

## CDA of Evidence of Writing Center Knowledge:

Jen indicated her understanding of writing center theory through her discussion of how she realized that she did *not* use the Entrance sheet in a way that would help her co-construct the session with a student. In the first stanza of her reflection (See Gee, *How to Do Discourse Analysis: A Toolkit*, for a detailed description of this critical discourse analysis methodology), Jen focuses on the start of the session and her concerns about putting Student A at ease:

I think the start of the session seems almost a little robotic with how I go straight into filling out the sheet and asking only the questions on it. Despite this, I do think the student felt comfortable. She told me what the professor has pointed out in her papers before, so she knew what she wanted to work on in the session. She said that she wanted to make sure that her paper and ideas were clear and connected. I don't think we could have really done anything differently for setting up the agenda of the session.

By immediately acknowledging that she has failed to participate fully in a process that is supposed to both gather information and set up a comfortable, conversational relationship with the student by sounding “robotic,” Jen acknowledges the expectation that she will help to create a space for collaboration within a session. She then considers the student’s comfort level, and constructs an identity for the student as a knowledgeable and responsible agent who brings to the tutoring session an understanding of her discipline, her assignment, and her professor’s needs, as well as her own independent agency as a writer. Jen’s switch to “we” when describing the setting of the agenda (“I don’t think we could have really done anything differently...”) is particularly appropriate because it indicates her awareness that both tutor and student share this responsibility. In this way, Jen ensures that Student A’s voice and both the assignment’s and professor’s “voices” are fully heard in this stanza, using what Gee calls “intertextuality” to

weave all of the participating voices together. Jen does this by quoting Student A's words indirectly, describing the assignment, and providing Student A's report of her professor's views. This intertextuality creates a strong sense that Jen understands the kind of collaboration that should take place between herself and the student. By viewing herself in a situation where she did not encourage collaboration as well as she might have, Jen was able to see how she could use the opportunity created by the Entrance Sheets to create a more collaborative interaction with students.

Lori's description of how she set up her session with Student B indicates that she is struggling to fully internalize this institutional and procedural knowledge. Strong sentence-level evidence for this is visible in stanza 2 of her reflection:

At the start of the session, I am supposed to explain why reading aloud is important. This is something I tend to forget. I can see why it is important to start out the session this way. Although I did ask the student who she would prefer to read the paper. Only after I began, did I realize that the paper was supposed to be an informal paper. This made me realize that the session should begin with a brief discussion of what kind of paper she was writing and what are the important aspects of this type of paper.

While Lori is indicating that she knows the "rules" of starting a session ("I am supposed to explain..."), her use of the verb "supposed to" suggests that she does not fully understand how or why this "rule" exists and what the benefits are of explaining to a new student why we use certain processes in sessions and constructing the plan for the session together with the student. She also presents herself as the "self" who is delivering information and the student as the "other" who is receiving information by constructing each sentence with an "I" subject, thereby indicating that she is the agentive member of this pair. Lori also includes a sentence fragment in

which she notes that she did participate in part of an appropriate procedure: “Although I did ask the student who she would prefer to read the paper.” This fragment has the feel of an afterthought, an add-on that has not yet been fully incorporated into the structure of Lori’s thinking.

While Lori does indicate some awareness that another strategy (discussing the assignment before reading the paper) would have been helpful, she is again looking at it from the position of a self who failed to perform a required operation properly and how that failure affected her own performance in this situation (she had to revise her thinking about the writing once she realized the assignment was more informal than she had assumed), rather than how having a conversation with the student about her assignment would have invited the student to participate more fully in the session by sharing important information about both the assignment and her understanding of it. While appropriate ideas are in evidence here, they have not yet been fully or meaningfully integrated into Lori’s practice.

Kate was an experienced tutor who chose to record two sessions with Student D, a regular of hers who Kate felt had become too dependent on her. In stanza 4 of her first reflection, Kate writes:

For the second reflection paper, the student would have to base her work on her experiences. We also looked at the assignment sheet together and compared what she had to what the professor was looking for.

Kate’s use of “we” here indicates her understanding of the value of collaboration, but when I viewed the video recording of the session, I found that the interaction was not as collaborative as Kate described. Instead, Kate held the assignment sheet and read it aloud to the student, then she explained the assignment to the student. By presenting the assignment to the student in this way,

Kate situated Student D as a receiver of information rather than an active and, in fact, responsible participant in decoding the assignment. Kate then walked the student through her draft, noting where and how it deviated from the assignment. Viewing and analyzing the video and Kate's reflection made the discrepancy between Kate's understanding of how to co-construct a session with a student ("we also looked at the assignment sheet together") and her actual positioning of herself within a session visible to both of us, providing an opening for discussion about how Kate could have asked the student to explain the assignment or to read it aloud, thereby inviting the student to take on some of the responsibility of understanding the assignment. Oftentimes in tutors' session notes in our center, tutors will present what they have done with students in exactly this way: *we* read through their introduction; *we* revised their Works Cited page, etc. This analysis made me more sensitive to this wording: what do we mean, exactly, when we say that "we" did something together.

