

Reflective Journals in EFL Tutoring

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As Writing Centers begin to expand from the West to new international contexts, L2 tutors, instead of native speaker tutors, are now being hired. These tutors face distinct problems in tutoring EFL students and little research has been done on the types of challenges these tutors encounter or the implications these issues have for tutor development. This paper examines the types of problems L2 writing tutors face when tutoring EFL students and the role reflective journals plays in understanding these issues. Data was collected from five L2 writing tutors in the form of nine reflective journal entries, per tutor, over a two month period making for 45 in total. The results show that tutors had difficulty in distinguishing between lower order concerns (LOC) and higher order concerns (HOC). Tutors also expressed that they were often required to take on a didactic role through being asked to offer explicit knowledge about an assignment. It is argued that there are two potential benefits in utilizing L2 tutors: empathy for the tutee and explicit grammar knowledge. In the discussion, the author analyzes the experiences of the L2 writing tutors and explores the ways in which these insights can be useful to their professional development.

Key words: EFL tutoring, reflective journals, writing center

INTRODUCTION

Developed in the United States during the 1930s, writing centers (WCs) typically serve as an out-of-class space where native English speakers take their writing

assignment to work with a tutor in a one-on-one setting based on a peer tutoring model (Williams & Severino, 2004). Recently, writing center services in the West have expanded to include help for English as a Foreign Language writers, not only in the United States or other English speaking contexts, but around the world, particularly in Asia. Due to these international contexts, L2 tutors are now hired instead of native English speakers. Unfortunately, there is little research regarding this phenomenon and the distinct problems L2 tutors face in working with EFL students in such international academic environments, such as the WC. There is even less research available on the types of tutor development and tutor training that is necessary for such L2 tutors. Therefore, through an analysis of L2 tutors reflective journals, I attempt to address these issues. First, I will provide the background on literature related to this topic.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Up until the 90s, WC research had been mainly focused on WC theory and tutor-writer interaction. It was generally believed that the tutor WC approach should be one of collaboration where he or she, through a non-directive approach, facilitates the process of letting the student writer discover their own meaning (Shamoon & Burns, 1995). The tutor is meant to avoid explicit teaching. This approach is called the collaborative approach or the non-directive peer tutor approach. Here, the tutor acts more as a peer facilitator than a teacher.

However, as an increasing number of English as a second language (ESL) students began using the WC in the 90s, researchers found that the tutorial style, that was designed at native speakers, was not always appropriate for L2 learners who wanted a more directive approach. (Powers, 1993; Severino, 1993; Thonus, 1993). Moreover, it was found that because their linguistic, content, contextual, and rhetorical schemata differ, L2 writers often have problems with the identification and fulfillment of Western essay expectations (Reid, 1994). These differences stem from different rhetoric styles in their first language and lack of knowledge of the English language. This carries a huge burden for ESL writers because they

compose in their second language (L2). According to Harris & Silva (1993), some problems that ESL writers encounter are that they “plan less, write with more difficulty (primarily due to a lack of lexical resources), reread what they have written less, and exhibit less facility in revising by ear, that is, in an intuitive manner-on the basis of what ‘sounds’ right, than their native English speaker peers” (p. 529). Many L2 writers come to WCs with the expectation that their tutor will teach them their grammar and structural mistakes (Williams & Severino, 2004). Due to this desire, research advocates that tutors establish a more directive and authoritative role during writing conferences with ESL tutees. (Blau & Hall, 2002; Linville, 2004; Minett, 2009; Powers, 1993; Thonus, 1999a, 1999b, 2001, 2002; Williams, 2004; Williams, & Severino 2004).

Research English as A Foreign Language Tutoring and Tutor Training

Current research in this area deals predominantly with ESL students working with native English speakers in Western contexts. There is very little research on EFL tutoring with L2 writing tutors in a non-Western context. There is even less research on tutor development and training in these non-Western contexts. According to Ronesi (2009) “Peer-tutor trainers abroad are challenged to fashion training programs to suit the unique local needs, as training literature has yet to address contexts outside North America.” (p. 75). Her work describes the development of a three credit training course for multilingual tutors in United Arab Emirates.

