to help Olivia tease out the ideas she had. Thompson and Mackiewicz's study on questioning found that common-ground questions made up a separate 41% of the questions asked in the tutoring sessions they studied (48). These types of questions can take on a number of different forms, but

most important to the current study, are common-ground questions that “establish a shared understanding of the assignment so that [tutors] could help students determine the best course of action in planning or revising” and questions that help to gauge what a student knows about a topic or assignment (Thompson and Mackiewicz 49). We can also connect Reuben’s line of questioning in his session with Georgia from earlier as common-ground questions as he was attempting to assess what Georgia knew about the assignment and her stage in the composing process (Thompson and Mackiewicz 42).

The following lengthy excerpt shows how Emma used the common-ground technique. It is especially important as you read through this excerpt to pay attention to the timestamps that indicate many awkward pauses throughout the exchange:

**Emma (04:15): Yeah. If you want to, you can share your screen. And then sometimes what helps me, you can choose to do this if you want, you can put the assignment at the top if you want to copy and paste it just to give something to look at. Okay. So, then you have your two texts and choose a topic or theme that pervades the texts. And you said your theme is kind of going to be like immigration and family relationships, you're saying. Okay, how does setting affect each of the characters' identities? Is that something that you noticed that the setting affects the characters?**

Olivia (06:15): No.

Emma (06:15): Okay, cool. So, through the lens of our [freshman seminar] theme, self and other. So, do you think that kind of has to do with the family relationships aspect or what are you kind of thinking for that?

Olivia (06:34): For the self and other thing, it's all about, like the [freshman seminar] thing.

Emma (06:48): It's all about what? Sorry.

Olivia (06:50): Identity.

Emma (06:51): Identity. Okay.

**Emma (07:05): So, what would your first step be if you were to just, like, brainstorm this essay, how would you start it? It's okay if you don't really know. Well, one thing you could do is try to think of examples or times in these two texts that kind of show the themes of immigration and family relationship. If you can think of when this character did this.**

Olivia (07:45): Right. Uhm...

Emma (08:40): So which character is Lola? In which book is Lola in? Wildwood?

Olivia (9:05): *Mumbling to self.*

Emma (9:18): Sorry. What?

Olivia (9:24): No, I didn't say anything.

Emma (9:28): "Lola adjusting to being independent. May adjusting to living without her mother." **So are there ways in which these two girls, like, adjusting ways in which they do it similarly and differently, do you think?**

Olivia (09:48): No.

**Emma (09:50): So what ways do you think their adjustments are similar?**

Olivia (10:06): Similar? I guess they both found out at the end, how their mother loves them?

Emma (10:14): Okay.

Olivia (10:16): That's kind of similar. They know that they care for them in some way.

Emma (10:31): Okay. That's kind of like a common thread that you can find between them. So, in both Wildwood and Pair of tickets, like, the characters realize.

Olivia (11:03): That's fine?

Emma (11:04): Yeah. Okay let's see what's next.

**Emma (11:39): Sorry, what?**

**Olivia (11:40): It's not me. It's tables around me.**

**Emma (11:45): Yeah, it's just hard to hear. I'm sorry.** This is a good similarity. So here we're comparing them, and we say that you're saying that. Okay, so they're similar in that both realize their mother's love for them. Is there any, like. Okay, that makes sense. And I feel like in your essay, you can definitely expand upon Lola and May's journeys to becoming independent.

Many different times within the interaction above, there were long pauses in which Emma gave Olivia time to respond to her common-ground questions. On one hand, as mentioned briefly in Chapter 1, Olivia's literacy acquisition journey in English was self-motivated. Her family did not really push her to learn English so it could be that she was looking to Emma as the language expert or the language authority, expecting that Emma would be more explicit in telling her what she should discuss in the essay. Writing center research supports this type of reasoning. As discussed by Parks, Blau, Hall and Sparks, and Harris, "Tutor dominance, or epistemic asymmetry (Park, 2012), is not surprising, as L2 learners who come to seek language advice are

not proficient in language and they perceive themselves as less knowledgeable than tutors who have higher status, subject knowledge and authority” (qtd. in Lee 53). It also could have been that it was taking Olivia longer to formulate her answers in English as opposed to Spanish when Emma was asking the questions, feeling as though she was on the spot. On the other hand, there could have been a number of other various reasons for Olivia’s passivity in the session, something Muriel Harris discussed in “Talk to Me: Engaging Reluctant Writers.” These reasons could include: the writer is forced to be there, the writer may be anxious about revealing ignorance or poor writing to anyone and nervous about being critiqued, the writer doesn’t have language to talk about their writing, and more (Harris 25-26). Could this type of analysis have been a genre of writing that Olivia was very unfamiliar with because she is a psychology major, or a genre she was unfamiliar with because she never encountered it in her previous literacy experiences? Would this session have gone differently had Emma known the answer to those questions? By the end of the session, there was no real work that had been done, so unfortunately, this session was not successful. And it is important to acknowledge that not all tutoring sessions are successful. What exactly happened, though, is hard to tell. Olivia declined to participate in a second session though she uses the writing center often, but that also could have been because it was the end of the semester and not because of an unsuccessful tutoring session. Could the online nature of the session have played a part in the disconnect between the tutor and tutee? As we see in the transcript, there were people around Olivia during the session who Emma heard talking that she thought was Olivia. Was the environment too distracting for Olivia to be able to focus on the questions Emma was asking? In the end, we can’t know for sure. However, we can look at Emma’s role as a literacy mentor in this session.

We learned from Emma's preliminary interview that she is more of a listener, something we discussed in depth earlier in the chapter. However, this quality that was fostered through her experiences with her family, may have hindered the session a bit. Emma would ask one of the common-ground questions, an attempt to engage Olivia and a common writing center technique, but then long moments of silence would ensue indicating Emma's desire to wait and listen for a response from Olivia. What we can think about further is that often silence means something different to different people based on culture and life experiences. In "Silent Pedagogy and Rethinking Classroom Practice: Structuring Teaching Through Silence Rather Than Talk," Ros Ollin discusses findings from their study that found 19 teacher participants used silence in their classrooms to "allow students' thoughts to be free from the intrusion of someone else's ideas – teachers and peers – giving them the opportunity to develop ideas for themselves" (271). Specifically, one of the teacher participants of the study, an ESOL teacher, mentions the importance of silence after asking questions. Ollin explains:

The ESOL teacher suggested that language teaching had a culture of recognising the importance of silence. She described how her training 'drummed' into her that she should not talk constantly and should leave space for students to answer, understand what was happening or make notes. For ESOL learners the cognitive processing involved not only understanding the language but also the cultural inferences behind the language, and hence the 'slow-time' needed to reflect the complexity of what they were being asked to undertake. (275)

And participants in higher education describe using silence as a way to build autonomy in students by making them responsible for responding (Ollin 275-76). However, what needs to be taken into account are the tutor and tutee's feelings toward silence. Does Emma value silence

because she wants others to have time to formulate their thoughts because she enjoys listening and learning about other's perspectives so much? Were the silences too overwhelming for Olivia, which could have been avoided if Emma knew more about her? Maybe if the two knew a bit more about one another, the session could have been successful.

*Implications: Through Using the Leading Question Method, Tutors Become Teachers*

Through the use of non-directive tutoring methods, like the leading questions and common-ground questions technique, the tutors became teachers to the Spanish-speaking tutees. This, of course, brings up the power and authority debate of tutoring; there is inherent power within the relationship because one person is assumed to have the knowledge that the other does not. However, these tutors never withheld information to the detriment of the tutees' learning. Instead, they used each opportunity as a moment for literacy learning. Reuben chose the beginning of the session with Georgia to ask that they read over the assignment sheet to ensure her understanding of the assignment. He also asked her how her assignment was different from the annotated bibliography to gauge her genre knowledge. In this way, Reuben was modeling and teaching reading and comprehension skills, as well as testing genre knowledge. In this way, Reuben's technique of challenging student thinking as a non-directive tutoring method is also a bit different from Erin's and Emma's non-directive techniques. It seems that Reuben led Georgia through the prompt and structured his questions based on their reading which seemed to help Georgia understand why he was asking those questions. As we read from her follow-up interview, Georgia worked with Reuben before this study and had become accustomed to this technique, citing that it helped her to better understand her assignments. In this way, Reuben has taught Georgia the importance of these reading techniques. Erin and Emma in using the same techniques were actually asking non-directive questions that only their tutees knew the answers

to. In Erin's session, she found the repetition of a particular word to not fit where Lily put it. Therefore, she brought the word to Lily's attention. Rather than simply saying that the word did not fit, Erin used the leading questions technique in an attempt to understand Lily's choices. Emma's common-ground questions attempted to engage Olivia in the session and attempted to engage her in analysis during their brainstorming session. She asked Olivia what similarities and differences she saw between the two readings, also modeling reading, comprehension, and analysis skills, and she explained that incorporating the idea of immigration might be too broad of a topic to cover in the type of analysis she needed to do, teaching genre conventions. While Erin's method was effective in that it helped Lily to realize what she really meant to say, Emma's method was unable to engage Olivia.

Overall, the many non-directive methods shown here can be used as a way to guide students toward understanding particular genre conventions or can be used as a way to better engage tutees. In this way, tutees are encouraged to learn new literacies such as reading and comprehension, while also being given the opportunity to articulate the thoughts that influenced the literacy choices they may or may not have made within their essays. While these techniques were successful in the first two examples, it was unsuccessful in the third example between Emma and Olivia. This begs the question, what makes non-directive techniques successful? It could be that tutors need more techniques for engaging quiet students. I think one way to do so may be to teach tutors to ask, especially multilingual students, what the issue might be. If Olivia was having trouble articulating her ideas in English, for example, and if Emma had asked and found that out, maybe she could have encouraged Olivia to brainstorm in Spanish first to get her ideas out and then work on explaining them in English, and then they could have moved forward

in the session. Sometimes simply engaging with the student to better understand them may help to overcome hurdles in sessions.

### **Relating to Students with Similar Experiences: Creating Rapport with Tutees**

The final action that occurred in the tutoring sessions that encouraged literacy learning for the Spanish-speaking tutees was the way in which the tutors related to similar experiences as the tutee. Throughout the sessions, the tutees offered information about their learning experiences or personal experiences that the tutors expressed they could relate to. In this way, tutors became more relatable to the students. Especially with peer-to-peer interactions, such as most of the writing center sessions in this study, being relatable to tutees helps to break that barrier between authority figure and peer. In sessions with multilingual students, finding a commonality can be the way in which tutors begin to better understand multilingual student needs in the writing center.

The concept of relating to tutees with similar experiences happened most often with Reuben and Frida. For this session, Frida wanted to take the informal topic paper they had written and make it into a formal introduction for their longer semester project. Frida's topic was related to bilingual education and because Reuben has a history of working as an ESL teacher and has a wife who is multilingual, he was able to relate very well to the topic, which was quite surprising considering that we might expect Reuben to have the least in common with Frida. The following excerpt shows Reuben and Frida talking about the paper, and then Reuben asks a clarifying question that leads to a discussion of a personal experience of his related to the topic they are discussing:

Reuben (04:33): Okay. So, if you want to make it a little more formal, you might consider I don't think it's necessary, but you might want to consider taking it out of the first person because that's a little informal. I'm not saying you have to, but you might say

for this paper would like to or you might start at the beginning with the I because you're telling people at the beginning. I don't think it's a little wrong, but at some point, I think the first person becomes informal. Okay. I want to elaborate on the differences in bilingual in regard to the amount and or kind of code switching program allows. Okay. **Now is code switching-is that a term that everybody will understand?**

**Frida (05:53):** Yes.

**Reuben (05:53):** So you've been talking about it in class.

**Frida (05:55):** Yes.

**Reuben (05:56):** What actually is it then?

**Frida (06:00):** In this case, it is the switching back and forth between languages. So, what's it called? "Today I went to the supermercado in this place..", that kind of stuff.

**Reuben (06:10):** Sure. My wife grew up in a completely bilingual city in North Africa where just exactly that. And I think this is largely certainly in the Hispanic section. Yes. Very much that way. And we still do that because we speak French at home, too. Sometimes the code switching. I guess I'm just going to especially your first sentence, the program what program exactly are we talking about? Differences in bilin--? Would it be different programs allow?

While asking a question for clarification from Frida to ensure they had thought about their audience completely, Reuben was able to share a personal experience with code switching. This happened relatively early in the session and seemed to establish a good rapport between the two for the rest of their time working together. In fact, Reuben continued to relate to Frida's essay throughout the session. In the following excerpt, Reuben pivots from the subject matter to ask Frida where they are from and based on their response, Reuben is able to make a connection to his personal life:

**Reuben (18:07):** So that's just a small point. Yeah. Okay. So, you were put in an ESL course. "I tried to eliminate it." You might tell us just when. Maybe nobody else is curious. But I'm always curious myself. **At what point in your schooling was it like, right in kindergarten or did they do it to you when you were in fourth grade or 7th grader? Can I ask? I'm always curious. I ask all my students.**

**Frida (18:45):** Twice. Kindergarten and then I tested out. And then when I moved to Anne Arundel County because it said that I spoke Spanish as a secondary language, they automatically threw me into ESOL in the second grade again, and I couldn't leave until I tested out.

**Reuben (18:57):** Okay.

**Frida (18:58):** So took it twice, hated it both times.

**Reuben (19:01):** Yeah. Well, I can see why you– that wasn't necessarily all that sensitive on the part of Anne Arundel. It's a perplexing problem for education. Can I ask you where your family is from?

**Frida (19:18):** My family is from Peru and El Salvador.

**Reuben (19:21):** Peru and El Salvador. I've been to Peru. It'd be fun to talk to you about it, but let's get onto this. What part of Peru?

**Frida (19:28):** So that's like close to Lima.

**Reuben (19:31):** We spent about six weeks in Peru in 1990, having a really interesting time.

At the end of the session, Reuben continued to make connections between his life and the topic of Frida's paper. In the following excerpt, they then transitioned into talking about the topic together unrelated to any specific tutoring advice and included me as someone who studies multilingual education to join their conversation:

**Reuben (37:40):** No, I think so. I think so. And that's what the more you dig into these things and break them apart is the expression that you were using here. I think the more interesting this paper will be, surely. And of course, some people perhaps if you do go back in your larger paper to the history, you might talk about why changes if you can find any research to say, well, for example, why the English only method is losing favor. **My children went to an immersion program called French immersion because my wife is French, even though I lived here. I speak French, but I'm a native, obviously, English speaker. So, they were not allowed to speak English in class. I don't know. That's sort of the immersion English only.**

**Frida (38:56):** Yeah.

**Reuben (39:00):** It got them pretty good in French. It didn't make them sound like Frenchmen, quite. But I don't know, maybe they're still doing that in lots of places. Immersion programs. So why wouldn't it work the other way around? There may be well be reasons. You guys probably study them, but you may want to, at least in your larger paper, tell us why this method is now not viewed as widely not as successful or not as widely promoted as the other two. Again, I think it's fine for what you've done for your paper. It's just an introduction, but the larger one.

**Frida (39:52):** And that's just like a larger paper thing. Yeah. Because a lot of the layers seem to really, when we talk about English only specifically really applied towards English in particular in the United States, because English has such an odd

history as a language that makes it much more complicated than French or Spanish or a lot of these other concepts to foreign students because it's not phonetic.

**Reuben (40:26):** And the overwhelming French certainly isn't phonetic. They have more ornamental letters than any language I ever came across.

**Frida (40:34):** Then the conjugation systems don't follow, I guess the other rules.

**Reuben (40:40):** Well, they don't follow the Romance languages. You're right. English is a *prosteich*. It's been put together from largely Germanic, and then with an imposition of Romance of French language for 300 years on it.

**Frida (40:54):** Yeah. And then just like the social status of what English means in the United States, and whether or not it's important or discussing why we forced English only, and is it for the betterment of the students, or is it for monolingualizing the nation? And so, I guess and even for immersion there's like other interesting...

**Reuben (41:18):** There's tons of interesting things about language. One, I'll just leave with you. English is the second language all over the world. Yes. When we went to Peru, our Spanish was good for simple stuff beyond that. But wherever you go, people in the hospitality industries speak English. When we went to Machu Picchu, what do you think our guide spoke to us? English. Because if you're from China or Japan or France or Italy, chances are you're going to have your tour in English. It's true everywhere I've been in the world.

**Frida (41:54):** Yes.

**Reuben (41:55):** That's an interesting phenomenon, too. How English is the second language of everybody everywhere. Beyond this, [Frida], I don't want to waste your time by just unless you've got some questions that we can go over. I see we have an expert here in bilingual education. If you have a couple of minutes, come in and join us. This is not normal. We don't normally do this, but we do have a little time, if you'd like.

At that point, the three of us did talk together about the topic and we had a nice conversation related to bilingual education and SAE.

This session seemed to work really well because Reuben was able to make that connection with Frida. They established a good working relationship. But at the beginning of the session, I picked up on Frida's body language. I saw that they were bouncing one of their legs a lot through the early parts of the session. Personally, this often happens to me as an anxious response, so I asked Frida about it in the follow-up interview. Frida's response was quite telling of their attitudes toward what others' language experiences might be as they explained:

It always seems to happen, but it gets worse in situations where I feel uncomfortable because in that sense, and this applies not just to him or in general, if you don't live an experience, it is much harder to make a case, to defend it or accept it, et cetera, et cetera. And so when I'm talking about something that is really personal and integral to me specifically, like being a bilingual person, being a person of color, these things that are so intertwined into what I'm writing about and explaining this to somebody that presumably does not have any of those experiences, it is a bit nerve racking because realistically, on paper, if you're doing something like working here or working at any of the University centers, you should not have an active bias towards some of these things. However, if I'm writing about Shakespeare, if I'm writing about *Huckleberry Finn*, or if I'm writing about any literature book, the opinions about the books are pretty consistent, pretty well established, and at the end of the day, I don't think Shakespeare cares. Whatever I have to say about what he wrote, he's dead. He's gone. It doesn't necessarily matter in the larger picture. However, if we're writing about things like race, if we're writing about things like language theory or writing about things that really apply in our political hot topics nowadays, who is looking over my paper? Whether that's my teacher, whether that's the person at the writing center, their bias and their opinions can show. And my fear is that I come here and somebody who has these kinds of biases takes out those biases on my paper. And rather than critique the structure of what I'm saying and how I'm saying it or how I'm saying it and how I'm putting it together, they might critique what I'm saying. And that isn't really helpful because I think that when I'm still not sure the full scope of what the writing center has to offer. But a lot of times when I come here, it's mainly because I want how I said it to be worked on, not always what I'm saying. If the question

that I'm asking is unclear, I understand that and let's work on that. Or maybe if my topic seems a little large or general. Great. Let's try and make that concise. However, I'm pretty confident in what I'm writing about, and I don't come to the writing center specifically to have that idea changed because that idea is there and it's not going anywhere.

And Frida also mentioned, "I also wasn't expecting him to have maybe any personal experience and or relation to this topic, possibly also sensitivity to that topic." Frida's trepidation going into the session is logical. As Nancy Alvarez explains, "Working with peer tutors who resemble most university faculty across the country probably wouldn't feel safe for students who are used to being judged by their English-language abilities by white humans—faculty and non-faculty alike" (85). With this in mind, adding in the fact that Reuben is a professional tutor rather than a peer tutor, it becomes clear how nearly any multilingual student might feel the same way Frida did. Therefore, had Reuben not mentioned his related experiences to Frida, Frida likely would have spent much of the session anxious.

Frida's experience with the writing center was a bit different from other participants' experiences with the writing center. Frida was participating in a Writing Partners Program through their English 101 course. This program allowed English 101 students to sign up to work with the same tutor for up to 10 sessions (at least once a week for an hour) throughout the semester to receive peer feedback on their projects. Frida mentioned they probably only used the writing center once a month, if that, before joining the Writing Partners Program so they didn't know much about the writing center. They were worried about a prescriptivist critique of their work. Therefore, not only did Reuben's choice to voice his similar experiences to Frida help to ease some of their anxieties, but hopefully it also helped to show Frida that the writing center can be a place for all writers of various backgrounds and experiences.

There were some interesting revelations about Reuben's dispositions from the examples discussed above. At 41:18, Reuben discussed that when he traveled to Machu Pichu that the tour guide spoke English, and that virtually anywhere in the world one might go, they would likely find tourist attractions with people speaking English, saying that it was true nearly everywhere he has been in the world. What Frida was discussing were the negative implications of pushing an English only education as a means for monolingualizing a nation. And Reuben's response was to discuss English as the second language of most people in the world, citing his Machu Pichu example. Of course, assumptions cannot be made about Reuben's thoughts toward English only education, but it seems that based on his response and his life experiences he might feel as though English only education has some positive aspects because "English is the second language of everybody everywhere." Therefore, what does this mean about Reuben's tutoring practices? It could mean that while Reuben supports the multilingual students he works with in the center, he might also support SAE because many see it as the best way to standardize communication for all who speak English. Or it could be that working and talking with students like Frida who have lived experiences with an English only education would influence the way Reuben understands these types of educational programs.

Erin also took a few opportunities in her session with Sadie to relate to some of the experiences that Sadie mentioned going through. In particular, rather than a personal experience such as the one Reuben and Frida had, Erin and Sadie had similar literacy learning experiences related to the correct use of punctuation for a parenthetical citation within an essay, which is represented in the excerpt below.

Sadie (20:17): I went to one writing center appointment and I forgot to ask about punctuation when it comes to quotations because I was taught here to put like – to put like commas instead of periods for the quotes and like commas here. But I have had

people like cross these out or this one out. And so now I'm more confused on what is and what isn't.

Erin (20:50): Got you. Is it professors that crossed it out or like tutors some tutors?

