

## **Tutorial and Revision in the Writing Center**

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### **Abstract**

Recently, writing centers for EFL writers have been widely established in Taiwan. But, little research is done to link the tutorial during writing consultation to student writers' subsequent revision. The study is conducted to connect what happens during the writing center sessions with how EFL writers revise their draft. Fifty students in two colleges who signed up for writing consultation with three native tutors participated in this study. These participants were divided into two groups; one was college students of English majors, and the other of non-English majors. The effectiveness and effects of tutoring for revision in these two groups were assessed in terms of (a) types and quality of changes in students' revision, (b) connection between the tutorial and students' revision, and (c) students' perceptions toward tutorial and revision. Various methods, including student writers' first draft, revision, questionnaires and recordings during the writing center sessions, were used to explore the possible effect of the writing consultation on student writers' revision. It is hoped that this research may contribute to the study of writing instruction in Taiwan and to the improvement of writing centers in the EFL context.

Key words: Writing Center, writing consultation, revision

### **Introduction**

The establishment of writing centers (or writing labs) has been established in the higher education since the 1930s (Murphy & Law, 1995). Early writing centers were mainly identified with remediation (Carino, 1992; North, 1984). In the late 1970s and 1980s, greater emphasis on facilitating the writing process and on the writer ownership of text (Brooks, 1991; Lunsford, 1991; Williams & Severino, 2004) has been put in writing centers. Numerous guides to writing center practice have been offered in the L1 context (Capossela, 1998; Gillespie & Lerner, 2004; Rafoth, 2000).

Attention has been turned to the second language (L2) writers in the past decade (Harris & Silva, 1993; Kennedy, 1993; Powers, 1993; Severino, 1993; Thonus, 1993). Most studies have examined tutor-writer interaction and writing center pedagogy. They pointed to the differences in the interaction with L2 writers, compared to that with native speakers. Focus has been made on how the roles for tutors and writers are co-constructed in the interaction. It has been found many L2 writers, disregarding the ownership of their own texts, expect their tutors to take on authoritative roles and to offer writing guidance they sorely need. Suggestions on non-directive, collaborative

approach to tutoring and leading questions to help L2 writers discover their own meaning (Gillespie & Lerner, 2000; Shamon & Burns, 1995) have been offered.

So far, little research on the effects of tutoring on the L2 writing revision has been made (Blalock, 1997; Blau & Hall, 2002; Thonus, 1999a, 1999b, 2001, 2002; Williams, 2004). As Thonus (2002: 112) notes, "Rarely is writing center assessment connected with assessments of quality or change(s) in students' writing." Also, the tri-dimensional research on process, product and students' reflections, as suggested in Long (1984), Storch (2005), and Warschauer & Ware (2006), requires more elaboration within the context of second language writers and writing centers.

Inspired by the previous reports, the researcher aimed to link the tutorial during writing consultation to L2 student writers' subsequent revision in Taiwan. The study was conducted to connect what happens during the writing center sessions with how L2 writers revise their draft. The effectiveness of the writing centers in Taiwan was discussed in three dimensions: L1 tutors' comments, L2 writers' revision and L2 writers' reflections. This study would carve up the discussion into the following parts. The second part includes some literature review on writing center theory and on research on writing centers. The description of research questions, participants, instruments, data collection and data analysis is presented in the third part. The fourth part reports the findings of the current study and offers detailed discussion. The last part summarizes the main findings and provides some possible implications as well as recommendations for future research.

## **Literature Review**

The focuses of literature review are on writing center pedagogy. Research on tutorial and revision in the writing center is discussed.

### **Writing Center Pedagogy**

The prevailing approach to writing center tutoring has long been student-centered and non-directive (Clark, 1988; Meyer & Smith, 1987; Shamon & Burns, 1995). As Shamon & Burns (1995) pinpoint, tutoring orthodoxy is process-based, Socratic or private, and a-disciplinary and it includes several key assumptions. First, writing is regarded as a process tied to cognitive activities occurring in recursive stages. In tutoring sessions, a ritual begins by noting where a writer is and proceeds through the remaining stages. Second, often tutoring in the writing center is conducted in private. One-on-one conferencing can best help students clarify their writing to themselves (Murray, 1968). Third, students possess sole ownership of their texts (Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982; Sommers, 1982). Without imposing their own ideas, tutors' mission is to help student writers clarify what is in

the text and to facilitate their subsequent revision. A question-based and indirect script is highly suggested for writing tutors. In a word, tutors have been trained to use process-centered, writer-centered pedagogy to students' drafts.

