

TUTORING STRATEGIES, CULTURAL/LINGUISTIC NEGOTIATIONS, AND  
RELATIONSHIP IN AN ESL OPT-IN PROGRAM IN THE GEORGE MASON  
UNIVERSITY WRITING CENTER

by

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A Thesis  
Submitted to the  
Graduate Faculty  
of  
George Mason University  
in Partial Fulfillment of  
The Requirements for the Degree  
of  
Master of Arts  
English

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Spring Semester 2016  
George Mason University  
Fairfax, VA

Tutoring Strategies, Cultural/Linguistic Negotiations, and Relationship in an ESL Opt-In  
Program in the George Mason University Writing Center

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of English, as  
in Master at George Mason University

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Spring Semester 2016  
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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I especially want to thank my mentors at George Mason for making this project possible: Susan Lawrence, for the hours she spent chatting with me about writing center research and pedagogy even before she became my advisor, and Michelle LaFrance, for giving me the research experience necessary to create this methodology. You are both giants in my academic development.

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **TUTORING STRATEGIES, CULTURAL/LINGUISTIC NEGOTIATIONS, AND RELATIONSHIP IN AN ESL OPT-IN PROGRAM IN THE GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY WRITING CENTER**

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George Mason University, 2016

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The George Mason University Writing Center offers enrollment tutoring, called the ESL Opt-In Program, which allows multilingual writers to enroll in semester-long collections of weekly sessions with a single tutor; however, our lack of knowledge about what actually transpired in these sessions meant our ability to prepare or evaluate this program relied mostly on presumptions. Therefore, this study presents case studies involving interviews and session observations for two tutor-tutee pairs through one semester. The findings describe the tutoring strategies, cultural/linguistic negotiations, and relationships that transpired in these semester-long collections of weekly sessions, which ultimately provided space and consistency for multilingual writers to successfully engage in adaptive transfer. These findings provide a foundational understanding of enrollment tutoring in order to further explore the effectiveness of this kind of long-term, consistent tutoring program.



## INTRODUCTION

The trend toward increased internationalization across American universities has encouraged administrators and professors alike to question and reevaluate their programs, pedagogies, and practices in terms of cultural and linguistic inclusion.

Internationalization trends reflect the interconnectedness of citizens across the globe and the necessity of a “shared world community” (Siczek & Shapiro, 2015, p. 330). In order to cultivate an education that values global consciousness and diversity, many universities are implementing programmatic changes that increase the cultural and linguistic diversity of their student bodies. George Mason, a historically diverse university, is no exception. In 2005, the *Princeton Review* named George Mason the most diverse university in the nation, a legacy Mason values and therefore seeks to strategically cultivate (Walsch, 2005). In the 2014 Strategic Plan, George Mason’s commitment to internationalization is clear: “The University will develop more fully its leading role as a global university... [It will] expand the number of international students by at least 20% while improving the integration of international and domestic students in extracurricular as well as academic activities.” It is the process of integrating all students in their extracurricular and academic activities that has sparked a great deal of research, evaluation, and contemplation. In the wake of a more culturally and linguistically diverse

student body, Mason professors and institutions are actively negotiating their practices to more fully include and integrate all students into the fold of meaningful learning.

The Writing Center is one of Mason's institutions working toward an improved response to internationalization. In the 2014-15 academic year, almost 5,000 appointments, which constituted 64% of all tutoring appointments, were held with multilingual writers (students who identify their first language as one other than English). Recruitment and support for multilingual writers and international students, formerly implemented through the English Language Institute and the Center for International Student Access (CISA), have been absorbed by INTO Mason, a public-private partnership between Mason and INTO Corporation. As a consequence, students not enrolled in INTO Mason have had difficulty locating the language support resources formerly housed in CISA; thus, the Writing Center has become a premiere destination for multilingual writers to further understand and negotiate the demands of the American academy through one-on-one writing tutoring. Therefore, the Writing Center must answer the call to assess and evaluate its practices for its ability to include and tailor for cultural and linguistic diversity.

One way the Writing Center is attempting to meet the climbing demand and unique needs of multilingual writers is through the ESL Opt-In Program.<sup>1</sup> Most 45-minute appointments in the Writing Center are scheduled online by the student whenever they decide they want to meet with a tutor, and any one student can make up to 15 appointments per semester. Because the schedule fills up quickly, if a student wants multiple appointments, they may or may not be able to meet with the same tutor based on

availability. However, if a student joins the ESL Opt-In Program, a coordinator matches the student with a tutor based on their schedules, and the coordinator will schedule one appointment per week with the same tutor for the entire semester. The rationale for this program assumes that, through continuity, the tutor and tutee can build cumulative knowledge throughout the course of a semester by building on and reinforcing knowledge established in prior sessions. This means that a tutor and tutee can work on the drafting and revision arc of one assignment for multiple sessions, or they can target a student's writing concerns systematically. Because of the weekly standing appointment, the program is also inclined to draw and respond to highly motivated multilingual students. While these rationales and goals for the ESL Opt-In Program seem to be an answer to increasing internationalization trends, evaluation prior to this study was limited to internal program review, mostly through student surveys, meaning we could not say if our ESL Opt-In Program supported a learning culture that drew on linguistic and cultural diversity because we did not know exactly what happened in these semester-long collections of weekly sessions.

Therefore, this study sought to recognize and record the tutoring strategies, cultural/linguistic negotiations, and relationships that transpired in two case studies of an ESL Opt-In tutor-tutee pair throughout one full semester of sessions. Those tutoring strategies, cultural/linguistic negotiations, and relationships that occurred throughout the semester-long collection of weekly sessions with a single tutor were then analyzed for their ability to contribute to the tutee's explicit engagement with *adaptive transfer* (the reshaping of past knowledge for new writing tasks), both from prior sessions and from

past cultural/linguistic experiences. The findings suggest that (1) the reliable relationship in this semester-long collection of weekly sessions with a single tutor created a foundation on which to build consistent tutoring strategies and continual cultural/linguistic negotiations. Meanwhile, (2) the tutoring strategies and cultural/linguistic negotiations that transpired throughout the semester-long collection of weekly sessions with a single tutor allowed the tutee to meaningfully and explicitly engage in adaptive transfer. Overall, (3) I propose that these two cases studies of semester-long collections of weekly sessions with a single tutor provided the space and consistency necessary for multilingual writers to successfully engage with adaptive transfer; therefore, the sessions themselves became catalysts or vehicles through which adaptive transfer could occur.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

When second language writing emerged as a specialized field of study in the early 1980's, the research results became somewhat separated from their applicable disciplines, including writing center studies (Matsuda, Ortmeier-Hooper, & Matsuda, 2009, p. 460). Now, however, as universities move towards further internationalization, writing centers have become one of the main sites to explore multilingual writing instruction. The bulk of these writing center publications encourage tutors to shift their usual pedagogy and ideology since they does not always translate for multilingual writers, but few of these publications focus on the multilingual writers' experiences or their actual improvements (Leki, Cumming, & Silva, 2008, p. 32). By investigating tutoring strategies for multilingual writers, cultural/linguistic negotiations, and relationships in second language writing and writing center studies literature, it seems that the nature of the ESL Opt-In Program – semester-long collections of weekly sessions with a single tutor – may provide the space and consistency to meet the needs and learning demands of multilingual writers.

### **Who Are Multilingual Writers?**

First, it's important to note that multilingual writers<sup>2</sup> are as diverse a group of students as native speakers. They are united in that English is not their first language, but they differ in whether they've studied the English language formally, whether they are

international students or citizens, whether they are first-generation or not, and whether they are beginner or advanced in their English language acquisition journey. This is not to mention differences in cultural backgrounds and socioeconomic statuses that can affect language acquisition and writing processes. Therefore, it is vital to note that all of the generalizations made about multilingual writers – what they struggle with, how they learn, what tutoring strategies work best – are indeed broad generalizations and may not apply in every sense to every multilingual writer. Just like native speakers, each multilingual writer needs tailored and individualized support to succeed. While almost every study about or suggestion for working with multilingual writers includes these disclaimers, the literature does point us toward some generalizations that may be useful concerning multilingual writers, and I will be working off of those generalizations in this literature review and refining them through my own results.

### **Tutoring Strategies for Working with Multilingual Writers**

In recent scholarship, writing center scholars have discussed and debated tutoring strategies that best meet the needs of multilingual writers, especially in how those strategies might differ from tutoring strategies for native speakers. These scholars usually start with the nature of multilingual writers' composing and revision processes: the research shows that very few multilingual writers have explicit instruction in revision techniques (Leki, Cumming, & Silva, 2008, p. 120), and tutoring strategies that provide multilingual writers with these revision tools often differ from strategies used with native speakers (Harris & Silva, 1993; Williams & Severino, 2004). The tools for tutoring multilingual writers are often different because multilingual writers can show differences

in composition and revision processes than native writers. Multilingual writers often “plan less in their writing, have difficulty setting appropriate goals, and spend more time trying to generate material and locating suitable vocabulary for a particular writing task” (Matsuda, Ortmeier-Hooper, & Matsuda, 2009, p. 462). Their composing process is often slower, filled with more stops-and-starts, and handled with on-the-go revision. They often struggle with awkward organizational structures at the global level, and they often struggle with idioms, verb tenses, and articles at the local level (Matsuda, Ortmeier-Hooper, & Matsuda, 2009; Leki, Cumming, & Silva, 2008). Most multilingual writers can start sentences – they know where they want to go with their ideas – but then many stop midway because they are not sure how to communicate those ideas effectively (Leki, 1992, p. 79). As language and writing are both lifelong learning pursuits, multilingual students especially need more opportunities to read and write English, more instruction and explanation, more “going over” (Leki, 1992, p. 82; Rafoth, 2015).

One move that seems necessary across strategies is a tutor’s use of metadiscourse, or the act of talking about what the tutor and tutee are talking about. Metadiscourse about what is happening in the session and why becomes especially important because it allows the multilingual writer to feel more control over the sessions and allows the multilingual writer to better keep track of interventions and strategies for future use (Severino & Deifell, 2011; Nan, 2012; Rafoth, 2015, p. 117). Another metadiscourse move includes the simplifications of tasks and goal-orientations, which are especially helpful in working toward revision (Harris & Silva, 1993; Williams, 2004). Other forms of metadiscourse involve explaining or discussing the work that’s been done prior to and even in the

session. For example, tutors need strategies for revising student writing collaboratively but avoiding appropriation: they can do this by explaining their interpretation of a writer's work through reverse outlining or topical structural analysis (Leki, 1992, p. 127); encouraging conversations about genre conventions and authorial intent (Reid, 1994); and clarifying meaning with "tell-me-more questions" before changing grammatical structures (Severino, 2009, p. 61).

The literature also points clearly to the effectiveness of strategies that involve collaboration between tutor and tutee. For example, multilingual students often make significant revision when meaning and language are negotiated between the tutor and tutee – collaborating to generate options and choices leads to more effective revision (Rafoth, 2015, p. 127); this collaborative negotiation is fostered by a more comfortable and familiar relationship between tutor and tutee. Sessions with multilingual students also benefit from re-reading a paper with a specific goal in mind for each read-through, modeling and explaining concepts with metaphors, and being more direct in instruction (without necessarily being overtly directive of the session) (Williams, 2004; Staben & Nordhaus, 2009). Taking written notes of session agendas, models, and/or issues in the session allows multilingual writers to better catalog and re-visit necessary revisions after the session (Leki, 1992, p. 129). The research also clarifies that language and writing feedback is most helpful when writers attend to that feedback, keeping track and paying attention to it over time (Leki, 1992, p. 129; Rafoth, 2015).

While language proficiency and writing proficiency are not necessarily the same function (for example, a multilingual writer may have the ability to develop and support



ideas but not to communicate those ideas) (Leki, 1992; Harris & Silva, 1993), the two are dependent on one another for effective communication, and oftentimes that dependency is what can interfere with a multilingual writer's composing process; we cannot always address writing without addressing language (and vice versa) because they are not separate entities (Zamel, 1995). Thus, giving multilingual writers the chance to parse out language and writing issues to look at each one in more individual depth can keep them from getting stuck in an overloaded monitoring stage (Kellogg, 2008). Many scholars support the need for more explicit language training for tutors working with multilingual writers, including vocabulary about language acquisition, linguistic structures, and vocabulary itself (Severino & Deifell, 2011; Brendel, 2012). The space for an in-depth approach across writing and language issues may also support many multilingual writers' cravings for intensity in their learning (Rafoth, 2015, pg. 56-7).

Since conversations about language must be present in tutoring multilingual writers, the problem of error becomes relevant. Recent scholarship has focused on how faculty can negotiate workplace standards and fairness versus the fact that error is a natural part of learning a new language. Faculty want to negotiate and accept multilingual writer's errors, but they perhaps misunderstand these errors, struggle with outside pressures, and do not know how to effectively give feedback for these types of errors (Zawacki & Habib, 2014). Unfortunately, while faculty are open to instruction in dealing with student error, mechanical errors still often get in the way of grading higher-order concerns like development and organization, and multilingual writers' final drafts are still often held to a "native-speaker" status (Ives, et al., 2014). For example, some

departments at Mason denote to automatic failure for a certain number of errors in a final draft. Therefore, writing centers cannot ignore errors in sessions with multilingual writers.

When Truscott proposed in 1996 that instructors should not address multilingual students' errors in writing, Ferris (2004) heatedly debated the proposal before publishing many concrete strategies for how to respond to these errors effectively. Most of these strategies also apply to the writing center session, and writing center scholars have echoed and refined Ferris's suggestions. For example, *before* giving feedback, tutors can uncover what the student already knows and elicit how they prefer their feedback; *while* giving feedback, tutors and tutees can read through a piece of writing several times and focus on different issues each time; *after* giving feedback, tutors can further explain how the errors are coded or symbolized and allow time for questions (Ferris, 2002, p. 75). Tutors can also address errors over time by locating, explaining, and charting patterns of error (Harris & Silva, 1993; Ferris, 2002; Linville, 2009; Bitchener, Young, & Cameron, 2005).

Most writing center pedagogy emphasizes working with higher-order concerns (HOCs) over lower-order concerns (LOCs), but scholars agree that multilingual writers need not only extensive treatment of textual errors from their tutor (Silva, 1993), but also more explicit and direct instruction for these textual errors (Leki, 1992; Cogie, 2006; Nan, 2012). Most scholars suggest blurring the hard line between HOCs and LOCs, and actually making a textual error a prioritized HOC, especially when error clouds meaning (Leki, 1992; Staben & Nordhaus, 2009). Rafoth (2015) even suggests the term "error

gravity” to imply a sliding scale of error seriousness instead of lumping all errors altogether as LOCs (p. 109).

The tutoring strategies presented in the literature would seem to be supported by the space and consistency that the ESL Opt-In Program offers through the semester-long collection of weekly sessions with a single tutor. The strategies that would especially rely on this space and consistency include parsing out writing and language issues, tracking errors over time, and collaborating effectively between tutor and tutee.

### **Negotiations**

While the literature shows us that tutors must develop a repertoire of tutoring strategies to address error in multilingual students’ writing, it also points us toward valuing the depth of perspective a different cultural and linguistic background can bring to a piece of writing. Therefore, these cultural and linguistic backgrounds cannot be overridden or ignored, but they instead must be negotiated with audience expectations, genre conventions, and the American academy in order to preserve student autonomy, value perspective, and still communicate effectively. Many instructors may believe that students are unable to engage in intellectual work because of their place in language acquisition (Zamel, 1995, p. 510), but tutors are in a unique position to learn through conversation how this blending of languages becomes a strength of ideas. In fact, scholars like Hall (2009) go so far as to claim we no longer “own English” (p. 36), and we must shift our pedagogies to value an evolving and global language. Tutors, because of their one-on-one position with a multilingual writer, are in a better position to follow a translingual approach to student writing, which calls for “*more*, not less, conscious and

critical attention to how writers deploy diction, syntax, and style, as well as form, register, and media” (Horner et al., 2011, p. 304). Language, and the cultural perspectives attached to it, should not be viewed as static or unified; instead, we should see the shuttling between languages as “strategic and creative choice” (Canagarajah, 2006, p. 591).

When working with multilingual students, a tutor’s responsibility toward the student moves beyond the writing at hand and includes making multilingual students more aware of rhetorical choices and how they interact with the language. For example, what dominant forms can be interchanged with nondominant forms, and what does that tell us about the genre and audience? What risks are involved with deviations from the norm? (Matsuda & Matsuda, 2010). This is not to mention the cultural divide that may exist between multilingual writers and their assignment prompts (Phillips, 2014). In order to engage these topics, many scholars suggest tutors learn about their students’ cultural and linguistic forms before sessions (Leki, 1992; Nan, 2012; Nakamaru, 2010; Brendel, 2012). However, since normally a tutor may not know the cultural and linguistic background of tutees until the start of a session, and then may never see the student again, it seems unreasonable for tutors to learn every rhetorical and linguistic style across the globe.

Again, the ESL Opt-In Program seems to offer the space and consistency necessary for the tutor to learn more about the tutee’s culture and language, and therefore better negotiate and explain American conventions against the background of the tutee’s knowledge. The sessions may provide the time for more attention to language in writing;

the tutor and tutee may additionally have time through the semester-long collection of weekly sessions to negotiate the best way to communicate the tutee's ideas without dismissing their cultural and linguistic perspective.

### **The Role of Relationship**

While only lightly explored in the literature to date, the role of relationship seems especially important to note in this kind of long-term, one-on-one tutoring format. One of the major components of the tutoring relationship is the balance of authority between tutor and tutee. Most writing center pedagogy concerning authority draws from Carino's (2011) response to minimalist tutoring: authority is always present in a writing center session, but it moves from the tutor to the tutee and back again at various times. This means the tutor can go from directive to nondirective techniques as needed, all while "maintaining a comfortable environment for students, treating them with kindness, understanding, and respect" (p. 123).

Amongst this balance of authority, a long-term tutoring relationship seems to lead to many personal connections and even a professional friendship. In one case study, Godbee (2012) describes the solidarity that formed between tutor and tutee in an eight-month tutoring relationship, complete with allying against outside "threats," enjoying their time together, and exchanging "shared histories" (pp. 179-80). He claims these personal connections and "shared contexts" allowed the tutor and tutee to insightfully analyze the tutee's data together, and it also led to empathy, heightened emotions, and intimacy of sorts (p. 181). Basically, "through an affiliative relationship, they more easily come to care about the other's lived experience and the values underlying the research

and writing they review on an ongoing basis” (p. 190). Thus, it seems these personal connections held significance on the writing in sessions.

Because language and writing improvement involve a combination of instruction, practice, and time, the process is improved by a positive relationship of trust (Nan, 2012; Rafoth, 2015). This trusting relationship also contributes a warmer and more approachable role that faculty often cannot fill; as Leki (1992) puts it, “When the academy appears too distant, too cold, and too unwelcoming, both ESL and native writing students may resist the kind of acculturation or initiation into the academic discourse community which is expected of them in their writing classes” (p. 20). Rafoth (2015) notes that interaction – a back and forth communication – is key to improving multilingual students’ writing, and a fruitful interaction usually blooms among a positive relationship (p. 40). Of course, cultural differences involving issues of authority might affect what kind of relationship a multilingual student will feel comfortable having with a tutor (Leki, 1992), but even if the relationship is more formal, the tutor and tutee can engage in metadiscourse about the nature of their relationship. A long-term tutoring relationship also allows the tutor to adjust their usual practices to better learn what tutoring strategies work best for the tutee, including levels of directness (Cogie, 2006) and politeness techniques (Bell & Youmans, 2006). Thonus (2008) even explores how coordinated laughter can occur in sessions between tutors and tutees who are better acquainted, but she’s clear that simply meeting more than once does not necessarily account for this coordinated laughter; instead, it can occur when familiarity is tied to “positive personal interaction” (p. 348).

Once again, it seems likely that these elements – balance of authority, personal connections, and trust – could flourish in the semester-long collection of weekly sessions with a single tutor that the ESL Opt-In Program offers. The tutor and tutee may have the space and time in the ESL Opt-In Program to establish this balance of authority, explore these personal connections, and develop trust.

### **Adaptive Transfer**

While the literature seems to suggest that semester-long collections of weekly sessions with a single tutor could provide the space and consistency for effective tutoring strategies, cultural/linguistic negotiations, and relationships with multilingual writers to occur, we must keep in mind the ultimate goal of these sessions and of all writing center sessions: we do not only want to help multilingual learners improve their writing in our sessions, but we want to offer tools and ways of thinking that can transfer to new writing contexts. In the memorable words of North (1984), we want to “produce better writers, not better writing” (p. 50). However, an additional layer of working with multilingual writers is the cultural and linguistic diversity that exists between the tutor, the tutee, and the rhetorical situation at hand. Tutors therefore serve as a collaborative middle ground to connect the tutee to cultural and linguistic knowledge needed to address their rhetorical situation (Harris, 1995). The writing center session serves as the transitional space towards writing improvement – it starts with the tutee’s knowledge and, through collaboration and negotiation with the tutor, the knowledge is reshaped to address new writing contexts.

