

**MOVING FROM “SHE JUST SITS HERE” TO “SHE’S OPENED MY EYES”:  
EVOLUTION OF WRITING TUTOR ROLES IN CONFERENCES  
WITH L1 AND L2 STUDENT-ATHLETES**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study took place in a university athletics tutoring facility which provides writing support to “underprepared” freshman student-athletes. Many students who are classified as underprepared students (often ethnic or linguistic minorities, international students, or first-generation college students) would not have the chance to attend a four-year university without their athletic ability and scholarships, making athletics writing support programs unique compared to campus-wide tutoring services. Athletics writing tutors are also subject to stricter National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) restrictions, making writing conferences in this setting a site of conflicting expectations and struggle. Since access to specialized tutoring services is an important factor in underprepared students’ college success, it is necessary to better understand the nature of these writing tutorials. In particular, it is essential to investigate whether and to what degree writing tutors who work with underprepared student-athletes are knowledgeable about the backgrounds, identities, and needs of this population, and how they navigate the NCAA restrictions on writing conferences.

This case study charts the evolution of writing tutoring practices over a two-year span in one Division 1 state university’s athletic tutoring center. Through identifying needs and struggles of both underprepared students and writing tutors, I developed and implemented training modules that provided tutors with training in student-athlete identities, language varieties, and tutoring strategies for the process of American English academic writing. Post-training observations of writing conferences show qualitative differences in the ways that writing tutors approach students and their writing. In this paper, key data from observations,

interviews, questionnaires, and training materials are utilized to explain how this evolution of tutoring practices took place.

## INTRODUCTION

This paper addresses the phenomenon of “underprepared” university students at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa (UHM) and focuses on the subset of the student-athlete population who are identified as in need of academic support for their writing. The research was carried out in three phases: first, from an interactional sociolinguistics perspective, I investigated both the literacy needs of the students as well as the writing tutors who support them by observing tutoring sessions and analyzing recordings of tutorials; second, I designed and implemented a six-part training and program structures that would help tutors scaffold their students’ literacy skills within institutional bounds; finally, I observed the effects of the training during tutoring sessions with attention to the interactional patterns I had initially identified. This project resulted in increased training support for writing tutors as well as qualitatively changed writing tutor practices.

Other researchers have also examined this phenomenon in non-athletic contexts, investigating the reading and writing development of diverse “underprepared” students who arrived in higher education without the literacy skills they would need for academic success (Callahan & Chumney, 2009; Kamhi-Stein, 1998, 2003; Larsen, 2003; Myers, 1998). Kamhi-Stein (1998, 2003) investigates the attitudes towards reading of “underprepared” L2 college readers and what impact these attitudes had on their reading strategies. Larsen (2003) considers “basic” NES freshman writers alongside their ESL counterparts, viewing English academic language as a secondary discourse that both groups of students must acquire. Myers (1998) examines the literacy histories of four underprepared college readers, trying to draw connections between students’ former literacy experiences and how they view themselves as college readers and writers. Callahan and Chumney (2009) observe the acquisition of cultural and academic capital by two groups of “at-risk” of students in remedial writing courses at a four-year university and a community college, as well as how these at-risk students are positioned within the field of higher education.

What all of these researchers have in common is the recognition of the issue of

“underprepared” students within higher education—students who have, for a variety of reasons, come to institutions of higher education without the academic skills (particularly reading and writing skills) that they will need in order to succeed in this context. Callahan and Chumney (2009) found that access to one-on-one tutoring services was the most important factor influencing underprepared students’ future academic success and independence as college writers. Due to the significance of tutoring for this population, it is important to investigate how tutoring works for underprepared student-athletes, whose experiences are further constrained by National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) regulations. In order to understand whether these services were of similar importance in an athletics tutoring setting, I set out to investigate the roles that underprepared freshman student-athletes and their writing tutors take on in my context: Student-Athlete Academic Services (SAAS) at (UHM). Through observing writing conferences with freshman students in action, I examined the turn-by-turn strategies that writing tutors use to socialize their underprepared students into the practices of American academic writing.

### *The “Contact Zone” of Athletics, Academics, and Identities*

In March 2014, the NCAA opened an investigation into UHM’s men’s basketball team and their admissions records, finally confirming what all SAAS tutors are told in training: college athletics in the United States is frequently the home of scandal, particularly when the academic competence of college athletes is disputed. This year alone, at least two media frenzies have called into question the academic abilities of student-athletes at major universities. In January 2014, CNN published an article citing SAT, ACT, and adult reading placement test scores from twenty-one public U.S. universities, alleging that many college athletes, especially in revenue-producing sports such as football and basketball, had reading scores as low as eighth grade level (Ganim, 2014). In June 2014, the NCAA reopened an old investigation into academic fraud at the University of North Carolina, where professors, academic advisors, writing tutors, and student-athletes alike felt the fallout of plagiarism accusations in 2011 (Tracy, 2014). This history of scandals and media scrutiny in all aspects of athletics has had long-reaching effects on the way student-athlete support services, such as SAAS, are run.

While these controversies do not define SAAS’s student-athlete population as a whole, they do shed light on the widespread belief among academics that athletes are not or cannot be strong

students. However it originated, this belief has resulted in the systemic “passing along” of student-athletes beginning in middle school and continuing into higher education, a practice which is particularly prevalent for minority students or those from underfunded urban school districts. These token passes tacitly encourage student-athletes to value themselves for their athletic rather than academic abilities (Bitzel, 2012; Broussard, 2003). When some of these student-athletes reach four-year universities where they are no longer simply passed along, the high academic expectations may come as a shock, especially to those who have learned to identify primarily as *athletes* rather than *students* (Beamon, 2012; Engstrom & Sedlacek, 1991; Gayles, 2009; Howard-Hamilton & Sina, 2001; McLaughlin, 2008; Melendez, 2006; Valentine & Taub, 1999). For students with a home language or language variety other than that widely known as “Standard English,” the lack of reading and writing support in a familiar language during elementary school may have caused them to fall behind their classmates early on (Valdes, 2011). For others, it may simply have been years since their teachers expected them to read and write at the level of their non-athlete peers. For still others, learning disabilities that have gone undiagnosed in mainstream classrooms may have impeded their literacy development.

As a result of the unique academic struggles faced by an underprepared student-athlete population, UHM, along with most Division I universities, has established tutorial and mentoring programs designed specifically to serve the needs of student-athletes. Despite an ongoing debate in both academic and public spheres over the fairness of providing such support services only to student-athletes, the reality is that some academically underprepared student-athletes would not have been given the chance to attend a prestigious four-year university without their athletic abilities. These same students would have slim chances of reaching graduation without the academic literacy support services. Three issues—a high percentage of students with low academic literacy, tight athletic schedules, and the time-consuming nature of writing—have led to a need for athlete-specific writing tutor support centers.

### ***Writing Centers in Athletics***

Within the tutorial programs offered to student-athletes, some, including SAAS at UHM, have chosen to set up writing centers specifically for their athletic context. Within SAAS there is a need for writing tutors working in the evening to accommodate student-athletes who have tight practice and class schedules during campus writing center hours; however, due to NCAA

compliance pressures, SAAS has established some policies for tutoring that are motivated by legal concerns rather than what benefits students the most. Rifenburg (2012) argues that the presence of the NCAA bylaws negatively affects the atmosphere in athletics writing conferences, stating that NCAA bylaws “eliminate space for collaboration” between tutors and tutees (p. 1). Rifenburg contrasts athletics writing centers with campus-wide writing centers, which are moving towards more collaborative models and reducing the hierarchical relationship between tutors and students. According to Rifenburg, athletics writing centers are often handcuffed to “outdated models of training and practice” that campus-wide writing centers are not limited to (p. 2). On the other hand, Bitzel (2013) claims that since writing center services are available to the general student population, the NCAA “extra benefits” bylaw actually provides a rationale for using the (more collaborative) campus-wide writing center practices as a basis for tutor practices in athletics. This “extra benefits” bylaw prohibits student-athletes from receiving extra benefits that non-athletes do not receive, with the exception of some services, such as tutoring, which are expressly permitted by the NCAA. However, while Bitzel’s claim makes sense theoretically, a history of harsh NCAA consequences—e.g., permanent ineligibility or termination of employment—for student-athletes and writing tutors engaging in co-composing moves during writing conferences makes her suggestion that athletic writing centers follow campus-wide models somewhat implausible (Finkel, Martin, & Paley, 2013).

Regardless of this debate, SAAS and other athletics writing centers are stricter than mainstream writing centers in their regulations for writing tutors. For example, SAAS writing tutors are prohibited from marking students’ papers or collaboratively composing sentences with their students. These regulations are likely a combined result of the NCAA bylaws and fear of plagiarism accusations that are much more frequently leveled at athletics tutoring centers than at campus-wide services. Moreover, various factors (such as the desire for a high degree of supervision over these academically underprepared students, the recognition of different academic pressures that are placed on athletes [who may become ineligible for scholarships or play if they drop below a certain GPA], time constraints, and the fear of plagiarism scandals) have led many student-athlete support programs, including SAAS at UHM, to set up highly structured and supervised writing centers within the department.

***Student-Athlete Academic Services at UH Mānoa***

At UHM, 21 sports teams (seven men's, 12 women's, and two co-ed) are served by SAAS. All of these student-athletes are able to use the Nagatani Academic Center (NAC) for academic purposes, and several teams (particularly football and men's basketball), as well as many individual athletes, have required study hall hours and tutor meetings mandated by their coaches or academic advisors. The students with mandatory study times tend to come from diverse backgrounds (ethnic minorities from the U.S. mainland, native Hawaiians, and other local students, as well as many international students, particularly from Samoa and Eastern Europe). Some of these students are, for a variety of reasons, more academically underprepared than the general student (and student-athlete) body. Many of them dislike writing and express a lack of confidence in their writing abilities. Part of this is due to the American tradition of valuing athletes (and teaching them to value themselves) for their athletic abilities, not their academic abilities (Bitzel, 2012, 2013; Rifenburg, 2012). Another part is likely due to the prevalence of non-standard varieties of English among this student group, which has likely led to criticism from teachers over the years regarding "incorrect" language and grammar "mistakes."

Self-reported learning assessment data collected from 165 incoming student-athletes at their freshman or transfer student orientation between the years of 2011-2014 show an interesting diversity of linguistic backgrounds, literacy levels, and English reading and writing confidence. Students were asked "What language(s) is/are spoken in your home?" and "What languages do you speak with your friends?" on the learning assessment questionnaire (see Appendix A). Home languages other than English were reported by 10 percent of incoming student-athletes, with just over one percent reporting that they grew up bilingually, speaking English and another tongue. Despite the high number of local Pidgin speakers as well as African American Vernacular English (AAVE) speakers from the U.S. mainland among the student-athlete population, only seven percent of incoming students report that they speak a non-standard English variety (e.g., "Pidgin," or "Ebonics"). This low number could be due to students' past experiences of negative stereotypes associated with their language variety, reluctance to identify their home language as anything other than Standard English, or lack of language or awareness to describe Pidgin and AAVE as languages other than "English." When incoming football players are considered separately, the number increases slightly to 12 percent, which could be due to the greater number of minority and working class students on the football team or to a greater atmosphere of

openness about academic struggles within this sport since football receives by far the most learning support services for their greater number of “underprepared” students. Students who self-identified as speakers of foreign languages or non-standard dialects of English were significantly more likely to identify as “having difficulty” with academic reading and writing, compared to their (self-identified) standard English speaking and bilingual peers, who were more likely to rate themselves as “excellent” in these same skills.

