ABSTRACT

NEGOTIATING THE NON-NEGOTIABLE:
RE-VISIONING WRITING CENTER APPROACH
TO CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

by Kelly Marie Grossman

This thesis presents the findings of a national survey reassessing writing center concerns and training practices in light of increasing non-native-English-speaking (NNES) student enrollment. After analyzing the relationship between two prominent concerns—responding to sentence-level issues and cultural biases—and the most popular tutor training texts, it proposes changes that empower multilingual/multicultural populations. One of the most critical parts of reform—tutor education—emphasizes understanding cultural, rhetorical, textual, and contextual variety; enacting a pedagogy of listening; and addressing sentence-level concerns in ways that foster language acquisition. On-going education aims to complicate this knowledge by discussing static notions of culture; exploring complexities of language and its practice; and examining race, ethnicity, and nationality. The project ultimately reveals implications for writing center administrators and those deeply involved in tutor training, especially those interested in reflecting a commitment to valuing diversity and promoting multicultural and multilingualism.
NEGOTIATING THE NON-NEGOTIABLE:
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TO CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

A Thesis

Submitted to the
Faculty of Miami University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
Department of English

by
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2013

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## CONTENTS

Chapter One: NNES Writers and the Writing Center: A National Survey  
Chapter Two: Revisiting the Practice and Politics of NNES Representation and Response  
Chapter Three: Towards a Re-Visioned Writing Center  
Appendix  
Works Cited
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first like to sincerely thank my thesis advisor, Dr. Katharine Ronald, for her warm encouragement, conversation, and guidance in directing not only this project but also my work in the writing center. I would also like to thank Dr. Jason Palmeri for his teaching and feedback — both formative in developing, focusing, and refining my academic and pedagogical aspirations — and Dr. LuMing Mao for his participation and thoughtful questions. I must also thank an extensive “unofficial committee” who were every bit as vital: Dr. Heidi McKee, for her instruction and enthusiasm while advising me through the research process; Dr. Tony Cimasko, for sharing his expertise with me and the rest of the Miami University community; and my friends, family, and colleagues, whose support and perspective enriched this project in unexpected ways. Finally, I would like to thank the writing center community — arguably the most collaborative and supportive in all of academia — and particularly those from the WCenter listserv who so graciously volunteered their time to share their thoughts and experiences.
During my first semester as a graduate student, I am asked to mentor the Howe Writing Center’s writing consultants on working with Miami University’s international, non-native English speaking (NNES) writers. The NNES student population has grown from 333 in 2005 to 1,212 in 2012—and shows no signs of slowing down (“International Students and Scholars”). On top of an extensive body of scholarship on the subject, my own observations and experiences suggest that tutorials with NNES writers are persistently challenging; I’m told that one native-English speaking (NES) consultant recently broke down in tears after a series of what she felt were unproductive consultations with NNES writers. Having worked in writing centers for many years, I am no stranger to this frustration, afraid to be too direct and be seen as a “fix-it shop,” but unsure whether a “minimalist” approach is at all helpful—and all of this on top of balancing my own beliefs and responsibilities as a tutor with the needs and goals of the student and the standards of the university and its faculty. My role at Howe, then, is to help others navigate these demands by observing their consultations with NNES writers, discussing their sessions and experiences, exploring frustrations and successes, and working collaboratively towards a better set of best practices.

In the weeks that follow, I’m struck by the similarities between this and other writing centers I’ve read about, visited, and worked in: the techniques employed (to mixed results), the palpable frustration (of both tutors and writers), the assumptions and attitudes of those involved (sometimes blatantly prejudiced, but far more often barely perceptible, seemingly unconscious,

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1 I use the terms “tutor” and “tutorial” for the majority of my thesis as these are currently the most widely used and recognized in writing center scholarship. However, when referring specifically to those working at Miami University’s writing centers, I will use their preferred terms: “consultant” and “consultation.”

2 I chose to use the term “non-native English speaker” (NNES) for a number of reasons. First, using “second-language learner” (L2) does not specify that individuals are learning English, which is the case here, as I focus on students enrolled in U.S. post-secondary institutions. However, using “English as a second language” (ESL) as a descriptor, while it acknowledges that the target language is English, neglects to acknowledge those learning English as a third, fourth, etc. language. The term “international” on its own neglects to tease out students’ varied English proficiencies: some speak international Englishes, as in Australia or India; some may have lived in the United States for an extended period of time while others just a short while; and yet others may have grown up speaking English only at school or work and another language at home. Because of these complications and to enhance readability, I believe that the consistent use of “NNES” is the best choice in this case.
and always just beyond the realm of what seemed comfortable to broach). One NES consultant off-handedly remarks to me that he remembers every writer he has ever worked with—“except Asian writers, because they’re all the same.” During a consultation with an NNES writer, a soft-spoken NES consultant wearing a look of concern remarks, “You are writing in English, but you are thinking in Chinese. So not only is the language different, but the way that you think is different. It would be cool if you could change your thinking to be more logical.” Afterwards, he dejectedly explains that wasn’t sure how else to help because the writer—whom he had worked with before—“just needs to be told what to do.” I recall tutors openly dreading sessions with NNES writers or even with writers they assumed to be NNES based on name or appearance; I remember tutors hiding behind the half-closed doors of their tutoring spaces as they pretended not to notice an NNES writer who just walked into the center.

Perhaps you can identify with some of the scenarios above—as a witness, participant, or both—as many likely can. Perhaps you find them upsetting, as many likely will. Perhaps, somewhat paradoxically, you feel both, as I do. And what is most troubling is that this behavior is not unique or isolated, as both experience and scholarship show (Thonus, “What Are the Differences?”).

Scholars sometimes speak of moments of “crisis,” often in reference to some sudden, significant change in the student body—such as the push for open admissions in the United States in the 1960s and ’70s in an effort to promote college education among historically underrepresented groups. Despite its distinctly pejorative connotations, I choose to use “crisis” here in part because it is, regrettably, an all-too-familiar one within academia. In this context, the term “crisis” has traditionally referred to the growth of some formerly un- or underrepresented group that now challenges the university’s ideas and expectations of academic literacy, resulting in tension and conflict. It furthermore suggests that the increased enrollment of such populations is a “problem that needs to be dealt with” rather than a welcome addition to the student body. Indeed, too often the lens of “crisis” has been focused on said groups, as if they and they-only have to change to “fit” into the academy. But I believe that “crisis” is perhaps more appropriate for describing the shortcomings of the institution, the lack of preparedness to meet the needs of these students, as well as the corresponding pressure placed on the institution to change rapidly to effectively accommodate these student changes. Keeping these lenses in mind, it seems that
American colleges are currently amidst such a “crisis”: the increased enrollment of international NNES students.

As the opening vignette reveals, writing centers may be in some state of crisis as well, as many tutors and administrators still struggle to respond appropriately and effectively to NNES writers. Why, given the considerable body of literature and research devoted thus far to working with NNES writers, do many of us continue to feel so ill-prepared? Though there are inevitably many factors at work here, this thesis will focus primarily on one: writing center tutor training, and particularly how tutors are being prepared to work with NNES students. To reassess prominent trends in tutorial concerns and tutor-training practices, materials, and attitudes in light of increasing linguistic and cultural diversity, I designed a person-based research project that surveyed writing center administration nation-wide. Ultimately, this research aims to inform the writing center community of large-scale trends in tutor training so that we may engage in a more level community-wide conversation that will eventually aid writing centers in better addressing the unique considerations that may arise with NNES writers. Through a critical synthesis of the national survey data and current scholarship in writing center and composition studies, I hope that the work presented here will not only unite our individual voices and local experiences to create a collective snapshot of where we generally stand as a field, but also provide a historical data point amid our ever-changing approaches to writing center work with diverse student writers. In the following chapter, I first briefly discuss the foundation and development of writing center and NNES studies, which establishes the grounds for my study. I then present my research, developing a broad body of knowledge that points to tutorial concerns and materials that deserve further investigation. After analyzing the relationship between two prominent concerns—responding to sentence-level issues and cultural biases—and the most popular tutor training texts in the second chapter, I finally propose administrative and educational changes that empower multilingual and multicultural populations.

Finally, I feel it necessary to note that I am not writing to point fingers, nor to excuse anyone’s words or actions. I am writing in the hopes of encouraging a national conversation of writing center practice regarding NNES writers; such a discussion could strengthen theory in the discipline of writing center pedagogy—particularly concerning how to better serve the NNES writers with whom we work, foster more respectful and productive sessions in the face of cultural or linguistic difference, and increase critical thinking of writers, tutors, and
administrators both in and outside writing center tutorials. But in order to truly understand how to best proceed, we need to better understand where we stand. As I write, I consciously keep in mind the words of Charles Moran: “I want to include myself in the critique. I don’t want to appear to stand outside” (345). I hope that others will join me.

The Emergence and Convergence of Writing Center and NNES Studies

NNES students have been a notable part of U.S. higher education’s landscape since the late 1800s, for a long time gravitating toward large, urban settings in coastal and border states (Payán and Nettles); however, as Matsuda points out, explicit attention to NNES writing would not become more prominent until the 1960s (“Second-Language Writing in the Twentieth Century”). Also around this time, an increasing number of writing labs—initially designed in the 1930s for students labelled “remedial,” often members of groups historically un- or underrepresented in post-secondary institutions—emerged in predominantly White colleges (Williams and Severino). But while writing centers and NNES writing studies largely emerged and evolved side-by-side, and while it is very likely that some early writing centers worked with NNES writers, research specifically focused on working with NNES students in writing centers would remain sparse until the 1990s—about 30 years later. This lag, however, makes sense in context; beginning in the 1980s, smaller schools in rural and suburban areas began to see a rise in numbers of NNES students; some states, such as Kentucky and Indiana, saw K-12 NNES enrollment more than quadruple in the span of ten years (Payán and Nettles). Of course, while NNES students were not necessarily new to smaller and more remote institutions, such dramatic increases in enrollment certainly were. Over the next decade, many college and university writing centers were also seeing significant increases in the numbers of NNES writers utilizing their services (Williams and Severino).

For centers situated in historically monolingual and monocultural institutions, working with such high volumes of NNES students was previously unprecedented and complicated some tenets that had, over 60-plus years of NES-centered writing center scholarship, become central to writing center practice. For one, many writing centers had long embraced the peer tutoring model first forwarded in 1984 by Bruffee: that tutoring is best seen as an interaction between peers who share similar backgrounds, experience, and status (“Peer Tutoring”). Furthermore, some of the earliest and most canonical writing center scholars, like North and Brooks, believed that writing
centers should work to produce better writers, not better papers, and thus should seek to enable student agency through education. They—and, subsequently, many others—argued that this required tutors to refrain from telling writers how to change their texts and instead act as Socratic questioners, gently guiding writers to discover their own answers (Thonus, “How to Communicate Politely”; Williams and Severino). Higher-order concerns (HOCs) are thus often emphasized over the more lower-order (LOCs) and “many [tutors] are told to deflect…requests of writers who come in to the center wishing to focus on grammar and instead…suggest that writers focus first on their text as a whole” (Williams and Severino 166). Tutors, however, found that the practices they had been trained to use—practices espoused in part because they aligned with the scholarship above—were not always as successful with NNES writers. Amidst confusion and frustration, writing center staff called for more explicit guidance for responding to NNES writers.

In response to this demand, a flurry of publications specifically focusing on NNES writers in the writing center arrived in the 1990s; early articles addressed topics ranging from cross-cultural rhetorical difference (e.g., Powers; Severino, “The ‘Doodles’ in Context”) to L2 sentence-level error (e.g., Harris and Silva; Thonus, “Tutors As Teachers”). Overall, these publications generally tended to suggest that NNES writers might “require a different, or at least more flexible approach to tutoring” than had previously been promoted (Blau and Hall; Williams and Severino 166). Powers was one of the first scholars to complicate Brooks’ (and others) non-directive approach by proposing a more authoritative tutor role. Those working with NNES writers, she argued, should act partially as “cultural informants” in regards to academic expectations and other necessary cultural information, and—whenever possible—partially as “Socratic questioners,” still maintaining the broadly accepted writing center philosophy that writers should take ownership of their own texts (Powers 370). While NNES-specific academic literature has proliferated since these early conversations—and particularly in the past ten years—scholars have yet to form a consensus on how to best work with NNES writers. On the contrary, the need for better NNES guidance has only grown along with NNES student enrollment.

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3 Higher-order concerns, or HOCs, are “big picture” writing matters typically associated with revision: focus, clarity, organization, development, etc. Lower-order concerns, or LOCs, are sentence-level issues often associated with proofreading and editing: spelling, punctuation, grammar, etc.
Thus far, empirically-based writing center research has very often taken the form of small-scale, qualitative studies that are immersed in localized experience and context (e.g., Blau and Hall; Nakamaru, “Lexical Issues”; Severino and Deifell; Ritter; Thonus, “What Are the Differences?”; to name only a few). Empirical studies of NNES writers in writing center contexts similarly tend to be focused on a single college or university’s student population—sometimes even a single tutor or writer—and aim to observe distinct traits or characteristics: politeness rhetorics used in tutor-writer interaction, for example (Bell and Youmans; Nurmukhamedov and Kim; Thonus, “How to Communicate Politely”), or how rhetorical and interactional differences in sessions with NNES and NES writers impact session success (Cogie; Thonus, “What Are the Differences?”; Thonus, “What is ‘Success’?”; Williams, “Tutoring and Revision”). Such a research model is reasonable: large bodies of data are difficult to collect and control, especially given the inevitable variation from institution to institution, center to center, writer to writer, tutor to tutor. Thus, in cases like these, data collection methods aim for a deep and nuanced understanding of issues that are unique, localized, and context-specific. Taken together, these studies have offered many valuable suggestions for addressing concerns that, based on their prevalence in published scholarship, are potentially salient and large-scale trends in tutorials with NNES writers: for example, issues related to sentence-level concerns (Linville; Myers; Nakamaru, “Lexical Issues”) or approaches for reading and responding to NNES writers’ texts (Matsuda and Cox; Staben and Nordhaus).

However, despite the attention paid to these and other NNES-related concerns, many tutors still find these sessions challenging—a phenomenon widely recognized in the field (Bell and Youmans; Blau and Hall; Cogie; Myers; Ritter; Thonus, “How to Communicate Politely”; Thonus, “What Are the Differences?”; Williams, “Tutoring and Revision”; Williams and Severino). As as Williams points out, these studies lack broad research findings (“The Role(s) of Writing Centers” 110). I believe it might be productive, then, to take a step back from looking for widely applicable answers in individual, localized tutorials and instead reevaluate the research questions we are posing in the first place. Rather than attempt to guess at the most prevalent NNES-specific concerns and “best practices” based on where each center stands in isolation, a large-scale study will allow us to reassess where we generally stand as a field: what we know, what we are trying to learn, and what we have yet to discover. Indeed, a large-scale study attending to the intersection of NNES and writing center studies has not been published since
Powers and Nelson’s national survey, “L2 Writers and the Writing Center: A National Survey of Writing Center Conferencing at Graduate Institutions,” which, published in 1995, furthermore focused specifically on graduate-student-serving writing centers. Despite this limitation, their research not only allowed us to get a sense of what we looked like as a field but pointed to the previously under-recognized value of collaboration between L2 professionals and general writing center staff.

Nakamaru writes, “Sharing what we know and do (locally) with a wider community is essential to maintaining viability as a ‘community’”; Powers and Nelson’s study is a testament to this belief (“A Tale of Two Multilingual Writers” 102). As a national survey considering undergraduate NNES writers has not yet been published, setting this baseline information would be valuable in and of itself; furthermore, it could also help initiate a large-scale discussion of and reflection upon writing centers’ concerns and successes, lead to new generalizations about the field as a whole, and perhaps help us discover and interrogate possible gaps in current popular writing center practice. Given anecdotal evidence of increasing NNES student populations, are our student bodies actually changing significantly—and if so, how? If these changes are nationally significant, have they impacted our concerns as a field? How are tutors being prepared to face these changes in this time of rapidly diversifying student populations? And are there larger issues that we have yet to discover, acknowledge, and address concerning NNES writers?

Research Background: Rationale, Recruitment and Participant Pool

To investigate the current relationship between NNES students and writing center studies, I asked questions about writing centers in the following general areas:

- Contextual demographic data about the size, setting, and makeup of the respondent’s college or university
- Similar information about the tutorial staff and those using the writing center
- Tutor training procedures and materials, particularly regarding preparation for working with NNES students
- Prominent and emerging training and tutorial trends and practices, with special attention towards working with NNES students

In order to answer these questions and in light of the rationale above, I chose to conduct a national survey. The survey contained 22 questions, most of which were either open-ended or...
contained open-ended fields in the event that respondents wished to provide an answer that was either not represented or to provide any clarifying information about the answer given.4

On March 26, 2012, a call for participants was sent out via e-mail to the WCenter listserv. The call aimed to recruit writing center directors and/or those deeply involved with coordinating or administering tutor training at U.S. college and university writing centers—those most likely to be familiar with tutors’ concerns, tutorial practice, and tutor preparation methods in the context of the writing center as a whole. Willing respondents then followed a hyperlink to an anonymous online survey. Several potential respondents e-mailed me inquiring about circumstances I had not entirely anticipated—online degree programs, commuter campuses, college and university writing centers outside of the U.S.—revealing my U.S.-centric and physical-location-centric construction biases in the development and construction of my survey. Given the potential to discover perhaps new or unexpected data that could be extremely valuable to the field, I extended an invitation to these individuals to participate. The survey was taken off-line on April 27, 2012. Of the 102 responses received, 82 respondents completed the survey. Because some respondents chose to skip select questions, total number of respondents will vary.

Survey Results

Institute Demographics

NNES populations have tended to be highest in populous urban settings, and particularly along the coast; however, as previously noted, since the 1980s, smaller communities in rural and suburban areas have begun to see a rise in the numbers of English-language-learning students (Payán and Nettles). Factors such as writing centers’ geographic location and campus setting, then, can give us a more complete contextual understanding of student size and community makeup, which in turn can offer greater insight into the concerns these centers face—after all, a writing center serving an area that is more likely to have long been linguistically and culturally diverse very well may have different concerns and training models than one that serves a historically largely homogenous population.

Respondents’ reported college or university enrollment reflected schools of all sizes, from fewer than 1,000 to over 40,000 students. Geographically, the smallest number of respondents

4 Invitation to Participate and Notional Survey Questions, as drafted, are included in the Appendix.
represented the Western (17.7%) and North Eastern (21.5%) regions of the U.S. The largest number of respondents represented the Southern (27.8%) and Mid-western (32.9%) regions\(^5\) (see fig. 1, below). Taken together, 60.7% of respondents came from these two regions, which historically have had lower NNES populations but are also those most likely to be currently experiencing significant NNES population growth. Furthermore, 52.5% of respondents identified their campus setting as either rural or suburban, again areas that historically have had lower NNES populations but that are most likely to be presently experiencing significant NNES population growth. This data could indicate a higher number of respondents from areas where NNES student populations have been low but that are rapidly growing.

