

CHAPTER FOUR

**CONFLICT AND CARE WHILE TUTORING IN THE CLASSROOM:  
CASE STUDIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON AND SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY**

On occasion, a person with a marginalized identity gains confidence to persist in the face of prevailing winds that trumpet convention.

– Harry Denny

Now is the time for peripheral visions.

– Jackie Grutsch McKinney

In this chapter I extend the work of fellow course-based tutoring researchers by offering detailed comparisons, drawn from my field notes and interviews, as we inch increasingly closer to an understanding of the many factors that provoke directive and nondirective tutoring strategies and that can encourage or deter successful CBT classroom interactions. Rebecca Babcock and Terese Thonus draw on research from the California State University Fresno Writing Center to argue, in contrast to one-to-one tutorials, “the validity of tutoring groups as an effective, and even superior, means of supporting basic writers” (92). I agree with this claim, but I also believe it warrants continuing scrutiny. What factors might make for successful classroom interactions? How can tutors best facilitate and support small-group peer response sessions in the developmental writing classroom? And what useful connections can be drawn between one-to-one and small-group tutoring in CBT situations?

I start my reporting and analyses with case studies of tutors involved in peer response facilitation in the classrooms they were connected to. I’ll begin with the three teams from the UW that were actively involved in the classroom. In the

first subsection, I offer detailed micro-analyses of four tutor-led peer response sessions. These sessions are unique and worth micro-analyses due to the fact that both tutors, Julian and Megan, were trained to adhere to a more nondirective tutoring method and methodology. Their performances, then, when compared to their one-to-ones from Chapter Three, aid in my efforts to draw connections between the discourses of one-to-one and small-group tutoring. In the second subsection, I turn my reporting and analyses toward the teams with tutors who received no explicit training in directive/nondirective strategies. Rather than focusing on the micro-level language of the interactions, I focus my analyses more peripherally, more on the broader rhetorical actions and attitudes of the participants. All in all, readers will hear detailed, multivocal and multi-perspectival analyses of tutors—some of whom we've already seen deep in action—with varying levels of experience and training and widely different personalities and preconceived notions attempt to aid fellow students with their writing performances on location in the classroom.

## **CONNECTING THE MICRO AND MACRO IN PEER RESPONSE FACILITATION: TEAMS ONE AND TWO**

### **REDEMPTION SONG OR CAUTIONARY TALE? JULIAN ON LOCATION**

I thought for sure—had complete trust—that Julian and Anne of **Team One** would realize a fruitful partnership. Just glancing at the highly positive student course evaluations for the course overall, one would never get a sense that things were not all they could have been with that partnership. Yet, as we clearly saw from our analyses of one-to-one tutorial transcripts, Julian confounded my (and students') expectations. Surely, he fared better in the classroom. The following scenarios take readers closer to an understanding of how authority, trust and directive/nondirective method negotiation can intertwine to either deter or promote successful peer response facilitation.

What follows are reports and analyses of peer response sessions facilitated by Julian and Anne on two different days drawn from my field notes. Due to the dynamic nature of multiple speakers in small groups, I have opted for a horizontal transcription style:

In the first peer review session, in week five, eight students are in attendance, arranged in two groups of four. I move to Julian's group. He asks if people brought extra copies. A student replies: "Only one." First student starts to read his paper. Other students are listening, but not writing, commenting or taking notes yet. Julian jots notes as the student continues read-

ing. Student One says: “Didn’t catch your claim.” Student Two says: “Should be in your introduction.” The writer points it out and rereads it. Julian asks: “What do you all think of that as a claim?” Student Two says: “Sounds more like your opinion.” Julian says: “Consider bringing in extra copies [of their essays].” Student One says: “None of us knew there was peer editing today.” Julian says (commenting on the writer’s paper): “Notes on logos, pathos, ethos; good intertextuality; citings of Takaki; with the claim feels like something’s missing, stakes; could you read it again?” The writer re-reads the claim. Julian asks: “Why is it important?” Writer repeats the second part of the claim with some extra commentary. Julian says: “That sounds good, that would give the stakes.” Student One says: “Could state whether or not you agree with Takaki.” The writer asks: “What about opinions?” Julian answers: “The idea is the whole paper is your opinion; stating opinions as if they are a fact, sorta like tricking your reader that your opinion is fact.” *Julian asks the student reviewers*: “Patterns in a section that you did?” Student Two says: “Logos, cause he keeps giving facts, then the stakes, then facts.” Julian says: “It seems it might not be too much more work to find the pattern. If there isn’t a pattern, that might be worth commenting on.” Julian asks the writer: “Any particular questions?” This group continues in similar fashion. (At this point I notice Anne has stayed primarily out of the groups. She spent about ten minutes with the other group, then she went to her desk for about ten minutes, then came back to the group.)

Julian moves on to the next group. The group he leaves continues talking on-task. In the next group a writer is in the middle of reading his paper aloud. Julian listens quietly. The writer is catching and commenting on many of his own mistakes as he reads aloud. Julian says: “That’s one of the advantages of reading aloud; can catch your own mistakes.” The group members agree verbally and with head shakes. Student One says: “Sounds like you’re making a list; really choppy.” Group members again verbally and nonverbally assent. Julian says: “I missed the beginning; what is the claim?” The writer says: “What is a real American? She claims only white people are true Americans.” *Julian asks the reviewers*: “What stands

out as the stakes for his claim?” Student One says: “Word choice, tone.” Student 2, overlapping his response with Student 1, says: “Go into more depth about Asian Americans.” The bell rings and the session ends.

What I find most interesting about both these peer review groups is how Julian actually does seem to be fulfilling his role as peer review facilitator when he prompts (in italics) students to comment on each other’s papers (much as Megan from Team Two does below), and the degree to which Julian tries to stay as closely as possible to the assignment prompt in his suggestions. Notice in both groups how Julian emphasizes claim, stakes, patterns, and the rhetorical appeals—all things detailed in the assignment prompt. On their perception of how the session went, both Anne and Julian agreed that students should have been told to bring in extra copies. (Each student brought only one paper copy.) Although Anne felt this was “probably not my best peer review session ever,” she liked how the opening discussion of the ground rules and strategies for peer review got the students involved early in the shaping of the session and gave them an understanding of why they were doing things the way they were. “In the name of metacognition, you know,” she said. Julian felt that while there were some good things that occurred, “overall I don’t think it went very well.” Julian blamed it primarily on not having extra essay copies, and also on a lack of time, but also pointed to what he felt was a problem with the assignment prompt: “There were so many bold words/ideas on their essay prompt, they didn’t seem to really know what to be talking about. None of the students seemed comfortable or fully in control of all the discipline-specific language, i.e., there was no common parlance amongst the peer group for all the essay’s aspects in discussion.”