For many of the underprepared student-athletes served by SAAS, both in football and other sports, the academic requirements of UHM, a four-year university, come as a shock. For some, this is the first time they have been asked to hold themselves to a high academic standard, and in the face of overwhelming requirements, students may lose even more confidence and doubt their ability to keep their GPA up without cheating. The writing tutors assigned to work with these students face many challenges, including developing students’ writing confidence and “student” (vs. “athlete”) identities, while at the same time scaffolding academic literacy development and navigating SAAS’s and students’ sometimes conflicting expectations of how much and what kind of writing help they should give in this particular “contact zone” (Wolff, 2000).

## THE CURRENT STUDY

### *Framework*

This study adopts a view of university-level academic writing as a discourse community that novice (“underprepared”) students gain access to through socialization with writing tutor “expert” members of this community. Some of these “underprepared” students may in fact be Gee’s (2004) “authentic beginners” with regard to academia: those “who have come to learning sites of any sort *without* the sorts of early preparation, pre-alignment in terms of cultural values, and sociocultural resources that more advantaged learners at those sites have” (Gee, 2004, p. 14). From this perspective, academic literacy is not just a matter of learning the language, but of learning the appropriate rhetorical and interpersonal “moves” that are considered appropriate in the academic discourse communities (Bartholomae, 2003; Duff, 2007, 2010; Gee, 2004, 2008). Bartholomae (2003) refers to underprepared students placed in remedial writing courses as “basic writers” who must go through the process of “inventing the university”—learning to speak the language of academics—or at least to “carry off the bluff, since speaking and writing

will most certainly be required long before the skill is ‘learned’” (p. 624). In the athletics context, Gee’s analogy of authentic beginners learning to not only “play the game” but to become agentive members of the discourse by “calling the game” is particularly apt (Gee, 2004).

Alongside this view of students’ socialization into academic discourse communities, I approach tutor-student interactions using an interactional sociolinguistics (IS) framework (Gumperz, 1982, 2001), examining how contextualization cues help tutor and student participants understand meaning and create roles and identities for themselves and each other as novices, experts, and co-learners. Gumperz (1982) defines contextualization cues as “any feature of linguistic form that contributes to the signaling of contextual presuppositions” (p. 131); conversation, therefore, is viewed as an ongoing negotiation in which participants are constantly sending and receiving both verbal and nonverbal signals in order to interpret their own and each others’ roles as well as the nature and purpose of the activity being engaged in. Since writing tutors in SAAS are often purposefully indirect to avoid NCAA liability for giving too much help, Gumperz’s contextualization cues are of particular use in understanding conversational dynamics in this tutoring context.

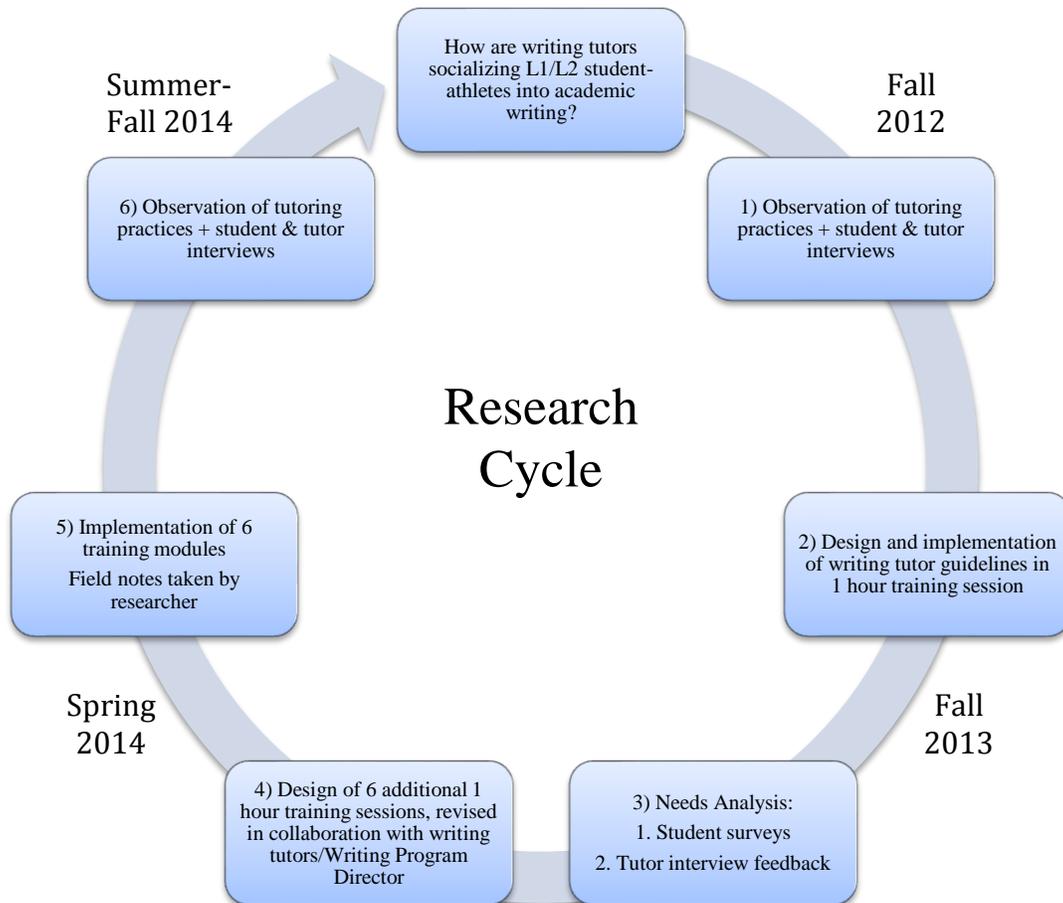
In this paper, I contribute to a body of research investigating contextualization cues in writing conferencing contexts. Since existing SAAS training sessions appeared to be insufficient in providing practical ways for writing tutors to help students without crossing NCAA boundaries, I observed writing conferences with the goal of identifying both successful and unsuccessful ways that tutors were using contextualization cues. My approach was similar to existing IS research investigating writing tutor conferences, which has found that contextualization cues such as conversational turn structure, affiliative overlapping speech, and simultaneous laughter characterized “successful” writing conferences (Thonus, 2002). Through my examination of writing conferencing practices, pausing and turn-taking patterns emerged as key contextualization cues shedding light on both tutor and student roles during writing talk. This finding builds on previous research which has found that ESL students can move from peripheral to active participation in decision-making processes in writing conferences through changes in turn-taking practices (Young & Miller, 2004) and that pauses and validation of student responses are strategies used to encourage student contributions in classroom writing conferences by ESL high school (Gilliland, 2014) and university teachers (Ewert, 2009). Other research has provided examples of writing tutors using similar strategies of pausing in tandem

with specific body language to form a “verbal blank” for the student to fill in (Thompson, 2009) or using “designedly incomplete utterances” composed by tutors rephrasing students’ own words as prompts for students to complete (Koshik, 2002).

Based on initial findings of both exemplary and problematic tutoring strategies in the first phase of my study, I designed and implemented a writing tutor training program, after which I continued my observations of writing conferences. This approach allowed me to draw conclusions about changing tutor-student roles and turn-taking patterns before and after the tutor training intervention, completing the research cycle (see Figure 1 below), a component that is missing from current writing center literature. Whereas other studies have only made recommendations for changes in practice, in this study, I will report on the impact of a tutor training program that I designed to effect changes in SAAS’s writing tutor practices.

### *Setting the Stage*

When I entered SAAS in August 2012 as a graduate assistant, the department was in a state of physical detachment that corresponded with the incohesiveness of our writing policies at the time. Due to the renovation of what is now the new NAC, half of the department had been moved into a back hallway of the football coaches’ office, and the other half, myself included, into the second floor of the baseball stadium. Communication between the two department sections occurred mainly in the form of a one-hour staff meeting every Tuesday, making the flow of information somewhat restricted.



*Figure 1:* Research Cycle.

As a former undergraduate peer writing tutor and English as a second language (ESL) writing instructor, I was hired partially for my interest in writing praxis and was asked to open “writing office hours” when student-athletes from all sports could come to me for writing assistance. Though overseeing men’s basketball study hall was my primary responsibility, the lack of organized writing tutors at the time I was hired resulted in advisors asking me to develop suggestions for a writing tutor training program. Through informal conversations with several of the academic advisors within SAAS, several things soon became clear to me: (a) the rules for writing assistance in athletics were stricter than any context I had worked in before; (b) different advisors had different interpretations of what these rules should look like in practice; (c) SAAS tutors and mentors from diverse disciplines were giving wildly differing levels/types of writing help to their students; and (d) as the new in-house writing “expert,” I was expected to clarify these practices.

***Stage 1: Observations and Interviews (Nov. – Dec. 2012)***

In November 2012, I began to reach out to SAAS tutors working with writing, enlisting writing tutor/student-athlete pairs who would be willing to let me observe and audio-record their writing conferences to help me develop an understanding of what strategies writing tutors were currently using to improve their students' writing skills. I also asked both students and tutors to participate in short post-conference interviews regarding their expectations and perceived roles in these conferences (see Appendices B and C for tutor and student interview guides and consent form). After observations and interviews, I listened to each audio-recording several times, taking detailed notes in a separate document. Based on these notes, I transcribed observational excerpts where tutors either conformed to or transgressed institutional policies set up in tutor training. In the interview data, I transcribed excerpts where conflict between tutor, student, and institutional expectations was explicitly addressed. After transcription excerpts were sorted into two distinct tutoring patterns, which are explained in more detail below.

During these observations, I was in a unique position as a researcher: I was both “novice” (as a newcomer in this context compared to veteran writing tutors) and “expert” (as an older graduate student who was being transitioned into a supervisory role over the department’s predominantly undergraduate tutoring and mentoring staff). During this period, I conducted two formal writing conference observations, two writing tutor interviews, and one freshman student-athlete interview (see Table 1).

Table 1

***Fall 2012 Writing Conference Observations***

	Writing Tutors	Post-interview?	Students	Post-interview?
Fall 2012 Writing Conference Observations	<b>Crystal</b> , L1-English (mainland), Senior	<b>X</b>	<b>Chris</b> , L1-English (mainland), Freshman	<b>X</b>
	<b>Kayla</b> , L1-English (local Pidgin), Senior	<b>X</b>	<b>Ashley</b> , L1-English (local Pidgin), Freshman	

I will summarize the results of these observations and interviews in this section, attempting to shed light on the following research questions:

1. How do writing tutors and freshman students use turn taking and pausing cues to define their roles as experts or novices in writing conferences?
2. How do tutors' and students' emerging roles in writing conference interactions support or detract from students' socialization into academic literacy practices?