She details the importance of creating a training course from the bottom-up to meet students’ unique needs in each international context. Although I had a similar goal, it was not possible to organize a weekly training course for writing tutors. Therefore, I decided to employ the use of reflective journals to establish a body of local knowledge that could aid in tutor development.

Reflective Journals

Over the past twenty years, the use of ‘reflection’ in teacher education is widely

acknowledged as an important part of pre-service teacher training (Calderhead & Gates, 1993). Many studies have reported on the usefulness of reflections, also known as reflective journals, to promote learning and introspection (Calderhead, 1989; Richards & Lockhart, 1994; Bengtsson, 1995; Norrish & Pachler, 2003). Teachers reflect in order to "utilize their experience as a basis for assessing and revising existing theories of action to develop more effective action strategies" (Osterman, 1990, p. 133). In other words, reflection is used to monitor the teachers' own practices and to learn systematically from experience.

While reflective journals have been widely researched in the context of teacher education, there is little research on the usage of reflective journals for writing tutors. Recently, WC administrators have started to request WC tutors to use reflective journals based on the assumption that reflection on practice will lead to an improvement in one's own practice. One study (Bell, 2001) attempted to report on the empirical effectiveness of using reflection journals as learning tools for writing tutors. However, it was found that the use of the reflective journal did not encourage tutors to make major changes in their tutoring or thinking. Bell (2001) found it "difficult to use the guided reflection to foster more reflective thinking and to change basic tutoring approaches" (p. 90).

Nonetheless, as a data collection tool, reflective journals are very rich in information. Thus, I intend to use them, not to measure the affect on the tutors' changes in their tutoring approach, but instead to better understand their experiences as L2 tutors tutoring EFL students in order to aid in their development and training.

METHOD

This case study of a small WC in an international context, addresses the scarcely researched issue of English foreign language tutoring by L2 tutors. Through the analysis of five L2 writing tutors' weekly reflective journals I will explore:

1. The different types of problems L2 tutors face when tutoring EFL students.

2. The role reflective journals play in understanding the various issues and problems encountered by L2 tutors when tutoring EFL students.

I attempt to provide insights on the little researched topic of tutoring English writing by non-native English speakers in international contexts. Through exploring what types of problems L2 tutors face, based on their own assessments in their journals in a non-Western context, I hope to present unique findings and perspectives that have never been reported in the literature.

Participants

The context of this study is an international university. There are many English basis students that can serve as writing tutors who, in this context, are titled Writing Tutors (WTs). They are hired based on their ability to work well with students and their excellent English writing skills. In this study, all five tutors were recommended by their teacher from the top Advanced English class. Although the tutors' TOEFL scores (around 650 on the paper based test which is equivalent to 8-9 on IELTS) and overall proficiency in English are high, they are not native English speakers and are, in fact, L2 tutors. At the University, there are native English speakers that could be hired but, at the moment, there are no native speakers of English serving as tutors. Instead, international students from Thailand, Vietnam and China, are hired as tutors. The tutors are also quite good in Japanese (most have passed the highest level, level one in the Japanese-Language proficiency test, JLPT). Table 1 shows each tutors age, gender, country of origin and English and Japanese ability.

TABLE 1
Each Tutor's Profile

Name	Age	Gender	Country	English Ability	Japanese Ability
Tutor 1	25	male	China	IELTS 8.5	Level 1 of JLPT
Tutor 2	20	female	Thailand	IELTS 8	Level 2 of

Tutor 3	20	male	Thailand	IELTS 9	JLPT Level 2 of JLPT
Tutor 4	20	female	Vietnam	IELTS 8.5	Level 1 of JLPT
Tutor 5	21	male	China	IELTS 8	Level 1 of JLPT

The tutors have two training sessions throughout the 16 week semester; the first at the very beginning of the semester and the second mid-semester. The training sessions usually last for 2-3 hours where new tutors and experienced tutors work together with teachers to explore different writing tutorial scenarios. Prior to this training session, the tutors have read various chapters in “ESL Writers: A guide for writing center tutors.” The experienced tutors are usually well versed in the strategies they should apply to the tutorial and provide useful models for the new tutors. After the role plays, tutors discuss the various issues that came up in the tutorial session. Most commonly, they are how to handle miscommunication, grammar errors, lexical errors and structural issues.