Recent studies on writing center have directed the attention to L2 writers in the tutoring session. How tutorials with L2 writers require a different or more flexible approach to tutoring than with native speakers has been discussed. The traditional writing center pedagogy suggests a non-directive, collaborative approach to tutoring, encouraging writers to discover their own meaning (Shamoon & Burns, 1995). But, Powers (1993) questioned this non-directive tutoring, arguing that tutors should act as cultural informants to explain educational practices and academic expectations to L2 writers. As more and more L2 writers began to use writing centers (Carter-Tod, 1995; Kennedy, 1993; Powers, 1993; Ronesi, 1995), more research is called for to connect native speaker and L2 concerns, and to link the tutorial during writing consultation to student writers' subsequent revision.

### **Feedback on Second Language Writing**

In recent decades, the process of writing, including planning, the act of writing and the revision of drafts, has gradually attracted writing researchers' as well as instructors' attention. Among the different elements of the process, "revision" is often referred to as an essential part of writing in modifying the writers' original thoughts or ideas and improving their writing (Birdwell, 1980; Murray, 1978).

From the perspective of feedback, peer evaluation (PE) has been widely documented in English writing for ESL/EFL learners (Chou, 2000; Goldstein, 2004; Huang, 1995; Lai & Chung, 2005; Li, 2002; Min, 2006; Su, 1995; Tu, 1997; Williams, 2004; Yang, Badger & Yu, 2006). Most of them suggested positive effects of peer response groups on students' attitudes and their writing ability. Studies on feedback in the writing tutorials with native speakers, however, have emerged only very recently (cf. Williams, 2004; Weigle & Nelson, 2004; Williams & Severino, 2004) and have exerted an increasing influence on second language writing instruction.

Recently, writing centers for EFL writers have been widely established in Taiwan. But, little research is done to link the tutorial during writing consultation to student writers' subsequent revision. The study is thus conducted to connect what happens during the writing center sessions with how EFL writers revise their draft. What types of feedback the L1 tutors may offer L2 student writers and how the L1 feedback helps improve L2 writers' subsequent revision are elaborated.

### **Research Design**

In this section, the design of the current research is introduced. Description of

research questions, participants, instruments, data collection and data analysis is explicitly presented.

### **Research Questions**

The main purposes of the current study are to investigate the effectiveness and effects of tutoring for revision in the writing center. What happens during the writing center sessions and how EFL writers revise their draft are connected and discussed. In general, this study aims to address the following questions:

- (1) To what extent does the tutorial in the writing center help the types and quality of changes in EFL learners' revision?
- (2) To what extent is the tutorial connected with EFL learners' revision?
- (3) How do EFL learners perceive and reflect on the tutorial and revision?

### **Participants**

Fifty EFL learners, whose ages ranged from twenty to twenty-two years old, in two colleges participated in this study. These participants were evenly divided into two groups; one was college students with English majors, and the other with non-English majors. The former received more training in four language skills and was assumed to have higher English proficiency level, thus entitled as the HEFL group (i.e. learners with high English proficiency). The latter, by contrast, majored in Fine Art and was comparatively less proficient in English, thus serving as the LEFL group (i.e. learners with low English proficiency). Both groups were college sophomores in two intact classes. Prior to this study, all of them had no experience with tutorial in the writing center. From September to December in 2007, the participants were asked to sign up for the writing consultation with L1 tutors to discuss their English draft in the writing center. The time limitation for each writing consultation was twenty minutes. Three L1 tutors served in the writing centers in two these colleges. Following the writing consultation, the students were encouraged to follow the L1 tutors' comments to revise their first draft. Then, they had to hand in their first draft and second revision and the recordings of their conversation in the tutorial. Finally, the questionnaires were completed in individual group meetings at the end of 2007.