Sadie (20:56): Some tutors and yeah.

**Erin (20:59): The way that you have it structured is like exactly the way that I learned to do it as well.** It's most definitely correct to have the comma on the inside the quotation mark and then the period outside of your parenthetical citation. **I feel like I am still a little bit unsure myself about whether or not you need, like, that first comma where it says, "The first line says," but I've never had a professor cross it off when I've included that. And I've never had them, like, say it needed to be added either.** So, I'm not sure that's as important. But everything that you have here looks completely right the way I learned it as well.

Erin expressed that she has had a similar literacy learning experience when it comes to the construction of a quote and its punctuation when Sadie questioned if she did it correctly. Erin also shared, though, that she was still unsure about the construction, creating a shared experience between the two. Erin, who may be seen as the expert in this situation because her native speaker status situated her in a position of power or authority, shifted the power dynamics when she admitted to the student that she was still a bit unsure about this specific topic. This moment did not seem to change the rapport between the two and it seemed as though Sadie felt just as comfortable with Erin as she had before. This exchange indicated that reminders of the true peer-to-peer nature of tutorials are not necessarily negative but can encourage continued literacy learning for both tutor and tutee. In fact, the very next exchange between Erin and Sadie showed the two engaging in a moment of literacy learning together:

**Sadie (21:54): It was in this essay that I started doing italicizing some words and letters. Is that okay in formal, academic writing?**

**Erin (22:06): That is a good question, because I've never done that myself. Let me look it up. The only time I've learned to use italics is when I'm using a word that's in a different language. If there's like a Latin word or something that I have to reference, I italicize it. But let me look it up. Let's see. I found something on the Purdue website here. Yes, it does look like it's okay. I'm on like, the Owl Purdue website, and it says, "the simplest way to call attention to a word or phrase is to italicize that." So that looks like it could be okay.**

Sadie (23:13): Okay. Thank you.

Erin (23:15): Yeah.

Sadie (23:17): Because I wasn't too sure.

Erin (23:24): Yeah. That is definitely a tricky one that I've wondered about myself. And I don't know, sometimes professors do have personal preferences on these kinds of things, but it looks like it's generally accepted.

Sadie (23:37): Okay.

Again, Erin admitted that she was unsure of the answer to the question Sadie posed and used the opportunity to introduce her to the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) website as a writing resource. In this way, Erin helped to encourage literacy learning for Sadie as she modeled her own literacy learning practices about the questions Sadie posed.

Miriam was another tutor who related to one of her tutees with similar experiences. What was interesting about this was the fact that initially, Miriam may not seem to her tutees as a “peer tutor.” Although Miriam is a bit older than most peer tutors, she is in fact a Master’s student at Public University. Therefore, although she may not necessarily be the undergraduate tutees’ peer, she is still a student like her tutees are. In this way, she can relate to many of the same issues her students face. This became an important part of her session with Georgia. Georgia wanted to use the session to brainstorm ideas on how to start her 8–10-page position paper for her English101 class, for which her topic was eyeglasses as an assistive technology. As they talked a bit about the ideas Georgia had, Miriam expressed that Georgia might want to talk with her instructor on ways she could tweak the topic to make it more argumentative since it was not a very controversial topic. They continued to talk a bit about ways they could make the topic controversial, and then in the following excerpt, Miriam asks Georgia if she was familiar with a resource from the university’s library:

**Miriam (17:20): Okay. And have you taken advantage of the library subject specialists? Are you familiar with them?**

Georgia (17:28): No.

**Miriam (17:29):** Okay. That is a really great service. Let me find that website. I had it up. I must have closed it by mistake. The nice thing about this is that if I can get my cursor to cooperate. Here we go. Drop this link in the chat for you. Each of the librarians in the [university] library system has certain fields that they specialize in the research of. So, in this case, maybe medical or psychological or sociology related. If you click on the link, it has the various specialties listed. And you can click on that to see which librarian or librarians specialize in researching things in those fields. And I've used this myself a couple of times with papers I was writing. And in both cases, they both helped me fix my query language, saying, oh, that term isn't working because you need to use this other term instead or something like that, or that should have worked. Try this. They also can help you figure out which database or databases are more likely to help you with your research. And it's kind of like getting an appointment with the writing center. You paid for it when you wrote your tuition check. So, it's a free service. You just go online, click on their link, and there's a place where you can schedule an appointment. It's really nice. And in both cases, they've been happy to help.

Georgia (19:23): I didn't know that because I was struggling finding specific subject because I think I'm going to the medical device, like engineering and then fashion.

Miriam (19:34): Right. And that's where the subject specialists are really, really helpful. They can help you figure out which databases and how to structure your query language so that you actually get some results that help, because a lot of times that's half the battle right there, isn't it?

Georgia (19:52): Yeah.

**Miriam (19:53):** Figuring out I don't know how to search on this. What? And they can help with that. And I only found out about it because the first class that I used it for, the instructor had somebody from the library come in, and it was the librarian in charge of that field. And she said, oh, yeah, here are the things. And she said, and please make an appointment. I'd much rather do this than all the administrative stuff I have to do. So, we enjoyed that. So, they enjoy doing that.

Georgia (20:33): Thank you. Yeah. If I knew that this topic, it will be for all the other assignments, I will try to choose another one that's going to.

Miriam (20:45): Right. Yeah. Really tricky one.

Georgia (20:51): Yeah. I was thinking and thinking I was trying to feel like my thesis, like the importance of eyeglasses as an assistive technology.

**Miriam (21:04):** Yeah. That was always one of my least favorite things about writing papers. It's like picking something to write on. It's always like, I don't know what hasn't been covered a zillion times already. And that's something else the subject specialist might be able to help you with is to help you find a spin on this so that you can stick with this topic.

Georgia (21:28): Okay. So, I just click on the name of the person and make an appointment.

Miriam (21:39): Yeah, it's that easy. I don't know how many obviously different people are going to have different availability. So, you may not be able to find somebody who's got an appointment that works with your schedule. But even if you can't make an appointment, you can email them and have a virtual chat, do back and forth that way and say, okay, here's my situation. What do you suggest? Because I've had that a couple of times I've used the library's, the chat, and I throw my question up there and they say, oh, you need to talk to so and so. And then they give me that person's email, I reach out to that librarian and email them with my question, and they come back with an answer. It was great.

Although they were not able to brainstorm much for her paper, Miriam was still able to make the session productive by providing a resource for Georgia. Georgia, in fact, mentioned how helpful the suggestion was in her follow-up interview. She said:

I was really struggling how to make this work, how I explained it to her. The topic I chose isn't that controversial to take a position. I was like, okay, I can write something, but then I don't know how to argument or especially the counter argument. So, I was kind of expecting that they could lead me to some perspective I can take to write my paper. But it was really helpful that she gave me this specialist so I can start there and take more advantage of that. Because at the beginning, when I was looking or researching about my topic, then I knew that I was going to struggle because I didn't find a lot of specific topic about eyeglasses. And now that there is people that know better than me where I can start looking for information that was really helpful and that would have saved me a lot of time at the beginning.

In choosing to relate to Georgia through discussing a similar experience as students, Miriam was able to give Georgia a tool to help advance her research skills. Because Miriam is also a student, she has had some of the same difficulties in researching paper topics as Georgia has had. Miriam explained that one of her instructors had a library staff member visit the class to explain the resources available at the library. Miriam's instructor found a means of providing tools for

research practices, which Miriam explained has been helpful to her. That experience became a part of the academic dimensions that have made up Miriam's attitudes toward language and literacy. And therefore because of the helpful nature of the advice she received, Miriam chose to share it with her tutee, modeling research practices for her.

*Implications: Rapport to Break Down Barriers and Model Research Practices*

In relating to their Spanish-speaking tutees in different ways, the tutors discussed here were able to build rapport and break down any potential barriers or apprehension that tutees may have felt in working with native speaking tutors. The most important example of this came with Reuben and Frida's session. This pair had much more in common than either likely realized at the outset of the session. Now, it is important to think about whether Reuben routinely seeks to relate to his tutees and their essay topics in the way he did with Frida. This was the first time the pair had worked together so it is possible that Reuben was indeed hoping to make connections with Frida and their topic. It's also possible that knowing the purpose of this research and my presence in observing the session meant Reuben specifically chose to make these connections known. In his session with Georgia, someone Reuben has worked with a few times before this research, Reuben did not ask the same type of personal questions or make the same personal connections. This could indicate that they have already built their rapport in their previous sessions. Overall, someone who seeks to make these connections to their tutees seems to be someone who not only wants to engage with the tutee but someone who wants to build relationships beyond the simple tutor/tutee paradigm.

Especially poignant with these examples were the ways in which most of the tutors were actually able to teach academic literacies through relating to their students, specifically modeling research practices for their tutees. Academic literacies in this context refer to the ability to read

and write about academic subjects, including being able to analyze and research. Erin was able to teach Sadie how to use Purdue OWL as a resource, and in the process she also learned the answer to a question she did not know. In a true peer-to-peer Bruffian model, both the tutor and tutee learned from working with one another and were able to advance their academic literacy skills. Erin's experiences in education throughout her life were an important influence on her attitudes toward language and literacy at this moment in the session. Erin explained in her preliminary interview that as she was learning to read, it felt like a race against her peers, but learning to write was a much more positive experience for her. Therefore, she explained in her preliminary interview, "I want to cultivate spaces where my own students can read and write independently without the fear of formal assessment." Because of these beliefs, it seemed Erin felt comfortable in sharing with Sadie that she did not know the answer to her question as a way of ensuring Sadie did not feel negatively about the fact that she did not know. It also helped to humanize Erin as well. It showed that although she is a tutor, she does not know everything and that even tutors are continually learning. Similarly, Miriam was able to teach research skills to Georgia by providing her with information on where she could receive help from the library based on her own experiences as a student. In this way, Miriam also helped to build connections between the writing center and other student resources across campus. Overall, by relating to their tutees through sharing similar experiences, these tutors were able to build rapport, learn from one another, and teach/model academic literacy skills to their tutees.

### **Chapter Conclusions: Tutors as Literacy Mentors**

On the surface, one may say that everything that happens in a tutoring session encourages literacy learning for students, as they are learning to become better writers. And while this is true that the center is focused on acquiring writing-related literacy, it is important to think about the

ways in which this literacy learning is encouraged and what literacies are actually being taught. What was revealing in these different moments discussed throughout the chapter was the way in which tutors' experiences really affected their sessions. If Emma knew more of Olivia's lived experiences could she have tried a different tactic to make their session successful? If Miriam was not currently a Master's student at the university, would she have known about the library resource that she explained to Georgia to help with her research? There is no way to know what would have happened differently in these sessions if each person did not have the attitudes toward language and literacy that they have developed throughout their lives. However, what we can imply is that there are clear connections between the stories told in the preliminary interviews and what happened in these sessions.

These moments where the tutors are teaching these different skills to the students are the moments in which they serve as literacy mentors for their Spanish-speaking tutees. In their article "The Importance of Intention: A Review of Mentoring for Writing Center Professionals," Maureen McBride and Molly Rentscher describe the act of mentorship as "a partnership with a mentor who guides, sponsors, or has positive and significant influence on the professional development of the mentee" (para. 7). While typically there is a hierarchical aspect to the mentor/mentee relationship, McBride and Rentscher furthered that "mentoring that emerges organically from existing relationships, such as peer mentoring and collaborative mentoring, breaks with the power structures of traditional mentoring" (para. 10). The question then arises, how is this mentorship different from the tutoring relationship? There isn't a definitive line that differentiates the two. It seems that being a literacy mentor is nearly implicit in the tutor role. We can better understand this when we think about an example in this chapter. Reuben, as a literacy mentor for Georgia, helped to guide her through the reading of the prompt, teaching her

the importance of reading and comprehension skills as they relate to this assignment. As he was serving as a mentor, guiding her through understanding, he was also teaching her. Therefore, being a literacy mentor is a part of the tutoring process. Along with this literacy mentor relationship, this chapter also revealed the importance of the interpersonal relationships that can develop during sessions.

Especially poignant in this chapter was the relationship between Reuben and Frida during their session. Frida expressed how anxious they felt going into a situation with a tutor they were unfamiliar with because they were worried about the ways the tutor might critique their opinions on the topic. And to their surprise, Reuben was much more understanding of the topic and could relate to it. Although Frida seemed to feel more comfortable about the session after reflecting on these similarities, the implications that came from this exchange are important. Maybe Frida will feel more comfortable returning to the writing center knowing that if they work with Reuben there will not be the worry of the unknown. Frida spoke of their concerns from their personal perspective, yet we can imagine that many multilingual students share the same anxieties. Therefore, if tutors are able to find moments of relatability during sessions, we should encourage them to act upon those moments, to be vulnerable in sharing a bit of themselves, and in that way, maybe more multilingual students will feel comfortable and encouraged to expand their literacy learning within the writing center.

### **Chapter 3 - Seeking Academic Literacies: Spanish-Speaking Tutees' and Agency in Tutoring Sessions**

In this chapter, I explore the second key finding from the data that revealed the ways Spanish-speaking tutees sought academic literacies within tutoring sessions. Throughout the sessions, the tutees relied on knowledge provided by their instructors and/or the academic literacies of their tutors to help them continue in their pursuit of academic literacies. During the tutoring sessions, this was present in a number of ways: the ways in which tutees relied on their teacher as the authority/used teacher feedback as a guiding agenda, relied on the tutor as the language expert, and took charge of the session or prompting self-directed educational experiences<sup>2</sup>. What these different instances showed was the way in which the Spanish-speaking tutees' attitudes toward language and literacy, and the contexts of their previous academic literacies and their home literacies, greatly affected their agency within the session. As the tutees' used instructor feedback to guide the session or relied on the tutor as the language expert, they asserted their desires for their sessions to focus on areas they found important, creating shifting power dynamics within these sessions between the tutor and Spanish-speaking tutee that ask us to reconsider our understandings of authority and expertise in tutoring sessions with multilingual students.

#### **Referring to Teacher as Authority/Teacher Feedback to Guide Agenda for the Session**

Relying on the instructor as the authority figure in a way that impacted their writing was the most common occurrence across all tutoring sessions. Interestingly enough, it happened the

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<sup>2</sup> Teacher as authority, teacher feedback as guiding agenda, relying on the tutor as language expert, and taking charge of the session/self-directed educational experiences are all codes gathered from the data that are discussed in detail throughout the chapter. The explanations of these codes are easier to distinguish by reading through the description of codes within Appendix F to help frame your understanding as you move into the chapter.

most with the two non-traditional tutors, Reuben and Miriam, in their sessions with students. Most often, it was the tutors who referred back to the teacher as authority. So, although these were the tutors with the most life experiences related to the teaching of writing, they still gestured back to the teacher as the authority figure. In this way, though they might have more closely resembled or mirrored a traditional classroom setting for students because they appeared similar to the students' instructors, these non-traditional tutors still aimed for students to understand that their instructors were the authority figures, helping to emphasize the important differences between tutoring sessions and classroom instruction.

First, in Georgia's session with Reuben, Georgia explained that her instructor gave the class a few examples and assignments to help them in drafting their literature review. In the following excerpts, Georgia explains the examples and assignments the instructor gave the class to help model the literature review for students:

Georgia (15:30): I want to be sure because I don't know if it's like an essay organization, like just introduction. And in the end. **So far, he made us read these two examples. It's like at the beginning, the two pages were introducing all the issue, and then they had this kind of this literature review has the objective of...**

Reuben (15:54): University of West Florida.

Georgia (15:56): **Yes. He gave us these two examples, like this one, this study will order.**

Reuben (16:01): **Yeah. Here's the thesis. That's it. I mean, this one just like having neon signs and the words sort of. And this can perhaps help you. You can say this study, or this paper will or will attempt to demonstrate that X and Y but not Z are where it's at. Obviously, you'll say something hopefully more...**

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Reuben (27:50): **It's okay to do that, but it's harder. You need to show to your teacher that you have ten different sources. And I assume rather like your annotated bibliography, he or she. Is it he? He will be looking for you to identify those so that he can see. Okay, I'm not saying that you're wrong here. Your final paper may well weave these things together, maybe more helpful. Let's see now. Okay. But you may. Alright, so you're dividing it thematically. Yeah, it's doable. It's definitely doable. It's a little complicated, but let's just look and see how well you've used here.**

**Georgia (28:41):** He made us do this matrix research, so they told us to put like four to five main ideas based on your topic and choose like up to 15 searches. And then if your research is supporting your idea, put that citation there. What I did is this matrix research.

**Reuben (29:08):** Okay. No, I think the idea was to try and help you get organized, and that's important. That's a good thing.

In the first excerpt above, Georgia first introduced the fact that the professor gave the class examples to read. This allowed Reuben to use the example to model what a thesis statement for Georgia's literature review might look like. And in the second excerpt, Georgia explained that the professor gave the class a matrix assignment to help them organize their main ideas as a way to connect evidence for the literature review. This again gave Reuben support in guiding Georgia through the session in organizing her ideas for a coherent literature review.

In a similar fashion, Reuben uses the idea of audience awareness to ask Georgia about her knowledge of citation styles. In the following excerpt, Reuben asks Georgia about her knowledge of in-text citations and in the second excerpt, he explains that she might ask her instructor for more examples:

**Reuben (29:51):** [Georgia], are you comfortable with these in text citations? They're important and they're going to be pretty important throughout your College career. So where would you go to find the right format for that?

**Georgia (30:09):** Usually I go to Purdue web page.

**Reuben (30:15):** Purdue Owl? Yeah, the online writing laboratory. I think it is. And normally they will tell you pretty clearly how to do it. Did you discuss different style guides, or did he say pick one and use one, or are you in Chicago?

**Georgia (30:33):** For citations? I guess he's assuming that we know how to cite.

**Reuben (30:37):** But there's styles, they're not much different, but they're a little bit different.

**Georgia (30:43):** I think it's been a long time. I learned that part of English direct citations and then paraphrasing.

**Reuben (30:51):** Yeah, that's slightly different from what I'm talking about here. For example, you're going to have to give where this is from. You're quoting somebody here and you need to say, okay, this is Professor Jane and where it's from,

what article or publication it's from. That's, of course, where he'll be able to determine, is this a scholarly source? Is this a popular source? He'll and the reader would want to know who's giving you that source and you obviously put a space here for it. So, he did not give you a specific style guide to use. Well, then use one, whichever one that you find most convenient and stick with it. Don't vary because they do vary a little bit. Some have a date here and some have a semi colon here and stuff. And a close reader of a teacher might be looking for inconsistencies to just do the same. Whichever style you choose. I think that's usually going to be acceptable. Okay. Sure. But even this whole idea of social embarrassment, it's almost a separate idea. But because the device aesthetics. Yes. Well, a device that is noticeable to everybody ... Decisions to use or not.

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Reuben (42:03): So that may help a little bit. But I do think normally you're going to have more information in there. It's not always easy to know exactly, however. And is this a draft or is this your final here?

Georgia (42:18): It's my draft.

**Reuben (42:19): Okay. So, if you're still a little uncertain of exactly how much you need to put in here, it is something that you could ask in class for example, or uh..**

Georgia (42:31): I think when you cite one author you first put the whole information and then you just put the last name on the page. Right. What I remember.

**Reuben (42:45): Well, that's the general idea, but there's so many different kinds of sources. Now, ideally, you do want your teacher and a reader to know, is this a book? Is this an article that appeared in the Wall Street Journal? Is this an article, a peer reviewed article that appeared in Optics Journal today or whatever, or is it written really by somebody who sells glasses, who makes tons of money selling frames because they're fancy and they're desirable piece of plastic like this that may cost as much as a buck to make.**

Reuben used the teacher as the authority figure to also bring audience awareness to the forefront of Georgia's mind. He asked her to think about the way in which her instructor would want to know who gave her the information for her essay and where she got her sources. This technique highlighted the importance of citing sources and gave Reuben the opportunity to teach a bit about citing sources, but it also teaches audience awareness. Some aspects of the writing process such as audience awareness are cultural notions that are socially constructed through values shared within a community, therefore teaching about audience in current context avoids tutors making assumptions about a set of cultural norms related to the writing process that the L2

learners may not possess (qtd. in Ritter 13-14). The teaching of audience awareness will be discussed in further detail in the following chapter as a way that the idea of developing new literacies was present in the sessions as well.

Another interesting way to think of all of the above discussed exchanges between Reuben and Georgia is the concept of the “present others” within tutoring sessions as discussed in the article “It’s Crowded in Here: ‘Present Others’ in Advanced Graduate Writers’ Sessions” by Allison Kranek and María Paz Carvajal Regidor. “Present others” refers to the many people involved in the feedback loops of writers’ writing processes such as their teachers, friends, colleagues, committee members, and more. Particularly, these are present others who are providing direct feedback rather than the imagined audiences of their writing (Kranek and Regidor 62). Kranek and Regidor argue that writing center tutors should make deliberate attempts to engage the present others during their sessions “because they are important to graduate students’ socialization process and their identities as graduate students and scholars” (62). Kranek and Regidor discuss Terese Thonus’ idea that for undergraduate students, the present other of their instructors are usually silent participants in sessions because their feedback can shape the feedback process and the session itself (qtd. in Kranek and Regidor 63). As we see Reuben do in the session with Georgia, he often acknowledges the presence of the instructor as part of the real audience of Georgia’s writing. What does it mean that Reuben is the one to invite the present other into the conversation most often? And what does this say about Reuben’s attitudes toward language and literacy? As Kranek and Regidor discuss, acknowledging the present other in sessions begins to complicate the idea of tutoring sessions as being only one-on-one, challenging Jackie Grutsch McKinney’s critique of the writing center grand narrative that the writing center is a place for writers to get one-on-one tutoring for their writing (Grutsch

McKinney 3). Therefore, I think that Reuben's choice to invite the present other into the session demonstrates his understanding of the importance each person has to a writers' literacy journey, something he likely learned through his experiences as an ESL teacher and through teaching his wife English.

