READING IN THE WRITING CENTER: TUTOR EDUCATION AND PRAXIS

Amanda M. Greenwell
Central Connecticut State
University[1]
greenwellamm@ccsu.edu

Renée J. Lavoie
University of Saint Joseph
rlavoie@usj.edu

Gissel A. Campos
University of Saint Joseph
gcampos@usj.edu

Sarah E. Gerrish
University of Saint Joseph
sgerrish@usj.edu

Mary E. Joerg
University of Saint Joseph
mjoerg@usj.edu

Abstract

Writing center scholarship's recent interest in the role of reading in the writing center often includes calls for stronger praxis. This article details and reflects upon the ways in which our writing center altered our tutor education course to include a focus on reading support as well as the ways in which tutors applied such education to their practice. Composing from two perspectives—that of tutor educators and that of tutors—we discuss four reading-focused aspects of our tutor education course: readerly self-reflection and tutorly awareness, annotation practices, scenario-based interventions, and English Language Learner (ELL)-specific support. We conclude that our experiment with integrating reading support formally into tutor education has promising results for writing tutor praxis, and we also suggest further avenues for consideration.

Writing center scholarship has recently exhibited an increase in attention to the role of reading in the writing center. Scholars such as W. Gary Griswold, G. Travis Adams, Ellen C. Carillo, Muriel Harris, and Carolyne M. King have begun to theorize more specifically the ways in which writing centers are positioned to work with reading, and they have also made some practical suggestions about reading-focused interventions in tutorials and tutor training. We will review that work below, but here we emphasize one key thread that unites all of this work: the call for writing center scholars and practitioners to prioritize attention to reading in their work and then to share their reading-oriented interventions with the field (Adams 86-89; Harris 239-241; Griswold 67-70, Carillo, "Letter" 1; Carillo, "Reading and Writing" 137-139; Carillo, "Reading With Purpose" 23; King 69). In her editor's introduction to a special issue of WLN: A Journal of Writing Center Scholarship, the first of any writing center studies journal devoted to the intersection of reading and writing center work, Carillo makes such a representative call: "As you read this issue, I invite you to think about how reading is currently addressed in your own centers [...] and what you might contribute to the conversation about the role of reading in writing centers and writing center studies" (1).

This article is a response to such invitations. It details and reflects upon the ways in which our writing center altered our tutor education course to include a focus on reading support, as well as the ways in which tutors applied such education to their practice. It is to our knowledge one of the first articles to include, at length, the voices of tutors who are "on the 'front lines'" (Griswold 60), as they tutor students who are both writers and readers.[2] To emphasize these voices, we have chosen to compose from two perspectives: that of tutor educators, and that of tutors. We make this division not because we see our roles as entirely separate within the mission of writing center work, but because we wish to honor the fact that student tutors enact a praxis that differs in focus and scope from that of tutor educators. Indeed, our overlapping yet distinct praxes constitute the foci of this piece, which presents a dual-voiced narrative of our developing responses to the call for stronger reading support in the writing center.

This dual-voiced discussion is divided into four parts, and each part corresponds with a newly conceived reading-focused aspect of our tutor education course: readerly self-reflection and tutorly awareness, annotation practices, scenario-based interventions, and English Language Learner (ELL)-specific support. In each section, we who are tutor educators discuss our design and implementation of these aspects of the course, and we who are tutors discuss our experience taking the course and applying our new knowledge to tutoring fellow undergraduate students in both one-on-one tutorials and embedded course support settings. We conclude that our experiment with integrating reading support formally into tutor education has promising results for writing tutor praxis, and it is worth sharing as part of the charge to "secure a place for reading" in the writing center (Horning 7). Additionally, writing center professionals must continue to become mindful of the ways they position the role of reading in relation to writing.[3]

Institutional and Theoretical Contexts

The University of Saint Joseph (USJ) in West Hartford, CT is a small, liberal arts college located in a large suburban town bordering a major city. Its most popular majors are Nursing, Social Work, and

Psychology. The Writing Center at USJ is one division of the Center for Academic Excellence (CAE), which also houses content tutoring services, academic success support, and accessibility services. Several years ago, the university allocated funds from a federal Title III/REACH grant to add a Literacy & Learning Coach to the CAE staff in response to a perceived need for reading support for our students. When Renée Lavoie, a public school-certified literacy specialist, began that position, she and Amanda Greenwell, the Writing Center Administrator, began discussing a potential overlap in services, especially since the same grant had already expanded our undergraduate staff in order to embed a writing tutor in every section of our first year writing courses.