Several patterns regarding these questions emerged from my initial data: (a) When tutors construct themselves as holders of academic knowledge (“experts”), they inhabit the role of “co-author” and use pauses in writing conferences to compose phrases before sharing them with students; and (b) When students construct themselves as holders of academic knowledge, students inhabit the “author” role alone and use interactional pauses to compose answers to questions tutors have posed or to revise phrases in their writing. Both patterns resulted in frustrations and/or conflicting expectations: in Pattern 1, tutors violated SAAS’s institutional expectation of “not giving student’s words,” and in Pattern 2, tutors and students were both frustrated at not being able to give/receive enough help.

***Pattern 1: Tutors as “experts” and co-composers.*** Pattern 1 is visible in Excerpts 1 and 2, below. In Excerpt 1, the tutor (Kayla)<sup>1</sup>, a senior in geology and geophysics, aligns herself with the scientific community with her use of the pronoun *we* in line 1: scientists, including Kayla, would use the word *primary* instead of *main*. Kayla’s phrasing (“we usually say”) implies a general state of knowledge about science that Ashley does not have, as opposed to a piece of advice (“we should say”). By identifying the student’s word choice as non-scientific, the tutor implies that the student (Ashley) does not know how to write things “how a scientist says them” (line 7), which has the effect of treating Ashley as a non-member of the scientific community. Ashley participates in this framing of herself as an outsider to the science community, saying “I’m bad at scientific writing” in line 5. By aligning herself as “bad” in this sense, the student constructs herself as someone who does not have scientific knowledge.

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<sup>1</sup> All tutor and student-athlete names are pseudonyms.

## Excerpt 1: “I’m bad at scientific writing”

1 K: so instead of "the main" we usually say "primary"  
 2 A: okay ((writing on paper))  
 3 K: I should like make a list one of these days (.) [things-  
 4 A: [that would be  
 5 really helpful (.) cus I'm [bad at scientific writing  
 6 K: [things you (.) normally want to say and then how a scientist says them  
 7 (.)

In Excerpt 2, the tutor continues to position herself as an expert on scientific writing during a discussion of young (“juvenile”) fish and their breathing practices. In this excerpt, pauses emerged as a key contextualization cue where either student processing/writing or tutor processing/writing could take place.

## Excerpt 2: “you will wanna use the technical term”

1 K: ((reading student's paper aloud)) "juveniles are not able to hold their breath as well as the  
 2 adults" (.) so hold their breath is really cute cuz it makes us understand it as humans  
 3 A: but he ((the professor)) d- wouldn't like that  
 4 K: but yeah he probably wouldn't like that (.) so you (.) will wanna use the technical term for  
 5 what juveniles do (.) which would be like (3.0) "they (6.0) they (.) decrease the rate at  
 6 which they (3.0) bring in oxygen" or something (.) and then you can- can just put like  
 7 y'know "↑comma similar to how humans hold their breath" or something.  
 8 A: okay ((pulling paper towards herself and writing))  
 9 K: so then you can draw a similarity to humans holding their breath because it makes sense and  
 10 it makes more sense to me to read that rather than "decreasing the oxygen rate or  
 11 something that they bring in,"  
 12 A: okay ((writing on her paper)) (6.0) "decrease the oxygen rate"?  
 13 K: or like- the- "decrease the rate at which they bring in oxygen" or something (.) something  
 14 along those lines (5.0) but the idea is that you (0.5) use more technical language

In line 7, Kayla is the one who determines whether the student’s writing makes sense. As a result of this positioning, both Ashley and Kayla interpret silences within the writing conference as opportunities for the tutor to reformulate the student’s words into “the words that scientists like to hear,” as Kayla later explained in her individual post-observation interview (see Excerpt 3, lines 2-3). In line 2, Ashley chooses not to interject during any of the extended pauses in the tutor’s turn, apparently interpreting these pauses as time for Kayla, not herself, to verbally revise the sentence. Rather than using these silences to prompt the student to decide what “the technical term for what juveniles do” (line 1) is, Kayla’s provision of “scientific” phrasing for Ashley to copy down (as the student does in lines 5 and 9) appears to be established practice for this tutor-student pair. Later, extended pauses (in lines 9 and 11) become opportunities for the student to write down what the tutor has said in lines 2-4 (and then repeated in line 10). In lines 10-11, Kayla attempts to soften the authoritative stance she has taken by providing the student with the “technical” words, trailing off with the phrase “or something (.) something along those lines [...],” perhaps reflecting the tutor’s awareness that she is violating institutional expectations in front of me, a supervisor. Kayla addressed her crossing of institutionally defined boundaries in her individual interview, shown in Excerpt 3.

Excerpt 3: “they say that you can’t give people words”

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 | K: so (2.0) it's a little bit strange for me cus (2.0) technically like in tutor training meetings and |
| 2 | stuff they say that you can't give people <u>words</u> except (1.0) <you don't kno::w> the words       |
| 3 | that scientists like to ↑hear until you have somebody tell you.  |
| 4 | P: right   |
| 5 | K: that <u>this</u> is the word you should use   |

For Kayla, the “technical” rules outlined in tutor training meetings are “a little bit strange” (line 1) and do not match up with her practical experiences of what students need help with. As a result of this mismatch, Ashley chooses not to align her tutoring praxis with the idea that “you can’t give people words” (line 2), as her tutor trainers would prefer. Despite this tutor’s good intentions to help Ashley get “a little bit better with the scientific language” (individual interview), she does not give her student the time to think about how to reformulate her own

sentences, and the student, willing or not, is pressured into assimilating into the tutor’s suggested writing style.

**Pattern 2: Tutors as “expert guides,” students as sole composers.** Pattern 2 emerged from my second initial writing conference observation, shown in Excerpts 4 to 6. In contrast to the use of extended pauses in Excerpt 2 above, in this writing conference silences were almost always used as an opportunity for the student (Chris) to edit his own writing. This is visible in Excerpt 4: the tutor (Crystal) prompts the student to see if he has used any “non-academic wording” in his thesis (lines 1-2), and an extended pause follows in line 4, which Chris uses to quietly highlight the “non-academic” words and insert new words that he has judged as more academic. Crystal follows up with a positive evaluation in line 4, which may indicate that this student and tutor pair share a common understanding of what constitutes academic language. Here, the student is constructed as a holder of academic writing knowledge, and the tutor gives him full agency in revising his own paper.

Excerpt 4: “any non-academic wording”

1	Cr: okay so (.) read your thesis statement and see if there's any non-academic (.) wording in
2	there that is <u>not</u> necessary
3	(8.0) ((student silently highlights some words and types))
4	Cr: ↑the::re we go

As this tutoring session progressed, there were several long instances of silence where Chris wrote independently, occasionally pausing and sighing—which can be understood as an implicit request for help. However, these cues were often not responded to by Crystal, and the student was left to revise the bulk of his paper on his own. This gap in student versus tutor expectations led the student to express his frustration towards the end of the conference, as shown in lines 2-3 of Excerpt 5, which occurred during a conversation I was a part of about a future take-home essay final exam on which the student would not be able to receive help from his writing tutor.

## Excerpt 5: “she just sits here”

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 | P: just because take-home finals are [different                      |
| 2 | Ch: [even if they are it's like she doesn't help me anyways (.) like |
| 3 | she just sits here and tells me what to remember                     |
| 4 | Cr: I just sit here and look pretty ((tutor laughs))                 |

The student’s manner is non-accusatory and perhaps even joking – as is the tutor’s response in line 4, in which she aligns herself with the student’s statement that “she just sits here” (line 3). However, the tutor’s laughter in this excerpt does not negate both the student’s and the tutor’s apparent frustrations at the lack of tutoring support in this scenario. It is worth noting that Chris does not join in with Crystal’s laughter, which could signal frustration with what he has perceived as his tutor’s passivity. Crystal addresses the conflicting expectations of students and the institution regarding her role as a writing tutor in her individual post-conference interview, shown in Excerpt 6.

## Excerpt 6: “why won’t you help me?”

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 1  | Cr: I think they all think (1.5) like Chris every student that I've helped with writing- they always              |
| 2  | ex- they think (.) that I'm there to do more than I'm actually allowed to do (.) like I don't                     |
| 3  | think they realize that I really like- I can't touch the computer   |
| 4  | P: yeah   |
| 5  | Cr: I can't do this like I will get ↑fired people will get in trouble like it is <u>not</u> okay and I think that |
| 6  | they don't ↑realize that  |
| 7  | P: mhmm   |
| 8  | Cr: and so then they're like "well why can't you help me" like "oh you don't like me" and it's like               |
| 9  | (1.0) "no you're- you're ↑nice, good job" but it's like you can't- (.) so like I- they're- I                      |
| 10 | think (.) um it's gotten better with Chris cuz I think- I think well at one point he was like                     |
| 11 | "well why won't you help me" and I'm like "I <u>can't</u> " (.) and so now I think like once they                 |
| 12 | know how much I can help I'm more of like (.) "I'm the map" it's like "you:: just go"                             |
| 13 | P: mhmm   |
| 14 | Cr: and so (2.0) I think that's the biggest thing is they want more help than I can actually give                 |

In line 5, Crystal takes on the voice of the institution: she has been told in tutor training that “I can’t do this ((touch the computer)) [...] it is not okay,” and because of her adherence to this institutional policy, she has apparently experienced frustration from “every student that I’ve helped with writing” (line 1). These students are given a choral voice in line 8: “they’re like ‘well why can’t you help me,’” which Crystal uses to lead into brief anecdote in which things have gotten better with Chris once she explicitly told him what she was not allowed to do (lines 8-11).

Both Kayla and Crystal experienced some frustration with the writing tutor rules laid down in tutor training: Kayla found that these rules were not practical and chose to ignore them, putting herself and her student at risk and taking away her students’ writing agency, and Crystal followed these rules and found that her students were continuously frustrated at what they perceived as her unwillingness to help them. Both of these situations demonstrated that tutor training sessions were not achieving their goal of helping tutors develop strategies to socialize their students into academic writing practices while remaining within the boundaries imposed on SAAS by the NCAA. After noticing these patterns throughout tutors’ work, I realized that we needed to institutionalize changes to our writing support structure and tutor training program.

### ***Stages 2 & 3: Training Development and Needs Analysis (Oct. 2013 – Dec. 2013)***

***Training development.*** In an attempt to improve this state of conflict between student, tutor, and institutional expectations and to give tutors the tools they needed to help students within institutional boundaries, I assisted in the restructuring of SAAS’s writing program beginning in fall 2013. Rather than asking tutors with no writing tutoring background or interest in writing to work with students’ writing (as was previously the case), a small group of six tutors were selected as writing tutors, based either on their existing expertise in writing tutoring/teaching or on their interest in developing this expertise. Based on my above observations, as well as on my own experiences as a writing tutor during the 2012-13 academic year and many informal conversations with both student-athletes and SAAS advisors, I created SAAS’s first “Writing Tutor Handbook,” which in Fall 2013 was adapted into a PowerPoint implemented as a one hour interactive training session for the six new writing tutors. The training session included real-life examples taken from observational data collected in Fall 2012 of both “good” and “bad” tutoring strategies, provided practical strategies of how scaffold students’ academic writing abilities and

confidence while remaining within institutional boundaries, and engaged writing tutors in a conversation about *why* these policies existed. After this initial training session, these writing tutors participated in monthly “troubleshooting” sessions with myself and the director of SAAS’s writing program throughout the Fall Semester 2013, in which we asked them to dissect both positive and negative writing tutoring experiences they had and collectively solve any conflicts that arose.