In the session between Miriam and Georgia, because Miriam had difficulty in helping Georgia make her topic about eyeglasses as an assistive technology into an argumentative topic as we learned in Chapter 2, the context in which Miriam referred Georgia back to her instructor as the authority figure was a bit different than the context in which Reuben referred Georgia to the instructor as the authority figure. In the following excerpts, Miriam attempts to gather information from Georgia about any feedback the instructor might have given in an attempt to help her provide feedback for Georgia, and then Miriam moves into suggesting that Georgia seek feedback from her instructor:

Georgia (05:06): Yeah, I'm starting kind of stuck because I choose a topic and I don't know how to take a position in that topic.

**Miriam (05:17): Okay. Yeah. That's the hard thing about English 101. It's like just when you think you know what's going on, they hand you a new assignment that's completely different. It can be challenging. So did the instructions that you got in class, either from the rubric or the syllabus or the instructor give you any clues? They give you anything helpful that you can use?**

Georgia (05:44): They gave us for the Interpolations page, like an example for position paper. I know that I have to make, like an introduction, like explaining how I was interested in this topic.

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**Miriam (09:24): Yeah. Because of the stigma issue. Yeah. Okay. Have you talked to your instructor about this assignment and things you could do with this? Yeah. That would still stick to the instruction that you got.**

Georgia (09:48): Not yet, because we are not working in the draft. I didn't talk with the instructor.

**Miriam (09:55): Yeah. Because you might want to before you start spending the time and effort on the draft and say, okay, I'm kind of stuck here.** I mean, it's not a controversial thing. You wear glasses or you don't by choice or by necessity. And so that

might be something to raise with your instructors. Like, okay, is this the best topic for this paper? Because I can see why you're having trouble, because that would be glasses aren't controversial.

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**Miriam (12:06):** Okay. Yeah. You might want to talk to your instructor and ask about this and explain the challenge that you're having with this, because this one would be a really tough topic to use for this paper. I hate to tell you that that's not what you want to hear when you've already started writing, but. Yeah. See if your instructor can give you a little bit of guidance on how you can maybe tweak what you've already chosen, because as it is, it's, as you say, not really controversial. So not like abortion or some sort of immigration policy or economic policy or something. Should we have free community college, anything like that? That might be more controversial and a lot more evidence on either side. What do you think about that? I'm sure it's not the advice you wanted.

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Georgia (14:24): That's true. Yeah. I don't know. I was trying to look to different perspectives, maybe about just focusing on socialistic stigma. But even if I go that way, I don't find, like a counter argument why it should be okay.

Miriam (14:54): Yeah. Because the things that come to mind as far as why reasons people don't wear glasses, a lot of them don't obtain anymore. It makes me look old. And then the stereotypes of nerds and geeks and dweebs and all that, the person is almost invariably wearing glasses. But that's still not very hard hitting. That's not very ...doesn't have a lot of weight to it. **Yeah. I think reaching out to your instructor for help with this particular assignment is probably going to be your best bet.** And just explain.

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**Miriam (24:34):** Yeah, I think for now it sounds like you need to talk to your instructor or the subject specialist or both about how to handle the subject and also get some more sources before you can really make too much more progress on this. But that's okay. I hope this has been helpful that you can give you some tools that you can use too.

Miriam seemed to refer to the instructor as an authority figure within the session because she was unsure how to help Georgia proceed with her topic. She felt that the instructor would be the best help for Georgia. This instance of referring back to the instructor was different than the instance with Reuben and made me wonder how agency can be viewed in this session between Miriam and Georgia. Does it take away the student's agency if the tutor refers them back to their instructor as Miriam did? Initially, it seemed to me that it did. Kranek and Regidor discuss Judith Power's term "trialogue" in their brief discussion of present others in undergraduate sessions.

This term refers to moments when the writing center seeks feedback from instructors directly (qtd. in Kranek and Regidor 63). The authors critique this practice because it centers the agency of the instructor rather than the agency of the student (Kranek and Regidor 63). Early in the session between Miriam and Georgia as Miriam makes the suggestions that Georgia should refer back to her instructor, it feels as though Miriam is centering the agency of the instructor over the student's agency in deciphering a more nuanced topic. However, I think Miriam then helps to provide Georgia with agency in narrowing her topic once she gives her the suggestion for visiting the library resource librarian for help.

What we see with these two examples from Reuben and Miriam are two different ways in which they referred to the instructor as the authority. Reuben referred to the instructor as a way to help Georgia understand some of the genre conventions of the literature review and to orient Georgia to her audience. On the other hand, Miriam referred to the instructor as authority even over her own expertise. She was unsure how to best help the student and therefore referred them back to the instructor. One thing that turning to the teacher as an authority figure modeled for their tutees was the way in which their instructors could be other literacy mentors the students could look to as they continue to improve their literary learning. And because this reference back to the instructor happened most often in these two sessions with the non-traditional tutors, there are some connections we can make to the tutors' attitudes toward language and literacy.

The ways in which writing was taught in the past and the aspects of their different careers had a clear effect on the two older non-traditional tutors' attitudes toward language and literacy, leading them to refer to the instructor as an authority figure for the student more often than other tutors. Reuben explained in his preliminary interview that understanding how to write to an audience was an important part of his career working in the federal government. He explained,

“And because I was out in the workforce for years, worked for the federal government for 26 years, I do have a lot of insights into how you want to position the very things that we're teaching here. Audience gosh.” Though he doesn't elaborate the point about audience further, his exclamation of “gosh” can lead us to understand that Reuben values the importance that audience has in a person's writing. Therefore, it is likely that Reuben values the teaching of audience as one of the more important skills he can teach students during tutoring sessions because he spent many years himself making sure that the audiences he wrote to in his career were clear. In fact, in the session with Frida, we can recall Reuben asking Frida about the term code-switching and whether that is a term that everyone would understand. In other words, Reuben was asking whether Frida had thought about their audience as they were writing their essay. So, it seems that for Reuben, reminding students to think about their audience is an important attitude toward writing literacy that influences many of his sessions.

While there is not as direct a connection between Miriam and her past experiences as there was with Reuben, it seems as though her time working as a translator could be related to her difficulties in helping the student and therefore her deference to the instructor. Miriam explained in her preliminary interview that with her translation work:

You have to know the nuts and bolts of how both languages work—both the one you're starting with and your target language. And where the similarities are or where things differ and therefore, where that's going to affect meaning. Nuance becomes really important when you're translating something for somebody else. You not only have to get the strict dictionary definition, you have to make sure you're picking the right dictionary definition and the one that has the right emotional flavor to it, if you will.

Maybe, with this in mind, Miriam's attitudes toward and experiences with language and literacy helped her to realize that Georgia's topic was not nuanced enough for the genre of writing she needed to complete. Rather than tell the student that the topic wasn't going to be generative enough, Miriam suggested talking with the professor as a way to help, which as discussed above, seemed to put agency in the hands of the instructor. In this way, it seems Miriam initially thought of the instructor as the expert in the situation. However, in the end, Miriam found a way to provide agency for the student by suggesting a visit with a subject librarian, the better expert on the subject, who could best help Georgia with her topic.

Referring to the teacher as authority or using teacher feedback as a guiding agenda for the session happened in nearly every other session as well, to a lesser degree. For example, in the session between Julia and Lily both the tutor and tutee referred to the instructor as the authority figure in various ways. In the session, Lily brought a creative story that contained scenes that she had worked on with Julia in previous sessions. For this session, Lily had received feedback from her instructor and wanted to use that as part of the guiding agenda for the session by incorporating that feedback into her draft, as we can see in the following excerpts:

**Lily (00:22):** After we review those, I do need to go back because I talked to my teacher and she said that maybe review the beginning and the scene with the Legos, because she said in the scene with the Legos, it seemed like the dad wasn't angry enough. And at the beginning that the beginning was too long. And I don't know what to cut out of it because this is my busy. Yeah.

Julia (00:47): No, sure. The intros are always the hardest part, but they're very easy to go back and fix once you've finished writing. So, we can definitely look at that after we read your next scenes.

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**Julia (11:07):** Oh, stood. Okay, that makes more sense. Okay, so that's good. All right. I would say. So, has your professor looked at this scene yet, or no?

Lily (11:17): No.

Julia (11:18): Okay. All right, so we'll keep reading, but I think maybe depending on, like, does this have a word length at all or a page length?

Lily (11:28): No, she said ten to 15 pages. I'm at ten pages.

Julia (11:31): Okay. All right. I'll give my feedback after when I'm done reading.

In the first exchange, Lily helps to set the guiding agenda of the session by explaining that she wants to incorporate some of the feedback she received from her instructor and with that in mind, the second exchange (starting at 11:07) shows the way in which Julia keeps the instructor as the guiding agenda throughout the session. By doing so, Julia relied on the knowledge and expertise of Lily's instructor as a way to continue aiding Lily in her pursuit of academic literacies. Later in the session, Julia uses the teacher's feedback again to guide the session when she makes a suggestion based on the teacher's feedback.

**Julia (16:54):** Okay, so you end it right there. Yeah, that's very creative. Okay, so I like that because I'm almost like as a reader, wanting more. Like I want a put together ending, but I like that that's super unique. And it also leaves the open ended if you ever wanted to write more, which is awesome. And I think it's really clever that you've kind of put a wedding at the end of this scene because I feel like throughout the whole time we're super feminist kind of gearing away towards marriage and like the tradition of things. But, yeah, so that's a really interesting spin. I think it's super entertaining to read. And again, just the way you work with dialogue and vivid details, those are really excellent traits that you're writing shows so great work with. That the only thing. **So, I know you want to work on the intro and the professor said more about the dad kind of being in the intro. We can go back to that. I just think almost, and it's completely up to you since you're the writer, but in the scene, like two scenes away from this, the shorter scene, I think it's like...**

Lily (18:10): This one.

Julia (18:11): Scene five.

Lily (18:13): No, scene five. Yeah. Isn't this one the one about where she goes home, and the parents are hiding?

**Julia (18:20):** Yes. I almost think you could add more of like, conflict here. Just make it a little more like tension ridden between the mom and the dad figure, just to further emphasize your point. But it's really up to you. I think it's fine the way it is as well. **But since your professor had mentioned a little more about the dad being kind of angry and this kind of figure that's like trying to hold everybody back, especially the women, maybe just add something in here, kind of relating to that just so it kind of connects a little bit more.**

So, while Julia kept the feedback from Lily's instructor in mind as a way to guide the session, she also used it to make suggestions for other parts of the essay as well to further enhance the areas the professor pointed out. In this way, Lily also used the instructors' feedback as a way to have agency within the session as she guided the session using the feedback provided by her instructor. Because Lily's writing was a more creative piece, I think the instructor's feedback gave her confidence in ensuring that she moved the session forward in ways that aided in her vision for her writing.

Overall, using teacher feedback as a guiding agenda and seeing the teacher as an authority figure were relevant to Lily's attitudes and experiences about language and literacy. As we learned earlier, Lily did not receive a lot of encouragement from her family in learning English; it was self-motivated. Even with the Spanish language, if she said something incorrectly, Lily explained that her family would "make a game out of it." They would throw different words at her and ask her if that word was what she was trying to say. In this way, it seems that Lily really relies on and appreciates the feedback she receives from her instructors because she typically does not receive as much English literacy feedback from other areas of her life. In this way, instructor feedback is an extremely important part of how Lily continues to seek advancement in her literacy journey. It also seems to give her the motivation to utilize her agency when she visits the writing center. Julia's previous academic experiences also seem to be relevant in this session. Julia recalled that she would often write short stories in a composition notebook when she was in third grade and that her after-school teacher would help her when she got writer's block. This aided in her creativity and was "helpful for me to grow my imagination," Julia explained, also showing her appreciation for the feedback she received on her creative writing that she seems to emulate in her session with Lily.

In her follow-up interview, Lily was very happy with the session and the ways in which Julia was able to help her brainstorm. She explained, “I was looking for brainstorm, just like, come out of it with some ideas. And I came out of it with actually, as soon as we started brainstorming and the idea started coming, I had a full portion already planned on how to improve it. So, it definitely exceeded my expectations.” Further, Lily explained that she felt very comfortable with Julia because she had worked with her before and learned a bit about her exact tutoring style. She explained:

I feel like the first sessions are always like, especially if it's like a new tutor. It's really, not that it's not good, it's just a little awkward. That might just be me, but I always feel like it's a little awkward in the first session because you're trying to figure out how they do tutoring because every tutor is slightly different. Some are more grammar and strict with it, but others are like more feedback. And then around the second section, they give you more grammatics or like, around the second half of the session, they give you more grammatics, but some are just more grammar based, and then they realize what even is your topic. So, it just depends on the tutor and how that first session goes. So based on the first session onward, I felt really comfortable after I realized that she does feedback and then on which I actually wrote. And then like grammatics, because I found out, at least for me, those who do it the opposite way, kind of like lose what I'm trying to say.

Most times in traditional tutoring situations, tutor and tutees end up working together randomly rather than being paired up. However, what this exchange shows is that as a tutor and tutee begin to build a relationship over multiple tutoring sessions, they learn more about each other in a way that can positively affect the students' literacy learning and help to provide them with agency in their writing because they feel more comfortable with the tutor.

In Emma's session with Sadie, Sadie brought an essay from her English class to work on. The assignment required her to discuss the common theme between two texts or two poems that her class read throughout the semester in connection to the theme of her first-year seminar course. Sadie explained to Emma that she spoke with her instructor about the assignment and from there, they used the instructor's feedback to guide the session as you will see in the following excerpt:

Sadie (00:33): It's kind of comparing two poems, but in a way that's not, like compare and contrast. Like what the theme of them both share. I'm trying to share that document; it also has to relate to the [first-year seminar] theme. Okay. Yes.

Emma (01:09): Are you doing two texts or two poems, do you think?

**Sadie (01:13):** Yes. The two poems we read in class because I've already done an essay on one of them and then a presentation on the other poem. **But I talked to my teacher, and she said if I would do something different for this one, it's fine to use both. So, I'm doing a completely different explanation for both of them.**

Later in the session, as we can see in the following excerpt, Emma questioned the formatting that was occurring, but Sadie explained that was the way the instructor wanted it:

**Emma (17:05):** After when you're going into a quote you just want like a comma after the word. So, like she writes, comma. There you go. "She writes no one escapes. In the end, each traveler returns to town where everyone knew she hadn't even been born." **Is that just like the kind of like separating the lines with them?**

**Sadie (17:32):** Yeah. My professor wanted us to do that so we could see the lines.

**Emma (17:38):** That makes sense. And then I don't think you need the comma after the word born because you're ending the quote there.

Emma also referred to the authority of the instructor as a person who would know more about the overall understanding of the text than she would in the following excerpt:

Emma (22:41): Yeah. I think the sentence before "Other people's life journey surely affects the speaker's own life journey. This one's about the migration." I think that's good and necessary. And I think one thing you just might want to. **Well, your professor will have, like, read this and have a better understanding of it than I do, but I think you might want to emphasize that the speakers, if this is something you want to talk**

**about, that the speaker's own life is like a journey as well, in addition to like, the ancestors' journey.** And then I feel like that kind of like reaffirms like the point you're trying to make that all of life is a journey, whether or not it seems like one. I don't know. Emma, in this way, served as part of the audience for the essay. She gave Sadie some insight into the way someone other than her professor, someone with no prior knowledge on the topic, would understand what was written. In mentioning the professor and their knowledge on the topic, she elevates the instructors' authority above her own and tries to manage the writer's expectations of what the instructor may want. In other words, she, like Reuben in the earlier example, uses the instructor as an authority figure to discuss audience and audience understanding. And this was something Sadie mentioned in her follow up interview and will be discussed in further detail in the following chapter. So, although this was a seemingly new genre for Sadie, she felt that it was helpful to work through it with someone else and gain that rhetorical literacy knowledge, understanding audience, purpose, and context.

In a very obvious connection to the ways in which teacher authority affects students' attitudes literacy and language, Sadie found a point in her essay that she told Emma she wanted to change because of the feedback she has received from instructors throughout her life in writing. The following excerpt shows Sadie mentioning that teachers have told her she should not start sentences with the word "it":

Sadie (41:17): I do know it needs some reworking because I also don't like in other essays, I started things with, sentences with "it". **And my teacher's always like, don't start with "it". So, I just caught this. Now I'm like, oh, I do not want that comment.** I could just keep it as like the speaker in *Escape from the Old Country*.

This moment demonstrates the ways in which previous academic experiences influence literacy. Sadie was able to recognize and make a conscious decision about her writing because she was able to recall the instruction she had received previously. This helped her to find the moment in her writing herself that she wished to change and because she was able to do so, she will likely

be able to correct it when she finds it in her writing in the future. However, it is not clear whether Sadie understands why she was told not to begin a sentence with the pronoun. Of course, we understand that in most cases the purpose of eliminating “it” is that the writer needs to be as specific as possible. But we also know there are times when a sentence can begin that way. But it’s unclear whether Sadie understands the purpose of eliminating the word or when she could use it. Therefore, it could be that she has internalized this rule and will always look to eliminate the pronoun at the beginning of her sentences. Regardless, this example seems to be a clear way in which Sadie’s attitudes and experiences toward language and literacy have been internalized and have affected her writing.

Similarly, in understanding an issue that she has in articulating her thoughts, Sadie sought the literacy expertise of her instructor before visiting the writing center when she was stuck at the beginning of her essay. Sadie explains in the following excerpt about how her instructor helped her to sort through and understand her ideas for her thesis statement:

**Sadie (44:34): Yeah, connect. I'm going to put connected journeys. That's like the phrase. Sometimes it's just like phrases that I can't like...**

Emma (44:43): It's just easier to talk to someone. I'm like, here.

**Sadie (44:48): Yeah. I was having difficulty with my thesis because I'm like, these are the ideas in my head. How do I format them? Like, how do I make it into, like a sentence? So, I talked to my teacher. I first started with an outline, but I was like, I need my thesis first to do my outline, and these are my ideas. Let me just word vomit. And then she's like, okay, definitely. You're talking about kind of like life as a dream, as a metaphor. Try working that out. I'm like, thank you. That's what I was trying to say.**

Sadie mentioned at this part of the session that she has a hard time getting her ideas from her thoughts to the paper she was writing. And as we learned in earlier chapters, Sadie often uses different tools like voice memos to help her understand the ideas she has. But during the drafting of the essay, she found she needed extra assistance, so she consulted her instructor as an

authority figure and literacy mentor. The instructor was able to help Sadie make sense of the ideas she had so that she could begin her essay. In this way, the instructor had done the work of helping Sadie further her pursuits of literacy by being a sounding board of sorts for her. She gave Sadie the ability to think through her writing process. And with her ideas in a more coherent form, Sadie was able to use those ideas to direct the session.

At the end of the session as they were wrapping up, Sadie circled back to ask Emma if she thought the essay was tied to the first-year seminar theme:

**Sadie (52:05): Yeah. I'll add something about the perspective, and then this is the next one because this is what I wanted to ultimately like the [first-year seminar] theme. Also, without me having to explicitly say [first-year seminar] theme in my paragraphs. Does it tie to [first-year seminar] theme? Because I don't want to say-kind of seems weird to say it in the middle of two poems.**

**Emma (52:39):** I think it does relate. I think it also kind of does depend on what your professor is looking for, because you're definitely relating to your [first-year seminar] theme of self and identity, because these stories are about identity and the journey of life and finding yourself. But I don't know. I think you do connect it to the theme well. **Do you think she wants you to, like, directly outright say, like anything about the [first-year seminar] theme or what do you think?**

**Sadie (53:21): I'm not sure. So, I do have class tomorrow. So, ask her for clarity if she wants that. Yeah. Not sure.**

**Emma (53:35): Yeah. I think it's definitely worth asking. Just so you know, she can tell you.**

Emma explained that she thought the essay did tie back to the theme but that Sadie should ask her instructor if she needed to explicitly mention the theme within the essay. In this way, Emma relied on the authority of the instructor to help push Sadie's understanding of the particular assignment.

*Implications: Teacher as Authority Related to Culture?*

One of the more difficult aspects of writing center work is balancing what tutees expect from the tutor with what is expected by the instructor. Tutors are typically taught to teach genre

conventions and in that way, unless directly stated otherwise in an assignment sheet, they are usually able to provide guidance that reflects what an instructor might be looking for in an essay. In the *Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors*, there are guidelines outlined for how tutors should maintain professionalism toward teachers. This includes refraining from writing parts of the students' papers so that teachers are sure they are evaluating students' own work, refraining from commenting on teaching styles and encouraging students to speak with the instructor if they are unsure about grading policies or assignments, never criticizing a grade given by an instructor, and never suggest a grade they believe an instructor would give (Ryan and Zimmerelli 3-4). With this in mind, we can better understand why many of the tutors decided to suggest their tutee talk with the instructor or to follow the instructor's feedback. Although the tutors taught basic genre conventions to the tutees such as Reuben teaching about a literature review, Julia teaching a creative genre, and Emma teaching analysis, sometimes the tutor was unable to parse out exactly what the professor wanted from the student, so they referred them back to the instructor as they are taught to do.