In the second small-group peer response session I observed a few weeks later, Julian only worked with one group of two students the entire time. The main thing I noticed about this session was that, besides reading aloud, the students barely spoke at all during the entire roughly forty minutes. The frustrating effect this had on Julian was palpable to me and must have seemed so to the students as well. Near the beginning of the session Julian asks Student One if he is comfortable reading aloud. Student One says “not really.” Julian describes why it is a good idea to read aloud: “It helps everyone stay in the same place, and you might hear and catch many of your own mistakes.” Without answering, Student One proceeds to read his paper aloud. Julian cuts in quickly and asks if he can slow down, that he “can’t process what he’s saying.” Student

One slows down considerably. As the student continues to read Anne writes more instructions on the board: “Is there a controlling thread of argument about what the readers need to take away from these texts? Is it persuasive? What would you say is at stake? Are all sources appropriately cited? Do the content, structure, evidence, appeals, tone all keep the reader in mind?”

What follows, to me, is Julian’s attempt to help students juggle all the well-intentioned prompting Anne has provided. I would call the resulting session an example of “resource overload,” or more is less. As in the peer review session above, Julian spent the entire session mostly trying to get these two students to talk about how they could get one of Anne’s prompt items, “Content,” working in their texts. There was no mention, nor any attempts at working another prompt item “Creative” textual potentialities into the conversation. Reflecting on this session, Julian felt it went poorly. He felt the groups were too small to encourage much comparative discussion. He also felt that perhaps students did not fully understand the assignment which, along with their unwillingness to talk about “their own writing process (or lack thereof),” left him with little to discuss. He said that although the two students hadn’t really done the assignment they “professed to understand what the assignment was.” Anne did not offer any reflections on this particular session.

Although Julian felt it was overall a good thing that he did attend the two peer review sessions, his explanations of the role he sees himself playing during peer review points to possible reasons why he experienced such lackluster results. Ironically, it just might be Julian’s sophisticated sense of what he *should* be doing during peer response that contributed to the problem. Keenly aware of authority issues, Julian feels that his role in peer review is one of “reserved adviser.” He elaborates:

My understanding is that my presence during the peer critique sessions, it’s not a tutoring session, it’s not me working one-on-one trying to work with their particular writing issues. It’s me trying to model for them skills and ways of being effective in future peer groups throughout their writing classes and college careers, so that they can be useful to other people

when I'm not around.

He spoke of previous peer review experiences, among the many he had participated in, where he had taken a more directive approach and felt that this causes students to “clam up because it stops becoming a peer critique session because I'm not their peer anymore and the whole process breaks down and becomes something other than what it's intended to be.” Julian felt that the biggest roadblock to success, however, involved lack of regular communication between him and Anne.

Rather than share the blame, as Julian did above, Anne, more than once, intimated how she should have done a better job scheduling conferences, getting Julian course materials, and most of all “including Julian in sort of the day-to-day workings of the class and making sure that he had sort of a well-defined role.” She goes on to explain how she feels this communicative oversight later caused students to have expectations of the sort of help they would receive from Julian that were never met. One of these expectations may have involved how much direct instruction they thought they might receive from Julian. Anne talked at length about how Julian's nondirective approach made her reconsider this approach in relation to this group of developmental students. She said that she had hoped that Julian might help disrupt her teacherly authority somewhat. She felt that because Julian was trying so hard to stay within what he thought were her expectations, he forfeited any opportunity for students to really stake their own claims, something she would have valued highly: “They're the quickest to bow to authority. They're the quickest to say ‘well am I doing it right?’ And the least likely in some ways to sort of say ‘I don't think that's a useful way of approaching this question’ or ‘what can we do with this assignment to make it something real for me and not just some imagined scenario or something.’”

Three *students* mentioned peer review in their course evaluations, one praising, the others critical. The first student, pointed to both her admiration of Anne, and the value she saw in peer review: “Anne is an amazing professor and it seems like she absolutely loves what she does and it makes me want to learn more from her. Peer review also played a big role when writing difficult papers. It's always nice to bounce ideas off your peers and contribute in making their papers better.” The second student, however, felt “we spent too much time reading each other's paper[s] during peer review, leaving no time for comments ... Taking each other's papers home to read before the actual day of peer review [would have improved the peer review process]” The third student, commenting on what aspects of the class detracted from his/her learning, wrote two words: “peer reviews.”

#### PEER REVIEW PEOPLE: MEGAN ON LOCATION

Megan, from **Team Two**, felt she was acting much more like a peer in the

classroom than a teacher, and she saw this as a good thing. She evinced to me that she worried she would become “more of the TA or assistant TA and not the tutor.” She goes on to explain that she was relieved when other, less authoritative roles were agreed upon between her and Laura. But Megan elaborated further about role negotiation, especially what exactly her role was supposed to be in the classroom:

We didn't have too many class discussions so I wasn't really a discussion leader. I tried to ask questions that would really help them understand the readings. But I guess I was kind of peer review [laughter] person. I would lead peer review at times and kind of help them with a new way to do that ... and not much else actually I guess.

Both of the peer review sessions I observed for Team Two seemed to involve both Megan and Laura in dynamic peer review and response facilitation and instruction with the entire class:

For the first peer review, in the third week, 12 students are in attendance. Laura assigns four students to three groups, writing the group assignments on the board. She reminds them that they are supposed to have two copies. Laura has Megan come to the front and explain how the peer review session will work: decide who goes first, read your essay aloud, go through the worksheet, note things that don't make sense. Megan says that Laura and she will go from group to group. Laura passes around the peer review sheet, and explains that these sheets should be attached to their essays when turned in. Next, Megan and Laura each attach themselves to a separate group. In Megan's group students begin to fill out the review sheets as the first writer reads his paper. Megan takes notes. Upon finishing reading, Megan says that he did really well and asks for observations from fellow group members. Student One says “Nice examples. It would be nice if you could include some quotes to bring out details.” Megan replies “Good suggestion.” Student Three says “Good flow.” Student Four follows with “flow nice.” Megan says “Introduction describing surveillance knew what you would be talking about ... the other responders gave good advice ... In academics I was hoping to hear a little more about surveillance in your social life and during the games ... Who is surveilling you? Be careful

about ‘being watched,’ word choice, maybe ‘surveilled’ ... details help make your points really clear; excellent, good job!” Megan certainly seems to be the authority figure here. She talks much more than the other students, who seem reluctant to offer any suggestions.

Writer Two reads his paper aloud. Fellow group members jot down notes. (Laura is still attached to the first group, listening, giving feedback apparently as a group member. Then she moves to the other group, listening, answering a few questions about the peer review sheet.) Megan says “Why don’t we do the same thing ... you want to go first? The level of student involvement picks up a little in this next round of responses. Student One offers some advice to the writer regarding his paper: “another suggestion, lack of style ... maybe make it more interesting ... I might make it like a story, rather than explaining steps.” The writer seems unsure, slightly resistant (non-verbally mostly), to this suggestion. After group members discuss what they believe is the writer’s claim and offer a few more suggestions, Megan says “It was a good job. I’m going to the next group; just continue as you’re doing.”

At this group (the first Laura was at; now she is at the third group) a student is reading aloud; other students are taking notes; one asks for clarification during reading. Megan takes notes on what she hears. Rather than Megan, Student One starts the response: “Good, explain what panopticon is.” Student Two says: “Good structure, describing and comparing to panopticon; but would be nice to describe activity.” Student One agrees. Megan says: “That’s a good observation.” One more student comments, then Megan takes over the conversation for the rest of the class period, ending with: “You guys did a great job; sometimes students don’t. I’ve been in classrooms where it’s like pulling teeth to get them to.” A student asks if Megan is still taking classes. They start to chat about her classes, future plans in teaching, etc. He asks her questions; other members in the group join in; conversation is casual and friendly.