Reflections on session closings were another place I found examples of tutors' engagement with institutional and procedural knowledge. For example, in her reflection, Jen filled out the Exit Sheet with Student A in a helpful way, as she discussed in stanza 6 of her reflection:

We did go over the exit sheet together because this student had never been to the writing center before. I definitely think she was a little surprised by the first question ["What did you learn about writing from this session?"], like she wouldn't expect to have to think about what changes were made or how she learned from the session. Although she gave an answer, it was a little vague, so I added more to it to show her why what we did was important.

Jen notes that this student was a newcomer to the writing center and so she, as the tutor and more knowledgeable member of the pair in this interaction, needed to take the lead. She also indicates her awareness that one of the institutional priorities of the writing center is that students learn something from the session to take with them to other writing situations, and that tutors and students meet that priority together.

Lori also exhibited her understanding of the goal of student learning in her discussion of closing her session:

I was satisfied with how I ended the session, asking her what she learned about writing from the session. I feel that it is important for them to take something away that they can apply to another paper they will write in the future.

However, Lori also switches to the third person plural pronoun (“they”/”them”) in last sentence, which shifts her focus from speaking about the particular student she was working with (“she”) to students in general. This seems to depersonalize the encounter, again presenting Lori’s understanding as more of a rule to follow than an internalization of how writing center procedures should serve the purpose of co-constructing productive individual relationships with students, but it is a very good first step in that understanding.

Kate’s discussion of the use of the Exit Sheet with Student D reveals her frustration with her attempts to encourage Student D to become more responsible for her own writing, and illustrates why procedures need to be critically re-evaluated. In the last stanza of her second reflection Kate explains:

I have previously suggested to this student to keep the take-home part of the exit sheets by her computer so that she can review all of her common mistakes before bringing her paper to me; however, she clearly has not done this, for she repeatedly

returns to the WC with the same errors. She often waits for me to go through all of the questions I typically ask her, as when she is checking to see if she needs commas in [sic] coordinating conjunctions. I told her explicitly to ask herself these questions as she's writing so that she will have to revise less and so that her writing improves. I'm hoping that I get through to her, but I am unsure that I will.

Kate describes a process that she has developed and that she feels should be productive but that she has come to find both ineffective and frustrating: Kate creates a checklist of things to correct in Student D's writing as the student is reading through her paper in the session and they correct these items together, with Kate mostly taking the lead. Kate then sends Student D home with a list of things to check in her writing, but Student D returns in her next session so that Kate can walk her through that list, pointing out errors for them to correct together. This lack of responsibility and initiative on Student D's part was frustrating to Kate. Based on my many observations of Kate and Student D working together, it was clear to me that this student wanted Kate to be the authority and resisted taking responsibility for her writing herself. By giving her a checklist to follow, Kate was attempting to get the student to take on that responsibility, but Student D ignored the checklists and returned in her next session expecting Kate to again walk her through any necessary corrections. Since, as Kate notes, this was an ongoing dynamic with this student, Kate could have considered this situation more productively if she had been able to be more critical of her use of the Exit Sheet, rather than focusing on what she saw as the student's misuse of it. Maybe the checklist idea was not going to work for this student, as it seemed to be reinforcing Kate as the authority. This moment in her reflection presents an opportunity for Kate to look at this strategy and to consider other possibilities for the use of the Exit Sheet. For example, Kate could have encouraged the student to fill out the Exit Sheet

herself, identifying the one or two things she would want to look for in her own writing, thus encouraging the student to take more responsibility for her own revision.

#### CDA of Evidence of Disciplinary Genre Knowledge:

Jen reflects on an interaction in her session which troubled her, though she does not discuss it in terms of what it reveals about her knowledge of disciplinary genre conventions. In stanza 2, she describes a discussion about a thesis statement that she thought was missing from Student A's paper, while Student A was reluctant to make the suggested addition to her introduction:

I think the biggest thing I tried to explain to the student in regard to her paper is the use of a thesis statement. After reading through her introduction section and realizing that one was lacking, I asked her if she thought she had one and if so where it was. I felt like she was a little thrown off by this, but she said she had no idea where her thesis was, so I tried explaining what a thesis statement is so she would have a better idea of how to create one for this paper. At first, I did think I explained the gist of a thesis pretty well, but the student still seemed confused and didn't completely understand why she would need a thesis. Instead of getting stuck on this, I suggested we move forward to the next section so she might get a better idea of how to create a thesis, where it would go, and why it is important to have one. Looking back now, I do realize how my phrasing might make what I was saying about a thesis a little confusing at first. I am afraid that I gave her too much in creating her thesis by starting to state it for her, but I was afraid that she still was not getting what a thesis was or how to create one. To assure that she understood

why one was being used, what it was saying, and where it would be, I simply asked her if she got why we did it. She laughed and said it made a lot more sense to her now.

