Embodying Resilience in the Writing Center: A Study of Tutor Training Handbooks and Videos Towards an Understanding of the "Ideal" Tutoring Session

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EMBODYING RESILIENCE IN THE WRITING CENTER: A STUDY OF TUTOR TRAINING HANDBOOKS AND VIDEOS TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE “IDEAL” TUTORING SESSION

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B.A., University of Southern Maine, 2018

A THESIS

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This thesis examines two distinct datasets (handbooks and videos) to explore whether writing tutors embody their training. This research project was grounded in Bruffee’s (1984; 1995) work with collaboration and its link to conversation (both verbal and nonverbal communicative acts) to analyze the peer-to-peer relationships that are observable in writing center tutorials. Research on collaboration and conversation provided a useful framework for qualitatively coding six (6) tutor training handbooks and sixteen (16) tutor training videos. In taking up Thompson’s (2009) and Olinger’s (2014; 2020) calls for further research on writers’ embodied understandings of language, the video component of this research project shows the necessity for supplemental multimodal training texts to accompany the handbooks for new tutors. This study found that an underlying assumption persists across tutor training handbooks that most of tutors’ knowledge will be gained across time, through experience. The analysis of different types of tutor training texts found that the notion of the “ideal” tutor, “ideal” writer, and “ideal” tutorial is baked into tutor training. This finding suggests that tutors’ resilience is a means of maintaining tutorial productivity toward these ideals. While Driscoll and Wells (2020) call for writing centers to
focus on “tutoring the whole person,” This thesis argues that tutors can be responsive to writers’ emotions without being responsible for those emotions. While researchers in the fields of writing studies and writing center studies argue that writing is, in fact, an activity that impacts both the physiological and psychological, we must create boundaries for tutors to protect their emotional and mental well-being, as well as ensure they are not overextending themselves beyond their training. Without analyzing multimodal tutor training texts (both handbooks and videos), the gap between the different kinds of training both the handbooks and the videos provide novice tutors would not be apparent to me. This connection would also not be apparent to novice tutors had they been trained solely with one or the other; novice tutors can benefit from engaging with multimodal tutor training texts.
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CHAPTER ONE: PEER TUTORING IS CONVERSATION: A REVIEW OF FOUNDATIONAL AND CONTEMPORARY SCHOLARSHIP

In the sections to follow in this chapter, I draw on Kenneth Bruffee’s definition of “collaboration,” along with other writing center studies scholars, to offer readers a glimpse into foundational writing center pedagogy. From there, I widen the scope of what collaboration can look like in peer-to-peer writing center tutoring sessions by expanding the connection across collaboration and conversation to include both verbal and non-verbal communication, and the implications of verbal and non-verbal communication in peer tutoring. To do this, I take on a cross-disciplinary approach by drawing on scholars outside of the field of writing center studies to more robustly account for links between collaboration and conversation to get at how tutors both do and do not embody their training during sessions. Next, I trace research relevant to emotional labor (i.e., resilience) in the writing center and connect the concept of resilience to the writing center ideal of improving the writer, not just the writer’s paper (North, 1984; Driscoll and Wells, 2020).

**Foundational Principles of Writing Center Pedagogy**

Bruffee (1995) argues that collaboration is a means toward more efficient ways of doing things. Collaborative learning “help[s] people learn to work together successfully” (Bruffee, 1995, p. 16), and “replaces the traditional classroom social structure with another structure: negotiated relationships among students and a negotiated relationship between those student communities and the teacher” (Bruffee, 1995, p. 17). This idea of negotiation that Bruffee (1995) brings forth is foundational to writing center work. For the purposes of this project, collaboration is defined as what happens during the interactions (and, specifically, the communication) that occurs between both the tutor and the writer during a tutoring session.
Collaboration is foundational to writing center work as it serves as the basis for directive versus non-directive tutoring pedagogy (Bruffee, 1984, 1995; Harris, 1992). Tutors should learn when to be directive (i.e., provide writers with explicit directions, advice, and answers to their questions) and when to be non-directive (i.e., when tutors should encourage writers to attempt writerly choices and seek out answers on their own, while the tutor remains present to support the writer and offer help only when necessary) (North, 1984; Brooks, 1991). Historically, tutors have been trained against being overly directive as too much direction from the tutor could hinder the progress of a writer who does not know where to begin when writing (North, 1984; Brooks, 1991). Muriel Harris (1986) holds that this foundational directive/non-directive dichotomy has been distilled over time into tutor training handbooks, writing center theory, and writing center practice as writing center scholars have historically reinforced the idea that tutoring sessions described as “collaborative” are perceived as “good” and “non-directive” (p. 71). To the folks who work in writing centers, collaboration between tutors and writers is ideal. Tutor-writer collaboration is responsible for “disrupt[ing] the traditional relationships between student writers and their primary audience, their teachers” (Kail, 1983, p. 596). Tutor-writer collaboration is influenced by the teachers who have assigned the writing. Further, tutors work as mediators between writers’ professors and the writers’ ideas and textual choices.

Tutors and writers behaving collaboratively does not necessarily mean that tutors and writers (even when both parties are peers) are equal participants; as tutors improve over time, the further they get from a collaborative relationship with the writers they work with (Harris, 1992). In other words, some scholars argue that the relationship between tutors and writers in-session is not “true” collaboration as tutors and the writers they work with belong to different communities (Clark, 1988; Lunsford, 1991). Tutors and writers are not equal participants in tutoring sessions
as tutors are trained to choose directive or non-directive pedagogical techniques in-session; even if a writer attempts to sway a tutor to be more directive, it is ultimately the tutor’s call as to if the tutor should be more directive. This decision is based on the tutor’s assessment of the writer’s needs during the tutoring session.

Some scholars argue that directive and non-directive tutoring strategies exist on a continuum (Blau et al., 1998). According to the researchers, non-directive strategies should be employed when writers need help with “ideas, structure and voice,” while directive strategies should be used when writers need instruction on the “formal rules of grammar and mechanics” (Blau et al., 1998, p. 38). In order for tutors to decide whether to take a directive or non-directive approach, they must engage in conversation with the writers they work with. To know whether writers need help with content or process, tutors need to ask writers about their writing assignments and their goals for coming to the writing center. Conversation happens externally and internally—the former referring to verbal interactions that take place among people and the latter referring to moments of “reflective thought” (conversations people have within their minds) (Bruffee, 1984, p. 208). In other words, thought—and, therefore, collaboration—is generated by conversation, while writing is, thus, a re-externalization of that internal conversation (Bruffee, 1984).

Internal and external conversation drive actions between participants and, in writing center tutorials, conversations work to facilitate collaboration between tutors and writers. Peer tutoring must involve conversation and, therefore, is a collaborative practice as tutors and writers successfully negotiate the session’s agenda through a discussion of the writer’s needs. The continuum of directivity and non-directivity is dependent on the conversations that take place in-session between tutors and writers (Blau et al., 1998) and collaboration is produced by, and

More contemporary writing center scholarship argues that the continuum of tutorial directivity and non-directivity is dependent on the demographics of writers in a particular university. Some writers are not capable of discussing their needs with writing tutors as they either do not know what they need, or they do not know how to articulate their needs. Educational choices are impacted by peoples’ “implicit social beliefs” about what they should do (Salem, 2016, p. 148). Meeting with a writing tutor is a particular educational choice and educational choices are contingent on both “personal preferences” and “broader social factors” (Salem, 2016, p. 149). For example, first-generation college students do not have the same access to information or resources as students whose parents went to college; first-generation college students need to learn about college in different ways (Salem, 2016).

**Tutoring is Conversation, and Conversation is More Than Verbal Communication**

Writing center tutorials are made up of conversations (Bruffee, 1984), and conversation includes both linguistic and gestural elements (Thompson, 2009). Body language, such as a tutor’s hand gestures, work to supplement the tutor’s verbal communication towards establishing rapport with writers, which is a pivotal aspect of the writing tutorial (Henning, 2001; Thompson, 2009). Establishing rapport is important to the integrity of the session as rapport is integral for both engagement and motivation (Henning, 2001; MacLellan, 2005; Thompson, 2009). Successful tutoring sessions can often be determined by the kinds of noticeable body language that take place (Henning, 2001). Henning (2001) suggests that writing center tutorials can be classified as “successful” based on the tutor and writer’s ability to establish (and maintain)
rapport between one another and agree upon an agenda at the outset of the session, and whether the writer is able to obtain (and apply) feedback from the tutor throughout the session.

The connection between success and the tutorial conversation doesn’t depend on a certain amount of time the tutor and writer spend talking, but rather the productivity of that conversation. For example, markers of success in writing tutorials (that undoubtedly arise out of conversation between tutor and writer) include negotiating (and agreeing upon) an agenda, establishing rapport, and the writer being able to appropriately apply feedback to improve their writing (Henning, 2001). In the same way that writing is perceived to be a textual conversation between writer and audience (Bruffee, 1984; Bruning and Horn, 2000), writing center tutorials rely on conversation, and the success of the tutorial can be assessed by the kinds of conversations that take place (Wolcott, 1989; Henning, 2001; MacLellan, 2005; Salem, 2016). Collaboration is at the center of tutors’ work with writers as “tutors must work to develop and maintain students’ motivation to participate actively during the brief time they are collaborating in writing center conferences” (Mackiewicz and Thompson, 2013, p. 38-9). Collaboration, especially in relation to the conversations produced by collaboration, is important to writing center work as the “more dialogic writing center conferences become, the better tutors can determine what students need to know and what they already understand; hence, tutors may be more effective in individualizing instruction for students” (Mackiewicz and Thompson, 2013, p. 44). For example, dialogue is necessary for individualized understanding of writers’ assignments and their expectations for completion (Mackiewicz and Thompson, 2013).

To account for a more robust definition of conversation—one that includes non-verbal communicative acts (i.e., gestures)—I draw on several scholars who operate outside the sphere of writing center work. Gestures, when accompanied by speech, work to represent ideas and
convey meaning (Wolfe, 2005; Prior, 2010) and are more nuanced than verbal language (Kang & Tversky, 2016). In Prior’s (2010) example of writing on a whiteboard, he found that the inscriptions on the whiteboard, coupled with the gestures used by those co-participating in the literate activity of writing the inscriptions are, too, semiotic markers used to embody the kinds of writing that is taking place alongside the inscriptions they represent. Writing is multi-semiotic (Prior, 2010; Olinger, 2020), as well as an embodied practice situated within particular contexts (Prior and Thorne, 2014). To that end, written texts are only one layer of what goes into writing.

Robust research on writing tutor training includes studies on expertise (Mackiewicz, 2004), tutoring strategies (Valentine, 2017), tutor-writer interactions, and how tutor training serves to prepare novice writing tutors in different aspects of writing center work (Thonus, 2002; Bleakney, 2019; Henning, 2001; Godbee, 2012; Salem, 2016).

Gestures contain communicative information that cannot be fully represented in speech alone (Kang and Tversky, 2016; Wolfe, 2005). Moreover, gestures can extend to the tools put in motion with the gesturing, such as writing implements and paper (Clayson, 2018; Wolfe, 2005). According to Wolfe (2005), even when a speaker attempts to convey the exact same message through both gesture and speech, the verbal and nonverbal representations are (obviously) not the same—one representation is spoken, and one is not. In other words, “speech can be translated word for word into written form, [whereas] gestures are often abstract and physical representations of language” (Wolfe, 2005, p. 299; Sauer, 1998). Gesturing is not a superficial accompaniment to verbal language but, rather, gestures represent embodied aspects of a speaker’s verbal and non-verbal language (Sauer, 1998; Haas and Witte, 2001).

Sauer (1998) uses the idea of “pit sense” (in reference to miners’ undocumented inclination to take risks as a result of their embodied understandings about how to perform their
jobs) as a means of explaining the driving forces behind miners’ need to take (sometimes dangerous) risks. Sauer (1998) argues that aspects of miners’ work can only be learned tacitly (through movement and by doing). While tutoring would not be considered a risky or dangerous job comparable to mining, writing centers, too, experience bouts of unpredictability and dynamic change. And writing centers as dynamic environments for flexibility and activity does not go unfelt by the tutors who work within them.

**Intersections of Writing Center Scholarship and Tutor Training**

Lave and Wenger’s (1991) work on “communities of practice” (CoP) offers a useful lens to better understand how tutors are trained. Learners who operate within communities of practice prioritize shared learning through shared participation of tasks (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 2006; Hall, 2017). By participating in shared learning experiences, learning becomes less about acquiring knowledge for one’s own gain and, rather, to accumulate a repertoire of shared knowledge for the benefit of the community (Wenger, 2006). In the context of peer tutoring, this shared knowledge might include resources like “experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems” (Hall, 2017, p. 19). Hall (2017) argues that the CoP framework is foundational to training tutors in the writing center, as tutor training “depends upon group collaboration” (Hall, 2017, p. 19). Tutor training handbooks and videos, including those examined in this thesis, provide writing tutors, and writing center directors, with a theoretical and pedagogical grounding through which they can frame their experiences as members of that particular community and, to that end, a sort of unified sense of what tutors can expect from their work as writing tutors (i.e., what kinds of writers they’ll tutor, how to navigate various challenges they might encounter during sessions).
Writing center lore becomes writing center orthodoxy and these orthodoxies become distilled in tutor training handbooks. As writing tutors study these handbooks, they perpetuate the writing center lore in the tutor training videos they produce, particularly the idea of some sort of “ideal” tutoring session or “ideal” writer who visits the writing center. Getting to the bottom of writing center lore could help shift perceptions of writing center work. Thompson et al. (2009) conducted research in the form of surveys and found that students were satisfied when tutors exerted their expertise in some way during the session, contradicting writing center lore that the level playing field is important to students' positive perceptions of the writing center. Thompson et al. (2009) contend that “[d]uring their rapid growth in the 1970s and 1980s, writing centers came to depend on 'lore,' what Stephen North defines as 'knowledge about what to do' (25), based on practice and inherited by one generation of practitioners from the previous one” (p. 79).