### **Instruments and Data Collection**

Various methods, including student writers' first draft, revision, questionnaires and recordings during the writing center sessions, were used to explore the possible effect of the writing consultation on student writers' revision. Each participant in the

current study was asked to record the conversation with the native tutors when having the writing consultation. Following the tutorial, the student writers had to transcribe the recordings, serving the data base of L1 writing consultants' comments and suggestions. Apart from the tutorial transcripts, L2 students' first and revised drafts served as another instrument in this research. The drafts were collected and analyzed to explore what revision student writers made in their second drafts.

Additionally, a questionnaire was designed by the researcher to explore the L2 students' reflections on writing consultation with L1 speakers. The data in the questionnaire were analyzed in three parts. Part I (Items 1 ~ 5) was the reflections on L1 comments. Part II (Items 6 ~ 10) was the reflections on improvement. Part III (Items 11 ~ 15) was the reflections on the writing consultation activity. All these items were constructed in a five-point scale, ranging from "strongly agree," "agree," "neutral," "disagree" and "strongly disagree." They were designed to elicit L2 student writers' perceptions of English tutors' feedback, improvement in English writing, and writing with English tutors.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis for the present study centers on the three perspectives: (a) frequencies and types of feedback L1 tutors offered for revision, (b) frequencies and types of L2 writers' revision, and (c) L2 students' reflections on the writing consultation activity. In the previous two items, five key dimensions, including Focus and Meaning, Content and Development, Organization, Language Use and Style, Mechanics and Convention (Appendix A)<sup>1</sup> were elaborated. Additionally, three levels of revision (Hall, 1990), involving word-level revision, phrase-level revision and clause-level revision, were analyzed and discussed.

Microsoft Word, Excel and SPSS software were first employed to compute the data obtained from the tutorial transcripts, drafts and questionnaires. Independent t-tests, Chi-square analysis and correlation tests were performed to examine the possible differences in the EFL learners with different proficiency levels.

## **Results and Discussion**

This section shows the statistical results L1 tutors' comments, L2 writers' revision and questionnaires. The findings of the study are presented in the order of the three research purposes.

### **L1 writing consultants' comments and suggestions**

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<sup>1</sup> These five kinds of feedback were adopted from *MY Access 3.0*. One additional feedback was "Overall Analysis." To be precise in evaluating students' revision, the current investigation focused merely on the five specific perspectives.

The L1 writing consultants' comments were analyzed in five dimensions. The process-based results are discussed in terms of frequency and types of revisions for HEFL learners and for LEFL learners, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Five dimensions of comments for revision

Five Dimensions	Group	N	F	M	SD	$\chi^2$	<i>p</i>
Focus & Meaning	HEFL	25	7	0.28	0.45	5.00*	0.03
	LEFL	25	16	0.64	0.64		
Content & Development	HEFL	25	27	1.08	1.15	15.17**	0.00
	LEFL	25	55	2.20	1.29		
Organization	HEFL	25	13	0.52	0.82	15.78**	0.00
	LEFL	25	33	1.32	0.95		
Language Use & Style	HEFL	25	165	6.60	2.87	30.31**	0.00
	LEFL	25	317	12.68	4.89		
Mechanics & Conventions	HEFL	25	38	1.52	1.50	32.90**	0.00
	LEFL	25	119	4.76	1.48		
Total	HEFL	25	250	10.00	5.51	42.00**	0.00
	LEFL	25	540	21.60	7.60		

Note: N: number of subjects; F: frequency; M: mean of frequency; SD: standard deviations; \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$

Several findings can be drawn from Table 1. To start with, significant differences between HEFL and LEFL were found in the five feedbacks for revision. Lower mean values in each item for HEFL were indicative of significantly fewer comments L1 tutors offered and possibly fewer errors L2 student writers had to correct. The LEFL group, by contrast, received significantly more comments from the L1 tutors, implying more revision for them to make. In sum, it can be argued that the numbers of L1 tutors' feedback are inversely related to the learners' English proficiency level. Fewer comments are provided for learners with higher English proficiency, but more comments for learners with lower English proficiency.