Within days of this session, I solicited Megan and Laura for their impressions of how things went. Laura said that she had asked students how it went



and she got back mixed reviews. Some students said the oral peer review style made it difficult to correct grammatical errors. Some said that reading the papers aloud helped them to recognize the structure of their papers. Laura wished she had had one tutor for each group. Megan said that by reading aloud, she felt students caught a lot of their own mistakes. She also commented on how many of these students had the first part of this stretch-course together and she believes this allowed them to feel comfortable and to be open and honest with each other. She had interesting things to say about the peer review sheets:

I think that the peer review sheets were helpful, but sometimes unnecessary. In group two I think they were doing what I would hope would happen in a peer review session, but they were not filling in their sheets as much. Whereas in group one they all filled in the sheets while the person was reading the paper aloud and then talked about the suggestions they had for the paper. I think that both were effective, but I think that sometimes students can get distracted with filling in the sheet and not giving the best feedback. For this reason, I would not have a peer review sheet. However, I can see how it might have been effective. Who knows, if there was not a worksheet in group one, they might have not paid as close attention and thus not had as many insightful comments. However, I think that group two did a wonderful job and may not get that acknowledgment because they did not fill in their worksheets as completely as group one. It is a tough balance.

It is clear to see that students were caught between what Laura called the “oral peer review” and the peer review that relied on filling out the sheet she had used with most of these students. While Megan was encouraging verbal conversation in her groups, Laura was emphasizing filling out the worksheet: “I instructed the first group I worked with step by step. We answered most of the questions on the peer review sheet. I gave less instruction to the second group, because when I got there they already figured out a different way of doing oral peer review.”

Four weeks later I was invited to their second peer review session. It seems as if they had made a couple of adjustments from the first one:

Less students end up showing up for this session, nine overall, divided into two groups. Laura chooses a group leader for group one and has that leader choose who she wants for the group. Laura then passes around the peer review sheet (a different one) and says, however, that she wants them to talk

about their papers first. Megan goes to group one, Laura to group two. Having a group leader somewhat changes the dynamics of group one's session. The group leader initiates questions and prompts speakers. But Megan soon resumes her role as authority figure by offering suggestions liberally; she ends up doing over half of the talking. However, having a different group leader than the implied Megan did seem to involve students more in the flow of the conversation, suggestions offered and questions asked, than the first group Megan worked with above.

The second group stands out in my memory and field notes for the way students seemed to control much more of the conversational floor. At right about the half-way point Megan and Laura switch groups. The flow of conversation seems strong and students readily offer answers to Megan's prompting questions. But the conversation becomes really dynamic as Megan asks the writer about her paper. The writer talks about her paper on Britney Spears. Megan asks about sources. The writer says none. *Megan asks if anyone can suggest texts/sources for her.* Student Two suggests Foucault and why. Megan summarizes her words. Student Four chimes in. Student Two offers another suggestion. Student One offers how Silberstein could be used. Megan agrees. Student Five offers more on how Silberstein could be used. Student Two questions/asks for clarification and offers how she sees Britney Spears in the media all the time. This causes the writer to explain more. Megan joins the conversation on Anna Nicole and Britney in the media all the time dealing with substance abuse. Student Five joins in. The writer describes an article she found on Anna and Britney. Megan says they have "very insightful comments on each other's papers" and suggests they incorporate texts from class, "awesome." Notice how the conversation involved much more dynamic uptake with more students *after* Megan openly asked for suggestions from all. I spoke with Megan and Laura afterwards and they both felt that this peer review was a great success.

The *student* questionnaires offered feedback that seems to support Megan's over Laura's view of in-class interactions. Like Laura, one student commented positively on Megan's personality: "I liked the attitude she had. She was always

willing to help us. Very dedicated to her job.” However, five students commented on what they viewed as Megan’s lack of overall participation in the classroom: “She needs to be more obvious in class. Then maybe students will want to go get help. Because it seemed like she wasn’t involved.” Another said, “As far as having her in the classroom, I did not think it was helpful. I rarely even noticed she was in our classroom. I don’t think they need to come to class.” Another, “Maybe the tutor could plan some activities and get involved more.” Another, “Didn’t find it too effective.” And the fifth, “She didn’t help out that much.” Perhaps Megan’s initial worry over becoming too much of a TA, and subsequent hesitancy to take on any authoritative instructional role in the classroom (besides peer review leader), actually hindered her from realizing her full potential in the classroom, though it might have helped her during one-to-one tutorials.

## RECIPROCAL CARE IN PEER RESPONSE WRITING GROUPS, AND BEYOND: TEAMS THREE, FIVE, AND SIX

### FINDING HER “COOL TO CARE” NICHE: MADELEINE ON LOCATION

The peer review session I was invited to for **Team Three** had a very different feel from the ones I report on with Teams One and Two above. Students in Sydney’s class were revising their annotated bibliographies for their final portfolios:

Ten students are in attendance. Sydney and Madeleine enter the classroom together. Rather than have a peer-review guideline sheet, Sydney simply passes around a handout on annotated bibliographies. Madeleine is sitting in the front row among the students. Sydney gives instructions on where to go from their previous personal responses. They are to partner-up and one, write in pen or highlighter what they can keep for the annotated bibliography, and two, write in what is missing. Information from the longer responses are to be brought down to two-three sentence summaries. Sydney writes these instructions on the board, and says that she and Madeleine will move among the groups. As students begin, Madeleine goes up to Sydney at the front with the assignment sheet and asks for some clarification. Then Madeleine begins to talk with the student next to her about the task. Madeleine uses the instruction sheet to help this student ask questions of her partner’s text. Sydney moves quickly from group to group. (Sydney commented during her interview that she felt that Madeleine often lingered too long one-to-one with students

during such class activities, rather than “roaming the room.”) Madeleine refers to an article they read and continues to talk about how that relates to the task. Madeleine then moves to the student’s partner, doing the same thing, explaining the task in more detail. Madeleine moves to another student; asks if he’s doing ok; repeats the same further explanation. Sydney gathers the class’s attention and talks about evaluating the source. As she describes evaluation, she looks over, gesturing to Madeleine. Madeleine adds to what Sydney is saying about evaluation, describing the idea of the credibility of the source and where it came from, or if it might be biased. Then Madeleine continues to move among students. She approaches two young women sitting in the back, and there appears to be some pre-established rapport as they begin to chat and laugh. The students ask about her being sick; they ask about what she studies. (They are off-task, but only for about a minute, and these students are already garrulous before and after Madeleine moves on.) Madeleine leaves the room for two minutes, comes back and sits in her seat. Sydney says pull out another article and do the same process on their own bibliography. Madeleine chats with me a bit. Sydney begins meeting one-to-one with a student up front with his paper. A student close to Madeleine asks what he’s supposed to be doing right now. She explains. Then he asks her about a paper. A student behind Madeleine drops a bunch of Altoid mints. She helps him pick them up, and she throws them away. Madeleine spends the rest of the class (about five minutes) writing in her day-planner and reading a paper (maybe hers, maybe a student’s?). With five minutes of class-time left, Sydney says they can leave if they’re done. Most students begin to leave. Madeleine packs up and leaves as well.