**Needs analysis.** Beginning in October 2013, students requesting writing assistance were referred to these writing tutors independently of their regular subject content tutors, and at the same time an optional student survey was implemented in order to gain information on what kinds of writing help students were looking for, as well as to give students a chance to assess the writing help they received (see Appendix D for survey). The survey was administered electronically via a computer that students could access as they were leaving the center. Students were asked to participate in the survey after they had finished their writing conference and were not given any time limit for completing it. The survey consisted of eight open-ended and 20 close-ended questions, including four Likert scales. Survey questions were in three major sections: students’ background information, students’ writing backgrounds, and students’ experiences in the SAAS Writing Center. Students were asked questions regarding their language background(s), their feelings and confidence regarding writing, what kind of help they wanted to receive from SAAS writing tutors, and their level of satisfaction with the help they received.

A total of twelve students, most of whom were freshmen (five students, 41.7%) and had a GPA below 3.0 (eight students, 66.7%), responded to this survey between October-December 2013. All but one student (who selected Serbian) identified English as their first language, which, since it does not reflect the linguistically diverse population of students served by SAAS, might be an indicator that native English speaking students were more willing to participate in a somewhat lengthy English language survey (attempts to address these limitations were made in the spring 2014 revision of the survey). Students used words such as “average,” “not good,” “struggle with research papers,” and “need improvements” to describe their writing abilities and when asked to describe their writing weaknesses wrote phrases such as “starting the paper,” “brainstorming,” “how to put my thoughts down on paper,” “organization,” and “structure,” which seem to indicate that students need the most help with the initial stages of the writing

process: brainstorming and organizing their ideas. Most students disagreed with the statement “I don’t understand how to complete university writing assignments”; however, the majority of students also disagreed with “I feel confident about my writing” and “writing academic essays is easy for me” (see Table 2).

Table 2

*Average Student Perceptions of Writing*

	<i>N</i>	Mean	Mode	Median	Low	High	Range	<i>SD</i>
I enjoy writing.	11	2.45	2	2	1	4	4	0.78
I feel confident about my writing.	11	<b>2.82</b>	3	3	1	4	4	0.72
I have good ideas for my papers.	11	1.91	2	2	1	3	3	0.51
Writing academic essays is easy for me.	11	<b>3.00</b>	3	3	2	4	3	0.60
I know how to find the research sources I need.	10	2.00	2	2	1	3	3	0.45
I know how to cite my research sources (APA, MLA, etc).	11	2.09	2	2	1	3	3	0.67
I dislike writing.	11	2.45	2	2	1	4	4	0.78
I don't understand how to complete university writing assignments.	11	<b>3.09</b>	3	3	3	4	2	0.29
I have trouble organizing my ideas in my writing.	11	2.09	3	2	1	3	3	0.79
I have trouble writing academic essays.	10	2.40	2	2	2	3	2	0.49

*1=strongly agree, 4=strongly disagree*

On the same survey, students rated brainstorming ideas, organizing their ideas, reviewing their papers for organization and clarity, understanding the assignment, and coming up with a thesis as the most important areas they wanted help from their writing tutor on (see Table 3). Finally, when asked “How satisfied are you with the help you received today?”, most students reported they were either “satisfied” or “very satisfied,” with the remaining students selecting “very unsatisfied” but neglecting to comment on the reason for this dissatisfaction (see Table 4).

Table 3

*Students' Perceptions of the Importance of Receiving Writing Help*

	<i>N</i>	Mean	Mode	Median	Low	High	Range	<i>SD</i>
Understanding the assignment	11	<b>3.09</b>	3	3	2	4	3	0.79
Brainstorming ideas	11	<b>3.55</b>	4	4	3	4	2	0.50
Organizing my ideas	11	<b>3.18</b>	3	3	2	4	3	0.72
Coming up with a thesis	11	<b>3.09</b>	3	3	2	4	3	0.79
Making an outline	11	2.91	2	3	2	4	3	0.79
Writing a draft of the paper	11	2.82	2	3	2	4	3	0.83
Expanding what I'd already written	11	3.00	3	3	2	4	3	0.60
Reviewing my paper for organization & clarity	11	<b>3.18</b>	3	3	2	4	3	0.72
Reviewing my paper for grammar/spelling	11	2.82	2	3	2	4	3	0.83
Finding research sources for my paper	11	2.82	2	3	1	4	4	1.03
Formatting my sources in the correct style (APA, MLA, ...)	11	2.64	2	3	1	4	4	0.88

*1=not important at all, 4=extremely important*

Table 4

## Average student satisfaction with writing center help

	<i>N</i>	Mean	Mode	Median	Low	High	Range	<i>SD</i>
How satisfied are you with the help you received today?	11	2.82	4	3	1	4	4	1.19

*1=very unsatisfied, 4=very satisfied*

***Stages 4 & 5: Design and Implementation of Additional Training (Jan. 2014 – May 2014)***

***Design of additional training modules.*** Based on the results of the above student survey, frustrations and occasional judgmental language voiced by tutors during monthly tutor meetings and in individual interviews, and my own concerns about valuing the linguistic knowledge of so-called non-standard English speakers, I developed materials for six additional one-hour writing tutor training sessions to be implemented in the Spring Semester 2014. These training modules were then revised based on concerns about learning disabilities voiced by SAAS's writing

program director. The finalized writing training modules as implemented in spring 2014 are shown in Table 5 (see Appendix E for an example of training materials).

Table 5

*Summary of Spring Semester 2014 Training Modules*

<b>Training Topic</b>	<b>Description of Materials</b>	<b>Problems Addressed</b>
1. New writing center policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of new writing center hours, location, and sign-up policies</li> <li>• Introduction of new tutor training plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of clear tutoring guidelines and training support for writing tutors</li> </ul>
2. Writing and identity for student-athletes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of writing confidence and role of writing tutors in fostering students' writing confidence</li> <li>• Discussion of strategies to foster writing confidence (e.g., giving positive feedback, complimenting)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low levels of student writing confidence</li> <li>• Lack of confidence building strategies in observed tutoring sessions</li> </ul>
3. Language awareness and non-standard languages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of language bias</li> <li>• Linguistic quiz on "American Football English"</li> <li>• Discussion of tutoring strategies using students' experiences/ linguistic knowledge as resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Judgmental language regarding "proper English" voiced by writing tutors in individual interviews</li> <li>• Low levels of student writing confidence</li> <li>• Lack of valuing students' knowledge in observed tutoring sessions</li> </ul>
4. Breaking down the writing process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of results from student surveys, indicating that most students want help with beginning of writing process</li> <li>• Discussion of tutors' own writing processes and strategies to break down the process for students (i.e., using questions to brainstorm)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student survey results indicating that most students want help with beginning of writing process</li> <li>• Tutor concerns about how to break down the writing process voiced in individual interviews</li> </ul>
5. Ownership and teaching academic English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Viewing of a movie clip showing one example of NCAA consequences for "too much" writing help (Finkel et al., 2013)</li> <li>• Discussion of writing ownership and strategies to support students without taking away students' ownership of their papers (i.e., use of leading questions)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crossing of institutional boundaries in observed tutoring sessions</li> <li>• Tutor uncertainty about permissible question strategies in individual interviews</li> </ul>
6. Working with learning disabilities in writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of how various learning disabilities might impact student writing</li> <li>• Discussion of tutoring strategies to support students who may have learning disabilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concerns voiced by writing program director about tutors encountering student disabilities in writing conferences</li> </ul>

***Implementation of additional training modules.*** The training sessions in Table 5 were implemented every other week beginning in January 2014, with a focus on discussions (both pair discussions between writing tutors and whole group discussions facilitated by myself) oriented

towards developing practical tutoring strategies and goals that writing tutors could put into immediate practice. Most training sessions began with a “troubleshooting” time for tutors to voice any issues arising in their tutoring and to give and receive peer feedback for how to improve their tutoring. Five of six writing tutors were new to SAAS, with one veteran tutor who was in his graduating semester of his master’s degree in English. Of the six tutors, three were undergraduates and three were enrolled in a graduate degree program.

Overall, tutors appeared receptive to tutor training topics and suggestions for practice. Tutors frequently shared stories of student encounters and contributed to a positive and supportive atmosphere in helping each other understand both successful and unsuccessful writing conferences. It was noticeable, however, that new SAAS tutors were much more willing to share and make adjustments to their tutoring practices than the sole veteran tutor, who showed reluctance to attend and participate in writing tutor meetings. This reluctance could be due to this tutor’s greater experience with tutoring writing in SAAS or to a sense that it was unnecessary for him to alter his tutoring practices since he was in his final semester. However, as I was unable to observe this tutor in action, this study cannot report on whether his tutoring practices showed any differences after the implementation of new training sessions.

***Implementation of revised student survey.*** Also in January 2014, I implemented a revised survey as an information-gathering and assessment tool (see Appendix F for survey). In order to increase the return rate, the survey was shortened to a half-page front and back and made mandatory for all students utilizing SAAS’s writing tutors. The results of this survey were uniformly positive; all 28 respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the writing help they received and would benefit from coming back to the writing center again, and only positive comments (i.e., “helped me understand my assignment,” “she help me notice the little things,” “make things clearer and more understanding,” etc.) were left in the open-ended question areas. Perhaps the low number of respondents can help explain this result: students who were satisfied with the help they received may have been more likely to complete and submit their evaluations. Of the students who responded, most wanted help with organizing their ideas (21 students, 75.0%), reviewing grammar (17 students, 60.7%), and brainstorming ideas (16 students, 57.1%). Slightly more than half of these students (15 students, 53.6%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement “I feel confident about my writing.” Nine students (32.1%) named languages other than English (Slovak, Portuguese, German, Russian) as

the first language they learned, and six students of the nineteen who listed English as their first language (31.6%) identified either Pidgin (five students) or Ebonics/African American English (one student) as an additional language. These and other results of this student survey feedback from spring 2014 can be used to further investigate the student population and student needs that SAAS’s writing tutors serve.

**Stage 6: Post-training Observations and Interviews (April – Sept. 2014)**

Beginning in the summer of 2014, following the implementation of both the one-hour initial writing tutor training session in Fall Semester 2013 and the six additional training modules over the course of the Spring Semester 2014, I began observing and interviewing writing conference participants once more, using the same interview protocols that I used for my initial data collected in Stage 1. Over the course of the Summer and Fall Semesters 2014, I observed two different writing tutors, one of whom I observed working with two different students (for a total of three observations) and conducted four follow-up interviews, two with tutors and two with students (see Table 6). Due to time and budget constraints, this data collection was a strategic investigation into patterns from the Fall Semester 2012 data and was not a comprehensive examination of training benefits. Since pausing and turn-taking emerged as key contextualization cues in my initial data, excerpts where these features were notable were transcribed in detail. In listening to and transcribing my data, I also looked for places where tutors aligned with or against the ideas discussed in training sessions, as well as for places of potential conflict between students, tutors, and the institution. After transcribing relevant sections in detail, data were compared to Patterns 1 and 2, explored above, to see whether any new patterns had emerged.