The researchers found that students who were tutored in the writing center were most satisfied when they were able to hold a certain level of power over the trajectory of the tutoring session while the tutor provided support. Sometimes writers prefer directiveness and other times they prefer non-directiveness by the tutors they work with in the writing center. The notion that writers can decide for themselves whether directive or non-directive tutoring methods are best for them contradicts the lore-based assumptions of writing centers. This isn’t surprising, however, given the reputation of writing centers to uphold traditions even when research is conducted that argues against those traditions (Thompson et al., 2009; Babcock & Thonus, 2012; Mackiewicz & Thompson, 2015; Giaimo and Turner, 2019). It’s possible that tutors who challenge the lore-based assumptions of writing center work are perceived as challenging the notion of the “ideal” writing tutorial.
Not only do tutor training handbooks run the risk of generalizing tutoring practices (Geller et al., 2007; Valentine, 2017), tutor training handbooks work to promote misconceptions about writing center interactions as egalitarian products of tutors’ and writers’ “equal status,” yet research suggests that the unequal status between tutor and writer is more obvious in tutorial interactions than the handbooks suggest (Thonus, 2002). By investigating the interactions (and, namely, the talk) that happen between tutors and writers in situ, we can better understand the kinds of interactions that take place in writing centers and, then, how tutor training can aid future interactions (North, 1984; Thonus, 2002). Thonus (2002) found that tutors and writers often cited “successful” tutoring sessions as being those most oriented around making writers’ papers better, not necessarily making the writers better themselves as the “conventional wisdom” claims is the biggest marker of a session’s success. According to Thonus (2002), “[s]uccessful tutor behaviors most often cited by both tutors and tutees were (a) helping with the definition and construction of a thesis statement…(b) clarifying and expanding essay content around it…. (c) emphasizing student ownership of the paper…. and (d) encouraging further contact between the tutee and the course instructor…” (p. 125). In order to train tutors to tutor “successfully,” tutors must be aware of the “interactional and pragmatic features” of what sets apart a successful (or “excellent”) tutorial from those deemed less successful by tutors and writers (Thonus, 2002, p. 130). Part of these interactional features that are worthy of study take the form of “immediate feedback” in-session (Merrill et al., 1995)—more recently referred to as “oral revision” (Denny, 2014; 2018) and “spoken written-language (SWL)” (Mackiewicz and Thompson, 2018)—have been found to contribute to the perceived success of a tutoring session.

Writing center researchers advocate for four components to integrate into tutor training: discussion of theory, hands-on practice tutoring, building in reflection into training, and
consistent evaluation (Bleakney and Pittock, 2019; Devet, 2014). Thus, writing center directors should use both theoretical and practical approaches to training tutors. Through the deployment of continuous tutor training, tutors are presented with opportunities to “revise or ‘re-see’ their practice,” running parallel to the writing center’s goal for tutors to “invite writers to revise their writing” (Bleakney and Pittock, 2019).

Some researchers argue that tutor training handbooks alone are not enough to provide writing tutors with a well-rounded training experience. Tutoring handbooks can potentially close down tutor responsiveness and openness during tutorials if they’re the only source of tutor training relied upon (Valentine, 2017). Tutor training handbooks should be supplemental to other multimodal methods of training, and one of these methods should include engagement with video-recorded tutoring sessions (Santa, 2016; Valentine, 2017; Hall, 2017). By engaging with different types of tutor training materials, tutors can cross-reference between tutor training texts in order to get at the underlying assumptions and values embedded within them (Hall, 2017). Tutors (and researchers who study tutors) should incorporate a multisemiotic approach in their study of tutorial interactions, focusing specifically on the “gaze” of both tutors and writers in session and the negotiation of “backchanneling” (short vocal responses) (Santa, 2016; Valentine, 2017). By relying on tutor training handbooks alone, tutors are only versed in the textual assumptions about what kinds of writers frequent the writing center and tutors are told (rather than shown) in the handbooks how to interact with particular kinds of writers (Grutsch McKinney, 2013). Just as there is no one “correct” writing process, there isn’t just one way to tutor writing as both writing itself, and the tutoring of writing, “vary by purpose, audience, task…and writer’s personality” (Severino, 1992, p. 53). Due to the entextualization of handbooks (Hanks, 2018; Silverstein, 2019), we need more training in the writing center on conversations
that happen in the writing center. Those who study writing centers should investigate talk
(linguistic and gestural interactions) between tutors and writers in-session (North, 1984; Thonus,
2002; Thompson, 2009).

Because writing centers rely on conversations to successfully do their work—tutors and
writers are trained to talk about writing, and the way they go about this is often detailed in the
handbooks that novice tutors are assigned to read as part of their training. Writing center training
is multifaceted in that not only are novice tutors directed to read handbooks, but they are also
often asked to observe more experienced tutors working with writers or be observed by writing
center directors. Conversations are not just verbal, they're also gestural—the kinds of unsaid,
enacted moments that occur in these conversations could diverge from the verbal language and
this divergence could potentially undermine the writing center’s goal of being unlike the
"traditional" classroom.

**Resilience in the Writing Center: Tutoring as Emotional Labor**

Resilience, specifically in the context of this project, is defined as being able to recover
quickly from an emotionally laborious situation. To be resilient as a writing tutor means having
the ability to recover from moments of conflict specifically for the sake of maintaining the
productiveness of the tutoring session. “Flexibility” also comes up within this study, so it’s worth
noting that the terms *resilience* and *flexibility* (in the context of this study) differ in their
definitions in that flexibility refers to tutors’ ability to recover with ease when switching between
tutoring strategies in accordance with writers’ needs and understandings). Flexibility is inherent
to the ideal tutoring session; tutors who can easily flex between different aspects of their training
are considered to be successfully embodying their training. Resilience, on the other hand, is a
response to the derailment of the “ideal” tutoring session in an effort to either maintain or obtain that ideal.

Resilience isn’t a new concept to writing center theory; writing centers have needed to be resilient since their formation. Writing centers have had a long history of trying to convince faculty and administration of their role in the university. The narratives that writing centers tell themselves and others have contributed to writing center lore. Writing center lore and orthodoxies have been distilled over time into writing center training handbooks and taken as a given. Denny et al. (2018) conducted interviews with both students and tutors and discovered that tutors and writers’ understandings of the writing center’s role is derived “from the implicit logic of our daily practices” and not necessarily from “what we explicitly say to them” (p. 89). The researchers argue that the “structural ‘givens’ of our writing centers: our generalist tutors, our timed tutoring sessions, our requirement that students ask for help” has a greater impact on how people come to understand writing center work (Denny et al., 2018, p. 89-90). The ideal tutor, the ideal writer, and the ideal tutorial are all baked into these givens, but these givens are not reality. According to Denny et al. (2018) writing centers “pride” themselves “on meeting students where they are, without preconceived notions of where they ‘should’ be. But our research reveals that writing centers do not function the way we imagine they do” (p. 69).

Writing centers often position themselves as going against the grain of academia and, as a result, resilience is baked into the history and material conditions of writing centers (Lerner, 2019). Lerner (2019) invites researchers to pair resilience with the idea of resistance as a means to gather “a more complete way to read the opportunities and limitations of writing center work” (p. 196). Resistance is more nuanced than just the writer who wants proofreading and the tutor won’t provide it. Forms of resistance on the part of writers exist in many different ways —
including writers who don’t listen to tutors’ feedback (resistance can be passive or not): “Both kinds of students challenge our notions of nondirective tutoring—whether demanding us to lay on or off their texts in ways that make almost all tutors very uncomfortable” (Lerner, 2019, p. 200).

Not only are tutors performing resilience in-session, but they have historically needed to be resilient in the face of university administration and faculty. Because the writing center’s role is not immediately obvious to those who operate outside of the writing center, tutors have come up against faculty who feel a loss of “control” over their classrooms because the writing tutor becomes an additional audience to writers’ work outside of the traditional student/teacher audience (Kail, 1983, p. 596). In the past, faculty have been unclear as to the role of the writing tutor and (incorrectly) expected tutors to act as teachers (Kail, 1983; Rodis, 1990) and, specifically, teachers who are not well-versed in writers’ assignments (Smith, 1986). Those who exist on the periphery of writing center work (i.e., faculty and/or university administrators) perceive collaboration between tutors and writers as a disruption to the status quo. These conflicting ideas as to what tutors should and should not help writers with, as well as what professors think tutors should help writers with, impact the interpersonal dynamics between tutors and writers in-session (Rodis, 1990).

Historically, peer tutors have been described by faculty members as causing further confusion to student writers who seek assistance from the writing center as the writing center becomes just one more option for writers to seek help (Smith, 1986) and, if writers do seek help at the writing center, they’re potentially hindering writers’ progress (Kail, 1983). The attempts at centralizing writing centers, as both Smith (1986) and Giltrow (1996; 2016) seem to contend, actually works against writing centers in detrimental ways. If, in fact, writing centers are “self-
evident,” then why do writing centers still, twenty-four years after Giltrow’s (1996) article was published, feel tremendous pressure to “define themselves” to faculty and administrators in their respective universities and beyond in writing center studies scholarship (p. 79)? While the purposes of writing center work seem obvious (at least according to Giltrow) to those who maintain them, there is an emphasis on advocating for their “activities...to get funding. Unlike established disciplines, they must elaborate themselves in reports and proposals” (Giltrow, 1996, p. 79). In other words, even if writing centers are “self-evident,” their purposes are not evident to those around them; writing centers are “objects of interpretation by their neighbours” (Giltrow, 1996, p. 81). As a result of the vast interpretations of writing center work, writing centers have struggled with whether they should even be referred to as “centers” (“writing labs” or “writing clinics” have been argued as more appropriate names according to those who work in writing centers and “neighbours” to writing centers). Also, writing centers are constantly being asked to relocate their locations within universities—instead of operating separately from other campus resources, writing centers are often asked to relocate in order to be in closer proximity to departments and offices that provide services to students, as writing centers themselves purport doing (i.e., integrating into other university-offered tutoring services for other disciplines or university libraries). Thirty years later, Giltrow (2016) continues this line of inquiry that writing centers are concerned with "all thinking, all students, all the time" (p. 19), agreeing that writing centers spread themselves too thin by taking on more than they can handle, and this issue impacts bureaucratic and faculty reception of the writing center as a necessary resource for writers in the university. A solution to this problem would be to foster relationships between writing tutors, writing center directors, and faculty members (Trimbur, 1987; Gordon and Kircher, 2012).
Some research has already been done on writing, and writing center work, as emotional activities (McLeod, 1987; Bisson, 2007; Lape, 2008; Perry, 2016; Driscoll and Wells, 2020). McLeod’s (1987) work focuses on writing anxiety, motivation, and beliefs. According to Bisson (2007), if a tutor notices the writer they’re working with is crying, they should ask the writer “whether they want to talk about their problem, or if the tutor should give them a few minutes alone” (p. 2). Not only is space beneficial for upset writers, but space is also necessary for tutors who encounter difficult or upset writers. A way that tutors can be supported in processing the aftermath of emotional sessions is to be allowed “the space and time to process emotional issues… [by] block[ing] themselves off for an hour after a difficult session if they can and to write about their experience” (Perry, 2016, p. 2). Additionally, the writing center staff as a whole can be supported by the holding of regular staff meetings “to share experiences and strategies” (Perry, 2016, p. 2). Lape (2008) argues that “emotional intelligence is no less important than knowledge of discourse conventions and the writing process” in tutoring (p. 1). However, tutor training handbooks “concentrate far more on cognitive than affective skills, which tend to be addressed in one chapter” (Lape, 2008, p. 1). While tutors are not trained as therapists, there are moments when tutors work with writers who are upset, and even cry (Bisson, 2007).

Lape (2008) homes in on a problem illuminated by the handbooks’ lack of attention to writers’ affect during sessions, particularly pointing out tutoring training handbooks’ “rhetoric that may place new tutors in a defensive position—on alert, waiting for the inevitable problem person to arrive” (p. 1). Tutors are expected to provide guidance to writers in need and in order to ensure a productive tutoring session, a tutor might need to help writers through their feelings about writing first (Weintraub, 2005).
Both within the writing center studies field and outside of it, research has been done on emotional intelligence and the workplace. Outside the field, Schutte and Loi (2014) found that higher emotional intelligence translates to feelings of more power, perception of work environment as more supportive, greater sense of control over environment, translating to better mental health, and the production of more social capital (p. 134). The higher an employee’s emotional intelligence, the more likely the employee will “flourish” in the workplace. In the context of their study, “flourishing” is defined as “optimal functioning in individuals and institutions” (Schutte and Loi, 2014, p. 135). Researchers found that emotional intelligence led to more successful employees in the workplace (i.e., productive, communicative, and happier employees) (Schutte and Loi, 2014). Within the realm of writing center studies, Jackson et al. (2016) focus on the emotional labor expended by writing center directors specifically, not tutors. While the researchers studied directors and not tutors, they still found that not only was emotional labor necessary for directors to take up, but the writing center directors studied actually enjoyed doing it. The kinds of emotional labor taken on by writing center directors in this study included “mentoring, advising, making small talk, putting on a friendly face, resolving conflicts, and making connections” (Jackson et al., 2016). Emotional labor is an integral aspect of writing tutors’ work as well (Hudson, 2001). It is in writing tutors’ best interests to learn how to handle writers’ emotions in the writing center because “tutorials [that] lack overt emotionalism” are more productive than sessions when emotions are running high (Hudson, 2001, p. 10). Though, there is a line tutors must balance within each session when emotions are running high. It is acceptable for students to be friendly and professional, while also making sure to avoid any “unwanted emotionalism” in a tutoring session (Hudson, 2001, p. 11). Tutor training materials often describe how “the collaborative partnership breaks down in the face of
an emotional writer” because upset writers try to emotionally connect with tutors while tutors are focused on the writers’ text (Lape, 2008, p. 1).

Some researchers have studied resilience and its relationship to writing and writing center work. Resilience (or “grit” as it’s referred to by some researchers) is connected to academic engagement, outcomes (Hodge et al., 2018), and greater persistence (Wolters and Hussain, 2014). Some scholars argue that writing centers as perceived outsiders to academia is what makes them so successful in helping writers improve (Riley, 1994; Davis, 1995) because writing centers’ position within the university allows them to meet writers where they’re at through the use of different strategies (Bleakney and Pittock, 2019).