Due to the design of this class activity, I notice that Madeleine seems much more casual and hands-off compared to both Megan (who attended class every day) and Julian. Madeleine also approached students differently. She would somewhat tentatively approach them and ask if they needed any help, rather than just assume they did. In fact, Madeleine’s attitude and actions in this peer response facilitation resembled more closely what I saw taking place with the SCSU Team Five below.

Of the ten *student* questionnaires I received back, *all ten* were overwhelming-

ly positive. Strikingly, while no students made direct reference to the one-to-one tutorials, *nine* students commented in detail on the benefits of having Madeleine in the classroom regularly. Students also wrote much more, and more complexly, than any of the other Teams' student questionnaires. Students talked about the convenience of having a tutor in the know, a tutor closer to the expectations of the class, a tutor they *trusted*. One student wrote: "In English 104 [the first part of the stretch-course] I did struggle in class because I had many questions that I needed to be answered but was scared to ask, but when having a tutor you know that you can ask questions." Another, "The in-class tutor always raised questions in class. She always let us know when we weren't meeting the expectations of the course. For example many of the students were only focusing on content and our tutor told us that we had to focus on meaning." Another, "In-class tutors give the professors a break and also are very helpful to the students when the professor is occupied ... When needing help in class and the teacher was helping another student having her there to answer questions." Another, "We got a lot of attention during class. It was like being one on one." Another, "Not having a tutor [in 104] was somewhat more difficult to receive help because there was only one instructor. Having two has made questions and help a lot faster." Another, "It was weird at first, but later on having the tutor really helped. The in-class tutor was like a TA for the class who goes around and helps a student in need. It really helped me, because the tutor gave me ideas and thoughts to think about what I was writing about." Another, "I had a better understanding because the tutor was willing to be a part of the class." Another, "They help give ideas to the class, as well as brainstorming situations with us." And finally, "She branches out a lot of good ideas during discussion ... I like how she joined class conversations. She always gave her feelings on what an article meant to her. Hearing her thoughts gave me ideas ... Many of my questions were answered because if Sydney was busy the tutor would help me."

### LEARNING DISABILITY AND RESPONSE-ABILITY: GINA ON LOCATION

Fresh from having taken the same developmental writing course the previous year, Gina from **Team Five** capitalized on the bond she already enjoyed with instructor Mya. During a peer review and response session in week four, I witnessed an amazing moment—something I had never quite seen before—that immediately piqued my interest.

I noticed one student in particular, Max, having a visibly tough time understanding what he was supposed to be doing, while his two peer group partners seemed to be experienc-

ing no trouble at all. Gina, who was circulating around the room, later in our interview reported that she saw that Max was having trouble. “I noticed Max looking nervous over in his seat so I went over to see what I could help him with. His partners Kim and Adrienne already had their computers set up and were starting the assignment. Max wasn’t as far along. He hadn’t even logged into the computer,” she said. Gina spent much of the remaining class session helping him get on track with the multiple organizational and communicative tasks students needed to negotiate during this peer review and response session: working with online files, following the response guidelines and instructions, and reading and offering feedback to his group members. Gina told Max not to worry too much about the comments his partners were giving him, but rather to focus on the comments he was writing for them.

As Mya circulated the room she went over to Max’s group. Max groggily said “I’m tired today, the weather.” Gina continued to good-naturedly and patiently help him navigate the review process. She turned to his two group members at one point for help. Kim came over to help out, succeeded, and then moved back to her computer. At one point, Max deeply sighed and Kim chipped in a tip on commenting. Max said “yeah, yeah, yeah” in relief. A few minutes later, Max said to Gina that he is “falling apart” and “can’t concentrate.” She continued trying to coach him on how to handle things.

After class, Max came up to me, we said hi, and then he just stood there for a second. I asked how he is doing. He told me that he is not feeling all that well and that he is having a hard time with this peer review. We chatted a little more before he left for his next class.

Later Gina would tell me, “I felt bad for Max because he was very overwhelmed and also not feeling well. I tried to make him feel like he will do much better with his group-mates’ advising in a less stressful environment so it’s fine that he is not really doing anything during class.” Part of the problem, and one that distinguished this class and partnership from others I have studied, was the amount of technology Mya uses in her courses. Mya always teaches in wired, computer-equipped classrooms. So, unlike the peer response sessions I reported on above, the participants in this study not only had to process the typical logis-

tics of peer response, they also had to negotiate the nuances of the technology involved. (Another thing that may have contributed to Max's discomfort, suggested by his approaching me at the end, was my very presence in the classroom to begin with. Perhaps Max's knowing that I was there to observe and potentially report on those observations contributed to the sensory-overload and anxiety he experienced.) The entire visit, I noticed how patient and caring Gina was with Max. And I started to think that there was something very important taking place here.

During a visit one month later, I noticed both Max and his peer response partners taking on much more interactive collaborative roles:

Max, today, seemed in much better shape—no visible worries, etc. I noticed that rather than frequently asking Gina for help he seemed to be much more involved with his two partners. In contrast to what I witnessed during my earlier visit, Max seemed to have a good grasp of what he was supposed to be doing. He asked his partners a question and they helped him; they asked him questions and he helped them. I was impressed with how these students, especially Kim, were collaborating with Max. In contrast to my last visit, Gina only came over to the group a couple of times. At one point, the group talked about works cited pages and the fact that neither of Max's partners did one, but that he did. Gina ended up spending much more focused time with other students, including a male student who was having difficulty with citations and formatting. Following Nelson's progression, Max seemed to be moving smoothly from dependence to interdependence and independence with his peer response group.

Gina gives her impressions of her involvement with Max and his group members in this second peer review session:

Like always Max was right on track with what he was supposed to do. He was just double-checking that he was up to speed. I looked at Max's work and realized he was very ahead of the game. He had his e-portfolio set up very nicely. He already had one paper posted and was almost ready to post another. He then asked me to look over the second paper he was going to post before he posted it. I looked at what he changed and what Mya asked him to look over. He took everything Mya said and changed it. His paper looked very nice. I told him it looked great and it should be ready to post.

He wanted a second opinion so Mya was called over. I was very happy that Max feels so comfortable to ask my opinion. I have noticed that every class he calls me over at least once. I am happy to talk with him and assure him he is on track with everything.

In their end-of-term questionnaires, ten out of eleven *students* felt Gina's presence in class was beneficial, and only one was ambivalent. (The ambivalent student only wrote a couple of yes's or no's indeterminately.) Several students commented on their overall impressions of having an in-class tutor: "makes help only a nod away. It was great." Another, "She was very helpful with papers and assignments. I think it was a good idea to have one in every class." And, harking back to the comments by students involved with Julian and Anne's overall unsuccessful partnership in Team One who felt that their course-based tutor did not know what was going on in the course, one student wrote: "I liked it because it gave you someone to help you with your work that actually sits in the class and knows what's going on ... so maybe people feel more comfortable that way." I also took the chance to interview the student Gina and Kim worked so closely with, Max. He told me that he really appreciated the attention he received from Gina, his group members, and Mya. He said he especially appreciated Kim's help (for more on this case study, especially Gina's and Max's personal stories, see Corbett "Learning").