Jen is presenting herself as knowledgeable about a writing convention. However, the information about thesis statements that Jen gave to Student A was from a Humanities genre perspective rather than a Social Sciences genre perspective, which is the genre the student was writing in. In the video, Jen described a thesis as “the point you’re trying to make to the reader.” However, Linton, et al., note that in writing in the sciences, “sometimes there is a true thesis statement near the end of the introduction, but more often what is stated in the introduction is a hypothesis, which focuses the issue yet preserves the possibility that the outcome may be unexpected” (68). Student A’s reluctance to incorporate a thesis how and where Jen wanted her to could be attributed to her understanding, albeit implicit (since she was not able to clearly explain her thinking to Jen), that the kind of thesis that Jen was encouraging her to write was not appropriate for the genre she was writing in. Indeed, based on my viewing of this interaction on the video, it appears that Student A voices her concern in the session when she says that adding a thesis where Jen suggests “will totally defeat the purpose of her whole problem paragraph,” which comes after the point in the paper that appears to Jen to be the end of her introduction. This interaction presents an opportunity for Jen to be truly collaborative with the student by attempting to make more explicit Student A’s implicit knowledge of such conventions, or by introducing a discussion about possible differences in academic genre conventions. That Jen does not initiate a discussion of what the student might know about how thesis statements work in kind of writing she was doing, and instead forges on with her thesis recommendation, indicates to me that she is not as knowledgeable of differences in disciplinary genres as she could be.



Similarly, Lori reflects on an interaction that also presented a missed opportunity for sharing metaknowledge about disciplinary genre conventions in stanza 4 of her second reflection:

I asked the student why she had so many paragraphs. I felt that they were too short and the student explained that she is used to blogging and using short paragraphs. Although this is valid, I was unsure whether I should encourage her to combine paragraphs or not. This discussion of paragraph length was a perfect opportunity to discuss the student's knowledge of and experience writing in multiple genres and to encourage her to consider why conventions for paragraph length in blog writing might be different from paragraph length in academic writing. That Lori does not do this, and that the focus in this stanza, as with much of this reflection, is her feelings of insecurity about whether she is doing things correctly, is likely a good indication that Lori is missing the very knowledge that would have been helpful to communicate to the student. Most importantly, Lori is missing the idea that this knowledge could have been co-constructed with the student, who, as a graduate student, was clearly more of an expert than Lori in this genre.

In stanza 6 of the same reflection, Lori discusses another interaction that indicates that she can effectively co-construct genre knowledge with students:

Finally, the student and I discussed whether or not she should include one of the studies in her paper. This was an interesting experience and I was not sure if I was helpful or not. In the end, I believe I allowed her to "talk it out" in a way that helped her come to her own conclusion.

While Lori indicates that she did not have the disciplinary knowledge in the social science use of data to be able to help the student decide on the use of a source, in this instance she was able to

acknowledge the agency of the student to make her own decisions about her text as well as the importance and value of discussing or “talking it out.”

As with procedural knowledge, disciplinary genre knowledge alone is not enough. Tutors also need to know how to employ their knowledge in a collaborative way. Kate does have access to knowledge about disciplinary genres, but she has not yet found a collaborative way to share this knowledge with Student D. For example, in stanza 2 of her second reflection Kate writes:

As with our previous session, the student questioned what the professor was looking for in this assignment. This time around, instead of projecting what I felt the professor wanted, I tried to clearly suggest to her that my opinion and what the professor wants are two different things. Moreover, I also tried suggesting to her throughout the session that many things she was asking my opinion on were a matter of personal preference and that she had the ability to answer these questions for herself. While I continually deferred to the assignment, I also had her justify what she did and did not [sic] to fulfill the professor’s requirements. I felt that in having her actually think about what she did and justify her answers to me that she understood the complexities of the assignment and the ways in which she did (or did not) fulfill the requirements.