Some of the other instances throughout the sessions showed the tutees' reliance on instructor feedback to guide their sessions. An important factor I noticed was that none of the tutees ever said that they didn't agree with the feedback they received from their instructor. Those who mentioned the feedback wanted to follow it closely. It made me wonder what it means that the students did not question the feedback or ask the tutor to help explain why they got the feedback they received. Did they also think those changes needed to be made, or were they making the changes simply because the instructor wanted those changes and the students wanted to get a good grade? Maybe there is a cultural tie that one does not question their elders because it would be considered disrespectful, although there was no such mention in any of the

tutees' preliminary interviews. Overall, I think it is telling that the students relied so heavily on the suggestions and criticisms of their instructors as a means to further pursue their literacy skills. Besides the session where Lily used teacher feedback as a way to explore her agency and direct the session where she wanted it to go, they all seemed to allow the instructors agency over their writing because they didn't question the feedback. While this isn't necessarily a bad thing, it would have been interesting to see the way in which one of these Spanish-speaking tutees might have resisted or questioned feedback.

### **Tutor as Language Expert: Relying on Tutor Knowledge Through Directive Feedback and Asking Questions**

Throughout the sessions, the tutees relied on the tutors as language experts frequently, becoming one of the most common occurrences across all sessions, although it was concentrated within Sadie's sessions. These instances of tutors as the language expert combine a few different aspects. At times, this meant that tutors were being more direct in the feedback they were giving to students of their own volition. At other times, the tutees asked specific questions about language use or sentence structure that they wanted the tutor as the language expert to weigh in on. In this way, the tutor helped to teach specific literacy skills lessons to their tutees.

In the session between Erin and Sadie, the reliance on the tutor as the language expert happened a few times in the different iterations. Throughout the following excerpts, Erin makes some direct suggestions to Sadie:

**Erin (06:54): ... Alright. I think you have some really good content in here and I think you could probably add a couple of sentences just to tie it back to the thesis and maybe just be a little bit more explicit about the kinds of people that the narrator is talking about through it. So, like, for example, at the very beginning, "the idea of sacrifice is further expanded upon." The narrator recognizes that for them. I know your professor will have read the poem, but for me I wasn't sure like what specific people the narrator was referring to there.**

Sadie (08:23): Okay. The narrator is like born from like she is the child of immigrants and how like the way that the poem goes is she herself is comparing her struggle is so different from her ancestors and how the one quote about the babysitting money. I'm just spending it on novels, books and stuff and then it quickly goes back to the journey of the difficulty of coming to America. So, I guess that could have been more explained.

**Erin (09:14): Yeah. And I think you could pretty easily do that with a couple of phrases or a sentence or two at the very beginning. So maybe something like kind of like what you just explained to me. The narrator is a person who can kind of elaborate on their identity and then you could start and say the narrator says that for people like her or he or them, their life had nothing to do with a journey and just kind of make a little bit more explicit in that sense. And I think that will help tie it back to the thesis too.**

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**Erin (10:49): Yeah. I think once again you do a really good job with the content; you have the specific line references, and you have the good elaboration on those as well and how they connect to your topic sentence there. I think probably you could add one more sentence at the end just to tie back what you've said in this paragraph to what you said in the introduction and in your thesis. So, let's see "the repetition of the word try at the end of lines 13 and 14 emphasize the narrator's constant effort of becoming nothing," and then maybe say something about how that like, either is different or the same as the other generations that are talked about in the poem. Just so you get back to that main idea of, like, the difference between the different generations.**

**Sadie (11:38): Okay. Yeah. Because I do remember writing just like that last line and not really knowing what to say after that, and I felt like it was like an abrupt ending to that paragraph, but I didn't know what else to write, but that would be a great kind of tie back.**

In the next excerpt, Sadie asks Erin direct questions related to the writing of conclusions for essays:

**Sadie (16:09): Yeah. So that's one thing I was also wondering, because this assignment had a three-page limit, and I went over two lines and asked my professor that was okay. And she said, if it's like those two lines, it's fine. But just for future reference, is it okay if I combine a conclusion not actually having a specific conclusion paragraph, but maybe sentences before that last paragraph. If I have a page limit.**

Erin (16:43): I'm not sure I fully understand what you mean. So, you're saying you'd have, like, a couple of sentences that you include in the conclusion paragraph that aren't directly the conclusion? Did I get that right?

Sadie (16:56): No, the other way around. My bad. Because here I still have, like, I still have evidence, but the way I was learned to write would have a whole separate paragraph for conclusions?

Erin (17:07): Okay,

**Sadie (17:08): But is it okay if there's an instance of a page limit that I don't have a specific conclusion paragraph, but have sentences that kind of wrap it up in that last paragraph?**

Erin (17:22): Okay, got you. I think I would always try to have conclusion paragraph, but I would say that what you have in the second to last paragraph, even having that bit of evidence that's okay to have in a conclusion paragraph. I feel like it summarizes kind of what your thesis is and what you're getting at. It's not like you're trying to point out something very specific, like a symbol or word choice or something. You're just kind of using evidence that more summarizes it. And so, I think you could combine it and just call it your conclusion there and include that evidence in there would work really well, actually.

**Sadie (17:56): Okay. Yeah. I wasn't sure if evidence is okay to have in conclusions just because of the same idea. Like you're just adding new things when you're supposed to be wrapping it up.**

**Erin (18:08): Yeah, I think this one's good. I think usually I wouldn't use more than one piece of evidence in the conclusion, but I've used one in there before. And if it helps kind of summarize everything, it's totally fine.**

Sadie (18:19): Okay.

Within these excerpts, we can see the ways in which Sadie relies on but also learns from Erin as the expert, the person who has the most knowledge about the genre conventions. In the first excerpt starting at 6:54, Erin read a paragraph and then explained her understanding of it, bringing audience awareness to Sadie's attention. Sadie understood that she needed to explain further, and Erin then provided direct choices that Sadie could make to clarify for her audience. At 10:49, Erin suggested a way that Sadie could better tie her content to her main idea. Sadie expressed that she knew she needed to do so but did not know how, so Erin's expertise helped to make the connection that Sadie wanted to make within the essay. Finally, in the last segment, Sadie directly asked Erin a question about paragraph conventions and what is appropriate to include in a conclusion to an essay. Erin was able to help Sadie to better understand how to craft a conclusion paragraph, as it was clear that Sadie already knew a bit about how to do it and was seeking clarification. Therefore, Erin was able to aid Sadie in furthering her understanding of that particular writing convention.

In the session between Emma and Sadie, Sadie relied much more on Emma as the language expert by asking direct questions about language, punctuation use, or sentence structure than she did in the session with Erin creating more of a self-directed educational experience. The following excerpts detail the many moments where Sadie asks the direct questions about punctuation and language use:

**Sadie (13:21): In the poem, it's capitalized. Would I make it lower case because of my sentence?**

**Emma (13:25): I think you can leave it capitalized.**

**Sadie (13:29): Okay. Yeah. I've had difficulty with inserting quotes. Yeah. Because I always forget to put "say" or like "said". But yeah. Thank you for that. Maybe if I say, "The speaker in Facing West describes his life like a circular path." That way I can cut that journey out.**

Emma (13:58): Yeah. I think that's good. The speaker's writing about his own journey of life. I think there you could say, like, you can leave how the journey was meant for self-discovery or you can say, like, and how it was meant for self-discovery, since you're referencing the journey of life. But it's up to you.

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**Sadie (15:54): I feel like if I were to take off the italicize it would sound odd when the speaker calls the people she's writing about travelers.**

Emma (16:06): Yeah. I think you can leave it italicized. I don't think that's a bad thing. I feel like if it wasn't there it would sound different.

**Sadie (16:19): And then here, how would I introduce this quote?**

Emma (16:25): Yeah. "Metaphor can be seen in Escape from the Old Country when the speaker calls the people that she's writing about travelers." I feel like you could say like she tells us or "the speaker said," "speaker writes" just something to bring in the ...

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Sadie (18:22): Yes. So, the thing about this poem is that I wrote another essay about it, so I have gone really in depth with it. So basically, it's like the lack of the speaker's, the lack of her taking a journey, of migrating over the sea and stuff is part of her identity and is part of her own journey even though she didn't take this one.

Emma (18:52): Okay.

**Sadie (18:53): And formulating that idea is what stumped me in writing this because it's like you have to understand as a reader having to understand the whole poem without me having to share the whole poem. How do I share that?**

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**Sadie (28:43): And then would I take this comma out or keep it?**

Emma (28:48): The speaker implies that this search has been going a long period of time. I feel like you could leave the comma, or you could take it out. You could say for a long period of time by saying like something like that, maybe.

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**Sadie (39:23): Would it be inconclusive?**

Emma (39:23): It would be inconclusive. You're right. Okay.

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**Sadie (59:31): Some way to take out journey the path to finding one's identity can be uncomfortable. Which can expect? Is the comma necessary?**

Emma (59:49): I think it grammatically does make sense.

**Sadie (59:55): Okay. Sometimes I add commas when just as a pause I used to go overboard with them so I'm trying to make sure this one isn't like an extra one.**

Emma (01:00:07): I think it's a necessary pause. I think you're good. Okay. Any last-minute things you want us to look at?

With Sadie's strong agentive choices in guiding the session and her equally strong sense of where her literacy knowledge is lacking, she was able to utilize the knowledge Emma has as a native speaker throughout the session by asking the questions that she did. Importantly, Sadie was the only student who really had this type of awareness of her lack of literacy knowledge, likely because she has not had as much support in her English literacy acquisition journey as others have had. Sadie's self-motivation to learn English that we learned from her preliminary interview has had a clear impact on her attitudes toward language and literacy as a self-directed learner.

Emma's role in the session was to not only provide the native speaker context to Sadie but also to teach her the grammar constructions. While writing center scholarship often criticizes the idea of multilingual students coming to the writing center for help with grammar since the goal of writing centers is to help writers with higher order concerns (HOCs) versus lower order concerns (LOCs), much scholarship has also supported the fact that writing centers should help

with grammar concerns. Judith Powers argues that if discussion of grammar is avoided in sessions, much like how sessions with native speakers are conducted, then there can be potential for cultural miscommunication and failed tutorial sessions because multilingual students bring their first language rhetoric to the session (Powers 40-42). Additionally, LOCs can affect the overall meaning in an essay and therefore require some attention before moving on to HOCs (Rafoth 108, 239). Overall, the few questions that Sadie had in relation to grammar did not take up much time in the session and gave Sadie the ability to learn a bit from Emma while still keeping the main objective of the session.

In Georgia's session with Reuben, the tutor as the expert was more prominent in the directive methods used by Reuben rather than the self-directed methods of the tutee seeking the tutor's language expertise. In her session with Reuben, Reuben took the time throughout the session to detail different genre conventions for Georgia. In the following excerpts, Reuben discusses thesis statements, introduction paragraphs, and literature reviews and the conventions of each:

Georgia (05:35): Yes. I'm just not sure about this assignment because...

**Reuben (05:39): You and everybody else don't feel bad. We'll work on it, and we'll try and help you figure out what it is. But basically, you're going to look at, say, ten things, and your thesis might be but we're going to see what it is. And the fact is it's okay to write your thesis after you've kind of done your maybe you do your best effort at the beginning, and then you go back and make sure it fits with what you've written in your literature. Then you can switch your thesis because you do want your literature to demonstrate your thesis is correct or directionally correct, moving in the right direction. So, your thesis might be that it has something to do with the importance of using proper glasses for a certain kind of work. Then your thesis might be that there's a definite health advantage or a definite efficiency advantage in your work or something that can affect in the literature. It's going to more or less demonstrate that. I think that's what we're going to try to do anyway. We'll work on it anyway.**

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**Reuben (12:15):** So, in your introduction, you're going to introduce sort of the big broad ideas that have been that you found in the literature and perhaps a couple of things that you want to point people's attention to where there's a problem or something new or something particularly interesting. Your thesis will be in there, right. Usually at the end of the introduction and then your literature review. Now, if at the end you feel that the literature falls into distinct groups, categories, you can give them subtitles if you want pros, cons, mixed signals or something like that. All A or all B and some A and B. I don't think it's necessary. But if it lends itself to do that, that's fine. If it doesn't, they all may be different. Maybe different to give them. It didn't say in the assignment that you had to do. It just a possible organizational tool. Does that make sense?

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**Reuben (15:12):** But it looks like your first paragraph is pretty good. But we don't have a thesis in here yet. So, this is normally classically where you're going to find your thesis. I think it could be okay in the second paragraph, but you usually want it up front things.

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**Reuben (24:54):** Okay, well, let's look at the first one there. I think. But all I'm saying, remember, this is a literature review. And mostly what you should be talking about here is what the literature tells you. And later, as you get your proposal paper at the end, they will allow you to sort of weigh in yourself. So, this is mostly what the literature tells you. So, I think you've done a good job up to here, so I think it's good. And you've got a nice thesis in here. Yeah, but make sure that I know I'm repeating myself, but it's important. Make sure your thesis fits the literature review. Not necessarily. Your literature review may not be exactly what your proposal paper is going to be. This is your gathering the information that you've gathered. So, make sure it fits. Or if you've added something like this, that may be a new twist. Make sure you find something in your literature that supports at least that discussion. Otherwise, your thesis won't be quite in harmony with your literature. Does that make sense?

The excerpts above are a few examples of many that demonstrate the way in which the tutor as the expert was present in the way in which Reuben took a more direct approach to tutoring. And as mentioned in the previous chapter, Georgia liked this method as she had worked with Reuben many times before and found that it was helpful that Reuben ensured she understood the assignment as they proceeded through the session. Although Georgia was relatively quiet throughout the session, it was clear that Georgia was still participating as she gave the appropriate back-channel cues and responded to specific questions asked throughout the

session. And she expressed in her follow-up interview that she felt the session was really helpful for her. In this way, Georgia's genre knowledge grew, and she became more comfortable with Reuben over time even though the session was a bit more direct than a typical writing center session.

*Implications: Tutors as Experts and Cultural Informants*

During these moments of the sessions, tutors acted as cultural informants for the tutees. They were able to provide the cultural and genre knowledge the tutees needed, sometimes on their own through direct tutoring techniques and other times through answering tutees' questions. Much like the way in which the tutees did not question the feedback received from their instructors, they also did not question the feedback their tutors provided, likely for the same reasons.

Most importantly, we can gather a lot of information from the ways in which Sadie and Georgia relied on their tutors as experts. First, we know that Sadie, as mentioned in previous chapters, was never pushed to learn English by her family. She was always pushed to learn English from her instructors. Therefore, teachers and those who occupy similar roles have always been the experts and those whose help Sadie sought throughout her life. And because learning English was a self-motivated activity, she was sure to seek the help she needed from these language experts during her sessions. On the other hand, Georgia allowed Reuben to take a more direct tutoring approach, assuming the role of expert within the session as she listened. This passivity is something typical for Georgia as she explained in her preliminary interview that listening to and respecting others is important. And having worked with Reuben many times, has found this dynamic to work well for her.

The passivity that was seen from Georgia in her session versus the directness of Sadie's session was a quite interesting comparison when we think about power and authority in sessions with multilingual students. As mentioned in Chapter 1 in relation to Georgia and her quiet nature, tutor dominance, or epistemic asymmetry as Lee calls it, is typical in sessions with L2 learners because of the tutee's own perceived lack of language knowledge (Lee 53). In other words, their passivity may be linked to their attitudes toward their own language and literacy learning (Lee 53). Sadie was often the person taking charge and had authority in her session by asking specific questions and making sure to guide the session where she wanted to go. Although Georgia did take a passive role, this does not mean that she was a "less effective language learner" while Sadie was the most effective language learner, as Lee argues (60). Georgia was still responding to Reuben by asking small questions as well as providing cues that she was listening and understanding Reuben's suggestions. Even more importantly, Georgia mentioned that Reuben's tutoring methods worked well for her. Therefore, it is clear that she is still actively learning and seeking to improve her understanding of English literacy. Rather than trying to distinguish between how each individual person learns as good versus bad, I think it is more productive to consider how their attitudes and beliefs about their language learning encourage their agency, as we saw in the vast differences between Georgia and Sadie's sessions, in furthering their literacy attainment as they seek new literacies.

The tutors' experiences also had a profound significance in the session. Emma's quiet nature worked well with Sadie's self-determined nature in that Sadie was able to ask questions of Emma to utilize her expert language knowledge. Erin, as she hopes to emulate positive literacy learning experiences for her students that mimic those from her own literacy learning, was able to have rapport back and forth with Sadie. At times, Erin would be direct in providing

suggestions and at other times would provide suggestions after Sadie prompted them with a question she had. This give and take allowed Erin to express some expertise but also allowed Sadie to have some agency within the session as she sought new literacy knowledge. Finally, Reuben's years of experience teaching and tutoring were present in his session with Georgia. He was able to express ways that previous students have reacted to the same assignment and surely base his tutoring choices on those previous sessions. Overall, the tutors, in their roles as experts in these moments in their sessions, were able to teach different literacies such as genre conventions, word choice, stylistic choices, and paragraph structure.

### **Tutees Taking Charge of the Session: Enacting Agency**

Throughout some of the sessions, the students took opportunities to take charge of the session and push the session in directions they wanted it to go, creating self-directed educational experiences. This did not happen in all the sessions and in fact, happened most of the time with Lily, but at other times with Frida and Sadie, as we saw in the previous section. This often looked like the tutee being direct with the tutor asking specific questions they had or the student navigating away from a comment the tutor made to go back to or move on to a new point they had a question about.

Particularly with Lily's sessions, she always had particular areas that she wanted to bring attention to in her essays and had direct responses to the tutor's questions. The following excerpts Lily makes explicit her desire to focus on grammar and her desire to have Erin read the text aloud:

Erin (03:12): All right, perfect. So, is there a specific section you'd like to start with or anything in particular you like me to look at or look for?

**Lily (03:24): No, I just had those three major points get set that I go back to the situation with reference to class or anything that we've learned in class why he died**

**and why is it. I know you said to give a little bit of a background, but more connecting to class and why it's important, but mostly it's grammar. Like, sometimes I forget because I write the way I think, which leads me to recording myself. It doesn't translate well sometimes.**

Erin (04:02): Sure. Yeah, no worries. I can definitely look out for that.

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Erin (04:54): Okay, cool. Would you prefer to read? Would you like me to? We can alternate whatever you think.

**Lily (04:59): I always prefer someone else to read just because. Not that I don't mind reading. It's just that it helps me catch mistakes quicker.**

In this exchange, Lily directed Erin's attention to the fact that she has some grammar issues that she wanted her to pay attention to when going through the essay because she "writes the way [she] thinks." Lily is very aware of the issues she has with being able to translate her thoughts from Spanish to English as was described in previous chapters. This allowed Lily to make grammar a priority for her in sessions and gave her the ability to continue pursuing grammatical literacy. Lily, much like we discussed with Sadie, was able to have a lot of agency within this session because she is a bit more self-aware than most other participants of her shortcomings in English literacy knowledge. In the second exchange, Erin asks how Lily wanted to begin the session by determining who would be reading aloud. By being direct in her response to Erin, Lily was able to advocate for what was best for her learning style, again showing a great amount of self-awareness and agency for her learning needs.

Lily was also able to notice areas where her meaning was not totally clear before Erin even pointed them out directly and was able to ask for direct advice, as we can see in the following excerpt:

Erin (17:58): Okay, cool. That's awesome that you tied it back, though. I think that's a good connection. All right. "The US government urged Diem to reform and expand his government, but because the News' brother and sister-in-law did not trust the US or the commitment to the Vietnamese government." Let's see. "The US government urged Diem

to reform and expand his government. But because the News' brother-in-law and sister-in-laws."

**Lily (18:26): I think what I'm trying to say is that remind that the news because you get lost sometimes with all these names that I mentioned. The news are his brother and his sister in law.**

Erin (18:39): Okay.

**Lily (18:41): So would that not be a comma instead, it would be like a dash or something.**

When Erin repeated the sentence, it signaled to Lily that there may have been something wrong with what she said, so she immediately clarified her thought and followed her thought by asking if she could fix it with a "dash or something." With this exchange, Lily took some of the responsibility of the session into her own hands, which she continued to do in the other session she completed as well.

In her session with Julia, Lily was also sure to take charge of the session and direct the session in the ways that best fit her literacy learning needs. Right at the beginning of the session, what was clearly a second session between the two with the same piece of writing, Lily directed the session to the specific paragraph she thought needed attention, as we can see in the following excerpt:

Julia (01:04): We can start from where we left off before.

**Lily (01:12): I think we should start from this scene because I did edit scene three.**

Julia (01:16): Scene three. Okay. That's good. And then I know last time you said you didn't want to read out loud. Okay. Yeah.

Lily continued to do that throughout the session as well, finding different moments that she wanted to emphasize more as a creative choice, therefore not something that Julia would have necessarily pointed out as a moment that needed attention, shifting the power and authority within the session to the Spanish-speaking tutee over the native-speaking tutor. In the following excerpt, Lily stops Julia's feedback to consider a revision to part of her work:

Lily (25:42): Okay, maybe it hit, like, the impact of it hitting the wall. Maybe.

Julia (25:48): Yes. That's a great thing you could add.

Lily (26:00): "It hit the wall behind me."

Julia (26:03): Yeah.

**Lily (26:04): Hold on. Honestly, I want to emphasize the loud sound. I don't know if I should take out the Barbie. "I stared at him in shock." Yeah.**

Because the piece of writing was more creative, Lily needed to take charge and be more direct because Julia would have had no idea what types of changes Lily would have wanted to make without her guidance. The more creative genre meant there were less strict conventions that Julia could have used as guidelines for feedback. Therefore, Lily's authority within the session was necessary, both for her own learning and for an overall successful session.

Part of what has shaped Lily's direct nature during her sessions can be connected to her attitude toward her past literacy and language experiences. During her preliminary interview, Lily described the ways in which she was forced to use English in school. She was not allowed to use Spanish at all. She also described how she often has trouble understanding and telling jokes in English because it takes her a while to understand, often causing her to use Google translate in an attempt to decipher the language. With these experiences in mind, it seems as though Lily wanted to overcome the "outsider" perception that many of these experiences formed for her. Therefore, she made the conscious decision to be an active participant in her literacy learning.