### **PAYING CARE AND TRUST FORWARD: KIM AND PENNY ON LOCATION**

As mentioned above, two of the students from Team Five's class, Kim and Penny, were recruited to become course-based tutors for the following semester with an experienced adjunct instructor, Jake. **Team Six**, illustrates what can happen if continuity is carried forward (genealogically, if you will) from student-to-tutor, from tutor-to-tutor, from instructor-to-instructor, from tutor-to-instructor. One of the several threads that linked the participants from the two courses was the interaction between Kim and Max. Recall, Max and Kim were peer response group partners and, like Sara, Kim found the experience of working with Max highly rewarding. While it would be easy to overestimate the effect Max had on Kim's performance as either a student writer with Mya or as a course-based tutor the subsequent term with Jake, one cannot help but believe there was indeed some inspirational paying forward. As with the other case-study teams, I sat in on and took field notes of in-class peer response sessions with this team. The sessions I witnessed fell very much on a continuum of directive/controlling and nondirective/facilitative interaction witnessed especially with Madeleine from



Team Three and Gina from Team Five. In short, in the sessions I witnessed, Kim acted much the way Sydney from Team Three reported Madeleine acting during class discussions—more outgoing and authoritative—and Penny acted a bit more like Megan from Team Two—more reserved during class discussions, but more hands-on during peer response sessions. When Jake started addressing the entire class for the session with Kim, Kim joined in with Jake very much as a co-teacher, even finishing his sentences a couple of times. In contrast, when Jake spoke to the entire class that Penny was attached to, she did not join in like Kim had. However, once students became engaged in responding to each other's essays, both Kim and Penny became very involved in the groups. Jake had encouraged both classes to write on each other's essays as well as talk about them. Both Kim and Penny did not hesitate to join in on writing comments down on student papers as they discussed their suggestions. But these tutors went even further in embracing authoritative roles in their respective courses, and together.

During my interviews with all participants in Team Six, and from the journals both Kim and Penny were keeping on a class-by-class basis, I came upon some compelling findings. Due to the fact that Kim and Penny were both working with the same instructor, Jake, albeit in two different courses, this team had the opportunity to collaborate much more interactively than any other CBT partnership I've studied. And they took full advantage of that opportunity. Allow me to end the reporting on the case studies and stories in this book by quoting at length from Penny and Kim's journals. (One of the strengths of both Nelson's and Brooke, Mirtz, and Evans's studies are the extensive amount of reporting and analyses the authors provide from participant journals.) We will begin with excerpts from Penny's journal:

**Tuesday, April 13<sup>th</sup>**

Yesterday, Jake handed out the assignment that Kim and I came up with. The assignment is much more specific so the students are able to understand and follow it. The assignment is called "The American Dream Museum Exhibit" [See Appendix D]. The students are to get in groups and bring any kind of artifact that they think represents the American Dream. On Thursday, the students will bring at least ten artifacts to class and explain to their group why they chose that. On Thursday, students will also narrow down their items to five each. These five will be the items they include in their exhibit and presentation. In a few weeks, the groups will present their museum of what they think represents the American Dream.

### Thursday, April 15<sup>th</sup>

Today, the groups met with artifacts they brought in or images they printed and cut out. I sat with group one for a while, just observing and listening to what they had to say about what they brought in. It was interesting to see the different perspectives they had of the American Dream. Each member brought something different, but in the same way, that one artifact connected with a group member's different artifact. One group member printed out a picture of a white picket fence, and another member brought a picture from the newspaper of a perfect-looking house. I suggested that the members can use both of those images in the presentation to add to the exhibit.

One member brought all portable items of technology (cell phone, iPod, etc.) and another member brought a McDonald's to-go bag. Both members had the different explanations for the artifacts, but I pointed out one way in which they tied together. I mentioned that both could represent mobility and how valuable time is to Americans. As I came back to this group later in the class, they had built off that idea even more.

As I moved onto other groups, and listened to what they had to say about their items, I was impressed with how different the results were. After listening to each member give me an explanation of all the artifacts they brought, I told them about things that I had not heard from the other groups, but I heard from them. Since they are covering the same topic, it's important that they all have different artifacts so things don't get repetitive when they present their exhibits.

### Wednesday, April 28<sup>th</sup>

Jake sent the following email:

Hi Kim and Penny,

I wanted to give you both a heads up that I will not be in class on Thursday. However I do not want to cancel class since each

group needs to work on their exhibit design and layout.

While I do not expect them to stay for the entire class, I would hope that they take the opportunity to organize their exhibit in detail and have each member give a tour of their artifacts and introductions. Each of you can provide your feedback and insights to the groups.

If either of you have any questions, please feel free to email me or call or text my cell.

Thanks and I'll see you on Tuesday.

Jake

**Thursday, April 29<sup>th</sup>**

As the students walked into class, I explained to them what the agenda would be. They knew Jake wasn't going to be in class, so I told them once I met with their groups, they were free to leave class. Each group had to explain what their title of their exhibit was, read their introductions, and give me a tour of what each artifact in their exhibit was. After each group was done presenting to me, I asked questions to keep them thinking. If they had artifacts they didn't explain well, I asked them what the artifact's symbolism or representation was of the American Dream. Each group was well-organized and knew how they were going to present the exhibit to the class. I made sure to ask the students how and where in the classroom were they going to set up all of their artifacts. If I was unsure of a question, I sent Jake a text. I did not want to tell the students the wrong answer, because it was Jake who was grading the presentations, not me. Before the groups left, I told them to come to class on time the following Tuesday and to be ready to present. Next Tuesday and Thursday the groups will be presenting their exhibits.

The following excerpts are taken from Kim's journal entries. The first one offers her take on the day Jake was not in class. The latter two provide reporting on the days students delivered their "American Dream Museum" exhibits near the end of the term.

4/29/2010

Today was very cool. Prof J. was unable to attend class. So I got to act as the prof for the day ☺ The students went over their exhibits and what they have so far. They both seemed to be very good and well thought out so far. However, only two people from the second group were in class today so I didn't really get a great sense of how their exhibit will go. Both groups read their introductions as if they were presenting it to the class ... What I enjoyed most was that even though these introductions were not being peer reviewed the students gave each other criticism and helped them reword things as well as encouraged them when they enjoyed what their peer wrote!