Kate makes some confusing assertions about authority in this stanza, seeming to portray it as being divided somehow between herself and the professor, and sometimes framing it more as personal opinion, rather than as knowledge guided by the academic genre the student was being asked to write in. She writes: “This time around, instead of projecting what I felt the professor wanted, I tried to clearly suggest to her that my opinion and what the professor wants are two different things.” This would likely be a confusing statement to this student for a few reasons: Kate had positioned herself as the authority in interpreting the assignments before—we saw her

do this in the previous session in which she read from and interpreted the assignment for the student. Also, while her “opinion” might be different from “what the professor wants,” as a tutor Kate does have the writing and institutional knowledge that could help a student understand an assignment; that is not opinion, it is disciplinary genre knowledge. Finally, Kate does not describe herself creating space here for the student to consider what she might already know about the academic genre she is writing in by, for example, asking questions to help Student D understand the assignment, such as how Student D might connect the assignment to her understanding of the course goals or to information the professor had provided in class.

In the next line of this stanza, Kate continues to frame the issue as a matter of personal preference and opinion, rather than one guided by genre conventions: “Moreover, I also tried suggesting to her throughout the session that many things she was asking my opinion on were a matter of personal preference and that she had the ability to answer these questions for herself.” While this might seem to be an empowering statement, it is not clear what would have been personal preference, what would have been genre conventions, and what would have been the expectations of this particular assignment and this professor. Teasing those ideas out and making them more visible to the student could have been a helpful way to deal with this issue. Instead, Kate seems place herself in a position of authority in the next line: “While I continually deferred to the assignment, I also had her justify what she did and did not [sic] to fulfill the professor’s requirements.” The use of the verb “justify” here positions Kate as the arbiter of correctness, rather than a sharer of information.

CDA of Evidence of Writing Process Knowledge:

Jen discusses her struggle with sharing her knowledge of grammar in stanza 3:

When the student asked me if the phrasing of a specific sentence made sense, and I did feel like there was something missing, instead of pausing and asking her what she might add to make it clearer, I just gave her an answer. I definitely could have told her to reread the sentence out loud and tell me why she thought it sounded weird and what she might think was missing. If she was not getting anywhere with that, I could have told her that I think a verb might be missing in order to help lead her in the right direction. I feel like I did this a few times in the session, and I wish I had taken the time to ask her what words might be added or what words might be changed in order to get her to think about why it makes sense to phrase it a little differently. With me doing it for her, I feel like it prevents her from learning. However, there were quite a few times that she changed the wording of something on her own.

By sharing a variety of strategies she could have used to help the student make more of her own revisions, Jen indicates that she has both sentence-level writing knowledge and the understanding of how to share it helpfully with students, even though she sometimes needs to be more mindful about practicing these strategies in sessions. As she noted in her last sentence of this stanza, both she and the student contributed to the sentence-level revision in the session.

Lori also struggled with how to share her sentence-level knowledge with the first student she recorded:

Early on in the second read-through, I pointed out that a sentence needed to be more consistent, stylistically. It took her a minute to understand what I was talking about and I had to give her an example. I would like to be able to be a little clearer in explanations and use examples that are not part of the actual paper. Some other times during the session, I used examples that she liked and changed her sentences to reflect

that. I would like to be able to help the student come up with new words/ideas on her own.

Although Lori indicates her awareness that it would be helpful for her to develop additional strategies for discussing sentence-level revisions in ways that are more clear to students (she used the phrase “more consistent, stylistically” when she was trying to get the student to revise for parallel structure, which was unclear and confusing to the student), her focus here is on how to deliver information to students. It would be more conducive to collaboration for her to consider strategies for devising questions to discover what a student might already know about grammatical structures and how a student might be thinking about a confusing moment in her own text, in order to help students be more active participants in their revision processes.

Kate also struggled with sharing her knowledge of grammar with Student D, who relied very much on Kate’s expertise. One moment in the video of the second session she recorded illustrates how this dependent behavior played out: Student D asked if she should take a comma out of a sentence. Kate responded, “Well, why would you take it out, explain it to me.” Student D provided an explanation but did not get it quite right, so Kate corrected her, explaining the grammatical rule in detail. Kate does not discuss this exchange in her reflection, but she does describe a similar exchange in stanza 3 of her second reflection:

This time I caught myself over-explaining once, but then I had her answer her own questions by asking ‘Well, what do you think?’ If her explanations were correct, I would agree with her, but if they were not, I would re-explain why she was wrong so that she understood the correct grammar/usage/etc.