Given that Alice Horning suggests that one way writing centers can work to include reading support is to invite reading specialists to work with their tutors (4), this collaboration seemed potentially fruitful. Amanda and Renée already had a good working relationship; furthermore, Renée understood writing centers well, having formerly been a writing center consultant herself, and Amanda, who educates pre-service secondary English teachers and who spent some time as an academic success specialist in higher education, had a practical understanding of reading support. We agreed that we should experiment with adding attention to reading support to our one-credit tutor education practicum course. Typically, students take this course concurrently with their first semester of tutoring, but we elected to invite experienced tutors to join their newer peers for the reading-focused sessions. Amanda and Renée's voices make up the "Tutor Educators" voice in the body of this article.

Gissel Campos, Sarah Gerrish, and Mary Joerg comprise the collective "Tutor" voice. When they entered the tutor education course with seven other new tutors, they were undergraduate sophomores newly recommended to be writing tutors by their first-year professors. Each concurrently held regular writing center hours for one-on-one undergraduate tutorials and worked as an embedded tutor in at least one section of a first-year writing course. Gissel majors in Child Studies and minors in Psychology and Spanish, Sarah majors in Psychology and minors in Public Health, and Mary majors in English and minors in Art History, so they bring a range of disciplinary experience to our center.

Our center's burgeoning plan to integrate attention to reading into writing tutor education dovetailed with the uptick in scholarly interest in the role of reading in the writing center. For instance, Lauren Fitzgerald and Melissa Ianetta's much-acclaimed 2016 inaugural edition of The Oxford Guide for Writing Tutors: Practice and Research, which we were already using in our tutor education course, devotes a small section to "Helping Writers with Reading." Fitzgerald and Ianetta assert that:

> although helping someone with reading might not, initially, seem to be the job of a writing tutor, […] writing assignments often start with reading— including the instructor's written instructions, the text or texts writers must respond to, and prior research to review and cite (94).

Several of the scholars mentioned above became guides for the ways we could extend this concept and make it more concrete for our tutors. For example, Griswold notes that while tutors often perceive a general need for reading support in their tutorials, tutors need guidance that helps them develop a praxis of writing support. Acknowledging that many writing centers, for various reasons, may not have the resources to provide thorough theoretical foundations for reading support, he argues that tutors would still benefit from exposure to key reading concepts and practices that would help them tutor their students more appropriately and more confidently (67). Developing tutorly sensibilities to their own and to students' reading practices—as well as helping tutors develop a language to discuss them—is crucial to expanding writing center work to include reading.

Carillo suggests that writing center professionals might borrow the concepts and practices necessary to perform such work from the fields of education, psychology, and composition, including Mike Bunn's concept of "reading like a writer" and Horning's suggestions for modeling expert reading practices ("Reading and Writing Centers" 137). In a companion piece, she isolates one approach and keenly adapts it for writing center use: reading with a purpose. Noting that it emerges as a key strategy across reading scholarship, Carillo makes the case for how tutoring students to read with a purpose can increase efficacy, mindfulness, and motivation in student readers ("Reading with a Purpose"), in addition to facilitating transfer of this skill to other settings (22).[4] Carillo, whose scholarship on reading straddles the fields of composition and writing center studies, emphasizes in both contexts the need for visibility and mindfulness as we support student readers.

Adams and Harris underscore the importance of such support by providing insight into the intricacies of adding reading to the writing center repertoire. Adams reminds us that just as there tends to be a disparity between writing center tutors and students in writing practices, so also are there disparities between their reading practices (73). He also critiques how writing

center tutor guides tend to privilege strategies for reading literary texts, which are not matched well to the non-literary reading assignments with which many writing center students struggle (76). Harris takes up this charge, pointing out how often students who visit writing centers present with reading needs. From comprehending paper assignments to working through secondary sources they must cite in their papers, student writers frequently bring their reading into the writing center, and tutors are faced with deciding how to help them. Harris argues that

> "if tutors focus on discussing students' writing skills without being aware of underlying reading problems, tutors are tending to only part of what the students need to learn" (229).

In order to remedy this gap—which echoes the "gaping hole in writing center scholarship" on reading (229)—we must experiment with tutor education strategies that equip tutors to support students as readers as well as writers. Here we present our experimentation, which was designed to raise tutorly awareness of reading support and to encourage the use of reading support strategies in our center's tutorials.

