

## Finding Quality Time: How Tutors Make the Most of Wide-Ranging Time Constraints in Tutorials

### **Abstract:**

This presentation investigates how individual tutors negotiate and scaffold tutorials with respect to the tension between the time constraints of the tutorial and the quality of the ongoing session. The goal of this research is to locate the methods which experienced peer tutors have learned or developed to serve different tutees with different time constraints while maintaining the same depth of knowledge-making. This qualitative study of how tutors employ flexibility in their sessions will be facilitated through tutorial observations, tutee surveys, and interviews with peer-tutors.

### **Proposal:**

If there is an ever-present force which writing center tutors are constantly battling with their consciousness of, it is time. Geller et al. refer to this as “the tension between fungible and epochal time” (2006, 33), or rather, the tension between the time on the clock and the quality of the ongoing tutorial. With limited times for tutorials and impending due dates ever-present in the tutee’s mind, “time begins to function as an excuse, preventing us from having harder conversations” (2006, 35). Attempting to cram the structure and content of an hour long session into half an hour won’t serve either the tutor or the writer effectively. Geller et al. asserts that longtime tutors learn through experience how to “expand and contract” (2006, 41) sessions while maintaining the same depth of analysis and knowledge-making. With this qualitative research I intend to study by what means and methods individual tutors at the University of Maine do or do not employ flexibility in their sessions, so as to serve the needs of different tutees under different time constraints. I research this co-negotiation of time within tutor sessions by investigating the following questions:

1. How do tutors “expand and contract” their sessions in order to make the most of the time available to them? 2. How do tutors’ strategies differ from longer sessions to shorter sessions? 3. How do tutors negotiate the scaffolding of a session with a tutee with respect to time restraints?

In order to forward the understanding of how tutors employ flexibility in their tutorials I will employ observations of tutorials, surveys of tutees, and tutor interviews. With this study we are able to determine and better understand the effective and specific methods experienced tutors have learned or developed to expand and contract their tutorials with writers, delivering a

valuable contribution to the writing center community that can be further replicated and investigated by future participants in the field.

#### References:

Geller, Anne Ellen, Eodice, Michele, and Condon, Frankie. 2006. *Everyday Writing Center :A Community of Practice*, 32-48. Logan: Utah State University Press. Accessed October 9, 2019. ProQuest Ebook Central.