Data Collection

The reflective journals were introduced to the tutors mid semester after they had already been tutoring for two months and had completed two, three hour workshops. Research shows that time and opportunity are needed in order for an effective reflection (Osterman, 1990). Therefore, I required the tutors to write these journals during their working hours so I could ensure that they had the time and chance to properly reflect. Throughout the semester, I ensured that writing the reflections did not take away from their primary duty of tutoring by ensuring that they only wrote the reflection during times when the WC was not busy. All tutors were provided with the information regarding this study and voluntarily chose to be involved. All five tutors signed an ethical consent form.

During the middle of the 2010 fall semester, all five tutors completed a weekly reflection journal in which they recorded their responses (Appendix A). In total, each writing tutor completed eight reflective journals over two months, making for

a total of 40. In addition to the weekly journals, they also composed a final journal in which they were asked to reflect on their experiences throughout the semester (Appendix B).

Analysis of the Data

The process of data analysis was ongoing as I checked and monitored the subject's reflective journals online once a week. I tried to respond to any problem or concern they were having. In total, each writing tutor completed eight reflective journals and one summative journal: 45 journals in total. Looking at the data, I first examined what kind of student errors the tutors dealt with. Then, I looked for the various issues and problems tutors had when responding to these student errors, all the while looking for patterns and thematic constructs (Holliday, 2002).

Limitations

The tutors only needed to write one reflective journal a week about one tutoring session despite the fact that they were working with many other students. Therefore, the reflective journals do not represent all issues they encountered but instead represent those they chose to report.

RESULTS

First, I will briefly report the common errors students who brought their papers to the WC exhibited, and then analyze the main themes that emerged from the reflective journals on issues tutors encountered during tutorials. Finally, I will explore the implications evidenced through the data and the possible effects for tutor development. It is worth noticing that, within the data, the tutors' journal quotes were changed only to correct grammatical errors.

In order to understand the types of problems the tutors had to deal with, it is first important to understand the errors that the tutees made. At APU's WC, the L2 tutors help EFL tutees of varying English proficiencies (Appendix C). Most students are

Japanese. Tutors are prepared to help all English language students, starting from Fundamental English through to Upper Advanced English. At the lower level, students are learning basic paragraph writing, while the higher level classes focus on academic writing. The following is a table of the main problems in students' papers that the tutors reported. Figure 1 below shows the total number of the student error problems encountered by all the tutors.

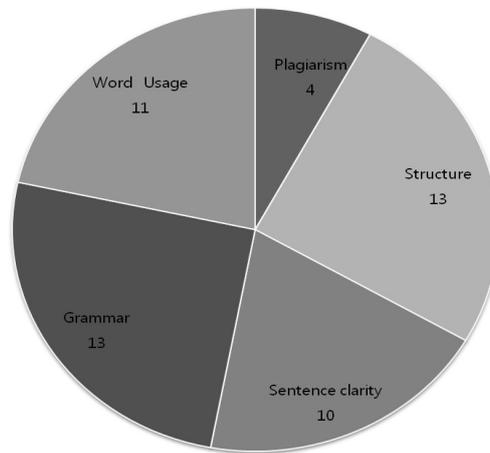


FIGURE 1
Total Number of Student Errors Encountered by Tutors

Overall, the students that came to the WC exhibited global errors in their structure and local errors in their grammar, sentence clarity, and word usage. These are common errors for ESL and EFL students. According to Harris & Silva (1993), some problems that ESL writers encounter are that they “plan less, write with more difficulty (primarily due to a lack of lexical resources), reread what they have written less, and exhibit less facility in revising by ear, that is, in an intuitive manner-on the basis of what ‘sounds’ right, than their native English speaker peers” (p. 529). In addition to these linguistic problems, students also plagiarized.