Driscoll and Wells (2020) conducted research on emotional resilience in students as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic: “The COVID-19 pandemic has stretched the limits of students’ emotional resilience—not to mention those of faculty, staff, and student tutors—and has surfaced the urgency of attending to emotions in our courses, workplaces, and writing centers.” The American College Heath Association’s (2017) study shows that, even in pre-pandemic times, 52.6% of U.S. students (out of 40,000 surveyed nationwide) have experienced some form of anxiety and 26.4% of those reported that their anxiety impacted their schoolwork in some way (i.e., being the cause of lower grades, forcing them to drop courses, or taking incompletes in courses (Driscoll and Wells, 2020). A study conducted by the New College of Florida after the COVID-19 pandemic offers us a glimpse into the impact of student performance and the researchers found that writers were just as likely to make online writing center appointments for help with writing, as well as social and emotional support. In response to this finding, the researchers suggest that writers likely have always sought support from writing tutors “all along because it is a place where both types of needs can be met.” Emotional tutoring
sessions are common in writing centers “not only because college can be emotionally taxing, but also because writing centers may be perceived as places students can go to feel better as often as they are perceived as places to get help with writing” (Driscoll and Wells, 2020). While writing tutorials have been found to ease writers’ anxieties, these writing tutorials can leave a “serious emotional toll on tutors” (Driscoll and Wells, 2020).

Emotions are at the core of writing center work in both theory and practice (Driscoll and Wells, 2020). These theoretical and practical underpinnings have been distilled over time in the literature novice tutors are assigned to read as part of their training. However, tutoring training handbooks often discuss emotions through a lens of negativity (Lape, 2008; Driscoll and Wells, 2020). Tutor training handbooks are dismissive of emotions and, as a result, tutors are being trained to minimize writers’ emotions because emotions just seem to get in the way of “real” writing (Lape, 2008; Lawson, 2015) and should be treated as a “last resort” (Driscoll and Wells, 2020). For example, Ryan and Zimmerelli’s (2016) *Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors* mentions the “counselor” role that tutors might need to *sometimes* adopt in-session, which is just one of several roles that tutors might take on. Another example of resistance in the writing center occurs with the “we don’t proofread papers” mantra found in writing center scholarship (Grimm, 1996; McKinney, 2013; Lerner, 2019). According to Lerner (2019), this resistance is found in the literature, but not so much in practice.

Emotional labor is hard, especially when tutors are tasked with working with different types of people with limited time in between sessions to prepare for the next. Bruffee (1984; 1995) and Harris’ (1992) work on collaboration ultimately became a model from which all other writing center pedagogy and orthodoxies sprang forth. However, that model did not include the emotional labor of writing tutors who struggle with navigating their peer-to-peer status with the
writers they work with. By studying tutors’ resilience as portrayed through both tutoring handbooks and videos, writing center directors and tutors can better understand the ways in which resilience is taken up in-session, how important resilience is to the integrity of tutoring sessions, and in what ways tutor training materials should be revised or supplemented.
CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

In order to fully account for the various kinds of training that tutors might receive (and that they might also potentially embody through their work with writers), it was necessary to observe multimodal tutor training texts because of the different genre conventions they hold. Before discussing how the methods for this project unfolded I discuss why tutor training handbooks are worthy of study through the lens of Rhetorical Genre Studies (RGS) through a discussion of their similar and dissimilar features. To begin, I will productively examine how texts go about motivating or influencing people through Teston’s (2009) study involving a “Standard of Care” document, alongside other scholars doing work in this field. Teston’s (2009) study is relevant here as it shows how an understanding of genre can help us make useful sense of tutor training as particular genres that “organize and authorize action” (p. 323) as the Standard of Care document provides guidelines for care that invoke sets of actions by both doctors and patients who engage with the document.

Rhetorical Genre Studies (RGS) played an important role in the selection of tutor training texts for this project. In Chapter One, I discussed the current writing center scholarship on the topic of resilience as this was a surprising and substantial finding in this research project. If what we need is a way to study resilience in the writing center, then we also need a way to study writing center materials (i.e., texts produced by and for writing tutors such as tutor training videos and handbooks).

Methodological Implications Through a Rhetorical Genre Studies Lens

The handbook’s residual existence as a textual resource for writing tutors provides tutors with a “practical basis of knowledge and the ways in which [that knowledge] is organized by the goals and purposes of actors” (Hanks, 2018, p. 132). In the field of Rhetorical Genre Studies,
genres are viewed as “typified recurrent situations rather than textual patterns” (Devitt and Reiff, 2014, p. 265). To put this definition into the context of this project, tutor training handbooks drive the activity (or social actions) in writing centers. Carolyn Miller’s (1984) work titled “Genre as Social Action” is a significant turn toward the acknowledgement of writers’ experiences and engagements with contexts as a lens for understanding how writers learn and employ composing practices. Miller (1984) broadened the scope of writing studies research to include both the social and the rhetorical (i.e., the writer’s relationship to different writing contexts). In Miller’s (1984), genres are not categories of texts as traditionally assumed. Instead, genres are the social actions that influence, and are taken up by, writers and the texts these writers produce become the residue of those social actions. For instance, take the following example: the social action of the writing center tutorial has propelled the publications of tutor training handbooks. Specifically, as the population of students attending universities (and, therefore, visiting writing centers) have become more diverse, tutor training handbooks have followed suit. While the purpose of the handbooks continues to be to train novice tutors, the kinds of training included in the handbooks has evolved.

When writers write (in both individual and collaborative settings), writing mediates social and organizational responses. Writing is responsive to, and reciprocal of, social and rhetorical activity. Genres are performative in that they mediate social relationships between the individuals enacting them (Campbell, 2017). Teston (2009) states “genres organize and authorize action” and they are “rhetorical in that their usefulness is contingent upon specific audiences and purposes” (Teston, 2009, p. 323). Bastian (2010) describes the relationship between the rhetorical situation and genre as “reciprocal” or “interrelated”, which means that writers and
readers “can look to a genre to understand elements of the rhetorical situation and one can look to the rhetorical situation to understand elements of the genre” (p. 30).

Genres are always influencing and being influenced by the ways readers and writers engage with them as their “actions [are] based within specific, social, and recurrent rhetorical situations, thus making genre rhetorical in nature” (Bastian, 2010, p. 30). Genres are not passive bystanders; they shape readers’ and writers’ physical environments and experiences (Campbell, 2017). For example, the genre of tutor training, and its textual residue of the “handbook,” serve the purpose of organizing those who work in writing centers around a set of conventions. Genres help us understand how to engage with the communities in which those genres are enacted (Teston, 2009; Miller, 1984).

Genres as social actions (rather than the typical conception of genres being the formal features of texts) shifts readers’ and writers’ perspectives of texts toward the values of communities (Campbell, 2017; Bawarshi and Reiff, 2010; Miller, 1984). According to Bastian (2010), “[g]enres represent and reinforce what participants within certain rhetorical situations value, believe, and assume” (p. 31). Genre is written by those who participate. Genres flex (to a degree) as they’re taken up by different members of different communities with different experiences.

Teston (2009) warns writers that standards and guidelines are “paradox[ical]” in that “they run the risk of losing their generalizability” when they attempt generalization (p. 344). A “tension” persists between the “assumptions implicit in generalizable guidelines and actual users’ unique, individual experiences” (Teston, 2009, p. 344-5). Teston’s (2009) research concludes that formal features of texts (“guidelines”) are “only as useful as the audience invoking them and the rhetorical situation deems necessary” (p. 345).
Rhetorical Genre Studies offers a useful lens through which the tutor training video as a text can be understood. In similar fashion to the handbooks, the tutor training video facilitates social action in writing centers. Because videos incorporate more modes than the linguistically-privileged text of the handbook, there are observational differences between the two kinds of texts. Analyzing tutor training videos as texts (and particularly through an RGS lens) illuminates moments where gesturing leads to the "regulating [of] other people's interactions (e.g., gesturing to get someone's attention)" and tutors are "enacting communicative moves (e.g., using air quotes)" (Olinger, 2020, p. 174).

Methods

As discussed in the first chapter, collaboration appeared as a construct of interest from the conception of this project, thereby informing the methods used. Because collaboration requires the interactive participation of at least two people, it was important to study scenes of tutors and writers working together (i.e., collaborating) and this was achieved by observing tutor training videos. Even though I focused solely on analyzing data from the tutor’s perspective in coding both the handbook and video datasets, the writers who work with the tutors play an important role in that tutors’ verbal and nonverbal communication was contingent on the presence of these writers.

The research questions are as follows:

- What are tutors being trained to do (and to not do) through different modalities of tutor training texts (i.e., handbooks and videos)?
- In what ways are tutors embodying (or not embodying) in the tutor training videos the advice of the tutor training handbooks?
Sixteen (16) writing tutorial videos published in the public domain (YouTube) were coded and analyzed and the systematic coding and analysis of six (6) writing tutor training handbooks was performed. My initial goals for this project were to look at tutors’ directiveness and non-directiveness in-session to determine how often tutors might exhibit one way or the other. At the conception of this project in Fall 2020, I was interested in the following questions: How do tutors know what they know? And how do tutors embody that knowledge while working with writers in the writing center? Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, I was interested in observing writers and tutors in-person. However, with universities (including writing centers) moving to remote modalities, this was no longer feasible. Thus, my research questions evolved as the methods for the project changed.

With the sections to follow in this chapter, I describe the process of collecting data for this study and how the data (and iterative analysis of the data) works toward collaboration as a construct that cannot be separated from conversation. To this end, this project seeks to investigate not only what those conversations entail, but also how exactly they exemplify collaboration within writing tutorials. Geisler (2016) argues that for methodological inquiries on language to be sound, data must attend to its “multidimensional” and “rhetorical” complexities (p. 217). Understanding that language is complex is crucial to this research because “a failure to consider language complexity may lead us into equally troubled methodological waters” (Geisler, 2016, p. 217). Texts are multidimensional and rhetorical insofar as they propel, and are influenced by, the actions of those who interact with them.

**Situating my Methods: Thompson (2009), Olinger (2014; 2020)**

The methods undertaken for this project were inspired by the methods outlined in Thompson (2009), Olinger (2014), and Olinger (2020). In Thompson’s (2009) microanalysis of a
tutor’s verbal and nonverbal tutoring strategies, Thompson focuses specifically on how a tutor’s gestures in-session possibly scaffold a writer’s “cognitive and motivational readiness” (p. 417) in relation to how directive (or non-directive) the tutor’s gestures are throughout the tutoring session. Olinger’s (2014) study observed experienced writers’ gestures as embodied representations of how those writers understood and enacted a disciplinary writing style. Olinger’s (2020) work argues for the importance of video in interview-based writing research as a way to research further how interviewees’ gestures embody beyond verbal language. In all three of these studies, video played a pivotal role in the research and subsequent findings. Without the video component in these studies, Thompson and Olinger would not have been able to further the research on language as embodied through speakers’ gestural communication. My work on this research project was inspired by the multimodal work conducted by these researchers. As discussed further in chapter four, the prevalence of resilience in this study was interesting, surprising, and would not have been observable without the video component of this study.

Data Collection: Handbook Dataset

Writing tutor training handbooks have been a part of the theoretical training for novice writing tutors since the 1970s. Stephen K. Bailey (2012) differentiates between “Generation 1.0” and “Generation 2.0” handbooks, the former being “no longer fully representative of writing center theory and practice” and the latter are “more recently published handbooks...authored by contemporary writing center specialists well known in the field, printed by major textbook publishers, and widely used in writing centers nationwide...Several of these Generation 2.0 handbooks have been updated in second, third, fourth, or even fifth editions, which provides further evidence of their continued use in tutor education workshops.” Bailey indicates six

Table 2.1 Handbook Authors, Titles, Editions, Dates of Publication, and Page Counts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Title (Edition)</th>
<th>Date of Publication</th>
<th>Page Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ben Rafoth</td>
<td><em>A Tutor’s Guide: Helping Writers One to One</em> (1st edition)</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margot Soven</td>
<td><em>What the Writing Tutor Needs to Know</em> (N/A)</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toni-Lee Capossela</td>
<td><em>The Harcourt Brace Guide to Peer Tutoring</em> (N/A)</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 2.1 (above), the authors, titles, editions, dates of publication, and page counts are shown for all six handbooks. Because my project was concerned with direct advice given to novice writing tutors by the handbook authors, there were parts of each handbook that were left uncoded. To paint a more robust portrait of how writing center tutors both embody their training at times and do not embody their training at other times, two datasets were analyzed—six handbooks and sixteen YouTube videos—to achieve a closer, more detailed analysis of how tutors are trained to interact with writers.

All six handbooks in the dataset focus on being descriptive about the situations new tutors might encounter in the writing center, rather than prescriptive. For example, In the introduction to *A Tutor’s Guide: Helping Writers One to One*, Rafoth states that this handbook
seeks "not to provide answers but to help you think through problems and gather new perspectives on them" (Rafoth, 2000, ix). Each of these handbooks addresses theoretical foundations of writing center scholarship along with guidelines for practice in tutoring through situating both theory and practice in conversation with what the authors describe as typical scenarios writing tutors will most likely encounter in sessions.

The authors of each handbook encourage new tutors and writing center directors to consider handbooks as foundational resources for their crafting of their own tutor training handbooks specific to the needs of their own university writing centers. In other words, it is understood that the handbooks operate within a constellation of texts (i.e., tutor observation sheets, discussion questions, writing center scholarship, university-specific guides, other handbooks). All of the handbooks include discussion questions and assignments either at the end of each individual chapter or at the end of the handbook. The inclusion of discussion questions and assignments for new writing tutors implies that the handbooks are designed to be supplemental in some way. For instance, Soven's (2005) handbook titled What the Writing Tutor Needs to Know was designed to supplement a tutor training course taught at La Salle University titled “Writing and the University.”