This process can be described by DePalma and Ringer's (2011) theory of adaptive transfer. Adaptive transfer is not simply the reuse of past knowledge in different contexts, which implies direct application of past knowledge, but the reshaping of prior knowledge for unfamiliar situations (p. 134). Because of cultural, linguistic, and rhetorical divides, multilingual writers cannot simply apply their prior knowledge directly onto new writing situations and expect success; instead, adaptive transfer emphasizes a reshaping and transforming of that knowledge to navigate new writing situations. This reshaping becomes especially important for multilingual writers because they are bringing knowledge from vastly different rhetorical, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds that must somehow be applied to American writing contexts. Therefore, this theory seems to be an answer to a "difference-as-deficit" stance to a "difference-as-resource" stance (Canagarajah, 2002) when working with multilingual writers, which is one of the main goals of the pedagogical adjustments previously discussed in this literature review.

DePalma and Ringer (2011) note six qualities of adaptive transfer:

1. Dynamic,
2. Idiosyncratic,
3. Cross-contextual,
4. Rhetorical,
5. Multilingual, and
6. Transformative (p. 141).

These six qualities can work collaboratively or independently, implicitly or explicitly, to create effective adaptive transfer. DePalma and Ringer suggest that this theory, using the



six qualities as an evaluative base, can be applied to pedagogy and research in contrastive rhetoric, English for academic purposes, and writing across the curriculum, but this study suggests that all six of these qualities of adaptive transfer have a natural stake in writing center sessions, as well, and especially in the ESL Opt-In Program.

## METHODS

While the literature's suggestions for tutoring strategies, cultural/linguistic negotiations, and relationships could supposedly find effective space and consistency in semester-long collections of weekly sessions with a single tutor – the ESL Opt-In Program – the methods for this study started from the simple revelation that we did not know what actually went on in these collections of sessions. We could assume that the tutoring strategies, cultural/linguistic negotiations, and relationships from the literature were transpiring, but until someone examined and analyzed these sessions, we could not know for sure. When I first considered this project, I originally wanted to evaluate our training for preparing tutors to work in these semester-long collections of weekly sessions with a single tutor; I then wanted to compare the elements of these semester-long collections of sessions with a single tutor against a one-time session or sessions with native speakers; I even wanted to evaluate tutees' actual writing improvement before, during, and after these semester-long collections of weekly sessions with a single tutor. However, the foundational step was to simply (1) discover if tutoring strategies, cultural/linguistic negotiations, and relationships happened at all, and if so, (2) describe what these elements looked like in a semester-long collection of weekly sessions with a single tutor, and (3) realize if and how each session built on knowledge established in prior sessions. I kept the scope of this project within this foundational step. While the

findings from this study do pave the way for my original questions, I purposefully keep my findings here descriptive and non-comparative.

Therefore, I conducted two case studies guided by the following research questions:

1. What tutoring strategies (especially those deemed most useful for multilingual writers), cultural/linguistic negotiations, and relationships transpired in a semester-long collection of weekly sessions with a single tutor?
2. Given these tutoring strategies, cultural/linguistic negotiations, and relationships, how is prior knowledge reshaped to contribute to adaptive transfer?
  - a. How do tutors and tutees draw on prior sessions over the semester to address current and/or future writing tasks?
  - b. How do tutors draw on the tutee's cultural and linguistic past to address current and/or future writing tasks?

Because of the individualized nature of both writing center tutoring and adaptive transfer, I pursued case studies to simply sketch a descriptive picture of what happened in these ESL Opt-In Sessions. The data collection occurred for the duration of one semester, Fall 2015, in which I observed, recorded, and transcribed each weekly session for my two case studies. My methods were reviewed and exempted by the Institutional Review Board previous to data collection.

## **Participants**

I recruited tutors first by emailing all of our center's Opt-In tutors for the Fall 2015 semester. Based on the tutors who responded positively to the initial recruitment, I

then recruited their assigned tutees; tutees were offered \$100 for participating in the full study. The first graduate tutee and undergraduate tutee to respond to the recruitment email dictated the two tutors and two tutees I accepted into my study. All names have been changed here for confidentiality. You can see who the participants are<sup>3</sup> and more about their backgrounds in the following table:

**Table 1: Participants**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Major &amp; Standing</b>	<b>Home Country &amp; Languages</b>	<b>Past Experience</b>
<b>Case Study #1 Tutor</b>	Kate (F)	Poetry First-Year MFA	United States: English	2 years in writing centers; Career ambassador for ESL students
<b>Case Study #1 Tutee</b>	Jing (M)	Educational Psychology Second-Year MA	China: Chinese, Mandarin, and English	Been in US since August 2014 to attend Mason
<b>Case Study #2 Tutor</b>	Brad (M)	Creative Nonfiction First-Year MFA	United States: English, some German & French	5 years in writing centers; 3 years working with multilingual writers
<b>Case Study #2 Tutee</b>	Lan (F)	Accounting Senior	Vietnam: Vietnamese, Finnish, and English	Been in US since July 2012; Attended community college before Mason

### **Case Study #1: Kate and Jing**

Kate told me in the pre-program interview that she most hoped her tutee would find support in his sessions with her. For Kate, providing support for a multilingual writer

doesn't just mean providing writing strategies, but also instilling confidence. Referring to her previous low-stakes Spanish classes, Kate said, "Even writing in a different language in a less stressful situation was still kind of intimidating. So to let that student who is in this high pressure environment, to be like, you are doing a good job. Here's how we can help you out, and here are some strategies so you can keep going and keep doing all these things." One of the ways Kate planned on helping her tutee "do all these things" was by encouraging his overall development as a writer, which she described as realizing "it's not just the paper that's important but the writing skills because there is a real life applicability to developing writing skills, not just at college but just living your life in general." For herself, Kate mentioned that she'd like to not only explore what it is like to learn from one tutee and what works for them over time, but she also appreciated the opportunity to improve her strategies for working with multilingual writers in general.

Meanwhile, Jing told me in the pre-program interview that he mostly has to write APA style essays like literature reviews and article critiques for his Educational Psychology major, and the writing center gives him the external motivation that he lacks to "kind of push [him] to improve his writing." He linked the lack of motivation and practice with his writing confidence:

My self-efficacy about writing is very low. I think I just don't have enough time invest in writing. Usually people write regularly, they will have this confidence about their ability in writing, but if I am not in school, in summer break, I just don't have the motivation to write... All your practice or experience build your confidence or skill or ability, so honestly my self-confidence about writing is low.

Thus, Jing relied on his weekly Opt-In appointments to provide the motivation to practice and therefore increase his confidence. Jing first heard about the Opt-In program from an international student orientation class, and he said he registered immediately. As far as other writing support, Jing said he would email his essays to his friends who are also international students for feedback, but he noted, “Except this, I think writing center is the major help. That’s it.”

### **Case Study #2: Brad and Lan**

Like Kate, Brad also noted in the pre-program interview that his Opt-In student most needed confidence, but he wanted his tutee to be confident enough to make errors and know she could correct them at a later time:

Because I think that the sooner they get the habit of just getting the information on the page rather than meticulously over analyzing it for every word for either the tutor or the professor or for anything like that. I think they need to be able to do prose confidently without focusing on every word that comes out.

He additionally hoped that this kind of confidence would relieve his tutee’s stress concerning tutoring and using academic language. Brad hoped to simply see what worked from tutoring his Opt-In long-term, and he also hoped to learn something new from each session.

Lan explained in her pre-program interview that she mostly has to write reports and research memos for her accounting major, and the strict guidelines and regulations of these assignments meant she was confident in the ideas and content of her writing, but she needed supplemental grammar and plagiarism instruction from the writing center.

After noticing her patterns of error, another tutor in a one-time session encouraged Lan to enroll in the Opt-In Program. Lan noted that besides the writing center, her only other forms of writing support are Google and online dictionaries.

### **My Role**

As a graduate administrator in the writing center, the Coordinator of Tutor Education and Development, I was careful to recruit tutors at the very start of our initial training week so as not to influence their participation through my position. I had also tutored Jing once over the summer when his previous Opt-In tutor was on vacation, but I did not reference this experience in my recruitment email. During tutoring sessions, I remained a silent observer; in a few instances, the tutors broke the fourth wall of the observation to ask me a specific genre or grammatical question, which is not surprising considering my role as their Coordinator of Tutor Education and Development. In these instances, I kept my answers as quick as possible. Otherwise, I only participated twice throughout all my observations: once Kate got confused explaining a quick-guide handout that I had written, so I jumped in to quickly clarify its contents, and another time Kate could not explain how to organize a literature review since she had never written one, so after the session ended, I gave Jing a few tips as a fellow graduate student on reading and organizing sources for his literature review. Naturally, since I first met the tutees before their tutors did for the pre-program interview, and because I saw them every week, I also developed a congenial relationship with Jing and Lan, and we enjoyed chatting as friends before and after sessions, as well as at the post-program interview.

## **Data Collection**

The data collection for my two case studies included three phases: 1) pre-program interviews with each tutor and tutee individually, 2) session observations throughout the semester, and 3) post-program interviews with each tutor and tutee individually.

The bulk of my data comes from observing these ESL Opt-In sessions. I observed, audio recorded, and transcribed every weekly tutoring session for both cases during the duration of the Fall 2015 semester; Case Study #1 included twelve sessions lasting between 38 and 52 minutes, and Case Study #2 included nine sessions lasting between 44 and 53 minutes. I typed detailed observation notes during sessions and then filled out those notes with direct transcriptions to better match actions and speech. Because I planned to analyze content rather than conversation, I did not transcribe every interruption or vocal utterance, and I also did not always transcribe when the tutor or tutee read aloud from a paper or handbook. Through the observation notes paired with transcriptions, I was able to document the tutoring strategies, cultural/linguistic negotiations, and relationships in these semester-long collections of weekly sessions with a single tutor.

To better understand my participants' experiences and perspectives, both about the Opt-In Program and about writing in general, I also conducted a pre-program interview and a post-program interview with all four tutors and tutees individually, as well as a few brief "check-ins" with the tutors following their sessions throughout the semester, all of which were transcribed. The first interviews took place before the Opt-In sessions began near the start of the Fall 2015 semester, and they lasted between 8 and 20



minutes. The second interviews took place after the Opt-In sessions ended near the close of the Fall 2015 semester, and they lasted between 8 and 16 minutes.

The first interview for the tutees (Appendix A) sought to discover demographic information, writing experiences and concerns, and expectations for the Opt-In Program. The first interview with the tutors (Appendix B) sought to discover basic background information, their expectations for tutoring in the Opt-In Program, and their feelings of preparedness for this tutoring. At the end of the semester, the second interview with both tutor and tutee recalled that information to see how the Opt-In sessions met those initial answers (Appendix C & D). The interviews helped illuminate the tutor and tutee perspective concerning what multilingual writers and tutors of multilingual writers need, as well as what worked or didn't work in sessions, that I could cross-reference and merge with the observation data. The check-ins were simple follow-up questions (no more than two) with the tutors after their tutoring sessions to clarify my observation notes. Most sessions did not require these follow-up questions.

## **Analysis**

Once all of the observations and interviews were collected and transcribed, I analyzed the observations through four rounds of mostly inductive coding: 1) tutoring strategies, 2) cultural/linguistic negotiations, 3) relationships, and 4) adaptive transfer. Here, my research questions, which mostly ask for description, guided my coding method. While I attempted a pure inductive coding process of all four elements, I did draw upon the literature and allow it to shape some of my terminology and interpretation of the data. Once I had coded all of the observations, I used the interviews as

supplemental data to further describe and provide tutor/tutee perspectives on the results of the observation coding.

The first round of coding was for tutoring strategies; instead of working from a masterlist of strategies, I described the tutoring strategies I saw in the observations and categorized them from there. What I coded as a tutoring strategy varied in length, with some strategies representing a single clause of speech and others encompassing several conversational turns between the tutor and tutee. Almost every move by the tutor was coded as a tutoring strategy and further described and categorized; therefore, the results of the tutoring strategies include mostly tutor movements, and some even overlap between the two case studies.

The second round of coding was for cultural/linguistic negotiations, and this process worked similarly to the coding for tutoring strategies. I once again read through all of the observation transcripts and inductively coded any explicit reference to cultural or linguistic issues, drawing on the literature even less than I did for tutoring strategies since each tutee brought such different cultural/linguistic experiences to their sessions. The results for this section of the two case studies look quite differently because they rely so heavily on the individuality of each tutee.

For the third round of coding, relationships, I attempted to start with inductive coding like I did with the tutoring strategies and cultural/linguistic negotiations. However, coding concrete data for a vague concept like “relationship” proved difficult. I found myself coding inconsistently and without confidence. Therefore, I looked to my literature review to help develop categories for which to code and describe the

relationship happening between tutor and tutee in these sessions, meaning my methods turned to deductive coding for this one round. I coded for the categories: 1) balance of authority, 2) personal connections, and 3) trust. Coding with these categories in mind meant I could find the concrete data that showed the relationship.

Finally, I coded for both implicit and explicit instances of adaptive transfer. It was crucial that this code happened last because, to be able to code the implicit instances of adaptive transfer, I had to be quite familiar with all of the observation transcripts – this being my fourth read-through of the transcripts (not including the actual observation and transcription) meant I knew what issues came up over and over and could code for them from the first session. For example, in Case Study #1, I knew that 1) addressing the prompt, 2) outlining, 3) transitioning, and 4) integrating sources were the four issues that the tutor and tutee focused on over and over, so I coded each time they came up throughout the twelve sessions to then describe the ways the tutor and tutee drew on the knowledge from prior sessions. Likewise, for Case Study #2, I coded for the various grammatical structures I knew that the tutor and tutee focused on throughout their nine sessions to see how and in what ways those issues were discussed and practiced over time. Meanwhile, I also coded for any explicit reference to an issue, a concept, or knowledge from previous sessions or previous learning that revealed adaptive transfer in action.

## CASE STUDY #1 RESULTS

The results of Case Study #1 are organized into three major sections: 1) tutoring strategies, 2) cultural/linguistic negotiations, and 3) relationship. Each section simply describes what these elements looked like in this particular semester-long collection of weekly sessions with a single tutor, and, at the end of each section, I analyze the data for the qualities of adaptive transfer. This analysis suggests that the **tutoring strategies** between Kate and Jing, which included 1) metadiscourse, 2) questioning, and 3) mini-lessons, seem to provide a level of individuation and collaboration necessary for Jing to explicitly engage in adaptive transfer; these tutoring strategies also allowed Kate and Jing to draw on and reshape knowledge from prior sessions for four targeted writing concepts. In addition, the **cultural/linguistic negotiations** between Kate and Jing, which included 1) Jing's identity as an international student, 2) vocabulary, and 3) common ground, meant that Jing could reshape his cultural/linguistic knowledge with Kate to better communicate in an American university. Finally, the **relationship** between Kate and Jing, which included a 1) balance of authority, 2) personal connections, and 3) trust, indirectly contributed to adaptive transfer by providing the foundation for the tutoring strategies and cultural/linguistic negotiations to occur.

## **Tutoring Strategies**

Within the first three sessions, Kate had developed a number of tutoring strategies in her sessions with Jing that she relied on throughout the rest of the semester. In her post-program interview, Kate mentioned that the two strategies she found most helpful were “writing things down a lot” and using outside resources to help her explain complex concepts. Indeed, my observation notes show that Kate did use these strategies often, and I also observed other questioning and responsive strategies that, when paired with the strategies that Kate identified, created a rhythm of back-and-forth collaboration in her sessions with Jing. Overall, I recognized three main categories of tutoring strategies that Kate used throughout her twelve sessions with Jing: 1) metadiscourse, 2) questioning, and 3) mini-lessons.

### **Metadiscourse**

One strategy that Kate weaved throughout all twelve sessions was metadiscourse. This metadiscourse occurred through several different moves in Kate’s sessions with Jing: setting pre- and post-agendas, discussing the prompt and context, directing the progression of the session, gauging Jing’s preferences for the session, and checking Jing’s comprehension. At the beginning of every session, Kate asked what Jing wanted to focus on in the session before asking questions about the prompt and main goal for the assignment he had brought in. While these elements of agenda-setting and reading the prompt happened in every session, in earlier sessions Kate physically wrote down the agenda and read the prompt herself; as time went by, though, Kate might briefly ask what assignment Jing brought in before they read the paper aloud. As early as Session #3, Kate didn’t ask for the prompt until she hit a question she could not answer mid-way through

the session. This habit of calling on the prompt when there was a snag in understanding Jing's purpose continued through the rest of their sessions; however, once the prompt was introduced into the session, Kate made many moves to redirect Jing's focus to the prompt's goals, like asking him to explain key terms/actions from the prompt in his own words or providing a suggestion based on the prompt ("So this connection is very great but it's not doing what the prompt is asking you to do" or "Remember, we are reflecting on something you've learned"). These moves echo Harris and Silva's (1993) and Williams's (2004) suggestion in using metadiscourse to simplify tasks and orient goals.

Another metadiscourse move that persisted through all twelve sessions was Kate's explicit or implicit directing of the session. Some of these directions took the form of announcements. For example, if Jing was reading aloud and Kate wanted to comment, she might say, "Let's stop here." She also might use language like, "Let's take a step back – what does it mean to be misunderstood?" or "I'm going to explain why 'human error' is such an ambiguous term." Some announcements were more elaborate about the upcoming time in the session, like near the beginning of Session #6 when Kate charted their course: "To maintain the focus, we are going to lay out the outline, your paragraphs. We are going to organize and see where these sections belong in the outline. Then we are going to type up how you are going to break down those paragraphs from there." Other announcements served to explain what was happening in the moment; in Session #5, when Jing was trying to translate a Chinese word, he told Kate, "Sorry, this might take a minute," and she answered, "That's okay; this is important so take your time." These announcements let Jing know what was happening in the session and to some extent why.

However, Kate balanced these directive announcements with letting Jing decide where the session should go next: she quite often throughout a session would ask questions like, “Do you want me to give you five minutes to review it?” or “Are we ready to move on?” or “So where do you want to go from here?” Both the direct and indirect metadiscourse that decided the progression of the sessions often relied on time markers, like “We have five minutes left; anything else you would like to go over?” Just as Severino and Deifell (2011) stress as a main reason to use metadiscourse, these questions allowed Jing control over their focus and allocation of time.

The final metadiscourse move that Kate made throughout their sessions was to gauge Jing’s preferences and check his comprehension. When a session shifted gears or ended, Kate would often ask Jing if he was benefiting from the session with questions like, “So how do you feel about that paragraph so far?” After completing a task, she would ask, “Were those words helpful?” or “Do you think the outline we downloaded was helpful?” These questions became especially important because Kate needed to know what worked or didn’t work for Jing so she would know what strategies to keep for the following week. Even more, these questions forced Jing to explicitly notice and evaluate the writing strategies he and Kate used in their sessions; Nan (2012) and Rafoth (2015) encourage this type of metadiscourse so the tutee can log away writing strategies for later use. In addition, Kate also included comprehension checkpoints throughout her sessions with phrases like, “Do you have any questions about this?” and “Does that make sense?” Jing didn’t hesitate to let Kate know if he was still confused or if he had misunderstood, so Kate could rely on these somewhat filler phrases. Some

comprehension checkpoints worked to further explain a change, like in Session #9 when Kate asked, “So do you see how we have this signal phrase, how we have it more clear?” She used this particular comprehension checkpoint not only to gauge if Jing had understood signal phrases, but also to explain how they can make writing more clear. This kind of metadiscourse that gauged Jing’s preferences and comprehension helped Kate and Jing know where to go next in the session at hand and in following sessions.

### **Questioning**

The bulk of Kate and Jing’s sessions revolved around questions, both from Kate and from Jing. I believe Kate relied on questions for a number of reasons: firstly, Jing was a graduate student writing detailed article critiques, proposals, and literature reviews for the field of Educational Psychology. Kate often needed to ask questions to simply understand the content before she could move forward with writing instruction. Secondly, as Kate realized within the first few sessions, Jing answered questions honestly and to the best of his ability, which usually led the session to a productive space whether he had an answer or not. Finally, Kate relied on questions to make suggestions for revision without erasing Jing’s authority.