The Writing Tutor's Problems

After coding for the data for the type of student errors the tutors had to face, I coded for specific common themes that related to various issues tutors encountered during the tutorials. Six themes emerged:

1. Where to start? Global or local concerns
2. Timing of the intervention
3. Didactic role
4. Lack of tutor knowledge about the assignment
5. Empathy for the student writer
6. Communication issues

Where to start? Global or Local Concerns

The first problem tutors would encounter in a tutoring session was where to start. According to Harris and Silva (1993) "tutors first concern is often a matter of wanting some guidance about where to plunge in" (p. 526). In line with WC theory, I instructed the tutors to first pay attention to higher order (global) concerns such as content and main ideas (McAndrew & Reigstand, 2001) before looking at mechanics at the local level. However, as reported within the reflective journals, all five of the tutors reported an overall lack of clarity in the students' essay, making it hard to recognize if the lack of clarity was a global level issue, local level issue, or both. Tutor four wrote:

The whole essay was confusing. I think each paragraphs [*sic*] had a main idea but because I couldn't understand the sentences I didn't know how to start the tutoring session.

Similar to this tutor one wrote,

The tutoring session was quite difficult in terms of just trying to understand what the student wanted to say. There was [*sic*] lots of long confusing sentences. I didn't know where to start.

The Timing of the Intervention

Another theme that emerged from the data was the timing of the intervention and whether the tutor had a role in the planning stage or just the post writing stage. Many students brought their finished product to the WC and expected the tutor to “fix it” the day before it was due. This put extra stress on the tutors who felt they needed more time to help their tutee. Tutor one wrote,

I wish the students would come to writing help as soon as their paper was assigned, not wait until two hours before the deadline.

Tutors felt lost in how to help these students.

According to the tutors, one of the reasons it was so frustrating was because they had to deal with the tutee’s lack of pre-planning for their paper. Pre-planning can include brainstorming, pre-writing, and outlining. This general lack of pre-planning made it difficult for the tutors to help the student when their essay was lacking a thesis or when the supporting detail did not match the main idea of the paragraph. This issue is consistent with other research on ESL writers which reported that overall ESL writers do less planning (Harris & Silva, 1993; Yau 1989, Whalen, 1988). Instead, ESL students would spend more time writing their essay and generating paragraphs. Therefore, tutors would get stuck when the overall essay lacked an argument, supporting detail or organization. Tutor one wrote,

I think I am [sic] good tutor when I have time to work together with the tutee. But when the paper is due that day, I don’t even want to help the tutee because I know I don’t have time.

Tutor five wrote,

Ideally students should come to the WC, get help, revise their paper and then come back again. Otherwise [sic] I don’t see how we are helping them.

Overall, if not given enough time, the tutors felt their efforts were futile and it was too late to work on global concerns such as structure and content. They would therefore be forced to focus only on sentence level local concerns.

Didactic Role

The tutors were faced with many situations where they felt their role changed from that of a peer tutor into more of a teacher. They reported taking on this role in order to teach students essay writing and self correction strategies and to advise students on plagiarism and citations.

Four of the five tutors reported teaching the tutees various pre-planning strategies such as brainstorming and outlining because the tutees were not familiar with these strategies. Tutor one wrote,

The student wanted to write the paragraph together but hadnt [sic] started brainstorming or outlining. I showed him how to do it and asked questions to find out his own ideas about the topic.

As mentioned earlier, this is consistent with current research findings showing that ESL writers usually generate paragraphs before planning (Harris & Silva, 1993; Yau, 1989; Whalen, 1988). Even though tutors reported teaching these strategies they still wondered whether they were doing it correctly. Tutor five was hesitant in teaching these strategies. He wrote,

I wonder why the teacher didn't teach them how to outline because he (the tutee) really needed one. I taught him how I outline [sic] but I wonder if that is correct.

Tutor two wrote,

I am not a teacher but I feel like I am teaching them how to write. I wonder if I am doing it correctly.

In addition to teaching pre-planning strategies, all of the tutors reported teaching basic essay writing instruction. This can be expected since many of the students who frequent the WC have never written an essay in their mother tongue before, let alone an essay in a foreign language (Hirose, 2001). Moreover, Yasuda (2006) argues that, “Japanese university students lack the abilities to explain their ideas, to write coherent texts, and to present their opinions logically” (p. 3). Therefore, all five of the tutors reported teaching students various topics such as how to write a topic sentence, a thesis, an introduction and a conclusion. Tutor three wrote,

Sometimes I feel like I am the teacher more than a tutor because the students don't know anything about writing an essay!!! I have to start from the beginning, teaching them [sic] topic sentence is, supporting detail, and so on.