The six handbooks analyzed for this project break down different categories of concerns writers face that can potentially impact their writing and that, while tutors should not pry into the personal lives of the writers they work with, tutors should be aware that writers have lives outside of tutoring session and any personal issues they face can negatively affect students’ writing. Across the handbooks, suggestions are given to tutors for working with writers who have “writing anxiety” and essentially tutors can help anxious writers by describing the act of writing as a process and ensuring writers that writing takes time and effort.
According to the handbooks studied, tutors should expect to work with multilingual writers, writers with learning disabilities, writers with physical disabilities, “adult learners” (or writers of “non-traditional” college age), and “basic writers.” Ryan and Zimmerelli (2016) offer suggestions for tutors who work with “basic writers” as well (i.e., tutors should place their focus on what the basic writer is doing well and not only what the writer needs to improve). The grammar and punctuation (and “errors” more generally) of basic writers should be looked at in terms of the effectiveness of the writers’ communication and ensuring that “errors will not distract readers” (p. 59). These six handbooks are explicit in that tutors should listen attentively to the needs of writers through tutoring strategies like agenda setting and remaining flexible to the needs of writers in-session.

Writing centers have long been positioned as flexible and dynamic spaces, and this is apparent in the handbooks’ call for tutors’ prioritization of flexibility. Even if a tutor is unfamiliar with a topic or discipline, tutors “can determine whether the ideas are presented in a cohesive and persuasive manner” (Ryan and Zimmerelli, 2016, p. 72). However, not all handbooks in the dataset present this information in the same way. For instance, Soven (2005) incorporates a myriad of anecdotal evidence from tutors and faculty members across the disciplines, while Ryan and Zimmerelli (2016) follow a more practical approach by including checklists for tutors to follow as they work with writers on research papers; lab reports; scientific papers; argument or position papers; literature papers; book, film, and play reviews; group writing projects; digital and/or multimodal environments; resumes; and cover letters. This speaks to the writing center’s call for all writers, regardless of discipline or writing task, as welcome to the writing center.
In all six of the handbooks, a parallel is drawn between tutoring and writing: “...learning how to tutor is like learning to write” (Soven, 2005, p. 19). All six of the handbooks provide tutors-in-training with a historical overview of writing centers and how writing centers’ missions seem to remain fundamentally, but how writing centers achieve those goals have evolved. Here’s an example of this from Soven’s (2005) tutor training text:

Early writing centers did not use undergraduate writing tutors, though some used graduate students who worked with a faculty member. It would take the vision of people like Bruffee and Harris to join the two ideas that form the philosophical foundation for contemporary writing centers: the power of collaborative work with a peer (the transitional community Bruffee recommended) in a setting which provides individualized instruction. (p. 21)

Ben Rafoth’s (2000) *A Tutor's Guide: Helping Writers One to One*, as well as Shanti Bruce and Ben Rafoth's (2009) *ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors* are edited collections of essays contributed by notable scholars in the fields of writing center studies and writing studies, with particularly distinct chapters tackling different aspects of writing center work from different perspectives. Despite differences in formal features of the texts, all six handbooks share similar purposes, namely the navigation of different rhetorical expectations between tutors, instructors, and writers, and the work done in the writing center and of writing more generally. For example, according to Soven (2005), “[w]riting tutors feel most comfortable when they are aware of teacher expectations” (p. 127) and “teacher expectations [of student writing] are related to conventions of writing in their fields” (p. 129). Soven (2005) calls for tutors to get in the minds of instructors a bit and find out why professors give out “A” grades/determine what it is that they’re looking for, even though this advice goes against “writing center dogma” (p. 134).
Overall, tutors need to balance the roles of “peer tutor” and “faculty messenger” (p. 135). Also, Gillespie and Lerner (2008) share an interesting take on students’ ownership of their own texts (or lack thereof): “...the student-text-teacher relationship complicates notions of ownership. For many writers, a more accurate concept would be that they ‘rent’ their texts, occupying a topic and content for the length of time specified by the teacher/landlord and thinking little of what they have written once the rental period has ended” (p. 22).

According to the handbooks, tutors need to balance directivity and non-directivity, especially when working with ESL students. Tutors should do their best to ensure they’re not appropriating writers’ texts; it’s important that students’ work remains the product of their own doing. On that note, the handbooks insist that tutors do not jump to conclusions about what an ESL student “means” to say in a text. This tends to happen when tutors have trouble reading a student’s text and, as a result, jump to their own conclusions about the messages being conveyed by the writer.

To some degree, each of the handbooks in this dataset weave anecdotal evidence throughout the chapters. These anecdotes are attributed to tutors, faculty members, the authors themselves, and sometimes writers who have visited the writing center. Referring to the anecdotes as “responses,” Soven (2005) asks readers to “read these responses [and] think about the experiences that you bring to tutoring writing” (p. 1). The use of anecdotal evidence moves the authors away from a prescriptive approach to tutor training and toward a descriptive model that allows tutors to take away from their reading of these stories whatever is most meaningful to them. Gillespie and Lerner (2008) write, “...this book grew out of conversations that we’ve had over the years, either on the phone, in front of computer screens, or face-to-face” (v) and that their handbook’s structure “mirror[s]...tutor training” (v). Furthermore, these authors contend
that “tutors and writers have been among our greatest teachers, and we knew that a tutor-training book should be steeped in their accounts” (v). Not only are anecdotes shared throughout the handbook to demonstrate the ways that tutors make sense of their sessions, but examples of dialogue by both tutor and writer serve as ways to see how tutoring sessions play out and key in tutors-in-training to conversations that they might have in the future (and how to navigate them).

Two of the handbooks (Capossela, 1998; Gillespie and Lerner, 2008) frontload the first half of the handbooks with both theoretical and practical, but concrete, advice for novice tutors, and the second half of these handbooks consist of collections of relevant scholarship in the field of writing center studies. For instance, in Capossela’s (1998) text, the beginning of handbook through page 113 works to guide novice writing tutors through twelve chapters to train tutors about the kind of work they’ll be doing in the writing center. The second half of the handbook (beginning on page 117) are additional readings for novice tutors that provide context for the advice given within the first half of the handbook. The first half of the handbook includes “Assignments” for tutors to do and most of these assignments involve reading the material included in the second half of the handbook.

Tutors are in the position to get to know writers’ “uniqueness,” even the uniqueness of writers that are not members of the same group as us. The handbooks work to ensure that tutors have a theoretical understanding of what students who acquire a new language go through as they learn it and become fluent in it. By examining this process of language acquisition, tutors become more attuned to the kinds of strategies and approaches that would be best taken up in tutoring sessions with ESL students. Similar to the other handbooks’ advice, tutors should work with writers on what the agenda will look like for the session and remain cognizant of moments where flexibility is key and from where the agenda should be diverged. Kenneth Bruffee and
Muriel Harris are mentioned or referenced in each handbook. Every handbook includes references to writing center scholarship and writing studies scholarship.

All six handbooks advise that tutors should seek outside help when a session becomes difficult for them, such as asking the writing center director or another tutor for help, pointing a student toward on-campus resources, or using a resource book (such as *The Bedford Handbook*). For example, *The Bedford Handbook* can help tutors answer questions during sessions with writers: for all things writing and tutors are expected to refer to *The Bedford Handbook* to “[n]ot only...help them answer their questions accurately, but...also be modeling the behavior of good writers” (Ryan and Zimmerelli, 2016, p. 24). Of course, before tutors and writers can work together through these tools and resources, the tutor needs to begin building rapport with the writer by introducing herself and making sure to sit beside the writer (not across from). Next, tutors should set the agenda for the session (and Ryan and Zimmerelli’s text provides a series of questions tutors can ask writers to determine and prioritize the needs of the particular writers they’re working with in that moment).

**Iterative Coding Materials and Procedures for the Handbook Dataset**

Through iterative coding of the handbook data, I explored the language of the handbooks that novice tutors are assigned as part of their training in order to determine what information remains consistent across the handbooks (i.e., distilled as “conventional wisdom” in the field), distributed across other sources of literature (i.e., evidence-based research articles in WC Studies), and, ultimately, taken up by writing tutors in practice. Coding the handbooks was an important component to this project because the handbooks are working to account and advocate for their existence in tutor training as texts that guide tutors toward the understanding that writing centers should be everything to all writers. But, analyzing tutor training videos—and
particularly the semiotic markers visible in the videos—offer a lens through which we can get at how tutors’ past experiences with “traditional” classroom genres influence their interactions with students, possibly countering the handbooks’ advice. The handbook data was coded in four separate passes. The first two passes of the data were conducted through Dedoose, and the data was coded two more times using MAXQDA (2020).¹

The coding scheme that emerged after the first two passes through the handbook data arose out of a two-tiered approach to analyzing the tutor training handbooks. I refer to this approach as “two-tiered” because “tiers” consist of differently sized levels and this level variance provides a useful framing for collecting and analyzing data from all six handbooks. In the first larger, broader tier, I conducted an overview of each handbook’s contents, looking particularly for moments where “collaboration,” “conversation,” and “experience” intersect. As a result of this broad analysis of the tutor training handbooks, I developed preliminary codes that took me into the second tier: “collaboration,” “anti-collaboration,” “challenging assumptions [of “traditional” classroom-based writing],” “conversation,” “contrasts,” and “experience.” These preliminary ex vivo (deductive) codes are based on writing center studies scholarship. In a second revision of the Codebook, two parent codes emerged: Interpersonal Dynamics and Intrapersonal Dynamics. At this time, a definition of conversation emerged as encompassing an array of verbal and non-verbal communicative acts and, out of this definition, two parent codes were formed: interpersonal and intrapersonal dynamics. Through consistent and repeated coding

¹ The switch from one software to another was not planned at the start of the project but deemed necessary to protect the integrity of the data. For example, I experienced technical difficulties when attempting to add the video dataset to Dedoose (i.e., long loading times and audio wouldn’t play). Uploading the datasets to MAXQDA took considerably less time than Dedoose, both the audio and video in the video dataset played without issue, and the interfaces of both the code system and document browser were easier to maneuver and revise when necessary.
of six writing tutor training handbooks, the relationship between collaboration, conversation, and tutor-writer inter- and intrapersonal dynamics emerged.

After the third pass through the handbook coding, I provided a colleague with the most recent version of the Codebook and a 10% sample of the handbook data. The purpose of this process was to calculate the interrater reliability of the coding scheme to determine the intuitiveness of the coding scheme, as well as determine what parts of the coding scheme need to be revised. To achieve interrater reliability, both “raters” (i.e., myself and my colleague) must agree at least 80% of the time (Krippendorff, 2011). Both my colleague and I independently coded the 10% data sample. To ensure the integrity of the interrater reliability check, I provided my colleague with only necessary guidance: I described the units of segmentation to be coded were each paragraph, I provided a copy of the Codebook, and I shared the specific direction to apply only one (1) code per unit of segmentation (or “excerpt” as I will refer to these units throughout). The results of this reliability check are shown in the table below. The data sample I provided my colleague consisted of 84 excerpts.

Table 2.2 (3rd Coding Pass) Interrater Reliability at 46.4%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of Data Coded</th>
<th>% of Data Not Coded</th>
<th>Reliability (coded and uncoded data)</th>
<th>Reliability (only coded data)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>78.6%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>46.4%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After conferring with my colleague, it was determined that even the absence of a code was telling. My colleague’s indecision as to what one (1) code could be applied to a particular excerpt indicated that my coding scheme needed to be pared down and my definitions of codes more robust. My colleague’s hesitation to code 21.4% of the dataset indicated that some codes could either be subsumed within other codes or become child codes. This interrater reliability check was pivotal in my coding process. Once the interrater reliability was determined to be at a
low 46.4%. I conferred with both my colleague and advisor to make useful, and necessary, changes to the codebook. The most notable change that occurred was the removal of the “interpersonal dynamics” and “intrapersonal dynamics” codes. In the first version of the codebook, the “intrapersonal dynamics” code operated as a generalized catch-all for more specific phenomena (i.e., metadiscursive comments made by authors, generalized claims and advice about writers and tutoring, and anecdotes attributed to different folks). In the first version of the codebook, the “interpersonal dynamics” parent code included the “Tutoring Strategies” child code, but both interpersonal and intrapersonal dynamics are at play in all activity that happens in writing centers.

The final version of the codebook for the handbook dataset appears below. From left to right, the codebook is broken down into the titles of each code, the definitions of each code, and an example segment from the handbook in which the code was applied. Collaboration no longer appears as a parent code in the final version of the codebook and, instead, becomes an unstated umbrella code since all tutoring is collaboration as a given.