While Kate is trying to guide Student D toward a better understanding of comma usage, Kate’s use of “correct” and “wrong” in her description of this interaction seem to reinforce the message

that she is the expert who holds the key to this knowledge, which the student certainly sees her as. It also positions Student D as a novice who requires constant monitoring and correction, rather than as a co-collaborator working together with Kate to understand how grammar can work rhetorically. If Kate had instead asked Student D how she was thinking about commas and they had discussed her assumptions, as well as what readers might be expecting or thinking when they saw, or did not see, a comma, Kate might have been able to shift Student D to a different kind of understanding of grammar guidelines. Especially since Kate notes that she has explained and re-explained these rules to this student, it would be helpful to work with her on finding other ways to discuss sentence-level revision.

#### CDA of Evidence of Rhetorical Knowledge:

Jen reflected on her struggle with how to break into the flow of Student A's reading to point out an issue she saw:

There was one point during her paper that I felt a little confused, almost like a connection between her points was missing, and I thought about it for a moment and then didn't pause her to bring it up, so I just waited until the end of the paper to go back to it and tell her why I felt like one sentence seemed like it did not fit in the paper. I asked her if there was any way for her to bring in [a specific idea] to make it connected to the purpose of her paper, and I believe this made sense to her. I'm not sure if I didn't bring up my problem of confusion at first because I myself wasn't quite sure why it didn't seem like it was fitting, so I felt like I had to think about it more. It might have been because she was reading through the sentences pretty quickly without much of a pause, so by the time I realized what was missing to me, we were passed [sic] it and I didn't want to

interrupt her because we were no longer on the same paragraph. I do feel like I should have paused her the second I felt something was off and then asked her to read it out loud to me again so I could think about what is missing and even ask her what is missing. One danger with waiting until the end of the paper to go back to this point was I did forget exactly where in the paper the issue was. I also could have forgotten what the issue I had with the sentence was.

This description illustrates how Jen is struggling with the challenges of sharing her rhetorical knowledge in a very transactional way, trying to figure how to enact it within the dynamics of a session. Part of Jen's concern is whether her question about missing information is justified: "I'm not sure if I didn't bring up my problem of confusion at first because I myself wasn't quite sure why it didn't seem like was fitting, so I felt like I had to think about it more." And partly it is a matter of logistics: the student was reading very quickly. From my perspective as a viewer of the interaction, it was perfectly reasonable to take a few minutes to think over a question like this, and if Jen felt more comfortable in how to express her rhetorical knowledge, viewing it as a process that encouraged such noticing and thinking aloud, she might have been more confident in asking Student A to pause so that they could mull over this question together, thus co-constructing a rhetorical response to the possible problem Jen identified.

Lori also described how she handled this process in her first reflection: "I notice that when I am confused by something, I tell the student that I am having a hard time understanding what she is saying and I ask her how she can change the sentence." And again in stanza 3 of her second reflection, Lori described a similarly successful rhetorical interaction, but then she questioned whether she used the right approach:

After reading the first paragraph, the student said that she was not sure if it worked. I asked her what she thought the issue was and we were able to talk it out together. Again, I think that I handled this well, but I am still not confident that there aren't other approaches. I think that asking the student questions about what she is trying to say is helpful, and this student was a very capable student who seemed to need someone to bounce her ideas off of.

Lori clearly has rhetorical knowledge and is able to share it with students, but her reflection also indicates that she needs reassurance that responding to students in this way is appropriate and helpful to them. Looking at this successful interaction together would be a good way to reinforce that she did indeed use a helpful strategy. Additionally, her response raises the interesting question of how she would respond to a student who she did not see as "very capable."

In stanza 4 of her first reflection, Kate also described a situation that illustrated that while she herself has rhetorical knowledge, she struggled to share that knowledge with this student in a helpful way:

For the second reflection paper, the student would have to base her work on her experiences. We also looked at the assignment sheet together and compared what she had to what the professor was looking for. Since this assignment is more subjective than a research paper in that she had to analyze the test subject for herself (whereas the research paper required her to report others' findings, documents, and other research materials), I felt that it was more important that we discuss how she was fulfilling the requirements of the assignment as well as how she was thinking about her test subject. Since only she is familiar with the student about whom she is writing, it is especially important that she convey her ideas clearly so that her professor is not misled or confused about the



student's progress. Perhaps this would have been helpful to reiterate during this session (although we have discussed this in prior sessions together).

Kate describes her understanding of the rhetorical needs of the assignment in quite a lot of detail in this stanza but indicates in the last sentence that she realized she did not convey that understanding clearly to the student, or ask the student to consider it: "Perhaps this would have been helpful to reiterate during this session...". And then, in a parenthetical aside: "(although we have discussed this in prior sessions together)." Instead of discussing the rhetorical situation of the assignment with the student in the session, Kate took a rule-following stance that inhibited her ability to discuss the assignment in a more helpfully rhetorical way. Affirming her acknowledgement that such a discussion would have been a more collaborative way to address the issue, even if she and the student had had similar conversations in the past, would be a way to support her ability to share this knowledge.