Despite the distinction in the number of comments, both HEFL and LEFL shared similar patterns in ranking L1 tutors' feedbacks for revision. The order of frequency of comments for revision was (1) Language Use and Style, (2) Mechanics and Convention, (3) Content and Development, (4) Organization and (5) Focus and Meaning. In other words, the L1 tutors offered comments on language use and style most frequently, but focus and meaning least frequently in their tutorials.

### **L2 students' subsequent revision**

A product approach is adopted to investigate to what extent the student writers adopted the L1 consultants' comments in their subsequent revision. The product-based results of student writers' revision were discussed from five dimensions (Table 2) and from three levels of revision (Table 3).

Table 2 Five dimensions of L2 student writers' revision

Five Dimensions	Group	N	F	M	SD	$\chi^2$	<i>p</i>
Focus & Meaning	HEFL	25	6	0.24	0.44	5.05*	0.02
	LEFL	25	13	0.52	0.65		
Content & Development	HEFL	25	23	0.92	0.95	14.67**	0.00
	LEFL	25	45	1.80	0.71		
Organization	HEFL	25	12	0.48	0.82	12.93*	0.01
	LEFL	25	27	1.08	0.76		
Language Use & Style	HEFL	25	142	5.68	2.41	31.88**	0.00
	LEFL	25	307	12.28	4.89		
Mechanics & Conventions	HEFL	25	33	1.32	1.31	36.10**	0.00
	LEFL	25	105	4.20	1.49		
Total	HEFL	25	216	8.64	4.63	40.13**	0.00
	LEFL	25	497	19.88	6.63		

Note: N: number of subjects; F: frequency; M: mean of frequency; SD: standard deviations; \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$

Table 3 Three levels of L2 student writers' revision

Three Levels	Group	N	F	M	SD	$\chi^2$	<i>p</i>
Word-level	HEFL	25	112	4.48	2.62	50.00**	0.00
	LEFL	25	305	12.20	5.47		
Phrase-level	HEFL	25	70	2.80	2.98	17.32*	0.03
	LEFL	25	113	4.52	3.54		
Clause-level	HEFL	25	34	1.36	1.47	19.81*	0.01
	LEFL	25	79	3.16	1.46		
Total	HEFL	25	216	8.64	5.29	46.00**	0.00
	LEFL	25	497	19.88	7.09		

Note: N: number of subjects; F: frequency; M: mean of frequency in use; SD: standard deviations; \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$

Table 2 summarizes the five dimensions of L2 student writers' revision. Significant differences were identified between HEFL and LEFL in their subsequent revision. Higher mean values in each item for LEFL were suggestive of significantly larger numbers of revision L2 student writers made. The HEFL group, by contrast, made significant fewer revisions. This finding echoed that in Table 1, in which HEFL received fewer L1 tutors' comments and had fewer revisions in their writing. The LEFL group, on the contrary, had more L1 tutors' suggestions and accordingly revised more.

As in Table 1, both HEFL and LEFL in Table 2 shared similar patterns in adopting five major feedbacks for revision. The order of frequency of comments for revision was (1) Language Use and Style, (2) Mechanics and Convention, (3) Content and Development, (4) Organization and (5) Focus and Meaning. To put it differently, the L2 writers addressed the most on language use and style, but the least on focus and meaning in their revisions.

Additionally, regarding size of revisions, both HEFL and LEFL revised in a similar way. The most frequent revision occurred at the level of word (M=4.48 for

HEFL; M=12.20 for LEFL), followed by phrase (M=2.80 for HEFL; M=4.52 for LEFL) and by clause (M=1.36 for HEFL; M=3.16 for LEFL). This finding was in disagreement with Min (2005), in which the sentence was the unit that received more revisions.