**CODEBOOK (HANDBOOK DATA)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
<th>EXAMPLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metadiscursive Comments (Made by Authors)</td>
<td>The Metadiscursive Comments (Made by Authors) code is applied when the authors refer directly back to themselves (in-text) in some way (i.e., calling back to a previous or future chapter the reader will encounter or sustaining an example or an anecdote via metadiscourse).</td>
<td>“To introduce you to tutoring writing and to how we hope this book will help you, we want to start at the beginning. Why do we tutor? The answer that question forms, for us, the foundation upon which our own lives as tutors and writing center directors are based, and informs each chapter of this book” (Gillespie and Lerner, p. 1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anecdotes from Tutors</td>
<td>The Anecdotes from Tutors code is applied when the handbook authors include anecdotes in-text and attribute these anecdotes to tutors.</td>
<td>“Give the writer a chance to solve a problem…Eric DePaul, a LaSalle tutor, earned this skill during his first semester of tutoring writing…’I learned when to keep speaking and when to remain silent…”’ (Soven, p. 46-7).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anecdotes from Writers</td>
<td>The Anecdotes from Writers code is applied when the handbook authors include anecdotes in-text and attribute these anecdotes to writers.</td>
<td>“‘You go to a tutor when you’re in trouble,’ one student noted, ‘but you go to a consultant when you really care about what you’re doing and want to make it as good as you can’” (Capossela, p. 3).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anecdotes from Authors</td>
<td>The Anecdotes from Authors code is applied when the handbook authors share their own personal anecdotes.</td>
<td>“I guess I wasn’t surprised when he reappeared in one of my literature courses in the next semester, and then in yet another of my courses…” (Soven 110).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Codebook</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anecdotes from Others</td>
<td>The Anecdotes from Others code is applied when the authors include anecdotes in-text and attribute these to others (i.e., scholars, WC directors, and faculty)</td>
<td>“…Here’s a list of strategies that workshop participants at Bristol Community College’s 12th Annual Conference on the Teaching of Writing came up with…” (Gillespie and Lerner 106).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>The Resilience code is applied when the handbooks suggest strategies for tutors to recover from difficult moments (read: conflictual) between tutors and writers in-session (i.e., if conversations between a tutor and writer get away from the set agenda, tutors are expected to move the session back on course with the agenda negotiated by both parties).</td>
<td>“ESL students may never have been asked questions like these about a piece of writing, so be patient if the answers don’t come easily. Asking open-ended questions will help you learn more about the writer as well as the assignment and the draft so far. Maintaining a dialogue will also reinforce the writer’s responsibility in the conference” (Bruce and Rafoth 37).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutoring Strategies</td>
<td>The Tutoring Strategies code is applied when the handbooks explicitly suggest that tutors employ specific tutoring strategies in-session. Examples of strategies are building rapport with writers, setting agendas, asking questions, responding as readers, reading aloud, listening to writers read their work aloud, and modeling particular writing practices.</td>
<td>“Teachers need to be sure that they are evaluating a writer’s own work; therefore, refrain from writing any part of a student’s paper. Instead, use guiding questions and comments to help writers recognize areas for improvement and come up with their own solutions for revising their texts…” (R&amp;Z).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutors and Flexibility</td>
<td>The Tutors and Flexibility code is applied when the handbooks call for balance between tutors’ professional and casual rapport with writers and/or tutors are advised to set boundaries for the sake of time management in a session. Tutors are expected to meet writers where they’re at, while also sufficiently negotiating and setting productive agendas for every session.</td>
<td>“The number of goals for each session will vary. There is no set formula for determining how many items you will have time to address. With practice, you will become more accurate at gauging the amount of time certain goals take. If global writing concerns are on the agenda, tackling one or two goals will probably all you can expect to cover. If issues of mechanics are to be the focus, you may have time to cover two, three, or even four goals. Sometimes it is okay to overplan because it will remind the student of items that still need attention after the conference ends” (Bruce and Rafoth, p. 38).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calls for Reflection</td>
<td>The Calls for Reflection child code is applied when the handbooks suggest reflective strategies (because tutors are said to gain knowledge about tutoring through reflective awareness): -It is suggested that tutors keep journals and/or compose reflective essays as part of their training -Tutors reflect anecdotally on why they were suited to the tutoring role -Tutors reflect on their own writing processes and use this reflective work to guide their instincts during sessions</td>
<td>“Before you begin this chapter, take ten minutes to list all the writing you’ve done as part of your college coursework. Don’t forget to include in-class writing, essay exams, journals, lab reports, and study questions” (Capossela, 1998, p. 79).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confront Traditional Notions About Language and Writing</td>
<td>Tutors are reminded by the authors to maintain their peer status with the writers they tutor, tutors are advised to empower writers to take ownership of their writing. For example, tutors seek input from writers when setting the agenda for the session, making sure the writer’s paper remains in front of the writer). Also, tutors are reminded that writers are experts of their own work.</td>
<td>“…Most important, we believe writing is a process, not a one-shot deal in a theme book, and we understand that a goal for any writing is to control his or her own process and to develop flexibility for approaching any writing task…” (Gillespie and Lerner, p. 13).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imitating Dialogic Exchanges In-Text</td>
<td>The Imitating Dialogic Exchange In-Text code is applied when the handbook authors include scripted exchanges to exemplify some aspect of tutor training.</td>
<td>“Let’s pick up the conversation about the essay on getting a tattoo as the tutor and writer venture into creative territory. Tutor: How do you think…? Writer: I’d like to describe my…” (Rafoth, p. 60).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The conventional wisdom outlined in the handbooks can be discerned through the coding scheme used to analyze the handbook data: All six handbooks focus on both the interpersonal and intrapersonal dynamics of peer tutoring. In terms of interpersonal dynamics, all of the handbooks work to train tutors out of an assumed disposition toward writing that they possess due to traditional U.S.-based education. The handbooks’ focus on training novice tutors toward different understandings about writing and its process is an intrapersonal endeavor (and coded specifically as Confront Traditional Notions About Language and Writing). The authors of all six handbooks make it a point to continuously remind novice tutors that flexibility is not only important, but necessary, as different writers come from different experiences with writing and, therefore, will need different kinds of attention.

Data Collection: Video Dataset

The object of interest for this project is tutor training and, specifically, how tutors embody (or do not embody) that training. In order to maintain this focus, it was important that the search parameters for the video dataset included the words tutor and training. I did not set out searching for videos solely produced by tutors themselves, but I found that all of the videos pertinent to this study were produced by experienced tutors for the purpose of illuminating particular situations. To find videos for this project, I entered the following phrases into the search bar on YouTube.com: “writing center tutorial,” “writing center tutor training,” “writing center tutor session,” and “writing center tutoring sessions.” From this search, videos were chosen by the “appropriateness” of their titles (similar words appearing in both the search terms
and the title of the video) and whether I saw a tutor and/or writer working together in the thumbnail (initial frame) of the video. Further, YouTube automatically starts playing videos that are deemed similar in some way immediately after the video that’s being watched ends, so this algorithmic selection could help me find relevant videos for my data set. Even a vague search through YouTube for the phrase “writing centers” turned up hundreds of videos about specific writing centers housed within universities, so different declensions of tutors and training helped narrow my search toward the specific object of inquiry I was looking for.

The video dataset was coded using MAXQDA 2020 software in four separate passes. With the first pass of the video data, I attempted to use the same coding scheme as the handbook dataset. Due to the video dataset having different modal affordances than the handbook dataset, some codes did not keep consistent across both the handbook and video datasets. Throughout the first two passes of the video dataset, the “time,” “deixis,” and “proxemics” codes developed.

For the video dataset, twenty-four (24) videos were initially selected. However, as I continued to refine the scope of my project, the video dataset was narrowed from 24 to sixteen (16) videos total. The videos that were cut from the dataset were created for stakeholders other than novice tutors (such as writers and instructors who need more information as to the writing center’s purposes and function). Because these videos were simply telling viewers about what they might expect to encounter in the writing center (and were not instructional videos for novice tutors), these videos were removed from the dataset. The 16 videos in the dataset are representative of tutor-writer interactions. While most of the videos are obviously scripted (i.e., the actors consistently and regularly flit their eyes from the scripts in front of them to each other), all the videos in the set are exemplary in some way of the interactions that occur in situ
between tutors and writers in the writing center. In the following sections, I attend to the data collection, observation, and analysis of both the handbook and video datasets.

**Iterative Coding Materials and Procedures for the Video Dataset**

I started to code the video dataset after my third pass through the handbook dataset coding. Instead of happening in tandem, the video dataset was coded after insights into the handbooks emerged (but the codebook for the handbook dataset was not yet finalized). This process speaks to the exigency of looking at tutor training videos as supplementary tutor training texts; the reason for collecting and analyzing video data was to find out what the videos offer to tutors in training that cannot be offered in the limited mode of the handbook. The final version of the codebook for the video dataset can be found below.

**CODEBOOK (VIDEO DATA)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARENT CODE</th>
<th>CHILD CODE</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proxemics</td>
<td>Orientation (Tools-Tutor)</td>
<td>The child code Orientation (Tools-Tutor) is applied when the tutor is observed holding tools, or tools are viewed in close proximity to the tutor (relative to their proximity or distance to the writer): The tutor has control of the tools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Orientation (Tools-Writer)</td>
<td>The child code Orientation (Tools-Writer) is applied when the writer is observed holding tools, or tools are viewed in close proximity or distance to the writer. The writer has control of the tools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spatial Orientation</td>
<td>The child code Spatial Orientation is applied when the tutor and writer are observed changing their bodily positions in relation to one another (but always for the purpose of preserving productivity in-session).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deixis</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>The child code Time can be applied when time is referenced in some way during the tutoring session, either by the tutor or the writer. For example, when: A tutor explicitly says the word “time” A tutor makes reference to time by mentioning specific units of time in-session like weeks, days, hours, minutes A writer explicitly says the word “time” A writer refers to time by mentioning specific units of time in-session like weeks, days, hours, minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deictic Expressions</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>The child code Deictic Expressions refers to moments where tutors point or indicate through language with words like &quot;This,&quot; &quot;That,&quot; &quot;There&quot;…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Resilience code is visible in moments of conflict and recovery. According to the handbooks, conflicts typically manifest in sessions when tutors and writers fail to negotiate a shared agenda, or an agenda is negotiated but becomes derailed at some point in the session. These moments of derailment are visible through abrupt changes in communication (verbal and non-verbal) that indicate friction between tutor and writer. For example, writers typically come to the writing center to create or improve an assignment enough to earn an A or B (and not to improve overall as a writer). Conflicts that occur in-session spur tutors’ moments of resiliency. This child code is applied when tutors perform acts of recovery (through verbal and nonverbal communication) in the moment during sessions to stay "on track" (i.e., continue tutoring in line with their training).

Specific tutoring strategies become child codes (listed to the left). These codes can be applied when tutors are visibly engaging in any of the listed strategies. This list of tutoring strategies was created out of the findings from the handbook data (i.e., WC conventional wisdom).

The video dataset consists of sixteen (16) videos. At the start of this project, twenty-four (24) videos were in the dataset, but after review of each video, it was determined that eight (8) of the 24 were not representative of my project’s purposes. These eight videos turned out to be explanatory or introductory-like videos where tutors and writing center directors discussed the purposes of their affiliated writing centers for the sake of educating students on what the writing center can do for them. This differs from my project’s purposes in that I am looking specifically at how tutors embody their training through their interactions with writers in-session. The sixteen (16) videos in the finalized dataset are each representative of that construct of interest.

I coded the video dataset after I had already coded the handbook data three separate times. The overarching purpose of the video dataset was to offer a way of viewing the handbook dataset in context, coding the video dataset before I was finished coding the handbook data allowed me to code for presence in the video dataset, as well as absence. In other words, the
codebook for the video dataset (see Appendix B) emerged from the coding of the handbook data, but as I coded the video dataset, the low numbers of the Resilience code (or absence of this code) in the handbook dataset became more apparent as I continued to code the videos.

**Data Analysis**

By situating the codes that emerge from the language present in the tutor handbooks in relation to the codes that emerge from the transcriptions of the video-recorded tutoring sessions, I’ve come to understand better not only what the handbook means to achieve, but also how that achievement is mobilized in practice. For coding both the handbook and video datasets, I drew on Saldana’s (2009) definition of a code: “a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute of language-based or visual data.” The methodology for this project consisted of coding units by defining them "physically in terms of their natural or intuitive borders. For instance, newspaper articles, letters, or poems all have natural boundaries" (Stemler, 2000, p. 2). The coding units analyzed were referred to as “sampling units.” These refer to the syntactic blocks of text/the arrangement of these syntactic blocks on the page (words, sentences, paragraphs, chapters) (Stemler, 2000). Inductive categories were developed for the qualitative content analysis of this study. By analyzing the content inductively, I allowed the texts (handbooks; videos) to shape the formulation of themes and, therefore, the object of study. This method ensured that my coding procedures remained exploratory..

As discussed in Chapter One, conversations encompass an array of semiotic markers—both verbal and nonverbal. The conversations that happen in the writing center between tutors and writers are no different. By coding and analyzing both the handbook and video data together, I can see how the video dataset lends itself as an accompaniment to the entextualized handbook.
dataset. In analyzing the data from both the handbook and video datasets, I noticed that slippage appears to occur around the Resilience code. Specifically in terms of the handbook dataset, tutors are being taught the theoretical foundations of writing center work, but the video dataset offers a glimpse into the experiential training that takes place to help tutors be more successful in their role. For example, the handbook data shows that the Tutoring Strategies code and the Confront Traditional Notions About Language and Writing code often interweave (as the latter code tends to be a way to account for the reasoning behind the former code). On the other hand, the Confront Traditional Notions About Language and Writing code appears significantly less in the video dataset (more on this finding in chapter three). In the handbooks, Tutoring Strategies are coded when the strategies are concretely suggested or described as possible strategies novice tutors can take up in sessions. In the video data, however, Tutoring Strategies are represented rather than explicitly mentioned. This distinction is important and reveals the importance of the multimodal component of this project: How is the conventional wisdom of writing center work (as described in the handbooks) embodied (or not embodied) by tutors in the videos? Or, more importantly, in what ways do the videos represent different aspects of tutor training than what is outlined in the handbooks? For example, the data analyzed for this project shows the Resilience code emerging more prominently in the video dataset due to the videos’ multimodal capacity to show novice tutors what emotionally charged tutoring sessions can look like, rather than tell (as the handbooks are limited to).