**Fig. 1: In what region of the U.S. is your institution?**

While NNES students are not new to smaller and more remote institutions in the U.S., observation-based testimonials of dramatic increases in NNES enrollment are becoming more and more frequent (Powers; Williams “The Role(s) of Writing Centers”). The data gathered

\(^5\) For the complete list of response options for this and all survey questions, see the Appendix.
confirms these claims. Indeed, 43.5% of respondents reported an increase in the total number of NNES students enrolled at their institute between 2005 and 2012; the average NNES enrollment rose 233%, with four respondents reporting increases of 500% or more. About 19.4% of respondents reported that the NNES student enrollment remained the same or roughly the same, while only two respondents (3.2%) reported decreased NNES enrollment. About 17.7% of respondents who reported a total number of NNES students currently enrolled did not provide enrollment numbers for 2005; because no comparison could be made in these cases, no definite conclusions about rate of enrollment could be conclusively drawn. One noted, however, that their university “is now actively and aggressively recruiting international students,” while another reported that “67% of freshman comp students spoke a language other than English at home.” These responses suggest, at the very least, the potential for high or increased linguistic and cultural diversity in at least some of these institutions.

In sum, respondents represented institutions diverse in terms of size, location, and setting. However, the largest percentage of survey respondents came from geographic locations and settings most likely to have small but growing NNES populations. The data confirms this hypothesis, with the largest percentage of respondents reporting increased NNES enrollment at their post-secondary institutions.

Writing Center Demographics

As Powers and Nelson reasoned in their national survey, “Some consideration of overall trends in writing center size and staffing is central to understanding the difficulties many centers face in working with [NNES] writers” (117). Given the continual evolution of and persistent variation within and between writing centers, these demographics deserve to be revisited and reassessed today.

Respondents indicated an average tutorial staff size of between 20 to 21 tutors. Staff composition was a mix of volunteers and professional staff, and tenure and non-tenure faculty; most centers, though, were primarily staffed by graduate and undergraduate tutors. The majority of respondents (68.6%) reported having at least one staff member with specialization in working with NNES writers; however, several noted that these were directors or assistant directors. In other words, this majority includes cases where administrators have some degree of NNES-specific specialization, but not necessarily their tutorial staff—those most often working face-to-
face with NNES students. And while an impressive 21.4% reported having between 50 to 100% of their staff specially trained to work with NNES writers, explanatory notes accompanying several of these responses (e.g., “All, to some degree,” “everyone who has taken our internship class,” “they read a couple of articles and we talk about practice as a staff,” “minimally, all,” etc.) make it difficult to ascertain the content or depth of this training. The overall nature of these comments seems to suggest that many centers weave NNES training into their overall training program, and that such training was sometimes considered specialization by respondents.

Data indicated that tutorials with NNES writers constituted a significant portion of writing center work. In the writing centers represented here, an average of 67.8% of sessions were with NES writers, and 32% with NNES writers; 56.5% of respondents reported that at least 30% of their sessions were with NNES writers. Because institution size was indicated by range rather than exact enrollment, it is difficult to draw definitive conclusions about the relationship between the percentage of NNES tutorials and the percentage of NNES students in relation to the total student body (e.g., NNES students make up 5% of overall enrollment but 32% of all writing center tutorials). However, at Miami University as of 2012, NNES students comprise about 6% of the student population on the Oxford campus but account for approximately 40% of writing center consultations; this could potentially be the case for some other respondents.

Overall, writing centers had about 20 to 21 tutorial staff members, primarily undergraduate and graduate students. The majority of respondents reported having at least one staff member who was specially trained in working with NNES writers, though the depth or formality of this training is unclear; many pointed out that only directors or assistant directors had specialized training while others suggested that NNES training was a part of the overall training program. Such specialized training may be important considering that while NES students were still the highest percentage of those visiting the writing center, almost 60% reported that about one-third of their sessions were with NNES writers.

Approaches to Tutor Training: Resources and Readings

An initial, significant research goal was to determine trends in how tutors are being prepared to work with NNES writers. Thus, a number of survey questions asked about models or frameworks used to conduct tutor training, the amount of training time devoted to working with NNES writers, and the readings and activities used to help prepare tutors for their work.
Regarding training models or frameworks, workshops were most popular, with 63.1% of respondents conducting tutor training workshop(s) before staff began tutoring and 55.4% conducting training workshops concurrently while staff tutored; 36.5% of respondents conducted both pre-tutoring and concurrent-with-tutoring training workshops (see fig. 2, below). The combined number of respondents using abbreviated training courses (i.e., credit-bearing coursework that is shorter than a full semester: week-long, quarter-semester, half-semester, etc.), semester-long training courses, and remote instruction (n=33) for tutor training was still less than the number who reported using either pre-semester or concurrent workshops (n=41 and n=36, respectively). But aside from the prevalence of the workshop model, few clear trends emerged. Indeed, almost a third of respondents chose to describe their training models via the open-ended response option. That so many respondents volunteered further explanatory information—or felt that the provided options did not adequately describe their training program—shows the richness
and diversity among our writing centers as well as the complexity and variation of tutor preparation.

Similar diversity extended to NNES-specific training. Although, of course, all aspects of tutor training prepare tutors to work with all writers, respondents estimated that on average about 19% of training time was focused specifically on preparation for working with NNES writers. This training drew on a variety of activities, as shown below (see fig. 3, below). Respondents reported bringing in ESL/TOESL faculty guest speakers (n=37) and experienced tutor guest speakers (n=38) to speak with their tutors. A similar number incorporated practice tutorials with sample papers (n=41), observations of tutorials (n=39), and written reflective analyses of the consultations they observe or engage in (n=36). The uniformity of these responses suggests that these are common training practices, taking place in roughly 60% of respondents’ training programs. Interestingly, the remaining listed activities—having NNES student guest speakers, recording and analysis of the tutor-in-training’s own consultations, and reading and analysis of

![Fig. 3: What approaches do you use to help prepare tutors to work with NNES writers?](image)

- Practice tutorials with sample papers: 68.1% (41)
- Observations of tutorials: 62.3% (39)
- Experienced tutor guest speakers: 61.3% (38)
- ESL/TOESL faculty guest speakers: 59.7% (37)
- Written reflective analyses of the consultations they observe or engage in: 58.1% (35)
- Reading and analysis of transcripts of tutorials: 22.6% (14)
- Recording and analysis of tutor-in-training’s own consultations: 22.6% (14)
- NNES student guest speakers: 16.1% (15)
tutorial transcripts—were also reported in almost equal, though significantly lower, numbers: n=10, 14, and 14, respectively, or in about 20.4% of respondents’ tutor training programs.

Perhaps most diverse, however, were the readings that respondents cited as resources for tutor training (see fig. 4, below). While a number of texts came out as favorites, their margin of popularity was not exactly sweeping. And aside from the 17 options provided, 22 respondents took advantage of the open field to note a wide variety of additional resources. While the exact resources were not always specified (e.g. “Other assorted readings (several of which focus on

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NNES),” “misc. articles in rhet comp and re: second-language acquisition,” etc.) where respondents provided more detail on the readings they chose, several specifically focused on grammatical or sentence-level concerns.

To say that survey responses indicated diversity in tutor training would be a downright inaccurate and gross oversimplification of the findings. While some models, practices, and materials stood out as more popular than others, the inevitability of extreme variation between each of these models is vast—in line with the unique variations in the contexts and communities that surround each writing center.

**Revisiting Tutor Concerns: The When’s and How’s of Sentence-level Issues**

A significant portion of the survey asked respondents to characterize tutorials occurring in their centers, their work preparing tutors to work in multilingual and/or multicultural settings, and their perceptions of tutors’ work with NNES writers. Respondents overwhelmingly focused on describing what they saw as the most pressing concerns—and, based on the data, respondents felt that tutors’ major struggles in tutorials with NNES writers involved perhaps unsurprising issues: grammar and sentence-level concerns. Indeed, 64% of respondents mentioned these issues when describing tutors’ greatest struggles. However, the open-ended nature of this question allowed for a more nuanced understanding of tutorial concerns that are often simply lumped together and labeled “grammar.”

In the past, I have occasionally observed writing center staff placing the desire to focus on grammar in the hands of NNES writers, perpetuating a belief that grammar is a prevalent tutorial concern because of NNES writer’s insistence on focusing on it. Certainly, some NES and NNES writers come to writing centers wanting to work on sentence-level concerns. However, of

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7 As “grammar” is one of respondents’ two most significant concerns, I believe it is important to pause and consider what they might have meant by the term. The most honest answer I can offer is “I’m not 100% certain.” While each respondent may (or may not) have a clear definition in mind when they refer to grammar, no such concrete explanation emerged in the data—and these definitions may even still differ from their tutors’ conceptions of grammar. Even scholars have yet to settle on a conclusive definition of the term. As it stands, “grammar” may include, but is not limited to: 1) “the set of formal patterns in which the words of a language are arranged in order to convey larger meanings,” 2) “the branch of linguistic science which is concerned with the description, analysis, and formulization of formal language patterns,” and 3) “linguistic etiquette” (Francis and Hartwell 300). I must thus emphasize that without further clarification, it is impossible to know precisely what respondents refer to here by. Thus for the sake of this thesis, I consider “grammar” to mean sentence-level concerns that often follow definable (thought often excepted) rules: e.g., verb tense, subject-noun agreement, punctuation, word order and choice, etc.
the respondents who see grammar as tutors’ biggest struggle, few placed that agency with writers; instead, many respondents placed the exigency for that concern with the tutors. In fact, they were far more often concerned with tutors’ over-attention to grammar, with one respondent writing that NES tutors’ biggest struggle was with “the desire to just give a grammar check. Many NES tutors just want to grammar check and throw all of their training out the window.” Respondents indicated that tutors’ focus on grammar can persist even when writers request other types of assistance: “NNES students move beyond looking at only grammar,” writes one respondent. “Sometimes they [the NNES writers] can’t get the tutor interested in other issues. Two of our tutors had this problem and are no longer with us as a result of their inability to see beyond grammar.” In discussing tutors’ biggest struggles, one respondent put it more bluntly: “GRAMMAR GRAMMAR GRAMMAR GRAMMAR GRAMMAR— which is not necessarily the case in a student’s writing…” Another noted that tutors’ “desire to edit doesn’t seem as prevalent with NES [writers], even if the grammar issues are equal in occurrence [to NNES writers].” The nature of these and similar responses indicates that some tutors might automatically and erroneously assume that NNES writers come to the writing center solely to address sentence-level concerns. This assumption can lead tutors to “throw out their training” and to focus only on those issues, even if NNES writers express request otherwise.

Survey responses furthermore indicated that tutors may be getting mixed signals as to how best address sentence-level concerns. In keeping with long-held writing center tenets that traditionally advocate for a non-directive approach and focus on higher order concerns, some tutors are told to “focus on two or three key issues, and our faculty guest speaker instructs tutors not to worry about prepositions, verb forms, articles, and even word choice to some degree.” Indeed, several respondents noted that they pushed for tutorials that maintain “focus on higher order concerns (content-related issues) instead of defaulting to sentence-level issues,” and thus struggle with convincing tutors to be “willing to focus on grammar and structure more than with NS—but drastic instance of training “encourages tutors to just perform grammar checks because that is an easier thing to do.” It seems that this sometimes extreme, rigid, and conflicting instruction leaves tutors at a loss for how to proceed.

8 An abbreviation for “native speaker,” referring to a native speaker of a given language
An overwhelming number of respondents, however, noted that tutors’ main difficulty was in balancing these two extremes. Not knowing when and how to effectively use one approach over another tended to result in tutor struggles with, for example, “When and how to work with sentence level concerns,” “seeing when usage and grammar is actually a HOC,” “Finding a balance between working with HOCs and LOCs,” “How much time should be spent on ‘correcting grammar’ vs. content,” and “balancing sentence-level and global feedback.” Based on the large number of responses similar to these, it seems that writing center administrators feel that tutors, familiar with traditional writing center pedagogy and its repeated admonishments to always attend to higher order concerns, are perhaps uncertain or uncomfortable diverging from it. As a result, tutors may tend to adhere to long-held writing center tenets and completely refuse to work on sentence-level concerns.

Tutor uncertainty in the face of sentence-level issues is also likely linked to the fact that when it came to grammar, what most often came up was neither writer nor tutor insistent focus on grammatical assistance but rather tutors’ inability to effectively respond to these requests. Multiple respondents cited defining rule-based systems and clarifying lexicogrammatical features as tutors’ biggest struggle, with one respondent writing that tutors struggle with “not being able to articulate grammar rules when NNES would like a clear rule-based explanation (of article use, for example)” — a sentiment echoed in many responses. Several respondents believe their NES tutors have internalized the knowledge of these rules but lack the “metalinguistic knowledge” necessary to explain them. In the words of one:

[The NES tutors in my writing center] do not have the same level of metalinguistic knowledge as many NNES writers, particularly internationals, and struggle to help students understand why something is wrong and why something is correct.

And yet another noted:

I think one of the biggest challenges NES tutors face is being able to articulate grammar rules/conventions. Often consultants (me included) internalize academic English grammar rules/conventions and the NNES writers they are working with are more versed in the “technical” terms. Pointing out an incorrect sentence structure is a lot easier than explaining and teaching why the structure is incorrect.
In light of these responses, it seems that one major reason that “grammar” is such a prominent concern is that tutors simply do not know how to effectively address it in tutorials—nor are they prepared to do so in training.

The previous two respondents furthermore note a critical connection between the number one concern—responding to grammar—and the second-most mentioned tutor struggle: finding an appropriate balance between feedback approaches. Indeed, many respondents cited “concerns about appropriate levels of directive/non-directive practice” as a significant issue, and a few linked it specifically to sentence-level concerns. As one respondent writes, “Sometimes [tutors] fear tackling language-related problems because they don’t want to go against predominant WC pedagogy and be too directive.” Indeed, based on the data, it seems that while some tutors may have an internalized understanding of how English writing rules look or sound, without some catalyst for making this knowledge explicit, tutors may be unable to vocalize these rules in a helpful way and thus be in danger of becoming overly directive, defaulting to “fixing” student errors in lieu of working with the student and teaching a transferrable skill.

One reason that responding to sentence-level concerns may be such a struggle for tutors is because of the struggle involved in teaching it: when asked what they struggled with the most in conducting tutor training, the largest percentage of respondents (31.3%) once again mentioned sentence-level concerns. Regarding this struggle, one respondent notes recognizing the need to focus more of tutor training on grammar issues, but that “instruction on how to work with grammar/language issues is particularly difficult because it intimidates some tutors, would take too long to do well, and seems to imply that language is the only thing to address in NNES writing, which of course is not true.” Another noted struggling in “Both getting [tutors] to think beyond lower order concerns and at the same time helping them find the language to explain grammatical ‘rules’ when it’s time to work on lower-order concerns.” It seems that many respondents experienced difficulties of their own emerging around directive and non-directive approaches—and particularly when and how to work on sentence-level concerns in a way that neither amounts to line-editing nor results in appropriation.

In summary, respondents believe that tutors’ biggest struggles in working with NNES writers revolve around replying to sentence-level concerns, especially given the consistent position of traditional writing center pedagogy and the mixed signals potentially sent in training.
And while respondents widely recognize this concern among tutors, many also mention their struggle to adequately train tutors to address these concerns.

“Nothing about tutorials, per se…”: Emerging Concerns in the Writing Center

While the survey data confirmed the continued prevalence of some long-standing tutorial concerns (e.g., responding to local-level errors, directive or non-directive binaries, etc.), it also raised lesser recognized but extremely compelling issues. Though they all merit attention, there are far too many to discuss thoroughly and meaningfully here. For this reason, I will focus on one particularly critical theme that ran through the majority of the responses provided in open-ended fields: cultural assumptions and biases and their impact on tutorials.

Cultural biases against NNES students spanned multiple layers of the writing center communities represented here, with respondents most often noting these biases amongst NES tutors. One respondent wrote that one of the greatest struggles in their writing center was, simply, “NES tutors NOT seeing NNES writers as intellectual equals.” This respondent was not alone; many noted struggling in one way or another with “the assumption [amongst tutors] that since English writing and/or speaking is difficult for the student then obviously the student is not very smart. That untrue assumption is the major issue in our writing center.” The nature of these and similar responses indicates that some NES tutors view NNES writers—and perhaps by extension, NNES students in general—as deficient in some way, associating linguistic features that often accompany the language acquisition process with a lack of intelligence, when it in fact indicates the opposite.

These extremely troubling biases also emerged in sessions with NNES tutors. Many respondents mentioned having difficulty with NES writers resistant to working with NNES tutors. As one respondent bluntly put it, “I don’t think the NNES tutors really struggle with tutoring; sometimes NES writers don’t like having NNES tutors, though.” Indeed, several respondents noted experiences with NES tutors “feeling like [NNES tutors] may not be as trusted as a resource for students coming in,” resulting in “NES writers questioning NNES tutors’ authority on writing or English as well as issues of NES writers expressing concern about NNES accents.” Based on the nature of these and similar responses, such skepticism seemed connected to NES writers doubting NNES tutor competency or authority over the English language and correspondingly their “[assumption] that NES writings have better English skills than NNES
writers.” One respondent writes that “sometimes tutees do not want to work with an NNES tutor, presuming that the tutor doesn’t know English well.” Another notes that “some NES writers have a skeptical attitude toward NNES tutors who speak with an accent that labels them ‘NNES’ because the NES writers mistakenly believe an NES tutor would be more knowledgeable.” Though less frequently noted, respondents reported that some NNES writers shared this bias against NNES tutors: “NNES writers sometimes do not trust that a NNES tutor will be able to help them,” one writes. One respondent mentioned that doubt or distrust is bound to occur with both NES and NNES tutors, but noted:

Though everyone may have issues with authority at times, many question whether minorities know what they’re talking about, despite NNES tutors having the same training and expertise and sometimes more, as they are familiar with another language.

Respondents tended to believe that these prejudices stemmed from “oversimplification” and “perception [and] ignorance” rather than from any particular difficulty NNES tutors had with tutoring. Several respondents made a point to mention that such discrimination was the exception rather than the rule; as one respondent noted: “a student may be skeptical about being assisted by a NNES, but that’s quickly overcome when they work together. Evaluations have been consistently good, and my tutors are all very confident in their capabilities.”

But not all respondents reported positive outcomes for their NNES tutors. In one center with only two NNES tutors on staff, one respondent expressed that “they struggle with being judged as not knowing English well enough to help NES writers. There is quite a bit of discrimination and racism that happens within their appointments.” On top of the obvious concerns inherent in blatant discrimination, these experiences could result in future difficulty hiring and retaining NNES tutors. This was in fact the case for one respondent, who wrote, “So far, we have had only one NNES tutor. She had difficulty maintaining authority with NES writers when she made NNES errors, so much so that she quit.” Indeed, when asked what issues they believed their NNES tutors struggled with the most in tutorials with either NES or NNES writers, respondents often noted that their responses might not be representative because their NNES tutorial staff was extremely limited or inconsistent over time (e.g. “Do not have NNES tutors each semester; it varies,” “So far, we have had only one NNES tutor,” “there are not a lot of NNES tutors in our center currently, just a few,” and, “we don’t have any NNES tutors this year.
in the past, when we have had one, I think one minor issue was feeling like they may not be as trusted as a resource for students coming in,” etc.). A far greater number of respondents could not answer this question as they had no NNES tutors on staff (e.g. “I don’t have NNES tutors in the center currently; none have applied,” “I don’t have any tutors who are specifically NNES,” “Unfortunately we don’t have any NNES tutors,” “Unsure—I do not have any NNES tutors on my staff,” “We do not have any NNES tutors currently in our center,” “n/a (no NNES tutors),” “We have no NNES tutors,” etc.).9 It is possible that discrimination on the basis of language or nationality is in part to blame for the lack of NNES tutors on staff; if such cultural biases continue to arise in tutorials, it seems that this trend could continue.