These reasons for including questions in their twelve sessions led Kate to develop roughly three types of questions: clarifying questions, suggestive questions, and “why” questions. The clarifying questions were relatively neutral in nature and functioned as a way for Kate to understand Jing’s content, goals, or choices. They often stemmed from Kate’s confusion or uncertainty in how to proceed; for example, she might make a suggestion but then say, “Well...so, can you tell me more about why you said this?” The



vitality of continued clarifying questions also become apparent in this exchange from Session #7 when Jing and Kate were working on a proposal Jing was writing to a possible mentor:

Jing: How can I explain this idea? Self-regulated learning is a model, a circle. But we should also consider emotion in this circle.

Kate: So you want to apply emotion to this structure?

Jing: My goal is still how to improve learning. To improve learning, we have to consider emotion on the way.

Kate: So maybe you can talk about this because [your mentor] specializes in self-regulated learning, but maybe through working with her, you can figure out how to put emotion into the self-regulated learning. Is that right?

Jing: No.

Kate: So tell me more then.

These kinds of invitations for Jing to explain and clarify allowed Kate and Jing to align how best to revise the writing for clarity of ideas, highlighting Severino's (2009) suggestion for "tell-me-more questions" to avoid appropriation. As evidenced in the above exchange, these clarifying questions would often follow any direct suggestion that Kate offered to insure she was not doling out incorrect advice or misinterpreting Jing's ideas.

Meanwhile, Kate also consistently used suggestive questions, which under the surface guided Jing toward certain revisions without necessarily telling him to do so directly. For example, in Session #2, after a long back-and-forth about emotional self-

regulation and what Jing meant by the term, Kate asked, “Do you think it’s important to mention that you are focusing on this without medicine?” This question showed that Kate realized Jing’s point about not using medicine was important to the clarity of his argument, but he had not included it in his writing. Instead of suggesting he add that detail, she posed it as a question of importance instead. Other examples of these suggestive questions include language like, “So how do you think you can make this verb clearer?” and “So you are going to touch on [the authors’] explanation of quantification and how you learned you can relate it to school psychologists, maybe?” These questions saved time in a sense – instead of telling Jing he needed a clearer verb and then asking which verb might be clearer, Kate just asked the question that has the implicit instruction – and these questions also allowed Jing to be steered toward the necessary revisions without losing control of his changes, a strategy that strikes Staben and Nordhaus’s (2009) suggested balance of being more direct in instruction with multilingual writers without becoming overly directive.

Another type of question that Kate used quite often was what I’m calling a “why” question. If she thought a revision might be necessary or she didn’t quite understand a passage, Kate would often ask Jing to explain his writing choices to her so she could gauge whether she needed to suggest a revision. For example, she might say, “So can you tell me more about why you put this [pointing to paper] here?” In Session #3, when Jing had written that ADHD was a discrepancy and not a disease, Kate asked, “Why do you think this? Did you read it somewhere?” before she explained that an audience might think differently. While this strategy of questioning was used less than the others, it

created key moments for Jing to reveal his logic of thinking in making certain writing choices. On the same note, Kate would also ask “why”-type questions that would charge Jing with his own question or suggestion. For example, in this exchange from Session #10, we can see how Jing was pursuing a direct statement from Kate, but she continued to put the question back to him until she felt confident in answering directly.

Jing: Do you think ‘databases’ is too narrow or too specific?

Kate: Well, what word would you use if it’s not the right word?

Jing: I don’t think it’s too narrow.

Kate: I don’t either.

Jing: I think it needs to be specific.

Kate: How would you make it more specific?

Jing: ...I don’t think it needs to be more specific.

Kate: So it seems like applying to PhD programs is too narrow and specific to you. Is that true?

Jing: Yes, I’m applying in the Spring.

Kate: Then I think that part is too specific. I think you want to just stay with database because that’s your end goal but that’s not everyone’s end goal.

Jing: Good. Then my professors will not feel uncomfortable. I feel like they feel uncomfortable when I mention something else.

This back-and-forth reveals Kate’s strategy of using questions to understand why Jing wanted to make changes before she supported or directed the change; here, we see a

version of Rafoth's (2015) idea of using collaboration to generate options and choices (p. 127).

It is impossible to talk about Kate's strategy of questioning without mentioning its companion – writing on scratch paper. Kate only physically wrote on Jing's draft twice in all their twelve sessions (both when time was running short). In Session #1, she went to write on his paper, but then stopped, laughed, and said, "Why don't I let you write on it?" This move set the stage for their following eleven sessions. Otherwise, Kate wrote on the scratch paper provided on the tutoring table while Jing made his own notes on his drafts. For almost any question, Kate wrote on a piece of scratch paper while Jing answered. Sometimes it was writing an agenda for the session, sometimes it was re-phrasing a confusing sentence that she'd asked Jing to clarify, and sometimes it was plotting an outline from Jing's crowded ideas, but this writing-while-Jing-talked always served as a way of clarifying and synthesizing his ideas. He would talk in ungrammatical English and circular ideas, but she would synthesize a grammatically correct and focused idea on paper from his oral explanation. A few times, Kate and Jing wrote simultaneously, and then they would compare their new sentences. Most of the time, however, Kate let Jing talk for several minutes while she wrote, and then she would read back to him what she wrote down, explain why she wrote it that way, and ask if it was closer to what he meant. This exchange from Session #10 follows Kate asking Jing to define what he means by database. She wrote while he talked, then checked that what she wrote was correct before explaining why it was important:

Jing: Oh, yes, database is a place where you explore our interested topic. For example, if I am interested in a question, a question I know nothing about, any information is on this question. If we go to some regular search engine like Google or Yahoo, these are not scientific articles; they are pseudo-scientific sometimes. If we go to these database, it's all based on research, and based on data, and it's scientific. And I believe in scientific. We can repeat this research. And it's more trustworthy. So in this way we can stand on very solid foundation to go further. So I think database is the foundation – at the beginning it's a foundation, but it's also the place to be published.

Kate: Alright, so from what you were telling me, when we say database, you're saying it's academic, it's online, it has scholarly articles, it's based on research, it can be scientific, and it's verified by the academic community. Right?

Jing: Yes.

Kate: So that's what I mean by definition. It's basically what kind of databases are you going to look at rather than...yeah, does that make sense?

Jing: Yeah, it makes sense.

Kate: Just because...it's important just to define the terms because a database could be something as like a library, like we don't consider them databases in the sense of online, so it's best to give your reader that kind of focus.

Jing: Where is the database? Okay.

Kate: Yeah. And you could probably also, I would actually, I think it might be best for you to define in your first paragraph because your research question has

database up there, right? So we want to start off, right from the start, with making sure that your audience knows what you define as a database in this research. And then if you need any help, I wrote down some things that we defined as databases. Jing always collected and took all of the scratch paper from every session, and he told me in the post-program interview that he would read over them all at home to make sure he hadn't missed anything; Leki (1992) claims that these written notes help multilingual writers better catalog and re-visit necessary revisions after the session. However, after Kate explained her writing in the sessions, Jing would usually make his own written comment on his draft for what kind of revision needed to take place. In fact, most of the time, the writing on scratch paper seemed more beneficial to Kate at times to help her keep track of Jing's dense subject matter.

The writing Kate used most by far was outlining. In the first three sessions, Jing brought in article critiques/reflections. Jing, having already worked as a professional for many years in China, had so many ideas, experiences, and opinions in all of these article critiques that he wasn't necessarily abiding by the prompt's guidelines. Therefore, Kate relied heavily on outlining in these sessions to re-organize the often-scattered information and to make sure every paragraph was serving to answer the prompt in some way. Both Kate and Jing mentioned in their post-program interviews that the number one thing Jing had improved on after his semester with Kate was organizing his ideas. When I asked in what ways Jing had improved most, Kate said,

I think organizing. Definitely the first few sessions...He just has a lot of big ideas, and that's great, but it's not really necessarily responding to what the prompt is

asking. So it took a lot of backtracking and saying, okay where did you answer this specific part of your prompt, where'd you answer this? And then after we kind of realized that it's not necessarily answering the prompt, we have to kind of go back and say, this is how you do this, this is kind of the basic structure you follow.

Using outlining to help Jing better answer the prompt worked well in those first few sessions; then in Session #6, Jing did not have a draft but specifically wanted to outline together. Here we see Leki's (1991) suggestion to use reverse outlining or topical structural analysis to avoid appropriation (p. 127). However, once Kate and Jing had established the habit of creating an outline whenever Jing had complex ideas to wade through, Kate continued to pursue this strategy even before they had read the paper and established its need, and she sometimes continued to pursue outlines when Jing felt confident about the organization and wanted to focus on other things. In fact, many times Kate would begin one outline, see new information in the next paragraph, and start a new outline on a fresh sheet of scratch paper. In the final session, Session #12, in which Jing had a full draft of a literature review, Kate pushed for Jing to organize the literature review in a different way (by author) and tried creating an outline, but Jing stood his ground and said his professor did not comment on the organization and that he liked the way he organized it (by theme). This is the only time Jing openly resisted the outlining, but many other outlines were started and abandoned after the needed revisions were brought into clearer focus.

### **Mini-Lessons**

The balance to Kate's strategy of questioning was the strategy of the mini-lesson.

While Kate more often relied on the suggestive question, she also deciphered when to give a direct suggestion instead. Many direct suggestions were about small grammatical errors or vocabulary words that needed to be changed; because none of Kate and Jing's sessions focused on lower-order concerns, Kate would suggest those changes offhand and usually without much explanation, like "So since you have a question mark here – just really quick – it should be 'how do we use...' since you are saying it as a question" and "I think we should drop the 'achievement researches' and I think we can have a stronger verb than 'do.'" She did this more in some sessions than others depending on whether Jing had a fully written draft or even depending on her confidence to talk about grammar in a session; after Session #8, I asked Kate why she hit so many direct grammar notes in that session because she usually hit them very rarely. She told me that she had just attended a Punctuation Refresher Tutor Workshop, so she felt like she had more language to talk about the grammar head-on, whereas previously when she saw those issues she would ask, "How can we rephrase that?"

However, I call this strategy the mini-lesson because almost every direct suggestion (that wasn't grammatical) was followed by some kind "why" explanation, whether short or long. These explanations usually served the dual function of teaching the bigger foundation of her question and why she was asking it: "So 'for example' here. I like that you are using a transition, but it seems like you are going to be showing multiple examples. So I think you should have a transition, but not 'for example.' Something that shows the connection – like 'although' or 'however.'" Here, we see that, embedded in



Kate's direct suggestion to change the transition, she also explains why the current one isn't working ("it seems like you are going to be showing multiple examples") and the function of the new transition ("something that shows the connection"). In fact, Kate almost always revolved her explanation around a reader response. When Jing admits that using the same topic for three different class assignments might not work, Kate replies, "I tend to agree with that because it's taking me off-topic. I think it might be making your paper too big for you to focus on it." For another one of her direct suggestions to include more information from a source article, Kate framed her comment with a reader response first: "As somebody who is not very familiar with the sciences and psychology, I don't know what this is trying to say here. Is it saying...? It could be saying it's a good idea but it could be saying it's a huge no-no. So we need to finish this out to see what's being said." Explaining the "why" behind direct suggestions kept Jing from making changes to the paper at hand without being able to apply the learning to other assignments in the future; it also worked to keep the idea of a reader, or audience, in Jing's mind when he made writing choices.

For bigger concepts or writing strategies that needed more than a quick explanation before implementation, Kate usually turned to an outside resource to assist her in explaining the why. In Session #11, Jing was writing a literature review but using an outside source on Annotated Bibliographies to help him do so; Kate retrieved the writing center's quick-guide on literature reviews and spent most of the session talking through the two handouts and explaining concepts to Jing after she had semi-explained them to herself through reading the quick-guides aloud. Other more extensive mini-

lessons included drawing and explaining the “introduction funnel” and using the writing center’s outlining quick-guide to explain the minutiae of organizing a paragraph (topic sentence, evidence, analysis). However, sometimes this turn to an outside resource based on Kate’s limitations came later than ideal; in Session #9, the third session in which they were struggling through the requirements of a proposal, Kate finally checked to see if our writing center had a quick-guide on proposals (we don’t) before breaking the fourth wall to ask me a question about the genre as her administrator. Then in Session #10, she suggested that Jing google what proposals look like in his discipline (he already had done this on his own previously). However, Kate answered Jing’s questions and provided suggestions for how he should write his proposal through all four of these sessions even though she was unsure of the genre requirements. Occasionally, Kate’s direct suggestion would come in conflict with Jing’s content and genre knowledge, and he would explain to her why the suggestion would not work.

It’s important to note that neither the metadiscourse, questioning, nor mini-lessons existed in isolation in these sessions, but instead they relied on and intertwined with one another. Usually a mini-lesson would be followed with a clarifying question. After a long round of suggestive questions, Kate might reveal the direct suggestion that she was aiming for. Kate would ask a suggestive question, write to synthesize, ask a clarifying question about what she wrote, and then ask Jing if the exercise was helpful. Therefore, while I’ve categorized and separated Kate’s tutoring strategies here to look at each one more fully, they did work together to create a bigger arc of session goals. Another interesting note about these tutoring strategies is that they remained remarkably

consistent throughout all twelve sessions. Almost every strategy showed up in every session, and it seemed that Jing came to expect and rely on Kate's style of tutoring.

### **Adaptive Transfer: Drawing on Prior Sessions**

Overall, Kate's collaborative and individualized tutoring strategies meant Jing could consciously engage in adaptive transfer. In fact, because adaptive transfer "highlights the way individuals perceive parallels across contexts and adapt knowledge as necessary" (DePalma & Ringer, 2011, p. 141), the sessions themselves embodied this adaptation process since Jing had to make a conscious acknowledgement of his writing knowledge and goals for how well they matched the situation at hand. For example, all three of Kate's questioning strategies (the clarifying questions, suggestive questions, and "why" questions) encouraged Jing to voice and acknowledge his writing choices, and then he and Kate could collaboratively reshape those choices together for the new task at hand. The questions, especially when paired with the metadiscourse moves that gauged Jing's preferences for revision or the direction of sessions, emphasized the *rhetorical* quality of adaptive transfer, which "leaves room for the possibility that differences in student writing are the result of a strategic and creative choice by the author" (p. 141). Jing always had the opportunity to remain autonomous over his learning and his writing choices since Kate relied heavily on his input before moving forward, but through their collaboration and even the mini-lessons that filled content gaps, Jing also learned "that the context, audience, and purpose of a piece of writing influence what is appropriate" (p. 141). Thus, Kate and Jing could use the prolonged space of twelve tutoring sessions to

better articulate and then refine how Jing applied past writing knowledge to his current writing tasks.

Additionally, because Kate's tutoring strategies relied so heavily on Jing's input and collaboration, the tutoring strategies also encouraged the *idiosyncratic* quality of adaptive transfer, which states that "processes of adaptive transfer are unique to individuals and are inflected by a range of factors, including language repertoire, race, class, gender, educational history, social setting, and genre knowledge" (p. 141). Because of the metadiscourse and questioning strategies that relied on Jing's explanation of his writing choices or goals, Kate could then pursue exercises or mini-lessons that best met Jing's specific needs or gaps in knowledge so he could successfully reshape his past learning for the writing situation at hand. For example, when Kate realized that Jing had trouble boiling down his big ideas to answer a given prompt, and he also had trouble organizing his thoughts into an American pattern of thinking, she gravitated towards using outlines to help Jing reshape his current knowledge for his current tasks. This use of outlining responded specifically to Jing's unique process of adaptive transfer.

Perhaps more interestingly, though, is that the long-term nature of these sessions not only (1) provided more physical time to engage the complexities of adaptive transfer and not only (2) reshaped Jing's past writing knowledge for new contexts, but Kate and Jing could also (3) reshape the writing knowledge established in prior sessions. Therefore, the consistent sessions over time created a kind of microcosm that emphasized the *cross-contextual* nature of adaptive transfer – "when students perceive similarity between the familiar writing context in which the skill was learned and the unfamiliar

context with which the writer is faced” (p. 141). Over their twelve sessions, Kate and Jing constructed and built on writing knowledge in four distinct areas: addressing a prompt/genre conventions, outlining, transitioning, and integrating sources. One can see how Kate and Jing refined and adapted these concepts for new writing situations over their twelve sessions in the following table:

**Table 2: Drawing on Prior Sessions in Case Study #1**

	<b>Addressing the Prompt</b>	<b>Outlining</b>	<b>Transitioning</b>	<b>Integrating Sources</b>
<b>Session #1</b>	Jing asks if he can speak about a topic; Kate says it depends on the prompt.  [Kate teaches.]	Near the end, Kate asks if Jing would like her to help him with anything else, he says, “outlining,” and they create their first outline together.  [Kate teaches.]	Kate uses the question “How would you like to transition?” as they create their outline.  [Kate teaches.]	
<b>Session #2</b>	Kate discourages Jing from using the same topic for three different assignments because it doesn’t fully answer the prompt. Jing agrees he put too many ideas in one piece of writing.  [Kate teaches.]	When Kate struggles to understand what Jing wants to write for his assignment early in the session, she suggests they begin outlining.  [Kate teaches.]		Responding to incorrect source integration, Kate explains how to introduce a source and then paraphrase it, explains why we do this, and gives an example. They draft the paraphrase together in bullet points.  [Kate teaches.]
<b>Session #3</b>	Kate realizes Jing has addressed three of the four required bullet points on his assignment prompt,	Once they reach the second paragraph and after reading the prompt, Kate suggests outlining	Kate asks, “How do you go from this sentence to this sentence?” Jing responds with the	Jing has attempted paraphrase on his own, but he ended up patchwriting. Kate explains how

	<p>and they discuss ways to address the fourth task within the limit of two pages. Later in the session, Kate explains that many of Jing's big ideas he wants to write about are taking him off-prompt.</p> <p>[Kate teaches.]</p>	<p>the paragraph to make sure they cover all the requirements.</p> <p>[Kate teaches.]</p>	<p>word "Transfer?" She corrects, "Transition." They discuss how to rephrase and connect the two sentences. Jing continues to use the word "transfer" throughout the session, and Kate offers sample transition phrases throughout.</p> <p>[Kate teaches.]</p>	<p>patchwriting is a form of plagiarism, and she suggests writing the paraphrase without looking at the original source as they draft together.</p> <p>[Kate teaches.]</p>
<b>Session #4</b>	<p>Jing has a new assignment, and he tells Kate right at the beginning of the session that he "just focused on the questions [from the prompt]."</p> <p>[Jing practices.]</p>	<p>When they clarify through conversation what Jing wants to argue, Kate asks, "Do you want me to help you outline that?" They outline several paragraphs together throughout the session.</p> <p>[Kate teaches.]</p>		<p>Jing had quoted a few words from a source, but he did not introduce it. When Kate suggests he introduce the quotation, he confirms her suggestion with the language from her samples the previous weeks: "So 'Some author's article says...'" He makes a note for later and Kate resorts to only saying "introduce this source, as well" throughout the session, and Jing replies with "You mean 'according to' or 'based on some research'?"</p> <p>[Jing practices.]</p>
<b>Session #5</b>		<p>After Jing spends most of the session trying to explain a difficult concept, Kate suggests he attempt to outline what he means on his</p>	<p>Kate suggests Jing transition between two sentences, and Jing repeats the word "transition" before they discuss how to do so. Later,</p>	<p>Right away, Kate praises Jing for doing "what we talked about last week, which is introducing the text." Jing admits</p>

		<p>own to work through it.</p> <p>[Kate teaches.]</p>	<p>when Kate mentions that Jing needs to “connect back” to an idea, he says, “So use this first sentence as a transfer, right?” When she corrects his term, he exclaims, “Transition!”</p> <p>[Kate teaches.]</p>	<p>he kept all the words of a source text because he didn’t have vocabulary to change them, and Kate reminds him he simply needs to quote.</p> <p>[Jing practices and applies.]</p>
<b>Session #6</b>	<p>After Kate explains thesis statements and topic sentences, Jing asks what to do if he has more than one big idea, and they decide he should delete them if they don’t fit under the main idea.</p> <p>[Jing practices.]</p>	<p>When he brings in a new assignment to date, Jing wants to “Outline!” They outline together throughout the session using the terms “introduction” and “conclusion.” When Jing asks the difference between the topic sentence and concluding sentence of a paragraph, Kate turns to an outlining handout for the answer.</p> <p>[Jing practices.]</p>		<p>When Kate suggests Jing include the source text to back up an argument, she quickly explains again that he must quote or paraphrase, and then repeats her strategy about not looking at the text when paraphrasing.</p> <p>[Jing applies.]</p>
<b>Session #7</b>	<p>Jing is revising his personal statement for a professor, and he must also write a proposal for her. Jing asks what the differences are between the two genres, and he and Kate discuss the specific conventions throughout.</p> <p>[Jing practices.]</p>	<p>When Kate asks how Jing wants to revise a paragraph, he says that he wants to add a “conclusion sentence that connects to the theme” and mentions this idea throughout. Later, Jing wants to outline the “topic sentence for the whole proposal” – Kate corrects “thesis” – for his proposal. Kate suggests Jing outline his whole proposal before drafting and reviews the parts of a paragraph.</p>		