After a second pass of coding these handbooks, I started to notice a pattern. The information in each one of these handbooks is presented in similar and particular ways. Sauer’s (1998) work on “pit sense” offers a useful framework to think through the inconsistencies in tutor training procedures. While all of the handbooks, in some way, point out that the advice,
strategies, and tools offered within them should be particularly tailored toward specific writing centers and tutor-tutee interactions, the rhetorical disposition of the handbooks as particularly ordered and sequential (i.e., numbered chapters) suggests “an orderly—and presumably natural—arrangement of material environment and human will” (Sauer, 1998, p. 141; Teston, p. 323). In addition to the sequential arrangement of chapters, a more specific example of this ordering appears in regard to a call for tutors to avoid appropriating writers’ texts (specifically writers whose native language is not English), a numbered list of ten steps (then the section immediately after the list is titled “A Ten-Step Program?” (Bruce and Rafoth, 2009, 56-62). In Bruce and Rafoth (2009), Carol Severino claims that all ten “steps” need not be followed exactly in each session, but at least the “first three are especially important” (p. 62). The handbooks’ particular ways of organizing information linguistically and spatially on its pages comes with consequences. Novice tutors lack the tacit (experiential, culturally supplied) knowledge “that is not made explicit in rules and procedures” (Sauer, 1998, p. 142). Another example of this ordering is referenced explicitly at the outset of Capossela’s (1998) *The Harcourt Brace Guide to Peer Tutoring*: “The book’s twelve chapters explore important consulting issues in order in which they **normally arise during a session.** The rest of the book presents readings by writing teachers, consultants in training, and writing center veterans. The two parts are linked by assignments at the end of the chapter, which suggest reading, writing, discussion, and role-playing activities” (Capossela iv, emphasis mine).
CHAPTER THREE: FINDINGS: RESILIENCE EMERGES SUBSTANTIALLY IN THE VIDEOS, WHILE RELATIVELY ABSENT IN THE HANDBOOKS

In this chapter, I will discuss the findings of both the handbook and video datasets. Through iterative coding and analyses, the data revealed that the variety of modes for tutor training is instrumental to ensuring that tutors in the writing center are holistically trained. Holistically, in the context of my findings, means that novice writing tutors have experience with training in different modalities as conversation between tutor and writer is foundational to the success of a tutoring session. Further, the data shows that the resilience code appeared more often in the video dataset than in the handbook dataset. The handbooks do as good of a job as they are able to with imitating dialogic exchanges in-text but fall short of training tutors of the nonverbal interactions already embedded within conversation. While all six handbooks studied for this project tell readers (new tutors) that they will spend a considerable amount of time taking interactional cues from writers to propel tutoring sessions in successful directions, the success of each session is contingent upon the tutor’s ability to engage the writer in the session. Also stated in all six handbooks is that tutors will often come face-to-face with writers who are not interested, or happy, to receive help from the writing center. These issues are not depicted sufficiently in the handbooks and, thus, the need for supplemental and multimodal tutor training texts (i.e., YouTube videos in the context of my study) are necessarily valuable in showing tutors what they can expect from their new role. In the sections to follow, I will discuss the ways in which my data demonstrates this finding.

**Handbook Dataset**

Table 3.1 (below) shows the titles of the handbooks in the dataset, as well as the percentage of the handbook that was coded for this project. For example, Ryan and Zimmerelli’s
Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors was 70.83% coded, which means that this percentage of the handbook was practical and applicable advice for novice tutors. On the other end, Capossela’s The Harcourt Brace Guide to Peer Tutoring was 37.30% coded (meaning that only this percentage of the handbook was practical, applicable advice or strategies for new tutors).

Table 3.1 Title of Handbook and Percentage Coded

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title (Edition)</th>
<th>Coded (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors (6th edition)</td>
<td>70.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors (2nd edition)</td>
<td>55.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Longman Guide to Peer Tutoring (2nd edition)</td>
<td>54.07%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Tutor’s Guide: Helping Writers One to One (1st edition)</td>
<td>60.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What the Writing Tutor Needs to Know (N/A)</td>
<td>66.87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Harcourt Brace Guide to Peer Tutoring (N/A)</td>
<td>37.30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The coded percentages in Table 3.1 refer to the ex vivo codes determined through systematic passes through the handbook dataset. Only certain parts of the handbooks were coded (only the parts where the authors are providing direct instruction to tutors-in-training, such as offering tutoring strategies and/or recounting anecdotes in-text). Parts of the handbooks that were not coded in this study included works cited pages, relevant scholarship in the field incorporated as part of embedded tutor training assignments in-text, introductions, and prefaces. For example, only 37.30% of Capossela’s (1998) text was coded because the remaining 62.70% of the handbook consisted of reprinted writing center studies articles, footnotes, reference pages, appendices, and assignments.

The Resilience code appeared less frequently across the handbook dataset than it did across the video dataset. In Table 3.2 below I included the authors of the handbooks (in the left-most column) and the percentages in which each code appeared in each handbook completes the additional columns. The highest percentage of segments coded for Resilience is 4.7% in Rafoth’s (2000) handbook.
Table 3.2 Low Percentage of Resilience Code Across the Handbook Dataset

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Metadiscursive Comments (Made by Authors)</th>
<th>Anecdotes from Tutors</th>
<th>Anecdotes from Writers</th>
<th>Anecdotes from Authors</th>
<th>Anecdotes from Others</th>
<th>Resilience</th>
<th>Tutoring Strategies</th>
<th>Tutors and Flexibility</th>
<th>Calls for Reflection</th>
<th>Confront Traditional Notions About Language and Writing</th>
<th>Imitating Dialogic Exchanges In-Text</th>
<th>Generalized Claims and Advice About Writers and Tutoring</th>
<th>Total # of Coded Segments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ryan and Zimmerelli</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>51.2%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruce and Rafoth</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>25.1%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gillespie and Lerner</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rafoth</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soven</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capossela</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Resilience code makes up only a small percentage of the handbook data and this is particularly apparent when compared to the frequency of the Tutoring Strategies and Confront Traditional Notions About Language and Writing codes. Across the handbook dataset, the Resilience code appears when the authors recount hypothetical situations in which tutors are described as working with writers who are anxious, upset, and emotional. Moments in the handbooks coded as Resilience serve the purpose of warning novice tutors about the writers they will work with. In reference to Table 3.2 (above), the Resilience column shows the code appeared between 0.3% and 4.7% of the time across individual handbooks in the dataset. Comparatively, in the column titled “Tutoring Strategies” to the right of the “Resilience” column, Tutoring Strategies was coded between 17.3% and 51.2% of the time across individual handbooks in the dataset. Insofar as handbooks exist at the level of linguistically privileged text, “resilience” isn’t manifested in a robust way (as it is with the video data) because the interactions
demonstrating resilience are not available in the handbook dataset as they are in the video dataset.

**Video Dataset**

Below, in Table 3.3, the titles of each one of the videos in the dataset are listed in the first column (as they are titled on YouTube), the lengths of each video, and the percentage of the video that was coded. The video with the shortest total time in the dataset is “Writing Center Tutoring Scenario Writers Block” with a total time of 1:53 (1 minute: 53 seconds). The longest video in the dataset is “Writing Center Training Video” with a total time of 10:09 (10 minutes: 9 seconds). The average running time for all videos in the dataset comes out to ~4:53 (~4 minutes: 53 seconds). The average percentage that was coded for all sixteen (16) videos was 84%, which comes out to about one hour and twelve minutes of video data coded (1:12).

The “% Coded” column shows the percentage of each video that was coded. All the videos in the dataset were either created for a class project (like a practicum course for writing tutors-in-training) or produced by tutors already working in a writing center. Because of these affiliations, all of the videos included some combination of opening and closing credits that either included the title of the video, information regarding the writing center creating and producing the video, the names of the individuals portraying the tutors and writers in the videos, or some combination of these. As the credits for each video were useful in providing context for me as a researcher in terms of who created the video and who it was created for, coding these particular parts of the videos was not important to my study (and this is what’s being depicted in the “% Coded” column).

Table 3.3 Percentage Coded Alongside Total Length of Each Video in the Dataset

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Video Titles (From YouTube)</th>
<th>Coded/Total Length (min:secs)</th>
<th>% Coded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Tutoring Scenario: Attitude is Everything”</td>
<td>01:38/03:00</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The Im Only Here Because I Have To Be Tutee”</td>
<td>01:59.9/02:17</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.3 Percentage Coded Alongside Total Length of Each Video in the Dataset (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Video Scenario</th>
<th>Total Length</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Writing Center (Bad Session)”</td>
<td>03:56/05:18</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Writing Center Video Scenario Plagiarism and Tutoring”</td>
<td>04:28/05:05</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Writing Center Tutoring Scenario Writers Block”</td>
<td>01:09/01:53</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Writing Center Tutoring Scenario Personal Life Distractions”</td>
<td>02:48/03:14</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Writing Center Tutoring Scenario ESL Writer”</td>
<td>03:00/03:16</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“WRT Tutoring Scenario”</td>
<td>02:59/03:22</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Writing Center Video Scenario The Texting Student”</td>
<td>02:53/03:49</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Writing Tutoring Session”</td>
<td>07:13/08:13</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Writing Center Training Video”</td>
<td>08:52/10:09</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Writing Center (Good Session)”</td>
<td>04:42/05:09</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Purdue Writing Lab Tutor Training Video The Intractable Tutee”</td>
<td>04:37/05:25</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Purdue Writing Lab Tutor Training Video I Want to Sound Natural”</td>
<td>04:20/05:19</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Purdue Writing Lab Tutor Training Video Grammar, Grammar!”</td>
<td>03:41/04:11</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Writing Center Video Scenario The Irate Student”</td>
<td>02:46/03:00</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.1 Resilience is the Second-Most Frequent Code Across the Video Dataset

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tutoring Strategies</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>34.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation (Tools-Tutor)</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation (Tools-Writer)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing Context</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greeting</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deictic Expressions</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confront Traditional Notions ...</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation (Spatial)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutors and Flexibility</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.1 offers a view of how often each code appeared in the video data. In contrast to the handbook dataset, the Resilience code appeared 57 times across the dataset (14% of the data was coded as such). As shown in Table 3.2, Resilience was coded 41 times in the handbook dataset. While the frequency of the Resilience code across both datasets doesn’t immediately appear to be much different by itself, the differences emerge when situated in the context of the appearance of the other coded segments. While Resilience was coded 14% of the time across the video dataset, it was only coded .026% across the entire handbook dataset (there are a total of 1,561 coded segments across the handbook dataset and Resilience was coded 41 times).

Out of the sixteen (16) videos in the dataset, nine (9) of the videos were representative of unproductive (unsuccessful) tutoring sessions and seven (7) of the videos were representative of...
productive (successful) sessions. “Productive” in this sense, refers to the video as being a representation of a successful tutoring session (as defined above in the handbook data analysis) where the tutor and the writer work together toward certain goals and this focus is successfully sustained throughout the duration of the video (and, theoretically, the session). On the other hand, “unproductive” is used here to name a session that is not successful—a session in which the tutor and the writers’ goals seem misaligned (or perhaps never set forth to begin with) and the writer and tutor are not productively engaged with the session in a way that the handbook data suggests that productivity would occur. The productive/unproductive dichotomy emerged after the final (fourth) pass of the video data and offered a useful framework for understanding why certain codes were more prevalent in some videos but not in others. Because resilience is a technique used to sustain order between people, this code is more prevalent in the video dataset than in the handbook dataset and, particularly, prevalent in videos deemed “unproductive” versus those deemed “productive.”

This finding emerged once I had coded all the video data four times and, interestingly, the videos are distributed between these two outcomes almost equally. I noticed this distinction within the video dataset emerged as I reviewed memos taken throughout the coding process. MAXQDA offers different qualitative data analysis features so, from this finding, I was able to run separate numbers for the 7 videos representing productive tutoring sessions and the 9 videos representing unproductivity, separately.
Figure 3.2 Resilience Coded 22.2% of the Time Across “Unproductive” Videos

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tutoring Strategies</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation (Tools-Tutor)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation (Tools-Writer)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greeting</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing Context</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation (Spatial)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Declarative Expressions</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutors and Flexibility</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confront Traditional Notions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.2 (above) shows the data for the subset of the video data that I am referring to “unproductive” videos. Out of these nine videos, Resilience was coded 48 times for a percentage of 22.2% of the time. To put this percentage in perspective, Tutoring Strategies was coded the most in both the unproductive and productive videos, but only appeared 27.3% of the time in the unproductive video subset. The highest percentage in which the Resilience code appeared in the handbook dataset was Capossela’s (1998) handbook, but the code appeared a mere 4.7% of the time in that handbook.

Figure 3.3 (shown below) shows another interesting finding regarding the appearance of the Resilience code and the seven (7) videos categorized as “productive.” In both Figures 3.2 and 3.3, the codes in the left-hand appear in frequency order from highest frequency in the dataset to lowest. In Figure 3.2, Resilience is shown as the second-most frequent code to appear in the unproductive video dataset subset. Contrarily, Resilience appears only 9 times across the seven productive videos (coming in 7th place for frequency of appearance). Resilience was only coded 4.7% of the time in the productive videos (and, interestingly, this number is comparable to the highest frequency of its appearance in the handbook dataset). Across the entire video dataset, without splitting the videos into subcategories of “productive” and “unproductive,” Resilience was the second-most applied code for a total of 14%.
Figure 3.3 Resilience Coded 4.7% of the Time Across “Productive” Videos

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tutoring Strategies</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>41.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation (Tools-Writer)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation (Tools-Tutor)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confront Traditional Notions...</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delicte Expressions</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing Context</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greeting</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutors and Flexibility</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation (Spatial)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Closer Look at the Video Data: Three Examples

The two distinct themes that emerged in the video dataset (unproductive/productive) show that tutors-in-training are interested in creating, and learning from, a range of different training videos (those that represent successful tutoring sessions and those considered unsuccessful). In the sections to follow, I share close analyses from three videos in the dataset. The first example represents a productive tutoring session and examples two and three represent unproductive sessions.

Example 1: “Writing Center Training Video”

The data shows that the videos representing successful tutoring sessions are coded with low frequencies of Resilience and the Tutoring Strategies code emerged more frequently in relation to other codes. For this reason, I chose only one video representing a successful (i.e., “productive”) tutoring session and I decided to give some closer analysis to the longest video in the dataset. You can see in the heatmap (Figure 3.4 below) that 26 segments of the video were coded as Tutoring Strategies while only 1 segment was coded as Resilience. Right behind the highest code frequency of Tutoring Strategies, is the code Orientation (Tools-Writer) with 9 segments. In other words, the code that emerged most frequently in this video is Tutoring Strategies, with Orientation (Tools-Writer) as the second most frequent. Resilience only emerged
once (and this is on par with the remainder of the videos in the dataset that depict successful, productive tutoring sessions). However, also noticeable is Orientation (Tools-Tutor) (emerging 5 times). The prevalence of the Orientation (Tools-Tutor) code (not just in this example, but across all 7 videos showing successful tutoring sessions) is an interesting finding as well, and in line with the handbooks’ advice, that tutors should employ both directive and non-directive tutoring strategies to ensure successful sessions. The first example is of a productive tutoring session and examples two and three represent unproductive tutoring sessions.