Table 4 Correlation coefficients between L1 consultants' comments and L2 student writers' revision

Five Dimensions	Group	N	F <sub>1</sub>	F <sub>2</sub>	P	Correlation
Focus & Meaning	HEFL	25	7	6	86%	0.821**
	LEFL	25	16	13	81%	0.950**
Content & Development	HEFL	25	27	23	85%	0.954**
	LEFL	25	55	45	82%	0.867**
Organization	HEFL	25	13	12	92%	0.970**
	LEFL	25	33	27	82%	0.834**
Language Use & Style	HEFL	25	165	142	86%	0.986**
	LEFL	25	317	307	97%	0.995**
Mechanics & Conventions	HEFL	25	38	33	87%	0.925**
	LEFL	25	119	105	88%	0.983**
Total	HEFL	25	250	216	86%	0.987**
	LEFL	25	540	497	92%	0.988**

Note: N: number of subjects; F<sub>1</sub>: frequency of L1 consultants' comments for revision; F<sub>2</sub>: frequency of L2 student writers' revision; P: percentage of taking L1 comments in revision; Correlation: correlation coefficients between L1 comments and L2 writers' subsequent revision; \**p* < .05; \*\**p* < .01

Table 4 display the correlation coefficients between L1 tutors' comments and L2 student writers' revision. In five dimensions, significant correlations were found in both HEFL and LEFL groups. These participants' subsequent revisions had positively correlated with the L1 consultants' feedbacks.

Judging from the Pearson correlation coefficients for both groups, the dimension of Language Use and Style has the highest coefficients (*r* = 0.986 for HEFL and *r* = 0.995 for LEFL) and thus the closest relationship with the L1 tutors' comments and L2 student revision, followed by the dimension of Mechanics and Conventions. As indicated in higher correlation coefficients, LEFL learners relied more on the L1 tutors' comments in these two dimensions to revise their draft. It can be argued that feedbacks in these two dimensions, referred to as local comments, were more direct and easier for student writers to revise.

Additionally, it is of great interest to find that LEFL group had lower correlation coefficients in three dimensions (less than 0.9), including Focus & Meaning, Content & Development, and Organization. There are two possible accounts for this finding. One was probably due to the less directive comments from L1 tutors. In-directive feedbacks without definite words for revision might pose greater challenges for these learners to comprehend and to revise. Proficiency levels or oral problems for further communication might offer another account. Due to the lower English proficiency,

learners might be discouraged from raising further questions to clarify the L1 tutors' comments or from asking the L1 tutors to offer more specific feedback. Having no idea how to work on these global dimensions, learners of lower English proficiency levels might ignore the L1 tutors' comments and try to avoid make related revisions.

### L2 students' responses to writing consultation

Results of students' reflections in the questionnaires are discussed from three perspectives. Part I (Items 1 ~ 5) addresses the reflections on L1 comments. Part II (Items 6 ~ 10) focuses on the reflections on improvement. Part III (Items 11 ~ 15) concerns the reflections on the writing consultation activity.