The other student who took charge the most in their session was Frida. Unfortunately, due to technical issues, the audio did not record for Frida's second session so there's only one session of theirs that could be analyzed. However, even in the one session, Frida was sure to move the session in the most productive ways for them. The following excerpt shows Frida's

direct responses to Reuben about what they wanted to do with the essay they brought to the session and a direct response to Reuben's question related to the essay audiences' knowledge:

Reuben (03:29): Okay. Good. Clear concise description here. Okay. I think I understand it. Then. Usually, these means do it right. Do it well and you're going to get good grades. Do it. Lousy, you won't. Poorly, I should say. Okay. Have you started or is it where you really want to be?

**Frida (03:52): No, it's submitted. It's done. I wanted to convert it into a better introduction format.**

Reuben (04:00): Okay. Yeah.

**Frida (04:01): So I wanted to take what I had and clean it up because it was meant to be informal. But now I want to turn it formal.**

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Reuben (20:35): Sure. You might just might say the language gap or something like that. Or the English language gap or something like that. Just to be a little bit more precise. That's all. You can say, "I know, maybe from personal experience", or you say, "my personal experience suggests that I know", or you could say, "I know English only was not as effective for me." Can you say it for everybody?

**Frida (21:09): In class? The general sentiment that we talk about consistently is that English only is the least effective form of bilingual education. And that's the only reason why I felt confident saying it.**

Reuben (21:21): Okay.

**Frida (21:21): Because in class it's, like held as fact rather than. But also, I see how in this paragraph it would be beneficial for saying, like in personal experience.**

With these two examples in mind, and thinking about Frida's follow-up interview after this session, it is much clearer why Frida took such a direct approach to guiding their own session. As we learned in the follow-up interview, Frida was very anxious leading up to and during the session. Because they anticipated that they might have to defend what they were saying within the essay, Frida was sure to make it clear exactly what they wanted Reuben's focus to be on. Frida quickly established that they held authority over their work and authority over the conversation they were about to have regarding the work. In this way, there was no room for Reuben to potentially comment on what Frida was saying instead of how they were saying it.

Finally, Sadie was the other student who took charge of their session and created self-directed educational experiences during their sessions. In her session with Emma, Sadie often took Emma's prompts as moments to direct the session. In the following excerpt, Emma asks Sadie how she feels about the paragraph that they had just read:

**Sadie (43:13): I didn't like this one. This poem specifically has just been so hard to explain. I feel like I'm kind of going in circles without specificity. However, I kind of want to drive this point home because this is kind of like what I'm trying to explain is the end of the journey. "Started her own, her ancestors' journey, started her own." So, their ceiling was like her floor. She can keep going.**

Emma (43:53): Okay.

**Sadie (43:54): Like that idea. I like to make more from this part of a paragraph.**

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**Sadie (45:26): Thank you. So, I have the rest of my outline. Maybe I have topic sentences. So, before I finish- before this ends, I'd like just to look over my topic sentences that way tomorrow I think I will be able to make it to four pages. So, it's like four to five.**

Because as we learned in her preliminary interview that Sadie did not have much support in her English literacy learning, it seems fitting that she would take charge of her sessions as she did in these two examples. We also learned in Sadie's preliminary interview that she has struggled with her English reading comprehension. She explained, "Because I didn't read that much as I kept growing up, comprehension has been hard for me. In English, in Spanish, surprisingly, it makes sense when I read things, but in English, it takes a while for me to understand things and I have to keep rereading things. And I'm a slow reader in English, too, so comprehension is hard."

Therefore, as we can see in the excerpt at 43:13, she explains that she has had a hard time explaining the poems. Because she struggles with comprehension, she was sure to respond directly to Emma's questions about her writing. In this way, she gained agency over her writing by ensuring that she received the kind of feedback that would be most beneficial to her and her language and literacy learning needs.

*Implications: Connections Between Repeat Sessions and Agency?*

There are many implications that can be discussed with this understanding of the ways in which the tutees sought new academic literacies in their sessions. What seems most important is that the Spanish-speaking tutees really took advantage of their agency in directing the sessions and creating self-directed educational moments. This was something many of them were likely more accustomed to because their English literacy journeys were self-motivated. A study conducted by Allison Briceño, Claudia Rodriguez-Mojica, and Eduardo Muñoz-Muñoz found that heritage Spanish-speaking preservice teachers' beliefs about language and literacy have influenced their classroom practices (213). Specifically, they discussed their participants' experiences as they became bilingual teachers as “reflect[ing] the contradictions of identity motivations (ex. heritage pride, assimilation pressures) and the influence of linguistic ideologies (e.g. US English dominance), as when families may support and oppose their bilingual growth” (Briceño, Rodriguez-Mojica, and Muñoz-Muñoz 215). In other words, the heritage Spanish-speaking participants of that study were influenced by their background experiences, both positive and negative, to be self-motivated in their pursuits of their careers, much like the participants of the current study did.

Part of a pattern that I noticed within the analysis of the sessions was that with Lily and Julia's session, they had already worked together once. Unlike the other two sessions discussed in this session, Lily was much more direct than the other students about what she wanted throughout the session. I wonder if her past experiences in tutoring sessions with Julia helped her to feel more comfortable and therefore more direct? She was also still direct in her session with Erin when she gave direct answers to what she wanted to focus on in the session. However, the directness with Julia felt different, and I believe that could be because they have worked together

before. The directness that was present in the session between Frida and Reuben seemed, upon reflection, to be rooted in apprehension. Because Frida was unsure of what to expect from the session based on their previous experiences in similar situations, their direct responses were their way of keeping the session in their control and ensuring that they stayed within the realm of what was comfortable for themselves. This led me to wonder how Frida would have felt in a session with a peer tutor rather than a professional tutor. Would working with someone closer to their age have eased some of their anxieties?

### **Chapter Conclusions: Seeking New Academic Literacy Knowledge Through Agency, Repeat Sessions, and More**

Overall, these tutoring sessions served as ways for the Spanish-speaking tutees to utilize the knowledge of their peers and instructors to further their literacy education. Throughout most of their literacy journeys, the Spanish-speaking tutees had instructors and teachers who in some way positively influenced their education, enough so that they all could recall who that person was and what they did that was so influential. Therefore, I surmise that the writing center interactions these students have are mirroring those other positive educational experiences. The students are valuing what is said by their instructors and writing center tutors and learning from them. By being agents of their own literacy learning, many of the Spanish-speaking tutees were able to guide the tutor to areas they wanted to focus on, showing self-awareness of their literacy learning needs.

With this in mind, it was not surprising to find a significance to repeated sessions with the same tutor. Although for the purposes of this study tutees worked with two different tutors, some of the tutees worked with the tutor participants before this study began which seemed to have a positive effect on their ability to seek new literacy knowledge from the tutors. The

students felt comfortable having worked with the tutor many times and grew to appreciate and seek out that tutor's particular tutoring style. This is a concept that many universities have begun to explore through Writing Partner Programs. I had a relatively hard time finding any scholarship that discusses Writing Partner Programs and the benefits of such programs for students.

However, by looking at the websites for a few different universities who do have these programs, I was able to learn some information about how these programs function. At New York University, the Writing Partners Program at Washington Square is designed for undergraduate multilingual students who are paired with a tutor for weekly 45-minute sessions. Their website explains, "Throughout the collaboration, your writing partner's goal will be to encourage and help you to gain confidence in expressing your ideas effectively for an academic audience" ("Writing Partners at Washington Square"). At Williams College, the Writing Partners Program is designed for students taking "multiple writing heavy courses" who are less experienced writers and who are concerned about meeting the demands of many writing courses ("Writing Partners Program"). During my time as the Graduate Administrative Fellow in the undergraduate Writing Center at UMD, we also implemented a Writing Partners Program. UMD's program "matches ENGL101 students with the same Writing Center tutor for 5-10 consecutive sessions during the semester" ("Writing Partners Application"). There are even more programs that other universities have that are specifically designed for graduate students or who match tutors with high school students, all of which are called Writing Partners Programs. It is clear that there is a consensus that repeated sessions with a tutor over time are significant in some way, but further research should be done to determine what effect the relationship building has on the tutees' literacy acquisition over time.

## **Chapter 4: Developing New Literacies: Spanish-Speaking Tutees' Gaining Tools for Literacy Learning**

The previous chapter focused on the ways in which Spanish-speaking tutees sought literacy knowledge from their tutors and instructors' feedback—they utilized the tutors' expertise and their instructors' feedback to better understand unknown areas of academic literacies. This chapter focuses on the actual tools that the Spanish-speaking tutees gained from working with their tutors that they will be able to utilize to develop new literacies.

The term “literacies” as used here has an important distinction from the term “literacy” as it has been used traditionally. Brian Street explains that when we apply the term “literacies” in academic contexts, we discover that the idea of literacy that fits administrative interests, Standard American English, is one literacy amongst many (Blommaert, Street, and Turner 140). Reminiscent of our discussion of literacy in the introduction, Street's distinction helps to solidify the idea that literacies within this study encompass all contexts simultaneously, giving students the ability to develop upon their academic literacies as they are constantly influenced by all of their literacies. Specifically, this chapter will explore moments of praise and critique, tutors positioning themselves as learners, and more as they provide specific feedback to the Spanish-speaking tutees that they can use to become better writers. These moments in the sessions were when the tutors and tutees shared their attitudes about genre conventions, their attitudes toward rhetorical choices, their priorities toward language in prioritizing higher order concerns (HOCs) versus lower order concerns (LOCs), and their attention to audience awareness.<sup>3</sup> These moments

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<sup>3</sup> Tutors' attitudes toward genre conventions, tutors' attitudes toward rhetorical choices, tutors' priorities toward language in prioritizing HOCs versus LOCs, and tutors' attention to audience awareness are all codes gathered from the data that are discussed in detail throughout the chapter. The explanations of these codes are easier to distinguish by reading through the description of codes within Appendix G to help frame your understanding as you move into the chapter.

will ask us to consider how tutors' attitudes and beliefs toward their own language and literacy learning influence their choices in making their literacy skills available to tutees (*Negotiating the Center ...* 40).

### **Tutors' Attitudes Toward Genre Conventions: Teaching Tutees Genre Knowledge**

Throughout the sessions, there were a few different instances where the tutors expressed their attitudes toward genre conventions in general or their attitudes about the ways in which the tutees exercised the genre conventions in their writing. Reuben most often expressed attitudes toward the genre conventions themselves. In the following excerpts, Reuben critiques the idea of credible sources, the concept of having a thesis statement for a literature review, and the use of headings within a literature review:

Georgia (00:58): And sources. Now they're asking us to do the literature review to inform in our audience that it will be our classmates and undergraduates about this topic.

Reuben (01:13): So you're going to have how many sources have they asked you to do?

Georgia (01:16): Eight to ten. Five must be academic.

**Reuben (01:21): Well, they say credible now, of course. Boy, is that difficult in today's world to know what's credible and what isn't. Wow. That's asking a lot. Personally, I think there should be a whole course on it because there's so much stuff. Who knows? Very hard to know. And yet some things look credible anyways. So are they all academic or do they consider The New York Times a credible source?**

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Reuben (04:21): Exactly. So like anything that may be new or controversial, there may be at least two sides to it. Right. And so as you develop your paper, you're going to first look seriously at what the information tells you, what the literature tells you. Then you're going to be able to add you're going to try and convince people that one view is better than the other. It's not perfect, and it will enable you to discuss why you think those are important or right and why some of the critiques may have weaknesses or maybe wrong or false assumptions. Right. Makes sense. Yeah. Because you got to deal with the people that say, no, that's not true. The moon rises out of the ... you know people. They got some sort of weird ideas. All right. **You're going to develop a thesis. You need a thesis for your literature review. I don't understand that, but that's what you're supposed to do.** Okay. So a thesis really you're going to identify are you comfortable with this? Have you done theses before? Theses?

Georgia (05:35): Yes. I'm just not sure about this assignment because...

Reuben (05:39): You and everybody else don't feel bad. We'll work on it, and we'll try and help you figure out what it is.

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Reuben (12:15): So in your introduction, you're going to introduce sort of the big broad ideas that have been that you found in the literature and perhaps a couple of things that you want to point people's attention to where there's a problem or something new or something particularly interesting. **Your thesis will be in there, right. Usually at the end of the introduction and then your literature review. Now, if at the end you feel that the literature falls into distinct groups, categories, you can give them subtitles if you want pros, cons, mixed signals or something like that. All A or all B and some A and B. I don't think it's necessary. But if it lends itself to do that, that's fine. If it doesn't, they all may be different. Maybe different to give them. It didn't say in the assignment that you had to do. It just a possible organizational tool. Does that make sense?**

In the first two excerpts above (00:58; 04:21), Reuben expressed certain opinions about the different genre conventions. In the first excerpt, Georgia and Reuben read over the assignment sheet for her literature review assignment. Reuben critiqued the language of “credible” sources, explaining to Georgia that it is difficult to decipher credible sources from uncredible sources in today’s world. Then, he redirected back to asking about specific requirements of the assignment. While this may be a likely critique from any tutor in today’s times considering the era of fake news that we are in, I think it is especially telling that it came from a professional tutor who has had many more years of teaching experience than peer tutors. Reuben has witnessed the change over time when it comes to the ways students research for their papers, starting from library research and moving into Internet research. Other than his research, another important aspect of Reuben’s life that seems pertinent to his attitudes toward credible sources can be traced back to his childhood. As he explained in his preliminary interview, his mother only allowed her children to read “serious” literature, not books like comics. books. Therefore, it can be implied that Reuben has learned to value the serious nature of research and literature. We also learned from Reuben’s preliminary interview that he spent some time working with in government where he learned the importance of audience in writing, and he also was a journalist for many years. His

career in journalism helped Reuben, as we learned in his preliminary interview, to learn to be conscious of who he was writing about and how to write accurately and succinctly. The field of journalism is founded on ensuring accuracy in storytelling, so it is not a stretch to say that Reuben's experiences as a journalist would make him wary of the types of fake news that occur in journalism and news reporting in today's society. By sharing his attitudes toward the genre conventions surrounding finding credible sources, Reuben could have helped Georgia to think more critically about her evaluation of sources because she heard that opinion from someone with many years of experience in teaching and understanding the academic literature review genre.

In the session between Sadie and Emma, Emma expressed her attitudes toward the compare and contrast type of analysis Sadie was asked to do within her essay, as we can see in the following excerpt:

Sadie (23:50): Oh, yeah. Just the transition here from the one poem to the second poem. Does it flow like. Okay, it doesn't make sense because I stopped talking about this.

Emma (24:04): "The metaphor can be seen in the speaker referring to can be a part of his religious identity." "The metaphor can be seen in *Escape from the Old Country*." **I feel like if you just wanted to connect them, I don't know. You don't have to do this. But you said the metaphor can be seen in *Escape from the Old Country* as well. Like something to kind of be like, oh, like this too.**

Emma (24:48): **Yeah. Because I feel like it's a compare and contrast. So you definitely need to I feel like it's understood that you're going to be kind of going back and forth, but yeah, I get what you mean. Where it might seem a little abrupt.**

Sadie (25:05): Yeah. That makes it a little nicer. Okay, so this is the next one.

In this excerpt, Emma provided some insight into the compare and contrast analysis genre after Sadie asked for some specific feedback on whether the paragraph flows. Emma expressed that while she understood Sadie's concern of the "back and forth" between the two poems that was happening, that it is a pretty normal characteristic of the genre and the switching of discussion between the two poems would be expected by the audience. Emma is able to articulate for Sadie

that part of what needs to be understood about the genre is that there is more of an interplay between the two texts, and in this way, Emma was able to show Sadie that what she wrote might be abrupt for the audience.

Emma also provided similar feedback to Olivia in their session regarding the comparative nature of the analysis she was doing in her essay. In the following excerpt, Emma attempts to explain how Olivia might make more direct comparisons between the two texts to best fit the genre:

Olivia (22:16): If I thought about family relationships. Can I also expand on the immigration thing?

Emma (22:28): **Yeah, we can see I think you probably could kind of like fit immigration in. There also is like well, maybe that could be like one of your smaller paragraphs or not even a smaller paragraph. Just like having I guess you could either do like family relationship or immigration as like the overall both definitely are related like self and other and affect identity. Have some good examples right now for family and immigration, family relationships. So if you wanted to try to come up with something for immigration throughout and how that kind of affects identity, I think that could be a good step. I think just like going back to the texts and trying to draw like direct like compare and contrast. This is where it's different and this is where it's like similar. Try to think of like other ways that can be helpful.**

In Emma's noble attempt to help Olivia despite receiving little response from the student, Emma provided some ideas on how Olivia could better attend to the genre of the analysis she was tasked to do. Especially since the analysis was between two essays that Emma was unfamiliar with and Olivia wanted to mostly just brainstorm, Emma did not have a lot to work with and therefore leaned on trying to teach some of the conventions of the genre.

Regardless of the outcomes of the sessions, Emma's overall attitudes toward language and literacy were important in her ability to share her attitudes toward genre conventions. As she provided genre information to her two tutees, she was also providing them with some knowledge and tools for furthering their literacies. In the session with Sadie, Emma helps to explain ways in

which Sadie could sharpen her writing to best communicate the existing analysis. By suggesting that Sadie add “as well” at the end of the sentence she teaches Sadie that she can signal with certain phrases that two elements of the analysis are similar. In the session with Olivia, Emma points to a theme that she can see from the bit of information available and tried to encourage Olivia to read further and make the comparison between the two texts using that theme. So while she was teaching the same genre, comparative analysis, during these two sessions, Emma was able to teach different types of skills to the students.

Emma explained in her preliminary interview, “I really like to read a lot, so I like to read other people's papers and just, like, see, I think it's interesting to see their perspectives and how that goes through the writing. I learned so much from all the papers. I read so many different topics and like people's lives and I just find it, like, super interesting and enjoyable to connect with people and read with the writing.” This does not directly relate to her sharing her attitudes toward genre conventions, but many of the instances of tutoring sessions could be characterized as moments of sharing one’s attitudes toward genre conventions and providing tutees with the tools to further their writing literacies further. Therefore, I think it is important that tutors in writing centers exhibit such characteristics as being interested in their tutees' perspectives and being interested in their lives to be effective in teaching these tools to tutees.

#### *Implications: Learning Genre Knowledge*

In these few instances throughout the different sessions, the tutors took opportunities to share their thoughts about the different genres the tutees were working with. From the few examples in this section, but also the many examples in previous chapters of sessions where tutors taught different techniques to students such as reading and analysis skills, it is clear that the tutors were able to share their genre knowledge with students. Specifically, what seems to be

happening are what Mackiewicz and Thompson discuss in *Talk About Writing: The Tutoring Strategies of Experienced Writing Center Tutors* in regard to tutors' instructional strategies that include telling and suggesting. They explain:

When tutors use directive language to tell students what to do and how to proceed, they risk imposing their views on students. In some conference situations, they might decrease opportunities for student writers to think through and make decisions for themselves about potential content, organization, and rhetorical choices, and they risk usurping control over the focus of the conference, potentially disengaging student writers from the conversation. (Mackiewicz and Thompson 88)

However, at times, instruction is necessary, and tutors are able to do so through different telling and suggesting strategies. Through their study, Mackiewicz and Thompson found that even with topics for which specific rules exist, like grammar and punctuation, tutors often use suggestions with mitigation as a politeness strategy—to allow the tutee to decide for themselves whether to change something in their writing even as they, the tutor, have expressed what they thought was best based on common practice (89-90). Tutors also use telling strategies “to indicate heightened engagement via the efficiency of bald-on-record directives, particularly to respond to something a student writer had just said” (Mackiewicz and Thompson 91). Through these instructional strategies, the tutors were able to be directive in teaching these skills to their tutees.

The tutors' attitudes also provided tools for the tutees to utilize to further develop their literacies. Reuben's critique of credible sources based on his years of teaching and tutoring experience could likely make Georgia reevaluate any sources she might find for her future papers, remembering the way her experienced tutor critiqued the idea of credibility. Emma's ability to serve as audience but also push her tutees to think about what it means to compare and

contrast or to refer back to source texts for the analysis provided her tutees with tangible tools that they may use in their future writing. Although there were no indications from their follow-up interviews of how they might utilize this information in the future, tutees will hopefully be able to think about these analysis genres in more depth in future writing, using the tools they were taught to further develop their literacy skills.

### **Tutors' Attitudes About Rhetorical Choices: Praise and Critique**

Throughout many of the sessions, the tutors praised the rhetorical choices the tutees made in their writing. Many times in tutoring sessions, praise is paired with a critique as a way to cushion the critique—to make it a bit easier to deliver. In some of the following instances, the tutors did just that, but at other times they also simply used it to praise the student's writing. In particular, this happened most often in the session between Lily and Julia. The following excerpts show moments within the session where Julia used both types of praise:

**Julia (04:27): I like the way you end it with, like, perfect the lines. Perfect the smile. Like she's trying to fit into this image that her mom thinks she is, but she's battling this experience that happened to her. Yeah. So I think it's excellent. I really like the parts where you add in, like the poetic prose and kind of like takes a really heavy scene and breaks it up, which is nice for the reader. Again, excellent dialogue. The way you fit it in works really well. And dialogue is a really tough thing to get right because a lot of people just throw it in. But you master in a way that it makes the scene flow, which is awesome. There was no point when I was like alright, come on, it needs to move. So great.**

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**Julia (07:51): This one's awesome. I remember reading it last time. Did you add more detail in between some of the conversation between the grandma and the girl? No, you just left it the same. Okay. For reading it again, I caught more detail between them, which is nice. I like the pauses you add, like the cars honked, the birds taps. That's great.** The only thing I see really minor is “recipes” again. So towards the end, “I looked at her. I get everyone likes the old recipes.” Yeah, right there. I'm not good at spelling recipes. No, it can be recipes still, but I don't know how to spell it. But let me try and Google.