Figure 3.4 Highest Code Frequency is Tutoring Strategies, Lowest is Resilience

In this first example, the tutor is on the left and the writer can be seen on the right-hand side of the image. At the start of this video, both the writer and tutor exchange greetings. After the tutor and writer greet one another, the tutor focuses on “assess[ing] [the] needs” of the writer (this is obvious from the words printed at the bottom of the image). The tutor looks down at the writer’s paper as the needs of the writer are assessed. The tutor’s hand can be seen underneath the tutor’s chin in a way that shows the tutor is pondering the writer’s possible needs.
In the image to the right, the tutor can be seen listening to the writer describe the potential audience(s) for the writer’s work. To show that the tutor is effectively employing the Tutoring Strategy of “listening,” the tutor is facing the writer, sustaining eye contact, elbow on table with fist propping up head, and all in ways that demonstrate the tutor is interested in the writer’s words and work. This video represents a productive tutoring session due, in large part, to the tutor’s focus on conversation with the writer. The tutor asks questions of the writer’s work to get a sense of the writer’s goals and progress on the assignment. For example, the tutor poses this question: “Can you say to me.. What are you trying to prove with this paper?” By engaging the writer in conversation with an open-ended question, the tutor demonstrates that the writer’s goals are the priority in the tutoring session.

The tutor continues to make productive use of conversation by asking the writer about particular diction choices. For example, in the writer’s paper the word “validated” is used, so the tutor asks, “validated by…?” As the tutor asks this question, a circular motion is made with the tutor’s index finger (shown in the images to the left). As you
can see in the two images to the left of this text, the writer is peering down at the tutor’s hand motion as the tutor asks the question. The writer’s paper is also in view of the writer’s gaze as the writer peers down (so it’s possible that the writer is gazing at the paper simultaneously).

When the writer answers the question regarding who is “validating,” the tutor nods and points down to paper to ask if that is written in the paper somewhere (see the image to the left). The tutor’s gesturing at the end of this exchange between the tutor and writer (shown to the left in frame 2:04) brings the tutor and writer’s conversation back to the writer’s paper to keep the session productive and the writer engaged with the session as the writer’s goal is to improve the paper that was brought to the tutorial.

In the images to the left (3:14-3:17), the tutor insists that the writer needs “three” or “maybe two…really solid supporting facts” and makes a slicing motion through the air onto the table (specifically the part of the table where the writer’s paper lies). This slicing motion works to emphasize the need for these supporting facts. As you’ll notice in these images, the writer’s gaze is oriented toward the tutor’s hand gesture (and the gesture is noticeably being made on top of the writer’s
paper) suggesting that a link exists between the writer’s understanding and the gestural components of the conversation unfolding here.

The segment in which the Resilience code was applied is shown in the three images to the left (6:24-6:27). In this part of the session, the tutor asked if the writer could substantiate the argument being made in the paper. In the image timestamped 6:24, the tutor’s gaze is directed at the writer and the tutor’s head is being propped up by the tutor’s hand. The writer could not come up with evidence to back up the claim being made so the tutor responded, “I’m not saying you’re wrong, I don’t think you’re wrong.” The tutor is reminding the writer here that the question about evidence is not a personal attack on the writer, but rather a question aimed at helping the writer improve the draft in line with academic discourse conventions.

In the images below (6:59, 7:10, 7:13-7:15), we see the tutor is giving “confirmation” (coded as Tutoring Strategies) to the writer. The tutor is seen knocking on the table to emphasize the writer’s main point in a way that “confirms” gesturally the writer’s main point. The tutor is confirming for the writer that the writer’s argument regarding the government “supporting racist policies” can be corroborated based on the research done by the writer. With
each word (“supporting,” “racist,” and “policies”) the tutor knocks on the table as a gestural signal of confirmation for the writer.

Example 2: “Writing Center Tutoring Scenario Personal Life Distractions”

Figure 3.5 Resilience Coded the Most, Tutoring Strategies the Second-Most Coded

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code System</th>
<th>Writing Center Tutoring Scenario Personal Life Distractions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutoring Strategies</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutors and Flexibility</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confront Traditional Notions About Lan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing Context</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greeting</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deictic Expressions</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proxemics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation (Spatial)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation (Tools-Tutor)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation (Tools-Writer)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The video titled “Writing Center Tutoring Scenario Personal Life Distractions” is an example of an unproductive tutoring session. The data across the entire video dataset demonstrates that Resilience and Tutoring Strategies are coded most frequently in videos depicting “unproductive” tutoring sessions. This second example is representative of the “unproductive” videos in the dataset.
Around the 00:12 second mark, the writer can be seen holding a cell phone to her ear and gazing off-camera. The tone of the phone call is not a happy one. This phone call sets the context for the rest of the session as the writer is unable to shake this discontent throughout the duration of the tutoring session. In the image above, the writer is shown glancing offscreen as the writer refers to the tutor as “stupid.” This glancing off-camera suggests that the writer not only can see the tutor, but also that the tutor can see the writer. Also, it’s understood that the tutor can hear the writer’s phone conversation and, particularly, the comment about the tutor being “stupid.”

The tutor overhearing the comment made by the writer that the tutor is “stupid” becomes evident when the tutor sits down (shown in the image to the left) at the 00:20 second mark. The tutor’s facial expression reads uncomfortable.

While it’s obvious that the tutor overheard the writer make the comment about the tutor being “stupid,” the tutor waits patiently for the writer to end the phone call so the tutoring session can begin. Between 14.5 seconds and 21.5 seconds, the writer continues to reference Time: “I can’t talk about this right now,” “pick me up in an hour,” “ONE HOUR.” At the end of this span of seconds, the writer slams the phone down on the table. Once the writer hangs up
After the tutor greets the writer (and that greeting was not reciprocated), the tutor asks, “What are we working on today?” and the writer responds by saying “this stupid resume” and waves around a sheet of paper to show the tutor that the writer has the assignment on hand. In the image to the left (00:34), the writer starts to emotionally unload on the tutor: the writer’s boyfriend was supposed to change the oil in the writer’s car but failed to do so. This is interesting context as the writer has brought a resume to the writing center and, as shown throughout the rest of this video example, the writer’s personal issues infiltrate how the writer approaches the assignment and the importance of the assignment to the writer.

In the image to the left (1:02), the tutor is poring over the writer’s paper with the writer sitting a greater distance away from the paper than the tutor. Particularly in this moment, the tutor says “Um, let’s see” in response to the writer telling the tutor what they will be working on during the session. In the next image (1:09), we see that the paper is between both the tutor and the tutor remarks on the writer’s “good start” (and this comment indicates the tutor’s momentary silence was to read the writer’s work). Noticeably, however, the tutor does not read the
writer’s work aloud (as the handbook data suggests is a useful strategy). The tutor tries to position the writer’s work so it is also in front of the writer. But the tutor continues to hold the pen and the writer’s hands are down (in the writer’s lap).

In the two images shown to the left (1:39, 1:45), the tutor employs the tutoring strategy of asking questions by asking the writer about “activities” to add to resume. In response, however, the writer continues to bring up her “incompetent boyfriend.” The writer’s request for the tutor to “…put that on there” in reference to “dealing with an incompetent boyfriend” suggests that the writer assumes that the tutor’s responsibility is to do the work for the writer by jotting down ideas on the writer’s behalf. Not only does the writer make this request verbally, but also the writer gestures toward the tutor (and toward the writer’s draft) by holding out a hand in the tutor’s direction.

In the next image (02:43), the tutor is seen trying to bring the writer’s attention back to the task (résumé) by stating that the writer does not want to include “so much of personal life into this.” As the tutor says this, the tutor
gestures to the writer’s paper by placing a hand onto the writer’s work. In terms of spatial orientation, the writer’s work remains largely in front of the tutor.

In the image above (02:49), the writer continues to be distracted by the cell phone that’s lying on the table. The writer gazes at the phone as it rings and places a hand on top of it. The tutor remains in the same position.

The writer abruptly leaves the session (02:58). Before leaving, the writer exclaims that the resume itself, or perhaps the writing center session overall, isn’t something she can deal with “right now” (coded as Resilience and Time). As the writer discusses personal issues with the tutor throughout the session, the tutor utters “um” in a way that orients the tutor toward a particular kind of response (perhaps one that’s appropriately in line with the tutor’s training). For example, “um” is said at the beginning as the tutor greets the writer, and “um” is said after the writer goes into detail about the specifics of the writer’s personal life.
Example 3: “Writing Center (Bad Session)”

Figure 3.6 Tutoring Strategies Coded the Most, Even Though This Video is Considered “Unproductive”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code System</th>
<th>Writing Center (Bad Session)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutoring Strategies</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutors and Flexibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confront Traditional Notions About Language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing Context</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greeting</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deictic Expressions</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proxemics</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation (Spatial)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation (Tools-Tutor)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation (Tools-Writer)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both examples two and three represent tutoring sessions that I have categorized as unproductive. While the second example involved a tutoring session where Resilience was coded at a high frequency, Resilience was coded only twice in the third example. On the other end, twelve (12) segments in this video were coded as Tutoring Strategies. This example is being included because the raw data (shown above in Figure 3.9) closely resembles the raw data for the first example (a productive session). The data of both examples two and three reveal interesting contrasts between both videos in the dataset.

Ultimately, the session shown in example three is unproductive because the tutor controls the session throughout its duration. Because of this control, the writer seems to leave the session feeling overwhelmed, perhaps due to the tutor telling the writer that lower-order corrections are needed without empowering the writer to understand why the corrections are necessary.
In the image above (00:17), the tutor exhibits the Tutoring Strategy of asking questions of the writer. By asking, “What would you like to work on today?”, the tutor is starting the process of negotiating the session’s agenda with the writer (all six handbooks in the dataset describe this part of the session as instrumental). However, while the tutor does demonstrate a pedagogical technique picked up from tutor training, the session quickly becomes less about the writer’s needs and more about what the tutor notices about the writer’s work.

After the tutor states that there is not an apparent thesis in the writer’s paper, the tutor asks, “What is your paper supposed to be about anyway?” The handbooks suggest that tutors ask this question prior to engaging with the writer’s work in-session. In the image to the left (00:52, 00:59), the writer makes hand gestures while explaining that one goal of the session is to determine whether there is a “good thesis” written in the paper. As the tutor responds that there is not an apparent thesis, the writer listens, hands placed on the table. The writer’s work remains in front of the tutor and the tutor continues to hold a pen while looking over the writer’s paper.
At the 01:50 mark, the writer communicates with the tutor about concerns over the thesis being phrased “awkwardly.” The writer uses an emphatic hand gesture that resembles a weighing motion that shows the writer’s uncertainty as to what the paper needs. Once the writer is finished talking, the writer’s hands are placed on the table again.

In these images (02:17, 02:19), the tutor explains to the writer what is “nice” about paper (the paper’s structure and included examples. As the tutor explains, the tutor gestures (i.e., points) to the first and third paragraphs. After this gesturing, the tutor, then, points to the second paragraph and asks why the same structure and examples were not included in that paragraph.

Perhaps it’s the tutor’s gesturing towards the document that makes the writer almost seem invisible in a way to the tutor. The tutor’s focus on
the document makes the writer feel unable to contribute to the agenda or trajectory of the session.

In the images to the left (2:31, 2:48, 2:50), the tutor does ask the writer questions related to the writer’s composing decisions, but when the writer cannot articulate why a particular composing decision was made, the tutor quickly moves on to “grammar corrections.” In the bottom frame to the left (2:50), the writer can be seen leaning in, hands still resting on the table, while the tutor continues to mark up the writer’s paper with a pen.

Here, the tutor tells the writer that comma placement is “off” and the tutor went ahead and “fixed” those errors. This has been coded as Tutoring Strategies because fixing a writer’s paper is technically a strategy that can be taken up by tutors during sessions (though not an ideal strategy).
In the images to the left (03:13, 03:39) and below (03:47), the writer’s face appears more dejected as time passes. At the 03:13 mark, the writer’s head leans on a balled-up fist. In frame 03:39, the tutor remarks that grammar issues are present and must be addressed. Interestingly, the tutor’s eyeglasses appear to be down the bridge of the tutor’s nose, making it easy to peer over them in a teacherly way.

Toward the end of the tutoring session, the writer’s hands are no longer resting on top of the table. By removing hands from the table, the writer appears to be withdrawing attention from the tutoring session.

These three examples illustrate the necessity of resilience in writing center sessions that are considered “unproductive” (examples 2 and 3), while resilience is not as present in sessions considered “productive” (example 1). The first video example is
considered a productive session because the writer and tutor are able to engage in successful conversation about the writer’s needs in a way that sets an agenda at the start of the session. Then, the tutoring session sustains its productivity as the tutor continues to employ tutoring strategies throughout the duration of the session. The second example shows a tutor maintaining a resilient stance throughout the tutoring session as the writer continues to be impacted by personal issues unrelated to the writer’s assignment of working on a résumé. Through my work on this project, I have found that tutors’ resiliency is a result of attempts to maintain the ideal writing tutorial. The third video example shows a writer and tutor engaging in an unproductive session, but resilience isn’t as apparent as it is in the second example for a particular reason: the tutor is the one driving the session in the third example unlike the writer driving the session in the second example. In the third example the tutor does not need to be resilient because the writer is not challenging the tutor’s methods in a way that’s obvious to the tutor (or perhaps the tutor is ignoring the writer’s body language that demonstrates the writer is uncomfortable). However, what this third example does demonstrate is the notion of an “ideal” tutoring session. The third example is representative of a “bad” session (as indicated by its title), but the session is largely directed by the tutor while the tutor sits quietly. While the tutoring session was unsuccessful because the tutor does not take up the handbooks’ advice in terms of balancing directivity and non-directivity in tutoring sessions, Tutoring Strategies and Orientation (Tools-Tutor) are coded frequently throughout this video (12 and 8, respectively). Further, Resilience was coded just twice in this video.