It is extremely important that the academic community does not think of such concerns as somehow exclusively a “student problem.” One respondent witnessed undisguised cultural bias and discrimination among the highest levels of writing center administration:

I went to 4C’s this year and realized that some WC Directors are still racist and discriminatory against international students and NNES. One director even told me that he does everything in his power to keep NNES students out of his Writing Center.

While no one can fully know the unique individual circumstances that shaped this individual’s attitude towards NNES students, I do not think I need to point out the problematic nature of such appalling discrimination. And while I am not suggesting that cultural biases are always as overt or widespread, I do think that similarly deleterious effects as those caused by student-level discrimination—that is, disenfranchising a particular group of students—could be even more devastating when coming from writing center administrators, even is said bias is good-intentioned and perhaps unacknowledged.

Conclusion

Based on the data gathered in this survey, a few conclusions can clearly be drawn. First, this research empirically confirms the notion long suggested by qualitative, anecdotal evidence:

9 I had originally drafted the question to ask, “Of your tutors, how many are NES? How many are NNES?” Unfortunately, due to a typo I made when uploading the survey, I inquired about the number of NES/NNES “tutorials” instead of “tutors”. I thus don’t have adequate data to draw conclusions regarding how many centers employ NNES tutors or the number employed. I did (thank goodness!) correctly ask about what issues respondents believed NNES tutors may face when working with NNES writers.
across the U.S., NNES presence is increasing significantly in colleges and universities as well as in their writing centers. A large number of respondents—nearly half—reported increases in NNES student enrollment at an average rate of 233% between 2005 and and spring of 2012, with only two respondents reporting decreases in NNES student enrollment during this same time period. Even respondents reporting only present-day NNES enrollment could suggest that past enrollment was minimal, unknown, or unrecorded by university administration. That these numbers are available in more recent years could point to a increasingly significant NNES student presence on these campuses. Indeed, a few of these respondents explicitly noted recent active multilingual and multicultural recruitment efforts.

Interestingly, respondents who reported rising NNES student enrollment reflected a diverse pool of colleges and universities in terms of location, size, and setting. These findings furthermore suggest that increased linguistic and cultural diversity in post-secondary settings may not be tied to some particular geographic or demographic feature but rather may be growing on a more universal basis. If this is indeed the case, it is of even greater, more pressing and widespread importance that writing centers across the board work on improving NNES-specific tutor training and devote the appropriate level of attention towards preparing tutors to better address the sometimes unique circumstances of working with NNES writers.

While NNES enrollment trends were consistent, few salient patterns could be discerned among writing centers and their training practices. The data instead reflected both writing centers and training programs that were tremendously diverse in terms of both NNES and non-NNES-specific issues alike, varying widely in everything from tutorial staff composition and training models employed to resources and readings used. However, when noting the most pressing concerns in their writing centers, responses were much more unified. As perhaps expected based on past literature, respondents overwhelmingly believed that in tutorials with NNES writers, tutors struggled most with responding to sentence-level issues—corresponding with the finding that one of respondents’ biggest struggles in conducting tutor training was adequately covering these issues with tutors.

While perhaps the only conclusion about tutor training that we may be able to directly draw from this data is that no one model has come out as clearly correlated to either success or failure, such incredible diversity points to other interesting possibilities warranting further exploration. First, prominent tutor and training concerns remained fairly consistent among
respondents, as did respondents’ difficulties in preparing tutors to face these concerns, despite the diversity of their individual surrounding contexts. That these issues were so consistent across the board could suggest that despite the variety of techniques and approaches, many currently employed training methods are not satisfactorily preparing tutors to address some of their most prominent concerns. On the other hand, it might also suggest that given the explosion of “best-practice” suggestions appearing in recent literature, those conducting tutor training struggle to find the best “best-practice,” and furthermore struggle to strike a balance between these practices and long-held writing center values. In the words of one respondent:

I struggle to make decisions about how to guide [tutors] based on the many perspectives on how to effectively support NNES. The WC literature reflects a relatively consistent position, but it is rather vague, and research in other disciplines often complicates and even contradicts what we find in WC lit.

It is also possible that successes and failures more generally may not be so clearly based on or connected to certain training models or sets of activities and readings at all. Needless to say, more extensive research into writing center training practices could be of great value, as could more empirical research into already previously published best-practices.

One of the most striking trends that emerged in the data concerned issues related to cultural biases, which responses suggested spanned all levels of the writing center, from visiting writers themselves to tutors and writing center administrators. Again, in light of the diversity of the respondents’ institutions, such cultural issues may not be linked to any specific demographic factor but larger underlying social and cultural values. Such wide-spread concern alone makes a strong case for incorporating discussion of potential bias into tutor training. And while a few respondents did mention discussing cultural difference in tutor training, more research into how tutors are being prepared to acknowledge and address cultural bias could be extremely valuable to the field. Indeed, for those who are broaching concerns of potential discrimination without significant difficulty for either tutors or those training them, further research around how tutors are being trained to deal with issues of discrimination in the writing center would be a valuable to those who have yet to confront this issue. If these issues are in fact not being addressed—which, based on my own experiences, I tend to believe is more often the case—I believe this is a conversation worth having, especially in light of increasingly diverse student populations. I hope that by uncovering and uniting these troubling but powerful local experiences, we can work
towards more open conversations between writing centers and developing better practices for addressing—and ideally, dispelling—such biases.

The data gathered by this national survey underscores the importance of continued research into both tutor training and working with NNES writers. One respondent noted that “we are definitely struggling with these issues as our NNES student population increases”; it is likely that as the NNES population continues to grow, so will the importance of this research. And in the words of one respondent:

…I think ongoing discussion among staff about these issues is critical; everyone needs to be reminded of how best to work with NNES writers and how to manage difficult areas…

The next chapter will extend this conversation by examining current discussion around these issues in more detail and depth.
Si yo dije que mi interés en estudiantes de ESL began at Miami, I’d be lying. Actually, my experiences and observations—and now, my reading and research—of NNES students in academic settings just reminded me de lo que vi mientras crecí.

I grew up in a suburb roughly situated between Philadelphia and Wilmington. Aquí, a year-round industria agrícola attracts a large population de trabajadores migrantes, mainly from México y Puerto Rico—y muchos con sus familias. En la escuela, los anuncios are made first en Inglés, then Spanish. Una necesidad, porque aproximente 35% of students hablan Español as their prima lingua—y para algunos, su única. Over my six years in this school district, Spanish and English speakers tienen unos clases juntos, claro—but homeroom, study hall, y los pasillos are prime contact zones. Before I took formal language classes, I tried to learn from mis amigos y classmates que hablan español. I’d point to a desk—el desko? They’d laugh (I assume at my shameless and barefaced ignorance)—no, el escritorio. Because not every L1 student—Spanish and English alike—fully mastered the L2, it was just easier to get around when we met half-way, and so we created our own working form of Spanglish.

I didn’t realize it at the time, but I could afford to laugh off my far-from-perfect Spanish because mastering it was not essential to my educational success. Sure, I sat through 50 minutes of Spanish class five days a week for like four years where I understood maybe half of what was going on. But I could roll my eyes at tests marked con un effe de rojo because the rest of my classes were conducted in English, and there I excelled. I didn’t realize that taking classes in my L1 was not just a huge advantage but a luxury, and one that was invisible to me and many of my peers. Years later, when I got to college and started looking for a Hispanic population that I couldn’t find, I started to wonder. Turns out my high school is a place where 18% of Hispanic students score proficient or above in science, versus 71% of White students. 35% of Hispanic students score proficient or above in mathematics, versus 81% of White students. 43% of of

10 Of course, following the age-old rule that any noun in English could be translated into Spanish by adding “o”—or, less frequently, “a”.

11 But let’s be real: the first Spanish any NES middle-schooler learned was nothing along the lines of “el escritorio”.

25
Hispanic students score proficient or above in reading, versus 88% of White students (Pennsylvania. Dept. of Education). And while numbers like these only provide a limited glimpse into assessing academic success, there has to be something behind results so consistently skewed and massively unbalanced. Some residents—White friends and family included—chalked it up to laziness, a lack of motivation, or—perhaps most frighteningly—a product of a culture that simple does not value education. But with patterns like these, it seems facile to conclude that it is the result of wide-spread individual failure.

In college, I began to wonder about one of my friends; he dropped out of school in eighth grade because he had been held back so many time that he had finally reached the age where legally, he no longer had to stay.

In the previous chapter, I presented the results of a national survey that reassessed trends in NNES student matriculation, the popularity of certain tutor training practices and materials, and what writing center administrators saw as significant NNES-specific tutorial concerns. This research confirmed the qualitative suggestions that NNES student enrollment is growing in colleges and universities nation-wide, as is NNES usage of writing centers. This data alone reaffirms the continued, heightened relevance of NNES-specific writing center research and improved tutor training. Furthermore, despite the variety of respondents’ individual writing center contexts, prominent NNES-specific tutorial and tutor training concerns remained consistently clustered around both text—specifically, how to balance addressing sentence-level concerns with writing center’s traditional non-directive pedagogy—and context—namely, cultural biases against NNES students among both writing center staff and its users. Taken together, these findings underscore the need for writing center administrators to (re)examine how tutors are being trained to work with NNES writers.

So how—if at all—are these concerns are being addressed in tutor training? What beliefs and practices are being passed on to tutors as they prepare to work in the writing center? Though an early research goal was to gauge trends in tutor training models, practices, and materials, respondents indicated such extreme variety in the two former categories (i.e., training models and practices) that attempting to critically discuss them without further research seems unlikely to be fruitful. While responses regarding tutor training materials were also diverse, certain works did emerge as more widely-used than others. And as written text—as opposed to interactional
instruction and training practices—is more uniform across contexts, analysis of its discourse may have more meaningful implications to a larger portion of the writing center community. In this chapter, then, I will examine the four most widely-used training materials as reported by respondents: Leigh Ryan and Lisa Zimmerelli’s *The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors* (2010), Paula Gillespie and Neal Lerner’s *The Longman Guide to Peer Tutoring* (2008), Shanti Bruce and Ben Rafaith’s *ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors* (2009), and Christina Murphy and Steve Sherwood’s *The St. Martin’s Sourcebook for Writing Tutors* (2011). I will first discuss the most popular response models and strategies suggested by these materials and consider some of their practical and ideological implications in tutorials with NNES writers. Then, I will analyze the language surrounding NNES students in tutor training literature to ascertain the attitudes conveyed. Taken together, these discussions demonstrate the relationship between tutor training materials and the most prevalent writing center concerns and ultimately the importance of reforming tutor training to better value voices of NNES students as individuals while also understanding the larger cultural and societal networks in which these students live.

**The Non-Directive and Cultural Informant Models: Limitations of Two Popular Approaches in Responding to NNES Writers**

12 As the first two texts—Ryan and Zimmerelli’s *The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors* and Gillespie and Lerner’s *The Longman Guide to Peer Tutoring*—are authored books, they will be considered holistically, with particular attention to portions of text that explicitly consider tutoring strategies and NNES writers. As the latter two texts—Bruce and Rafaith’s *ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors* and Murphy and Sherwood’s *The St. Martin’s Sourcebook for Writing Tutors*—are edited collections, I will focus on a selection of articles that I believe to be most relevant to the discussion at hand (i.e., those that focus on NNES response models, sentence-level concerns, and NNES cultural understanding).

Specifically, in *ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors*, the discussion of NNES response models will focus on: 1) Cynthia Linville, “Editing Line by Line”; 2) Paul Kei Matsuda and Michelle Cox, “Reading an ESL Writer’s Text”; and 3) Jennifer E. Staben and Kathryn Dempsey Nordhaus, “Looking at the Whole Text”. The discourse analysis will focus on: 4) Shanti Bruce, “Listening to and Learning From ESL Writers” and 5) Ilona Leki, “Before the Conversation: A Sketch of Some Possible Backgrounds, Experiences, and Attitudes Among ESL Students Visiting a Writing Center”.

In *The St. Martin’s Sourcebook for Writing Tutors*, the discussion of NNES response models and discourse analysis will focus on: 1) Jeff Brooks, “Minimalist Tutoring: Making the Student Do All the Work”; 2) Sharon A. Myers, “Reassessing the ‘Proofreading Trap’: ESL Tutoring and Writing Instruction”; 3) Stephen M. North, “The Idea of a Writing Center”; and 4) Thonus, Terese, “Tutor and Student Assessments of Academic Writing Tutorials: What is ‘Success’?”
While an array of “best-practices” for conducting NNES tutorials have appeared in recent scholarship, writing center administrators and those deeply involved in tutor training seem unsure of how to incorporate them in light of the advice offered by tutor training literature, which has consistently promoted certain response models that seem to be in direct conflict. In considering the most popular tutor training texts side by side, the two approaches most frequently endorsed—and indeed, the approaches that I have seen most often practiced in writing centers today—are the non-directive model and the cultural informant model. While these approaches can be of tremendous value in many tutorials, strict adherence to any one model ultimately fails to address the concerns voiced by survey respondents and to negotiate the complex relationships between tutors, NNES writers, instructors, and writing center practice, thus contributing to the tutor frustration we see today.

The Non-Directive Model

As writing centers have traditionally strived to produce better writers, not just better papers, training materials often seek to enable students’ independence. They assert that the tutorial goal is for writers to leave having learned some transferrable skill that they could utilize in the future; the aim tends to be revision, not editing, and thus large-scale concerns are emphasized over the local-level (Brooks, “Minimalist Tutoring” and North, “The Idea of a Writing Center” in Murphy and Sherwood; Williams, “Tutoring and Revision”). Furthermore, tutors are taught strategies to address these concerns collaboratively, thereby keeping authority over the text in the writer’s hands (Brooks, “Minimalist Tutoring” in Murphy and Sherwood; Thonus, “How to Communicate Politely”; Thonus, “What Are the Differences?”; Williams and Severino). One popular strategy is for tutors to work as non-directive Socratic questioners, gently guiding writers to discover their own answers (Brooks, “Minimalist Tutoring” and North, “The Idea of a Writing Center” in Murphy and Sherwood; Thonus, “How to Communicate Politely”; Williams and Severino). The Bedford Guide strongly endorses this approach, telling tutors that “writers should always be responsible for and in control of their own papers” (Ryan and Zimmerelli 30); therefore tutors should “use guiding questions and comments to help writers recognize their difficulties and come up with their own solutions for revising their texts” (Ryan and Zimmerelli 3). By using a non-directive approach, “[tutors] help [writers] to acquire strategies and skills that will work not just for this paper but for others as well” (Ryan and
Zimmerelli 29). *The Longman Guide*, which also promotes a non-directive approach driven by Socratic questioning, acknowledges that “Obviously, this is slow (and sometimes tedious) work, but what you are doing is teaching the writer, not correcting texts or claiming ownership” (Gillespie and Lerner 126). Overall, discussion of the non-directive approach appeared in all training materials.

This approach is encouraged with both NES and NNES writers, higher- and lower-order concerns alike. *The Bedford Guide* tells tutors that, “When you work with second language writers, respond first to the content and organization of their papers, as you would with any writer,” commanding the prioritization of higher order concerns in all tutorials (Ryan and Zimmerelli 66). *The Longman Guide*, though acknowledging the potential desire to work at the sentence level, similarly advises tutors that “NNS writers will still be seeking feedback on meaning, structure, and evidence; unlike some native English writers, they will also be seeking feedback and instruction on English grammar and usage. However, we urge you not to give in to the easy inclination to tackle LOCs before HOCs” (Gillespie and Lerner 121). Furthermore, LOC stands for “later-order concern” in *The Longman Guide*. This choice was meant to acknowledge that for some teachers and students, sentence-level issues are in fact not a low priority; however, it also suggests that even if writers want to focus on grammar, higher order concerns should still always come first in tutorials. *The Longman Guide* states just as much:

> Even in sessions in which writers report that they need help just with grammar and usage, our approach is first to talk about the assignment, the writers’ approach to the assignment, and the gist of what the writers are trying to say in their papers. These conversations in and of themselves will often lead to the writers expressing concern about higher-order matters and dictate a session less focused on later-order concerns. (Gillespie and Lerner 122)

*The Longman Guide* also includes a table that contrasts the tutor’s role with the role she’s not supposed to play—that of editor. And while this training manual recognizes that some tutorials will include some degree of focus on sentence-level concerns, it simply tells tutors that “all it takes for NNS writers to supply a correction is for you to point with your index finger at the problem” (Gillespie and Lerner 125). However, there is no advice for how to proceed in the event that the writer cannot self-correct the indicated error, potentially leaving both the tutor and writer at an impasse. *The Bedford Guide’s* recommendations go a little further, telling tutors to
work on either patterns of error or a small portion of the text and “not just to correct mistakes but also to explain how writers can identify and correct future sentence-level errors” by “demonstrat[ing] how making appropriate changes renders it more effective” (Ryan and Zimmerelli 51-52). Again, this text ultimately does not prepare tutors to actually identify and explain sentence-level error in a meaningful way, equip them with strategies to demonstrate appropriate changes, or explain what even constitutes such a change.

The ideology behind the non-directive approach is commendable, and its widespread use could indicate its value to many tutorials. When taught and applied inflexibly, however, its reach is limited. Given writing centers’ emphasis on writer authority, tutors ought to work with students’ writing goals in mind. However, writers come to the writing center for a wide variety of reasons, some of which—such as working on grammar—may conflict with the priorities associated with a non-directive approach. Indeed, the tutor training manuals examined here instruct tutors “to deflect or postpone the requests of writers who come into the center wishing to focus on grammar” and instead suggest focusing first on writers’ texts as a whole (Brooks, “Minimalist Tutoring” in Murphy and Sherwood; Gillespie and Lerner; Ryan and Zimmerelli; Williams and Severino). This practice stems in part from the effort to dispel the persistent impression that writing centers’ primary function is to provide editing services. While this is an important mission, strictly non-directive approaches encourages other questionable practices. First, it risks having tutors put their own concerns ahead of writers’ or even ignoring writers’ concerns entirely. This mentality is evinced in the The Longman Guide, which states that even though NNES writers may struggle with reading aloud or to identify and self-correct errors as they go, they should still “ask them to read their whole texts aloud. This approach not only gives NNS writers practice in English pronunciation (and many will ask you how to pronounce certain words), but gives you a chance to assess the text as a whole and address those higher-order concerns that you feel need scrutiny” (Gillespie and Lerner 122). Again, this approach encourages tutors to attend to what they—or in some cases, the training materials’ authors—feel needs work and to do so with practice that suit them, which risks preempting the goals a writer came to the center to address, and with techniques ill-matched for her strengths. Furthermore, Grimm points out that as “lower order concerns, which are often markers of identity, race, and class, are…often overlooked,” students who are “true outsiders” neither have say in whether or
not they assimilate nor the tools to penetrate or challenge dominant discourses ("Retheorizing Writing Center Work" 84).