Lily (08:47): Oh, wait, it's I. Yeah.

**Julia (08:48):** Okay, you got it. All right, good. Just a minor thing, but. Okay, so, yes, that looks great. This is, I think, one of my favorite scenes here, just because it's so good. I like the family dynamic and I like the slow burn. And then kind of at the last sentence, you're like, okay, it's all okay. So good writing.

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**Julia (16:54):** Okay, so you end it right there. Yeah, that's very creative. Okay, so I like that because I'm almost like as a reader, wanting more. Like I want a put together ending, but I like that that's super unique. And it also leaves the open ended if you ever wanted to write more, which is awesome. And I think it's really clever that you've kind of put a wedding at the end of this scene because I feel like throughout the whole time we're super feminist kind of gearing away towards marriage and like the tradition of things. But, yeah, so that's a really interesting spin. I think it's super entertaining to read. And again, just the way you work with dialogue and vivid details, those are really excellent traits that you're writing shows so great work with. That the only thing. So I know you want to work on the intro and the professor said more about the dad kind of being in the intro. We can go back to that. I just think almost, and it's completely up to you since you're the writer, but in the scene, like two scenes away from this, the shorter scene, I think it's like.

In the first instance (04:27), Julia offered praise for the rhetorical choices Lily made by providing specific examples of what she thought worked well in the paragraph. This was then followed by continuing to read the next paragraph. So, this instance of praise was not a precursor to a moment of critique. In the next two excerpts above, Julia offers a piece of praise followed by a piece of advice. As Diana Calhoun Bell and Madeleine Youmans discuss in their article “Politeness and Praise: Rhetorical Issues in ESL (L2) Writing Center Conferences,” politeness is often used to create rapport between the tutor and tutee as a way to show respect for the work the tutee has done as well as to establish the collaborative relationship (32). Bell and Youmans also note that instructors often use this pattern of compliment and critique in their summative comments to student writing creating an “important rhetorical discursive movement in the overall genre of student response” that leads tutors to mimic the kinds of responses they received from instructors throughout their own educational careers (Bell and Youmans 32). Therefore, tutors’ academic biological dimensions are an important factor in their tutoring. And with these

critiques, Julia took the opportunity to teach Lily something new about how she could better respond to the instructor's feedback.

Julia's preliminary interview revealed interesting insights into her thoughts on writing that can be connected to her use of politeness and praise in the above examples. In her interview she explained her first memory of writing when she was a child, a creative writing assignment, much like the one she helped Lily with:

Okay, so in second grade, we did like acting. We had to play Stone Soup, so we all had a part. And I was Minestrone. And I remember I was like kind of a lead, which is really cool. And I remember practicing my parts and I had to have them really perfect when we were rolling. So that was pretty fun. And then the assignment after we recorded the whole thing, we put it on DVD. So that was awesome. But we had to write our own script, and it had to be long. Like, as a second grader, writing a full page is, like, a lot of writing. But, yeah, I got carried away. I wrote more than a page, and I loved giving people parts and giving them, like, a sentence or two to say, yeah. So that was fun. Just like the descriptive details, adjectives, verbs were all very intriguing to me in second grade.

Although Julia doesn't mention the types of feedback she received on this creative project, it seems that she understands the value that the praise may have for the student especially because of the vulnerability it takes to receive feedback on creative writing. Even the critiques that Julia gives aren't harsh critiques. One critique points out a small spelling error and the other actually refers back to feedback from the professor. Therefore, the praise serves to create continued rapport between the tutor tutee pair who have worked together before.

In the session between Sadie and Erin, Erin veered from the typical compliment and critique pattern by simply providing praise for the rhetorical decisions Sadie made throughout her essay, as is seen in the following excerpts:

**Erin (13:12): I think you pulled out some really good details in this poem. I'd never thought about alliteration speeding up the lines and then creating a nervousness and discomfort like that. I think that's really strong, and I think you tie it back at the end to, like, the group that they're trying to dissociate from. Nice job.**

Sadie (13:29): Thank you.

Erin (13:30): Yeah, of course.

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*In reference to italicizing within her essay:*

**Erin (23:40): I actually thought it was really helpful when I was reading it to be able to see the parts of the line or the parts of the word that you were highlighting. I thought it worked well. Yeah.**

Sadie (23:50): That's why I wanted it. Because when I was thinking about how I wanted to explain, like word choice on my personal notes, I was underlining the words in certain parts. I know I probably shouldn't underline. So let me try to italicize to make that clear. Like, if you were speaking, like, we can put emphasis on words or parts of words.

**Erin (24:16): Yeah, for sure. I like the way you did that.**

Erin's use of praise in these moments throughout the session can be what Bell and Youmans refer to as "positive politeness" (34). The authors explained, positive politeness consists of "noticing and attending to hearer's wants, exaggerating interest/approval, seeking agreement, [and] showing optimism," making the hearer feel liked and approved of (Bell and Youmans 34-35). Positive politeness allows the tutor and tutee to establish rapport and create a common space for collaboration and conversation to occur in the session (Bell and Youmans 35). Therefore, not only does it make the tutee feel more comfortable within the interaction, but it also fosters a positive learning environment.

Erin's attitudes and experiences with language and literacy such as receiving feedback on her own writing has a clear influence here. Erin recalled fondly in her preliminary interview that,

“My elementary school teachers set aside time for creative writing within the classroom. In second grade, my teacher had us write about our weekends in our journals every Monday morning. She always wrote encouraging feedback for me in the margins, and she prompted me to write as many sentences as I could in the time that she gave us.” Because Erin was one of the only tutors to utilize positive politeness, I think it is clear that Erin intentionally praises the students she works with in an attempt to mimic the types of responses she received for her own writing during her literacy journey.

*Implications: Praise, Critique, and Confidence in Writing*

The tutors’ ability to share their attitudes and experiences about the rhetorical choices the tutees made revealed really interesting moments where the tutees were able to learn new skills and therefore further develop their literacy skills. In fact, in Sadie’s follow-up interview after her session with Erin described above, Sadie explained:

I think [utilizing the writing center is] extremely valuable, and it's underestimated by people. I would have thought that I had a good grasp on things and would just turn things in without even reading them over and trying to look for them. But having another pair of eyes really does make you see the things that you couldn't see. And doing that improves writing. And also just, like, helps writing afterwards because they give you good information, good advice, and if any questions come up, sometimes I ask punctuation, what should I do in this case? And that. And then because they do know a lot more about writing, I learned more about writing through experiencing the appointment. And I like, just asking, oh, if this were to happen, what should I do? What should I say and stuff? It's been really valuable. And from the first essay, my teacher recommended my class to go, and I was the only person who wanted to go into the Writing Center after that

assignment. And she was like, “It's really valuable for you guys to go.” And I don't think anyone in my class has gone. But when I do my peer editing, from what I've seen at the Writing Center, like, how they helped me, I've been able to help my peers when we've done editing workshops because I'm like, hey, if you're not going to go, at least this is what I learned last time I went.

What's telling here is that not only has Sadie been able to take the lessons she has learned from the writing center and use them in her other writing assignments, which is the goal of writing center interactions, but she has also been able to mimic the literacy experiences she has learned in the writing center for other classmates during peer review.

Additionally, whether the tutors consciously knew so or not, sharing their attitudes toward the rhetorical choices the tutees made likely also gave them an important tool for their literacy learning journey, confidence. Receiving critique on one's writing is a vulnerable task for anyone, let alone multilingual students who are writing in their non-dominant language. Through the use of praise, these tutors are encouraging their Spanish-speaking tutees, and hopefully this helps the tutees feel confident in themselves as writers and encourages them to come back to the writing center in the future.

### **Priorities Toward HOCs vs. LOCs: Negotiating Between the Two in Sessions**

Another important aspect of many of the tutoring sessions that occurred was the way in which tutors demonstrated priorities about higher order concerns (HOCs) versus lower order concerns (LOCs) in student writing. The following three excerpts are from three different sessions that demonstrate moments of tutors providing feedback on LOCs:

**Emma (27:38): Okay, nice. Just a small little thing. The comma just goes in the quotes.**

**Sadie (27:56): So here.**

**Emma (27:58): Yeah. Right there. Okay.**

Emma (28:03): Just a small like grammar usually.

Sadie (28:05): Thank you.

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**Julia (10:29): Awesome. So that was a super short scene, but you definitely get the point across with a lot of details. So, like, all the colors, the prints, the textures of things. That's good. The only thing I saw. So I think just another spelling thing if you want to scroll up. Let's see. Okay, so it's like the second to last paragraph, so. Yeah, that second word.**

Lily (11:05): Yeah.

Julia (11:07): Oh, stood. Okay, that makes more sense. Okay, so that's good.

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Erin (06:01): Yeah, I think that's good. And you talk about how the second and third stanzas to speak to the vast differences between them. So I think you do strongly tie it back to the thesis there. **One small thing a little bit further up. If there are two ways to spell overseas, and I think it didn't correct, it where it says on a journey overseas, it should be like the overseas with an A in it, a little higher than where your cursor is.**

Sadie (06:31): Oh, here. Yeah, right. Because it's not see?

These examples are just a few that demonstrate the ways in which these tutors navigated their priorities with HOCs versus LOCs, a topic that has been widely discussed in writing center research in terms of working with multilingual students. Often the literature details how multilingual students visit the writing center and ask for the focus of the session to be on grammar concerns. This has historically raised issues because the goal of writing center interactions is to focus on HOCs like organization, thesis statements, and supporting claims with details or to, as Stephen North details, “produce better writers, not better writing” (438). More recent scholarship concerning HOCs versus LOCs discusses how this phenomena has continued to be present in the minds of writing center scholars. In his article “Challenging Perceptions: Exploring the Relationship between ELL Students and Writing Centers,” Joseph Cheadle explains that in order to respond to North’s call to “produce better writers, not better writing”

(438), tutors are taught to steer tutees toward focusing on more global issue, or HOCs, when they come to the center requesting assistance with grammar and editing (Cheatle 21-22). Often, though, there are implications for the ways in which multilingual students' attitudes and experiences toward language and literacy affect their desires to focus on grammar within tutoring sessions. Cheatle explains that ELL (English language learner) students may feel pressured to talk and write with native-like accuracy. He elaborates through quoting Carol Severino that "... the feedback and pressure [ELL students] receive from their professors, their supervisors, their dissertation advisors, and their journal editors convinces them that they need to feel this way" (qtd. in Cheatle 22). However, surprisingly, in these sessions, none of the students mentioned during agenda setting that they wanted the tutor to focus on grammar. Instead, the tutors organically mentioned grammatical mistakes throughout the sessions and took quick moments to point them out to students before moving back into focusing on HOCs.

*Implications: Grammar as Important for Tutees' Literacy Learning*

Because some of the tutors chose to also mention grammar although it was not asked of them nor was it a main focus in the session, the tutors acted as language informants for the tutees. As Jennifer Ritter explained that native speaking tutors act as cultural informants for non-native speaking tutees, providing cultural context to multilingual students during sessions that they may not already have, Sharon Myers furthered that "just as instruction in vocabulary and syntax ('language') cannot be separated from instruction in rhetoric ('writing'), language and culture are inseparable," and therefore, "being a cultural informant includes being a language informant" (Myers 288-289). In this way, tutees are learning English grammatical structures rather than defaulting to the grammatical structures of their L1. It is important for tutors and instructors alike to understand that often what they are viewing as grammatical "errors" in

multilingual students' writing are often what Newman calls "approximations" to the grammatical structures of their L1. Newman describes approximations as "merg[ing] dual and sometimes multiple linguistic competencies in structures that objectively can be described as errors, transfers, direct translations, or cross-linguistic influences" ("Tutoring Translingual ...." para. 13). This means that rather than committing an "error" because they don't know the grammar rules, multilingual students are often calling upon the grammatical rules that they are accustomed to using in their L1. This is an important distinction because by understanding the similarities between students' L1 grammatical structures and English grammatical structures, tutors can begin to move away from the deficit mindset when multilingual students ask to focus on grammar during their sessions. In other words, although grammatical concerns are not always a priority in writing center sessions, by taking small moments to address grammar concerns in a multilingual tutee's writing, tutors are therefore aiding in the literacy learning process for their tutees and helping them to better understand how their current grammatical skills can be helpful in learning English grammatical skills.

### **Attention to Audience Awareness: A Non-Intuitive Notion**

An important factor in a few of the sessions was the connection the tutors helped the Spanish-speaking tutees to make to audience awareness. In Georgia's session with Reuben, Reuben spent a lot of time ensuring Georgia understood the audience she was writing to in her literature review as a way to help teach her the typical genre conventions of a literature review. In the following excerpt, Reuben explicitly discusses audience for the sake of teaching audience,

whereas in other examples in previous chapters, audience was discussed along with teacher as authority, an important distinction to make as this could seem the same as other analyses:<sup>4</sup>

Reuben (07:11): **Should imagine you're writing for a primary audience of undergraduate researchers in your field. So people perhaps your own age or a year or two older that might be conducting research into, say, optics. And there's probably a lot of different types of research that you could deal with.** What's the state of the conversation? Yes. Who was talking to whom and why? What aren't people saying those are actually good things? Maybe a little. Especially going forward when you're starting to write your proposal paper, where are things at? It's not the same thing as they were in Benjamin Franklin's day or even in my day maybe when I was your age. So what's the conversation about? What's the literature pointing it to and sometimes what questions are they not asking or not resolving? That might be things that you would conclude at the end of your paper that we might need further research on. This is what they really love. If you can identify a place where people could do further research to tease out meaning. Yeah. So did you get it? This is sort of a discussion. Did he give you a. Okay, well, this is, I guess, the assignment. Three-to-four-page literature review, eight to ten credible sources. Sorry. Okay. And we're going to have to have a thesis in there. So let's look at have you started?

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Reuben (11:01): **As a reader, I think you can put the framework around it. So of course, when somebody reads it, they're not going to read it in any order that you wrote it. I mean, they're going to read it in the way you present it in your final position. It's a little bit like cooking. Did you Cook it all? Okay, so let's say you make something with a lot of different ingredients. The first thing you taste or see, maybe the last thing you put in in the cooking. Right. Maybe you put in a little spicing at the end. You really taste that in the end. But that may be the last thing you put, or you may taste it first. You see what I'm saying?** So it doesn't matter in your writing process, it's the end product that will read like this with an introduction, thesis, point by point. But of course, it's the material inside. It should determine what your introduction and your conclusion is. So you can start with an introduction and a thesis that helps you. But don't be hung up on it. Go back after you've done your literature review and adjust it.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the teaching of audience awareness was an important part of Reuben's tutoring techniques. He used it as a way to transition into questions about Georgia's awareness of citation styles, and in the case of the excerpt above, he used it to frame the genre conventions of a literature review. By asking Georgia to think about what questions the audience

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<sup>4</sup> Referring to the explanation of codes for each chapter can also help to make the distinction between these different moments clear.

might have or to think about how one might encounter cooking something, it gave Georgia the tools to think through how she could make connections between the sources she discussed in her literature review. Especially because of Reuben's role as a professional tutor and a former educator, his discussion of audience awareness could closely mimic the expectations of the instructor, providing Georgia with the tools to effectively write to her audience as part of teaching the literature review genre.

In Sadie and Emma's session, a similar type of situation occurred, but in particular, Sadie specifically questioned how she could make her audience aware of her source text without them having to read the source text, as we can see in the following excerpt:

Sadie (18:22): Yes. So the thing about this poem is that I wrote another essay about it, so I have gone really in depth with it. So basically it's like the lack of the speaker's, the lack of her taking a journey, of migrating over the sea and stuff is part of her identity and is part of her own journey even though she didn't take this one.

Emma (18:52): Okay.

Sadie (18:53): And formulating that idea is what stumped me in writing this because it's like you have to understand as a reader having to understand the whole poem without me having to share the whole poem. How do I share that?

Emma (19:11): So it's about the speaker's ancestors more even though, like, she didn't take that journey. Okay.

Sadie (19:20): Yeah. The only part that, and I think I quoted here, is just like her new American lifestyle. Like a teenager spending all this money on dumb little things. And then she continues to talk about her ancestors and how they made this huge travel and stuff. Both psalms talk about identity. One is about, like, personally taking a journey and the other one is the lack of taking a journey is part of her identity.

Emma (19:52): Okay. Yeah.

Sadie (19:53): Which relates to like the self and the other theme that's kind of like the background to this section.

Emma (20:02): I think that's a good connection you made between the self and the other. Cause like you're saying her lack of a journey is like part of her life journey. It's not like a physical journey like her ancestors but it's still like.

Sadie (20:16): Okay, yeah. So this part I couldn't, I don't know. I have this, but it's not enough for what I just explained. Like it doesn't say all that. Yeah.

Emma (20:29): Can we go back up to your topic sentence for this paragraph and we can see make sure we have it relating to, say, life being a journey of the common metaphor used to explain human experience. And then— so the first one, *Facing West*, is all about, like, the circular path of life. And then how would you sum up kind of the other one, kind of like the journey without it being a journey?

Sadie (21:00): Yeah. Would I say it like that lack of physical journey is part of her life journey.

Emma (21:12): Okay. “The metaphor can be seen in *Escape from the Old Country*. When the speaker calls the people she's writing about travelers, she writes, no one escapes. In the end, each traveler returns to the town where everyone knew she hadn't even been born.” So she's writing about her ancestors. Is that it?

Sadie (21:39): Yeah. This part is about other people.

Emma (21:43): Okay. Yeah. I think you might want just an option to include something kind of like explaining that it's like her ancestors' journey that she's writing about. “Life metaphor labels people as travelers because life is a journey they are embarking on. Other people's journeys directly affected the speaker's own life journey as this poem is about the migration of the speaker's ancestors. The life is a journey metaphor applies to all humans, which is explicitly seen in *Escape from the Old Country*.”

Sadie (22:27): I feel like this could be cut out.

Emma (22:30): Okay. The last sentence, you think?

Sadie (22:33): Yeah, it's kind of vague. If it wasn't there, I would still get that same sentence.

Emma (22:41): Yeah. I think the sentence before “Other people's life journey surely affects the speaker's own life journey. This one's about the migration.” I think that's good and necessary. And I think one thing you just might want to. Well, your professor will have, like, read this and have a better understanding of it than I do, but I think you might want to emphasize that the speakers, if this is something you want to talk about, that the speaker's own life is like a journey as well, in addition to like, the ancestors' journey. And then I feel like that kind of like reaffirms like the point you're trying to make that all of life is a journey, whether or not it seems like one. I don't know.

In attempting to respond to Sadie's query on how she can ensure her audience understood the source text without needing to spell everything out, Emma highlighted a few important elements to audience awareness. First, she highlighted the importance of topic sentences. Although she did not explain to Sadie why she directed her back to the topic sentence of the paragraph and how that would help the audience's understanding, by asking to go back to the topic sentence, she at least gestured that there is a connection between the topic sentence and ensuring the audience's understanding of the source text. At the end of the excerpt, Emma also pointed back to audience

awareness through her promotion of the teacher as the authority figure. She makes a suggestion but hedges it with the fact that the professor would know more about the source text than she does. This not only helps to remind Sadie that her main audience member likely does have a good understanding of the source text, but also helps to show the ways in which different audience members may interpret different elements of her essay differently.

In her follow up interview, Sadie mentioned that she thought working with Emma was helpful in helping her to better realize the elements she needed to add to the essay when considering the audience. She said:

Since it's hard for me to analyze, I just feel like I have to explain a lot as a context of how like- what my thinking process when writing the essay to be able to get the help I needed, and I don't think that's necessarily a bad thing. It's more of like, it was just like a lack of understanding. If they were my teacher, she would understand the poem more. It makes sense that I had to add more context and also explain a lot of my thinking was a good help with also being able to have more ideas come up in my head while we were, like, explaining. But, yeah, this session, since it was a draft, the other session was like final draft. It was a lot more of, like, crafting it up than just revising things, which I hadn't experienced that before. So it was really nice to be able to work through something with someone.

As Sadie explained, this was the first session she had in the writing center where she was working on a partial draft rather than a final draft, and she was able to think through a lot of the important implications of the essay with Emma as they worked together.

In the session between Sadie and Erin, Erin does a nice job of modeling for Sadie how different audiences would comprehend the ideas in the paragraph they were reviewing, as we can see in the following excerpt:

Erin (06:54): Yeah, it looks good. "The idea of sacrifice is further expanded upon in the fourth, fifth and 6th stanzas. The narrator recognizes that for them, their life had nothing to do with a journey, nor the struggles it brought for the past generation, as they say, not undertaken, not with dialect, nor with a land that waited to be rediscovered, then rejected. The narrator was a product of the sacrifices their ancestors made. The language barrier is a reality that many immigrants face when coming to America, a reality to which the narrator cannot completely relate. The narrator personifies the land in saying a land that waited. Although land cannot wait, it can symbolize the desire of a new life plan and future which the landing on American soil promises." **Alright. I think you have some really good content in here and I think you could probably add a couple of sentences just to tie it back to the thesis and maybe just be a little bit more explicit about the kinds of people that the narrator is talking about through it. So like, for example, at the very beginning, "the idea of sacrifice is further expanded upon." The narrator recognizes that for them. I know your professor will have read the poem, but for me I wasn't sure, like, what specific people the narrator was referring to there.**

Erin explained how an audience unfamiliar with the source text would not know who the narrator was referring to, but that Sadie's professor would, so she may want to be more explicit in describing that particular point. Erin, in her teaching of audience to Sadie, did a nice job of modeling the types of teaching behaviors that are often highlighted in tutor training initiatives. She explained in her follow-up interview:

I think that when we're learning to become tutors, like in the semester-long course that we take, there's a lot of emphasis on having the sessions be student led and kind of taking a minimalist approach to tutoring. So we're supporting the students, but we're not taking over their work and we leave it in their hands. So I think it provides a resource of- kind of empowerment to the students to help them grow as writers and learn different techniques.