#### CDA of Evidence of Interpersonal Knowledge:

In stanza 4 of her reflection, Jen illustrates her interpersonal knowledge by detailing an interaction in which she negotiated a revision with Student A:

When I thought explanations might be missing [from her paper] that I thought could have been helpful to have, I did the best I could to explain why I think it might be helpful to have it in the paper, trying to remind her why her professor might want to see it. She understood why I felt the idea might appear in the paper, and agreed that her professor would probably like to see it, but then she seemed hesitant because she would have to rearrange her entire paper to make it fit. Ultimately, she came to a decision that we both

agreed would be helpful for the paper in which the idea was included and explained in a way she would not have to change her whole paper.

Jen brought together her writing knowledge and rhetorical knowledge to explain to the student what she saw as missing from the paper. Then she relied on her interpersonal knowledge to be able to see and understand the student's hesitancy to make the changes Jen had suggested, and to open up a space within which the student could ultimately decide whether and how to accept Jen's feedback and make her own decision about revision. The last line quoted above is a particularly strong example of a collaborative moment in which Jen and Student A are both asserting individual and compatible expertise in a positive way: "Ultimately, she came to a decision that we both agreed would be helpful for the paper in which the idea was included and explained in a way she would not have to change her whole paper." The final decision on the revision is made by the student, with input and agreement from the tutor.

Jen also presents herself as someone who cares about both the student's feelings and her learning. At various points in her reflection she writes statements that indicate her concern: "I do think the student felt comfortable"; "...so the student...wouldn't be upset if we didn't reach the end"; "I felt like she was a little thrown off by this." But then at other points Jen worries that she "gave too much": "I am afraid that I gave her too much in creating her thesis by starting to state it for her..."; "...instead of pausing and asking her what she might add to make it clearer, I just gave her an answer." Jen's language presents a common dilemma for writing tutors: In many social interactions we would think about giving things as a way to make someone comfortable—giving attention, a cup of tea, etc. And in many ways, writing center best practices call for making sure students feel comfortable. But there is also the conflicting imperative in a writing center session, which Jen is clearly cognizant of, to *not* give too much, to encourage the student

do the “work” of the session. This is the dilemma we contend with when working through how to be collaborative with a student. There is a dichotomy set up here because the actual work of the session might well make a student feel un/comfortable since she is being asked to provide information or ideas, or to consider rearranging her ideas, to in some way struggle with her own writing. Jen appears to be caught in this paradox, though she does not seem fully conscious of it, except to note how her own manner could have been more friendly, or how she might have mitigated the work she was asking the student to do, which she actually did quite well. This leaves me to consider the question of what we mean by “comfortable” in the context of a writing center session. Do we mean to make welcome, to construct as a valued collaborator, to understand as someone who is struggling with work that is challenging? All of these at once, always? Some mix of them as best fits the given student and context? Or do we sometimes want to make a student un-comfortable by asking them to do uncomfortable work of rethinking their writing? Jen’s struggle to grapple with these issues, albeit implicitly, presents an opening for productive discussions for future staff development.

Lori’s reflections illustrate how a tutor’s understanding of a student’s expertise or reading of a student’s need for help can affect how the tutor conceives of a relationship with a student and, therefore, how the tutor responds to the student. In her first reflection on her session with Student B, Lori positions Student B as a grammatical object throughout her reflection: “After watching my video session with a student...;” “I told the student...;” “I let her know...”

Student B is only given the subject position at the very end of the first reflection in the last clause: “I think that the session was successful and I was working with a bright student who understood everything I was saying, but if the student was not as tuned in, she may have missed out on a few things.” This phrasing does several things that indicate Lori’s positioning of Student

B as a passive rather than an active agent in the session. It moves from discussing Student B as a particular student to “the student,” a hypothetical student, thereby depersonalizing her. It also focuses solely on attentiveness, rather than Student B’s potential agency as a writer, and therefore suggests that Lori saw this particular student as less capable of being a full and active participant in the session. And, indeed, in the video, Student B sits quietly slightly behind Lori who is closer to the computer screen and who is reading through the paper making comments and suggestions as she goes.

When Lori and I viewed the video of this session together, I encouraged her to look for moments when Student B seemed left out of the intellectual work of the session and to consider ways that she might have encouraged the student to bring in her own voice. For example, at one point in the session, Lori asks Student B about a term in the paper that Lori does not understand. The student begins to explain it, but Lori continues to puzzle out the meaning herself, talking over the student. This interaction, which Lori did not notice on her viewing of the video nor address in her reflection, was a good example of a moment when Lori needed additional interpersonal knowledge in order to be able to conceive of the student as a capable participant in the session, and it seemed that viewing the session together and discussing it helped her to develop in this area.