The edited collections examined here, on the other hand, both contain articles that attend to the intersection of sentence-level and NNES-specific concerns (i.e., Linville’s, “Editing Line by Line” in Bruce and Rafoth; Myers, “Reassessing the ‘Proofreading Trap’” in Murphy and Sherwood). These two texts work to prepare tutors to both address sentence-level concerns in ways that attend to writers’ voiced goals and that still impart transferrable education; Myers contends that it may be beneficial in some cases to go against traditional practice and attend to LOCs before higher order concerns, while Linville provides concrete strategies for teaching writers to self-correct their own errors. The downfall, however, is because this advice still cannot be found all in one place, it remains more difficult (versus, say, a single tutor training text) for teachers to curate and thus for tutors to accesses. And as this advice has yet to appear in training manuals themselves, the majority of tutors tend to be stumped when faced with sentence-level issues.

Another popular component of the non-directive approach is reading papers aloud. Both tutor training manuals recommend beginning sessions this way, and NNES-specific resources in edited collections make the same recommendations (Brooks “Minimalist Tutoring” in Murphy and Sherwood; Gillespie and Lerner; Linville, “Editing Line by Line,” Matsuda and Cox, “Reading an ESL Writer’s Text,” and Staben and Nordhaus, “Looking at the Whole Text” in Bruce and Rafoth; Ryan and Zimmerelli, to name only a few). This technique is promoted for addressing higher order and lower order concerns alike. The Longman Guide explains that the reasoning behind having writers read their own texts aloud is that it keeps writers in control of their papers, and as The Bedford Guide points out, as writers read out loud, “they often make corrections as they go, for the ear frequently judges more accurately than the eye” (Gillespie and Lerner; Ryan and Zimmerelli 53). One specific scenario described in The Bedford Guide tells tutors: “To improve choppy writing, have the writer read the paper aloud. (Often it is easier for the writer to detect choppiness when reading aloud than when reading silently.)” and that “to improve the voice of the paper, ask the writer, ‘Do you talk like this?’” (Ryan and Zimmerelli 51-52). The limitation here, of course, is that not every NNES student may be able to see or hear grammatical errors the same way that NESs assumedly can; therefore, they may require more direct guidance. Furthermore, asking a writer if they speak as they write assumes that their
spoken English is error-free and is nuanced enough to sense necessary changes in tone (e.g., spoken vs. written, casual vs. formal, etc.). While *The Longman Guide* does acknowledge that reading aloud might be difficult for NNES writers, the alternative offered is for tutors to read the paper aloud instead (Gillespie and Lerner). However, if the reasoning is to keep the paper physically in the hands of the writer and to have the writer correct errors as they read—the stated goals for having NES writers read aloud—this strategy accomplishes neither.

When it comes to NNES students, then, the non-directive model could actually deny writers the very agency and transferrable writing education that it seeks to achieve. Indeed, more recent NNES-specific scholarship has suggested that a more direct approach may be beneficial to NNES students in certain scenarios (Bell and Youmans; Blau and Hall; Cogie; Nurmukhamedov and Kim; Ritter; Thonus, “How to Communicate Politely”; Thonus, “What Are the Differences?”; Thonus, “What is ‘Success’?” in Murphy and Sherwood; Williams, “Tutoring and Revision”; Williams and Severino). Specifically, as Myers and others point out, research suggests that direct advice accompanied by tutor explanation and tutor-writer negotiation can aid in the acquisition and future application of rule-based systems such as grammar (Blau and Hall; Cogie; Myers, “Reassessing the ‘Proofreading Trap’” in Murphy and Sherwood; Williams, “Tutoring and Revision”). Linville is the most successful in preparing tutors to address sentence-level concerns in this way: she lists the most common written errors tutors may see as well as steps for how to address these errors in an educational way (Bruce and Rafoth). And doing so does not necessarily mean the abandonment of larger-level writing concerns. Several scholars have observed that “sentence-level tutoring tended to lead…to discussions of meaning and thus to the resolution of the frequently noted conflict between the agendas of ESL learners, eager for error correction, and the agendas of tutors, who are typically trained to focus first on whole-essay concerns” (Blau and Hall; Cogie 49; Myers, “Reassessing the ‘Proofreading Trap’” in Murphy and Sherwood). However, the most popular tutor training manuals have not incorporated this advice. If writing centers encourage a non-directive approach in order to enable writer agency through the teaching of transferrable writing skills, they neglect to consider that for NNES writers, achieving the same goals may necessitate a more direct model.

The non-directive approach also fails to consider that NNES students may be prompted to visit the by their instructors. When mechanical correctness is emphasized over content—an attitude that persists among some teachers (Blau and Hall; Grimm, *Good Intentions*; Lu; Zamel)
—they may respond by simply marking up “errors” and issuing a grade, or by sending students “who have ‘problems’ with ‘usage’ to the writing center” to have their errors “corrected” (Lu 443; Williams, “The Role(s) of Writing Centers”). And while recent studies suggest that NNES status did not negatively impact mainstream teachers’ evaluations of writing quality, teachers did judge writers based on surface errors when those errors were associated with non-standardized dialects like African-American Vernacular English (Wilson). Furthermore, Rubin and Williams-James’ research found that “[j]udgements of the quality of [NNES] papers…were solely related to the instructors’ detection of surface error. Although instructors were not more prone to find surface error in NNS writing, what error they did find they used as the exclusive basis for their evaluations of ESL students in particular” (Rubin and Williams-James 366). Such pressure from faculty might cause NNES students to be particularly anxious about sentence-level correctness.

The Longman Guide acknowledges this reality, warning tutors of “the instructor who just sends NNS students to the writing center, telling students, ‘Have the writing center fix that paper and come back to me so that I can grade your content.’ So often you won’t be dealing only with a writer’s request for a grammar check, but also a classroom instructor’s” (Gillespie and Lerner 120). Thonus speculates that when this occurs in the writing center that strictly adheres to a non-directive approach, “What often emerges are subcurrents of fear and frustration: As a tutor, I’m supposed to employ a Socratic approach, to let the student take ownership of his/her writing, avoid telling him/her what to do…Do I simply send the student back to his/her instructor?” (“What Are the Differences?” 240). However, Blau and Hall point out that “a professor who grades NNES writers harshly for their writing errors may also make the students afraid to approach the professor for help,” thus leaving the writing center to fill this role (32).

The non-directive model may cause us to refuse to provide such education—problematic in and of itself—and in the case of teachers who value form over content, this could further result in consistently penalized grades, thereby further “oppressing the very students most dependent on writing center assistance” (Grimm, Good Intentions xvii).

Furthermore, the non-directive approach contains the unspoken assumption that all writers have the same understanding of the same cultural knowledge. The Bedford Guide, for example, tells tutors to ask questions such as, “How would you fix this paragraph?” or “What do you see as the problem here?” and to “guide [writers] toward considering the audience [by asking questions] such as “What does your audience know about…?” or “How can you make
that clear to your audience?” (Ryan and Zimmerelli 54, 43). Such Socratic questioning assumes that writers already know the expectations of academic writing and its audiences and simply need some guidance to successfully apply them (Grimm, “Retheorizing Writing Center Work” 84). For some NNES writers—particularly international students who have have limited exposure to U.S. academic culture—this simply may not yet be the case. And as Williams points out:

> There is much that no amount of questioning, indirect or otherwise, could ever elicit from these writers because there is so much that they simply do not know or understand about their L2 academic writing. In some of the data presented here, non-directive tutoring led to almost absurdly circuitous interactions, in which the writer engaged in a sort of guessing game. (“Tutoring and Revision” 195)

Indeed, asking a writer a question like, “What is the thesis of this text?” assumes quite a bit about the writer: that she is not only familiar with the term “thesis” (as opposed to synonyms like argument, main idea, etc.) but that she has adopted it to her vocabulary; that she knows what a thesis does or what it looks like; that she has a background in reading or writing in the L2 that offers hints to where to look for it if she cannot immediately recall, etc. When it comes to sentence-level issues, a non-directive approach can become even more futile; saying “You wrote, ‘I have an large family.’ How should you fix that?” calls upon writers to access knowledge of article use, which tends to be one of the most difficult aspects of English language acquisition. In essence, this is not a neutral but rather a culture-specific approach that benefits speakers of dominants forms of language. For NNES writers, “who’s work in English carries markers of non-dominant…languages and cultures” (Grimm, “Retheorizing Writing Center Work” 84), this approach tends to be more frustrating than educational, the writer trying to read the tutor’s mind and perhaps never getting to “the right answer.”

Furthermore, without access to necessary cultural conventions, writers are unable to participate in writer-tutor collaboration—a key to a successful tutorial (Bell and Youmans). Assuming uniform levels of English proficiency, expectations of educational spaces and roles, and cultural conceptions of politeness norms may also potentially hinder NNES understanding and render non-directive suggestions even less effective. For example, while the non-directive model often relies on politely hedging suggestions (e.g., “Would you perhaps consider…”) or preceding critiques with compliments (e.g., “Your introduction is great, but…”), these are again
culturally-specific rhetorical strategies that many researchers have found can further contribute to cross-cultural miscommunication; speaking more directly may increase NNES understanding and retention of tutorial contents (Bell and Youmans; Blau and Hall; Cogie; Harris; Nurmukhamedov and Kim).

Training materials may enthusiastically promote a thoroughly non-directive approach in an attempt to discourage tutors from enacting its opposite—that is, a directive approach. Thus without proper training in alternative approaches, and out of a sincere desire to help make a difference for student writers, tutors may feel torn between or overwhelmed by the conflicts above and in some cases resort to an overly-directive approach characterized by line-editing for grammatical and lexical errors—all in an attempt to “help” NNES writers (Blau and Hall; Bokser; Grimm, Good Intentions; Myers, “Reassessing the ‘Proofreading Trap’” in Murphy and Sherwood; Ritter; Thonus, “What is ‘Success’?” in Murphy and Sherwood). Of course, such an overly-directive approach is also problematic. Like the rigidly non-directive model, this approach betrays the writing center’s mission: if tutors simply tell NNES writers what to “fix,” they may leave with “better papers”—that is, more grammatically “correct” writing—but not “better writers,” perhaps having learned nothing. Though Blau and Hall assert that “no good writing teacher would correct students’ errors for them” (24-25), it is one of the most prominent national tutorial concerns and a pattern that I have both observed and admittedly taken part in with NNES writers—as has at least one writing center director (Gadbow). In an effort to “help” the student succeed, the overly-directive tutor has in fact discouraged an opportunity for negotiation and active exchange with the writer, which can lead to a greater understanding of the English language, more text-based revision, and a tutorial that mutually perceived as successful (Bell and Youmans; Blau and Hall; Cogie; Myers, “Reassessing the ‘Proofreading Trap’” in Murphy and Sherwood; Ritter; Thonus, “How to Communicate Politely”; Thonus, “What Are the Differences?”; Thonus, “What is ‘Success’?” in Murphy and Sherwood; Williams, “Tutoring and Revision”).

The sociopolitical implications of an overly directive approach are also troubling. By line-editing, the tutor is replacing the NNES writers’ work with what she believes to be “correct” academic discourse—likely standardized American academic English, as tutors are often hired based at least partially on their success in writing in such settings. As Grimm points out, promoting a particular form of literacy—particularly in light of the “better writers, not better
writing” ideology—proposes that “to change the identity of the writer” through changing their language is essentially a covert effort to “make him or her ‘better’” (“Retheorizing Writing Center Work” 87). In the attempt to “help” this student, the tutor is in fact “reiterat[ing] dynamics of ‘right’/’wrong,’ ‘correct’/’incorrect’ in the presence of multiple languages while reinforcing linguistic homogenization and… neglect[ing]… linguistic diversity” (Kinloch 84). In effect, an overly-directive approach tends to suggest the inferiority of non-standardized languages and dialects and positions these writers in terms of what they “lack,” thus subtly asserting already-dominant languages and cultures as superior—the same languages and cultures which have thus far oppressed NNES writers in U.S. colleges and universities. What’s more, making these choices for NNES writers pressures students to assimilate to U.S. academic literacy norms, “forcibly erasing [their] first language” (Kinloch 83). Without proper training, tutors may be unaware of these sociopolitical implications, and without such cultural awareness, “we convince ourselves that we are ‘doing good’ by helping students survive academically” (Grimm, Good Intentions 47). However, these actions refuse the opportunity for linguistic multiplicity within the university, which would in fact empower NNES writers, and further risks the replication of problematic cultural biases.

The Cultural Informant Model

A popular alternative to the non-directive approach—and a second model frequently discussed in the most popular tutor training materials—is commonly referred to as the cultural informant approach. Indeed, as The Bedford Guide notes, “Culture determines acceptable ways of presenting information, and in a tutoring session, acknowledging cultural differences often means explaining appropriate rhetorical patterns for standard academic English” (Ryan and Zimmerelli 65). First proposed by Powers in 1993, this model acknowledges cultural difference and attempts to account for some of the limitations of directive/non-directive binary behavior: tutors act partially as “cultural informants,” directly explaining academic expectations, and partially as “Socratic questioners,” still maintaining student ownership of the text by guiding, not telling, whenever possible (Cogie; Blau and Hall; Harris; Myers, “Reassessing the ‘Proofreading Trap’” in Murphy and Sherwood; Powers; Ritter; Williams and Severino). This approach features prominently in The Longman Guide. In tutorials, tutors are to “talk about what tutor and writer responsibilities should be in a session. For cultural issues that have to do with what’s in a writer’s
text, discuss your expectations for what [some aspect of writing] should look like and why you believe this to be the case” (Gillespie and Lerner 119). In addition to written, academic, and genre conventions, NNES writers may “also be looking toward you, if you are a native speaker of English, to help them with idioms, to share some of your cultural knowledge” (Gillespie and Lerner 124). In this case, *The Longman Guide* recognizes the limitations of non-directive, Socratic questioning and advises tutors that “If NNS writers need direct or indirect articles or American idioms, you can give them those. This is not dishonest—they simply have nowhere else to get this information” (Gillespie and Lerner 124). In this slightly more flexible model, “directness proved helpful to meeting the ESL students’ need for cultural information and for avoiding the related tendency for Socratic questioning to deteriorate into ‘trolling for the right answer’” (Blau and Hall; Cegie).

This model does tend to account for some of the flaws of strictly directive and non-directive approaches, and the recognition and discussion of differing cultural values in tutor training and practice is both necessary and valuable. However, this approach is still limited in several ways. First, the cultural exchange occurring in these scenarios is rather one-sided; as the model is proposed, L1 language and culture impacts L2 language and culture, but not vice-versa. Tutors tend to be communicatively dominant within tutorials, and even more so in sessions with NNES writers (Cogie; Thonus, “How to Communicate Politely”; Thonus, “What Are the Differences?”; Thonus, “What is ‘Success’?” in Murphy and Sherwood; Williams, “Tutoring and Revision”; Williams and Severino). This model only further encourages tutor dominance. And because of this unidirectional “exchange,” the cultural informant approach defines NNES students in terms of deficiency, inherently lacking knowledge. Furthermore, this model imagines a tutor role where dominant linguistic and cultural norms may simply be “deposited” onto writers without negotiation or explanation. *The Longman Guide* demonstrates this mentality, writing that “[Y]ou’ll have great opportunities to enable NNS writers to transcend their previous schooling and express themselves in sophisticated ways” (Gillespie and Lerner 121). Again, this model assumes that NNES are needing to “transcend” their past, suggesting that their first language, culture, and education are things that need to be overcome and erased rather than positive contributions that the university could benefit and learn from. Coming from positions of power, such responses can reinforce institutional values regarding linguistic and cultural superiority (Severino, “Sociopolitical Implications”).
This model also makes problematic assumptions about writing center staff. First, in assuming that the tutor inherently holds cultural information about U.S. cultural norms, it paints a picture of a tutor who is very much in line with those norms—in other words, it sets a “norm” for tutors and does not acknowledge the possibility for any non-normative staff. Most obviously, automatically assuming that tutors already have the necessary information about U.S. cultural and academic norms also assumes that tutors are either NES students or have spent a significant amount of familiarity with its education system and communication conventions—which is not often the case for international NNES students. *The Longman Guide* clearly communicates this biased expectation, writing that “Certainly, these concerns [about ESL writers] are understandable; after all, many of you have had little contact up to this point with ESL writers” (Gillespie and Lerner 117). What is implied, of course, is that tutors are NES and come from largely homogenous NES backgrounds. However, not all tutors are NES; several survey respondents noted employing NNES tutors. Assumptions like this only further marginalize NNES individuals as outsiders in writing centers. Implying that NNES students solely visit—but do not staff—writing centers risks perpetuating a system where NNES tutors are seen as somehow abnormal by the student body, discouraging NNES students from becoming tutors and explaining their being seen as untrusted resources.

Secondly, the cultural informant model leaves the cultural information tutors give to students in the hands of a single individual, and suggests that this information is conveyed as a writing rule and in a non-negotiable fashion. If tutors hold biased cultural perceptions—albeit even unknowingly—they may carry these expectations into tutorials and convey them to writers. Such responses coming from positions of power—no matter if they are also coming from a place of good will—can enforce linguistic and cultural assimilation, marginalize speakers of other languages and dialects, and reinforce institutional values regarding linguistic and cultural superiority and inferiority (Hull, Rose, Fraser, and Castellano; Severino, “Sociopolitical Implications”; Verplaeste). And as research has demonstrated, differing cultural expectations have created an “unshakable belief in the authority of the writing tutor” for some NNES students (Thonus, “What Are the Differences?” 236). If tutors are viewed as authoritative “informants,” they may risk dominating and depositing over negotiating and collaborating.

Of course, refusing to discuss cultural information is similarly problematic. NNES writers are all in the process of acquiring a second language and thus are continuing to learn
morphological, syntactical, etc. rule systems of the English language as well as larger rhetorical conventions and expectations. Failing to recognize this reality, tutors could refuse writers’ requests to cover this information, or the tutor could intentionally avoid these topics even if they recognize that these areas of a paper could benefit from such a discussion. In such scenarios, the tutor in effect becomes a gatekeeper, withholding knowledge necessary to succeed in the university, such as dominant expectations of academic literacy, from NNES writers. Leki’s “Before the Conversation” in *ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors* acknowledges this reality: NNES and NES students often complete the same classes, tests, and writing assignments, in essence competing for grades and eventually jobs (Bruce and Rafoth). Those students who are familiar with U.S. academic expectations can use this knowledge to advance while those who do not have access to this information could be denied the same opportunities. Because of this, refusing cultural knowledge could disenfranchise NNES writers.