		[Jing practices.]		
<b>Session #8</b>	Jing stops after a sentence in his proposal that is more personal and confirms that it needs to be taken out. They once again discuss the differences between the personal statement and proposal.  [Jing practices.]		Kate explains her confusion as a reader by saying the ideas between paragraphs do not transition. They re-write the topic sentence together to better connect the two ideas. She offers the phrase “for example.”  [Kate teaches.]	
<b>Session #9</b>		Kate and Jing revise many of Jing’s topic sentences, always using that term and reiterating how the topic sentence reflects the information in the paragraph.  [Jing practices.]	Jing has used the phrase “for example” incorrectly, and they discuss how he can transition more accurately. Later, Kate uses the term “signal phrase” to talk about using a more accurate transition.  [Jing practices.]	Kate interrupts Jing’s reading to ask if he quoted or paraphrased from a source. He says he thinks he paraphrased but he will check later, and they continue on.  [Jing applies.]
<b>Session #10</b>			Kate offers the word “then” and explains it’s function, and Jing replies, “All these transition words. It makes, at least it makes me feel better, it’s more clear.”  [Jing practices and applies.]	Kate and Jing find a definition online they would like to use and Jing says, “I just need to paraphrase it” and Kate reminds him of their strategy: “Just minimize that [window] and try to write it.” He composes the paraphrase himself.  [Jing applies.]
<b>Session #11</b>	Jing is working from an Annotated Bibliography handout for his literature review, and Kate brings a	When Jing struggles to integrate all of his sources into his lit review, Kate suggests he make a detailed outline;		



	<p>literature review handout into the session so they can compare and follow the correct conventions.</p> <p>[Jing practices and applies.]</p>	<p>when he is unsure of how to proceed outlining this genre, they make the it together in the session. Jing compares terms like “introduction,” “background” and “conclusion” to how they used them for previous genres. At the end of the session, Jing wants to simply review all the parts of their outline one more time.</p> <p>[Jing practices and applies.]</p>		
<b>Session #12</b>	<p>Kate assumes Jing wants to turn his lit review into a proposal, but he insists his professor only wants a lit review without a research question. Later, Kate suggests Jing have an argumentative claim, and Jing says about her suggestion, “This is like a thesis” before insisting his professor does not want a thesis either. Kate gets the lit review handout to review with Jing once again.</p> <p>[Jing applies.]</p>	<p>Kate attempts to make an outline that groups the review by author, but Jing insists he wants to group the review by theme instead. Therefore, Kate asked Jing to outline for him how he wants to expand one of his paragraphs.</p> <p>[Jing applies.]</p>		

What this table reveals is how, over time, Jing was able to draw on knowledge from previous sessions and apply them to new writing situations. All four categories of

writing knowledge that Kate and Jing focused on most throughout their sessions follow a pattern: (1) Kate taught and reviewed new writing knowledge, (2) Jing confirmed and practiced the new writing knowledge with Kate, and then (3) Jing applied the writing knowledge on his own. For example, Kate suggested, taught, and modeled effective outlining for *five* sessions before Jing himself, in Session #6, suggested outlining and began using Kate's outlining terms (like "introduction" and "conclusion"). In Sessions #7, #9, and #11, Jing was the one initiating the revisions that involved outlining with Kate, and then in Session #12, Jing compared what they had established about outlining to the unfamiliar genre of literature reviews. Likewise, for all the sessions that included integrating sources, Kate explained the rules and strategies for integrating sources for two sessions, Jing recognized needed revisions and checked them against Kate for the next three sessions, but then Jing saw the needed revisions and fixed them on his own in the last two sessions. This pattern suggests that the ESL Opt-In Program in this case provided the space and consistency necessary to learn, practice, and then apply writing knowledge – it created both the temporal space and individuation necessary for adaptive transfer to occur.

### **Cultural/Linguistic Negotiations**

Not only did Kate's tutoring strategies over time contribute to Jing's adaptive transfer, but the cultural/linguistic negotiations that occurred within sessions further contributed to adaptive transfer by emphasizing the variety of cultural and linguistic knowledge used to make strategic writing choices. Over the course of the semester, Kate and Jing encountered a number of cultural/linguistic issues between them that often

guided and shaped the direction of their tutoring sessions. I've separated these often-intertwined cultural/linguistic negotiations that most affected sessions into three main categories: 1) the negotiation of Jing's multilingual, international student identity; 2) the negotiation of vocabulary; 3) and the negotiation of common communicative ground.

### **A Multilingual, International Student Identity**

In our interviews, Jing claimed he had no strengths as a writer, but he waxed on about his weaknesses. While it's obvious to me now after a semester of watching Jing share and talk about his writing that Jing has many (quite outstanding) writing strengths, Jing's recognition of his limitations as a multilingual, international student played a major role in his sessions with Kate. For example, his number one concern in all sessions was clarity of content and syntax. He would often stop reading aloud to say, "This sentence has not expressed what I am trying to say" or "Can you understand this sentence?" This push for clarity in his writing most likely stemmed from Jing's difficulty with composing: in the pre-program interview, Jing explained, "I really want to improve my English thinking, you know? Like I don't need my Chinese to think or organize my essay but if I can use English to organize and edit everything in my mind, then I could very quickly type it on my computer. But it's very difficult." Jing's experiences echo Matsuda, Ortemeier-Hooper, and Matsuda's (2009) observation that multilingual writers often "plan less in their writing, have difficulty setting appropriate goals, and spend more time trying to generate material and locating suitable vocabulary for a particular writing task" (p. 462). Because Jing was still trying to improve his "English thinking," he felt that both the ideas and the grammar of his sentences needed to be clarified through revision.

When Jing would express his lack of confidence about the clarity of his writing to Kate, she would often prompt him to further explain what he meant or have him explain why he felt the writing was unclear. In fact, most of Kate's tutoring strategies, especially the clarifying, suggestive, and "why" questions, directly addressed Jing's cultural concern of clarity.

Not only did Jing recognize his need to clarify, but he also recognized a number of other reading and composing limitations related to his status as a multilingual, international student that ended up dictating his sessions with Kate. For example, Jing felt he did not have adequate vocabulary to paraphrase well, so when paraphrasing came up in seven different sessions, he and Kate wrestled with paraphrasing strategies and equivalent vocabulary words every time. Jing told Kate, "This week, I read these articles and there a lot of ideas that confirm my own thinking. It's still not easy to develop some language, some English language, to connect with these readings." Additionally, in Session #2, Jing was attempting to use one topic to fulfill three different class assignments, and therefore none of his writing was fully meeting the requirements of each separate prompt. When Kate admitted she was confused by his choice, Jing explained, "To me, I just want to save my time because of my reading. I have some reading difficulty in English. If I have three different topics for three different classes, it will be very time-consuming." Working through Jing's idea to triple-up on assignments took a large part of the session. Throughout the semester, Jing mentioned other reading and composing limitations that guided his sessions with Kate, like developing a whole

paragraph around a concept, choosing only one word that sums up what he is trying to say, and reading articles efficiently.

Interestingly, Jing's identity as a multilingual, international student greatly affected the actual content he chose to write about for his courses, and therefore affected the ideas that he and Kate worked through in their sessions. This especially highlights Canagarajah's (2006) suggestion that a shuttling between languages is a "strategic and creative choice" (p. 591) on the part of the writer. For example, in an article critique supporting empirical methods, Jing explained to Kate that these are better than "human judgment or common sense that is allowed everyday life, bias and discrimination. There is a lot of issue like this especially when we face cultural diversity environment." Here, we see the explanations that Jing needed were colored by his experience as an international student. In another assignment in Session #5, Kate and Jing went back-and-forth for most of the session because he was trying to explain a major difference between the Chinese language and the English language – that Chinese often sums up abstract concepts in one symbol or claims a concept is "unspeakable" while English has enough words to specify and define an abstract concept. They struggled at length to find the words to explain this difference and work it into the assignment, so Kate suggested near the end of the session, "I think that if after a while if it proves too difficult, I might suggest cutting it out even though it's something you want to focus on." Jing quickly replied, "No, I want to keep it because I have think about this for many years, not just right now." Likewise, for his major literature review near the end of the semester, Jing revised his research question about using digital technologies for teaching databases and

providing writing feedback to especially focus on these services for ESL students; he told Kate, “This is based on myself. If this research can be improved, it will be very helpful to myself.” Because Jing’s experiences passionately informed these content choices, he often went off-prompt to include them in his writing, and therefore often Kate used outlines and conversation to redirect the focus back to the prompt. Content based in Jing’s Chinese experiences also led to much more explaining and refining information between he and Kate before they could move forward with revisions.

### **Vocabulary**

The major linguistic negotiation that shaped Kate and Jing’s sessions revolved around vocabulary. One or more vocabulary exchanges occurred in almost every session. Always wanting to be clearer, Jing constantly looked for better and more concise words to express himself. The following is a vocabulary exchange from Session #7 that is typical of other sessions:

Jing: Can we use this metaphor of the enemy in the circle? Do we have a better choice?

Kate: Than “enemy”? Maybe like “antithetical” or “opposite”... maybe “interference”?

Jing: What’s the first word?

Kate: “Antithetical,” but I don’t think that’s the right word choice, though, so don’t quote me on that. Maybe “interference” because it’s not that emotion is the opposite of learning.

Jing: My ideas are more clear now. (Begins sketching a diagram as he explains.)

The model is like this is self-regulated learning model to the whole circle and it will be led by self and the focus is learning. Emotion is here – it will impact any step.

Kate: So it's like when a virus comes in?

Jing: How to use English to explain these ideas is the point. Do you have any other better idea than “enemy?”

Kate: I think “interference” is your best choice. Because it's not that emotion is the enemy of learning or the opposite of learning, but it's something that can get in the way of something.

Jing: (Writes in the word.)

In this exchange, we can see that Jing was looking for an English word to explain his idea, but he was also clarifying his ideas as he explained them to Kate. Jing's push for concise words happened constantly in his sessions with Kate; he almost always had his Chinese translator and English dictionary up on his laptop and would sometimes find the word he was looking for on his own, but often he would ask Kate and they would look up the word together.

Another common vocabulary exchange centered on American connotations for words Jing had used. These exchanges were almost always initiated by Kate, although sometimes Jing would ask something like, “What is this phrase to you if you don't read the article?” Here is a typical exchange of Kate initiating a vocabulary change from Session #7:

Kate: Can you tell me what you mean by “acceptance of counseling”?

Jing: I’m trying to say normal people still cannot accept mental health service is a good thing. They think like crazy people will try to search for this service. But this is what I’m trying to say.

Kate: Yeah, that makes sense. So when I saw “acceptance,” I was thinking maybe from the students who have to go to counseling and psychological services, accepting help, that’s what I read that as. So how do you think you can make this verb a little clearer?

Jing: “Believe”? No. Hmm. “Developed”?

Kate: Cause when we use developed, what happens is it makes it seem like the counselors and psychologists haven’t developed service. (Reads the sentence out loud with the new word). That makes it seem like it’s the problem from the counselors and psychologists.

Jing: So you think this word can be better?

Kate: I think we need to modify it maybe with...because do you think this is a kind of discrimination? Or...maybe like “public acceptance”? Because I think acceptance is on the right track but we need something to modify.

Jing: “Public acceptance.” That sounds better.

Kate: Do you think that works?

Jing: Yes. Or improvement – do you improvement would work here?

Kate: No.



Some exchanges were shorter than the ones here – just a quick turn of him asking for the right word and her giving it to him – but often they were lengthy, took multiple conversational turns, and involved dictionaries and translators to arrive at a common understanding and appropriate revision. This intense focus on vocabulary in Kate and Jing’s sessions support claims from scholars like Severino and Deifell (2011) and Brendel (2012) who suggest tutors need more vocabulary about language acquisition and about vocabulary itself. While Kate was able to collaborate with Jing to find the best vocabulary words, the sheer volume of time they spent discussing this vocabulary shows that Kate may have benefited from a more well-rounded knowledge of vocabulary and language acquisition in order to best meet Jing’s needs and contribute to his long-term learning.

### **Common Ground**

The final cultural negotiation to take place in this semester-long collection of weekly sessions is perhaps the most obvious: Kate and Jing often had to explain American and Chinese cultural values or perspectives that were informing their ideas about Jing’s writing to reach common ground before moving forward with revisions. Like the vocabulary exchanges, some attempts at reaching common ground happened quickly, and some took almost whole sessions to accomplish. A quicker exchange looked like this example from Session #8:

Kate: Can you explain why you went to test-centered education?

Jing: Oh, that's my background, my education is always focused on tests. Not like here. Here, tests is not so important, as important as it is in China. Because every student in China, all they try to do is pass the test.

Kate: It's definitely getting like that a little bit in America now, for sure, I don't think it's as successful but people are definitely trying to make the curriculum so students can pass this test and some students just can't pass them. So I wouldn't necessarily say that. It might be more strenuous in China, but we definitely have a test-centered education style here, too.

However, many cultural negotiations to find common ground took much longer and were more complicated. For example, in Session #3, Jing wrote that ADHD is a discrepancy instead of a disease. Kate said, "I would just keep this in mind, to an audience this might be a little... I think it is kind of accepted as a disease since there's a lot of treatment and therapy for it. Just be aware of that. This is your opinion, but be aware that an audience might not agree with it." It took another 15 minutes of conversation to get to the real root of why Jing made this observation about ADHD, and it revolved around his cultural understanding of medicine; he told Kate, "Western medicine is just like war. If you see an enemy, you kill it. That's it. But herbal medicine or the traditional Chinese medicine is all about you make harmony. My language is not enough to explain this. It's like yin-yang." Once they understood that Jing was writing about an ADHD treatment from a Chinese perspective and Kate was commenting on his ideas from an American perspective, they could discuss a revision that acknowledged both realities to still get his point across to his audience. Throughout the semester, Kate and Jing developed effective

ways of conducting these conversations; as one of her main tutoring strategies, Kate would write down what Jing said and repeat it back to him to make sure she'd understood. This writing and repeating was crucial for Kate because often she had misunderstood due to the cultural boundaries, and her clarifying questions kept her from giving Jing incorrect vocabulary, etc. Likewise, Jing also began drawing diagrams and pictures for Kate to better explain Chinese concepts for which he felt he didn't have adequate English vocabulary.

One of the more interesting findings involving Kate and Jing's common ground is that Jing sometimes expected Kate to know specific content and/or disciplinary knowledge that she usually did not know and would have no reason to know; it seems that Jing didn't distinguish between Kate's cultural knowledge as an American and her disciplinary knowledge. For example, at one point in the ADHD conversation, Jing asked outright: "Can I just ask several questions? Is ADHD a disease or a discrepancy?" Likewise, in Session #4, Kate and Jing spent most of the session trying to sort out the word "quantification." He asked, "Do you think quantification is a scientific method?" And then later, "Is there something else different than numbers we can use quantification?" Even for his idea of using digital technologies to teach ESL students how to use databases and to receive feedback on their writing, he asked Kate, "So do you think we could practice it in real life?" To Jing, it seems that Kate's status as an American and as a tutor means that she would have answers to these complex and disciplinary-specific questions.

### **Adaptive Transfer: Drawing on Prior Cultural/Linguistic Knowledge**

Through the cultural/linguistic negotiations that occurred between Jing's

multilingual identity, vocabulary, and common ground, we see that Jing's sessions with Kate seemed to create the conversation and refinement necessary for Jing to reshape his prior cultural/linguistic knowledge to better meet his current writing tasks. Here we especially see the *multilingual* quality of adaptive transfer, which "views writers as possessing the agency to draw from among a variety of discourses and language varieties in their attempts to intervene and change contexts for writing" (DePalma & Ringer, 2011, p. 141). Jing could keep this agency but still change his context for writing because Kate assumed the position of the "reader." Their conversation about his multilingual, international student identity, vocabulary, and Chinese perspectives called attention to Jing's discourse and language varieties, by which "the complexity and variability of writers' and readers' backgrounds become more apparent, which decreases the possibility that writing specialists will rely on reductive generalizations" (p. 142). Indeed, Kate's tutoring strategies had to contend with Jing's past cultural/linguistic experiences before moving forward. The reworking of backgrounds, knowledge, and values made "both readers and writers responsible for constructing a meaningful interaction" (p. 142); thus, Kate served as the reader with which Jing could negotiate his past influences and ultimately improve his communication. Even more, these cultural/linguistic negotiations meant that Jing could bring his unique perspective to his writing process and products while still meeting audience expectations, which is key because "rather than viewing students as novice writers, adaptive transfer allows for students to be perceived as agents who possess a variety of language resources and range of knowledge bases that they might

draw on in each writing context” (p. 142). Again, we see that semester-long collections of weekly sessions with a single tutor in this case acted as a catalyst for adaptive transfer to occur by allowing the space and consistency for the tutor and tutee to reshape the tutee’s past cultural/linguistic knowledge for the writing task at hand.

### **Relationship**

The adaptive transfer that occurred through the tutoring strategies and cultural negotiations perhaps could not have survived without the backbone of this semester-long collection of weekly sessions with a single tutor: the relationship between tutor and tutee. This relationship indirectly contributed to adaptive transfer by fostering the tutoring strategies and cultural/linguistic negotiations that did directly contributed to adaptive transfer. The relational elements that contributed to the shape and direction of the tutoring between Kate and Jing stayed surprisingly consistent throughout their sessions. The definable observations that best represent Kate and Jing’s tutoring relationship can be grouped into three general categories: 1) how the two balanced authority, 2) how the two integrated personal connections, and 3) how the two built trust.

#### **Balance of Authority**

The scale of who held authority at any point in a session slid back and forth quite easily from the first session, but the middle ground of the shared authority revolved around courteousness, a politeness technique recognized by Bell and Youmans (2006). One way Kate and Jing expressed courteousness was by asking the other about the direction of the session before moving forward; occasionally Jing would just continue reading without a word or Kate would express a concern without metadiscourse, but more

often than not, Kate would ask questions like, “Do you want to focus on this sentence?” or “How do you feel about that paragraph? Do you want to talk more about how we can expand it?” Jing would also ask these courtesy questions like “Should I continue reading?” before moving forward. These questions kept Jing and Kate unified about the session’s direction, focus, and goals. In addition, Jing also showed courteousness by apologizing to Kate if a session went slowly or if he didn’t understand her suggestion, and then he would thank her when they finally got to the end of an exchange. These sorrys and thank-yous made sense after learning Jing’s perspective on his relationship with Kate in the post-program interview: “There is a barrier in here to develop the tutor relationship between me and my tutor. I think because ethical code between us, we cannot be friends, we can only be tutor and the student.”<sup>4</sup> Interestingly, Kate apologized a few times when she broke the unspoken rules of their courtesy: for example, once when Jing picked up reading aloud but Kate wasn’t finished with her note, she interrupted by saying, “Sorry, I’m going to keep writing this.” The last element of courteousness in Kate and Jing’s sessions was laughter; Kate and Jing were usually very focused in their sessions, and none of their occasional laughter was anywhere close to raucous, but they did use it as a courteous measure in understanding one another, what Thonus (2008) would call coordinated laughter. For example, when Kate went to explain semicolons, Jing pointed to his wrist: they both laughed politely when they realized he was referring to the popular semicolon tattoo. These acts of courteousness in deciding the session’s direction, apologizing and thanking, and laughing created the basis of Kate and Jing’s expectations for their relationship and their habits within a session.

While courteousness brought Kate and Jing back to a center of shared authority, the balance of authority definitely tipped from tutor to tutee and back in every session, just as Carino (2011) suggests it should. Jing's authority stemmed heavily from his disciplinary knowledge and related personal experiences. Just as Kate used mini-lessons as one of her tutoring strategies, Jing also gave Kate mini-lessons of his own to explain disciplinary concepts, Chinese values, or related functions. Ever courteous, he would often ask – "Do you know what self-regulation is?" – before launching into his explanations. Although Jing's lessons were often necessary for he and Kate to collaborate toward revision, in the post-program interview, Kate characterized Jing's lessons as a challenge: "He really likes to explain things – it's really interesting to the content, but they don't necessarily need to be explained. So that could be a little frustrating at times just because it felt like we were getting off track and so I wanted to make sure that I was interested in what he was saying but also kind of guide back to where he needed to go." However, Jing shared a different take on the essentiality of his lessons in his post-program interview: "Sometimes I think it's the barrier between my expression, what I am trying to say is not what I am thinking, so she might misunderstand my thinking, so she explains based on what she has understood..." For Jing, Kate's explanations or suggestions were not as helpful if she didn't fully understand what he was trying to say. Jing and Kate's deviating goals on this matter – Jing's desire to express himself clearly and Kate's desire to focus solely on the prompt/writing strategies – meant the authority bobbed from tutor to tutee, and it also forced Jing and Kate both to develop courteous phrases to move the authority (and goal of the session) in one direction or the other.