In her second reflection on a session with Student C, a graduate student who presented herself as very knowledgeable and in control of her own writing process, Lori finds it much easier to see the student as a co-participant in the session. In the seventh and final stanza of her second reflection, Lori writes: “The experience of working with a student who was an extremely capable writer who was writing a scientific research paper was interesting. I enjoyed helping her make her own decisions and it allowed me to see why tutors can be essential in the self-editing

process.” Being able to appropriately reposition herself in her second recorded session from a take-charge teacher to a facilitator based on the needs and expertise of the student illustrates positive interpersonal knowledge. And seeing the change in her response to two different students, based in part on her understanding of their abilities, will hopefully help Lori be more aware of what assumptions she is making about students’ level of expertise and how that is affecting her tutoring.

Kate also struggled with applying interpersonal knowledge in a way that would help her co-construct sessions with Student D, as stanza 5 from her second reflection indicates:

Previously, I had re-explained grammar rules over and over to this student. This time, however, I caught myself. As I always do, I had taken notes while she was reading her piece aloud to let her know which issues I saw reemerging in her paper. I said, “I know you know [these rules], so I’ll leave it to you,” which clearly suggests to her that I will not be her copyeditor, which she has previously regarded me (as I could tell from her behavior—she used to return to the WC so that I could proofread her documents once more to ensure that she hadn’t missed any changes and so that she would definitely not be penalized by her professors). I asked her if she was comfortable doing this on her own, and when she expressed her doubts, I worked on the least familiar/mundane of topics, one that I don’t think we had ever gone over (or at least not in several semesters), so that she felt comfortable going back to revise on her own. When she read through her second assignment and I saw the same errors, I told her that I was not going to point them out to her (which I did not do for her first assignment either) and that I knew she was capable of handling them on her own.

Kate describes an unhelpful dynamic that has developed over several semesters with Student D. She begins with the statement that she has “re-explained grammar rules over and over to this student,” and indicates that she decided to change that strategy in this session. Rather than consider the interpersonal dynamic that might have led to this situation, Kate’s focus in this stanza is on her own actions. She puts herself in the subject position for every independent clause except one in which she is describing how the student has positioned her as “copyeditor”: “—she used to return to the WC so that I could proofread her documents once more to ensure that she hadn’t missed any changes and so that she would definitely not be penalized by her professors).” This clause is presented as an aside, within parentheses, and further separated by a dash, which has the effect of removing the student’s behavior from the main action of the stanza. It would have indicated more effective use of interpersonal knowledge if Kate had made this issue—Student D’s reliance on her and how her own behavior might have been contributing to that—the subject of this stanza. Instead, Kate characterizes their relationship in this stanza as if she were the gatekeeper of knowledge who will decide what knowledge she will share with the student, as well as when and how she will do that, a factor that might have helped to enable Student D’s presentation of herself as unable to take responsibility for her own writing. Kate’s assertion in the last sentence illustrates the missing connection in this relationship: “When she read through her second assignment and I saw the same errors, I told her that I was not going to point them out to her (which I did not do for her first assignment either) and that I knew she was capable of handling them on her own.” Kate appears to be presenting herself as the gate-keeper of this knowledge who can see errors the student cannot, so her assertion at the end of this sentence, “I knew she was capable of handling them on her own,” seems problematic. While students might certainly attempt to shift the responsibility for their writing onto a tutor, and Student D does

seem to be doing so, tutors would ideally employ their interpersonal knowledge to attempt to figure out why students are reluctant to take responsibility for their own writing and how to help them learn to be more comfortable and competent with writing tasks they find challenging.

#### CDA of Evidence of Intrapersonal Knowledge:

Of the three tutors studied, Jen was most able to critically evaluate the way she presented herself within the session she recorded. Stanza 8 of her reflection details her response to viewing herself on the video, particularly the sound of her voice and non-verbal interactions, which were the aspects of her tutoring I found most troubling and was hoping she would evaluate:

While watching this video, I felt like I came off as very fake. I don't know if it's because I hate my voice and it just sounds fake and annoying to me, or if it was something about my body language and my diction that seemed fake. I became super aware of how I talk after watching the video, so much so that I found myself thinking about it in all of my other sessions. Do I sound annoying? Do I sound generally uninterested? Do I come off as fake to the students I'm working with? Another thing I noticed in the video was I seemed to make little eye contact. I know a lot of the session involves looking at the screen while the student or tutor reads the paper, but even outside of that, when I was trying to talk to her about parts of her paper, I was looking at the screen a lot instead of looking at her. I feel like I could have made more eye contact in order to maybe make her feel more comfortable or like I care more.