So while Erin was using the techniques she learned through tutor training, she was also influenced through that education and her previous educational experiences to provide the right

tools for Sadie to utilize as she sought new academic literacies through the writing center session.

*Implications: Tutors Serve as Representative of American Academic Audience*

Helping to teach multilingual students about audience is an important part of the writing center tutorial because the rhetorical contexts for writing elsewhere are different from the rhetorical contexts for writing in academic settings in the US. Ritter explains, “Aspects of writing including genre and audience requirements, are culturally constrained notions which are socially constructed from shared values within a community” (qtd. in Ritter, *Negotiating the Center* ... 13). Therefore it is not intuitive for multilingual students to be able to write to an American academic audience. In this way, tutors serve the function of a teacher in ensuring that multilingual tutees understand their audience and how the writing choices they make affect their audience.

**Chapter Conclusions: Tutors Providing Tools to Make Better Writers**

In “Tutors as Teachers: Assisting ESL/EFL Students in the Writing Center,” Terese Thonus argues that there are three ways writing center tutors can aid multilingual students in tutoring sessions, and while some of these approaches have evolved over the almost 30 years since its publication, the approach of focusing on the writer seems to be the most relevant to our current knowledge of how to best aid multilingual student writers in the writing center. Thonus argues that using the tutee’s language knowledge from their L1 in planning and drafting can help to improve the final draft (19). By using the tutees’ knowledge of their literacy skills in their L1 as well as by teaching different writing conventions such as those discussed in this chapter, tutors are providing these Spanish-speaking tutees with the tools they need to further develop their literacies. As Ritter explains, “The tutor makes her literacy skills available to the student in order

to facilitate the students' literacy purpose, which in most cases is writing a course paper. The role of the tutor in literacy acquisition, then, is that of literacy mediator" (*Negotiating the Center...* 40). In other words, the tutor is explicitly displaying and providing their literacy knowledge for the tutees throughout the session. But it also seems through some of the examples discussed in this chapter that the tutees, at times, also actively sought the tutors' literacy skills. Through all the examples discussed in this chapter there is just one example of this active gathering of literacy tools when Sadie asked for advice on how to make her source text clearer to her audience. Otherwise, the tutor prompted the discussion. And for the most part throughout the different examples discussed, the tutor also accompanied their critique with a bit of an explanation as to how that suggestion would help to improve the paper, or at times giving direct feedback, two instructional strategies we discussed from Mackiewicz and Thompson's research, giving the tutees the tools to develop those literacies. Where I was surprised to see a lack of explanation was actually within the grammatical suggestions tutors provided. It seems that if part of the goal of writing center interactions is to "make better writers, not better writing" that an explanation of why one word is used over another or why a comma should be used in a certain place in the sentence would be necessary. By quickly teaching the grammatical rule, tutees' might then be able to avoid making those "errors" in future writing. Overall, though it is clear that while we often talk about the collaborative nature of writing center interactions, sometimes these interactions mirror more of a traditional classroom setting where the tutor is teaching small moments of rhetorical theory or grammar to the tutee. And is that necessarily a bad thing?

### **Conclusion: Dispositions in Practice and What Do We Do Next?**

I would like to begin the conclusion with an important summary of Aja Martinez's foreword in *Counterstories from the Writing Center*. In the foreword, Martinez showed a conversation between two writing center tutors, Jessica and Alejandra, about a student Alejandra worked with. The student was an Asian woman named Melati, and before the session began Melati asked Alejandra what the writing center was and why her professor had sent her there before they had ever written anything in that class. Alejandra explained to Jessica that in talking with Melati she learned that Melati is fluent in four languages and has facility in reading and writing in three of those languages (Martinez, "Foreword" x-xi). Alejandra surmised, "This whole idea of experiences, and the narratives that accompany those experiences, and the ways the lack of awareness of these lived realities of our students lends itself to a benevolence devoid of empathy on the part of some teachers" (qtd. in Martinez, "Foreword" xii). And Jessica added, "And in an effort *not* to make assumptions and *not* to do harm to students based on things like race, class, national origin, or language, educators really need to take the time to engage students' narratives and experiences" (qtd. in Martinez, "Foreword" xiii). The work I've done with this study is work that I see as responding to the call that Martinez makes in the foreword. By examining Spanish-speaking tutees' attitudes toward their literacy experiences, writing center and composition faculty will not have to make harmful assumptions about Spanish-speaking tutees in their writing centers and classrooms. With this in mind, next, I will briefly summarize the key findings from each chapter. Then I hope to move into discussion of the ways in which the current research can aid in writing center efforts to understand, engage, and utilize multilingual students' narratives and experiences, their dispositions, to avoid assumptions about

students and make them feel comfortable enough to continue to utilize the writing center for their literacy learning needs.

This research aimed to understand how writing center tutors', Spanish-speaking tutees', and writing center directors' dispositions, or attitudes toward language and their own literacies, has an effect in the writing center. What this research has highlighted is the explicit and implicit ways in which participants' different academic and non-academic contexts are present in many ways throughout tutoring sessions in the writing center. This was evident in the ways tutors served as literacy mentors, in the ways the Spanish-speaking tutees' enacted agency throughout their sessions, and in the ways the Spanish-speaking tutees gained tools through their tutoring sessions that could aid in their continued literacy learning.

The first major finding, detailed in Chapter 2, was the way in which tutors served as literacy mentors for their tutees. Often the tutors served to enlighten the tutees about conventions of an American audience and other similar conventions of writing that are not inherent to them. This begs the question of what exactly is a literacy mentor and what roles do they play in tutoring sessions with multilingual writers? As we can recall from Chapter 2's discussion of literacy mentorship, McBride and Rentscher describe the act of mentorship as "a partnership with a mentor who guides, sponsors, or has positive and significant influence on the professional development of the mentee" (para. 7). While typically there is a hierarchical aspect to the mentor/mentee relationship, McBride and Rentscher furthered that "mentoring that emerges organically from existing relationships, such as peer mentoring and collaborative mentoring, breaks with the power structures of traditional mentoring" (para. 10). And I argued in that chapter that literacy mentorship is inherent in the tutor/tutee relationship. But we need to take our

understanding of literacy mentorship a step further and outline what it means for a tutor to serve as a literacy mentor for their multilingual tutees.

Literacy mentors work best when the tutors utilize their own experiences, that include their tutor training, to encourage students to become agents of their own literacy learning. In “Queering the Writing Center,” Harry Denny argues, calling tutors writing mentors rather than literacy mentors, that “writing mentors ought to help students bridge the multiple literacies to which they have access and those dominant forms they require for academic success” (“Queering ...” 107). In other words, literacy mentorship within tutoring sessions should include using one’s own dispositions toward literacy to help multilingual students understand and utilize their dispositions toward their own literacies within their writing.

Literacy mentorship should also include serving as a cultural informant for multilingual tutees. Being a cultural informant means providing knowledge for what an unknown audience will expect from multilingual students’ writing, enabling students from other cultures to express themselves in the new culture, and to provide linguistic, pragmatic, and sociocultural knowledge to multilingual students (Powers 41; Myers 6; Rafoth 1). In serving as cultural informants, tutors are helping multilingual students, not necessarily teaching them to assimilate as some may argue. Denny explains, “Consuming cultural capital, or learning the rules of its acquisition, isn’t about a slavish adherence to tradition; it’s about knowing enough to undercut and challenge from a position of security. Understanding conventions or genres doesn’t necessarily mean accepting them as natural or given” (*Facing the Center* ... 54). Therefore, tutors as literacy mentors and cultural informants are not only teaching these conventions and genres, but are also, hopefully, aiding in multilingual students’ understanding of hegemonic power structures in place in academic writing and how they might overcome them.

The findings that emerged from my study extend the work done on literacy mentorship by Powers, Myers, Rafoth, Denny, and many others. Through highlighting literacy mentorship in tutoring sessions, I want to underscore the importance of dispositions toward language and literacy. When we understand the influences that the different contexts of a tutor's life have on their decision making in tutoring sessions we can begin to better utilize those contexts in our writing center pedagogy.

A surprising finding from Chapter 3 was the way in which the Spanish-speaking tutees' agency was greatly influenced by the relationships they built with their tutors over multiple sessions, even though they worked with two different tutors for this study. By working with the same tutor over time, it seemed the Spanish-speaking tutees became more comfortable with their tutors and therefore more comfortable being direct in their sessions. Therefore, I see my research as highlighting two important aspects of multilingual student agency. First, the findings about the correlation between student agency and repeat sessions need to be researched more. Through my study, I saw the ways in which tutor/tutee pairs that worked together many times seemed to be more comfortable with one another, allowing tutees to be more direct in what they wanted from the session. As I mentioned in a previous chapter, Writing Partner Programs that allow tutees to work with the same tutor a number of times throughout a semester seem to be the answer to this phenomenon, yet there is little research to back their existence. So, I argue that we need more research into these types of programs within our centers as this research seems to indicate that these could be extremely beneficial for both tutors and multilingual tutees. The second finding is the way in which agency itself is an important aspect of multilingual tutoring sessions. Therefore, my research supports that we need to teach tutors to promote student agency, which

can be done through a specific concept called “teaching for agency.” This concept created by Shawna Shapiro, Michelle Cox, Gail Shuck, and Emily Simnitt:

seek[s] to create optimal conditions for multilingual student agency, by building options for students and by working to increase awareness so those students can make informed decisions about those options. This awareness includes increased knowledge of second language writing itself, of the politics of English, and of the effects of different linguistic and rhetorical choices. That knowledge, in turn, increases students’ control over how they navigate an assignment or writing program, how they position themselves in a text and in the wider community, and how they continue developing as English users. (48)

By understanding multilingual tutee’s dispositions toward literacy and language, we can teach tutors to utilize that knowledge to “teach for agency” and promote or add to the knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and ideas multilingual tutees already possess, giving them agency in their writing and literacy practices in the writing center.

And finally, the tutors in this study often provided direct information to students about word choice or grammatical concerns, providing them with the tools that would help to create better writers and not just better writing; therefore, this begs the question of whether the directive method of tutoring is necessarily bad. And as my research adds to other scholars’ research on this topic, it is clear the answer is, no. At times, the directiveness is needed and necessary and if tutee’s have developed a rapport with their tutors, if they have taken the time to share a bit about each of their dispositions toward literacy as many of the examples from this study show, then the directiveness is not a negative experience for multilingual tutees. These main findings can lead to many different implications for writing centers and composition classrooms alike which I will discuss next.

There are many implications for tutor training initiatives that arose from this research. First, a more explicit teaching of literacy and multiliteracies needs to be a priority in tutor training courses. Often, students are taught different techniques to use and ways to engage students but making a stronger connection to the ways in which those techniques are actually teaching literacy skills can be a more intentional way to train tutors. As we saw in all the examples discussed in the previous chapters, tutors taught the Spanish-speaking tutees several literacies: modeling and scaffolding reading practices, reading comprehension, analysis, agency, modeling research practices, confidence, and more. Grutsch McKinney's discussion of the writing center grand narrative explains that the writing center is a place for writers to get one-on-one tutoring for their writing, but that is just a part of the work that is done in writing centers and to continue to push that narrative is to limit all that is realistically done in writing centers (Grutsch McKinney 3). And there have been changes in centers across the country that seem to push against that narrative as many centers are being called "multiliteracy centers" or "writing and speaking centers" because they are fully embracing all the work that is actually done in writing centers. This work needs to continue to happen in writing centers, and that can be done by starting in tutor training courses.

An example of ways to include this type of training for tutors could be to include scholarship on the connections between reading and the writing center. Two examples of texts to aid administrators in beginning to incorporate some of these ideas into tutor training are Ellen Carillo's article "Reading and Writing Centers: A Primer for Writing Center Professionals" and Carolyn King's article "Tutors as Readers: Reprising the Role of Reading in the Writing Center." Carillo's article explained the history of reading in the writing center, making connections to other fields such as education and psychology. Carillo then moves into discussing the inclusion

of reading in tutor training. She explains, “Educating tutors about why students have difficulties reading and training tutors to help the students understand this and support students as they develop the tools to manage these difficulties is a potentially powerful approach to tutor education” (Carillo 133). This could be a helpful resource in acclimating administrators to include reading in their tutor training pedagogy and providing the background knowledge that would support the inclusion. King’s article would be especially helpful as she discusses the results of a study conducted with writing center tutors. Results from that study show that a single training session on reading “dramatically improved tutors’ awareness of reading and perception of the reading-writing connection ... [and] explicit instruction on reading practices increased tutors’ confidence in bringing their own reading practices into tutorials” (King para. 9). A case study that might interest administrators who are hoping to include teaching of reading practices into their tutor training courses is called “Reading in the Writing Center: Tutor Education and Praxis” by Amanda Greenwell, René Lavoie, Gissel Campos, Sarah Gerrish, and Mary Joerg. By combining the perspectives of both tutors and tutor educators through the implementation of this new, reading-focused tutor education, their article details a “gallery walk” activity designed to “gauge the depth of student understanding of particular concepts and to challenge misconceptions” (Greenwell, Lavoie, Campos, Gerrish, and Joerg para. 13), explicit discussion of purpose and practice of annotation, and scenario-based learning discussions (Greenwell, Lavoie, Campos, Gerrish, and Joerg para. 28; 39). With this scholarship in mind, administrators can see the ways in which this type of training benefits the tutors and their tutees.

Similarly, as was discussed in the introduction chapter, Paul Kei Matsuda argues tutors also have to become more accepting of what multilingual students bring to their writing in terms of rhetorical approaches. Tutors then have to critique their own ways of reading, reflecting on

their own training and language backgrounds and the way those experiences have affected the way they read and respond to multilingual students' writing (qtd. in Ortmeier-Hooper 10). Therefore, an assignment like composing a literacy narrative could engage tutors in understanding how their own dispositions have been formed as a means for understanding, as Matsuda said, how they respond to multilingual students' writing.

Literacy narratives are a valuable way to understand one's own literacy experiences and have been most famously championed by Cynthia Selfe who established the Digital Archive of Literacy Narratives (DALN) at the Ohio State University. In an interview with Samuel Head published in *Kairos: Rhetoric, Technology, Pedagogy*, Selfe describes her definition of literacy as:

The activities, the events, the understandings, the values, the experiences that are associated with reading and composing using shared symbolic systems, either mathematical notation, musical notation, alphabetic notation, so using all of those systems or any of those systems. But also understanding that the practices and the values of literacy, because values are a part of literacy, are shaped by the cultural context, the historical context, your economic context, your linguistic context, the geographical location, your geographical location in the world. And that literacy varies widely, those experiences, those understandings, those values, those practices, those events, they all vary widely depending on the context within which they're practiced. (Selfe para. 13)

With this definition in mind, Selfe explains that personal narratives are the most natural way to communicate and therefore because personal narratives are intrinsically tied to one's personal understandings of "what literacy is, what the expectations for literacy are, what your values surrounding literacy are, what your economic class, gender, considerations, familial expectations

are” (Selfe para. 17) that are woven into the fabric of one’s story, they “provid[e] a marvelous lens through which we can discern some of the personal experiences and values and understandings of literacy, not always directly, but sometimes indirectly” (Selfe para. 17). Therefore, a literacy narrative assignment for tutors would give them the ability to better understand their attitudes and beliefs about their own literacy experiences before working with and trying to understand their tutees’ literacy experiences.

In “Hay un Tiempo y un Lugar Para Todo: Literacy Autobiographies and the Cultivation of Translingual Rhetorical Sensibilities,” Esther Milu and Mathew Gomes discuss the outcomes from a literacy-autobiography (LA) assignment, something very similar to a literacy narrative assignment. In 2014, at the time of the study, the first-year writing (FYW) curriculum at Milu’s university, Michigan State University focused heavily on literacy, including personal literacies, cultural literacies, disciplinary literacies, and multimodal literacies (Milu and Gomes 155-156). Milu and Gomes worked to design the course to be informed by translingual pedagogy and saw an opportunity to redesign the LA assignment already present in the curriculum to focus on not only literacy, but also language, as the subjects of inquiry so that “students [could] make an explicit connection between their literacy and language histories and development” (Milu and Gomes 151; 156). Milu and Gomes revealed many findings from this study. First, the assignment allowed students to code mesh using linguistic and semiotic resources, and as was revealed in the accompanying reflective memos, students realized they could compose in two or more languages without hindering the meaning of their texts (Milu and Gomes 159). The second finding was students’ translation choices within their texts. Rather than choose to translate the parts of the text from their home languages, some students chose to include contextual cues to help readers understand the text while others chose not to explain at all. The authors explain, “[the students’]

deliberate choice not to translate some of their linguistic items shows potential for code-meshed writing to encourage readers and listeners to develop a translingual disposition towards texts written in multiple languages” (Milu and Gomes 160). Overall, the assignment taught students to cultivate what Juan Guerra calls rhetorical sensibilities as a way to “challenge the dominant, monolingual, monomodal, alphabetic, product-oriented writing practices prevalent in FYW classrooms” (Milu and Gomes 166-167).

Juan Guerra also discusses the concept of transcultural repositioning in his article “Emerging Representations, Situated Literacies, and the Practice of Transcultural Repositioning.” He discusses transcultural repositioning as a rhetorical skill that people use to self-consciously, and not intuitively, move with ease between dialects, communities, social classes, and more that provides an opportunity to “develop a better understanding of the society we [Latino/a(s)] are actively transforming through our sheer numbers and community practices” (Guerra 8). Guerra explains further that the majority of the students in his classes are Anglo, but he still utilizes every opportunity he has to show how transculturation happens in all of our lives. He does this by showing observations of his own work and through having students read work from Rosaura Sánchez, David Wallance Adams and K. Tsianina Lomawaima, Geneva Smitherman, Rosina Lippi-Green, and James Crawford to encompass a wide range of scholars of color discussing a wide range of experiences of students of color (Guerra 18). Guerra hedges these conversations, however, with a warning to students that the goal is not to read these texts and become what Min-Zhan Lu calls “discursive schizophrenics” (qtd. in Guerra 20) who write alternatively as their different identities within and outside of academia but rather “to teach our students how to become more rhetorically astute and agile, how in other words, to become more effective and critical readers of the rhetorical and social scenes within which writing takes place”

(Guerra 20) in hopes that it offers students with more “creative and productive possibilities than assimilation ever will as they read and write their own lives” (Guerra 20).

In having tutors engage in an assignment like a literacy narrative assignment and engage with scholarship about concepts like transcultural repositioning within the tutor training course, they would also be enacting what Marilee Brooks-Gillies, Varshini Balaji, KC Chan-Brose, and Kelin Hull, in their article “Listening Across: A Cultural Rhetorics Approach to Understanding Power Dynamics within a University Writing Center,” call a “listening across framework.” Through telling their narratives about their lived experiences as writing center administrators, they found:

Through the process of reflecting on our positionality stories, including the portions shared here, and telling and re-telling our stories among one another, we’ve learned not just from the stories themselves but the relationships among them and ourselves through the process of sharing. This is what we are calling the listening across framework. Within the process we have found ways to listen and hear one another and more fully consider the relationships we have fostered, ignored, enhanced, disrupted across our interactions. (Brooks-Gillies, Balaji, Chan-Brose, and Hull para. 38)

This listening across framework is something that can be taught in tutor training courses as a way for tutors to better understand how to relate to each other, creating a more unified writing center, but more importantly to the students they help in the center, especially multilingual students who they may not think they can relate to.

In addition, more reading could be done with articles from education that focus on literacy and articles that detail teaching research skills in the writing center. Even creating relationships with education departments on campuses and asking for resources from those

departments could be beneficial to the tutors' learning as well as to the center overall. In the end, the writing center does more than simply just teach writing, and it is important to cultivate those literacy teaching skills in our tutors if we want to be more effective and inclusive with our practices for working with multilingual and multiliterate students.

It is also important, though, to realize that if we are hoping to understand students' dispositions, there cannot be a single guiding principle for working with multilingual students, there needs to be individualized instruction. In R. Mark Hall's *Around the Texts of Writing Center Work: An Inquiry Based Approach to Tutor Education*, he argued that "As Terese Thonus (2014) reminds us, 'The point of tutoring is to individualize instruction' (205). A ridged [*sic*] set of common practices cannot work for all. Tutoring writing is, and must remain, a highly inefficient teaching and learning activity, whose specific contexts, even within a single writing center, are so varied that we should not hope to find the 'one best way'" (qtd. in Hall 19). Of course, many will critique this idea to say that it is not possible to learn everything about every student who visits the center or that it is not possible within a tutor training course to attempt to learn about many different cultures because there is no way to know who visits the center. And to an extent, this is true. There is no way to anticipate who will come to the writing center for help. That's why we must teach tutors to seek moments within sessions to learn about their tutees past the surface level because, as Martinez mentioned in her foreword, "it is *not* the responsibility of the student to educate the teacher about these lived realities" (qtd. in Martinez, "Foreword" xii). If tutors are taught to seek moments for connection and utilize their own dispositions, they can create moments within sessions that make Spanish-speaking and other multilingual students feel comfortable to return.