Readerly Self-Reflection and Tutorly Awareness: The Gallery Walk

Tutor Educators

In introducing and framing the task of guiding writing tutors to develop a reading support praxis, we knew that our starting point had to address the concern that Griswold expresses: "[H]ow can we effectively judge what writing center tutors might know or not know about the teaching of reading to college-level writers?" (62). We, like Griswold, knew that we needed to anchor this inquiry in tutors' own experiences with academic reading, fully aware that because of their strong academic abilities, writing tutors would likely have "no real memories of actually learning to read, but rather recall just being readers" (65). Adams's strategy for mining tutors' reading experiences is an individualized reading inventory (84), which asks tutors to rate their intellectual responses to and strategies for accessing the texts they encounter. He then uses that document "to spur conversations about reading and writing center work" (83). We drew upon and expanded this strategy by designing a collaborative activity that allowed us to create a communal rendering of tutors' readerly practices as well as tutors' assumptions about general students' reading practices.

This collaborative activity took the form of a gallery walk, an active learning strategy that allows instructors to "gauge the depth of student understanding of

particular concepts and to challenge misconceptions" ("What"). Typically, a gallery walk fosters active participation in the learning process because the kinesthetic and visual nature of the activity prompts students to ask questions, share ideas, and formulate and revise conclusions about what they see as they create and "walk" along the gallery walls. As a tutor education method to access the potential role of reading in the writing center, the gallery walk proved to be a strong choice: it became, at once, a showcase for the key literacy ideas that we wanted to feature throughout the semester, a method of self-assessment and communal reflection regarding the tutors' own literacy practices, and a categorization tool by which they could consider the literacy strategies they see their student writers employ.

To facilitate our gallery walk, we printed and hung on the walls of our "gallery" classroom space a series of statements pertaining to reading practices:

- "Before I begin reading an assignment, I think about what I already know about the topic";
- "Before I begin reading, I set a purpose for why I am reading that is related to what I plan to do with or how I will be assessed on the information";
- "Before I begin reading, I scan the assignment to familiarize myself with the text features (headings, sub-headings, diagrams, captions, etc.)";
- "I divide my reading assignments into 'chunks' or more manageable parts";
- "I put off reading long assignments until I have a large chunk of time to read" and
- "When I begin a reading assignment, I start at the beginning."[5]

Below each statement was a matrix, one row of which invited tutors to categorize their own use of the reading practice ("always," "sometimes," or "never"), and one of which invited them to categorize their perceptions of their student writers' uses of these practices. At the start of the session, we handed tutors a sheet of dot stickers and asked them to move about the room, consider the statements, and place stickers in the appropriate boxes under each, thus mapping our data for visual consumption by the group.

This visual inventory immediately threw our points of consensus and difference into sharp relief and launched a robust discussion about reading practices. A few trends were apparent: the "sometimes" boxes contained the most dots, and there were more "always" dots in the tutor self-perception row than in the student writer row of the matrix. Tutors explored the nuanced

contexts for their responses, often bringing up differences in discipline- and course-related expectations that drove their reading decisions as well as embodied experiences that inflected their practices. They also expressed some uncertainty about whether their reading strategies were "right" or "appropriate," revealing a lack of confidence in reading approaches despite having consistently employed strategies that had "worked" for them up to this point. This uncertainty allowed us to provide some direct instruction about the reading techniques we had showcased on the walls, which prompted some of our tutors to admit that they should begin using some of these strategies more mindfully themselves.

The tutors also concluded that they assume their efficient reading, like their strong writing, set them apart from their peers, and they were perplexed when confronted with a question about whether or not they could accurately "assess" the readerly practices of other students. A key realization for them was that since they had not often foregrounded reading practices in their tutoring sessions or informal discussions about writing, they had access to very little information about their peers' reading practices. Thus, beyond just a discussion of who was using which strategies, the gallery walk created a forum for us to interrogate assumptions about reading at the college level and the extent to which "best" reading practices are uniform and universal. Below, the tutors discuss their experiences, takeaways, and applications for praxis related to this discussion, and their narrative reveals the power of readerly self-reflection as a component of tutorly awareness about reading support.

Tutors

Before the gallery walk, we had not made many conscious, articulable connections between writing and reading practices. This session allowed us to start talking about how we read for our college courses, and that was especially beneficial for helping us see how our reading processes played a significant role in our writing practices. As we discussed our strategies for reading, we agreed that we use many different strategies in various contexts, often aimed at understanding our reading in a certain way, which correspond to how—and often paid off when—we write about what we have read.