Tutors also gave instruction on local error correction ranging from basic grammar problems to lack of sentence clarity. Three of the tutors questioned the correct method in handling these reoccurring errors in students' papers. In line with WC theory for ESL writers, tutors had been taught to use a more direct approach with the ultimate goal of teaching students to self-correct. This led to many problems as many of the tutors explained that they ended up giving the student the answer. Tutor two wrote,

When I try to illicit the correct grammar from them they seem to have no idea so I end up giving them all the answers but is this the correct way?

Tutor four pondered the same question,

What is the correct way to get them (the tutees) to self correct [sic]?

Tutor five wrote,

When I help them with their paper by correcting their mistakes I worry that I am doing what I have been instructed not to do, making a better paper not a better writer.

The tutors faced this same problem when helping EFL and ESL students choose the appropriate word. According to Myers (2003), errors in L2 writers' texts are mostly lexical in nature, rather than grammatical. These lexical errors can include miscollocation, wrong use of vocabulary (semantic error) or even a word-form error. Every tutor reported this problem with students from all levels. The fundamental EFL students were lacking in vocabulary to communicate their intended meaning (Minett, 2009). On the other hand, the more advanced ESL students might not be lacking vocabulary but, while experimenting with new vocabulary, would employ the word incorrectly or use the wrong collocation in an attempt to create a more academic sounding essay.

As reported in the journals, tutor one tried a direct method of helping the tutee realize her miscollocation. She wondered if there was a more effective way to promote student learning rather than just telling the student which word is better. Tutor three noted,

I wonder if there is any method to check word colloquations [sic], because electronic dictionaries sometimes do not work.

The tutors lacked the knowledge of how to direct students in looking for correct collocations. Since they were L2 writers themselves, they too questioned their own knowledge of collocation. Tutor one wrote,

I wonder if this collocation is correct. The student wanted to elevate their writing I didn't know how to help them.

The final instance where the tutors found themselves placed in a didactic role was when the tutees plagiarized. Plagiarism was a common problem that left the writing tutors confused as to how best handle the situation. They wondered whether they should confront the student and teach them how to cite, or chastise the student for obviously copying someone else's work. Tutor five reported,

The student obviously copied and I told him not to do that. But should I

have told him more. [sic] Should I be teaching the student that plagiarism is bad or is that the responsibility of the teacher?

Overall, tutors reported confusion in how to handle this situation.

Lack of Tutor Knowledge about the Assignment

All tutors stated that their lack of knowledge about the tutee's assignment was a problem. They felt comfortable when they knew the assignment from their previous course work or previous tutoring experiences but when the assignment was new, coupled with new teacher requirements, they felt nervous about giving advice in case the teacher had mandated something different. Tutor five wrote,

it [sic] was quite difficult (referring to the tutoring session) since I did not know how the Advanced English curriculum goes and what the teacher expects from students in each draft of their essay. Teachers have specific requirements but I don't know what they are.

Moreover, the tutor felt that the student expected the tutor to know these requirements and, when they didn't, they felt that they were letting the student down.

The English department's rubrics have been created in line with general TESOL theory and EAP. Therefore, within each course, every assignment has specific rubrics and requirements in terms of composition of paragraphs, topic sentences, concluding sentences, thesis, quotes from outside sources, references, etc. The reason is that EFL students need training in how to write an essay. Writing a formulaic essay with specific sections helps students to learn the basic skills of essay writing in English, their L2. If the student does not understand these requirements enough to explain them to the tutor, then the tutor runs the risk of helping the student create a strong essay but one that does not fit the prerequisite. Tutors reported that this happened on numerous occasions. Some problems the tutors experienced were they were not aware of the requirement that the thesis

statement must be at the end of the first body paragraph, that the concluding sentence must be a restatement, or that the essay must include reported speech (the grammar point of that assignment). The tutors helped the tutee with their essay but when the tutee received a poor score for not fulfilling the requirement they came back to the tutor frustrated. The tutors realized that this was the tutee's problem but still felt discouraged and worried about encountering this problem again. On the whole, EFL tutors need to be well versed on each assignment since EFL writing is much more likely to have specific formulaic requirements.