In the first example, the tutor focuses on improving the writer’s understanding of the writing process, not just the writer’s paper. Because the tutor focuses on the writer’s needs and interests, this session is deemed a productive one. As stated in chapter one, collaboration is at the
forefront of the distinction between directive and non-directive tutoring pedagogy. Collaboration is the product of the conversations that take place between participants of the collaboration; without conversation, there is no collaboration. The notion of the ideal writing tutorial can be found in this example of a productive tutoring session. The tutor spends most of the session asking the writer open-ended questions, listening to the writer’s ideas, and advising the writer to take notes as needed. The ideal tutorial is closely related to non-directive tutoring, while the less ideal tutoring session is more directive.

Examples two and three help corroborate Smith’s (1986) claim that writing centers are a polarizing resource. It is apparent that this is (at least partly) due to misunderstandings about tutors’ roles, and the role of the writing center overall. These misunderstandings can lead to writers and tutors being unable to successfully communicate and, thereby, unable to engage with one another productively. The findings of this research project align with Thompson et al.’s (2009) finding that writers who visit writing centers often expect directiveness to an extent, but the writer should have a say in what that directiveness can look like. The connection between success and the tutorial conversation doesn’t depend on a certain amount of time the tutor and writer spend talking, but rather the productivity of that conversation.
CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSION: HOW DOES THE NOTION OF AN “IDEAL” TUTORING SESSION PLAY A ROLE IN TUTOR RESILIENCY?

In this chapter I address the question posed in its title: How does the notion of an “ideal” tutoring session play a role in tutor resiliency? In the first chapter I drew on Bruffee’s (1995) definition of “collaboration” as a means to “help people learn to work together successfully” (p. 16). As stated in Chapter One, collaboration was key in the formation of this research project and, in the context of this project, is defined as what happens during the interactions (specifically the verbal and non-verbal communication) that occurs between both the tutor and the writer during a tutoring session. My findings indicate that both successful and unsuccessful tutoring sessions can be collaborative because in both scenarios the tutors and writers interact with one another.

This project’s findings show that resilience is more prevalent in the tutor training videos than in the handbooks. An important finding to come out of this project is that tutors’ resilience increases when the tutoring session is impacted by writers’ negative emotions. For instance, in the second example (refer to chapter three) where the writer was quite obviously frustrated due to the personal issues verbally expressed, and in the third example where the writer appears withdrawn throughout the session. It appears that, through the production and perpetuation of tutor training videos, tutors find it important to work toward sustaining collaboration through resilience, and experienced tutors are concerned with training new tutors to sustain collaboration even during difficult sessions. However, is sustaining collaboration through resilience the responsibility of the tutor? And what is it about a seemingly ‘ideal’ tutoring session that might be making resilience more of a concern than it would be if no ‘ideal’ tutorial or writer existed?
This research project focused on the ways tutors are being trained and how tutor training (as discussed in the handbooks) is demonstrated (or not) in the tutor training videos. In the first example in Chapter Three (a “productive” tutoring session), the tutor employs a number of tutoring strategies to help the writer: greeting the writer, negotiating the agenda, and asking questions. In Chapter One, I brought in Lape’s (2008) work on writers who are upset as needing “human understanding” (p. 4), and by showing human understanding to those writers in need of it, tutors are able to preserve the collaborative nature of the tutoring session (Lape, 2008). Even though the tutor in the first example only briefly addresses the writer’s emotions, this acknowledgement helped the writer interact with the tutor in a way that kept the session moving in a productive direction.

In both the second and third examples in Chapter Three of “unproductive” tutoring sessions, the lack of attention given to the writer’s emotions is apparent as the tutors in both videos were more concerned with the writers’ work rather than their emotions. In the second example, the writer came to the session with particular assumptions about what both the tutor and the writer’s roles were. While we can’t know for sure what assumptions the writer had going into the tutoring session, it is obvious that the tutor was drawing on pedagogical techniques that are outlined in the tutor training handbooks analyzed for this project. For example, the tutor attempts to establish rapport with the writer (even after the writer refers to the tutor as “stupid” and it’s understood that the tutor heard the writer’s comment). The tutor then asks the writer about the assignment, continues to ask questions throughout the session in order to help the writer improve the writer’s work, and continues to do so even as the writer remains upset for the duration of the tutoring session. This session was categorized as “unproductive” due to its lack of a conclusion (because the writer eventually stands up and walks out) and because the tutor’s
attempts at embodying the writing tutor training as outlined in the handbooks were unsuccessful. As noted in Chapter Three (but worth reiterating), “unproductive” in the context of this project is used to categorize an unsuccessful (and not ideal) tutoring session. An unproductive tutoring session can involve a misalignment of the tutor and writer’s goals, or perhaps the tutor and writer are not engaged in ways outlined by tutor training handbooks. Resiliency comes into play when tutors try to embody their training, yet they experience difficulty doing so. Across the handbook dataset, the Resilience code appears when the authors recount hypothetical situations in which tutors are described as working with writers who are anxious, upset, and emotional. Moments of resilience depicted in both the handbooks and videos serve as warnings to new tutors: the further you end up from the ideal tutorial, the more resilient you’ll need to be.

In the third example in chapter three, the writer’s body language gives away some feelings of uncomfortability with the session. Even though the writer expressed a need for help with the thesis statement, the tutor acknowledged that the writer’s thesis statement did not seem apparent yet chose to focus on grammar and punctuation (specifically comma placement) for most of the session. Had the tutor acknowledged the writer’s emotions, the tutor would have had the opportunity to change the trajectory of the session. This third example is interesting in regard to this notion of the ideal writer, tutor, and tutorial. From this example it can be gathered that the tutor is being too directive (making the session unproductive) and the writer is not engaged due to the tutor’s focus being misaligned with the writer’s proposed agenda.

Hudson’s (2001) call for writing tutors to not acknowledge writers’ emotions in-session seems disingenuous. According to this researcher, tutors should be “friendly” toward the writers they work with but should remain “professional and detached” (p. 11). However, my research suggests that writers do not always become filled with emotion during the session but, rather,
they *come to* tutoring sessions with particular feelings. To be clear, I am not arguing that tutors should stray from working with writers on their writing and focus on discussing their emotions instead. However, I am arguing that it is more difficult for tutors and writers to engage with one another productively when emotions take over. Is it possible, then, that what’s lurking behind the tutor training videos is the notion of some “ideal” writer and “ideal” tutoring session? And, if so, how do these assumptions about ideal writers and tutorials impact tutor resiliency?

To answer the questions posed above, it is necessary to reiterate Blau et al.’s (1998) discussion of directivity and non-directivity existing on a continuum that was discussed in Chapter One. Distilled in writing center lore, in tutoring handbooks, and in the minds of writing center directors and tutors is the idea that ‘directivity’ is synonymous with ‘bad’ and non-directivity with ‘good.’ In thinking particularly about the second case analysis discussed in Chapter Three, the tutor sustains a non-directive stance throughout the tutoring session. The tutor continuously attempts to engage the writer by asking the writer questions and placing the writer’s paper between both the tutor and writer. It’s worth reiterating that the tutor training videos studied for this project are not actual tutoring sessions, but rather scripted representations of tutoring sessions. Even so, the tutor’s tenacity regardless of the writer’s quite obvious and downright anger demonstrates that the tutor’s ‘ideal’ tutoring session is sustaining a non-directive stance.

The idea that directivity and non-directivity exist on a continuum could be responsible for tutors’ assumptions about ideal writing tutorials. Instead, I argue against Blau et al.’s (1998) language of the “continuum” and call for a less dichotomized understanding of tutorial strategies. Instead of a continuum, directiveness and non-directiveness should exist on a spectrum where varying degrees of each type of tutoring strategy is considered (and still dependent on the
writer’s needs). While tutors are not (and should not be) responsible for writers’ emotions from personal problems (as shown in the second example in chapter three), tutors should meet writers where they’re at and employ a variety of tutoring strategies that consist of both directive and non-directive. The “ideal” tutoring session – how does this idea of an “ideal” hinder us in writing center work? Without the assumption that an “ideal” tutoring session exists, would resilience be important for tutors to study/understand?

The notion that directivity and non-directivity exist on a continuum stems from a history of writing center lore (Kjesrud, 2015). This researcher argues that lore maintains its place in writing center work because writing center researchers, directors, and tutors “need…stories…to help explain our work to others” (p.51). Also, lore serves to “stir our curiosity as researchers” (Kjesrud, 2015, p. 51). However, lore should not replace data-driven research. For example, the finding in this project that resilience was coded 22.2% of the time across the unproductive video subset has not affirmed that these videos were, in fact, unproductive. Instead, this data has called into question for me as a researcher what is considered “unproductive” (or not “ideal”) in the context of the writing center. Contrarily, the productive video subset was coded for resilience only 4.7% of the time, calling into question what makes a tutoring session “ideal” to those who work in writing centers.

Resilience was only coded .026% of the time across the handbook dataset, compared to 14% of the time across the video dataset. These findings show that tutor training videos can adequately supplement tutor training handbooks because tutor training videos are able to demonstrate aspects of tutor training that the handbooks are not able to. For instance, the third example discussed in chapter three demonstrates a “bad” tutoring session where the session had not been sufficiently negotiated by both the writer and the tutor. The writer’s facial expression
(sullen, downcast), along with the writer seemingly giving up on any attempt to participate in the
tutoring session toward the end (the writer sits back in the chair, removes hands from the table
and places them out of view), is only noticeable because of the audio-visual components of the
video.

Tutor training handbooks are residue of the lore that writing centers have been
perpetuating for decades. While tutor training handbooks help novice tutors gain both theoretical
and pedagogical understandings of writing center work, they do not do enough to prepare new
tutors for their work in writing centers. Writing tutors rely on conversation to productively work
with writers—and handbooks train tutors how to go about the verbal aspects of these
conversations. Tutor training videos, on the other hand, have the potential to train new tutors in
nonverbal communicative acts exhibited by writers. As stated in chapter one, writing center
training is already multifaceted in that new tutors are typically instructed to observe more
experienced tutors, and be observed themselves by their writing center directors, in addition to
reading tutor training handbooks. Because conversations are both verbal and gestural, tutor
training videos add an important component to tutor training that handbooks are not able to
provide.

Sauer’s (1998) work is important to the findings outlined in this project. Sauer’s (1998)
discussion of miners’ “pit sense” offers a lens through which we can make sense of tutors’ tacit
knowledge. While tutors are explicitly taught that particular tutoring strategies are categorized as
either directive or non-directive, the notion of an ideal tutoring session is a tacit one. When two
peers discuss writing one-on-one with the aim of the writer and the tutor learning more about
writing and tutoring, respectively, the tutor and writer are engaging in a tacit activity. In other
words, peer tutoring requires tacit knowledge because tutoring is learned by doing. The findings
from both the handbook and video datasets indicate that tutors must confront the traditional notions about the kinds of activities that tutoring, and writing more generally, are in which they have been entrenched as result of experiences in “traditional” academia. Upon visiting the writing center, writers are also confronted with challenging their assumptions about writing, and the writing center offers a space for tutors and writers to challenge these assumptions collaboratively. Novice writing tutors start to challenge these notions when they begin working in a writing center by engaging with tutor training texts (and typically one of these texts is a handbook). In the same vein as their tutors, writers confront preconceived notions about writing and its processes during one-on-one interactions with tutors in the writing center.

While tutors are trained in specific tutoring strategies to help writers improve, as well as helping writers confront the traditional notions they carry from traditional academic experiences, tutors are not equipped to conduct a successful tutoring session with an emotional writer. However, tutors should not have to take on that role either. Driscoll and Wells (2020) call for writing centers to focus on “tutoring the whole person.” While researchers in the fields of writing studies and writing center studies argue that writing is, in fact, an activity that impacts both the physiological and psychological, we must create boundaries for tutors in order to protect their emotional and mental well-being, as well as ensure they are not overextending themselves beyond their training. Tutors can be responsive to writers’ emotions without being responsible for those emotions. Without analyzing multimodal tutor training texts (both handbooks and videos), the gap between the different kinds of training both the handbooks and the videos provide novice tutors would not be apparent to me. I argue that this connection would also not be apparent to novice tutors had they been trained solely with one or the other; novice tutors can benefit from engaging with multimodal tutor training texts.
Most importantly, tutoring the whole person means tutors will have access to writers’ positive and negative emotions during sessions. Driscoll and Wells (2020) call for “the need for developing training materials and a body of research that considers to the role of emotional intelligence and emotional management in the practice of tutoring…and the need to recognize this work as emotional labor and to create safe spaces for tutors to be supported.” The tutor training videos exist because they fulfill a role that the handbooks cannot provide: a full, semiotic account of what a tutoring session can look like. The tutor training videos depict both the positive and negative experiences novice tutors will face. However, this project’s analyses of tutor training texts demonstrates (at least implicitly) that an ideal tutorial is possible. Tutors seem to enact resilience as a means to achieve this notion of the ideal tutoring session, but, arguably, the ideal tutorial is not achievable.
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BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR

Katelyn Parsons, born in Norway, Maine, graduated from high school in South Paris, Maine. In December 2018, she graduated from the University of Southern Maine (USM) in Portland, Maine, with a B.A. in English and Social and Behavioral Sciences (double major). During her time at USM, Katelyn worked as a writing tutor in the Writing Center on the Lewiston-Auburn College campus, was Vice President and then President of the USM-LAC Student Government Association, and was a recipient of a grant from the Maine Regulatory Training and Ethics Center (MeRTEC) to study abroad in Reykjavik, Iceland.

During her time as a master’s student at the University of Maine, Katelyn taught first-year composition (ENG 101) for the English Department, serving on the Portfolio Review Appeals Committee, and read Challenge Exams submitted by incoming students to first-year composition. Katelyn served as a voting member of the English Graduate Student Association, a member of the International English Honors Society Sigma Tau Delta. Katelyn’s Tutor’s Column, titled “’Just Say No’: Setting Emotional Boundaries in the Writing Center is a Practice in Self-Care,” was published in the January/February 2020 issue of WLN: A Journal for Writing Center Scholarship. Katelyn co-authored an article with Keaton Studebaker and Benjamin Markey titled “Feedback as Genre: The Efficacy of Multimedia Approaches for Establishing Social Presence in Remote Writing Instruction,” which was published in the August 2020 issue of Northwords. She is a candidate for the Master of Arts degree in English with a concentration in Composition and Pedagogy from The University of Maine in August 2021.