The reality is that the growing population of NNES students visiting writing centers may have wants and needs that differ from NESs’. They may want to acquire this knowledge—and tutors may want to “help” writers by simply telling them what to do—in order to improve chances of success within the university. Certainly, writing centers, tutorial models, and training literature are continually evolving; however, how the most popular tutor training materials currently instruct tutors to work with NNES students is often limited and problematic. The two tutorial approaches most often promoted in popular writing center literature—the non-directive/directive and the cultural informant models of response—while valuable, often fall short in considering and balancing NNES writers’ goals with respect for the larger cultural and sociopolitical frameworks in which both tutors and students live. Each text considered here has many strengths to contribute to tutor training, but no single work completely addresses all of most prominent tutorial concerns. Indeed, as the analysis above shows, training literature may not only not address but in fact may contribute to the most prominent NNES-specific tutorial concerns.

“**Good readers usually recognize a problem…**: A Textual Analysis of the Portrayal of NNES Writers

A major goal of tutor training materials is to impart theoretical frameworks and practical pedagogical strategies and techniques, like those just discussed. However, these materials
inevitably convey much more—knowingly or not—through the very wording of the text itself. Given the increasing diversification of the collegiate student body, more and more training materials recognize the importance of incorporating, rather than ignoring, discussions of linguistic and cultural diversity and their potential significance in the writing center. Indeed, all of the most popular training materials make efforts to characterize, to varying degrees, the backgrounds and characteristics of NNES students. These attempts are necessary to prepare tutors for the tutorials with NNES writers that they will inevitably participate in in the center; tutors ought to have a general idea of what NNES writers might expect from them—as well as what they as tutors might expect from NNES writers—and to contextualize NNES writers’ educational background and current experiences as a college student in the U.S.

As cultural biases are prominent concerns in writing centers nationwide, examining the conversations surrounding NNES students seems key; such discourses could be suggesting problematic ideologies that could leak into and impact writing center work. But conveying stereotyped perceptions of and beliefs about NNES students—inadvertently or otherwise—is more than just a theoretical concern: essentialized, prejudicial, and incomplete perceptions of what it means to be “ESL” are so wide-spread that some NNES students seek to avoid the label entirely. In case studies of three NNES students, Ortmeier-Hooper states that “‘ESL,’ ‘bicultural,’ and ‘bilingual’ backgrounds are not always seen as positive markers by students, no matter how we try to frame diversity as a positive attribute” (410). Chiang and Schmida similarly found that labels such as “linguistic minority” often hindered these students because they “are expected to stumble over the English language” (406). Students internalized these expectations and were led to “see themselves as incapable of owning the language” (Chiang and Schmida 406).

And not only do some NNES students feel that the label is a negative marker linked with incompetence, but limited or exclusionary: “terms as ‘ESL’ and ‘Generation1.5’ are often problematic for students and mask a wide range of student experiences and expectations.” Harklau echoes Ortmeier-Hooper’s conclusion, noting that “the representation of ESOL students…did not reflect their backgrounds and experience, and because of this mismatch the students often found themselves cast as deficient” (130). Consequently, “students who are still in need of some language instruction can view such support as “stigmatized and are insulted by designation as an ‘ESL student’” (Ortmeier-Hooper 392). These studies suggest that NNES

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students are repeatedly treated as deficient and that the label was perceived in such broad
generalizations that NNES students themselves did not identify with the term. In what follows, I
conduct a textual analysis of the discussion of NNES students in writing center literature to
ascertain how the cultural values conveyed may influence these perceptions.

Readers will first note where in the course of the text the discussion of NNES writers
occurs. Interestingly, in both training manuals and one edited collection, discussion of NNES
writers is set apart in a distinct section falling in the middle-latter portion of the text. (Bruce and
Rafoth’s *ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors*, the NNES-specific collection, of
course sets NNES-discussion apart entirely.) In *The Longman Guide to Peer Tutoring*, “Working
With ESL Writers” is a full, ten-page chapter—the ninth of thirteen—specifically devoted to
preparing tutors to work with NNES writers. In *The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors*, “The
Writers You Tutor” is the fifth of nine chapters; in it, “The Second Language Writer” is the
second to last “category” of writer discussed and consists of a five-page subsection devoted to
NNES-specific concerns. Finally, the discussion of NNES writers in *The St. Martin’s Sourcebook
for Writing Tutors* falls primarily under the third of four segments: “Affirming Diversity”. It
contains only one NNES-specific article—Myers’s “Reassessing the ‘Proofreading Trap’,” which
centers around the debate regarding addressing sentence-level issues in tutorials. Two additional
articles explicitly mention NNES writers, but they are not the primary focus. The segregation
and later placement of the discussion of NNES writers in these texts immediately marks these
students as “Other,” and could suggest to tutors that NNES writers are somehow separate from,
outside of, or fundamentally distinct from NES writers. In so doing, tutor training materials
indicate that working with NNES writers is completely distinct from the work done with NES
writers, a division that risks keeping tutors from transferring valuable pedagogical strategies
from NES to NNES writers and vice-versa (Zamel 68). And while NNES writers constitute a
significant portion of tutorials in many writing centers, as my data demonstrates, the amount of
physical space they occupy in these texts is far out of proportion with the amount of space and
time they occupy in many centers. This, in addition to the placement of NNES-specific content
later in the text, could suggest that working with NNES writers is somehow less of a priority.

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13 Barron and Grimm, “Addressing Racial Diversity in a Writing Center: Stories and Lessons from Two Beginners” and Thonus, “Tutor and Student Assessments of Academic Writing Tutorials: What is ‘Success’?”
However, when it comes to the descriptions of NNES writers, the tutor training materials examined here depict NNES students as intelligent, motivated, and academically driven. In “Working With ESL Writers,” the authors of The Longman Guide, for example, state that in their experience, “[S]ome of our strongest and most gifted writers did not speak or write English as their first language” (Gillespie and Lerner 118). Such a description portrays NNES students as capable, accomplished, and talented—in both the L1 and L2. More often, though, praise of NNES students’ strengths emphasizes non-linguistic aspects of writing, such as unique cultural perspective, novel rhetorical approach, or the diligence in putting forth the incredible effort required to do college-level work in another language. The Bedford Guide, for example, writes that, “Sometimes, second language writers are serious students who do very well in some classes and are unaccustomed to encountering difficulties with a course; therefore, they find their problems with writing in English especially frustrating” (Ryan and Zimmerelli 67). As in The Longman Guide, The Bedford Guide suggests that many NNES writers are intellectually committed and academically successful, but when it comes to these same students expressing themselves in English, they inevitably have difficulty.

In the NNES-specific works, descriptions of NNES students are also positive but similarly described as limited when it comes to communicating in English. In Bruce and Rafoth’s ESL Writers, Leki’s “Before the Conversation” states that international NNES students are “often very successful academically…., carry the reputation among disciplinary professors of having an impressive work ethic, and may display an overt interest in the life of the mind, sometimes viewing themselves as the intellectual elite”; however, once again, while NNES students have the “ability to flexibly access and manipulate their first language smoothly and easily,” this is “a facility that they may not feel in their second language either orally or in text form” (7). Because these paltry attempts to highlight NNES writers’ academic assets always precede the main focus of how to deal with their weaknesses—a rhetorical strategy familiar to NES administrators and tutors alike—they tend to read, at worst, as obligatory posing or, at best, like pleas for respect.

While descriptions of NNES students are prima facie positive, a closer reading of tutor training manuals implies the opposite: that NNES writers are somehow deficient, a problem or challenge that tutors must face as part of their job. In The Bedford Guide, “The Writers You Tutor” describes a variety of students that they may encounter. However, the text advises tutors that “Some writers—those with writing anxiety, basic writing skills, or learning disabilities or
those for whom English is a second language…may present special challenges for tutors” (Ryan
and Zimmerelli 58). Grouping all of these writers together not only suggests that the needs of
these writers are somehow alike, but it associates NNES students with rudimentary or “basic”
skill as well as handicap or impairment. Similarly, as The Longman Guide discusses NNES
writers, it goes on to say that “Whether in their native countries or in NNS classes in the
American public school system, approaches to remediating underprepared students are little cure
for the ‘problem’” (Gillespie and Lerner 121). The scare quotes do little to negate the suggestion
that once again NNES students’ background and knowledge base is elementary, insufficient, and
a troublesome sickness in need of fixing.

Descriptions like this one furthermore state that NNES writers are somehow the source of
problems in the academic community, a message repeated throughout the training material; The
Bedford Guide, for example, states that, “ESL writers can sometimes pose a challenge for tutors.
Their difficulties with composition involve not only language but also unfamiliar customs and
ways of thinking that may be reflected in their writing” (Ryan and Zimmerelli 65). Again, NNES
writers are surrounded by terms like “challenge,” “difficulties,” and “unfamiliar,” painting a
rather negative picture of these writers. NNES writers are suggested to have “unfamiliar
customs,” both exoticizing and contrasting all NNES languages and backgrounds with those of
tutors, who are suggested to be NES. Furthermore, this statement forwards the questionable
notion that NNES students think in a fundamentally different way than NES students, and that
such thinking puts them at a disadvantage when writing. Overall, these messages collapse
together all NNES cultures into a single, monolithic entity—one that is positioned not only
against but below that of NES tutors—not only erasing difference between cultures but also
individuals.

These negative messages are carried into the suggestions The Bedford Guide offers for
working with NNES writers, telling tutors to “balance between sympathy and encouragement”
by “discuss[ing] aspects of the paper in terms of what might be more effective instead of what is
inadequate or wrong” (Ryan and Zimmerelli 67, 58). Again, NNES writers are portrayed as
sympathetic figures in need of tutor encouragement and guidance because their written work is
deficient and unsuitable. The Bedford Guide inadvertently sends these messages even outside of
NNES-centered contexts; indeed, when discussing the practice of reading aloud in a tutorial, they
note that “Good readers usually recognize a problem, though they may not always be able to
explain it technically” (Ryan and Zimmerelli 52). As some NNES writers may not have the ear or eye for the same issues that might stand out to an NES writer, this advice implies that NNES writers are unintelligent or poor readers. The Longman Guide similarly feels the need to persuade tutors into working with NNES writers by telling them that “There is such a contagious enthusiasm when students who struggle more than average have a breakthrough” (Gillespie and Lerner 118). This statement immediately suggests that NNES writers are academically below average and that working with them, though worthwhile, could be burdensome. Talking about NNES students in terms of what they lack rather than what the university stands to gain and portraying them, not the writing center, as the problem that needs to change could foster the cultural biases writing center administrators see today.

Discussions of NNES writers in the training manuals examined are also closely accompanied by the topic of grammar, which is significant given that one of the most prominent tutorial concerns was tutors assuming that NNES writers want to focus on grammar, even if the writer expresses otherwise. The Longman Guide opens their chapter on working with NNES by stating that, “We have often found that a large source of anxiety for new tutors surrounds the work they will do with ESL writers. ‘Will my knowledge of grammatical terms and rules be adequate?’ they wonder. ‘Will my session get bogged down in line-by-line identification and correction of error?’ they fear” (Gillespie and Lerner 117). Beginning the chapter this way immediately associates NNES writers with fear, apprehension, and suggests that tutorials with them will in fact focus on grammatical correction and line-editing. And despite going on to attempting to dispel assumptions like these—”Myth #3—NNS WRITERS COME TO THE WRITING CENTER TO GET THEIR GRAMMAR CHECKED”—they also on to “advise [tutors] to spend time with your favorite grammar handbook and become familiar with explanations to common grammatical problems” (Gillespie and Lerner 123). Of course, tutors should be prepared to address grammatical concerns, and it is important to acknowledge that this could be a part of tutorials; however, sending inconsistent messages to tutors could cause confusion, contributing to the difficulties tutors have discussing sentence-level concerns. The Bedford Guide makes similar connections in their discussion of NNES writers, among them that, “Some second language writers work diligently to master rules for English usage and can cite and apply grammar rules correctly in an exercise but have difficulty applying them as they write an essay” (Ryan and Zimmerelli 66).
These associations occur far less in the NNES-specific articles in the edited collections, with the exception of Myers’s “Reassessing the ‘Proofreading Trap’” in Murphy and Sherwood’s *The St. Martin’s Guide*, which centers around the debate regarding addressing sentence-level concerns in tutorials. Indeed, the first sentence reads, “ESL writers present a common dilemma to writing centers—the desire for sentence-level interventions from their tutors” (285). As this is the only NNES-specific article in this collection, it could give the false impression that the only writing issues that NNES writers want to work on in the center are grammar-related. Overall, such consistent coupling of NNES writers and grammar could cause tutors to assume that NNES writers are the only writers who want to work on grammar, and that perhaps they want to work on it exclusively. Entering tutorials with such an assumption could lead to it becoming such a prominent issue in writing centers today.

While generalized descriptions in these texts do tend to lump NNES writers together by describing their background and academic character, the texts do make a point to acknowledge limitations of these descriptions. Alongside its discussion of NNES writers, *The Bedford Guide*, for example, offers this caveat: “While you want to be aware of cultural differences, you should not assume that every writer you meet from a particular culture embodies what you know about that culture…respect them for what they represent: unique ways of looking at the world” (Ryan and Zimmerelli 65). *The Longman Guide* similarly warns tutors, “[D]on’t pigeonhole an NNS writer into a particular mode of thinking because of the rhetorical style to which he or she is accustomed” and that “[Y]ou shouldn’t assume that NNS writers have cultural expectations that are fixed” (Gillespie and Lerner 119). While explanations of cultural difference are valuable and necessary to help tutors better understand and feel prepared for the NNES writers with whom they will work, these concessions are the extent of the training manuals’ attempts at exploring variation between NNES students or international cultures; thus they tend to function more as disclaimers to allow the authors to advise tutors of the potential for cultural difference without having to get into the variation that exists between cultures and individuals within each culture.

The NNES-specific texts examined here, on the other hand, tend to devote a bit more time and space to exploring intercultural variation. Bruce’s “Listening to and Learning From ESL Writers” in Bruce and Rafoth’s *ESL Writers*, for example, aims to remind tutors that “each English as a second language (ESL) student we encounter is an individual” and is entirely devoted to interviews with a variety of NNES writers, exploring their writing needs and goals.
and their expectations of the writing center as an educational space (215). Leki attempts to explore the contexts in which NNES students have lived and learned, as these experiences could help tutors better understand these writers’ communication and academic expectations. She attempts to break down the monolithic label of “ESL” by examining the differing experiences of Generation 1.5, international undergraduate, and international graduate students. However, Leki prefaces these descriptions with the acknowledgement that:

ESL students present a wide range of interests, experiences, and characteristics, making it exceedingly difficult, even dangerous, to discuss them as a group or even groups. In fact, the internal variation of this group is so great that perhaps the only characteristic linking them is the fact that they can function, to a greater or lesser degree, in a language other than English. (“Before the Conversation” in Bruce and Rafoth 2)

While Leki recognizes that even these more in-depth examinations of the variation of ESL students are limited, she argues that “multilingual university students do share certain traits, and examining some of their interests, experiences, and characteristics may encourage a more nuanced, more differentiated, more complicated and three-dimensional view of them than as simply ESL students, foreigners, or people who don’t speak English” (“Before the Conversation” in Bruce and Rafoth 2). Ultimately, she attempts to balance between acknowledging inevitable difference among individual experiences while still offering a general contextualized experience of NNES writers in U.S. academia, offering tutors a “summary” of what they might see when working with NNES writers.

In sum, the materials examined here attempt to prepare tutors for the cross cultural exchanges they will encounter in the writing center by describing some of the potential cultural backgrounds, educational experiences, and linguistic needs of NNES students. While NNES students embody a diverse array of experiences and characteristics, a fact acknowledged by the authors here, attempts are still made to characterize NNES students in order to help tutors understand the context for these writers’ visits to the center. A close reading of the discussion of the NNES students, however, is that these descriptions, even when positive, are essentialized representations of a monolithic “Other culture” that not only encourages NES tutors to see all NNES writers as having the same background, characteristics, and goals, but also all non-American cultures as fundamentally alien to their own. The wording of tutor training manuals
constructs a cultural dichotomy between American academic culture and all Other cultures and creates particular power relations in which the dominant group—the NES tutor—defines the subordinate group, the NNES writer, as the exotic Other. The assumption underlying this approach is that there is a systematic, culturally determined way in which all members in a certain culture think, behave, and act, which when passed on to tutors could result in the problematic biases present in writing centers today.

A Proposal for Change

The rapid increase in enrollment of NNES students has resulted in stress on writing centers nationwide. I believe that the cause of this stress is not NNES students, but rather a limited understanding of NNES writers as well as tutor frustration and guilt with being unable to effectively respond to their concerns. The reality is that the growing population of NNES students visiting writing centers may have wants and needs that differ from NESs’. And while training approaches and training literature offer a lot of valuable advice, when it comes to working with NNES writers, these texts are problematic; in their attempts to prepare tutors for cross cultural exchange, the most popular training materials not only fail to adequately address but in fact may contribute to the most prominent NNES-specific tutorial concerns. Only limited portions of select texts actually prepare tutors with the tools they need to address sentence-level concern in a way that is in line with writing centers’ stated goals, and the discourse surrounding NNES students background and culture tends to be essentialized, exoticized, and dichotimized with that of tutors’. Thus the core of the “problem” is a resistance to change—knowingly or unknowingly—within our writing centers. In attempting to hold onto practices that no longer meet the needs of our changing student body, tutor training materials have been continuing to promote the same limited tutor training models, and, as a result, we find tutors inadequately prepared to work with NNES writers.

Recognizing their limitations and potential for misuse, several scholars have begun to move away from “best practices” for working with NNES writers, like those seen in the training materials examined here, and have instead taken a more critical and theoretical approach to writing center response. I espouse this approach, and call instead for administrative and curricular reform that encourages greater cultural awareness. So that tutors feel better prepared to appropriately and effectively address the two most prominent, nation-wide tutorial issues
discussed earlier, and so that NNES writers are more empowered as writers and scholars, this sort of change seems necessary for many writing centers. This reformation would most immediately benefit tutors, writers, and the writing center—on a more universal, humanistic level, the erasure of cultural bias and its many negative side-effects is always beneficial. The following chapter suggests implementing administrative action and tutor training in a way that keeps growing multilingual and multicultural populations in mind and empowers these students by respecting cultural multiplicity and valuing each individual’s writing goals.
In the spring of 2013—about 18 months after getting involved at Howe—some peers and I are discussing dynamics between NES and NNES students on campus. I mention that while I’m on campus (a perspective admittedly limited in many ways), I see very little cross-cultural interaction; relations appear almost non-existent. In the course of discussion, someone mentions the Twitter account @oxfordasians. This alleged “humor” account is fueled by one student’s racist stereotypes of a generalized Asian population, but it’s content is tailored to Miami University; here, students from East Asia, South East Asia, South Central Asia, Western Asian and the Middle East make up approximately 88% of the international student population.