One of the clearest expressions of Jing's authority in his sessions with Kate was his ability to easily express his disagreement with her. Even if Kate pushed that a genre was written a certain way or that Jing should use a certain phrasing, when Jing knew that she was mistaken or that she wasn't understanding him, he would not back down even though he stayed courteous as ever. For example, in Session #5, Kate suggested multiple times that Jing might not worry about incorporating a very difficult concept into his article critique because it was taking so much of their session time for him to explain it to her, but he would not take her advice or let her move on to another issue in the session. At one point she said, "I know you have an idea of what you're saying, but if it's too hard --" to which he interrupted, "No, I do want to do it!" Likewise, in Session #12, Kate suggested that Jing re-organize his literature review by author instead of by theme. Jing repeated her suggestions, then said, "So this is a structure you have provided. But my structure is not like this, it's like my focus, and what is the sub-theme of my focus and then just pick some useful information." After more back-and-forth on this issue, he later proved to Kate that this was the correct way to organize his literature review by showing her one of his article's literature review sections and how they have several authors in every parenthetical. Whether more drawn out like in this scenario or just a short redirect, Jing was never afraid to disagree with Kate and explain why. However, as much as Jing was willing to disagree with Kate when he was sure, Jing still relied on her expertise when he was unsure by asking her direct questions on various writing and disciplinary subjects. For example, even after he rejected Kate's literature review organization in Session #12, later in the session he asked her, "I have to have a discussion [section]?" It



seemed that Jing's disagreements with Kate never phased his reliance on her expertise as a tutor.

Meanwhile, Kate exerted her authority through her tutoring strategies, but since the bulk of her strategies included metadiscourse and questioning, she still gave Jing autonomy even as she directed the course of the sessions under the surface. When Jing would disagree or express uncertainty about a suggestion, sometimes Kate would continue to insist that Jing follow the revision action, especially if she felt that action best served the prompt, and sometimes she would back off quickly and move to something else. Her response depended on Jing's insistence and her own security about the suggestion. For example, in Session #9, Kate repeatedly encouraged Jing to change all of the questions in his proposal to statements. He changed some and didn't change others, but he always expressed uncertainty. Finally, near the end of the session (which was actually the third session they had been working on this proposal), Kate asked to "break the fourth wall" so she could ask me as her administrator if questions were appropriate for proposals. In this case, the authority she felt on the issue eventually faltered, and so she sought outside advice and ended up just moving on to something else afterwards. Kate often turned to outside sources, like samples online or the Writing Center's quick-guides, to fill in the gaps of her expertise, especially when it came to unfamiliar genres that Jing was also unsure about, like the proposal and the literature review. However, these moves usually came later in sessions or session arcs, which lead me to believe Kate was hesitant to admit her content and genre limitations as a tutor. This overall balance of authority that occurred in every session supports Rafoth's (2015) claims that interaction –

a back and forth communication – is key to improving multilingual students’ writing, and a fruitful interaction usually blooms among a positive relationship (p. 40).

### **Personal Connections**

In addition to a balance of authority, another relational element that held significant implications in Kate and Jing’s sessions was personal connections. These were moments when Jing or Kate would talk about their experiences, their values, their habits, or their backgrounds to better make a connection with the other person and therefore improve the quality of the tutoring; Godbee’s (2012) study of a long-term tutoring relationship revealed similar personal connections between tutor and tutee and their significance for the writing. Jing used this strategy constantly to explain a difficult concept or to explain why he made a particular writing choice. When Jing was writing a proposal to study emotional self-regulation in athletes with one professor, he told Kate, “I have done a big project in self-efficacy and personally I was an athlete when I was in college, so I can understand these emotion frustrations. And it kind of seems like this barrier to athletes, so I’m very interested in this area. That’s my motivation.” Occasionally, Jing would even gauge Kate’s ability to make a personal connection with what he was trying to explain to her with questions like “Have you used databases?” He used these insights into his background and choices so she could better understand him and therefore better lead him towards revisions. Jing explained these personal connections in his post-program interview:

I like meeting the same tutor because I want to know people. It's my personal thing. I do not want these Facebook friends. Now we do not say hello in face-to-

face, we only chat by text or by message. That's not my type of deal with interpersonal relationships. So I really like to meet one tutor every week for the whole semester so I can know more about her and there is like a connection between me and the other person on this campus. And a value these interpersonal relationships very high. It's very important to me. I always value my friendships and my friends and I'm a very easy going person. I like the idea to meet one tutor because I am this type of person.

While Jing brought these personal connections into almost every session since they were working on his writing, Kate only brought her own personal connections in a few times to give Jing writing advice; for example, she explained how she likes to write questions in the margins while she reads and then look for the answers in the text. Another way Jing and Kate made personal connections involved chit-chat at the end of sessions. Jing usually came in very focused and ready-to-go at the beginning of sessions, so they usually dove right in, but at the end of sessions, he relaxed a bit to engage in pleasantries, like asking how busy Kate was, how her midterms were going, if she was feeling better than the week before, and so on.

One of the most interesting personal connections that Jing and Kate established occurred when Jing asked Kate at the end of Session #10 about her habit of drawing cubes on scratch paper during their sessions before linking it back to his own research topic. I give you the full exchange here so you can see the rhythm of their back-and-forth and how the conversation progressed back to Jing's research interests:

Jing: Can I ask a question about your personal habit? What's this? (points to the scratch paper where she has been doodling 3D cubes)

Kate: Oh, I just doodle cubes sometimes.

Jing: This helps you to focus?

Kate: To concentrate. Yeah.

Jing: Interesting. So how do you learn this? Did someone teach you or...?

Kate: I don't know, I've been doing this since I was in high school.

Jing: In high school? So no one teach you how to use this strategy?

Kate: No, it's just something that I do, from listening, I like to doodle just to engage.

Jing: And you always draw the same?

Kate: Yeah, or I try to make it look...do you see how this one looks shaded and this one doesn't?

Jing: (Laughs.) It's a big difference. How can you concentrate at the same time you draw?

Kate: Because it just makes me listen more. So I'm...if I'm intent on something, I can hear the information better.

Jing: So you are not really paying attention to this drawing?

Kate: No, I'm like listening. It's something where...

Jing: Interesting.

Kate: I promise you I'm paying attention! (They laugh).

Jing: No, I'm just curious. Maybe I can learn from you because sometimes it's difficult to concentrate.

Kate: Well, you can see I write a lot of stuff too, and that's also another way of me keeping that attention – just engaging my brain and like writing down the things I'm either hearing from you or things I'm thinking of as you're going on just so I remember and keep myself...

Jing: This is the same as what I'm trying to do. I'm trying to find a tool that can help me concentrate, like self-regulated. So you are doing the same thing, but different method, you draw, you write.

Kate: (Laughs.) You should do a proposal on this!

Jing: You should do it.

Kate: Yeah, I just doodle a lot. You can keep that. (Hands him the scratch paper.)

Jing: Personal collection!

Kate: Personal collection of my cubes!

Jing's comfort in asking Kate about her in-session habit, as well as his comfort in pushing for more information about why and how she does it, speaks volumes about the nature of their relationship at this point of the semester. It seems Jing believed he could have an honest, genuine conversation with her without her being offended or off-put. It seems Jing also believed Kate knew enough about self-regulation, his research topic, to make that connection, as well. Then Kate's joke about how Jing should do a proposal on her drawings stemmed from the fact that this was the fourth session in which they had worked on a single proposal – they were able to laugh about it at this point.

## **Trust**

The final indication of Kate and Jing's relationship in their semester-long collection of weekly sessions was the trust that developed between the two of them. Nan (2012) and Rafoth (2015) both note that because language and writing improvement involve a combination of instruction, practice, and time, the process is improved by a positive relationship of trust. I observed the trust Jing had in Kate when he, as previously mentioned, asked her direct questions to which he expected her to have an exact answer. He would even directly ask her how he should approach his writing tasks outside of their sessions ("Do you think I should finish [my personal statement] or the proposal first?"). The biggest sign of trust, though, seemed to be Jing's ability to confide his weaknesses, struggles, or shortcomings with Kate in their sessions. In Session #3, he trusted Kate enough to ask her to expose his weaknesses: "May I ask a question? We've met three or four times. What's your impression of me? What's my biggest problem of writing?" Kate struggled to phrase her answer at first, but she eventually realized at Jing's insistence that he genuinely wanted her answer, so she pointed out his inability to stick to a prompt, which she also tied to his need for more outlining/organizing. From that point on, Jing was quick to point out his own flaws or limitations in sessions; for example, when Kate asked how his professor liked his proposal they had worked on, Jing quickly admitted, "Unfortunately, the professor who I want to be my mentor, she denied my proposal, so I have to find another one. But I'm still interested in my topic." In other instances, Jing might laugh in a self-deprecating way when he realized he needed a revision that they'd discussed multiple times before, like when he laughed in Session #10, "I always use more words in one sentence." And then sometimes the confessions were more strained, and

Kate tried to offer encouragement and direction in these instances, like the following example from Session #11:

Jing: I think this is a very high requirement for a literature review (points to online source). It's good, but for this course, I cannot achieve these requirements. It's too high.

Kate: So maybe then what you would do...maybe what would be a good next step is see if I can meet with your professor. And say I've been doing some research online about how to outline a literature review. Do you think that would be something you think would be helpful?

Jing: Yes, I do and after here, I will read and write my literature review followed by this one. But I'm pretty sure I cannot fulfill every detail in this outline.

Kate: As in you don't think the class requires it or you don't think you could do that?

Jing: The second one, I don't think I can do this. For example, identify the themes and the trends, especially the trends, it would require a lot of the reading in the research. I'm not even sure I could find these articles.

Kate: Maybe based off of what you read, you can see these trends, right? Does that make sense?

As revealed in the tutoring strategy of metadiscourse and even this exchange, Kate relied on many checkpoints to see if Jing was understanding her. Kate trusted that Jing would answer honestly, and he often would answer her standard "Does that make sense?"

question with a simple “No.” These expressions of trust kept Kate and Jing’s sessions addressing Jing’s concerns and filling the gaps in his (and her) knowledge.

At the end of the exchange above from Session #11, a tough session in which Jing seemed discouraged about the daunting task of writing a literature review, he asked Kate a question that seemed more than just making a personal connection. Because Jing was feeling discouraged and overwhelmed, he asked Kate if she thought “writing is enjoyable.” This question showed that he trusted Kate to answer honestly and maybe even give him the encouragement he needed in her answer. Kate did answer quite honestly: “Me? After a while, I like it, yeah. For academic writing, it’s a little hard to get started at first...”

### **Adaptive Transfer: Relationship’s Indirect Contribution**

Interestingly, I don’t believe Kate and Jing’s relationship over their twelve session allowed Jing to consciously engage in adaptive transfer like the tutoring strategies and cultural/linguistic negotiations did; however, I do believe their relationship indirectly contributed to Jing’s ability to engage in adaptive transfer by creating the foundation on which they could build successful tutoring strategies and cultural/linguistic negotiations. For example, without a balance of authority, Jing might not have been such an active participant and collaborator in his sessions with Kate, and therefore the reshaping of his explicit writing choices and knowledge could not have taken place. Meanwhile, the personal connections may have meant Jing and Kate were both more open to invoke their cultural/linguistic mindsets and further negotiate them for new writing tasks. And finally, the trust between Kate and Jing could have possibly led to the success of both the tutoring



strategies and cultural/linguistic negotiations – without positivity and trust, neither could have occurred successfully, and Jing's engagement in adaptive transfer would have suffered.

## CASE STUDY #2 RESULTS

The results of Case Study #2 are also organized into three major sections: 1) tutoring strategies, 2) cultural/linguistic negotiations, and 3) relationship. Just like for Case Study #1, each section simply describes what these elements look like in this particular semester-long collection of weekly sessions with a single tutor, and, at the end of each section, I analyze the data through the qualities of adaptive transfer. This analysis suggests that the **tutoring strategies** between Brad and Lan, which included 1) direct teaching, 2) metadiscourse, and 3) explicit strategies & thinking patterns, contributed to Lan's understanding of the fluidity of grammar concepts so she could appropriately reshape knowledge from one situation to another; these tutoring strategies also allowed Brad and Lan to draw on and reshape knowledge from prior by learning and practicing grammatical structures in increasingly complex scenarios. In addition, the **cultural/linguistic negotiations** between Brad and Lan, which included 1) language and 2) past learning, seem to suggest that Lan could reshape her cultural/linguistic knowledge to better write in an American university. Finally, similarly to Kate and Jing, the **relationship** between Brad and Lan, which also included a 1) balance of authority, 2) personal connections, and 3) trust, indirectly contributed to adaptive transfer by providing the foundation for the tutoring strategies and cultural/linguistic negotiations to occur.

## **Tutoring Strategies**

Like Kate's, Brad's tutoring strategies over his nine sessions with Lan remained remarkably consistent from the very first session. However, unlike Kate and Jing, who spent most of their time wrestling with clarity of content, Brad and Lan used their sessions to explore and tighten Lan's understanding of English grammatical structures. As a result, Brad established three broad categories of tutoring strategies in the very first session that recurred consistently in the following nine sessions with Lan: 1) direct teaching, 2) metadiscourse, and 3) explicit strategies/thinking patterns.

### **Direct Teaching**

Brad's first tutoring strategy of direct teaching<sup>5</sup> met the expectations that Lan expressed in our pre-program interview: "I have three main grammar mistakes: singular/plural, run-on sentences, and articles. I hope I will do better on those things after this semester." Because Lan wanted to learn more about these different grammatical structures, Brad spent a great deal of their sessions simply teaching Lan grammar rules, usages, and structures, usually followed by an explanation of "why" and plenty of examples. This meant that Brad ended up doing most of the talking in his sessions with Lan, and this type of explicit and direct instruction for textual errors can be supported by scholars like Leki (1992), Cogie (2006), and Nan (2012). We additionally see Silva's (1993) observation that multilingual writers need more extensive treatment of textual errors from their tutor to be correct. For example, notice the time Brad took in Session #7 to explain the rules (and the "why" behind the rules) for using a period, comma-conjunction, or semicolon between independent clauses:

So I'm sure I've showed this to you before, but I usually say when you're connecting two complete ideas as in complete sentences usually, we connect them with a period, which is the most distancing thing you can do is to put a period. You can connect them with a semicolon, which is slightly less, or you can do a comma and conjunction. So these three, when you're connecting two complete sentences – complete sentences meaning subject and verb – so when you have these, you should be able to interchange them. There shouldn't be any time where you have two complete sentences and you can't put one or the other in. It depends on whether or not you want these ideas to be really close together or really far apart. So something like a very simple sentence is usually going to have a comma-and. If I say "You like cats, and I like dogs." Those are two different things, right? I don't need a period between those, do I? I could, but it's a short sentence. So that would have a comma-and because I have "I like, you like" right? So this is, the semicolon is a little bit closer to that. Let's go through this [exercise] and we'll come up with some good examples of what should have a semicolon vs. what should have a period or a comma-and.

These long teaching breaks, complete with "why" and examples, happened several times throughout any given session. While Brad did like to explain these grammatical structures to Lan in his own words, he often integrated an outside resource to assist him, like one of the Writing Center's quick-guides or Lan's grammar handbook. Because Brad was aware of the time it took to fully explain, model, and practice a new grammar structure, he created the habit of checking Lan's comprehension directly before launching

into these explanations. For example, he would ask quick questions like “Do you know when to use the ‘comma-and’ or just the regular ‘and’?” This kept Brad from explaining structures that Lan already understood.

One interesting result of Brad’s consistency in wanting to provide Lan a “why” behind grammar rules was that he would sometimes create “whys” when they didn’t really exist. This happened more often in later sessions, most likely because Brad had already established the habit of explaining the “why.” For example, in Session #6, Brad made the observation that the prepositions “from” and “than” seem to match with contrasting words (“different from” and “different than”) while “to” seems to match with comparing words (“similar to”). He said, “You’ll start to notice that all these adjectives with very similar meanings, they all seem to have similar prepositions that follow them.” Later in the session, when the phrase “I prefer skiing to swimming” comes up, Brad paused and said more to himself than to Lan:

And now why wouldn’t we use “than” up here? Because we were just talking about we used “than” to do contrasting and down here [with “prefer”] we’re doing contrasting, right? There’s not an answer. (Laughs.) It seems like we should be using “than” here like we use “than” down here, because here we are contrasting just like we do up here – “different from” / “different than” – and I think it maybe has to do with... We have to use “than” here because there’s too many “to’s” and it sounds really weird in our language.

Even when Brad realizes that his original observation doesn’t work, he’s still trying to make sense of why we use certain prepositions in certain situations. For this scenario, a

little bit later he ended up rationalizing “to” being used as contrastive preposition because it’s a derivation of “as opposed to.” Therefore, while Brad’s instinct to give Lan as many ways to understand and remember grammatical structures often led to clear explanations, they sometimes put Brad in a difficult position.

As evidenced in two excerpts from Brad and Lan’s sessions so far, Brad never taught a grammatical structure without including several examples to model its use. These examples sometimes came from an outside resource, like the quick-guides, Lan’s handbook, or Lan’s own paper, and sometimes Brad made these examples up in the moment. Sometimes they were written down and sometimes they were just discussed verbally. Either way, because Brad wanted to show the deeply contextual nature of grammar rules, these examples were based heavily in semi-elaborate scenarios. In Session #1, Brad and Lan were filling in article exercise sentences. One sentence read, “I ordered \_\_\_ bottle of wine at dinner.” Lan immediately answered “a,” which Brad confirmed worked perfectly, but he also wanted her to see how and why the article “the” could work, as well, in a different scenario. Here we see Brad build a context so Lan could understand the circumstantial nature of articles:

Brad: Let’s put this into a scenario, okay?

Lan: Yeah.

Brad: So let’s say we’re going to dinner. And we arrive and you go off to the bathroom and come back and I say, “I ordered a bottle of wine.” That fits, right?

Lan: Yeah.

Brad: Say we were headed to dinner and it was at a restaurant we've been to before, and we say, "There's this really good wine there that I don't remember the name but we had it there last time." And neither one of us can remember. So same thing happens – we arrive, we sit down, you go to the bathroom and I come back, and I say, "I ordered the bottle of wine..." What does that say to you?

Lan: The bottle is the wine we had last time.

Brad: Yes, it's the one we just talked about in the car, and it's the one that we had last time, right? Does that work?

Lan: Yeah, yeah.

Brad: It's a really rare scenario, right? But we're going to have those, and that's why I'm saying there's so many exceptions to these rules.

In this case, Brad used multiple examples to complicate and add context to a simple fill-in-the-blank exercise; creating these scenarios with several grammatical structures, including prepositions and punctuation marks, allowed Brad to reveal the situated nature of grammar, which supports Zamel's (1995) claim that we cannot always address writing without addressing language (and vice versa) because they are not separate entities.

Brad not only built scenario-based contexts into his examples, but he also taught grammar usage by comparing many examples against one another. We see how Brad used these comparisons to teach Lan clearly in Session #4 when Brad and Lan are discussing the preposition "about" in the sentence "She never spoke about the table."

Brad: So a couple of ways would be, first of all, she never spoke about the table in terms of being. Here's the table, and she's not speaking in reference to this. She has nothing to say regarding this table.

Lan: Yeah.

Brad: So that's one way. Another way is we found that "about" also sort of means "around" sometimes. So like, she never spoke while she was around the table. So that would work, as well. And "around" could work, couldn't it? She never spoke around the table? The one that was used here [in the answer key] was "at." She never spoke at the table.

Lan: Yeah.

Brad: But in the same vein, it's around or about, putting yourself in location of that table rather than talking about it.

Lan: So it means that she never be at the table to speak?

Brad: No, it would mean that she is at the table. That means that while she is sitting there, she does not speak.