This discussion sparked our interest in making those types of strategies available to other student writers and coaching them about how to use them in context. Because the gallery walk gave names to strategies that we had been using for so long already, we found Renée's formulation of a literacy "tool box" particularly helpful in this endeavor. The tool box

metaphor seems simple—and it is not an uncommon one in tutoring work—but the idea of creating a mental space which is reserved for techniques and strategies to support students as they engage with reading-focused work was a key shift for us as tutors, a threshold concept that helped us to expand our developing writing tutor praxis to include reading. Thus, the bridge between our gallery walk and the development of our tutoring tool boxes was our self-reflection: the ability to identify specific strategies we use in our own reading is critical to supporting students because as we become aware of our own reading practices, we can help students become aware of and add to theirs. We can use the language of reading to highlight the strategies they are using, as well as provide new strategies for them to use.

We also agree with Carillo that reading with a purpose is one of the foundational reading strategies we can encourage in our writing center praxis because it works in so many academic contexts. Mary, for instance, discussed the different strategies she employs in each of her majors. In Art History, she uses disciplinary concepts her professors emphasize in class as a guide to discern important information in her reading. In English, however, she focuses less on information-gathering than on interpreting characters, themes, plots, and patterns. Even within a discipline, reading purposes can differ, which we readily see in our writing center work. For example, if a student comes in with a not-yet-drafted assignment for their business class where they have to read an article and respond in writing to three post-reading questions, we are going to handle that consultation differently than one for another business student who is overwhelmed by the task of reading five to ten articles as sources for a longer research paper. In the instance where the student comes in with a short article and questions to answer, we might model for the student how to use the question prompts to set a purpose for reading, and spend the rest of the session in conversation with the student as they read the article and begin to formulate their responses. However, for the larger research paper, we will be discussing reading approaches the student can use as they read through articles on their own. For example, we would model or suggest reviewing abstracts for relevancy and finding connections and conflicts among the articlesn anticipation of developing an argument and outline, and then we would invite the student to return for an appointment where we can discuss their progress.

Beginning our reading support praxis with a focus on reading for a purpose helped us, as tutors, make explicit connections between reading and writing assignments for our students. For example, in the first-year writing course in which Gissel was an embedded

tutor, students were working on a lens-artifact assignment. The assignment required students to identify the themes of one reading (the lens), and, through them, analyze the second reading (the artifact). As Gissel worked with different students, she discovered that they were confused about how to approach this task. Their early drafts largely included comparisons and contrasts of the two readings, as opposed to lens-focused analysis. Carillo notes that "even if a student has, in fact, already completed the reading component of an assignment, her way of reading may not have been appropriate or sufficient to complete the related writing task" ("Reading with a Purpose" 19). In this case, Gissel realized that her students had not read the material in a way that was productive for the purpose of the paper.

This misunderstanding of the assignment signaled that the students were not approaching the readings with the appropriate purposes, so it was important to guide them in understanding how setting a purpose for reading could help them engage the assignment efficiently. To do this, Gissel focused her tutoring sessions on reading approaches. She pointed out that students needed to use two different reading strategies with each text, and she practiced them with students. First, Gissel asked students to review the first reading with the purpose of looking for its main ideas. After identifying these main ideas, they could move quickly to the overarching themes that the reading addressed. Next, she had students review the second reading with the purpose of identifying and discussing examples that connected to the themes they saw in the first reading. Because Gissel implemented a guided reading scenario for students, they were able to apply the strategies that would help them locate and analyze the information they needed from each text. Once students could identify themes and examples from the readings, they were able to see the connections between the readings that they needed to address in their writing—and the connections between strategic reading and effective writing.

Annotation Practices: Making Reading Visible

Tutor Educators

As Rachel Ihara and Ann Del Principe note, "different purposes for reading shape reading behaviors" (1), and one behavior that can link reading strategies, such as setting a purpose, to writing, is annotation. Therefore, Carillo's work on making reading visible via annotation was key to our next step as tutor educators. Carillo notes that while educators can access

students' writing with ease since students often submit it in stages for us to review, we actually have very little access to students' reading processes. But ignoring reading as a practice firmly linked to composing is problematic because it de-emphasizes the significance of reading development in ways that hinder writing students' growth and writing teachers' efficacy (Carillo, "Making" 37-38). In A Writer's Guide to Mindful Reading, her open-access textbook written for a student audience, Carillo not only highlights the ways in which close attention to reading supports writerly development, but also details annotation as a key strategy students can use to become more writerly readers:

> When you annotate you are writing as you read. You make notes, you comment, react, and raise questions in the margins of your text. Reflections of your engagement with the text and its author, annotations represent the initial and preliminary ways you are participating in a scholarly conversation with the author of what you are reading (6).