Table 5 L2 student responses to writing consultation

<b>Part I: Reflections on L1 comments</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>p</b>																																																																																																																																															
1. I regard the English tutor as real audience.	<b>HEFL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>4.12</b>	<b>0.53</b>	22.61**	0.00																																																																																																																																															
	LEFL	25	3.72	1.06			2. I highly value the English tutor's comments.	<b>HEFL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>4.40</b>	<b>0.58</b>	0.08	0.78	LEFL	25	4.12	0.83	3. I adopt the English tutor's comments for revision.	<b>HEFL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>4.40</b>	<b>0.65</b>	0.21	0.65	LEFL	25	4.20	0.91	4. The comments and suggestions <i>the English tutor</i> gives are fair.	<b>HEFL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>4.28</b>	<b>0.46</b>	0.01	0.98	LEFL	25	4.00	0.71	5. I don't think <i>the English tutor</i> may avoid giving negative feedback for fear of hurting me.	<b>HEFL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>3.80</b>	<b>0.91</b>	0.07	0.80	LEFL	25	3.88	0.78	<b>Part II: Reflections on improvement</b>							6. I think <i>the English tutor</i> helps me a lot in "Focus and Meaning".	<b>HEFL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>3.32</b>	<b>0.69</b>	0.38	0.54	LEFL	25	2.68	0.85	7. I think <i>the English tutor</i> helps me a lot in "Content and Development".	<b>HEFL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>3.60</b>	<b>0.71</b>	0.20	0.66	LEFL	25	3.00	0.87	8. I think <i>the English tutor</i> helps me a lot in "Organization".	<b>HEFL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>3.52</b>	<b>0.65</b>	0.11	0.75	LEFL	25	2.68	0.84	9. I find <i>the English tutor</i> helps me a lot in "Language Use and Style".	<b>HEFL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>4.52</b>	<b>0.59</b>	11.43**	0.00	LEFL	25	3.60	1.22	10. I find <i>the English tutor</i> helps me a lot in "Mechanics and Convention".	<b>HEFL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>4.08</b>	<b>0.76</b>	3.67	0.06	LEFL	25	3.04	1.10	<b>Part III: Reflections on WC activity</b>							11. I revise my writing more when I have the writing consultation with <i>the English tutor</i> .	<b>HEFL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>4.20</b>	<b>0.58</b>	22.93**	0.00	LEFL	25	3.48	1.39	12. With the help of <i>the English tutor</i> , I increase my confidence in my writing.	<b>HEFL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>4.08</b>	<b>0.64</b>	2.91	0.09	LEFL	25	3.00	1.00	13. I think <i>writing consultation</i> quite useful in improving my composition and my writing skills.	<b>HEFL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>4.32</b>	<b>0.56</b>	2.31	0.13	LEFL
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	LEFL	25	4.12	0.83			3. I adopt the English tutor's comments for revision.	<b>HEFL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>4.40</b>	<b>0.65</b>	0.21	0.65	LEFL	25	4.20	0.91	4. The comments and suggestions <i>the English tutor</i> gives are fair.	<b>HEFL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>4.28</b>	<b>0.46</b>	0.01	0.98	LEFL	25	4.00	0.71	5. I don't think <i>the English tutor</i> may avoid giving negative feedback for fear of hurting me.	<b>HEFL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>3.80</b>	<b>0.91</b>	0.07	0.80	LEFL	25	3.88	0.78	<b>Part II: Reflections on improvement</b>							6. I think <i>the English tutor</i> helps me a lot in "Focus and Meaning".	<b>HEFL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>3.32</b>	<b>0.69</b>	0.38	0.54	LEFL	25	2.68	0.85	7. I think <i>the English tutor</i> helps me a lot in "Content and Development".	<b>HEFL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>3.60</b>	<b>0.71</b>	0.20	0.66	LEFL	25	3.00	0.87	8. I think <i>the English tutor</i> helps me a lot in "Organization".	<b>HEFL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>3.52</b>	<b>0.65</b>	0.11	0.75	LEFL	25	2.68	0.84	9. I find <i>the English tutor</i> helps me a lot in "Language Use and Style".	<b>HEFL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>4.52</b>	<b>0.59</b>	11.43**	0.00	LEFL	25	3.60	1.22	10. I find <i>the English tutor</i> helps me a lot in "Mechanics and Convention".	<b>HEFL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>4.08</b>	<b>0.76</b>	3.67	0.06	LEFL	25	3.04	1.10	<b>Part III: Reflections on WC activity</b>							11. I revise my writing more when I have the writing consultation with <i>the English tutor</i> .	<b>HEFL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>4.20</b>	<b>0.58</b>	22.93**	0.00	LEFL	25	3.48	1.39	12. With the help of <i>the English tutor</i> , I increase my confidence in my writing.	<b>HEFL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>4.08</b>	<b>0.64</b>	2.91	0.09	LEFL	25	3.00	1.00	13. I think <i>writing consultation</i> quite useful in improving my composition and my writing skills.	<b>HEFL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>4.32</b>	<b>0.56</b>	2.31	0.13	LEFL	25	3.00	1.00								
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	LEFL	25	3.00	1.00																																																																																																																																																	