Table 6  
*April-September 2014 Writing Conference Observations*

	Writing Tutors	Post-interview?	Students	Post-interview?
Summer-Fall Semesters 2014	<b>Robyn</b> , L1-English (some local Pidgin), Graduate student	<b>X</b>	<b>Sefa</b> , L1-Samoan, Freshman	<b>X</b>
			<b>Britney</b> , L1-English (AAVE), Freshman	<b>X</b>
Writing Conference Observations	<b>Megan</b> , L1-English (mainland), Senior	<b>X</b>	<b>Amanda</b> , L1-English (mainland), Freshman	

The patterns that emerged from these later observations were distinct from the initial patterns in several ways. First, Pattern 1, wherein tutors use pauses to compose and then share sentences for their tutees, was completely absent, perhaps as a result of clearer articulation of institutional expectations and strategies to work within these expectations in writing training sessions. Pattern 2 could still be observed, as in Excerpt 7 below, which took place in a conference between Megan and Amanda. In line 1 of Excerpt 7, Amanda makes an explicit request for Megan, her tutor, to tell her how she should change the wording in her thesis statement. Rather than enter into a co-authoring role by making word choice directives, Megan responds with additional prompting in lines 3, 5, and 7-9. The tutor's questions the student's own intuitions with the phrases "do you feel like that would add meaning" (line 7) and "do you think you should add that" (line 9), shifting responsibility for authorship back to Amanda. An extended pause follows Megan's turn (line 9), which the student apparently uses to mentally recompose her sentence, after which she makes use of another extended pause (line 10) to change the sentence on her laptop. Similar to Excerpt 4 between Crystal and Chris, the tutor observes what the student has written and offers a positive evaluation, as in line 11 of Excerpt 7, a move which can be interpreted as supporting students' writing confidence and future independence. However, unlike Crystal in Excerpt 4, Megan offers more guidance prior to the student's typing turn, which could be due to her comfort with using guiding questions in writing conferences, which we discussed several times in training (see Table 5).

Excerpt 7: “do you think you should add that?”

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 1  | A: would I say “earlier in” like “2014” and then say “which today?” o:r (.) would I just take out |
| 2  | the “today” and say like (1.0) u::m (1.0)   |
| 3  | M: what do you think would sound more like kinda gets [the idea across                            |
| 4  | A: [yeah  |
| 5  | M: cuz you wanna kee::p your paper to the point   |
| 6  | A: mm hmm   |
| 7  | M: and so do you feel like that would add meaning or take away meaning when you say you           |
| 8  | know the “today” part (.) you think if you put in the year it still gets the idea across? (.) or  |
| 9  | do you think you should add that (14.0)   |
| 10 | A: okay (.) u::m (13.0) ((S typing on her laptop))  |
| 11 | M: mm okay (.) nice   |

The absence of Pattern 1 and variance on Pattern 2 observed in these later writing conferences may be explained by the implementation of writing training sessions focused on NCAA consequences for too much help, writing ownership, and the use of appropriate leading questions in order to give needed guidance while refraining from the co-authoring moves seen in Pattern 1 (see training topic five in Table 5). These training discussions may have contributed to Megan’s choice to use leading questions rather than directly answering the student’s question about wording in lines 1-2 of Excerpt 7. Megan’s positive reinforcement in line 11 also aligns with discussions of the importance of positive feedback in writing tutor training sessions (see training topic two in Table 5).

***Pattern 3: Relocating the role of “expert guides” onto students.*** In addition, a new turn-taking pattern emerged from my later observations: in Pattern 3, tutors reject the role of “expert,” positioning students as knowledgeable and themselves as co-learners through declining turn-taking opportunities and providing students with either explicit or implicit encouragement. This was distinct from Pattern 2 in that tutors treated students, rather than themselves, as guiders of the session, frequently asking students to provide necessary information that tutors either did not have access to (i.e., from course readings) or chose not to provide (i.e., from assignment guidelines). The first instance of Pattern 3 comes from Robyn, a graduate student writing tutor, and her Samoan tutee, Sefa, shown in Excerpt 8.

Excerpt 8: “that was just basically about it”

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | R: what other kinda things came up  |
| 2 | S: ((breathy exhale)) other things came up such as (3.0) ((S flipping pages of his article)) well |
| 3 | that was just basically about it (.) it was just (1.0) they were talking about the work           |
| 4 | environme::nt   |
| 5 | R: okay what about the work environment   |
| 6 | S: u::m there were some companies [...] ((continues reading from article))                        |

Responding to Robyn’s request in line 1 for other things that “came up” in the text he needed to write about, Sefa initially is reluctant to contribute this information. In line 3, Sefa uses “just” several times, diminishing the authority of what he is about to say, and pauses twice, possibly looking for the information in his text or waiting for Robyn to provide it. However, Robyn remains silent during these pauses, providing tacit encouragement for Sefa to keep going, which he eventually does: “they were talking about the work environment” (lines 3-4). Similarly, in Excerpt 9 Sefa’s hesitation and Robyn’s encouragement become more explicit.

Excerpt 9: “keep going”

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 | S: I guess you know Europeans are like – kinda like – how do you say – like (3.0) u::m (2.0)       |
| 2 | being more acculturized to American ways? (1.0) do you know what I mean?                           |
| 3 | R: (1.0) keep going  |
| 4 | S: (.) it’s like they’re – they’re trying (.) ah how do I say (.) they’re trying to step more into |
| 5 | American culture than their own culture in a way (19.0) ((R writing S’s words on the               |
| 6 | board))  |

In lines 1-2, the student’s several longer pauses, accompanied by rising intonation and phrases such as “how do you say” (line 1) and “do you know what I mean” (line 2), are markers of his hesitation and explicit requests for encouragement. Rather than interrupting Sefa during these pauses, Robyn waits for him to finish his thought and gives explicit encouragement in line 3: “keep going,” which results in the student rephrasing his thoughts in lines 4-5. This is followed by a long pause during which Robyn writes her own paraphrase of the student’s words on the whiteboard: “Europeans trying to step into Am Cul instead of own.” Writing students’

words on the whiteboard, a common practice for this writing tutor, provides a visual affirmation that what the student has said is worth remembering for his paper. This practice is distinct from Pattern 1, where tutors composed exact words for students and students wrote down tutors' words, since here the tutor is merely providing written notes of what the student has said (every word in the tutor's whiteboard notes was originally uttered by the student in Excerpt 9).

This increased emphasis on encouraging students to increase their agency in writing conferences can be partially explained by a tutoring practice that became salient in my Summer and Fall Semesters 2014 observations: tutors frequently complimented students' writing explicitly, a topic which was explicitly addressed in the second writing training introduced above (see Table 5). This pattern, which was absent in my initial observations in Fall Semester 2012, is visible in Excerpt 10 below, an exchange between Megan and Amanda that occurred near the end of their conference.

Excerpt 10: "it's actually a really good paper"

1	M: so::
2	A: ↑okay
3	M: but ↑I think it's actually a really good paper [you have like all those parts
4	A: [o::h \$thank you\$
5	M: yeah do::n't worry ((A laughing)) like I- you covered all these parts that you're supposed to
6	in your paper (.) and it flowed and made sense to me u::m and you took parts from her
7	article and put it in so that was good and you <u>cited</u> it correctly

In Excerpt 10, Megan attempts to end the conference on a positive note, complimenting the student's overall paper (in line 3) as well as specific elements of the paper (e.g., "it flowed") in lines 5-7. The student seems to accept the compliment, although her laughing speech (line 4) may indicate some discomfort with the compliment or lingering insecurities about her paper. A similar pattern of reassurance/complimenting is found in Robyn's conferences with Sefa, shown in Excerpt 11.

Excerpt 11: “What do you know right now?”

- 1 R: so what do you- what do you already know about this from your experiences growing up?  
 2 what are some ways of controlling deviance?  
 3 S: you mean what I know about the topic right now?  
 4 R: ↑yeah (.) what do you know::w right now? I mean (.) Sefa you've got a lot of experience [...]²  
 5 What are some of the (2.0) u::h (.) like institutions or some of the (.) people <that  
 6 control deviance> (.) in society (2.0)  
 7 S: for example, football? (.)  
 8 R: that could be [one. [okay  
 9 S: [the football team? [or coaches  
 10 R: okay↑  
 11 S: yeah (.) and probably your teammates  
 12 [...]  
 13 R: right (.) good (.) okay (.) see? you already know::w (.) a lot about the topic (.) right? so  
 14 remember before you go to read something (.) <what do you already> know?

In Excerpt 11, Robyn frequently makes statements that value Sefa's experience (line 4) and which highlight his knowledge of the topic (line 13), seemingly to encourage him to value the contributions that his own knowledge and life experiences can bring to his academic literacy. Additionally, Robyn's back channeling (lines 8 and 10) and rising intonation (line 10) show acceptance and positive evaluation of the student's choice to use his own knowledge of “controlling deviance” in the context of his sport, football. In line 8, Robyn ratifies Sefa's contribution while at the same time hinting that he needs to explain his idea more fully. Similarly, in line 10 Robyn's back channeling encourages Sefa's train of thought while her rising pitch yields the floor and asks him to contribute more.

Given these observations, it was not surprising that both Megan and Robyn explicitly referred to building their students' confidence when asked to describe their roles as writing tutors in their individual interviews (unlike my observations of Kayla and Crystal, in which neither complimenting nor confidence building was explicitly addressed). Excerpt 12 is taken from my

<sup>2</sup> Personally identifying information has been removed from the transcript.

interview with Robyn, in which I specifically asked her to explain her purpose for complimenting Sefa during her conferences.

Excerpt 12: “to make him realize he’s smart”

- |    |    |  |
|----|----|--|
| 1  | P: | you:: >say a lot of things< like “you have a lot of experience” (.) “you know a lot about        |
| 2  |    | this” to Sefa (.) so what is the purpose of that.  |
| 3  | R: | u::h purpose of that is to make him ↑realize he’s- he’s <u>smart</u> (.) he knows stuff (.) he’s |
| 4  |    | got stuff to bring to the table I think that’s the problem with a lot of these kids they         |
| 5  |    | feel dumb (.) they never did well in school (.) and they feel like they don’t bring              |
| 6  |    | anything to the ↑table (.) when they ↑do (.) you got great experiences you know,                 |
| 7  |    | FAMR ((Family Resources)) you know he’s a dad, he has a kid [...] playing on a team              |
| 8  |    | (.) growing up (.) you know being a- being a person (.) you have stuff to bring so I             |
| 9  |    | want him to remember that he:: brings things to the table.                                       |
| 10 | P: | and what effect are you hoping that that has on him?   |
| 11 | R: | improves his confidence.   |

In line 3 of Excerpt 12, Robyn emphasizes the words “realize” (with her rising intonation) and “smart” (with accenting), explaining in lines 4-8 her stance that Sefa is not currently confident in his (academic) intelligence, and needs to be reminded that “he brings things to the table” (line 9). When I directly ask Robyn to explain her purpose for this positioning of Sefa (line 10), she explicitly states that she hopes her affirmation of Sefa’s knowledge base “improves his confidence” (line 11). This perspective towards improving students confidence, especially in students who “never did well in school” (line 5), indicates that writing tutor training sessions discussing confidence-building and student-athlete identities (see training topics two and three in Table 5) resulted in changed writing tutoring practices. These new practices position students as owners of knowledge about writing and as deserving of praise regarding their successful appropriation of academic writing discourse features such as “citing” and “flow” (lines 6-7 of Excerpt 10 above). In Pattern 3, students are engaged in becoming agentive members of this discourse, learning to “play the game” of academic writing in ways that draw on their own knowledge and lived experiences.