These questions indicate a very productive grappling with how she might seem to students in sessions, something Jen was not at all aware of before she saw herself in her video.

When Jen and I discussed her discomfort with her affect in sessions, one of the challenges we identified in enacting the kind of collaborative identity that she clearly understood intellectually is her personality: She is a quiet and introspective person; she is friendly but not outgoing; she is very comfortable with people she knows, but is often restrained with those she doesn't. The student she was working with appeared to have the same quiet affect, so neither could reach out in an expansive enough way to the other to make the session as comfortably collaborative as others of Jen's sessions have been. With more gregarious students, Jen easily matches the students' more outgoing behavior. So while Jen indicates that she highly values collaboration, her tendency toward shyness and possible lack of confidence in her own knowledge sometimes makes it challenging for her to enact it. The very explicit intrapersonal awareness of these issues she gained from viewing, reflecting on, and discussing her video allowed her to come up with strategies for helping herself feel more comfortable in tutoring situations that would otherwise have been awkward or difficult for her.

Another important aspect of self-knowledge is flexibility, the ability to reposition oneself based on the needs and expertise of the student. For example, Lori was able to change her role from a take-charge deliverer of information in her first recorded session to a supportive collaborator in her second session. She describes this role in the seventh and final stanza of her second reflection: "The experience of working with a student who was an extremely capable writer who was writing a scientific research paper was interesting. I enjoyed helping her make her own decisions and it allowed me to see why tutors can be essential in the self-editing process." By positioning the student as an expert, Lori changed her role from a teacher of basic writing strategies to a co-expert in writing at the university level. This allowed her to come to the realization that even capable writers can benefit from talking to someone about their writing, an



idea that is at the heart of writing center discourse, and to see herself as someone who was able to be a facilitator. This realization again illustrates the overlap between interpersonal and intrapersonal knowledge: Lori was willing to accept this facilitator role because the student was capable. On the other hand, it was helpful for Lori to see how her positioning of Student B as a novice encouraged Lori to do more of the intellectual work in the session than was conducive to this student's learning.

Kate, on the other hand, seems to have the most difficulty with intrapersonal knowledge, as she is reluctant to see herself as being inappropriately authoritative in a way that was likely contributing to the unhelpful dynamic that had developed with Student D. Throughout her two reflections, and even more so in her second reflection, Kate seems more concerned about defending her position of authority than she is in honestly exploring why the relationship she had with this student had developed in this way. Rather than attempting to build a self-aware, reflexive identity, Kate appears to be attempting to build her identity as a competent and knowledgeable tutor who is struggling with a problem student. This instinct for self-preservation is understandable, but was not particularly helpful for Kate, as she indicates in the third stanza of her second reflection:

Last time I found that I was teaching this student more than I should have because she presents herself as needing an immense amount of help. This time I caught myself over-explaining once, but then I had her answer her own questions by asking "Well, what do you think?" If her explanations were correct, I would agree with her, but if they were not, I would re-explain why she was wrong so that she understood the correct grammar/usage/etc. Previously, I had thought that my use of "I think" and "I would" was shaping the way in which she regarded my role as her tutor and our services as a Writing

Center; however, I did change the way in which I stated my opinion. In one scenario, I said to the student, “I think it’d benefit your writing if you...” In this way, I expressed both that it was my opinion but in a way that suggested that she should not be meeting my standards for what I think is good but for what will improve her writing as a whole. It has seemed that she seeks my approval blindly without questioning whether or not I was correct or what the professor wanted.

Kate seems to be unaware that she is sending conflicting signals to the student, possibly because she is conflicted herself about the level of authority she wants to have, the level of authority that the student’s behavior seems to call for, and the level of authority she knows would theoretically be more appropriate or helpful to have in these sessions. In particular, when she discusses her use of “I think” and “I would” to provide direction to Student D, she is referencing a suggestion I had made to her during one of our many conversations about her frustration with this student. I suggested that she frame discussions more in terms of genre conventions than her own opinion. While she agreed to try a new way of phrasing, she still presented the information as her opinion, something she does not seem to be aware of, based on this reflection: “In this way, I expressed both that it was my opinion but in a way that suggested that she should not be meeting my standards for what I think is good but for what will improve her writing as a whole.” This indicates that Kate had only a superficial understanding of how she was presenting herself as an authority on writing to Student D. Developing more deeper intrapersonal knowledge would ideally allow Kate to see her own motivations, desires, and expectations more clearly. Possibly, giving Kate the resources to do her own CDA of her reflection might have encouraged more productive reflexivity.