Empathy for the Student Writer

One reoccurring theme reported, that wasn't necessarily an issue but important to mention, was an overall empathy for the student writer. Tutors empathized with the struggles EFL tutees' faced writing in a foreign language. Many of the tutors were reminded of their own language struggles when confronted with the tutee's errors. Tutor five wrote,

The student didn't know how to summarize another author's work. I remember be [sic] like that myself.

Another example of this theme was when tutors dealt with students who plagiarized. Two of the tutors reflected that they used to be like that student and lacked overall knowledge about what is acceptable in academic writing and what is not. Tutor one wrote,

I knew it (the assignment) was plagiarized from Wikipedia and I know why he did it. He didn't think it was a big deal and thought it was okay. I used to think this too until I learned Freshman [sic] year that copying from a website is like stealing.

Overall, this empathy can lead to a better understanding of the nature of the writers' strengths and weaknesses. Tutor three explained,

The tutors, because they are ESL students themselves, know what kind of obstacle, or problem the students encounter and this makes it very easy for us to help students to realize their mistakes and teach them how to fix it.

This understanding perhaps would be missing if the tutor were a native English speaker.

Communication Issues

Another point that wasn't necessarily a challenge for the ESL tutors but, was mentioned by many tutors in their reflective journal, was the importance of communication. All five tutors felt this was a very important skill necessary for tutoring EFL students. All tutors were chosen for their excellent communication skills in English but also their ability to speak Japanese, so, if necessary, they could communicate with the EFL students in their mother tongue. EFL and ESL students are not fluent English speakers and therefore special attention needs to be given to help draw them out and communicate. The tutor is responsible for providing a friendly and encouraging environment (Tseng, 2004). They are responsible for lowering the affective filter to help draw out the student and make them feel comfortable to communicate.

DISCUSSION

There are many implications here for tutor training and development. The use of the reflective journals as a report and reflection device documented student thinking and concerns. This information served as an excellent tool to raise the various issues that tutors face. In this sense, the journal entries help teacher educators to perform an ongoing needs assessment that enables them to determine the topics to be addressed during training (Shin, 2006). This also helps to make training more collaborative between the tutor educator and tutors.

It is useful for administrators in non-Western environments to be mindful of the

specific problems their tutors encounter so that the WC meets their specific needs and the specific characteristics of the tutees. Many of the issues highlighted in the reflective journal entries parallel WC research. However, some issues did not. By using the journals, tutor educators can become more attuned to the tutor's specific local context. Had the tutors not reported some of the issues they encountered, perhaps some of these challenges would not have been exposed.

A predominant theme of 'where to start? global or local concerns' emerged which was inconsistent with common WC theory. According to WC theory, the tutors should deal with higher order concerns (like structure, development, and focus) first (Gillespie & Lerner, 2008). As reported by the tutors, higher order concerns and lower order concerns (grammar, word usage, syntax) are often related and indistinguishable. This correlates with research by Xiao (2001). He found that it is not only difficult in L2 tutoring to make distinctions between higher and lower level concerns but unproductive as well. According to Xiao (2001) "making a distinction between what is higher and lower may actually discourage students and teachers from seeing important connections between different dimensions of a text, connections that may ultimately help students develop their writing." (p. 14). Staben and Norhouse (2009) explain tutors do not have to choose between substance and grammar. They advise for tutors to create a balance between both content and language. Therefore, it is important for administrators to train tutors what to do in these situations by incorporating a broader range of foci and starting points within writing sessions.

Another theme that emerged was 'lack of tutor knowledge about the assignment.' This was not necessarily inconsistent with WC theory, but there is very little research on this topic. It highlights an interesting point as to whether the tutor needs to be aware of the specific requirements of an essay to help the EFL tutee. I would argue that they do not necessarily need to be aware of these requirements, but that it would greatly enhance the tutoring service if they were. These essays are assigned by English language teachers and are therefore more prescriptive with specific requirements and evaluation rubrics. Essays in language classes differ greatly from a content class essay where, in the latter, a typical essay assignment is usually a brief writing prompt. Requirements for content class essays usually only include a

word count. Rarely do they have specific organization requirements or detailed criterion referenced scales for evaluation. However, English language requirements are different. English for Academic Purposes (EAP) for ESL students encourages English teachers to create specific requirements for every writing assignment and employ detailed criteria-referenced scales (Hyland, 2006). General TESOL theory also supports the idea that a specific rubric must be created for the evaluation of the student's writing (Brown, 2001). Administrators training tutors for foreign language tutoring should consider training tutors in the requirements of different essays or assignments that language students are likely to bring to the WC.