## DISCUSSION

Overall, writing tutors agreed in their individual interviews at the end of the Spring Semester 2014 that they had learned more about the NCAA policies that they were required to abide by, that they had improved their confidence in tutoring students and giving writing advice, and that writing training sessions had been useful. Several tutors remarked that they gave “more specific positive feedback,” were more aware of “how to approach the writing process for different students,” and are “a little bit more patient now” as a result of the new training sessions. Every tutor commented on the NCAA-specific discussion we had in our fifth training session (“ownership and teaching academic English”), indicating hearing a real-world story of the possible consequences that “giving too much help” could have for student-athletes as well as tutors, tutor program advisors, and the tutoring center itself was helpful to understand the reasons why we ask tutors not to “give people words.”

In addition to these tutors’ remarks, qualitative differences between my observed conferences in Fall Semester 2012 and those in Summer and Fall Semesters 2014 indicate that the new writing tutor training sessions implemented in Fall Semester 2013 and Spring Semester 2014 did have at least some of their intended impact. Tutors refrained from co-authoring moves which could take away ownership from students, used strategies such as leading questions and taking notes on what students have said to help students come up with and organize their ideas, and consciously engaged in activities meant to bolster students’ writing confidence—all of which were explicitly discussed in both initial and bi-weekly writing tutor training sessions.

Interestingly, prior to the tutor training intervention, only a few validations of students’ contributions of the kind noticed by Gilliland (2014) in Ms. Chou’s speech were visible in writing tutor talk (see Crystal in Excerpt 4 for one example). However, in post-training observations, frequent explicit positive feedback as well as ongoing ratification of students’ suggestions was visible in every writing conference (see Megan and Robyn in Excerpts 7, 9, 10 and 11). Similar to the pauses in teacher talk that were found in Gilliland (2014) and Ewert (2009), three tutors in this study (Crystal, Megan, and Robyn) also frequently utilized pauses to give students opportunities to contribute. One unique contribution of this study is that in conferences observed between tutors and students with a history of working together (Kayla/Ashley, Crystal/Chris, Robyn/Sefa, and Robyn/Britney) tutors’ and students’ mutual

orientation to the function of pauses suggests that individual tutor-student pairs develop local practices and expectations for who owns writing knowledge and who is responsible for revising the text. For example, in Excerpt 2 Ashley's silence during Kayla's pauses and her eager uptake of Kayla's recommended revisions suggest that the tutor's position as owner of writing knowledge and co-composer of the text is common practice for this tutor-student pair. Contrastingly, in Excerpts 8 and 9, Robyn's silence during Sefa's pauses and Sefa's continued contributions of information (with some encouragement from Robyn) suggest that the student's role as owner of knowledge about the text is also established practice for this student and tutor. This result indicates that it is important for tutors to set clear expectations for students' responsibility to revise their own texts from the very first writing conference. Writing tutor training programs such as the one described here can help by providing clear guidelines for tutors and practical suggestions for how to help students within these guidelines.

The writing tutor training program in this study follows Thonus' (2004) description of tutor training program content: "specific instructions on asking questions, prompting writer reflection, and ensuring that the writer remain in charge of the revision process" (p. 228). However, as Thonus (2004) states, these methods of tutoring assume that "there is a great deal that even novice writers already know" (p. 228) and may not be as effective when working with novice L2 writers. Although Robyn's questioning and encouragement strategies appear to be successful in scaffolding Sefa's skills within the academic writing discourse, since Sefa was the only L2 writer observed in this study it is difficult to draw conclusions about the overall effectiveness of questioning and non-directive tutoring strategies for L2 writers.

### **LIMITATIONS**

Though the steps taken in Figure 1 appeared to have a positive impact, this study has several limitations due to the nature of centers such as SAAS. Firstly, most tutors and mentors employed by SAAS are upperclassmen, and as in any student job, there is a high degree of turnover year to year. Because of this, most of the writing tutors working with SAAS in Fall Semester 2012 had graduated before the implementation of new writing tutor training in Fall Semester 2013, and all of them had graduated before the post-training interviews and observations in Spring and Summer Semesters 2014. Because of this limitation, it is difficult to say how much of the

changes in SAAS writing tutor practices is due to the changes in policy and training, and how much is due to the personalities and tutoring philosophies of the individual writing tutors who were observed.

Secondly, my own position as a supervisor/researcher undoubtedly shaped the interactions that took place both in the writing conferences I observed and in tutors' and students' individual interviews with me. While I did my best to mitigate this effect through emphasizing to tutors that I was not observing in a supervisory capacity, it is nevertheless possible that the tutoring practices I observed do not represent the normal (unsupervised) habits of SAAS's writing tutors.

Finally, the small number of participants (four tutors and five students) in this study make it hard to generalize these findings to other tutoring contexts. Observing more tutor-student pairs engaged in writing conferences, as well as observing the same tutor-student pairings multiple times during the course of training implementation, would have enabled me to chart both writing tutors' and their students' changing participatory patterns in greater detail. However, based on the small number (usually six or less) of writing tutors working at SAAS, and based on tutors' comments to me in their retrospective interviews, the data presented in this paper can be said to be fairly representative of normal tutoring practice for each of these tutors.

## CONCLUSIONS

As with any training program, more could be done to continue to develop SAAS's writing tutors' repertoire of strategies and awareness of their students' needs. Student survey feedback from Fall Semester 2014 have yet to be analyzed, and it remains to be seen whether students' current writing needs will follow the same paths that my initial observations, interviews, and survey collections led me to identify. This project has not reached its conclusion; it will take new shapes as new students and new writing tutors filter through our tutoring center, and as other advisors and graduate assistants in the department inflect their own interpretations of the data on future tutor training curriculums. However, it can be hoped that this cycle of assessing tutoring, identifying student needs, and making adjustments to tutor training will continue and that SAAS's writing tutors' strategic energy directed towards helping their students learn and become confident in the discourse of academic English will have a lasting impression on these students' academic pathways.

This study has several implications for other writing tutoring programs, particularly those working with student-athletes. First, this study raises the issue that all writing tutors need to be trained, since tutors such as Kayla may bring with them beliefs about tutoring writing that are in conflict with institutional policies. Second, it demonstrates that simply presenting policies for writing tutors to follow is not enough, since without concrete and practical strategies for helping students within these guidelines, tutors (such as Kayla and Crystal) may have a hard time finding a balance between student needs and institutional expectations. Finally, this study shows that through close observation of writing conferences, identification of both student, tutor, and institutional needs, and implementation of interactive, discussion-based tutor training sessions designed to meet these needs, qualitative changes in the ways that writing tutors approach students and their writing can be achieved.

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Appendix A: SAAS Learning Assessment Questionnaire



Student-Athlete Academic Services (SAAS) – University of Hawai'i at Mānoa  
**Learning Assessment Questionnaire**

Confidential and Voluntary

Learning difficulties, personal, medical, and/or family problems can compromise your ability to perform well academically and athletically. The staff at the Student-Athlete Academic Services (SAAS) is committed to your academic achievement and wants to assist you in your goal of being a successful student. This form asks questions about your family as well as your medical and educational history in order to identify your academic strengths as well as to recognize potential problem areas that might hinder your ability to perform at the university level. The more information you make available to us, the more academic support and/or referral to appropriate support services we can provide.

The SAAS respects your right to CONFIDENTIALITY. No information about student-athletes will be released to outside parties without your prior WRITTEN consent. However, information may be shared with appropriate personnel within the SAAS when in the best interest of the student.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ SPORT: \_\_\_\_\_ ACADEMIC YEAR: \_\_\_\_\_

**PERSONAL BACKGROUND**

1. What language(s) is/are spoken in your home? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What language(s) do you speak with your friends? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What are your current family responsibilities (i.e., spouse, children, parents, extended family)? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Do you feel your racial/ethnic background ever affected your school life? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, please explain. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Have you ever had any of the following problems? Vision \_\_\_\_\_ Hearing \_\_\_\_\_ Head Injuries \_\_\_\_\_ Serious Illness \_\_\_\_\_ Frequent School Absences \_\_\_\_\_ Sleep Difficulties \_\_\_\_\_ Other Health Issues \_\_\_\_\_ Stuttering/Speech Impediment \_\_\_\_\_  
 Please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

6. When was your last eye exam? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Describe any personal or family issues that may interfere with your school attendance (i.e., church, job, childcare). \_\_\_\_\_

8. Put an "X" at the point that indicates how you prioritize your academic and athletic responsibilities:

Athletics
  Academics

**LEARNING BACKGROUND**

1. On average, how many hours a week do you spend on homework outside of class? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Describe where and how you study best (i.e., w/others, alone, headphones, on the bed, in the library, need quiet, w/snacks). \_\_\_\_\_
3. How do you organize your study time? (Short intervals, cram before test, do two things at once, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

4. What kind of classroom setting do you feel you learn best in? \_\_\_\_\_ Large lecture \_\_\_\_\_ Small class \_\_\_\_\_ Discussion-based Work in groups \_\_\_\_\_ Why? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Did you receive any special academic assistance from your previous school? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Would you like to meet with the Learning Specialist to see if you would be eligible for any accommodations which you have used in the past such as extended test-taking time, note taking services, books on tape, etc.? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ How do you think this would help you? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Regarding school/studying, in what areas do you feel you need the most help? \_\_\_\_\_

8. Please rate your abilities in each of the following areas by placing a check mark in the appropriate box.

	Have Difficulty	Average	Excellent	Comments
Public Speaking				
Listening				
Reading				
Writing				
Spelling				
Math				
Memory				
Study Skills				
Foreign Language				
Computer Skills: Keyboarding/Word Processing Spreadsheets/Excel				

**READING**

1. Do you experience frustration when reading? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, please explain what happens when you read: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Are you comfortable reading out loud? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

3. Rate yourself in the following areas:

	Have Difficulty	Average	Excellent	Comments
Understanding what you read				
Finding the main idea				
Summarizing information				
Reading & using maps/graphs				
Remembering what you read				
Reading speed				
Vocabulary/Pronunciation				
Taking notes when reading				