5/4/2010

TODAY'S THE BIG DAY!! ☺ The students have been working on their exhibits and they will finally be able to present them. Unfortunately, one student was absent. Thus, one of the groups was short. Also two students came late so they were unable to present their projects today with their groups ☹ The projects included a movie (*The Pursuit of Happiness*), a baseball card, lots of pictures, poems and songs, a water bottle, and more. I loved the explanations and after their intros last class and then again today, I could see a huge difference. The students who actually came today had made the changes to their intros for the objects and they came out very well ... The students really went in depth and took the explanation to another level. Also, the students didn't really seem nervous. They knew why they chose their five objects and discussed them well. One of the poems that was shared also made me think a lot. It was titled "The American Dream" and the student used the poem to stress how the American dream is represented in a negative way. The poem basically goes into how once people are living the so called "American Dream," making money and doing well for themselves, they forget about the individuals who do not have wealth or even places to rest their head at night ☹

5/6/2010

This semester is coming to an end ☺ We started the class off by having the last three students present their projects. These three students actually presented their projects separately because their groups went on Tuesday. It really made me remember back to the second and third class hearing the students read their essays and being embarrassed and rushing through them, whereas today they mostly spoke clearly and with confidence. I could definitely see the growth in such a short amount of time.

In their questionnaires, *students* from both of Team Six's courses reported very much the same sort of high satisfaction with the courses as with Team Five above.

## **DISCUSSION: DIRECTION, NONDIRECTION, AND MISDIRECTION IN THE CBT CLASSROOM**

The above scenarios begin to clearly illustrate just how complicated—or complimentary—things can get when you combine various instructional aspects of the parent genres, as well as different participant personalities, goals, and instructional experiences and backgrounds. Of all the teams, **Team One** I initially thought would be the most successful. Julian, with all his experience, seemed like the ideal “writing advisor” tutor for this project. Anne, likewise had the experience, was studying in the field of Composition and Rhetoric, and showed early enthusiasm toward the project in general. Yet Julian summarized the overall experience as going “sort of poorly, less than mediocre.” Julian pointed to two primary reasons he felt the partnership did not work well: lack of communication with Anne, and confusion as to what his specific role was in the class. Julian felt that his minimal presence in the classroom affected his relationship with the class, creating an awkward, “ambivalent space” between himself and the students. He felt that the students and he never got to know each other. So, he said, students were “like ‘Julian’s going to be our writing consultant, is going to be part of the class,’ and then I show up twice and nobody ever hears from me.” Anne voiced two main reasons why she felt the partnership floundered: her lack of collaboration with Julian, and Julian’s nondirective instructional approach. On her initial high-hopes that quickly began to fall, she said: “When I met Julian at the beginning I thought this would be great; this has such great potential because we both have such similar philosophies, basically teaching philosophy ... But [laughter] in practice it wasn’t quite as good.”

Despite the relatively greater amount of tutoring experience both Julian and Anne possessed, they were ironically unable to perform with the sort of flexibility and adaptability that the other teams displayed. While we might point to instances where Julian did get directive, as when he more or less “forced” the student to read his paper aloud during the second peer review, I would argue that Julian did not really do that bad a job during the peer reviews, evidenced by him trying to play what he felt was his role of question-posing facilitator, or “reserved advisor”—in short, to play the role of Decker’s “meta-tutor, encouraging students to tutor each other” (“Diplomatic” 27). The greatest tension seemed to be in Julian’s debatably inflexible minimalist/nondirective approach. Repeatedly, as illustrated especially in the peer reviews above, the data point to instances where Julian was trying perhaps too hard to play it safe, to attempt at all costs to meet what he felt were Anne’s expectations, to stick to the prompts closely and carefully during interactions with students. Perhaps, as with Megan, Julian worried too much about taking on a teacherly role. His feeling that Anne was the teacher, and he was there to be a “reserved advisor,” may have actually confounded the students’ expectations that he should offer whatever direct suggestions he could. His attempt to be as peer-like as possible may have had the opposite effect. Clark’s study of directive/nondirective tutoring with students who labeled themselves “poor” writers, found that these students perceived their tutors as more successful when the tutors were directive, contributing “many ideas” (“Perspectives” 41). In contrast to the case studies of Teams Three, Five, and Six where tutors embraced their roles as authority figures, Julian’s attempt to stick to what he felt were Anne’s expectations, coupled with his limited presence in the classroom, only bewildered students who, it seems, wanted to know more than anything what *he* thought. Julian’s repeated efforts to stay within Anne’s expectations came across to student’s as unwillingness to model a sense of “what would you do?” Further, while I’ve been tempted to make tentative claims about Julian’s actions during tutorials in terms of gender roles, like Black, Denny, and Judith Butler I believe gender is performative based on context. Black argues that though feminist theorists have frequently claimed that talk between women is “cooperative, supportive, non-competitive, nurturing, and recursive” her extensive study of teacher-to-student conferences revealed that

female teachers dominate female students just as male teachers do ... they are less likely to cooperatively overlap their speech ... female students initiate fewer revision strategies to female teachers and hear less praise from female teachers ... All this together does not add up to the picture of cooperation, support, and shared control that is often presented as characteris-

tic of female-to-female speech. (68; also see Denny 101-02)

While we saw the same sorts of instructional and conversational “domination” during the one-to-one tutorials from Madeleine, Megan, as well as Julian, a host of other contextual forces worked to undermine the success of Team One.

For **Team Two**, overall, Laura and Megan reported enjoying working together very much. Megan talked about initial role negotiations with Laura:

It was kind of hard because I'm not a student and I'm not her teaching assistant. But I'm not involved in the grading, but I'm supposed to help them ... it was an opportunity for the students to get some of the most personal and helpful advice in their writing, because they have someone who's there who's not intimidating, because it's not their professor ... I think at the beginning she was thinking that one day I could lead the class. And so I wasn't sure [laughter] what to do.

Megan explained that she worried she would become “more of the TA or assistant TA and not the tutor.” As we noted earlier, she was relieved when other, less authoritative roles were agreed upon.

Laura commented on how pleasant Megan's personality was, how she was always smiling and cheerful, how she always had a positive attitude, and how she was easy to talk to and work with. In contrast to Megan's sentiments above, Laura described her working relationship with Megan in terms of wanting to keep their interactions as peer-like as possible: “I kind of see her as my peer. Instead of asking her to do this and that I wanted to get her feedback. We kind of designed the class together.” Laura described how early in the quarter she and Megan would meet once a week to discuss weekly schedules, class plans, and upcoming assignments. They would also have “meta-teaching” conversations after class. Laura described Megan's role as “conversation partner” who would “have a lot of things to say about texts” during conversations in class (though she did not distinguish between whole-class conversations and conversations involving peer response).