The didactic role tutors reported confirms the more recent research mentioned in the literature review that advocates tutors take a more directive approach when tutoring ESL students (Blau & Hall, 2002; Linville, 2004; Minett, 2009; Powers, 1993; Thonus, 1999a, 1999b, 2001, 2002; Williams, 2004; Williams, & Severino 2004). In practice, acting as a teacher was difficult for the tutors, many of whom were the same age as the tutees and had little or no experience teaching. For example, they wondered how to help students with their grammar and English mechanics. Simple error correction, changing the mistake on the paper by crossing it out and writing the correct grammar, perhaps makes a better paper, but they do teach the student the mistake and prevent them from making the same mistake in their next assignment (Ferris, 1995; Leki, 1990). The goal of the tutor should be to help the student become independent self editors.

It is recommended that administrators collaborate with tutors to decide on what method they should follow for error correction. WC theory recommends:

- a. "Consciousness-raising about the importance of editing in general and of each particular student's areas of need;
- b. Training in recognizing major error types ;
- c. Teaching students to find and correct their own error." (Ferris, 1995, p. 45).

One way of doing this is to make addressing the recurring major grammatical errors a priority. Small errors or 'typos' that do not interfere with comprehension ability should not be the primary concern. Instead, major errors that interfere with

communication should be addressed. According to Linville (2004) “ESL writing specialists agree that identifying errors should focus on those that are the most frequent, serious and treatable”(p. 86).

Another time when they needed to take the teacher role was when addressing lexical problems. The wrong word choice can be a serious problem in an essay because it is often what teachers react to the most as it impacts the meaning of the sentence (Matsuda & Cox, 2009). EFL and ESL writers need feedback on their word choice but it isn't necessarily the tutor's job to tell them which word they should use because it is important for EFL writers to maintain authorship. Therefore, tutors need to be well versed in the different sources available to help students choose their own words and collocations. Teaching tutors how to access these various sources is a vital part of tutor training.

Another instance when tutors needed to take a more didactic role was when they advised on plagiarism. When EFL and ESL students do plagiarize, many do so inadvertently. Hence, the writing tutor has a responsibility to address this problem and teach the student how to cite and paraphrase. Bouman (2004) points out that by teaching these conventions and helping students avoid plagiarism one “can also help ESL writers develop the kind of original, independent voice that many of their English-language instructors expect them to use.” (p. 114). Moreover, the tutor has a responsibility to explain why plagiarism is wrong in the same way a teacher would. Here again, this forces the tutor to take on a directive teacher role. However, the tutors need to be trained in what to do when they encounter this problem as many of the tutors in this study did not know how to advise against plagiarism. Administrators need to make sure that the tutors advice is in line with school policies regarding plagiarism.

Overall, it is recommended that teacher administrators need to create many role-play scenarios, such as teaching essay structure or error correction, where tutors have many opportunities to practice how to be more directive while still promoting student learning.

Benefits of Hiring L2 Tutors

One unique point that emerged from the data was the potential benefits that L2 tutors can bring to such sessions through having empathy for the tutee and explicit grammar knowledge. L2 tutors have a greater understanding of the struggles EFL tutees' face when writing in a foreign language. This empathy leads not only to a better understanding of the EFL students' difficulties of writing in English but also leads to a greater understanding of how their L2 affects their English writing and the nature of the strengths and weaknesses of the writer. (Nakamaru, 2010). Furthermore, because of this empathy, they can provide "the appropriate feedback" (Nakamaru, 2010, p.110).