3. Describe any strategies or support you have used in the past that have helped you academically (e.g., planners, calendars, organizers, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Were they successful? \_\_\_\_\_

**GENERAL AREAS**

1. In regards to school situations, please rate yourself in the following areas by checking the appropriate box:

	Low	Average	High	Comments
Motivation				
Planning ahead				
Interest in personal growth				
Cooperation with school staff/authority figures				
Self Confidence				
Being on time				
Organization				

2. Check any of the following that have presented difficulties in your test-taking experience:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Anxiety \_\_\_\_\_ Not enough time \_\_\_\_\_ Multiple choice questions
- \_\_\_\_\_ True/False questions \_\_\_\_\_ Matching questions \_\_\_\_\_ Fill-in the blank questions
- \_\_\_\_\_ Short answer \_\_\_\_\_ Long essay \_\_\_\_\_ Calculations/Formulas
- \_\_\_\_\_ Spelling \_\_\_\_\_ Grammar \_\_\_\_\_ Organizing information
- \_\_\_\_\_ Memory \_\_\_\_\_ Resilience \_\_\_\_\_ Difficulty staying focused/ Easily Distracted
- \_\_\_\_\_ Filling out ~~Scopoon~~ \_\_\_\_\_ Understanding the question \_\_\_\_\_  
(bubbling in answers)

3. Would you like more information on the counseling services available on campus? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No  
 Concerns: \_\_\_\_\_ Anxiety \_\_\_\_\_ Homesickness \_\_\_\_\_ Adjustment Issue \_\_\_\_\_ Self-esteem  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Sadness/Depression \_\_\_\_\_ Body Image \_\_\_\_\_ Substance Use \_\_\_\_\_ Grief  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Anger/Conflict Management \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship Issues \_\_\_\_\_ Personal Identity \_\_\_\_\_ Other

4. Would you like to meet with an Advisor/Learning Specialist about any difficulties/concerns in studying you feel you may have?  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No If yes, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

5. What kinds of academic support would be most helpful to your success in college? (Mentor, tutor, study group, study skill instruction, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

6. What else would you like us to know about you? \_\_\_\_\_

4. In your previous school, did you have reading assignments to do outside of class? (Yes / No) Did you read them? (Yes / No) Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Do you like to read? \_\_\_\_\_ Have you read a novel on your own? \_\_\_\_\_ Describe the kinds of reading you do outside of school (nonfiction, fiction, magazines, newspapers, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

**MATH**

1. Place a check in front of any math skill(s) that you have difficulty with:  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Math Operations (Addition/Subtraction/Multiplication/Division) \_\_\_\_\_ Algebra  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Word Problems \_\_\_\_\_ Geometry \_\_\_\_\_ Time  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Money \_\_\_\_\_ Measurement \_\_\_\_\_ Fractions/Decimals
2. Do you have difficulty: Sequencing the steps of a math task? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No  
 Showing your work? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

**EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE**

1. Rate yourself in the following areas:

	Have Difficulty	Average	Excellent	Comments
Organizing and expressing your thoughts and ideas				
Expressing your emotions				
Retelling information you've read, seen or heard				
Talking in front of a group				

2. How do you express yourself most effectively? \_\_\_\_\_ Writing \_\_\_\_\_ Speaking \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_
3. Have your English speaking or writing skills ever negatively affected your school performance? \_\_\_\_\_ How? \_\_\_\_\_

**LEARNING STYLE**

1. Rate yourself in the following areas:

	Have Difficulty	Average	Excellent	Comments
Comprehending verbal information (such as when listening to a lecture)				
Correctly understanding what people mean				
Memorizing material (i.e. numbers, dates, names, factual information)				
Remembering details				

2. Do you have difficulty with directions such as:
- a. Left and right: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No
  - b. Verbal instructions: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No
  - c. North, South, East, West or ~~Scopoon~~ Diamond Head, ~~Scopoon~~ \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

## **Appendix B: Post-Observation Interview Guide**

**Research Project Title:** Perspectives on Writing Conferences for Academically Underprepared Student Athletes

**Primary researcher:** Pamela Stacey

### **Interview Questions for Freshman Student Athlete Participants:**

1. How was this writing conference successful or unsuccessful? Why?
2. Before this session, how did you feel about the paper you are working on now?
3. How do you feel about the paper now?
4. Do you enjoy writing? Why/why not?
5. What is the best thing you have ever written? What made it good?
6. What do you think your role is in writing conferences?
7. What do you think your tutor's role is in writing conferences?
8. What do you want your tutor to do in writing conferences?
9. What was the most helpful thing your tutor did in this session?
10. In this session, were there any moments where you felt your tutor wanted you to do something you did not want to do? If yes, how did you negotiate?

### **Interview Questions for Writing Tutors:**

1. How was this writing conference successful or unsuccessful? Why?
2. What do you think your role is in writing conferences?
3. What do you think your student's role is in writing conferences?
4. What do you want your student to do when they come to writing conferences?
5. What strategies do you use to help students with their writing?
6. What strategies do you use to boost your students' confidence about their writing?
7. In this session, were there any moments where you felt your student wanted you to do something you did not want to do? If yes, how did you negotiate?

## Appendix C: Observation & Interview Consent Form

research participant, in this project, you can contact the University of Hawai'i, Human Studies Program, by phone at (808) 956-5007 or by e-mail at [uhirfb@hawaii.edu](mailto:uhirfb@hawaii.edu).

Please keep the prior portion of this consent form for your records.  
If you agree to participate in this project, please sign the following signature portion of this consent form and return it to Pamela Stacey.

-----  
Tear or cut here  
-----

**Signature(s) for Consent:**

- I agree to participate in the research project entitled, *Perspectives on Reading and Writing Conferences for Underprepared Student Athletes*. I understand that I can change my mind about participating in this project, at any time, by notifying the researcher.
- I agree to be observed and audio-recorded for one tutoring session, as well as to be only audio-recorded during additional tutoring sessions.
- I agree to participate in a short (10-20 minute) interview regarding my writing and reading background and the content of the observed tutoring session(s).

**Your Name (Print):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Your Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**University of Hawai'i at Mānoa**

**Consent to Participate in Research Project:**  
*Perspectives on Reading & Writing Conferences for Underprepared Student Athletes*

My name is Pamela Stacey, and I am a graduate student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UH), in Second Language Studies Department. As part of my studies, I am conducting research on perspectives of tutors and student athletes towards reading and writing tutor sessions taking place as a part of Student Athletic Academic Services (SAAS). The purpose of the research is to gain insight into effective tutoring strategies in this context. I am asking you to participate in this project because you are a tutor/mentor for SAAS OR because you are a student athlete at UH.

**Project Description - Activities and Time Commitment:** If you participate, I will observe you once during a normally-scheduled tutoring session, for as long as the conference naturally lasts, up to a maximum of one hour. I will record the session and interview using a digital audio-recorder so that I can later type a transcript – a written record of what we talked about during the interview - and analyze the information from the interview. I may also request to audio record future tutoring sessions where I will not be physically present. After the tutoring session, I will ask you to participate in a short interview regarding your writing and reading background, your perspectives on academic reading and writing development, and your perspectives on the observed tutoring sessions. Interview questions will be based on the topic(s) of the observed tutoring sessions. One example of the type of question I will ask is, "How has your reading/writing improved as a result of this tutoring?"

**Benefits and Risks:** A possible benefit of this study is increased awareness of your learning/tutoring strategies. There is a minimal risk of loss of privacy; however, all efforts to prevent this will be taken (see Confidentiality and Privacy). If you are uncomfortable or stressed by any of the interview questions, we will skip the question, take a break, or stop the interview.

**Confidentiality and Privacy:** During this research project, I will keep all data from observations and interviews in a secure location. Only I will have access to the data. All information will be kept confidential. Additionally, any information you request to be removed will be erased and not included in written transcripts. When I report the results of my research project, as well as in my typed transcripts, I will not use your name or any other personally identifying information. Instead, I will use a pseudonym (fake name). If you would like a summary of the findings from my final report, please contact me at the number listed near the end of this consent form.

**Voluntary Participation:** Participation in this research project is voluntary. You can choose freely to participate or not to participate. If you are a student, your decision to participate will have no effect on the academic support services you receive from your tutor or from SAAS. If you are a tutor, your decision to participate will have no effect on your employment with SAAS. In addition, at any point during this project, you can withdraw your permission without any penalty.

**Questions:** If you have any questions about this project, please contact me at via phone (616) 608-2160 or e-mail ([pstacey@hawaii.edu](mailto:pstacey@hawaii.edu)). If you have any questions about your rights as a

Appendix D: Student Survey (Fall 2013)

**SAAS Writing Center Feedback**

**Background Information**

**\* 2. I am a... (check one):**

Male  I prefer not to answer

Female

Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**\* 3. How old are you?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**\* 4. What is your status at UH Manoa?**

Freshman

Sophomore

Junior

Senior

5th year

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**\* 5. What is your current GPA at UH Manoa? (if you are not sure, please estimate.)**

below 2.0

2.0-2.49

2.5-2.99

3.0-3.49

3.5-4.0

I prefer not to answer

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

**\* 6. Do you receive an athletic scholarship from UH?**

Yes

No

I prefer not to answer

**SAAS Writing Center Feedback**

**Informed Consent**

1. **PURPOSE:** The purpose of this survey is to learn more about how student-athletes who use the SAAS Writing Center feel about writing, and what kind of writing help they want/need. This information will be used to improve the quality of the tutoring services in the SAAS Writing Center.

2. **PROCEDURES:** You will be asked questions regarding your background, your feelings about writing in general, and your experience in the SAAS Writing Center today.

3. **DISCOMFORTS AND RISKS:** Since the information you provide will be kept strictly confidential, there are no known risks involved in completing this survey.

4. **BENEFITS:** The findings from this survey are intended to improve SAAS Writing Center services for you and other future students.

5. **DURATION:** It will take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete the survey.

6. **CONFIDENTIALITY:** Your responses to questions will NOT be associated with your name or any other identifying information at any point. Your answers will be combined with the answers of others for analysis and reporting, and your anonymity will be maintained at all times. Only the researcher (Pamela Stacey) will have access to the data.

7. **RIGHT TO ASK QUESTIONS:** Please contact Pamela Stacey (616-710-6509, pstacey@hawaii.edu) with any questions about this survey. If you have questions about your rights as a participant, contact the University of Hawaii Committee on Human Studies (608-538-3955, or email at uhrb@hawaii.edu).

8. **COMPENSATION:** There is no compensation for completing this survey.

9. **VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION:** You are not required to participate in this survey. You can stop your participation at any time.

**\* 1. I have read and understand the above information. I agree to participate in this survey and permit the researcher to use the data as described above.**

Yes

No

**SAAS Writing Center Feedback**

**Writing Background**

\*10. In general, how do you feel about your writing?

\*11. What are your writing strengths?

\*12. What are your writing weaknesses?