The account description, plastered over a background of sushi roll graphics, reads: “Must bring great good glory and honor to twitter.” Tweets mock everything from classic Chinese philosophy (“Confucius say man who drop watch in toilet has a shitty time”) to Japanese pop culture iconography (“Miami girls why you not wear more Hello Kitty backpacks?”); they make sweeping generalizations about academic motivation (“Gave blood today. They told me my blood was B-. Why not it A+????”) and erroneous allusions to child labor (“Check out my new Nikes! My little brother made them”). While most tend to generalize Asian international students as a group, tweets occasionally seemed more personal and targeted (“Oh you’ve been sitting in the same seat everyday in class? Let me come really early one day and take it.”). Linguistic markers sometimes associated with language acquisition—errors in verb tense; word deletion; substitution or inversion of letter sounds, such as /ð/ or /θ/ and /ʃ/, or /l/ and /rl/, etc.—permeate the majority of tweets (e.g., “Deck da halls wif bells of hawry fa ra ra ra ra ra ra” and “Father say key to success in USA is drive fancy car even if I can’t drive good,” etc.). At the time of our discussion, the account—run by a White, male NES—had been up for at least six months and had nearly 1,000 followers.

Days later, after drawing negative attention from several English department members, the account is taken down. But the controversy sparks a brief dialogue pointing to a more widespread, deep-rooted, and overarching culture of intolerance on campus. Local articles capture the responses of both international and domestic students of Asian heritage who recall being told to “go back to their own country.” One undergraduate student remarks: “I am saddened, but
honestly not very surprised, because many people have similar sentiments on campus. However, ignoring discrimination does not make it go away, it just gives the aggressor more assurance that what they are doing is acceptable and won’t be challenged.”

Having identified and interrogated the gaps in current popular writing center tutor training practice, the next logical step is to consider how writing centers might resolve these gaps in ways that invite, support, and respect linguistic and cultural diversity (rather than bias against it) and attend to its corresponding complexities (rather than ignore or delay responding to them). Indeed, to responsibly and effectively respond to increasingly diverse student populations, administrators need to enable tutors to support NNES writers’ voiced concerns regarding sentence-level issues as well as attend to individual and institutional cultural biases. To create a writing center capable of enacting such a transformation, administration will need to make changes that achieve “both long-term, long-reaching and short-term, immediate change” (Ozias and Godbee 158). Such changes will necessarily include re-visioning the role of the writing center, which immediately impacts both administrative action and tutor education.

However, as scholars such as Geller, Eodice, Condon, Carroll, and Boquet point out, as “writing centers are situated within institutions which are themselves implicated in the power structures that wittingly or unwittingly foster racism, they cannot completely escape resembling and reproducing much of what students [who use our centers] experience outside our spaces” (92). Indeed, it is crucial to keep in mind that all writing centers are situated in unique institutional contexts—regarding race, of course, but also language norms and cultural biases—and thus the issues discussed here are likely manifesting themselves in a variety of ways that may demand different modes of practical intervention. Furthermore, no two writing centers are themselves alike, in terms of vision, values, administrative structure, staff, etc. Thus what adaptations are most appropriate will inevitably change not only among writing centers but also in each individual center over time as both it and its context evolve. Therefore, the following model may be effective in some cases but not well-suited for all writing centers. It is best viewed instead as a framework of guiding principles or goals that can be used to shape subsequent praxis; specific activities and readings can be considered examples which may or may not be adopted based on individual circumstance.
Confronting and dismantling biases should of course be a priority for all university structures. However, when open to rethinking encounters with diversity, writing centers have the potential to be especially critical sites for this type of reform as they consistently serve as contact zones for languages and cultures (Grimm, “Retheorizing Writing Center Work”; Severino, “Crossing Cultures”). In his analysis of one university’s efforts to attend to the literacy practices of matriculated “high risk” Black students in the 1960s and 70s, Lamos notes that:

One of the most important institutional entities…within the…EOP\textsuperscript{14} program was the EOP Writing Lab, a one-on-one tutorial center designed to help students negotiate the language and literacy demands of the university…[C]entral to the success of the overall EOP program…, it can offer the kind of “individualized assistance” that will ultimately enable EOP students “to achieve proficiency in writing necessary for successful college work” [footnote added]. (13)

Indeed, writing centers have long been “in a good position to serve as a site of critique of the institutionalized structure of writing…and to empower students as writers who also understand what writing involves and who act as agents in their writing” (Cooper 336). One reason for this advantageous positioning is that writing centers are in direct contact with both university administration and a heterogenous segment of the student body. They thus can bring a variety of prominent student issues to the attention of those who have power to resolve them; as the number of tutorials with NNES writers steadily grows, writing centers are in an ideal position to advocate for NNES writers. Furthermore, students often staff writing centers, affording the potential of fresh perspectives that more readily reflect the current realities and attitudes of the student body. And as comparatively autonomous educational spaces within the university, writing centers are able to navigate the sometimes precarious position between tradition and transformation (Grimm, \textit{Good Intentions}). Thus with proper administrative conduct and tutor instruction, writing centers have both the power to effect change and the flexibility to quickly adapt in ways more attuned to ever-changing student needs than the institutions in which they are situated.

\textsuperscript{14} “The EOP program was developed in 1968 to support, recruit, retain, and graduate…high-risk Black students… Furthermore, the EOP program hosted the EOP Writing Lab, an entity dedicated to providing EOP students with the language and literacy skills that they would ostensibly need in order to achieve success in the university environment.” (Lamos 49)
However, being well-positioned to enact change—or even having vocal supporters of such efforts—does not mean that said change will occur organically. As Barron and Grimm point out, the reality is that “[f]or some time now, higher education has theoretically endorsed the idea of multiculturalism. Diversity in students, in faculty, in curriculum is generally accepted as a good thing. In practice, however, teachers, tutors, and administrators have struggled with meaningfully instantiating diversity” (306). This reality certainly seems true for many writing centers. Indeed, I believe that if asked, the vast majority of writing center administrators would agree that diversity is “a good thing”; yet when many administrators look across their own writing centers, both scholarly observation and survey data suggests that many see a primarily homogenous staff (Grimm, “Retheorizing Writing Center Work” 77) and the same persistent struggles in cross-cultural tutorials. Though writing centers have made small but significant strides in recruiting multilingual and multicultural tutors and have evolved in complexity since their earliest days as error-correcting “labs” in the basements of English departments, they still seem to be places very much permeated by tradition—the training materials examined earlier serve as testimonial to this fact. It’s unlikely that if writing centers continue to run the same way, they will yield significantly different results.

It seems no mystery, then, that for writing centers to transform from sites of potential institutional reform into communities actively advancing multiculturalism, administrators need to move from tacitly embracing the possibility of diversity simply happening to them and instead re-vision the very role of the writing center itself—a move that, though seemingly radical, is growing in popularity among more contemporary writing center scholars (Barron and Grimm; Denny; Geller, Eodge, Condon, Carroll, and Boquet; Grimm, Good Intentions; Greenfield and Rowan; Ozias and Godbee). Readers—and particularly those from the writing center community—may have doubts and reservations. Indeed, many survey respondents indicated that they struggled to devote enough—if any—time to completely address their most pressing NNES-related concerns due to limitations on resources, time, and/or possible tutor training models; because of these constraints, it was either impractical or impossible to cover anything “non-essential” to tutor practice.

However, it’s what we value in writing center work that dictates what we see as “essential” and thus what we make time for. As Greenfield and Rowan argue, “in order to realize the change potential…, writing center directors must look critically at how we have been
designing and executing our tutor education courses in order to make a number of significant changes in how we approach our work” (126). The role of the center, of tutor education, and of administrative action are all essential in enacting any change, and all are inextricably intertwined; once we engage in re-visioning any one of these three elements, we necessarily begin to re-vision how the others are conducted. Thus if writing centers want to foster multiculturalism and institutional reform in ways that support and empower NNES students, administrators will see writing center work as not solely a text-focused mission to create better writers, but also as a context-focused mission to create awareness and critical consciousness of how literacy norms are constructed and how they relate to power and agency. Once the role of the writing center has been re-visioned in this way, administrators will necessarily begin to “move away from understanding our courses as preparation for tutors to perform a job or service while in school and towards seeing such courses as a critical part of their broader educational experience that carries implications for how they will negotiate their greater roles in the world” (Greenfield and Rowan 126). Consequently, tutor training and administrative action will evolve to ways that are in line with and reflect these newly re-visioned priorities.

So while a single, significant action—such as reforming tutor training to better attend to cultural and linguistic diversity—is a major step towards forwarding multilingual and multicultural presence and support, if we are to have any hope for long-term change taking hold, tutors will need to leave training and enter into a reformed writing center environment that reinforces similar values. Thus the first necessity for writing centers to better meet both the immediate needs of NNES writers seeking error-free sentence-level writing as well as fostering long-term cultural and linguistic inclusivity is administrative awareness and committed support. Awareness of systematic bias is key to meaningfully intercede in existing patterns of inequity through day-to-day administrative tasks. To make change within any organization, administrators will need critical awareness to:

- conduct organizing through a combined approach of collaboratively planning long-term, structural change as well as watching for daily, unexpected opportunities. Programs of consciousness raising…usually occur both strategically and tactically through a multitiered approach of disseminating information and engaging in dialogues, both planned and spontaneous. (Ozias and Godbee 160)
Critical understanding of NNES concerns is not only necessary to recognize opportunities to enact change but also must underlie strategic and tactical “programs of consciousness raising,” such as teaching tutors to recognize the manifestation of cultural biases, as well as dialogues with other university officials; these educated exchanges are critical to disrupting embedded linguistic and cultural ideologies—and to creating future opportunities for intervention.

Awareness of the biased systems in which we are all embedded allows administrators to look for opportunities to actively work towards immediate theoretical, practical, and structural change. When I speak of administrative action against linguistic and cultural biases, I do not necessarily mean organizing anti-discriminatory protests. In fact, in most cases:

Organizing in writing centers inevitably encompasses administrative activities such as hiring and scheduling tutors, developing tutor education programs, constructing resource collections, and sharing leadership. It also includes the pedagogical work in one-with-one conferences: enacting reciprocal learning, connecting writers with campus resources, building relationships, and discussing arguments and ideologies in texts. Every day in writing centers, when we talk with writers, record notes from sessions, and design research projects, we are organizing. (Geller, Eodice, Condon, Carroll, and Boquet 154)

Indeed, the fact of the matter is that even as we make the most routine decisions, we are demonstrating to the individuals and communities around us “what it is we value about our work and, correspondingly, what it is that others should value” (Geller, Eodice, Condon, Carroll, and Boquet 121). Thus, in order to intervene in recreating patterns of educational inequity, administrators must first be aware that they exist. Then they will be able to see every administrative action—planned and spontaneous, small and large scale—as an opportunity to intervene in and actively work towards philosophical, practical, and structural change and to model for others how to do the same.

After establishing awareness of cultural biases and recognizing both small and large opportunities to intercede, the next step is administrative action itself. Kilburn argues that for writing centers—and particularly those in historically culturally homogenous institutions—to create an environment that will “survive and thrive” as student bodies diversify, they will need to build strategic relationships with other administrators who can lend support to their efforts, such as department chairs and campus deans (394). Williams agrees, echoing that “[s]ome of the most
important issues in how, and perhaps how well, the L2 writer population is served are embedded in institutional relationships,” stressing that networking “may determine who uses the WC, who is running the center, who is staffing it, how staff are trained, and how they view their mission, particularly as regards L2 writers” (111). Administrators will thus need to build personal relationships with those whom align with writing centers’ re-visioned goals: individuals from linguistic departments as well as organizations that represent and support racial and cultural diversity, such as minority and international academic support services, as well as those to whom these programs report (Kilburn; Williams, “The Role(s) of Writing Centers). It is important to encourage these individuals to actively contribute to the development of reform initiatives so that they feel more ownership and investment in these combined efforts to work against cultural biases; one possibility Kilburn offers is for writing centers to partner with and support the release of publications by and for minority students groups by offering funds or editorial assistance (394). Outreach could expand into co-hosting or assisting with their group events and presenting “workshops on writing resumes, job application letters, and essays for graduate and law school applications”—efforts which not only empower student advancement but emphasize that writing is not solely a first-year requirement (Kilburn 395). These events also provide opportunities to persuade others to demonstrate commitment to shared goals. Such commitment “reflects how the institution views English language instruction” and will prove a devotion to cultural and linguistic diversity rather than just pay it lip service (Kubota and Abels 75). Though Kilburn warns that differing perspectives on how minority students are best served could “undercut the ability of writing centers to develop and implement culture diversity initiatives in ways which will truly change the complexion of writing centers,” positive networking experiences is critical to their success (393).

The work above is also a significant step in recruiting and retaining a multicultural staff. Being actively involved with minority and international student programs will give writing centers opportunities to counter assumptions that they are fix-it shops offering remedial services to basic writers. Students who may already feel labeled, discriminated against, or in any way Othered on the basis of language, cultural background, etc. are not likely “to seek spaces which

15 Both Kilburn’s “Cultural Diversity in the Writing Center: Defining Ourselves and Our Challenges” and Kubota and Abels’ “Improving Institutional ESL/EAP Support for International Students: Seeking the Promised Land” include descriptions of a handful of popular stances on NNES academic support models.
stamp them with yet another label” (Kilburn 395). It is thus crucial to personally represent ourselves, our services, and our values to those on campus. Connecting and building relationships with those actively involved in minority and international student affairs shows that the writing centers “support…and appreciate a multitude of voices and backgrounds” (Kilburn 395). Furthermore, many of those who apply to work as tutors have been personally encouraged by faculty and staff—in fact, without that encouragement, I would have never had the confidence to apply to work in my own undergraduate writing center. By connecting and building relationships with campus minorities, writing centers can welcome more diverse student bodies in our centers—as writers, certainly, and ideally these personal relationships also offer lines of support that result in higher application and retention. Indeed, Kilburn points out that one of the most important aspects of recruiting and retaining a multicultural staff and clientele is “whether or not minority students are comfortable working in the center, [and] minority students will be uncomfortable in the center if our staffs do not themselves reflect diversity” (396). Increasing the diversity of writing center staff will encourage a more diverse body of writers to visit the writing center and carry the additional benefit of making cultural and linguistic diversity the campus “norm”—as it should be.

Williams I believe correctly argues that the most important factors in the performance of a writing center are “the place it has in the larger institution, how it is supported and staffed, and the lines of communication and reporting between it and other units in the institution” (“The Role(s) of Writing Centers” 111). The re-visionsed role of the writing center and its administration that I have proposed here addressed all of these facets in ways that shift our priorities from simply producing better writers to spaces that also reflect a commitment to valuing diversity and that promote multicultural and multilingualism.

**Re-visioning Tutor Training Education**

As previously noted, one of the most critical elements of writing center reform is how administrators conduct tutor training. The bottom line is that efforts to combat biases and foster multilingual and multicultural writing centers will be short-lived if tutors are inadequately prepared to respond sensitively and successfully to a diverse body of student writers. Before I elaborate on the changes I propose, however, I would like to again stress that this reform begin with re-visions, one consistent with the re-visions of the role of the writing center and its
administration. Just as these re-visions will impact what it is we value in our work and thus the actions we take, the values highlighted in our re-vision of tutor training will impact how training is conducted. Along with Greenfield and Rowan, I believe that it is essential that this re-vision entail shifting away from tutor training and towards tutor education (126). As the name implies, tutor training aims to prepare staff to perform a service—that is, create better writers. Tutors are then conditioned to meet this goal in a more-or-less prescribed way. Indeed, tutor training materials emphasize uniformity (by offering overviews of standard tutorials) and rule-following (by outlining defined lists of tutorial do’s and don’ts). And while suggestions for best practices have changed over time, simply switching a new set of suggestions in for the old is not nearly enough, even if these new suggestions are grounded in context-specific, empirically-based research; what is intended as helpful advice again reads as “lockstep models for starting, running, and ending a session” (Geller, Eodice, Condon, Carroll, and Boquet 64). Tutor training has thus entailed administrators “playing the role of stewards of the discipline by introducing tutors to conventional writing center lore,” resulting in a stagnant practice that is a poor match for increasingly variegated student bodies (Greenfield and Rowan 126).

Tutor education, on the other hand, encourages tutors to critically reflect on their own positionality and the choices available to them in each tutorial, to create new knowledge, and to re-imagine the possibilities for and purposes of writing center work. If the re-vision of writing centers includes empowering diversity by valuing linguistic and cultural multiplicity, then we must move away from tutor training as it currently stands—which anticipates a neutral, monolingual, and monocultural writer—and towards tutor education, which recognizes that such neutrality is impossible. Once we acknowledge that there is no such thing as a neutral, unbiased, writing center, we can see that there are neither “neutral and objective” tutorials nor linguistic- or culturally-neutral approaches to tutor education. Therefore:

The idea of choosing whether or not to “bring race into” our tutor education courses is not in fact a choice at all; race is already there. Rather than ignoring this reality and unconsciously perpetuating racist discourses and practices, we must do a better job of preparing tutors to recognize, understand, and grapple with the complicated ways racism shaped the collaborative work we do with student writers on a daily basis. (Greenfield and Rowan 125)
Though Greenfield and Rowan speak specifically to race here, this mentality easily extends to other identity markers: class, ethnicity, sex or gender—and certainly nationality, including one’s linguistic and cultural background. Seeing writing centers are rife with bias predicated on these very factors, it is time that tutor education prioritize the goal of addressing them. In order to better prepare tutors to responsibly navigate these biases towards NNES writers, I believe that writing centers need to take action, making these conversation a significant component of writing center education.

In light of the re-visioned roles of both the writing center and tutor education, the ideological goals I forward here center around valuing and respecting the voices and requests of NNES writers while also understanding the larger cultural and societal networks in which we all live. I propose that a reformed tutor education curriculum be broken down into two parts: first, a preparatory, semester-long course—a significant portion of which is devoted to NNES-specific concerns—that tutors take prior to beginning their work in the center; and, second, on-going, semiweekly workshops that last the entire academic year and for the duration of tutor employment. More specifically, coursework should be aimed at first building a foundation for informed, flexible cross-cultural tutorials by promoting critical linguistic and cultural awareness, emphasizing a pedagogy of listening, and enabling tutors to teach writers how to self-correct their own sentence-level errors rather than line-edit and appropriate NNES writers’ texts. On-going staff development workshops focus on deepening and complicating this knowledge by considering the sociopolitical implications of tutorial interaction as well as valuing cultural exchange and working towards empowering a more polyphonic academic discourse open to alternative and non-standardized dialects.

Proposed Coursework

As opposed to rigidly emphasizing higher order concerns over sentence-level issues in all tutorials, reformed tutor education should emphasize the need for tutors to sincerely value writers’ voiced requests and prioritize their best interests. Tutors will thus build on the foundational ideology that all tutorials should truly enable student agency through education. While this ideology was a part of the original reasoning behind a nondirective approach, strict adherence to this ideology has over time been replaced with strict adherence to a practice. Indeed, as the previous chapter discussed, a nondirective approach was based on the assumption
of a monolingual and monocultural student body. Consequently, it works best to promote student agency in tutorials where tutors and writers share linguistic and cultural knowledge and can be ineffective and irresponsible for international NNES writers who seek certain necessary linguistic and rhetorical information—writers that tutors are working with more and more often. But tutors do not have to be strictly directive or nondirective—nor should they be.