Annotation practices, then, seem to be a key way writing centers are positioned to address the writing-reading connection —and not only because they prompt a critical conversation between reader and source text, but because they make students' reading practices visible to tutors, who can then provide support.

As a literacy specialist and a former academic success specialist who each teach courses involving reading and writing regularly, we know that students often benefit from guided practice with annotating college-level texts. Readers at our university have shared that they were expected to annotate in high school, but not shown explicitly how to annotate, or if they were shown, that might have been sometime in late elementary to middle school. They were applying strategies developmentally appropriate for a fifth grader to college-level assignments. Indeed, many of them understood notetaking to be "something I should do" rather than a strategized choice for accessing their course materials or preparing to write about a text. Essentially, they did not have a way to talk to themselves about the academic work they were doing. We needed to position our tutors to prompt annotating as a process of internal choice related to the purpose with which they were reading and not just a way to decorate a page.

Furthermore, students visiting our center reported annotating most often for English courses focused on literature. Indeed, Griswold points out this same trend at his university, and Adams notes that Gillespie and Lerner's Longman Guide to Peer Tutoring provides close reading and annotation examples exclusively for

literary texts, discipline-specific strategies that break down when applied elsewhere (78-84). We wanted to work against the erasure of annotation as a key skill for reading in other disciplines; consequently, we designed sessions about annotation that explicitly position annotation as part of an academic reading process writ large, and a valid strategy to use with texts other than literature.

We also couched this work in terms of reading with a purpose, as annotations must proceed from directed reading. Thus, we discussed the variety of marginal comments a savvy reader might make, such as summarizing content, highlighting key "turns" in the argument, and articulating questions for further consideration. Such written commentary largely helps a reader track their interaction with the reading, "making visible" their metacognition via writing. This key concept underpinned our annotation sessions: annotating is not just a way to understand the text; it's a way for readers to understand how they understand the text. Thus, annotating with a purpose has to do with the transaction between the student and the material, a transaction that is influenced by contexts such as discipline, genre, course, and aims.

Providing this tool to our writing tutors gave them a way to weave writing and verbal expression into tutorials requiring attention to reading so that they could combine reading support with writing skills. This was a big step for our tutors because many of these higher-level literacy skills were so second nature to some of them, they didn't know they were making these moves with such sophistication. In some cases, our tutors were making readerly moves in their heads but not in the margin, which means they had not yet made visible their own reading. Therefore, talking explicitly about the purpose and practice of annotation helped tutors make note-taking processes explicit for their students.

Tutors

A main concept we took away from the annotation instruction was that annotation enables and documents the reader's ability to engage with the text. This interaction between reader and text allows for a deeper understanding of the reading as well as of the reader's intellectual response to that reading. We also admit that while some of us were already using annotation as a reading and thinking strategy, some of us were not. We non-annotators found that emphasizing annotation with other students helped us realize how important it is to annotate a text in order to think about and understand it in ways that we had not before. This made us even more motivated to support students as they figured out

the kind of intellectual moves that they can make when they interact with a text through annotation.

As we applied annotation strategies to our tutorials, we quickly realized that focusing on annotation was a way to open up a dialogue with our students about reading in connection to writing. For instance, Gissel worked with a student who came to an appointment with a reading from her religion class, which she would need to reference later in a writing assignment. The student had difficulty understanding the text, so Gissel knew this consultation would be reading-based. Gissel could not offer content support, but she could offer strategies to better navigate it. The student had read most of the text, so Gissel assessed the depth of the student's comprehension by asking the student to explain what she thought the author was saying. Gissel noticed that the student had highlighted certain sections in the text, so she prompted her to talk about her highlights and marginalia. Despite these highlights and notes, the student struggled to articulate her reasoning for making them. This disconnect suggested to Gissel that the student was highlighting only because it seemed like something one does when one reads, not because she was consciously reading with a purpose or authentically engaging with the text. At that point, Gissel decided the student could benefit from a session about effective annotation techniques.