\*13. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

I know how to cite my research sources (APA, MLA, etc).	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree	<input type="radio"/>	Agree	<input type="radio"/>	Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly disagree
I don't understand how to complete university writing assignments.	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree	<input type="radio"/>	Agree	<input type="radio"/>	Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly disagree
Writing academic essays is easy for me.	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree	<input type="radio"/>	Agree	<input type="radio"/>	Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly disagree
I feel confident about my writing.	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree	<input type="radio"/>	Agree	<input type="radio"/>	Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly disagree
I enjoy writing.	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree	<input type="radio"/>	Agree	<input type="radio"/>	Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly disagree
I have trouble organizing my ideas in my writing.	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree	<input type="radio"/>	Agree	<input type="radio"/>	Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly disagree
I have trouble writing academic essays.	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree	<input type="radio"/>	Agree	<input type="radio"/>	Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly disagree
I dislike writing.	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree	<input type="radio"/>	Agree	<input type="radio"/>	Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly disagree
I have good ideas for my papers.	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree	<input type="radio"/>	Agree	<input type="radio"/>	Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly disagree
I know how to find the research sources I need.	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree	<input type="radio"/>	Agree	<input type="radio"/>	Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly disagree

Comments:

**SAAS Writing Center Feedback**

\*7. What race and/or ethnicity do you identify with? (Select all that apply.)

White/Caucasian  
 Black/African American  
 Native Hawaiian  
 Samoan  
 American Indian or Alaskan Native  
 Southeast Asian (Filipino, Thai, Singaporean, ...)  
 East Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, ...)  
 Other Asian (please specify in comments box)  
 Other Pacific Islander (please specify in comments box)  
 Hispanic/Latino  
 Middle Eastern  
 I prefer not to answer

Comments/Other race(s) (please specify):

\*8. What is your first language? (Select all that apply.)

English  
 Pidgin (Hawaiian Creole English)  
 Hawaiian  
 Samoan  
 Tagalog  
 Ilokano  
 Marshallese  
 Other (please specify)  
 Chamorro  
 Japanese  
 Korean  
 Chinese  
 Spanish  
 Portuguese  
 German  
 Polish  
 Czech  
 Croatian  
 Russian  
 Hebrew

\*9. Please list ALL the languages in which you can read and write:

**SAAS Writing Center Feedback**  
**Experience in SAAS Writing Center**

**\*14. Is this your first visit to the SAAS Writing Center?**

Yes, and this is my first time receiving writing help from SAAS tutors.  
 Yes, but I've received writing help from individual SAAS tutors before.  
 No, I've been to the Writing Center once before.  
 No, I've been to the Writing Center 2 or more times before.

**\*15. What is the reason for your visit to the SAAS Writing Center today?**

My advisor, GA, or mentor required me to work with a writing tutor.  
 My advisor, GA, or mentor suggested that I work with a writing tutor, but didn't require it.  
 I came to the writing center on my own.

**\*16. Please select the writing tutor you worked with today:**

My writing tutor was:

**\*17. What writing assignment did you work on in the Writing Center today? (select all that apply):**

Short response/reflection paper  
 Essay  
 Blog post  
 Research paper  
 Other (please specify)

Project proposal  
 Creative writing assignment  
 Article/book review

**\*18. What class(es) was the writing assignment for?**

**SAAS Writing Center Feedback**

**\*19. What stage in the writing process were you at before you came to the Writing Center?**

I didn't have a topic.  
 I had a topic, but hadn't started the assignment yet.  
 I had a topic and a few notes written down.  
 I had an outline.  
 I had already written a little of the paper.  
 I had already written most of the paper.  
 I had already finished a draft of the paper.  
 Other (please specify)

**\*20. How important was it to you to receive the following kinds of help from your writing tutor?**

	Not important at all	Not important	Important	Extremely important
Brainstorming ideas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Expanding what I'd already written	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Writing a draft of the paper	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Organizing my ideas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Coming up with a thesis	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reviewing my paper for organization & clarity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Finding research sources for my paper	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Understanding the assignment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reviewing my paper for grammar/spelling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Making an outline	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Formatting my sources in the correct style (APA, MLA, ...)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

**\*21. What other areas did you want writing help with?**

**SAAS Writing Center Feedback**

**\* 25. Please check the likelihood of the following activities:**

	Very unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Very likely
I would benefit from coming back to the SAAS Writing Center again.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would recommend the SAAS Writing Center to a friend or roommate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If there were online tools (for example, brainstorming and self-editing help) available on the SAAS website, I would use these online tools.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

**SAAS Writing Center Feedback**

**\* 22. How much time did your writing tutor spend helping you with the following kinds of help?**

	No time	5-10 minutes	Half of the session	Almost the whole session
Coming up with a thesis	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Expanding what I'd already written	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reviewing my paper for organization & clarity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Organizing my ideas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Making an outline	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Writing a draft of the paper	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Brainstorming ideas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reviewing my paper for grammar/spelling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Finding research sources for my paper	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Understanding the assignment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Formatting my sources in the correct style (APA, MLA, ...)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

**23. What other areas did you work on with your tutor?**

**\* 24. How satisfied are you with the help you received today?**

	Very unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

**SAAS Writing Center Feedback**

**Final Comments**

**26. Do you have any other comments/suggestions about your experience in the Writing Center?**

**\*27. Is this the first time you have filled out this survey?**

Yes, this is the first time.  
 No, I have filled out this survey one or more times before.

**\*28. Would you be willing to provide your email to participate in a short follow-up interview?**

Yes  
 No

If "yes," please provide your email address here:

**SAAS Writing Center Feedback**

**Conclusion**

Thank you very much for your time. Your responses will be used to improve tutoring services available in the SAAS Writing Center.

At this time you may go back and edit your answers if you wish. If you are completely finished, click "done" and you will exit the survey. Once you have exited the survey, you will not be able to change any of your answers.

We appreciate your help in improving our services! Good luck with your studies, and we hope you visit the SAAS Writing Center again.

**Appendix E: Writing Tutor Training Materials**

SAAS Writing Tutor Training #2 – Feb. 6, 2014, 4:30-5:30pm  
**Writing & Identity for Student-Athletes**

Part 1 – Roundtable Discussion:

Q1: How confident are you in your writing? What positive/negative experiences have you had with writing in the past?

Q2: What are some factors that have contributed to your level of writing confidence?

Q3: How confident are your students in their writing? What experiences have they had with writing in the past?

Q4: What are some reasons why student-athletes might not feel confident about their writing?

Part 2 – Pair Discussion:

Q1: What is the role of SAAS in fostering student-athletes' writing development?

Q2: What is your role, as a tutor, in supporting students' writing confidence?

Q3: What strategies can you use to help students identify as “writers” and increase their writing confidence?

Part 3 – Tutoring Strategies to scaffold students' writing confidence:

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

Part 4 – Tutoring Goals for this week:

(1) Ask your students how they feel about their writing and the specific writing assignment, as well as why they feel this way.

(2) Incorporate at least one strategy from today's training to build your students' writing confidence.

SAAS Writing Tutor Training #5 – March 20<sup>th</sup>, 4:30-5:30pm  
**Ownership, Writing Voice, & Scaffolding Academic English**

**1. Writing Resources Agenda:**

- a. **Website format** – do we like it? Boxes or Columns? Titles and Categories? Other innovative ideas?
- b. **Drew’s step-by-step pre-writing instructions** – together or separate? Too wordy? Ideas for how to present this on the website?
- c. **Self-edit checklists** – do you have something to share?

**2. Video clip: “Schooled: The Price of College Sports” (51:35 start, 58:30 end)**

Before watching:

What do you know about the University of North Carolina scandal two years ago?

After watching:

What was appropriate and what was “illegal tutoring” in this scenario?

Who was at fault?

What should the writing tutor have done differently?

**3. Scaffolding Academic English**

How does what the tutor did in the UNC scandal relate the idea of writing voice?

In SAAS, we tell you to never write on students’ papers, edit their grammar, or put words into their mouths. With these rules, how can you help them turn in good academic essays?

**4. Tutoring Strategies to (1) value students’ home languages/dialects & (2) help them make language choices for their academic writing:**

- a. Consult assignment guidelines and encourage students to talk to their professors to find out what language is expected.
- b. Discuss with students: why are university students expected to write in Standard Academic English? Why not Pidgin? Why not other varieties of English? Who is the intended audience? What assumptions are being made?
- c. If students are having trouble getting started, ask them to brainstorm or freewrite in the language most comfortable to them, then set their writing aside and re-draft it in Standard Academic English.
- d.
- e.
- f.

Appendix F: Revised Student Survey (Spring 2014)

**Nagatani Writing Center – Post Evaluation Survey**

1. My writing tutor today was (circle one): \_\_\_\_\_
2. What did your writing tutor help you with? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Circle yes/no for these statements, or circle n/a if you did not need help with this:
- |   |   |   |     |
|---|---|---|-----|
| <b>My tutor helped me understand the assignment better.</b>         | Y | N | n/a |
| <b>My tutor helped me brainstorm and/or organize my ideas.</b>      | Y | N | n/a |
| <b>My tutor helped me write a thesis and/or outline my paper.</b>   | Y | N | n/a |
| <b>My tutor helped me write a draft and/or expand my draft.</b>     | Y | N | n/a |
| <b>My tutor helped me find sources and/or cite my sources.</b>      | Y | N | n/a |
| <b>My tutor helped me review my paper for grammar/spelling.</b>     | Y | N | n/a |
| <b>My tutor helped me review my paper for organization/clarity.</b> | Y | N | n/a |
- I am satisfied with the writing help I received today.**  
Strongly agree / Agree / Disagree / Strongly disagree

\*\*Please explain why you are satisfied/unsatisfied: \_\_\_\_\_

**I would benefit from coming back to the Nagatani Writing Center again.**

Strongly agree / Agree / Disagree / Strongly disagree

**I would recommend the Nagatani Writing Center to a friend/teammate.**

Strongly agree / Agree / Disagree / Strongly disagree

4. Do you have any other comments about the Nagatani Writing Center? \_\_\_\_\_

**Nagatani Writing Center – Pre-survey**

1. I am (circle one):  
Male Female Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
2. I am a (circle one):  
Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior 5<sup>th</sup> Year Senior
3. My GPA is (circle one):  
below 2.0 2.0-2.49 2.5-2.99 3.0-3.49 3.5-4.0
4. What is the first language you learned as a child? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Please list all the languages you speak (include Pidgin, Ebonics (African American English), etc. if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_
6. Do you agree or disagree with these statements? Circle your answer.  
**I like writing.** Strongly agree / Agree / Disagree / Strongly disagree  
**I feel confident about my writing.** Strongly agree / Agree / Disagree / Strongly disagree
- Other people think I am good at writing.**  
Strongly agree / Agree / Disagree / Strongly disagree
7. How many times have you been to the Nagatani Writing Center? \_\_\_\_\_

8. Did you come on your own, or were you required to come? (circle one)  
I came on my own I was required to come

9. I want writing help with (circle all that apply):
- |                              |                   |                        |
|------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Brainstorming ideas          | Selecting a topic | Writing a thesis       |
| Organizing my ideas          | Outlining         | Finding sources        |
| Citing sources               | Writing my draft  | Expanding my draft     |
| Reviewing content            | Reviewing grammar | Reviewing organization |
| Understanding the assignment |                   |                        |