ABSTRACT

DENISE ELIZABETH SAWYER. A Peer-Centered Approach: A Case Study on the Experiences of Early College High School Writing Tutors. (Under the direction of Professors Nancy Penrose and Brandy Grabow.)

The Early College High School model for education began to prepare underrepresented students for higher education in the 1970’s. As these students are expected to perform at the university level, support services are crucial for their success. In the field of composition studies, there has been a continued conversation on writing support available for students. The following is a case study of a peer-centered writing center at an early college high school in North Carolina, Hertford Early College High School. In order to engage with and expand upon current literature, this case study aims to understand what the experience of tutoring is like for high school students, and the benefits tutors recognize from their work as peer tutors.

In order to explore these research questions, the principal, writing center director, and six tutors were interviewed. The questions these groups were asked focus on the perception of the center within the school, challenges the center faces, and benefits and the experiences for student tutors. The analysis of these responses with current literature and in pulling out trends across individual interviews showed that this center struggles with the perception that the service is remedial or focused on grades. Additionally, the tutors believe both they and Hertford students who use the services benefit from the peer-centered writing center, which would drastically shift if the service was staffed with faculty.