	LEFL	25	3.64	0.81		
14. I enjoy the <i>writing consultation activities</i> .	HEFL	25	4.24	0.60	10.18**	0.00
	LEFL	25	3.32	1.10		
15. I hope the <i>writing consultation activities</i> with English tutors will be held next semester.	HEFL	25	4.48	0.59	8.61*	0.01
	LEFL	25	3.52	1.08		

Note: N: number of subjects; M: mean; SD: standard deviations; \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$

Table 5 summarizes the statistical results of L2 student reflections on the comments from native speakers of American English (Part I), on their improvement in English writing (Part II), and on the writing consultation activity (Part III). In Part I, the mean scores in both groups exceeded the average ( $M=2.5$ ), implying their positive attitudes toward L1 tutors' comments. Compared with the LEFL group, the HEFL group had higher mean scores in Items 1 to 4 and expressed more positive responses. The only statistically significant difference was found in Item 1 about the real audience. Judging from the mean scores, it can be argued that HEFL regarded L1 tutors more as a real audience, for whom they could communicate and collaborate in their draft. LEFL, by contrast, viewed L1 tutors less as a real audience partly because their lower proficiency in English might impede them from having good communication with L1 tutors and partly because they might respect more the authority of L1 tutors and dare not to argue against their comments.

Both HEFL and LEFL groups displayed similar patterns in relation to improvements in English writing (Part II). They made the greatest process in Language Use and Style (Item 9), followed by Mechanics and Convention (Item 10). Less improvement was reported in Content and Development (Item 7), Organization (Item 8), and Focus and Meaning (Item 6). This ranking echoed those in Table 1 and Table 2. It can be argued that what L1 tutors offered for comments are closely related to what L2 student writers revised and to what improvements they have made in English writing.

With regard to the responses toward the writing consultation activity (Part III), HEFL group differed significantly from LEFL group in Items 11 and 14. Compared with the LEFL group, the HEFL group revised their writing more and enjoyed the writing consultation activity with significant difference. There were two possible explanations why the LEFL group displayed comparatively negative responses toward writing consultation activity. One was that their lower proficiency in English might result in their less command of English in effective communication and in clarifying the L1 tutors' suggestions. Few ideas of how to revise L1 tutors' global comments or in-directive comments (i.e. focus, content and organization) might offer another account.

## Conclusion

The present study investigated the tutorial and revision in writing centers in Taiwan. The effectiveness and effects of tutoring for revision in EFL writing were assessed in terms of (a) types and quality of changes in students' revision, (b) connection between the tutorial and students' revision, and (c) students' perceptions toward the writing consultation activity. It is found that what happens during the writing center sessions is closely connected with how EFL writers revise their draft. English-majors, compared with non-English majors, significantly regarded L1 tutors as real audience, enjoyed the writing consultation activities more.

These findings were further elaborated the writing center pedagogy. First of all, indirectness, though being considered a form of politeness (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1996; Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper, 1989; Thonus, 2004), poses greater challenges for L2 student writers to comprehend, especially for those of lower English proficiency levels. As Thonus (1999b) and Williams & Severino (2004) suggest, tutors should offer more direct comments for L2 writers to ease the processing load and to increase the comprehensibility to the L2 writers. This in turn echoes the challenges for tutors of non-native speakers, as pinpointed in Thonus (2004). In working with L2 student writers, L1 tutors should strike a balance between providing clear guidance to tutees and taking ownership of the text. To meet these challenges, L1 tutors and L2 tutees should both be trained to act and think like the other party. Taping and transcribing tutorials is also essential to conscious-raising. The content of interaction and the features of interaction will be manifestly revealed in this way.

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**Appendix A Five dimensions** (adapted from *MYAccess 3.0*)

<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Definition</b>
1. Focus & Meaning	A writer’s ability to present a consistent, unified message and stay on topic.
2. Content & Development	A writer’s ability to provide content that supports main idea or controlling point, and provide supporting details, examples and evidence.
3. Organization	A writer’s ability to present ideas in a logical and ordered fashion.
4. Language Use and Style	The decisions a writer makes to create “style” in the writing. Style is created through sentence variety, word choice and usage.
5. Mechanics & Conventions	A writer’s ability to apply the rules of standard American English, including grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.