However, we saw that Megan and Laura had different perceptions of Megan's usefulness in the classroom. While Laura felt that Megan was an important day-to-day in-class player, Megan *and* the students felt that she wasn't quite living up to her participative potential. And while I think she did a great job as “peer review person,” especially in the second sessions, students didn't seem to get the same sense of the importance of her presence. Perhaps the introduction of the “oral” peer review confused the students at first and it took a little bit of getting used to before they could feel the full benefits of that method. In the fourth

edition of *A Short Course in Writing*, Bruffee distinguishes between two forms of peer review. According to Bruffee, *corresponding* is a more exacting and rigorous form where students write to each other about their papers, and *conferring* is an immediately responsive, conversational form more attuned to the writer's needs. Bruffee argues that "the most helpful kind of constructive conversation combines the two ... So in peer review you write to each other about your essays first, and then you talk about them" (170; also see Gere and Stevens). It seems that, by the end, Team Two was certainly moving in this two-fold feedback direction, exercising and flexing students' abilities to negotiate directive and nondirective strategies, and Megan's ability to coach these peer-to-peer pedagogical skills. It also seems that from the first to the second peer response session, students were moving from dependence to interdependence. Concurrently, it appears that Megan and Laura were moving away from directiveness and more toward a more minimalist facilitative role. This supports Nelson's claims regarding the inverse relationship between students taking and tutors/instructors relinquishing control when working toward successful peer response. Simply put, by that second peer response session I witnessed, the attitude, action, and language of control and directiveness had shifted from Megan to the students. This also coincides with Harris's four reasons why writers need writing tutors, that valuable analytic link between tutoring one-to-one and in small groups. While control seemed to flow from Megan to the students explicitly realizing Harris's first reason—encouraging student independence in collaborative talk—it might have more implicitly helped students realize the other three reasons: assisting students with metacognitive acquisition of strategic knowledge; assisting with knowledge of how to interpret, translate, and apply assignments and teacher comments; and assisting with affective concerns. Yet, overall, students still wanted more from Megan in the classroom.

Madeleine and Sydney from **Team Three** expressed mixed reviews of their partnership. The tutor, Madeleine, narrated her satisfaction with the experience from start to finish. She enjoyed all aspects of her involvement: working with Sydney; working with students; and working with the subject of the course, race and citizenship in the nation. On her initial interactions with students, Madeleine said:

I think at first they were like, "What the heck, who is this person?" They weren't mad or anything [laughter]. They were just kind of like "ok." They didn't know why I was there, but it was cool. After a while they just thought of me as kind of like another student ... They really seemed to appreciate the things that I said in class and after a while I think it was really



comfortable ... And they didn't feel, at least as far as I know, they didn't feel like I was trying to be authoritative.

And on her initial role negotiations with Sydney, Madeleine reported: "At first I didn't know what my job would be in the class. And we were just like trying to work it out the first couple of weeks of the quarter." Madeleine goes on to describe how she soon found her niche in the classroom as "discussion participant." During an early class discussion of readings, Madeleine joined in. Afterwards, Sydney praised Madeleine, telling her that she felt the students had participated in a way they "might not have been able to and she [Sydney] might not have been able to. She felt like the students listen to me. Not really more than they listen to her, but they tend to agree with her. So whatever she's saying, whatever she's contributing to the discussion, they think 'oh that's the right way.'"

Sydney's take on the partnership, however, portrays a much more conflicted point of view. Sydney said that she was initially worried that someone else's presence in the classroom would make her feel like she was being watched, but that, fortunately, did not end up being the case. This may be due to her impressions that, echoing Madeleine's own comments, Madeleine really took on more of a peer role in the classroom, seeming much like just another student. Sydney did, however, detail further initial misgivings that—in her mind—ended up affecting the rest of the quarter:

Initially there was a lot of frustration just trying to match two personalities, two kinds of teaching styles, trying to negotiate where roles were ... I remember the first couple of days I felt like there was a little bit of showing off going on on her part. Maybe she felt the need to prove herself to show [herself] as capable as the TA. Maybe she was trying to show me; I don't know. And I felt that that kind of shut down conversations with my students a little bit because they might have felt intimidated a little bit you know.

But Sydney also talked about how she eventually came to view her interactions with Madeleine in a different light: "In the end I think it took us a while, but I feel like in the end we finally at least began to kind of click and mesh." A big part of this eventually-realized mutual understanding may have something to do with Madeleine's overall motives for and attitude toward this course. In her own words: "The most important thing for me to teach the students was to be active learners in the classroom. I hoped that they would view my enthusiasm for the content as an example of it actually being cool to care." I believe it was

this ultimate clicking and meshing that I observed late in the term.

While we might rightly question Madeleine's performance during one-to-one tutorials, I certainly maintain my belief that Madeleine's authoritative style was effective and valuable in the classroom. Delpit makes a related point that hints at a possible reason why the diverse students from Team Three identified so closely with Madeleine:

The "man (person) of words," be he or she preacher, poet, philosopher, huckster, or rap song creator, receives the highest form of respect in the black community. The verbal adroitness, the cogent and quick wit, the brilliant use of metaphorical language, the facility in rhythm and rhyme, evident in the language of preacher Martin Luther King, Jr., boxer Muhammad Ali, comedienne Whoopi Goldberg, rapper L.L. Cool J., and singer and songwriter Billie Holiday, and many inner-city black students, *may all be drawn upon to facilitate school learning.* (*Other 57*; emphasis added)

Another way to consider the implications of Madeleine's performance is when moving tutors to classrooms we could encourage a more authoritative approach, but when they move back to the center (or wherever else one-to-one or small-group tutorials happen) tutors should resist the temptation to overuse what they know about the course and the instructor's expectations. One of the reasons the tutorials conducted by Madeleine, and to large extent with Megan and Julian (Appendix C), seemed so tutor-centric was because all three of these tutors tried perhaps much too hard to speculate on what the teacher wanted. Most of the linguistic feature and cue ratios—total words spoken, references to the TA or assignment prompts, and interruptions versus main channel overlaps and joint productions—detail salient imbalances, imbalances that overwhelmingly point to almost complete tutor control. While this discursive imbalance luckily did not seem to affect the overall successful partnerships of Teams Two and Three, it certainly did not help the unsuccessful collaboration in Team One. The overarching lesson? Tutors might hold on a little tighter to some nondirective methods and moves that could place agency back in the hands and minds of the students. Of course, unlike the other tutors, Madeleine had not been exposed to the literature on directive/nondirective tutoring, nor could I find any indication that she was encouraged to practice a particularly nondirective method. Perhaps, if she had received a bit of training in directive/nondirective strategies, then Madeleine's fight-for-the-floor session might have sounded more like Sam's parallel session, or even more like the sort of non-intrusive, flexible collaboration I witnessed during my visit to Madeleine and Sydney's classroom

during peer response. Maybe then Madeleine could have exhibited some of those nondirective methods and moves showcased by Sam from Team Four in all of her one-to-one tutorials. Yet perhaps, as Nelson discovered, Madeleine had earlier moments of directiveness, but as the course moved on, and by the time I saw her more “laid-back” attitude and action in the classroom near the end of the term, she had pulled back on her interventions as students became more self-directed, interdependent, and to varying degrees independent.

The tutor for **Team Five**, Gina, felt her involvement as a course-based tutor for the class went “different, but better than I thought it would be.” She thought it was wonderful that students had the option of asking either her or Mya questions during classroom activities. She also felt she was able to engage with students on a personal as well as academic level, even though she said that she usually sat at the head of the class with Mya when she was not circulating around the room. She also did all of the readings for the course, but only did one writing assignment to show students how she approached it. (Something none of the other case-study tutors undertook.) Gina said that if she could give other course-based tutors any advice, it would be not to overly worry or hesitate to approach and interact with students. She felt that in the first few weeks she did not want to bother or interfere too much, but then she started to realize that students really appreciated her interventionist attention.