To be clear, I am not suggesting that tutor education completely abandon the nondirective and cultural informant approaches that have long worked for many writers—indeed, techniques from each model will inevitably be utilized. Rather, administrators should thus seek to create tutors capable of critically reflecting on the benefits and disadvantages of these approaches and understanding how and when they can be used for NNES writer empowerment and cultural education (and, alternately, how and when they achieve the opposite). Tutors “need to be aware…that a continuum of choices is available to them. They can choose responses based not only on the L2 development of ESL students, but also on the kinds of political messages their responses invariably suggest to students—messages about acculturation” (Severino, “Sociopolitical Implications” 196). Because no two students are alike, if tutors are to tailor each tutorial to meet the best interests of the student, then tutorials will look a bit different based on differing backgrounds and goals of students. Teaching tutors that adhering solely to either a directive/nondirective binary is “good” or “bad” will thus be abandoned and in favor of a focus on flexibility in and critical reflection on what techniques are best suited to promote education. As Jessica Williams suggests of directive/nondirective binaries, for example:

Perhaps the best alternative to either asking or telling is showing and explaining. Thus, for example, neither asking the writer: What is the perspective of the author of the assigned text? nor telling her: This is the perspective of the author of the assigned text may be the best choice. Rather, showing: This (e.g., this word, this passage) is how you can tell the perspective of the author of the assigned text may make more sense. (“Tutoring and Revision” 195-196)

Having such flexibility in approach is key; a critical, flexible approach recognizes what students seek to learn and provides that information along with an explanation, making what could be a simple directive an educational moment that teachers a transferrable skill. Ultimately, this model aims for tutorials that are flexible and conversational, balancing the practical concerns and goals of the individual student with larger ideological concerns.
In order for tutors to be able to promote NNES writer agency through education, re-visioned tutor education must familiarize tutors with the possibility of linguistic and cultural difference; indeed, to make well-informed, strategic decisions in tutorials with NNES writers—and really, in all tutorials—tutors will necessarily need to understand differences in cultural, rhetorical, and educational expectations. While I believe that beginning discussion of NNES students by focusing on difference could be problematic, administrators espousing the model proposed here ought to take several measures to avoid tutors fossilizing in such a mindset. First, administrators must make sure that reformed tutor education does not limit discussion of NNES writers to simply highlighting difference—the workshops I propose here offer room to extend this conversation if there is not time enough in the course itself. Furthermore, to avoid dichotomizing NES and NNES students or positioning NNES writers as deficient, conversation should focus on cultural and rhetorical difference, not human or intellectual difference. Administrators can clarify this distinction by explicitly recognizing and discussing the expectations of U.S. academic literacy with tutors, which also lays a foundation for more critical, sociopolitical exploration of socially-constructed rhetorical norms in the workshops that follow.

I recommend that this discussion include potential textual difference (e.g., linguistic and rhetorical characteristics) and contextual difference (e.g., social, cultural, and/or educational background). At the linguistic level, so that tutors can anticipate and navigate the most common written and spoken errors they may see with NNES writers, I recommend Michael Swan and Bernard Smith’s *Learner English: A Teacher’s Guide to Interference and Other Problems* (2001). This text provides an overview of phonological, orthographical, grammatical, paralinguistic, vocabulary, and punctuation differences, as well as writing samples and a brief cultural contextualizations of communicative practices. As it compares a variety of L1s with English, administrators can select portion(s) of the text that best represent the unique NNES student population(s) that tutors may serve (e.g., Spanish speakers, Arabic speakers, Chinese speakers, etc.). Understanding writers’ linguistic backgrounds also makes tutors more likely to view errors as evidence of language acquisition rather than the result of laziness or deficiency. To next demonstrate how not only language but communication conventions are culturally situated and to complicate the nondirective and cultural informant approaches likely discussed earlier in training, Susan Blau and John Hall’s “Guilt-free Tutoring: Rethinking How we Tutor Non-Native-English-Speaking Students” (2002) is an excellent resource; it summarizes some of the
major topics that emerged since discussion on NNES writers heated up in the early ‘90s, pointing
to the limitations of popular tutorial models when it comes to working with NNES writers and
offering concrete alternative strategies. Finally, both Shanti Bruce’s “Listening to and Learning
From ESL Writers” and Ilona Leki’s “Before the Conversation: A Sketch of Some Possible
Backgrounds, Experiences, and Attitudes Among ESL Students Visiting a Writing
Center” (2009) complicate the idea of “a typical NNES writer” passed on through many training
materials—Bruce’s by presenting conversations with NNES writers about the variety of reasons
behind writing center use and experiences in writing in English; Leki’s by exploring the different
student groups who fall under this umbrella term (e.g., international visa undergraduates,
international graduate students, generation 1.5 students, etc.). In generally contextualizing a
variety of NNES writers’ cultural backgrounds and educational experiences, she attempts to
illustrate the potential origins of writers’ concerns and how language, literacy, and culture
interact to create students’ unique identities.

Leki states that people “tend to see members of our group as individuals and to see those
who are not our group as all alike” (v). Monolithic ideas of Culture contribute to essentializing
NNES students and positioning them solely in comparison with NES, viewing these groups as
statically, diametrically opposed (Atkinson; Grimm, “Retheorizing Writing Center Work” 95;
Leki). Such a mindset often leads to problematic assumptions about NNES students’ academic
ability and writing needs. Furthermore, it undermines the very foundation of reformed tutor
training—that is, valuing writers’ voiced interests and enabling them to reach their goals via
education—as it risks having tutors fixate on a tutorial approach to meet their preselected
understanding of the writer’s goals, and all this before the session even begins. We can see this
mentality manifesting itself when tutorials continually begin with, “What are you working on?”
and turn immediately to the text, an approach seemingly driven by the goals of service-driven
writing centers that measure success in quantity rather than quality. Formulaic approaches to
NNES tutorials, further emphasized by training materials’ flimsy “ESL writers” sections and
bullet lists, only reinforce a mindset that all NNES writers have the same needs, and benefit from
the same techniques. And while I believe that the suggestions offered are generally valid, they
lack the contextualization necessary for tutors to successfully apply them in tutorials; tutors
consist frustrations with NNES writers are testimony to this fact. Furthermore, these suggestions
primarily focus on the tutor and what the tutor should be doing rather than the writer herself;
indeed, how could these suggestions be helpful if they don’t actually attend to what the writer knows, how she best learns, and what she is seeking to gain?

Re-visioned tutor education thus rejects this method and instead emphasizes a pedagogy of listening: a writer-centered, inquiry-based approach wherein tutors consciously treat each writer as unique and her goals as valuable. This pedagogy is in part inspired by Krista Ratcliffe’s idea of “rhetorical listening,” one essential component of which—and what is most critical for tutors to espouse and enact in tutorials—is that:

understanding means more than simply listening for a speaker/writer’s intent. It also means more than simply listening for our own self-interested intent, which may range from appropriation (employing a text for one’s own ends), to… smoothing over differences…, to…only affirming one’s own view of reality. Instead, understanding means listening to discourse not for intent but with intent…to understand not just the claims, not just the cultural logics within which the claims function, but the rhetorical negotiations of understanding as well. (205)

A pedagogy of listening aligns itself with Ratcliffe’s above explanation in that it teaches tutors to approach sessions with questions, not answers. Furthermore, tutors should not just question the writer but themselves by critically reflecting on the motivations or influences behind how and why they might be responding to the writer and her text. Though this approach is helpful in any tutorial, it is, as Ratcliffe argues, well suited for NES-NNES tutorials in that it “may be employed to hear discursive intersections of any cultural categories…and any cultural positions…[and] may help us to…facilitate cross-cultural dialogues” (196). Thus tutors should enter tutorials with curiosity, listening openly and welcoming both “harmonics and/or dissonance” between the tutor and writer, between the writer and standard academic written convention, all the while considering cultural positionality.

Enacting a pedagogy of listening entails beginning tutorials with an extended conversation that contextualizes a writer’s visit by raising awareness around prior educational and language experiences as well as her strengths and needs. While this approach may be written off as “a waste of time” in a writing center whose ideology is service-oriented, it is not only perfectly in line with the mission these centers profess—focus on the writer, not the writing—but also with the re-visioned goal of empowering NNES writers and valuing the multiplicity of educational and background experiences that they will bring with them to the writing center.
Indeed, “the purpose of highlighting strengths is not so that tutors will admire their clients”—which is how it appears in tutor training materials—but “rather…to encourage tutors to view students’ strengths as a resource that they can draw upon during sessions” (Nakamaru “A Tale of Two Multilingual Writers” 118). Returning focus to the writer fosters this mission as it increases awareness of the diversity among multilingual writers and builds upon “typical descriptions of strengths and acknowledges…the wide range of ESL students’ real linguistic strengths, based on the wide range of educational and language acquisition experiences they have had”; for example, one student might have sophisticated written skills in her first language while another student might have good oral communication skills in English (Nakamaru, “A Tale of Two Multilingual Writers” 117). And Nakamaru, who used her own materials in the course of tutor education in her center, states, “with this inquiry-based, case-study approach…we progressed beyond simply looking for language errors and thinking about whether, when, and how to correct them…[and] began to develop the professional judgment necessary to make educated guesses” about how best to proceed (“A Tale of Two Multilingual Writers” 116). Such an approach also encourages tutors to see the sources of difficulty for the students rather than simply errors that need to be corrected and avoids “reducing the training to a list of ‘dos and don’ts’ and ‘common grammar trouble spots’; i.e., focus on a thinking process rather than a form or template for how a session should go” (Nakamaru, “A Tale of Two Multilingual Writers” 107). Ultimately, learning more about writers helps tutors conduct tutorials in the most educational way.

To practice starting from a focus on the student rather than on the tutor or even on the student’s writing, I recommend Nakamaru’s “Theory In/To Practice: A Tale of Two Multilingual Writers: A Case-Study Approach to Tutor Education” (2010). Here, she presents two student “cases” which include a profile of the student’s cultural, linguistic, and educational background as well as a writing excerpt. “Listening” to these contexts demonstrates the importance of beginning with conversation that seeks to learn about individual experiences. As Nakamaru points out, this approach “also provided a context in which to discuss some basic theoretical ideas from TESOL (e.g., the ways literacy in a first language might be important when writing in a second language)” (“A Tale of Two Multilingual Writers” 107). Indeed, after introducing these profiles to her tutors:

We talked at some length about who these students were as individual people and what their particular sets of experiences might mean in terms of the strengths and
needs they brought with them to the writing center. After this discussion, we looked at their writing samples and made connections between the student and the writing; i.e., how the students’ education and language acquisition backgrounds may have affected the texts they produced. (Nakamaru, “A Tale of Two Multilingual Writers” 107-108)

This approach helped tutors see NNES students as unique, differing strengths and weaknesses as the result of language learning and educational background, and that these differences necessitate different tutorial approaches. Of course, a pedagogy of listening does not begin and end with an opening conversation—tutors must be listening to writers’ texts, as well. Paul Kei Matsuda and Michelle Cox’s “Reading an ESL Writer’s Text” (2009) advises tutors to approach NNES writers’ texts openly, read them completely, and assume logic in what may be, to NES tutors, unconventional rhetorical moves. By getting tutors to attend to individual difference, they are more likely to treat each writer as an individual and tailor session strategies to promote education based on this knowledge.

In additional to the work above, which contextualizes NNES writers’ literacies and experiences and attends to cultural biases, reformed tutor education will teach tutors to treat voiced desire to work on sentence-level issues as a requests for linguistic knowledge and prepare them to respond to such requests in ways that are instructional, not editorial. After all, if writing centers are to truly promote a pedagogy of listening and strive to enable student agency, then they must be prepared to constructively address whatever concerns writers voice. And as both scholarship and practical experience demonstrate, sentence-level issues are significant concerns to many writers, tutors, and instructors. Tutors will thus be taught that when it comes to sentence-level concerns, they should engage in active tutor-writer negotiation (conversation of intent, meaning, options for expressing the same idea, etc.) and give direct advice accompanied by explanation—actions which aid in the acquisition and future application of grammatical rule-based systems (Blau and Hall; Cogie; Myers; Williams, “Tutoring and Revision”). It is absolutely critical that tutors understand the distinction between “direct” and “directive.” Telling the writer what to write would be “directive,” an appropriation of text and voice and contradictory to the writing center’s mission; straight-forwardly explaining rules or conventions that one would need to do their own writing would be “direct,” enabling writers with the knowledge and tools to express themselves in the way that they want. Furthermore, tutors will
learn that talking about grammar does not necessarily mean the abandonment of larger-level writing concerns; indeed, conversational sentence-level tutoring can lead to discussions of meaning, attending to the desire for both grammatical assistance and higher order concerns.

To ease tutors into feeling less guilt about looking at local-level issues, Sharon Myer’s “Reassessing the ‘Proofreading Trap’: ESL Tutoring and Writing Instruction” (2003) is an excellent resource in which she argues that the “cultural informant” approach includes being a language informant and that the linguistic and rhetorical components of writing are inseparable. Additionally, for many NNES writers, it is the linguistic component that warrants attention as it is part of language learning and it necessary for the student to express meaning. With this knowledge, tutors will be able to see when and how working on sentence-level issues is necessary and educational. Cynthia Linville’s “Editing Ling by Line” (2009) outlines the goals that tutors and writers should have in tutorials that focus on sentence-level concerns, familiarizes tutors with the six most common error types that benefit from self-identification and rule-based explanation, and offers strategies for working with writers in addressing these errors while learning how to self-identify and correct them on their own. Tutors should also be taught to work with a grammar guide—Linville recommends Janet Lane and Ellen Lange’s Writing Clearly: An Editing Guide (1999), recently revised and reprinted as Writing Clearly: Grammar for Editing (2011)—which they should have on hand in tutorials to explain any other grammatical rules that they may be confronted with and to connect writers with helpful resources that they may access themselves as they write on their own.

The NNES-conscientious coursework I have proposed here—understanding cultural and rhetorical, textual and contextual variety; enacting a pedagogy of listening; and working on sentence-level concerns in ways that enable language acquisition—aims to build a foundation for addressing two prominent concerns in writing center practice: cultural biases and grammatical instruction. However, as Canagarajah points out, “Effective writing is not a matter of stringing well-formed sentences…Students have to develop a critical awareness of the choices that are rhetorically more effective” (“Codemeshing in Academic Writing” 402). In order for writers to have the critical awareness necessary to empower their voices and perspectives by effectively appropriating dominant literacies, tutors of course need to have the same contextual, textual, personal, and social consciousnesses, the goal of the following workshops (Canagarajah, 404).
Proposed Workshops

The second portion of re-visioned tutor education—on-going, semiweekly workshops—is critical to extend the conversations initiated during semester-long coursework. As I envision them, these workshops aim to deepen and complicate the tutors’ foundational understanding of NNES-related concerns by valuing cultural exchange and increasing critical cultural and sociolinguistic awareness among tutors—an awareness of their own values, those of the individual students they work with, the values taught by the writing center, and those at work in the university. With this knowledge, tutors will have more opportunities for cultural renewal and critique and to incorporate the possibilities inherent in other cultures. This greater awareness allows for tutors to enact other ways of seeing and knowing the practices they use in the writing center, “offer[ing] increased opportunities for cultural renewal and critique, allowing us to incorporate the possibilities inherent in other cultures” and better enabling NNES writers to make their own choices regarding how much, if at all, to assimilate. On the other hand, without the recognition of and reflection on the literacy values of the systems in which they are embedded, those in positions of power—like, as much as we attempt to subvert it, writing center tutors—will remain ill-prepared to respond to diversity and in danger of enacting (or perhaps continuing to enact) a culturally biased pedagogy.

Critical understanding of culture, language, and text will begin with engaging in open, honest articulation and discussion of the expectations of current U.S. academic literacy standards (Blau and Hall; Bokser; Grimm, Good Intentions; Kinloch; Lu; Severino, “Sociopolitical Implications”). This entails realizing that no one form of literacy is “universal” or inherently “more correct” than another, and that different forms of literacy are not the result of different or deficient thought patterns; rather, tutors must understand that “rhetorical structure is socially constructed” (Blau and Hall 26). Indeed, the idea that “correct” academic writing is linear, thesis-statement-centered, and topic-sentence-driven is a product of cultural values—and these values are not universal (Severino, “Sociopolitical Implications”). This approach allows tutors to articulate writing expectations to NNES students in terms of what is expected, not in terms of what is inherently “right,” thereby providing necessary cultural information while also explaining that this information is socially contingent. Nancy Grimm’s Good Intentions: Writing Center Work in Postmodern Times (1999) is a clear and engaging text that offers a thorough explanation of this phenomenon, from its historical origins to its influence in academia today,
and could serve as powerful and substantial source material to initiate tutor conversation on this topic.

After reframing how tutors come to conceive of and value written conventions, workshops can move towards reframing how tutors conceive of and value NNES writers’ texts. Once tutors understand that literacy expectations are culturally constructed, they will be more likely to approach NNES writing neither in terms of what it “lacks” nor as something in need of “correction” by university standards, which are inherently biased, but rather as the product of different sets of cultural values and expectations. Approaching NNES writers in a way that recognizes the socially contingent conventions they bring to university discourse encourages a dialogue about what potentially differing cultural perspectives have taught them to value within literacy (Bokser, 2005). Opposed to the cultural informant approach where the L1 is unidirectionally deposited onto the L2, workshops will demonstrate how first and second languages and cultures are not set up as binaries but as fluid identities that can influence one another and incorporate the best features of each. Furthermore, it creates an opportunity for L1 conventions to be influenced by other cultures, thereby over time disrupting balances of power created by language use. Suresh Canagarajah’s “Toward a Writing Pedagogy of Shuttling Between Languages: Learning From Multilingual Writers” (2006), a case study of a multilingual NNES writer composing in different languages and for multicultural audiences, is one of many excellent articles that counters the notion that multilingual individuals are linguistically or culturally conditioned to write in a particular way—a limited assumption which prevents a full understanding of the resources they bring to texts. When tutors begin to see reasoning behind and efficacy of the written conventions of a variety of NNES cultures, they will be better able to approach NNES writing with “an awareness of these diverse options and resources available for multilingual students” by listening to and negotiating rhetorical and communicative effectiveness rather than “imposing unfair expectations from outside” via a correctness-oriented tutoring approach (Canagarajah, “Codemeshing in Academic Writing” 415).