In this excerpt, Brad not only compared all the different meanings of the preposition "about" in the sentence, but then he also compared those meanings to the preposition "at." In teaching articles, prepositions, and various punctuation marks, Brad almost always came back to this place of comparison in his scenario-based examples so Lan could see all of her different options and why some options worked better than others. For example, in Session #7, we see a similar comparative strategy for how to break up two independent clauses: "So we have a lot of breaks in that sentence by putting the 'comma-



and' in there, whereas the semicolon gives us a kind of stopping point but lets us keep in mind that this next sentence is going to have a lot to do with what we just read. Whereas the period might not – the period might just say we're going to a new idea." By pitting the choices of "comma-and," semicolon, and period against each other, Brad could better explain the "why" behind each structure. In later sessions, as Brad became more acquainted with Lan's major of accounting, he also explained grammar by comparing genres of writing: "Dashes aren't used often. They're used mostly in literature, but they're not used in professional writing. Parentheses sometimes are, but a lot of the times if parentheses are used are specific to...like with your accounting, they are specific to certain modes of writing and a lot of times it's just to separate it from the rest of the text, you know?"

Depending on how unfamiliar Lan was with a topic, how difficult the concept was, or how many other options were in the mix, Brad mixed and matched his toolbox for direct teaching. He may have used all of these strategies for one topic: he might provide the rule, set up a scenario, write an example, explain the "why" behind the example, and compare it to a different example. Or if the concept was one he and Lan had discussed previously and she seemed to understand it, he might have just briefly reviewed the rule before moving on. Either way, this main strategy of direct teaching created the backbone of Brad's sessions with Lan. As Lan told me in her post-program interview, "He works hard during our meetings, he prepared in advance, and he was always willing to answer my questions about everything."

### **Metadiscourse**

Like Kate, Brad also engaged in meaningful metadiscourse in his sessions with Lan. A basic form of metadiscourse was setting the agenda for each session at the beginning, tweaking the agenda throughout the session to determine the next step, and then setting a more long-term agenda for future sessions at the end. The agenda-setting sometimes took the form of instructions and sometimes Brad would ask Lan for her input, but he always made sure he was keeping her informed about their direction and goals. For example, near the beginning of a session, he might say something like, “Okay, let’s go back over to these quotes, and I wanna talk about paraphrasing a little bit. Let me find a handout because that would be helpful.” Here he made sure Lan understood what was happening in the session and even to an extent why. Brad also referred to the agenda throughout the session; for example, in the middle of deciphering Lan’s professor’s comments in Session #5, Brad said, “So here – when we were talking about prepositions last week and maybe we will get to talk about it some more today – you had ‘until’ here and she has ‘through’ – why do you think ‘through’ works better than ‘until’?” In this example, Brad evoked the agenda of past sessions and connected it to the agenda of future sessions. He made a similar move later in the same session when he said,

I hopefully will get a chance to talk about this, if not this week, then we’ll talk about it next week. I wanted to talk about prepositions with you that are joined with verbs and adjectives. So far we’ve mostly just talked about prepositions, what they do on their own, but then there’s all these verbs and adjectives that come two-in-one, and this is one of them.

Even more so than Kate, Brad used the last few minutes of every session to plan an agenda for the upcoming session. For example, in Session #8, he reviewed their progress for the day before proposing what they should do the following week and asking Lan if she would find it helpful:

Alright, so we went into more stylistic things today. You're getting a nice well-rounded... We won't meet next week because of Thanksgiving, the week after that we will, what I have, I printed out a sample essay and I think it could be interesting to go through that, each of us, and see how well you can identify errors in other people's writing, and I think that might show, that might give you some ideas of things to look out for. Or it will just generate any more questions you might have about why something might be wrong, why something might be right. How does that sound for next session?

These moves to solidify the agenda at the beginning, throughout, and at the end of sessions gave shape and continuity to Brad and Lan's work together, in which we again see Harris and Silva's (1993) and William's (2004) suggestions to use metadiscourse for the simplification of tasks and goals-orientations becoming especially helpful in working toward long-term revisions. This kind of long-term agenda-setting also contributed to Brad and Lan's ability to locate, explain, and chart patterns of error over time (Harris & Silva, 1993; Ferris, 2002; Linville, 2009; Bitchener, Young, & Cameron, 2005).

Other metadiscourse moves that Brad (similarly to Kate) used were comprehension checkpoints. Brad formed a habit of ending his direct teaching with the phrase "Does that make sense?" or adding a "right?" to the end of his explanatory

phrases. While these comprehension checkpoints sometimes acted as fillers, especially the “rights,” Lan answered honestly when she did not follow Brad’s explanations, so Brad could rely on these comprehension checkpoints to make sure Lan understood him and to know if he needed to further explain/provide another example. Once when Lan hesitantly answered that she’d understood, Brad pressed the comprehension checkpoint further: “You look a little confused – are you sure?” Sometimes, Brad even brought his own observations about Lan’s knowledge into his comprehension checkpoints; for example, in Session #6, when he read a definition from Lan’s grammar handbook, Brad followed with “So do you understand what they’re trying to explain here? I don’t think you struggle too much with this or where to use a preposition or why to use a preposition. I think most of the problem we have is just which preposition to use. Is that normally how you feel?” Additionally, Brad would often check Lan’s vocabulary, especially for the examples he used. He would ask these questions as an aside after he’d used a word that he suddenly realized she may not know; for example, “Have you heard of the term abstractions?” and “You know what a duck is? – an animal” and “Have you heard of that before – transition words?” Not only were these asides a way to make sure that Lan knew the writing terminology that Brad used, but they also assured that she understood the terms in his examples. In fact, Lan learned several new vocabulary words, like “hut,” “coma,” and “slacks,” through Brad’s off-the-cuff examples.

The final form of metadiscourse included commentary on different session events. These ranged from jokes to serious observations. It usually took the form of Brad commenting on a newly discovered rule (“That’s interesting”) or on an especially

complicated rule (“Yeah, that’s really difficult”). For example, in Session #5 when Brad and Lan were reviewing her professor’s revision notes, Brad laughed, “That’s an easy mistake – don’t even feel bad about that. I would have read right over that probably.” Then later in the session, Brad reasoned, “Things like this, I think you should feel really good about the fact that the corrections she’s making for you are very much stylistic. There have only been a few errors so far that have been grammatical. So it looks like you’ve moved past the grammatical, high grammatical level, and it’s more just how to use language in a document like this.” This kind of talk about what they were reviewing in the session let Lan understand Brad’s take on the task at hand. Sometimes Brad would even attach his own emotions or thoughts to this metadiscourse: “This is probably one of the best ways to use a colon is to introduce a quote. And I wish, unlike the semicolon where I feel like people overuse it, I wish people would use the colon to introduce a quote more often. However, another one that people learn how to do it and they don’t stop.” These breaks for commentary brought a level of approachability and personality to Brad’s interaction with Lan.

### **Explicit Strategies and Thinking Patterns**

The final tutoring strategy that became essential in Brad’s sessions with Lan was his explicit modeling and describing of writing strategies and effective thinking patterns. Because they worked so extensively on grammar, Brad wanted to instill not just grammatical rules and structures, but ways of *thinking about* these rules and structures in the future; Rafoth (2015) encourages this move as a way for multilingual writers to keep better track of interventions and strategies for future use. One way Brad did this was to

ask questions but answer them himself aloud as a form of modeling effective thought processes. For example, when Lan would offer one preposition as the answer, Brad would model working through other options by asking and answering questions: “As always, let’s go and look to see if any of the other ones could work. ‘At the bedroom’ – no. ‘On the bedroom’ – probably not. ‘In’ could work, but I think for this one ‘into’ is better.” He made the same kind of move with article usage, as well: “Could any of the other ones work? Who ‘a’ cook was? That doesn’t make sense. Does nothing make sense? No. ‘The’ works best. We could also use ‘our,’ I think in the example it was ‘our,’ but it works.” By verbalizing his thought process, Brad not only modeled how Lan should be thinking through her grammatical options, but he also explained how the various answers worked.

Brad’s similar strategy for establishing how Lan should be thinking about grammar was by asking her questions that forced her to explain her writing choices or think through her other options. For example, he asked questions like, “You put the ‘the’ there; why did you know to do that?” and “In this case, you are using the present tense. Do you know why?” When they reviewed Lan’s professor’s comments, Brad’s questions asked Lan to speculate on the professor’s reasoning: “Do you know why she recommended that language instead of the language you had?” These questions forced Lan to verbalize her choices and therefore solidify her learning for future writing tasks. Often, Lan could not explain her choices, which opened a door for Brad to establish a rule or strategy so Lan could replicate her correct instincts later. Brad especially liked to use this technique when he had already reviewed a concept with Lan and wanted her to

remember what they'd discussed. For example, in Session #8, Brad and Lan were looking at a sentence with a dependent clause and independent clause separated by a comma:

Lan: Can we put the semicolon instead?

Brad: No, why?

Lan: (Thinks for a moment.)

Brad: What's the number one rule about semicolons?

Lan: (She flips through the handbook.) Oh, clauses. This connect independent clauses...

Brad: And for it to be an independent clause, what does that mean?

Lan: Umm...with subject and verb...

The natural companion to Brad asking these questions is that he often restated, refined, and added on to Lan's answers, even if they were correct, to further establish rules and patterns of thinking. For example, in Session #5, Lan knew which two prepositions would work in a given sentence, but Brad still explained her answers to solidify her choices:

Lan: I'll meet you in the cinema.

Brad: Mmhmm. What else?

Lan: At the cinema.

Brad: What would be the difference when those would be used? If we were already like standing outside, right? And someone was like, I'm going to go grab popcorn or tickets, I'd say, "Oh I'll meet you in the cinema," where we're going inside.

Lan: Oh.

Brad: Whereas when we're leaving from our house, and we say, "Oh I'll meet you" – we wouldn't say "in" because we're not there yet – but we'd meet you "at."

Here, we can see Brad using a combination of his strategies to establish patterns of thought – he asked Lan questions to make her think about other options, he answered his own questions to model how he was thinking through this problem, and he was of course basing these questions and answers in scenario-based examples. Another example of Brad adding onto and refining Lan's answers can be seen in this excerpt from Session #9 when a sample sentence read, "Some says...":

Lan: Yeah, I stopped for a while here. "Some..." I was wonder if it's wrong for the "s" on "says?"

Brad: Yeah, it should not be "says." It should be "say." Do you know why?

Lan: It's more than one.

Brad: Yeah, and one way you can sort of tell is "some" is working as the noun, but "some" isn't always working as the noun. You could say "a scholar," but you might say "some scholars," so if you put "some" before a noun, it has to become plural. If this were to say "some scholars" – if you imagine that in there – you wouldn't say "scholars says." You would say "scholars say," so in this instance, as well, even though that "scholars" was assumed or that group of people was assumed, we are still dealing with a plural noun by having that "some" there.



In this excerpt, Lan knew that “some” was plural and therefore needed the plural verb “say,” but Brad still used this as an opportunity to add onto Lan’s understanding about “some” by giving the strategy of putting a concrete noun after it.

Likewise, over and over in every session, Brad offered Lan explicit strategies for future writing tasks and offers bottom-line take-aways from any activity at hand. For example, in Session #1, Brad stated what he wanted Lan to get out of their work with articles very clearly: “So it’s a good thing to keep in mind that whenever you use one of these articles, to go back and think of the other articles and, do they work? And maybe one of the other ones is working in a way that works better for you.” Later in the session, he framed this strategy even more so for Lan’s composing processes:

A good revision strategy for that is to write casually or normally as you would and then at the end of the paragraph maybe go back through, and just like we did with this, whenever you use the “a,” “an,” “the,” or nothing, what happens when I put one of the other ones in here? Does it work better or work worse? And that can be something that you look for to see maybe, to make sure you got the right one. Does that make sense? But I wouldn’t sit on every sentence to make sure you have the right article, just go back and check afterwards to make sure you have the right one.

For this example, Brad introduced the general strategy while they worked, and then at the end of the session, he reiterated more fully what Lan should ultimately take from their work with articles. Brad took these breaks to advise Lan constantly throughout his

sessions, always reminding her of what strategy was guiding their decisions for the exercises at hand. Here are a few of these explicit strategies he offers in various sessions:

Session #2: Yeah, and so that's good thing to look at, too. Whenever you see the "it" refer to the thing right before it, look to see how the thing before it could be doing the action instead and that way you're getting rid of all these extra words that really aren't necessary for the language you are using.

Session #3: Yeah, again, I'm going to use [this example] just to point out – this is a thing you have to remember – but just to point out the different ways that we could use prepositions.

Session #5: So basically the thing I want you to take away from that is what you wrote wasn't necessarily wrong, it just might not be right for this audience. For my audience it would be fine, but just keep in mind that when [your professor is] making comments like these, they are specific to your audience and how people are going to perceive that in this field.

Session #9: I'm noticing you caught some things that I didn't, so this is just to prove the importance of revision because even when you take things to us, we have a hard time catching everything.

In each of these examples, Brad made clear connections between what he and Lan were working on at the moment and what she should remember to make the correct choices for the next time. In later sessions, when Lan was the one asking complicating questions or offering up her thought processes, Brad commended her and still left her with a take-away: "But it's definitely good that you're looking out for stuff like that, just until you

get to the point where it can be second hand on when you can use both and when you can use each.”

### **Adaptive Transfer: Drawing on Prior Sessions**

Because Brad constantly pushed Lan to explain her writing choices, consider her other grammatically correct options, and establish thought patterns that worked across contexts, he created a clear space for Lan to engage in adaptive transfer. Brad’s tutoring strategies especially highlighted the *dynamic* nature of adaptive transfer, which “allows for change and fluidity and begins from the premise that writing skills learned in one context may be applied or reshaped into another” (DePalma and Ringer, 2011, p. 141). By asking Lan to explain her writing choices and explore the contextual nature of grammatical structures, Brad established the fluidity of writing and how Lan must shift her knowledge for different contexts. Additionally, by emphasizing strategies and patterns of thought that work across contexts, Brad revealed how writing skills can in fact be transferred to new writing tasks if appropriately reshaped. Once again, we see that through Brad’s tutoring strategies, Lan can better engage in adaptive transfer because her past knowledge is challenged by Brad’s questions and filtered through both of their experiences. Just as for Kate and Jing, the tutoring sessions act as the vehicle for adaptive transfer to successfully occur.

Similarly, just as Kate and Jing’s sessions created a microcosm to draw on prior sessions, Brad and Lan were also able to engage in adaptive transfer based on the writing knowledge established in prior sessions, which further emphasizes the *cross-contextual* nature of adaptive transfer. Unlike Kate, though, Brad makes very explicit connections to

previous sessions while tutoring Lan. He constantly refers to previous rules, previous examples, and previous issues that they've discussed since Brad and Lan's nine sessions focused on only a handful of grammatical structures. For example, some explicit connections referred to earlier in a single session, like "Exactly, just like the last one" or "In this instance even more than the previous one..." while other statements referred to previous sessions altogether, like "We've talked about before phrases that get separated with commas that can appear anywhere in the sentence..." and "This is what we were talking about last week." These explicit connections to prior sessions kept a through-line for Brad and Lan to build their knowledge and reshape it as they went. Even more so than just building writing concepts and skills over time like Kate and Jing, Brad and Lan's consistent sessions allowed them to build grammar knowledge, review that knowledge, and apply that knowledge in *increasingly complex* writing situations and tasks. Lan even refers to this build in her post-program interview when she reflected, "At first, we worked on the theory of grammar, then we have examples, small examples, like very simple sentences to work on, and then we have a short paragraph – same problem – but it is getting more and more complicated." Here, I chart this building of complexity:

**Table 3: Drawing on Prior Sessions in Case Study #2**

<b>Session #1</b>	They review article rules from a writing center quick guide and work through twelve exercise sentences that leave a blank where the article should be. Brad especially pushes Lan to try all the articles per example to see how the meaning changes.
<b>Session #2</b>	They first finish the three remaining exercise sentences for articles for the previous week. Lan brings in a draft of a short accounting assignment; they read through it and correct grammatical errors together. Through the paper, they discuss articles, combining sentences with a comma-conjunction, “it” referents, and integrating sources.
<b>Session #3</b>	They review a handful of popular prepositions from a writing center quick guide, and then Brad copies a passage from one of his books with the prepositions blanked out. They fill them in together, again with Brad pushing Lan to see how different prepositions change the meaning. When they finish, Brad prints a list of all prepositions, and they create sample sentences for as many as they can.
<b>Session #4</b>	Brad calls this a “reminder session.” He copies a passage from his book and blanks out the articles; they fill them in together working through all the possible options. Then, he copies a passage from his book and blanks out the prepositions; they fill them in together working through all the possible options.
<b>Session #5</b>	Lan wants to review her professor’s comments on her writing; they look through all of the comments together with Brad explaining rules if they are unclear. Through the comments, they discuss articles, “it” referents, comma use, italics, and many stylistic writing choices specific to accounting.
<b>Session #6</b>	Brad and Lan work through the preposition definitions and examples in her Bedford Handbook; this adds many layers to their characterization of prepositions, like adjectival vs. adverbial. They then work through blanked out sentences using the strategies from the handbook along with Brad’s strategy of trying as many as possible.
<b>Session #7</b>	Brad and Lan work through colon and semicolon definitions and examples in her Bedford Handbook, and Brad further teaches, explains, and provides more examples as necessary. The idea of stylistic writing comes up again.
<b>Session #8</b>	Brad and Lan work through parentheses and dashes definitions and examples in her Bedford Handbook, and Brad further teaches, explains, and provides more examples as necessary. The idea of stylistic writing becomes even more of a theme.
<b>Session #9</b>	Brad prints another student’s paper, and he and Lan work through it correcting the grammatical errors. Through the paper, they discuss articles, word forms, comma use, subject/verb agreement. Again, they talk about the difference between stylistic “errors” and grammatical errors.

What this chart reveals is how, over time, Brad and Lan could establish new knowledge in simple ways and then move to applying it in more complex ways. For example, if we isolate articles, we can see that in Session #1, Brad and Lan just reviewed rules and simple exercise sentences. In the next session, they discussed articles briefly in the context of her paper, but then in Session #4, they looked at articles in a more complex context of a novel passage. In Session #5, they talked about articles through the lens of Lan's professor's comments and therefore more stylistically. Finally, in Session #9, Lan applied her knowledge of articles by correcting the article usage in another multilingual writer's paper. The consistent sessions not only created the space to learn, review, and apply new writing knowledge, but also to do so in increasingly complex scenarios. Likewise, if we look at the arc of learning as a whole, we can see that Brad and Lan start with her more serious issues of articles and prepositions and end up moving to more stylistic punctuation choices like semicolons and dashes. Through the semester, Lan gains enough knowledge to move from correcting grammatical errors to choosing grammatical structures for stylistic purposes – or in terms of adaptive transfer, “the possibility for [Lan] to act as a broker” (DePalma and Ringer, 2011, p. 141) can be achieved over time. Thus, we see that the sessions build on one another and effectively contribute to adaptive transfer through the available space and consistency.

### **Cultural/Linguistic Negotiations**

Like Kate and Jing, Brad and Lan's sessions were also affected by the cultural/linguistic negotiations that took place; however, because Brad and Lan focused

solely on grammatical structures, these negotiations were less pronounced than the ones between Kate and Jing. The subtle cultural negotiations that shaped Brad and Lan's sessions can be discussed in two major categories: 1) language and 2) past learning.

### **Language**

The first way that cultural/linguistic negotiations shaped Brad and Lan's sessions was the most obvious: the fact that Lan enrolled in the program to improve her English grammar and language skills. Rafoth (2015) says that this space for an in-depth approach across writing and language issues supports many multilingual writers' cravings for intensity in their learning (p. 56), and it also meets Horner et al.'s (2011) translingual approach to writing, which encourages "*more*, not less, conscious and critical attention to how writers deploy diction, syntax, and style" (p. 304). When I asked Lan in the pre-program interview in what ways she felt confident, she replied, "I quite confident about my ideas...[my professor said] my paragraphs are developed so I think I got the good ideas." Then later she told me, "They are good ideas...but I have a limitation in English to present in a very effective and very impressive way." It is clear that Lan entered the ESL Opt-In Program with very specific goals to improve the grammatical structures that she felt were making her communication suffer. Therefore, Lan presented what structures she struggled with or was unfamiliar with, and Brad created an agenda around them. In the post-program interview, Lan was especially grateful that Brad followed her lead on their focus; she said, "Like at the beginning, I told him I got problems on these things more, so some meetings he prepared in advance and then I came and we worked on his, some paragraphs, the essay." She made it clear that her sessions with Brad had cleared up

some of the trouble she was having with English grammar and switching over from Vietnamese:

I was confused because I saw different ways of grammar before and I don't know which is correct. I used this before and then I switched to the other one, but after the tutor program, I am confident to know which I shouldn't use or which I should use or I can use both depending on the situation and circumstances. And also some punctuation, some grammars that I was also confused before because it's different in English and Vietnamese. In Asian way, there's a different way to do it. If we do it in our way, it comes out a little bit awkward in English. But now I am better about that.