Another advantage L2 tutors have over native English speakers is their ability in helping students with error correction. A native speaker with intuitive knowledge of English might lack the skills to explain to the student why the verb tense is incorrect. According to Silva and Harris (1993),

Typically, tutors, who bring to their work a background of experience and knowledge in interacting effectively with native speakers of English, are not adequately equipped to deal with some additional concerns of non-native speakers of English, the unfamiliar grammatical errors, the sometimes bewilderingly different rhetorical patterns and conventions of other languages (p. 525).

These are two assets L2 Tutors bring to international WCs. The themes found all point to issues tutors need to think about and administrators need to pay heed to in training sessions. The reflective journals served as a way for me to understand these issues the tutors encounter. However, the reflective journals were not used to their full capacity as an exercise to promote learning. As mentioned in the literature review, in teacher education, structured reflection on teaching issues helps tutors to integrate their learning and analyze their actions to become more effective tutors. In this study, perhaps the reflections raised the tutors' consciousness of the various problems. However, without a method to promote the meta cognition of their learning it is hard to say with confidence what they actually learned. It was

nonetheless important in that it highlighted the various issues that they encountered so that the administrator could better serve their needs. It is evident that further research needs to be done on reflective journals as a source of learning in WCs.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights important issues other non-Western WCs need to consider. According to Bell (2001), because “the WC field is relatively young and empirical research is rather scarce, we need local, empirical studies to test our key assumptions” (p. 91). This study is an attempt to provide this local context. The findings shown here suggest further research needs to be conducted on how tutors can differentiate between global and local concerns, advantages L2 tutors have in tutoring EFL tutees, and the specific needs EFL students have in EFL tutoring. It has also highlighted the need for tutors to take on the role of teacher in their interactions with tutees although I am yet to explore how administrators can train tutors to fill this role. More research needs to be conducted on this subject. Finally, I was not able to distinguish what specific problems tutors encountered because they were L2 writers. I was able to show an advantage that they have but further research needs to be conducted on the disadvantages they have tutoring as an L2 tutor.

I hope that my analysis was able to highlight new discussion on EFL tutoring requirements and issues that these tutors face in EFL tutoring. The research is related to findings at my specific university, a unique WC in an individual context and with a small number of subjects and is not meant to be generalized. Instead, I explored the experiences of a particular set of tutors and how they engaged in writing conferences and highlighted their problems. Therefore, it is my hope that this small scale study contributes to the scarce research on EFL tutoring and international WCs. By analyzing the tutors’ reflective journal I was able to include their own voices as they express particular frustrations and positives experienced in EFL tutoring. These voices contribute to a greater understanding and awareness of EFL tutoring issues.

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APPENDIX A

Tutor Reflective Journal Questions

1. What assignment did you work on with the student? What aspect of writing did you focus on?
2. Please reflect on your experience tutoring. Was it difficult? Was it easy? What problems did you encounter? What did you do to solve these problems? What concerns do you continue to have about tutoring students with their written work?

APPENDIX B
Final Tutor Reflective Journal Entry

1. Looking over your reflections what are the most common problems you encountered?
2. How did you handle these problems?
3. What do you feel confident in when helping students?
4. What are you not confident about and which areas would you like more training in?
5. What is an important skill you think a writing help tutor needs?
6. What types of problems do EFL writing tutors face?
7. Do you think these problems are unique to EFL language tutoring?

APPENDIX C
**Typical Writing Tasks Students Bring to work on
with Tutors for Each Level**

	Fundamental English	Intermediate English	Advanced English	Upper Advanced English
Course Objective for Writing	1. Write well-structured, grammatically accurate sentences; 2 Write an organized paragraph with topic sentences, supporting sentences and concluding sentences.	1. Write a well-organized 5 paragraph essay; 2. Write paragraphs that summarize, reflect on and critically respond to ideas from the course.	1. Write a well-organized research report; 2. Write concise, focused summaries and responses; 3. Write annotations	1. Write a well-structured argumentative research essay; 2. Write critical responses to the literature; 3. Write an expository in class essay; 4. Use APA citations accurately.
Students	Domestic Japanese EFL	Domestic Japanese EFL	Domestic Japanese EFL	International Students EFL
Average Paper Based TOEFL Score	400-450	450-500	500-550	550-600
Typical Assignments	1.Paragraph Responses	1.Five Paragraph Essay	1.Summaries 2.Research Paper	1.Research Paper 2.Argumentative essay