A significant component of these workshops will be acknowledging diversity to combat the unfortunate wide-spread illusion of “colorblindness,” which Barron and Grimm define as “a way of avoiding the mess of racial history by pretending that racial differences don’t exist” (306). Indeed, many individuals, tutors included, have been brought up to believe that race does not matter. However, the refusal to recognize or discuss the existence and significance of
race and nationality—really, any perceptible marker of “difference”—is in and of itself
discriminatory; it stifles important conversation by writing off the experiences of any minority as
insignificant. The reality is that “writing centers are always already raced. By this we meant that
the work of and in writing centers is always implicated in the institutional racism that shapes our
work in higher education” (Greenfield and Rowan 124). When tutors make assumptions about
writers based on race, we see this mentality in action. When tutors make assumptions about
NNES writers’ literacy based on nationality, we see this mentality in action. Even if addressing
these topics is difficult, uncomfortable, and potentially divisive, it is not only necessary but
socially responsible to get tutors to recognize the subtle ways that race, culture, language, etc.
can affect day-to-day life—and their own tutorials. Before beginning this undertaking,
administrators might benefit from reading Nancy Barron and Nancy Grimm’s “Addressing
Racial Diversity in a Writing Center: Stories and Lessons From Two Beginners” (2002) which
recounts their own difficulties starting these conversations with their experienced writing tutors
(that is, tutors who had already been through tutor education coursework). They offer preparatory
advice for administrators planning on incorporating these conversations into their own writing
centers as well as a selection of readings that they use to initiate and fuel conversation.
Additionally for tutors, I recommend Harry Denny’s “Facing Nationality in the Writing Center”
in Facing the Center: Toward an Identity Politics of One-to-One Mentoring (2010), one of the
few works which talks specifically about cultural bias in writing center contexts. Finally, Geller,
Eodice, Condon, Carroll and Boquet’s “Everyday Racism: Anti-Racism Work and Writing Center
Practice” in The Everyday Writing Center: A Community of Practice (2007) deals specifically
with issues of race and includes a list of questions excellent for having tutors consider how
ethnicity may impact their perceptions of the students with whom they work.

Once tutors recognize how all communicative norms are culturally constructed, and how
perceptions of literacy can be tied to race and nationality, workshops will focus on seeing tutorial
response is not a neutral and objective act but one with significant sociopolitical implications.
Severino long ago recognized that this might be our current reality, stating that:

in increasingly multicultural educational settings such as writing centers, the
internalization of reductive notions about the rhetorics of different languages and
cultures, including English in the US, can lead to skewed, simplistic expectations
and interpretations of ESL students and their writing and an ethnocentric, assimilationist pedagogical stance. (“The ‘Doodles’ in Context’” 45)

Reductive and inaccurate views of NNES students, “deficiency” model rhetorics, and assimilative practices are in fact present in our writing centers; indeed, we see tutors promoting assimilationist consequences when line-editing NNES student writing, imposing their own voice in an attempt to “help” with student or teacher requests for the writing to “sound like an NES.” In these ways, writing centers may be subliminally and unknowingly positing the “superiority of the standard dialect through the process of exclusion, negation and derogation of the inferiority of the non-standard dialect,” stressing both the “inferiority of the speakers who speak it and the inferiority of their culture which produces it” (Lamos 84). Considering their relative position of power, tutors’ literacy values very well may be what is emphasized in tutorials with students, erasing students’ lived experiences. Unless tutors are trained to honor distinct student voices, they may fall into the pattern of “fixing” non-standardized communicative forms, unknowingly contributing to systematic devaluation of NNES students’ languages and cultures and recreating pressure to assimilate.

Once aware of the sociopolitical influence on language and the ideologies behind and implications of their responses to NNES writers, workshops can explore how tutorials can incorporate this knowledge into tutorials so that writers can choose to what degree they adopt U.S. academic literacy. Tutors will also be able to make these expectations and potential benefits and disadvantages of assimilation explicit to NNES writers, thus empowering them to make their own choices as informed communicators. NNES writers may choose to fully assimilate while others may incorporate standardized norms only insofar as they believe such assimilation could benefit them, partially holding on to first languages and associated cultural values. Perhaps, recognizing how assimilating reinforces the superiority of the dominant academic discourse that has served to disenfranchise NNESs, some writers will decline to use any form of said discourse, believing that they should not have to change or adapt in order to gain educational and economic rights (Severino, “Sociopolitical Implications”). Both Carol Severino’s “The Sociopolitical Implications of Response to Second Language and Second Dialect Writing” (1993) and Julie Bokser’s “Pedagogies of Belonging: Listening to Students and Peers” (2005) expound on these issues, emphasizing the importance of NNES writer awareness of the choices available in their own rhetorical practices as well as the complicated nature of the possible benefits and
disadvantages of those choices. Such discussion may help tutors better focus on increasing metacognitive awareness rather than surface-level “correctness” in tutorials, which will give writers greater agency in decisions about their education. And in whatever the student chooses, such knowledge will allow tutors to conduct tutorials in ways that honor those choices educationally and respectfully.

Armed with this entire body of knowledge, tutors will then be able to consciously examine their own cultural values and how they may bias their responses to NNES writing and their views of NNES culture (Bokser, 2005). Indeed, Atkinson argues that the discussion of culture in relation to NNES populations is not best used as a tool to define others, but:

> The first and foremost usefulness of culture in L2 writing, as I see it, is to turn the cultural viewing lens critically and reflexively back on ourselves and our own practices. By “ourselves,” I am actually referring here to a relatively small segment of the earth’s population, but one that has disproportionate power in academia: I mean the people who define what counts in terms of academic writing in English, especially “good” academic writing. (51)

As individuals holding the type academic power Atkinson refers to here, tutors at the very least function as ideological reinforcers, and as they are responsible for aiding learning in a way that also embraces and respects linguistic and cultural multiplicity ought to engage in self-reflection on their tutorial practices. In order to do so, tutors might benefit from recording some of their tutorials with NNES writers and listening back to them to see not only if their pedagogy abides with what they learned in tutor education but also what is communicated by through what the tutor focuses on in the tutorial and the language and strategies used to respond to these concerns. Atkinson urges tutors to “investigate what is tacitly assumed in the use of terms [used] such as ‘logic,’ ‘reason,’ and ‘argument’—terms that have too long been granted an uncritical place in academic writing, as well as society at large. Most crucially, let’s do so before assuming their unproblematic universality across social and cultural groups” (56). Indeed, these seemingly minor components of tutorials may convey quite a bit about the ideology driving it.

In addition to providing a space for the discussion of literacy, culture, and the sociopolitical implications of each, workshops should serve as an impetus for action-oriented change. Just as getting university organizations personally invested in designing projects that support the goals of a re-visioned writing center, having tutors do the same could turn what may
begin as obligatory discussion of linguistic and cultural bias into personal investment and
discovery. Barron and Grimm found that this was a critical piece of their own diversity-centered
workshops, stating that if potential biases are “to be a topic in writing center training, the
undertaking has more hope of succeeding if student coaches are invited into the project as
designers rather than as recipients of an imposed diversity experience” (317). This could mean
that as workshops move forward, tutors could decide what topics they would like to further
explore, perhaps independently researching this specific topic and leading a workshop on it for
fellow staff.

Ozias and Godbee extend the research possibilities even further, emphasizing “the
importance of participatory activist research (PAR) for ongoing reflection and partnership in
knowledge creation with all stakeholders” (171). Indeed, PAR seems well-suited for those who
staff and utilize the writing center, as this research methodology:

asks institutionally recognized researchers to collaborate with folks whose
expertise goes unrecognized by the institutions in which their lives intersect. In
this way it extends the impetus of that strand of writing center scholarship that
seeks to highlight and draw from the expertise of peer tutors…and promotes cross
racial, cross status research. (Ozias and Godbee 171)

Of course, the primary goal of having NES and NNES students collaborate and exchange
knowledge is that “for the sake of doing, we are better able to work toward solutions to the
complex problem of racism” (Ozias and Godbee 172). And after workshop discussion around the
empowering and disenfranchising potential of literacy, tutors partnering with NNES writers
would be better able to see these arguments as more than theoretical, as actually having tangible
impact on the students with whom they work—and as Barron and Grimm note, when it comes to
addressing cultural biases, “writing center coaches need both theoretical and narrative based
arguments” (316). Additionally, this partnership may lead to a more multicultural tutorial staff
and helps NES tutors to recognize that cultural descriptions thus far encountered in tutor training
texts are blunt instrument to the degree that they seeks to characterize whole groups of people via
a restricted range of descriptors; NNES individuals are just as diverse as their NES counterparts.

On-going workshops aim to complicate static, limited notions of culture; explore
complexities of language and its practice; and both culture and language’s complicated ties with
race, ethnicity, and nationally. These topics, as they are framed here, have long been
marginalized or entirely absent in many writing centers. Making these discussions central to tutor education will cultivate critically conscious tutors able to see value in all writers’ strengths while listening and attending to their individual writing goals; tutors and writers will also be able to exchange culturally-situated knowledge of rhetorical norms and together navigate the implications of assimilating—or not—to such norms. When coupled with coursework, re- visioned tutor education embraces and empowers a changing student body by adapting their mission and practices rather than force writers submit entirely to theirs. These changes not only empower tutors to make more informed and responsible decisions when working with NNES writers, but foster values and practices that empower NNES writers by effectively addressing both textual and contextual concerns.

A Road Forward?

Several composition scholars have recently pointed out that “the assumption that college students are by default native speakers of a privileged variety of English” has lead to the enforcement of traditional U.S. academic English in university writing; this practice is not only “seriously out of sync with the sociolinguistic reality of today’s U.S. higher education a well as the U.S. society at large” (Matsuda, “Myth of Linguistic Homogeneity” 641) but in fact at odds with it (Horner, Lu, Royster, and Trimbur). Given this reality, writing center administrators—and indeed, tutors preparing to enter an increasingly globalized world—would benefit from engaging in the re-imagination of the writing center “as a multilingual space where the presence of language differences is the default” rather than the exception (Matsuda, “Myth of Linguistic Homogeneity” 649). This change in vision entails viewing the growing enrollment of NNES writers not as temporary problem that we need to struggle through and endure, or as a crisis that can and should be dealt with by fixing students, but as valuable members of the academic community who we can draw on and learn from—and vice-versa.

However, writing center administrators’ struggles to adequately prepare tutors to work with multilingual and multicultural writers—namely, addressing biases and sentence-level concerns—suggests that this sea change has yet to occur. Instead, many writing centers continue to train tutors to strictly adhere to models of response that do not adequately account for cultural difference and tend to reinforce dominant institutional literacy values. This stagnancy makes sense, as Grimm points out:
When conventional beliefs, conventional practices, and conventional theories cohere into a system of thought, it becomes nearly impossible to doubt the status quo…Tutors are often attracted to their work because they enjoy ‘helping others.’ They feel good, so they are unlikely to question the conceptual system that structures what they do. *(Good Intentions 22).*

Without the recognition of and critical reflection on the literacy beliefs and perceptions widespread within university systems, I believe that tutors will remain ill-prepared to respond to the complex needs of NNES writers. I have thus suggested that writing center administrators modify their ideological values—and, consequently, the goals of tutor education—to acknowledge, value, and critically reflect on linguistic and cultural difference with respect to the larger societal networks in which we are all positioned.

I offer no distinct timeline for the work proposed here; I believe that to do so would not only be entirely conjectural but knowingly specious. Indeed, this undertaking includes building institutional relationships, investment in and promotion of campus minority affairs, restructuring the composition of the staff and their education, and ultimately reformation of the overarching values and goals that guide all writing center action; as opposed to instilling a set of contextless, practical tutorial strategies, achieving ideological transformation “in a writing center is not a one-time event, but a continual process” (Barron and Grimm 308; Grimm, “Retheorizing Writing Center Work” 90). It is highly unlikely to expect that conversations around the topics proposed will fully develop and take root in discrete, class- or workshop-measurable increments. Some topics may be readily comprehended and supported by tutorial staff while others may need to be hashed out over an extended period of time; many race theorists argue that white and/or middle class individuals “are so accustomed to…privilege that even with expressed commitment to social justice, it takes a lifetime to unlearn it” (“Retheorizing Writing Center Work” 79).

Furthermore, these timelines will differ from center to center, even from individual to individual. And while assessing efficacy of grammar instruction may be easier to ascertain, it seems that assessing the presence of cultural biases could resist clear-cut assessment. We cannot expect that such biases will be resolved with one conversation or even one year of conversations; these changes will come slowly as writing center demographics shift. Effectively responding to grammar and cultural bias are significant tutor and writer—and really, societal—concerns, and such consistent action is essential to demonstrate writing center commitment to improve.
going implementation, reassessment, and re-adaptation of these approaches and resources is thus critical for success.

If the dominant mind-set within a given writing center is not open to change, those working there are in danger of “[reproducing] social divisions and unjustly [regulating] access” (Grimm, *Good Intentions* 22)—access to knowledge and literacies capable of empowering those who may otherwise be disenfranchised by U.S. academic systems. By working to understand and critically reflect on the beliefs, biases, and practices of those working in writing centers, we will hopefully continue to move towards discovering new and better ways to work with NNES writers—and indeed, better supporting diversity—in and outside of the university. I acknowledge that enacting the work proposed above many be an uncomfortable process for many of us; it involves self-examination that is certainly not comfortable and may not necessarily be flattering. But we must keep in mind that these perhaps unacknowledged attitudes are not unique to one person, one writing center, or one college. To meet the repeated calls for institutional change, for efforts to truly welcome and embrace cultural and linguistic difference in our writing centers and universities, we need to start by looking at ourselves: we have all, at some point, kept quiet in the presence of a bigoted remark, been a face in *los pasillos*, had a hand in the crisis.
You are being asked to participate in a research study entitled, “Language Diversity and the Writing Center: A National Survey of Tutor Preparation.” I hope to discover national trends in post-secondary non-native English speaker (NNES) student enrollment and writing center tutor training practices, particularly as they relate to working with NNESs. Anything you tell us will be helpful.

Participating in this study is entirely up to you. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete a 15 to 20-minute survey about the use of your center by NNES writers and about approaches you have used and tried for preparing tutors to work with NNESs. If at any point you do not wish to answer a given question, please feel free to move on to the next question. Please do not feel obligated to answer all of the questions or to provide any information that you do not feel comfortable providing. No questions, aside from this consent, are required. You may quit the survey at any time without penalization or information being stored.

The survey is anonymous and no identifying information is collected. The survey itself is hosted on Survey Monkey. IP addresses are not stored in the survey results. This non-identifiable survey data may appear in my thesis and in an academic conference or published study.

Finally, I want to make you aware of the small risk attendant in all electronic communication. Though we will make every effort to ensure your confidentiality, all Internet-based communication is subject to the remote likelihood of tampering from an outside source.

If you have questions about this study, please contact me, Kelly Grossman, at grossmkm@muohio.edu or my faculty adviser, Heidi McKee (mckeeha@muohio.edu). If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Office of Advancement of Research and Scholarship at 513-529-3600 or humansubjects@muohio.edu.

If you do not wish to participate, please close your browser window or navigate to a new page and no information will be captured by the survey. If you are over 18 years of age and willing to participate in and continue to the survey, a “yes” response will be captured by the survey and kept as record of consent. Participants may print out a copy of the informed consent information for their records. Continuing to the survey by selecting “yes” indicates that you have read the preceding statement and have agreed to the terms and statements outlined within.

2. In what region of the U.S. is your institution? [select one]
   - Northeast, New England (Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut)
   - Northeast, Mid-Atlantic (New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, District of Columbia)
   - Midwest, East North Central (Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio)
   - Midwest, West North Central (Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Minnesota, Iowa)
   - South, South Atlantic (Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida)
   - South, East South Central (Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama)
   - South, West South Central (Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana)
   - West, Mountain (Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico)
3. How would you describe your institution’s campus setting? [select one]
   Rural
   Suburban
   Urban
   Other [open field]

4. How many students attend your institution? [select one]
   fewer than 1,000 students
   1,000 to 4,999 students
   5,000 to 9,999 students
   10,000 to 19,999 students
   20,000 to 29,999 students
   30,000 to 40,000 students
   more than 40,000 students

5. How many non-native English speakers, both undergraduate and graduate, were/are enrolled at your institution (approximations are acceptable):
   In 2005? [open field]
   Now? [open field]

6. How many people comprise the tutoring staff in your writing center? [open field]

7. Of these staff members, how many fall into each of the following categories?
   Faculty/lecturer (both tenure/non-tenure) [open field]
   Graduate students [open field]
   Undergraduate students [open field]
   Volunteers [open field]
   Other [open field: please specify]

8. Of these staff members, how many have specialized training in working with NNES students (e.g. college course work in teaching NNESs, NNES degrees, specialized workshops)? [open field]

9. Of these staff members, how many tutors are (approximations are acceptable)?
   Native English speakers (NES) [open field]
   Non-native English speakers (NNES) [open field]

10. In your writing center, what percentage of tutorials are conducted in a language or languages other than English (approximations are acceptable)? [open field]

11. How is tutor training conducted at your institution? [check all that apply]
    Pre-semester workshop(s)
    Concurrent workshop(s)
    Abbreviated course (week-long, half a semester, etc.)
12. Although, of course, all aspects of tutor training prepares tutors to work with all writers, if possible to estimate, what percentage of your tutor training focuses specifically on working with NNES students? [open field]

13. Which of the following readings, if any, do you use for tutor training? [check all that apply]
   Barnett and Blumner, “The Longman Guide to Writing Center Theory and Practice”
   Bruce and Rafoth, “ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Tutors”
   Capossela, “The Harcourt Brace Guide to Peer Tutoring”
   Clark, “Talking about Writing: A Guide for Tutor and Teacher Conferences”
   Elbow and Belanoff, “Sharing and Responding”
   Gillespie and Lerner, “The Longman Guide to Peer Tutoring”
   Grimm, “Good Intentions”
   Johnson and Krase, “Theory and Practice for Writing Tutors”
   McAndrew and Reigstad, “Tutoring Writing: A Practical Guide for Conferences”
   Meyer, “The Practical Tutor”
   Murphy and Sherwood, “The St. Martin’s Sourcebook for Writing Tutors”
   Murray, “The Craft of Revision”
   Rafoth, “A Tutor’s Guide: Helping Writers One to One”
   Ryan and Zimmerelli, “Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors”
   Soven, “What the Writing Tutor Needs to Know”
   Other [open field: please specify]

14. In addition to readings, what approaches do you use to help prepare tutors to work with NNES writers? [check all that apply]
   ESL/TOESL faculty guest speakers
   NNES student guest speakers
   Experienced tutor guest speakers
   Practice tutorials with sample papers
   Observations of tutorials
   Reading and analysis of transcripts of tutorials
   Recording and analysis of tutor-in-training’s own consultations
   Written reflective analyses of the consultations they observe or engage in
   Other [open field]

15. What issues do you think NES tutors in your center struggle with the most when working with NNES writers? [open field]
16. Do these issues differ from those NES tutors experience in working with NES writers? [yes/no] [open field: please explain]

17. What issues do you think NNES tutors in your center struggle with the most when working with NES writers? [open field]

18. Do these issues differ from those NNES tutors experience in working with NNES writers? [yes/no] [open field: please explain]

19. What issues do you struggle with the most when preparing tutors (both NES and NNES) to work with NNES writers? [open field]

20. What have you seen in tutorials with NNES writers that has been most effective or encouraging? [open field]

21. What have you seen in tutorials with NNES writers that has been most troubling or problematic? [open field]

22. Is there anything else that you would like to include that you think would be helpful for me to know (e.g. about NNES student enrollment, tutor training, or your specific writing center context)? [open field]