In addition to some of the bigger grammar issues Brad and Lan worked through, like articles, prepositions, and various punctuation marks, Lan also collected questions throughout the week and throughout sessions to ask Brad; she might interrupt with something like, "I just suddenly remember about cash, like we pay 'in cash' and we pay 'for' ...and both are right?" Or once she wrote the words "executive," "execution," and "executed" on a piece of paper so she could ask Brad the difference between them. In another session, she had seen her professor use the preposition "at" in a lecture slide differently than she was used to and asked Brad about it. She was especially concerned with proper English pronunciation, and she would repeat words after Brad or ask him to repeat words until she could say them comfortably. (These words included fan, France vs. friends, italicize, intimidating, colon, Iraq, and genre.) All of these instances reveal how



Lan used her sessions with Brad as a space to better negotiate between her home language, her acquisition process, and the English language.

Interestingly, Lan's linguistic negotiations revolved around the status and/or commonality of the language at hand. Lan was very concerned with what was common for Americans to say, and she was also concerned with whether a certain structure was advanced. For example, she used the pronoun "we" constantly when proposing an answer: "I think we usually say 'for a reason'" or "I think we say 'I'm doing homework at home.'" This "we" refers speakers of English, and, most likely, American speakers of English. It is clear that Lan wanted to align herself with the more common structures of speech and writing. For example, when Lan found Brad's explanation of dashes difficult to understand, she asked,

Lan: Do you think many Americans know that?

Brad: Knows what?

Lan: Do you think many Americans, native speakers, know this?

Brad: Maybe parentheses, but not dashes.

In the same vein, Lan also makes observations like, "Are [these prepositions] in the advanced level?" and "Yeah, it makes sense, but it's kind of higher level" and "So this is just common language? Is it the written formal?" These observations and questions suggest that Lan wanted to understand the difference between the levels of language acquisition. One of my personal favorite moments from Brad and Lan's sessions was in Session #9 when Brad printed a random paper from our writing center's email tutoring for he and Lan to read through and make corrections. He had removed all identifying

information, but Lan asked who wrote it. When Brad said he didn't know, she replied, "Oh, they sound Asian." This simple observation speaks volumes about Lan's improving language acquisition process – she could recognize English writing by a native Asian student – and the literal space of negotiation that her sessions with Brad had created.

### **Past Learning**

The other way Brad and Lan engaged in cultural/linguistic negotiations in their sessions occurred because Lan very often explained her past learning experiences to display her thought processes. These experiences revealed the language acquisition process of a multilingual learner, and Brad had to work within and around these past learning experiences. Lan referenced a number of different ways she learned different rules or structures, including song lyrics, high school English classes in Vietnam, newspapers, BBC, the TOEFL, and professors' lectures. She often referred to what she'd heard ("Somebody say...") or in what ways others have corrected her: "Sometimes I am confused with 'across' and 'in front of.' Sometimes they describe...there's a street and these two locations. Sometimes I say, 'This is in front of this one,' but someone corrected me that we usually say, 'This one across from this one.'" Once, when Lan answered with the correct preposition, she exclaimed, "I learned many prepositions from songs!" before singing a line from the song that taught her that particular preposition. Many times Lan's confusion over grammar arose from this immersive and observational way of learning a language. In Session #7, when discussing the difference between two prepositions, she observed:

I've used this one more often, and then I hear people using this more often, so I thought this is correct and this is incorrect. So I switched to use this. But then I saw in the lectures they used this other one, so I figure out they both are correct. So I may learn English from books and lectures a lot, and don't have many changes to discuss with you. That's why I'm familiar with this one rather than this one.

Lan in this quote was actually quite proud that she's learned English from books and lectures because she doesn't have too many mistakes, but when she hadn't encountered a structure or term through experience, she didn't know what it meant or how to use it. She and Brad often started with where Lan learned the structure to see how it was working there and what other ways it could work.

Of course, Lan also needed to negotiate the past learning of her home language, Vietnamese. She would occasionally make comparisons between Vietnamese and English, and she and Brad would discuss ways in which English differed. For language, Lan might say something like "I think I still have...in Vietnam we learn that before the noun, before it should be an "a," so I think I still have that habit" or "We sometimes use passive voice in Vietnamese and in English in business only, and I found that we should use the active in the resume or the cover letter like that. So I don't know when is better." Likewise, in Session #9, when Brad asked Lan if a sentence was better with or without the phrase "in it" at the end (alluding that it was better without), Lan thought for a moment before saying, "To me from Asia, I think it makes more sense with 'in it,' but I think for you maybe without." This pulling from Lan's home language created the need

for Brad and Lan to discuss differences and negotiate how the grammatical structures translated to English. Interestingly, Brad followed Lan's lead in comparing English structures to other languages – he occasionally compared structures to French and German to show the peculiarities of the English language.

### **Adaptive Transfer: Drawing on Prior Cultural/Linguistic Knowledge**

What we see in these cultural/linguistic negotiations between Brad and Lan is a very explicit reshaping of Lan's current linguistic knowledge and learning experiences to better apply them to new writing situations. Once again, we see the *multilingual* component of adaptive transfer in action: "it views writers as possessing the agency to draw from among a variety of discourses and language varieties in their attempts to intervene and change contexts for writing" (DePalma and Ringer, 2011, p. 141) Even from exercise sentence to exercise sentence, we see Lan bringing her past linguistic knowledge to the situation at hand – sometimes it transferred over directly and sometimes it had to be reshaped through Brad's instruction. We see that through filtering her current knowledge and past experiences through Brad's linguistic knowledge, together they could transfer Lan's knowledge from point A to point B without scrapping point A altogether when the knowledge didn't directly transfer. Likewise, Brad and Lan's cultural/linguistic negotiations revealed the *idiosyncratic* quality of adaptive transfer – Lan's unique reshaping process was "inflected by a range of factors" (p. 141). Because adaptive transfer additionally "highlights the way individuals perceive parallels across contexts and adapt knowledge as necessary" (p. 141), adaptive transfer occurred because Lan explicitly voiced how she was trying to apply past learning to new writing situations

– the parallels across contexts – and then Brad was there to assist with the adaptation necessary to correctly apply that knowledge.

### **Relationship**

Again, the adaptive transfer that occurred through the tutoring strategies and cultural/linguistic negotiations could not have taken place without the tutoring relationship between Brad and Lan. In order to stay within the realm of definable observations for a vague term like relationship, I've kept the three main categories from Kate and Jing's sessions to analyze what relational elements shaped Brad and Lan's sessions: 1) how the two balanced authority, 2) how the two integrated personal connections, and 3) how the two built trust. However, these three relational elements looked quite differently for Brad and Lan than they did for Kate and Jing, especially considering their focus on grammatical structures.

### **Balance of Authority**

While Brad did most of the talking in his sessions with Lan because of the tutoring strategies involved in direct teaching, there still existed a balance of authority between them in subtle ways. One way Lan held a great deal of authority was in setting the big agenda for every session. She would come in and state what she wanted to focus on in the session, sometimes without Brad even asking: articles, prepositions, her accounting paper, her professor's comments, colons/semicolons, parentheses/dashes, etc. She told me in the post-program interview, "Usually we go to class and the professor give us the assignments and they will instruct us most of the time, but with my tutor, I can tell him that, today we can work on this thing or that thing." Brad always agreed to focus on

whatever Lan wanted, but then the authority would shift back to him to actually make the plan for how they'd focus on that structure in the session. For example, in Session #3, Lan said she wanted to talk about prepositions, and Brad created the plan of reading the rules on the writing center quick-guide, working through the exercises together, and then printing a complete list of prepositions to talk through. Brad even told me in the post-program interview, "So a lot of times it kind of felt like setting up lesson plans rather than... Which in some cases nice, but in other cases was like, okay how do I adapt to the situation?"<sup>6</sup> However, Lan commented in the post-program interview that she liked the way Brad built on their sessions in his planning: "I think he has the structural teaching. At first, we worked on the theory of grammar then we have examples, small examples, like very simple sentences to work on and then we have a short paragraph – same problem – but it is getting more and more complicated." Of course, Lan did still have a say throughout the session's activities when she wanted; for example, when Brad suggested they go through prepositions on the master list "and see if there's any confusion," Lan additionally suggested, "Can we – for each of the prepositions, can we make a sentence for?" In this way, Lan held ultimate authority over what she and Brad focused on in their sessions, but Brad used his knowledge of how one learns grammatical structures for the session's logistics, about which Lan told me, "Yeah, I like that. I learned a lot from that style."

Another way authority shifted between Brad and Lan was through the kind of questions that Lan asked. Lan did rely on Brad's authority as a tutor to know the answers to her very specific grammar and vocabulary questions. In the beginning, even if Lan

could explain her rationale for a certain structure, she'd still ask for Brad's approval: "It can be plural...so it's my thought to put nothing. Can nothing here?" She especially trusted in his authority as an American; if there was more than one grammatically correct option for an example, Lan would often still ask Brad which one was better. However, especially as the semester went on, Lan was not afraid to raise a complication or ask a question that somewhat challenged Brad's initial answer. When I asked Brad in the post-program interview if he thought Lan's confidence had increased, he answered:

And also I think a good test of that, towards the end of the semester, she wasn't necessarily contradicting me, but whenever you can say – what about this? When I would point something out, I'd say oh you're right. And whenever she can point out things and not wait for me to point them out, I feel like that is a good amount of confidence and I think that is a good tutoring relationship to have rather than the more authoritarian one that was maybe at the beginning where I would say something and she might just go like this [shrug] and say, oh I don't really understand but I will get it later. Whereas now, towards the end, she would be like, "But..." So I think that's a good symbol of her developing confidence is being able to – I mean she spoke more eloquently as well, but to be able to be thinking on that level and be confident enough to ask questions and question the authority. Question the man.

We can see an example of Lan "questioning the man" in Session #9 when she said she was unsure of when to turn countries into their adjectival forms:

Brad: When would you use "Africa" as an adjective but not "African"?

Lan: I don't know, but I believe they use it right because it's on CNN, newspapers, BBC.

Brad: Yeah. So you're right, these are wrong, they should be "African" and it should be "European." And I'm trying to think if there are any other ways that you might use these terms to describe a noun or describe a verb like an adverb would do, and I think it almost always has to be changed to...

Lan: Like, for example, Vietnam War, so they just use "Vietnam."

Brad: Oh yeah, that's a good point. Vietnam War. And we say the Iraq War. Why would we do that?

In this exchange, we can see that Lan offers her own example to counteract Brad's rule that the noun must be changed to the adjectival form. Her persistence opened a space for them to discuss why this might be the case. Therefore, although Lan did recognize Brad's authority to answer her questions and provide the correct answer in most cases, she still retained enough authority to question him when necessary.

Just as Lan asked and complicated questions, Brad balanced his authority in how he answered these questions. Brad wasn't afraid to directly disagree and/or correct Lan when she was mistaken. These exchanges of correction, which happened in almost every session, looked similar to one of the first ones in Session #1:

Brad: "You could buy her a jewelry for her birthday." Does that work?

Lan: Yeah.

Brad: It doesn't.

Lan: It doesn't?



Brad: The reason “a” doesn’t work is because jewelry is considered plural. Here, we see that Brad blatantly disagreed with Lan in his answer and then used an explanation to prove his authority to do so. However, as we saw in the previous example about the “Vietnam War,” Brad was also quick to admit when he’d missed something or answered incorrectly. For example, he might say, “That’s a good point. I wasn’t even thinking that way.” Brad reflected on what was going through his mind in these instances in his post-program interview: “And also there were a lot of times were she would ask me questions about certain grammatical conventions or something and in my head I’m not thinking, how do I explain this, in my head I’m thinking, how do I explain this in a way that I’m not going to be wrong in like five minutes when we look at some other sentence?” This shows that while Brad used his authority to answer Lan’s questions and correct her, he remained cautious and aware that he couldn’t always give a hard-and-fast rule or that Lan could complicate his answer at any moment. In their sessions, Brad was additionally quick to confirm and praise Lan’s knowledge when she was correct; in this way, Brad maintains authority by confirming her knowledge, but he also shares authority by increasing Lan’s confidence.

In fact, both Brad and Lan were quick to acknowledge and share their limitations, misunderstandings, or knowledge gaps with one another during their sessions. As evidenced in the previous paragraph, Brad usually tried to find a rule or explanation, but he would be clear when he couldn’t by saying something like, “I’m not sure of the answer to be honest.” He went on his post-program interview to explain:

Because just the way the English language is, there are so many exceptions to the rules, so whenever I say “oh the reason...” and “why you have ‘a’...” and “before the which is...” That seems like it would just be a rule that you would follow but then of course there is exceptions and it's like, how can I explain that without seeming like an ass real soon? And then you probably noticed, there were a lot of times where I was just like, I don't know. I can't answer that because I don't want to say what I'm thinking because it could be wrong.

Just as Brad would admit his limitations to Lan, Lan would also admit her limitations to Brad without hesitation. For example, Session #1 provided a representation of this admission that occurred consistently in every session when Lan said, “I have the problem when I write the paragraphs. I mention something, and actually I don’t have to put “the,” and sometimes I mention something and I put the “the” after it, and sometimes I need to put “the” for something I mentioned.” For a great deal of these instances, laughter was involved. Occasionally Brad or Lan would mention a limitation or knowledge gap seriously or thoughtfully, but more often than not, these kinds of admissions were accompanied by laughter on one side or both sides. For example, they both had a big laugh when Brad asked, “What is accounting treatment?” (a term on Lan’s prompt), and Lan semi-joked, “I have the same question.” These jokey ways of revealing limitations occurred constantly in Brad and Lan’s sessions, and I believe it simultaneously reveals a level of comfort with one another to be able to laugh over their misgivings, but also a level of defense to protect themselves from too open or serious an admission.

### **Personal Connections**

Partly because of the content of grammatical structures in their sessions, Brad and Lan made far fewer personal connections than Kate and Jing that shaped or held significance in their sessions. The occasional personal connections that formed usually happened as a quick aside and in relation to the examples Brad was using to teach the grammar rules. For example, after several exercise sentences that dealt with the subject of cancer, Brad laughed and said, “This is a grim topic; who wrote this? So much about cancer.” Likewise, in Session #7, Brad used the semi-silly example of the band Smashmouth to teach how to use colons when introducing a quote. Brad and the other (eavesdropping) tutor in the room laughed quite a bit over him quoting a Smashmouth song; as Lan didn’t quite get what was so funny, she asked several questions about the band, what kind of music they played, if they were popular, etc., to better understand the joke. In this case, Lan wanted to make the personal connection. By far, laughter signaled the personal connections between Brad and Lan, and this laughter usually had little to do with their past experiences or values and more to do with the examples or rules they were discussing. Brad and Lan would often laugh together over a particularly difficult or complicated rule, a nonsensical example, or a recurring mistake. For example, after spending a great deal of a session discussing how to summarize and paraphrase blocks of quotations, Brad and Lan shared a laugh when he stopped later in the paper to ask, “Do you know what I’m going to say about this paragraph now?” and Lan answers, “Too much quotation?” The experience of reviewing a rule and then finding further offenses for that rule almost always created a personal connection over which Brad and Lan could laugh about or comment on.

Meanwhile, if Lan did make a move to bring in more of a personal connection to their sessions, Brad usually redirected it rather quickly back to the task at hand. For example, in Session #6, Lan asked Brad if he knew what AmeriCorp was since she had just landed an interview with them. Brad had actually worked for AmeriCorp previously, and it was obvious that Lan was very excited to have an insider who could share information with her. She asked several questions, but Brad kept his answers short and redirected her back to their agenda before long. She even brought up another question about the job later in the session, and Brad once again answered shortly before turning her attention back to their exercises. This redirect also took place during the chit-chat that occurred sometimes at length in Kate and Jing's sessions but remained limited for Brad and Lan. Lan would often mention her classes and her upcoming exams at the beginning or end of sessions, and Brad would comment briefly before moving to the agenda.

### **Trust**

While there were fewer personal connections between Brad and Lan, their sessions still revealed observable factors of trust. The biggest indication of trust was Lan's willingness to share her insecurities, as well as her triumphs, with Brad. Just as she shared her limitations or knowledge gaps, Lan would also share her insecurities with Brad, often in their chit-chat about her upcoming quizzes, and sometimes about her general reading, writing, and speaking skills. She told me in the post-program interview that their relationship was "a little more laid back. So I am more confident see him. I am more willing to tell him my weaknesses and my mistakes." For example, in Session #6, she told Brad, "I think for the basic standard, I can do the simple sentence, and every

component of the sentence, like verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, but into a little bit more complicated level, I'm reading science books, nonfiction or taxation, I got difficult time to understand. I had to read two, three times." She was never afraid to ask Brad to repeat his explanation or admit she hadn't understand a concept. On the flip side, Lan also celebrated her triumphs with Brad. In Session #4, Lan had just gotten a paper back that she and Brad reviewed in Session #2 on which she received an 8 out of 10 for the grammar portion, whereas in previous semesters she had received a 5 out of 10 for the same category. Lan was clearly over the moon about this score: she brought it up *three* different times during their session that day, mentioned it in the following session, and then told me in the post-program interview: "So this semester I got eight [out of ten] with just one session with the tutor, so absolutely [my writing] has improved. So I am more confident about that. I got good compliments from the grader, which I didn't expect before, so I was very glad to get that compliment, and the tutor's comments on my writing too." Lan enjoyed celebrating this triumph with Brad and viewed the grade as one of the most tangible outcomes of their sessions together.

Interestingly, just as Jing asked Kate what his biggest writing problem was in their third session, in Session #2, Lan made a similar move. After they spent the session working through a short assignment for her accounting class, Lan asked Brad to evaluate the issues she initially voiced more generally:

Lan: Did you find any grammar mistakes from my writing?

Brad: I think we covered mostly everything, so everything looked pretty good.

Lan: My run-on sentences, singular/plural, articles...?

Brad: No, I didn't notice, the one instance that we did was that "comma-and," and we talked about that. So hopefully you should...but it seems like you have a good idea of how to structure sentences with commas so that's good.

This push for Brad to evaluate her as a writer revealed Lan's trust in Brad's judgment and her trust in him as a tutor.

I did want to note a couple of things in Brad and Lan's sessions that I thought might represent a lack of trust or at least a hesitation to trust. One is the laughter that occurred over the limitations and the recurring mistakes. Some laughter in Brad and Lan's sessions was congenial or joke-like, whereas some laughter seemed to be more nervous or defensive. It's hard to tell just from audio recordings and observations the motivation behind different laughter, but I do believe the laughter acted as a kind of bridge to maintain trust even when it meant being vulnerable. The second possible indication of a hesitation of trust was the "courtesy" moves that Lan made. For Kate and Jing, courtesy kept the center of their balance of authority, but for Brad and Lan, courtesy questions only arose when Lan wanted to interrupt Brad. She'd always say something like, "Can I--?" or "I wondered – sorry – but I wondered if..." In other words, she always apologized for interrupting or asked if she could ask a question. These moves, especially since they were only on Lan's side, seemed less like courtesy moves and more like nervousness or possibly respect for Brad's authority; either way, it seemed to indicate a hesitancy for Lan to trust in her right to ask questions and change the direction of the session.

### **Adaptive Transfer: Relationship's Indirect Contribution**

Just as with Kate & Jing, we see that Brad and Lan's relationship indirectly contributed to adaptive transfer by building a foundation on which they could build the tutoring strategies and cultural/linguistic negotiations. The balance of authority could have meant that Lan became an active participant in her learning and held autonomy over what she learned, which directly dictated Brad's tutoring strategies. The personal connections may have opened space for Lan to better voice her own cultural/linguistic influences so they could be negotiated with Brad. Finally, her somewhat reserved trust in Brad possibly meant that she could accept the direct teaching, but she also knew when to draw on her own past influences to complicate his explanations. Again, we see that the relationship paved the way for adaptive transfer to ultimately occur.

## CONCLUSION

I propose that the nature of these two semester-long collections of weekly sessions between a single tutor and a multilingual writer allowed writers to consciously engage in adaptive transfer by drawing on prior sessions and by drawing on past cultural/linguistic experiences. First, the tutoring strategies relied on collaboration and input, which meant the tutee had to voice their writing choices and thought processes. Once the tutor understood from what past knowledge or learning the tutee was attempting to transfer, they could collaboratively reshape that knowledge for the new writing situation through strategies like using metadiscourse, asking questions, teaching in some way, integrating examples, and writing in sessions. Even more so, the consistency of sessions meant that the tutor and tutee could begin reshaping knowledge that was previously established in an earlier session, whether by moving through the zones of proximal development or by increasing complexity.