The instructor, Mya, said that she and Gina’s familiarity allowed Gina to take a very active and highly informed role in assistant teaching for the course. She said Gina started off a little slow at first, but very soon she felt that students started to warm up to her and really lean on her for questions and support. She (echoing Madeleine from Team Three) would often help jump-start class discussions if students were initially silent. She felt that Gina was like a “life preserver” that she could throw out at any time in the classroom for any particular student who needed it. Although, she did feel this class was stronger than usual in terms of their engagement, she very much appreciated having Gina close by to help circulate and give more individual attention to others. She said that even though Gina did not say a lot in class all the time, she was very upbeat and always had wonderfully positive energy (reminiscent of Megan from Team Two). Mya said she believes Gina’s LD actually enabled her to make even stronger connections with other students, especially Max, though she said “you can’t tell Gina has a LD by just talking with her.” Mya praised Gina’s communication and organization skills. When I asked her if she would do anything differently next time, Mya said that she would have liked to plan things out a little more with Gina, perhaps regular weekly meetings, so Gina had more say in what was going on (I have heard this advice several times before with participants in CBT). When I asked her if she’d be willing to have another tutor attached to her class, she said,

laughing, “I would not want to do it without one.” She felt that having a tutor did not demand any extra time on her part and was only a benefit. She felt that working with Gina made her think just how important it is to slow down sometimes and make sure things are clear to all students.

Much like the in-class peer response session I witnessed with Madeleine and Sydney from Team Three, I saw Gina responding at the point of need of the students. In other words, *the potential for the tutor to control or over-direct in this situation was mitigated due to the fact that the students themselves initiated, and to a large degree controlled, the call for tutorial assistance.* Yet scholars disagree on what might be the best setting for fostering such student-centered control, including minority students and students with LDs. In “Cultural Diversity in the Writing Center” Judith Kilborn describes these contrasting philosophies in terms of those who believe either: one, minority and diverse students should be mainstreamed into the general population “to prepare them to interact with the diverse population they will meet in the workplace”; or two, “minority students are best served by services designed and run by minorities for minorities; they feel that such services provide a sense of community and cultural pride” (393). In “Discourses of Disability and Basic Writing” Amy Vidali questions a claim made by Barber-Fendley and Hamel that LD students should be separated out from the writing classroom, especially the basic writing classroom, for additional support. Vidali argues, rather, that similarities abound between LD and non-LD basic writing students: they are both talked about in terms of difficulty and overcoming deficits, they often share identities and classrooms, and both are “defined according to a dominant (white, male, abled) other” (53). Vidali urges us to do what we can to unify basic writing and LD pedagogy. She believes that LD students would then benefit from the same structural support systems afforded basic writers in all their various diversities. I find myself agreeing with Vidali. When we consider the effects of the interactions of both Gina and Kim with Max, Vidali’s assertions begin to make very good sense—for all participants. In a way, then, the arguments for more unified instructional support systems for diverse students echo the arguments for closer writing classroom and peer tutoring coordination described in the Introduction (see Corbett “Learning” for more on this particular case study).

All participants from **Team Six** voiced high satisfaction with their experiences together. Overall, Kim described her experiences as highly positive and rewarding: “I felt that working with the students taught me a lot. It actually helped me with my own study habits and certainly helped me become more patient.” Reflecting back on their interactions, like Sara, Kim found the experience of working with Max rewarding. She told me that she would sometimes email Max when she had questions about an assignment. She went on to say:

When working with Max I remember him being a very intelligent young man. He had wonderful thoughts and ideas and always put one hundred percent into all of his work. Even when doing public speaking projects Max gave his all. He was frightened to speak in front of the class but, as his partner, I saw him practice over and over until he was confident. Sometimes Max just needed someone there to repeat or explain the assignments as well as a partner who was willing to practice with him over and over until he felt comfortable.

Likewise, the other tutor, Penny, reported an overall positive experience, especially in relation to her field of study, Elementary Education:

It helped me jump into being a mentor or teacher of some sort. It helped encourage me to dive right in and help students, no matter what age. Working with college age students for this project was a new experience, but still had the same concept of teaching and helping students. I had to figure out the correct way to communicate with them and how to approach them. I learned a lot from the experience, mostly about myself and how capable I was to help others.

The instructor, Jake, during our interview talked at length about the project, highlighting how much he felt all participants benefited from their close collaboration. He said, “the key to all of this, in my mind, both for the tutors and me the instructor, is flexibility and being open to different approaches and different ways of structuring the class.” He said that he thinks it is important not just to find out how the instructor wants to realize participant roles, but to also consider the peer tutors’ desires. (He did express some relief, however, when he saw just how active and involved, typically shy and quiet, Penny was during small-group work, compared to her more ostensibly passive performances during whole-class discussions.) On the benefits of having developmental students who themselves had just taken the course as peer tutors he said: “It let students know that here is someone who went through the same struggles as you went through and were successful in their journey through the course.” He went on to say that he felt that course-based tutors do not even need to be A students to have a positive effect. He feels there is some benefit in being able to say “Look these are real people who worked real hard to work through the writing process to improve their writing, and they are just here to help.” Jake said that he also gained quite a bit from this experience. He felt that the American Dream project, especially, made him consider the possibilities for students designing their own group projects.

He felt that the creativity and care Kim and Penny demonstrated throughout that project, in their negotiations of what pedagogically might work, “might encourage me to be more creative. They [the tutors] have the benefit of tapping into many different professors who are equally or more creative than I am, and I have no problem stealing from them and learning from them.”

What I believe I saw emerge with Team Six was a heightened level of collaborative trust among the participants. This heightened level of trust enabled Kim and Penny to take active interventions in all phases of the students’ writing processes—from invention, to revision, to delivery. In “A Non-Coda,” Muriel Harris revisits her 1992, “Collaboration Is Not Collaboration Is Not Collaboration,” where she delineated the boundaries between one-to-one tutoring and peer response. In her more recent essay, she argues that peer response groups could be utilized for pre-writing activities like brainstorming how to approach the assignment, trading ideas on how to incorporate readings, and initial thoughts on topics and the narrowing of topics—if instructors are willing and able to facilitate such activities. This is precisely the sort of generative pre-writing activities we saw facilitated with such aplomb by Kim and Penny in the “American Dream” project. While the experienced tutors from the UW case studies were worried about trying to make sure students were meeting the expectations of the instructor’s assignments, these “novice” tutors were creating their own assignments and doing all they could to assist students in generative inquiry, and all other phases, in order to succeed and learn something. In short, and even more than Madeleine, these tutors were vividly enacting and modeling creative and critical thought and action for the benefit of their peers/mentees—something all teachers of writing hope and strive to do.

My research over the years, including these portraits of CBT teachers, students, and tutors in action, has persuaded me that the pros of encouraging tutors to practice at the edge of their expertise, by-and-large, outweigh the cons. Case studies like the kind presented here could help all stakeholders in peer-to-peer teaching and learning consider strategies and rationales for what methods might be characterized as directive or nondirective in various circumstances and how to try to resist moving too far along the continuum in either direction, in a variety of situations, in and out of the classroom. Perhaps with the knowledge gained regarding directive and nondirective pedagogical strategies and methods, CBT practitioners can continue encouraging colleagues (and their students and tutors) in writing classrooms and in writing centers to make and map similar explorations—to take similar complimentary journeys—serving center *and* classroom.