Another critique of this idea will be that it is impossible to get to know enough about a student in a 30- or 60-minute session for the tutor to utilize the information, especially if they work with a different tutor the next time they come to the center. First, I would say that if we think back to the session between Frida and Reuben, although it was the first time they met, Reuben asked enough questions that it did not take anything away from the session, but that he learned something about Frida that he was able to use to relate to the student that helped to change Frida's initial expectations of the session. Is this generalizable? No. But, I think if Frida returns to the center, especially if they return with less trepidation than when they arrived for their session with Reuben, then we can see the possibilities this could have for helping other Spanish-speaking and multilingual students feel comfortable in the writing center. Second, I think the data reveals that repeat sessions with tutors helped to make these Spanish-speaking tutees more comfortable with their tutors. Although each tutee worked with a different tutor for my study, many had previously worked with these tutors. Of those who had worked with their tutors previously, many noted in their follow-up interviews, as we saw throughout, that they had grown very comfortable with their tutors and that the tutors' specific tutoring style has continued to work well for them. We even saw this with Frida who mentioned the same positive characteristics of working with the same tutor over time through the writing center's Writing Partners Program. Once that rapport is established and those relationships are built, tutees will likely continue utilizing the center and seeking out appointment times with those specific tutors.

There also seems to be inherent implications for the types of tutors we recruit to work in the center. Like many scholars have argued (Condon; Grimm; Denny, *Facing the Center...*), we need to recruit more diverse writing center tutors. With more diverse tutors come more diverse attitudes and experiences that inform the ways in which tutors interact with tutees in the writing

center. Neisha-Anne Green gives a great example of this in her article “Moving Beyond Alright and the Emotional Toll of This, My Life Matters Too, In the Writing Center Work,” Green recounts a story of working as a tutor at Lehman College. Green began to work with a student and was asking the questions to get the session started, but the student was only responding with *I don't know*s and *uhms*. So, Green pointed out a paragraph, asked the student to read it, and then explain it in her own words. Yet, the student didn't respond and even after a second attempt at asking the student to read it, she did not. So Green said, “I'm going to say it to you like this. I'm going to pretend like we're on the corner of Kingsbridge, waiting for the 4 train to go by, and we're just chit-chatting, we're just shooting the shit” (21). And after reading the passage, the student asks Green, “Well, why couldn't they just say that?” Green then explains to the student that, “This shit wasn't written for you” (22). What Green did in that moment was help the tutee understand the ways in which academia has been historically designed for white people to succeed and that people of color need “to take what you know, take what makes you *you*, take all that stuff, and apply it to this work and make it yours” (22, emphasis in original). Green was able to realize this important fact and speak it aloud to a student because of her attitudes and experiences toward language and literacy. A white tutor would likely not have been able to answer that question for the student. Therefore, by recruiting students with diverse backgrounds to become tutors, our centers can become spaces where tutors and tutees can question the inherent power structures of academia and help multilingual and other students of color to feel comfortable and welcome in the center.

Finally, there are also implications that emerged from this research for literacy education. One of the more important implications relates to how we might engage children in K-12 education in conversations about language and culture difference using basal readers. Basal

readers are textbooks used to teach reading that “guide teachers to draw out students’ background knowledge before reading the text” (Herrera, Perez, and Escamilla 18). By using students’ background knowledge and choosing basal readers that explore language and culture, teachers will begin to cultivate important dispositions toward language and literacy for their students early in their acquisition journeys. This will help to foster student dispositions toward language at a young age that will continue to inform their dispositions throughout their lives. Then, once they are entering the university they will have already been exposed to different languages and backgrounds that will, hopefully, impact their attitudes toward language as adults.

Another way in which literacy education can be impacted through this research is by thinking through concepts that I discuss such as language brokering. As we discussed in an earlier chapter, language brokering can be a stressful situation for students, causing depression and anxiety (qtd. in Martínez-Gómez 130). Yet what was mostly unaccounted for in my participants’ narratives were the ways in which brokering could have led to rich literacy experiences for the Spanish-speaking tutees. Maybe through acknowledging brokering as a positive experience and finding ways to utilize brokering skills in K-12 classrooms, like homework assignments that students need to complete with their parents, students may find brokering as a more positive literacy learning activity than my participants did.

### **Methodological Questions/Limitations**

Probably the most clear and definitive conclusion that I was able to arrive at from this research is that the understanding and framing of dispositions is hard. As I began my analysis, I struggled to parse out moments where dispositions were present in these sessions. At times, it was quite easy like in the session with Frida and Reuben and in certain instances with Sadie and her self-directed nature. But other times, it just didn’t fit as neatly. I most often asked myself

whether what was happening in sessions was a result of tutor training or if it was influenced by participants' attitudes and experiences toward language and literacy. I tried to see a clear distinction that would help me to separate the two. And at times that was clear, but other times it was muddled. If tutors' academic dimensions of life consist of their past educational experiences then tutor training would of course influence tutors' dispositions toward their own literacy and language and the literacies and languages of the students they work with. So how can you tell where the influences originate when it is not so explicit? This calls for more research into dispositions in these contexts and a clear methodological approach to best determine how dispositions are present.

In terms of other limitations, unfortunately, I did not end up making the connections between the directors' preliminary interviews and their center policies and initiatives that I initially set out to make. However, future research may include reading center mission statements, tutor training syllabi, and more to understand any connections between the directors' attitudes and beliefs toward literacy and how they have crafted the texts and guiding tenets of their writing centers.

What I can say about the directors' preliminary interviews was that they revealed some interesting understandings of how universities as a whole may be responding to the increasing numbers of multilingual students on campuses. Dr. Donald's interview revealed what is potentially the biggest issue amongst smaller private universities and probably some larger ones as well. He explained:

The whole thing [Private University's writing center multilingual student initiative] started because professors came to us in the other place where we do tutoring [on campus] and they're like, I don't know what to do. I don't know how to teach these

students. The writing center is not teaching them and the [indistinguishable] is not teaching them. And they just didn't know what to do. So we're like, we need to come up with resources. And then we also started to learn, like, how many multilingual speakers we actually had at [Private University]. People just weren't reporting or there was no real resources for them, so nobody was paying attention. And so we started kind of learning all that as well. And I just think that as [Private University] becomes a place that's more intent on actually becoming diverse and prizing that diversity, then it's going to become more and more important.

If these lack of resources have been an issue for a private state university, what is happening at the community college level where there are even less resources and less funding but potentially higher percentages of Spanish-speaking and other multilingual student populations? More needs to be done to ensure that colleges and universities are aware of the growing populations of multilingual students on their campuses and that they are attending to those students' needs. Dr. Donald and Dr. Smith have continued this important work on their campuses, creating multilingual tutor training modules, assigning tutor research projects on different topics relating to multilingual initiatives, creating connections to other areas of their campuses, and more.

And finally, one of the most important takeaways from this research should be that we need to be listening. As scholars like Romeo García, Beatrice Méndez Newman, and more argue, we need to be listening to Spanish-speaking and other multilingual students' narratives and stories both in the writing center and in our writing classrooms so that we may understand their dispositions, meet their needs, acknowledge the harm these spaces have caused multilingual students, and to counter the master narratives about language, literacy, and multilingual students in the academy. In the introduction to their edited collection, *Immigrant Scholars in Rhetoric*,

*Composition, and Communication: Memoirs of a First Generation*, Letizia Guglielmo and Sergio C. Figueiredo explain that in bringing all the narratives together in this collection they “imagine how ‘little’ narratives like ours and those of our contributors might be useful to counter and complicate ‘master’ narratives regarding literacy, language policy, and identity within the field” (9), functioning as a counterstory, a methodology that serves the purpose of “exposing stereotypes, expressing arguments against injustice, and offering additional truths through narrating authors’ lived experiences” (Martinez, “A Plea...” 51).

This turn toward counterstories has become one of the most recent ways scholars of color are using their voices to speak against the “stock stories” of those in power. These stock stories present a picture of the world that best fits the narrative of those in power (Martinez, “A Plea...” 38). At the 2023 Conference on College Composition and Communication, Martinez said of counterstories and the fight for Critical Race Theory, “We must fight story with story” (Martinez, “Teaching CRT...”). And therefore, we need to continue to value narrative-based research as a means to lift up and listen to the voices of racially and linguistically marginalized students who have been historically silenced.

And we need to remember that listening to these stories alone is not enough. We need to do more to ensure we’re not continuing to reproduce the same harmful ideals that have plagued writing centers since their inception, and maybe if we start with understanding dispositions we can move into making the necessary changes to help our Spanish-speaking and other multilingual students.

## Appendix A – Prevalence of Codes Spreadsheet Chart

	Olivia with Emma	Sadie with Erin	Lily with Erin	Lily with Julia	Georgia with Reuben	Frida with Miriam	Georgia with Miriam	Frida with Reuben	Sadie with Emma	
Teacher feedback as guiding agenda		1	1	1111				1	11	9
Seeking genre knowledge						1	11	1		4
Teacher as authority	11		1	11	11111		11111	11111	1111	24
Attitudes toward genre conventions/experiences	11	1		1	11111 111	1		11111	111	21
Taking charge of session/self-directed educational experiences		1	1111	1111				111	111	15
Relating to student with similar experiences		11	1				11	1111		9
Priorities toward language HOC/LOC		1	111	1	11			111	1	11
Assumptions about tutee language knowledge					111			111		6
Tutee as language expert /attitudes toward tutee as language expert			1		1			11111 1		8
Curiosity about language experiences								11		2
Validating experiences			11		111		1	1		7
Audience awareness/WC as connecting classroom to wider audience		11		11	11			1111		10
Attitudes toward rhetorical choices		111	11	1111	11			11		13
Using experiences to make connections/question					11		111	1	1	7
Challenging tutee assumptions					1			11		3
Encouraging student-led learning	1	11111	11111 1	11			11		11111 11	23
Tutor as language expert	1	11111	1	1	11111	11			11111	20
Acknowledgement of peer-to-peer collaboration			1		11	1	1		1	6
Acknowledgement of moments of literacy learning									1	1
Challenging student thinking as non-directive technique for language use	111	111	11		11111 111			1	11	19



## Appendix B – Preliminary Interview Questions for Tutors

## Demographic Questions:

1. What are the languages you speak and write in?
2. What is your primary language and what language did you first learn?
3. What language(s) are/were spoken at home and at school?
4. Where did you grow up?
5. How do you identify in terms of gender, race, nationality, and how old are you?

## Narrative Inquiry Questions

6. Tell me about one of your first memories associated with reading, writing, speaking, or listening in your home (this can be about tv shows or radio stations you listened to or certain activities a family member had you do).
7. Tell me about one of your first memories associated with reading, writing, speaking, or listening in school (this can be about a specific lesson you were taught or a specific assignment that you had to do).
8. Was there a particular family member, friend, teacher, etc. who was important to your learning of how to read and/or write in particular ways or in various languages? Please tell me about this person and how they have helped your learning.
9. Was there a particular family member, friend, teacher, etc. who was important to your learning of how to speak and/or listen in particular ways or in various languages? Please tell me about this person and how they have helped your learning.
10. How have reading, writing, speaking, or listening been promoted in your home throughout your educational career in your primary language and any other languages?
11. How have reading, writing, speaking, or listening been promoted in schools throughout your educational career in your primary language and any other languages?
12. Explain the ways in which reading, writing, speaking, or listening have/have not had an effect on your everyday home life.
13. Explain the ways in which reading, writing, speaking, or listening have/have not had an effect on your everyday academic life.

**Follow up questions are subject to participants' responses.**

## Appendix C – Preliminary Interview Questions for Spanish-Speaking Students

## Demographic Questions:

1. What are the languages you speak and write in?
2. What is your primary language and what language did you first learn?
3. What language(s) are/were spoken at home and at school?
4. Where did you grow up?
5. How do you identify in terms of gender, race, nationality, and how old are you?

## Narrative Inquiry Questions

6. Tell me about one of your first memories associated with reading, writing, speaking, or listening in your home (this can be about tv shows or radio stations you listened to or certain activities a family member had you do).
7. Tell me about one of your first memories associated with reading, writing, speaking, or listening in school (this can be about a specific lesson you were taught or a specific assignment that you had to do).
8. Was there a particular family member, friend, teacher, etc. who was important to your learning of how to read and/or write in particular ways or in various languages? Please tell me about this person and how they have helped your learning.
9. Was there a particular family member, friend, teacher, etc. who was important to your learning of how to speak and/or listen in particular ways or in various languages? Please tell me about this person and how they have helped your learning.
10. How have reading, writing, speaking, or listening been promoted in your home throughout your educational career in your primary language and any other languages?
11. How have reading, writing, speaking, or listening been promoted in schools throughout your educational career in your primary language and any other languages?
12. Explain the ways in which reading, writing, speaking, or listening have/have not had an effect on your everyday home life.
13. Explain the ways in which reading, writing, speaking, or listening have/have not had an effect on your everyday academic life.

**Follow up questions are subject to participants' responses.**

## Appendix D – Interview Questions for Directors

### Demographic Questions:

1. How long have you been the writing center director at your university?
2. What is your primary language to speak or write in? Are there any other language(s) that you speak and/or write in? If so, what are they?
3. What degrees do you hold?
4. How do you identify in terms of gender, race, and nationality?

### Interview Questions

5. Please tell me a story about one of your first memories associated with reading, writing, speaking, and listening outside of academia.
6. Please tell me a story about how you were trained in literacy concerns throughout your education and/or career.
7. Was there a particular family member, friend, teacher, etc. who was important to your learning of how to read and/or write in particular ways or in various languages? Please tell me about this person and how they have helped your learning.
8. Was there a particular family member, friend, teacher, etc. who was important to your learning of how to speak and/or listen in particular ways or in various languages? Please tell me about this person and how they have helped your learning.
9. In what ways have you witnessed literacy concerns change during your time as director of the writing center? Explain how you have addressed these changes in literacy concerns.
10. In what ways have you witnessed changes in multilingual student populations in the writing center during your time as director and how have you addressed these changes?
11. How have you developed or added to tutor training initiatives that focus on multilingual students?

**Follow up questions are subject to participants' responses.**

## Appendix E – Explanation of Codes for Chapter 2

Code	Example	Explanation
“encouraging student-led learning”	<p>Erin (03:12): All right, perfect. So is there a specific section you'd like to start with or anything in particular you like me to look at or look for?</p> <p>From session between Lily and Erin</p>	<p>This code was used for moments when the tutor encouraged the student to demonstrate what they wanted from the session or where they thought the session should go. These were moments when the tutors encouraged the tutees' agency in the session.</p>
“challenging student thinking as non-directive technique for language learning”	<p>Reuben (02:26): So ... So how is this different from your annotated bibliography? Have you done that?</p> <p>From session between Georgia and Reuben</p>	<p>This code was used for moments when it was clear the tutor was asking a question and looking for a specific response from the tutee to test their knowledge on the subject. They wanted the tutee to articulate a specific meaning in order to ensure the student knew what they were saying.</p>
“relating to students with similar experiences”	<p>Miriam (21:04): Yeah. That was always one of my least favorite things about writing papers. It's like picking something to write on. It's always like, I don't know what hasn't been covered a zillion times already. And that's something else the subject specialist might be able to help you with is to help you find a spin on this so that you can stick with this topic.</p> <p>From session between Georgia and Miriam</p>	<p>This code was used during moments when the tutor veered from discussion of typical tutoring talk and told the tutee a personal anecdote about a similar experience to one the tutee was having or discussing. These were moments when the tutor established rapport with the tutee by sharing similarities between the two.</p>

## Appendix F – Explanation of Codes for Chapter 3

Code	Example	Explanation
“teacher as authority”	<p>Emma (21:00): Okay. So I'm guessing that it will probably tell you what she's looking for. Sorry. Or what your professor is looking for for the comparative essay and kind of like might be helpful for some structural things.</p> <p>From session between Olivia and Emma</p>	<p>This code was used for moments when the tutors or tutees referred to the instructor's expectations and how the student might meet those expectations throughout their paper.</p>
“teacher feedback as guiding agenda”	<p>Lily (00:22): After we review those, I do need to go back because I talked to my teacher and she said that maybe review the beginning and the scene with the Legos, because she said in the scene with the Legos, it seemed like the dad wasn't angry enough. And at the beginning that the beginning was too long. And I don't know what to cut out of it because this is my baby.</p> <p>From session between Lily and Julia</p>	<p>This code was used for moments when the tutees used the feedback they received on their writing from their instructor to guide the session. The tutee would explain the feedback they received from the instructor and that became the focal point for the session and the tutors would often refer back to the feedback to keep the session on track.</p>
“tutor as language expert”	<p>Sadie (16:09): Yeah. So ... But just for future reference, is it okay if I combine a conclusion not actually having a specific conclusion paragraph, but maybe sentences before that last paragraph. If I have a page limit.</p>	<p>This code was used at two different times. First, it was used to describe moments where the tutors were being directive and explaining a specific concept to the tutee and the tutee acknowledged that what the tutor said helped to better articulate what they were trying to say. It was also used in moments where the</p>

	From session between Sadie and Erin	tutee asked the tutor a specific question regarding word choice or sentence structure and the tutor provided direct guidance.
"taking charge of the session/self-directed educational experiences"	<p>Erin (04:54): Okay, cool. Would you prefer to read? Would you like me to? We can alternate whatever you think.</p> <p>Lily (04:59): I always prefer someone else to read just because. Not that I don't mind reading. It's just that it helps me catch mistakes quicker.</p> <p>From session between Lily and Erin</p>	This code was used to define moments within sessions where the tutees were explicit in how they wanted the session to take place. This occurred both spontaneously, moments where the tutee was unprompted and voiced their opinion, and through prompts where the tutor asked the tutee a question that prompted them to identify how they wanted the session to occur.

## Appendix G – Explanation of Codes for Chapter 4

Code	Example	Explanation
“attitudes about genre conventions”	<p>Georgia (00:58): And sources. Now they're asking us to do the literature review to inform in our audience that it will be our classmates and undergraduates about this topic.</p> <p>Reuben (01:13): So you're going to have how many sources have they asked you to do?</p> <p>Georgia (01:16): Eight to ten. Five must be academic.</p> <p>Reuben (01:21): Well, they say credible now, of course. Boy, is that difficult in today's world to know what's credible and what isn't. Wow. That's asking a lot. Personally, I think there should be a whole course on it because there's so much stuff. Who knows? Very hard to know. And yet some things look credible anyways. So are they all academic or do they consider The New York Times a credible source?</p> <p>From session between Georgia and Reuben</p>	<p>This code characterized moments within the sessions where tutors or tutees (but mostly tutors) attitudes toward genre conventions were expressed. Often the tutor would reveal either their personal experiences or societal experiences that relate to the genre to the student.</p>
“attitudes toward rhetorical choices”	<p>Julia (04:27): I like the way you end it with, like, perfect the lines. Perfect the smile. Like she's trying to fit into this image that her mom</p>	<p>This code represented moments where the tutor expressed to the tutee how they felt about rhetorical choices that were made within</p>

	<p>thinks she is, but she's battling this experience that happened to her. Yeah. So I think it's excellent. I really like the parts where you add in, like the poetic prose and kind of like takes a really heavy scene and breaks it up, which is nice for the reader. Again, excellent dialogue. The way you fit it in works really well. And dialogue is a really tough thing to get right because a lot of people just throw it in. But you master in a way that it makes the scene flow, which is awesome. There was no point when I was like alright, come on, it needs to move. So great.</p> <p>From session between Lily and Julia</p>	<p>their writing. This happened most often in the two sessions where the pieces of writing the tutees brought were more creative and therefore had the most potential for unique rhetorical choices to be made.</p>
<p>“priorities toward language in prioritizing higher order concerns (HOCs) versus lower order concerns (LOCs)”</p>	<p>Reuben (07:53): And again, you might want to go and get stopped soon with the “my” and say “this” instead of “my” or something like that. You get it into a little bit higher level there. I don't want to overstate it, but “this topic allows”- you could just say “allows a further breakdown.” We know you're going to be doing it, “Bilingual -- from solely being the counterpart English only education.” Sorry to bug you a little bit, but I'm not 100% sure what you mean. So maybe we're going to work a little bit on precision. Not that you made grammatical mistakes at all, but ...English</p>	<p>This code identifies moments where tutors identify and critique lower-order concerns throughout their discussion of higher-order concerns. In these moments, the tutor simply pointed out the “error” to the tutee and provided a correction and then moved back into discussion of the previous higher-order concern they were working on.</p>

	<p>please. We better make sure we get capital E's here. Obviously, you know that I'm sure. "Breakdown." Do you want to distinguish? Maybe. Would that be better than breakdown? You're trying to make distinctions. Am I correct? Maybe that's a little bit better. And then you could say, "from solely English only education." Would that make sense? And then again, it's just a little bit more concise in our language, which is often easy to point out and others often quite difficult to do.</p> <p>From session between Frida and Reuben.</p>	
<p>"attention to audience awareness"</p>	<p>Erin (06:54): ... (<i>Erin reads a paragraph from the essay</i>). Alright. I think you have some really good content in here and I think you could probably add a couple of sentences just to tie it back to the thesis and maybe just be a little bit more explicit about the kinds of people that the narrator is talking about through it. So like, for example, at the very beginning, "the idea of sacrifice is further expanded upon." The narrator recognizes that for them. I know your professor will have read the poem, but for me I wasn't sure like what specific people the narrator was referring to there.</p>	<p>This code refers to moments where the tutor serves as the audience member for the tutee and provides critiques based on their point of view as a member of the audience. Often this was used to help the tutee express more contextual evidence for the essay. In one other session, the tutee actually asked for advice on how to better contextualize for the audience. Otherwise, this was often tutor-led.</p>

	From session between Sadie and Erin	
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