Not only could the tutee reshape prior knowledge for new writing tasks through the tutoring strategies, but I also argue that the tutee could engage in adaptive transfer to reshape prior cultural and linguistic experiences for an American setting; this occurred when tutor and tutee negotiated and discussed issues like student identity, vocabulary, language, and past learning experiences. Finally, I contend that the relationship between tutor and tutee, which is defined here as a balance of authority, personal connections, and



trust, created the foundation on which the tutoring strategies and cultural/linguistic negotiations had space to thrive. Without the balance of authority, the tutee would not have a collaborative voice; without personal connections, the tutor may not have known enough about the tutee's cultural/linguistic experiences; and without trust, the tutor and tutee could not have effectively shared a positive learning environment.

Therefore, between the tutoring strategies, cultural/linguistic negotiations, and relationships that occurred in sessions, it seems that these semester-long collections of weekly sessions with a single tutor themselves provided the space and consistency to act as the vehicle or catalyst for adaptive transfer to take place; tutees did not have to reshape past knowledge on their own, but they could use the space and consistency afforded by the weekly sessions with the same tutor to explicitly negotiate past writing knowledge and cultural/linguistic influences with new writing tasks through conversation.

If we re-visit the six qualities of adaptive transfer, we can see that five of the six occurred between the two case studies. While many other outer and inner elements may have contributed to the tutee's ability to engage in adaptive transfer, and any of the elements recognized in this study may appear in other learning environments, it is important to note what conditions I recognized in this study that seem to at least foster or possibly create the opportunity for writers to successfully engage in adaptive transfer.

1. *Dynamic* – In order for writers to understand the change and fluidity of writing skills, it was important for the tutor and tutee to explore writing options and discuss how different strategies and revisions best met the writing task at hand.

For Brad and Lan, this quality happened through Brad explaining grammar rules

in different contexts and by establishing explicit thinking patterns for Lan to use later.

2. *Idiosyncratic* – The nature of the one-on-one collaboration lent itself towards the idiosyncratic quality of adaptive transfer, but it was heightened when tutors especially catered their tutoring strategies and cultural/linguistic negotiations to best meet the unique individual before them. For example, both Kate and Brad’s tutoring strategies sought to meet Jing and Lan where they were in their learning and then respond to their needs. Meanwhile, the cultural/linguistic negotiations that took place in the prolonged sessions highlighted the range of factors that influence a writer’s choices.
3. *Cross-contextual* – While the similarity between familiar and unfamiliar writing contexts could be voiced through conversation, the biggest element in these case studies that emphasized the cross-contextual quality of adaptive transfer was the way the sessions built on one another and began drawing from previous sessions as time went by. For Kate and Jing, the writer could move from learning, to directed practice, to application in four content areas, and for Brad and Lan, the writer could make explicit connections to info in previous sessions and then engage those connections in increasingly complex scenarios.
4. *Rhetorical* – The rhetorical quality of adaptive transfer came into play when both Kate and Brad used tutoring strategies, like questions and metadiscourse, that forced the writer to consider the strategy of their writing choices and if it best fit the audience, purpose, and genre of the task at hand. They could refine and

negotiate which changes needed to be made and in what direction these changes should go through their conversation.

5. *Multilingual* – The cultural/linguistic negotiations that occurred between tutor and tutee in both case studies highlighted the needed “ongoing and varying material practice” (p. 141) the writers needed for their language, like with Jing’s vocabulary and Lan’s grammar. These negotiations simultaneously allowed the writers to keep their agency since they were able to voice the cultural perspectives or past learning experiences that led to the writing choice or goal at hand; then, the tutor and tutee could best collaborate with how to reshape (but not erase) that knowledge to best communicate.
6. *Transformative* – The transformative quality of adaptive transfer means that writers can “introduce new ways of seeing, doing, or knowing” (p. 141) into the practice. The balance of authority between tutor and tutee meant that, at moments, the tutees came close to accomplishing this push on the “right” way of doing things. For example, Jing would not always give up ideas he felt were too important even if they distracted him from the prompt. However, the tutees’ desire to communicate fluently in an American context meant that, even though they did sometimes complicate the tutor’s instruction or suggestions, they still pursued the “right” way of doing things, and the tutors, especially in their mini-lessons and direct teaching, obliged. Therefore, it seems we still need to consider what it means for multilingual learners to challenge and possibly improve current

writing standards or practices in a one-on-one tutoring environment while still reshaping past learning for the new situation.

In fact, these case studies allow us to return to the theory of adaptive transfer with fresh insight. For example, DePalma and Ringer say that adaptive transfer can be a “conscious or intuitive process” (p. 141). In these case studies, the tutees’ conscious acknowledgement of their past knowledge and cultural/linguistic experiences allows the reshaping process to occur through collaboration with the tutor, and consequently this study sees the conscious and explicit process of adaptive transfer as a condition for success. Therefore, the theory could provide more ideas for what an “intuitive” process of adaptive transfer might look like. Additionally, while DePalma and Ringer suggest that writing researchers use this theory for L2 pedagogies, they especially emphasize using it in the areas of “contrastive rhetoric, English for academic purposes, and writing across the curriculum” (p. 134). However, from the given case studies, it seems this theory holds a significant implications in the arena of writing center studies, as well, and could especially illuminate ways in which tutors and tutees might engage the process of adaptive transfer through the six qualities, with further exploration of how the *transformative* quality might become possible.

Ultimately, providing multilingual writers an option for semester-long collections of weekly sessions with a single tutor seems to be a viable and effective option for writing centers to meet the increased demands for internationalization and to integrate adaptive transfer into their program designs. Lan told me that in her post-program interview that she would “definitely recommend this program for other students,

American students or especially non-native speaking students.” Likewise, Jing said he would “always” recommend the ESL Opt-In Program to others:

It's like the best learning resource we can get on this campus. Of so many support we can get here, it is face-to-face communication and it is very specific on writing, and the writing is what I am needing to learn about. Writing tutoring is not only about writing, it will facilitate your thinking, sometimes regulate some insight, so you can improve or you can develop your idea. So with this help I think we can think deeper and go further. It is just something we cannot get without the help... This is my first year [studying in the United States], so maybe after two or three years with my improvement in English, I guess all I need is a tutor, not a professor. Because I have my own idea, I have my own motivation, and in maybe two years I can use the topics like a professional. So I get all these resource, the only thing I need is a person who can help me to improve my writing and even help me polish it. That's it.

These insights from Jing show how offering multilingual writers long-term, consistent tutoring sessions can provide them the tools to improve their ideas, their thinking, their language, and their written products. This study shows that Jing’s description is made possible with the adaptive transfer that can occur through tutoring strategies, cultural negotiations, and relationships.

### **Further Research**

Since this study limits its scope to simply describe what occurs in two cases of these semester-long collections of weekly sessions with a single tutor, as well as how

these occurrences contribute to adaptive transfer, we must consider a number of questions for further research to better understand and implement a writing center design like the ESL Opt-In Program:

1. *How does the tutor and tutee's satisfaction and improvement compare to or rely on what actually occurs in long-term, consistent tutoring sessions?* In this study, I've "evaluated" our ESL Opt-In Program through the theory of adaptive transfer and the tutors' and tutees' *perceived* improvement in their post-program interviews. A next step, though, would be to actually assess tutoring and writing improvement over time to better evaluate the success of long-term, consistent tutoring sessions.
2. *If writing centers do implement this programmatic design of long-term, consistent tutoring sessions, how should they design a training to better prepare their tutors?* Depending on the research that explores the differences between multiple sessions vs. single sessions, we can assume that there are some shifts to usual writing center pedagogy that would require additional training to best prepare tutors for this long-term tutoring relationship.
3. *How can we generate a larger and more replicable data set for this type of program?* Because these long-term, consistent tutoring sessions with multilingual writers are highly individualized, case studies seemed to be the best methodology for this particular study of description. However, a next step would be to create a methodology that supplements the findings from this smaller qualitative data with bigger quantitative data.

4. *How do the tutoring strategies, cultural negotiations, and relational elements in long-term, consistent tutoring sessions with multilingual writers compare to the same elements in single sessions with multilingual writers?* I am not unaware that many of the descriptive categories in the results of these two case studies could also show up similarly in single sessions; however, to what extent these elements could be established, developed, negotiated, and expected in a single session compared to multiple sessions is unknown and worth exploring.
5. *How does the effectiveness of adaptive transfer in long-term, consistent tutoring sessions with multilingual writers compare to single sessions with multilingual writers?* Obviously, tutors and tutees lose the ability to reshape knowledge from prior sessions in a single tutoring session, but since the elements from question one can exist in single sessions, we can assume that adaptive transfer also can exist in single sessions, and noting the comparisons between adaptive transfer in single sessions versus multiple sessions could aid program design.
6. *How do the occurrences and integration of adaptive transfer in long-term, consistent tutoring sessions change with native speakers as opposed to multilingual writers?* Many of the occurrences in these long-term, consistent tutoring sessions meet much of the literature's suggestions for tutoring multilingual writers, but there could also be significant implications for native speakers, as well.

Overall, the results from this study are significant enough both to consider implementing a similar writing program for any university's multilingual writer

population and to continue to pursue further research to better understand, describe, and evaluate this type of program.



## NOTES

1. The ESL Opt-In program was founded in 2009 by Anna Habib, who was the Writing Center Director at the time. Habib's original rationale for the program was that the consistent tutor and regular schedule would allow for targeted support and a systematic tutoring approach. When I asked her informally about the program, she said that she and a colleague were simply trying to think of writing support that they would have liked as multilingual learners struggling through their universities.
2. Each term for non-native speakers takes on complicated baggage, and scholars like Zawacki and Cox invite conversation about these terms and their various connotations and meanings. Meanwhile, Bruce et al. are currently conducting a national study that explores what terms non-native speakers identify with and claim. In this study, however, I prefer to use the term "multilingual" since it describes the writer's language function without the inherent comparison to English (unlike terms like L2 or ESL). You'll see "ESL" when I refer to the Opt-In Program's name because that is the current title we use in our Writing Center.
3. The ESL Opt-In Program allows participants to actually make two appointments with two different tutors every week. Both Jing and Lan met with a second tutor every week. Because I wanted to see what happens between one tutor-tutee pair, the other tutors do not become relevant in this study. However, it is interesting to note that I did

talk to the tutees about their other tutors a little, and they ended up splitting content and language naturally. For example, in this study, Kate and Jing primarily focus on clarity of content and answering the prompt, and Jing and his other tutor focused only on sentence-level errors. In this study, Brad and Lan focused solely on grammar and language, but Lan and her other tutor mostly discussed writing and living in America in general.

4. When I further asked Jing what he meant by “ethical code,” Jing explained that he had this assumption about the more formal relationship between tutor and tutee because the Writing Center does not allow tutees to know their tutors’ last names or personal email addresses.
5. To clarify my use of terms, Kate’s mini-lessons and Brad’s direct teaching were very similar tutoring strategies. I’m using different terms because, for Kate, these moments of instruction were very brief, happened only occasionally, and were usually paired with questioning. For Brad, though, these moments of instruction were usually much longer, more directive, and more self-contained.
6. In fact, Brad went on to suggest that the writing center should have a separate training for ESL Opt-In Sessions, and a huge part of this training should be how to collaborate with the student to create and execute “lesson plans” for those Opt-In students who do not have written work every week but just want to improve their writing in general.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Tutee Pre-Program Interview Protocol**

#### **Sponsors**

The GMU Writing Center is arranging this meeting. We are setting up this discussion because we would like to know some demographic information, your feelings toward and experiences with writing, and what you expect to get out of this program. We will be using this information to guide our analysis of your session observations, and we will also be comparing your answers now to your answers after a semester in our Opt-In Program. The combination of pre-program interview, observations, and post-program interview will help us gauge not only what is happening over time in these sessions, but they will help us know how what is happening is meeting your needs and expectations as a writer. In this way, we can work to improve our program and tutoring.

#### **Confidentiality**

We are interested in your answers to this interview and in observing your sessions only because they will help us further understand your attitude and expectations concerning writing and the Opt-In Program. We will be coding your name so no one can link your answers to you, and I am the only investigator who will have the master list of names.

#### **Consent**

At this time, I would like you to read over your consent form for this case study. The form gives your consent for me to conduct this interview, for me to observe your Opt-In sessions, and for me to conduct one more interview at the end of the semester. We will be tape-recording and transcribing this interview and the last interview, both of which we expect to last about 30 minutes, and I will also be tape-recording and transcribing the sessions I observe weekly. Please read the consent form carefully because it details your participation, your confidentiality, and your risks and benefits. If you agree to the consent form's contents, you can sign one copy to return to me and keep the other copy for your records.

#### **Content of Interview**

##### *Background Information*

1. What is your major and class standing at Mason?
2. What do you consider your home country and home language? Do you speak any other languages beside English and your home language?
3. How long have you been in the United States?
4. When and how did you first begin learning the English language?
5. Have you taken any ESL-designated language or writing courses in the U.S.?

#### *Writing Experiences*

6. What kind of writing do you have to do at Mason and in general?
7. How is the writing you do at Mason similar to or different from writing you've done in the past, especially the writing you did in your home country?
8. How is your writing instruction at Mason similar to or different from the writing instruction you've received in the past?
9. What do you think your strengths are when it comes to writing in an American university?
10. What is difficult about writing in an American university?
11. How confident do you feel about writing for your courses and in general?
12. Besides the Writing Center, what other forms of support do you or have you used to improve your writing?

#### *The ESL Opt-In Program*

13. How did you hear about the ESL Opt-In Program?
14. Why did you decide to enroll in this program?
15. What aspect of writing do you hope to improve most by enrolling in this program?
16. What are you hoping this program will do for you that other forms of support cannot do for you?

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Tutor Pre-Program Interview Protocol**

#### **Sponsors**

The GMU Writing Center is arranging this meeting. We are setting up this discussion because we would like to get a sense of your expectations for your Opt-In sessions. We will be using this information to guide our analysis of your session observations, and we will also be comparing your answers now to your answers after a semester tutoring in our Opt-In Program. The combination of pre-program interview, observations, and post-program interview will help us gauge not only what is happening over time in these sessions, but they will help us know how what is happening is meeting your needs, expectations, and experiences as an Opt-In tutor. In this way, we can work to improve our program and training for this program.

#### **Confidentiality**

We are interested in your answers to this interview and in observing your sessions only because they will help us further understand your attitude and expectations concerning tutoring in the Opt-In Program. We will be coding your name so no one can link your answers to you, and I am the only investigator who will have the master list of names.

#### **Consent**

At this time, I would like you to read over your consent form for this case study. The form gives your consent for me to conduct this interview, for me to observe your Opt-In sessions, and for me to conduct one more interview at the end of the semester. We will be tape-recording and transcribing this interview and the last interview, both of which we expect to last about 30 minutes, and I will also be tape-recording and transcribing the sessions I observe weekly. Please read the consent form carefully because it details your participation, your confidentiality, and your risks and benefits. If you agree to the consent form's contents, you can sign one copy to return to me and keep the other copy for your records.

#### **Content of Interview**

##### *Background Information*

1. What is your major and class standing at Mason?
2. What do you consider your home country and home language? Do you speak any other languages in addition to English [and your home language]?
3. Do you have any former experiences working with ESL students, working in Writing Centers, or tutoring/teaching in general?
4. Why are you tutoring in the Opt-In Program?

#### *Tutoring Expectations*

5. What do you think an ESL student needs most from a long-term writing tutor?
6. How do you envision your Opt-In sessions unfolding over the upcoming semester?
7. What do you hope to get out of this more long-term tutoring relationship?
8. What do you think your tutee will get out of this long-term tutoring relationship?
9. What tutoring strategies or activities do you think will be most helpful for tutoring in the Opt-In Program?

#### *Preparation*

10. In what ways do you feel prepared to tutor your Opt-In student?
11. In what ways do you feel unprepared to tutor your Opt-In student?
12. What training modules and/or personal background and experiences do you believe will become most relevant in tutoring your Opt-In student?

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Tutee Post-Program Interview Protocol**

#### **Sponsors**

The GMU Writing Center is arranging this meeting. We are setting up this discussion because we would like to know your thoughts about the sessions I've been observing all semester. We will be using this information to guide our analysis of your session observations, and we will also be comparing your answers now to the answers you gave in our interview at the beginning of the semester.

#### **Confidentiality**

We are interested in your answers to this interview because they will help us understand how you perceived what I've been observing in your sessions, and we can also see how the program did or did not meet your expectations and writing goals. As a reminder, we will be coding your name so no one can link your answers to you, and I am the only investigator who will have the master list of names.

#### **Consent**

I will be tape-recording and transcribing this interview just like the last one, and I expect it to last about 30 minutes. Your consent for this interview holds from the initial form you signed at our first interview.

#### **Content of Interview**

1. Tell me a little bit about your Opt-In tutor and your sessions. What are your general thoughts as you reflect over the semester?

#### *Writing Improvements*

2. What aspects of your writing do you feel have improved most because of your sessions?
3. What aspects of your writing are you still uncertain about or feel you need additional improvement?

4. You said in our first interview that you most wanted to improve [insert answer here]. Do you feel that has improved a satisfactory amount? How so?
5. Have you learned about writing in the American university that you did not know before this program?
6. Do you feel more, less, or equally confident about your writing compared to the start of the semester?
7. What is the most important thing you learned about writing in the Opt-In Program?

*Program Satisfaction*

8. What was your relationship like with your tutor? How was it similar to or different from other relationships at Mason?
9. What kind of moves, activities, or strategies did your tutor use in your sessions that contributed most to your learning?
10. What kind of moves, activities, or strategies did your tutor use in your sessions that did not necessarily contribute to your learning?
11. Did you like meeting with the same tutor every week? Why or why not?
12. How was the Opt-In Program similar to or different from the support you received from other resources (including your teachers)?
13. Would you recommend the program to other students? Why or why not?



## **APPENDIX D**

### **Tutor Post-Program Interview Protocol**

#### **Sponsors**

The GMU Writing Center is arranging this meeting. We are setting up this discussion because we would like to know your thoughts about the sessions I've been observing all semester. We will be using this information to guide our analysis of your session observations, and we will also be comparing your answers now to the answers you gave in our interview at the beginning of the semester.

#### **Confidentiality**

We are interested in your answers to this interview because they will help us understand how you perceived what I've been observing in your sessions, and we can also see how the program did or did not meet your expectations and preparation. As a reminder, we will be coding your name so no one can link your answers to you, and I am the only investigator who will have the master list of names.

#### **Consent**

I will be tape-recording and transcribing this interview just like the last one, and I expect it to last about 30 minutes. Your consent for this interview holds from the initial form you signed at our first interview.

#### **Content of Interview**

1. Tell me a little bit about your Opt-In tutee and your sessions. What are your general thoughts as you reflect over the semester?
2. In what ways do you feel like your tutee improved most?
3. In what ways do you feel your tutee still needs to work towards improvement?
4. Did you like meeting with your Opt-In tutee every week? Why or why not?

*Tutoring Your Opt-In Students*

5. What did your Opt-In student seem to need most from a long-term writing center tutor at the beginning of the semester?
6. What was most rewarding about tutoring your Opt-In student?
7. What was most challenging about tutoring your Opt-In student? Were there special challenges with your Opt-In students that you didn't experience with your other tutees?
8. What tutoring strategies did you find you used most or were most helpful in tutoring your Opt-In student? How were these strategies similar to or different from the strategies you used in other sessions?
9. How was your relationship with your Opt-In student similar to or different than your relationship with other tutees?
10. In our initial interview, this is what you said you hoped to get out of this program: [insert answer here]. Now that the semester is over, do you find you that initial hope reflects your experiences? Why or why not?
11. In our initial interview, this is what you said you hoped your tutee would get out of this program: [insert answer here]. Do you think your Opt-In student had that experience? Why or why not?

*Training for the Opt-In Program*

12. Was there any training or preparation that became particularly important or useful in tutoring your Opt-In student?
13. Was there any training or preparation to best tutor your Opt-In student that you felt you lacked throughout the semester?
14. What could the admin team, both in the initial training and ongoing TED, have done to better support your Opt-In tutoring?
15. What advice would you give to incoming tutors concerning our Opt-In program or tutoring Opt-In students?

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## **BIOGRAPHY**

Alisa L. Russell received her Bachelor of Arts in English from Lee University in August of 2013, and she received her Master of Arts in English from George Mason University in May of 2016. At Mason, Alisa served as a graduate teaching assistant by tutoring in the writing center and teaching first-year composition; served as a graduate administrator in the writing center in the role of Coordinator of Tutor Education and Development; and served as a graduate research assistant for WAC. She will join the PhD program in Composition and Rhetoric at the University of Kansas in Fall of 2016.