The specific techniques Gissel suggested included those we had discussed during our annotation session: navigating the text and summarizing the content. Gissel asked the student to read the passage out loud, one paragraph at a time. At the end of each, Gissel asked her to verbalize her thoughts and then turn those thoughts into notes on the page by summarizing the paragraph in a sentence and writing it down next to the text, as well as underlining the parts of the paragraph that guided her to that thinking. Additionally, Gissel suggested she take notes along the tops of each page to briefly summarize the main points on the page as a whole, since such notes could become a tool she could use to quickly locate the information she needed to reference while writing.

We found that such attention to annotating often prompted students to engage with the course content more deeply. For instance, as Gissel and her student discussed the reading at this careful pace, and with the purpose of summarizing the author's argument, the student posed questions and drew connections she noticed to other readings in the class. Gissel pointed out that these comments were useful as well, and encouraged the student to track her own ideas in the margins. It also became clear that part of the student's struggle was vocabulary-based, so whenever the student encountered a word she did not know, Gissel prompted

the student to look up the definition, jot it in the margin, and apply this new knowledge to her understanding of the paragraph.

At the ends of appointments like these, we recapped the strategies we introduced and encouraged our students to continue to use them. We also suggested, as Horning encourages writing tutors to do, that students write a brief summary at the end of the reading to capture the main ideas of the text, as

> this strategy encourages repeated readings and careful analysis of a text and ultimately can be a highly effective tool to improve students' reading of assigned material as well as their reading of materials for their own writing projects (6).

In addition, we urged students to jot down any questions they still had so they could raise them during class or talk about them with their professors during office hours. These annotation practices transform overreliance on highlighting to metacognitive, self-monitoring strategies, and in many cases, we saw students' annotation practices become part of their writing strategies as we continued to work with them over time. The student discussed above, for instance, later returned to the writing center with a draft of a paper that required her to answer questions in relation to the text. During the appointment, Gissel had her pull out the reading and refer to it as they discussed her responses. Gissel noticed the student used the annotations to document her reading, consulting them to find additional points to include in her essay, and used some of the language from her annotations in her draft.

Those of us who had not often practiced annotation as a strategy to connect reading and writing found that when we began to do so, we discovered better ways to guide our students in similar practices. At one point, Sarah noticed that her first-year writing students struggled to put themselves into conversation with their readings, and she realized that she needed to adapt the way she was reading and taking notes in order to model this intellectual move for her students. The students in this course not only had to understand their assigned texts, but evaluate them as well: they also had to look beyond understanding in order to find the argument's assumptions and limitations, assess interpretations involving the validity and value of the evidence the author presented, and pose questions that would contribute to the discussion they found themselves entering by reading the text. Annotating the text herself to make visible this type of readerly conversation allowed Sarah to exhibit some of her annotations as a way to guide her students' notetaking in ways that moved beyond comprehension.

In particular, it took some time for Sarah to help her students understand that evaluating required them to look at the strengths, weaknesses and grey areas of the author's argument. Many of the students struggled to discern the limitations of the argument; students often asserted that they had "found" limitations that were simply rephrasing an author's own, e.g. low numbers of participants or trials. To help students consider more deeply the way their texts presented the studies they compared, Sarah guided them to read beyond the literal level and make meaning by annotating in a way that developed a sort of "conversation" among several sources. By writing down questions they developed in response to their sources, the students began to be able to identify limitations, gaps, and silences in their arguments. Noticing these trends allowed them to put these sources into a larger conversation that also included their own voices.

It is perhaps not surprising that many first-year students do not consider reading to be a crucial aspect of the writing process, so Sarah's focus on annotation as a key writing strategy emphasized this connection for them. Teaching them to think and write critically via annotation practices supported them as they moved towards figuring out how an author makes a point rhetorically rather than just figuring out what that point is. Once the students did that deeper analysis of and transaction with the text, they were able to use their discoveries as the basis for their writing. Adding attention to annotation to our praxis augmented our shift towards integrating reading into writing center work. Rather than limiting our tutorials to looking at writing assignments and drafts, we were able to prompt annotation skills through which students could track what and how they read—and we encouraged them to transfer those skills to other disciplines or areas of their lives, which Carillo notes is an important undertaking for writing centers adding reading to their repertoires ("Reading and Writing Centers" 138). Furthermore, we were also looking more carefully at annotations students showed to us, which made visible the extent to which they needed further prompting in reading and annotation practices. Essentially, we had an expanded toolbox from which to draw when we discussed pre-writing and revision strategies related to primary and secondary source work.

Scenario-Based Interventions: Developing a Praxis
Tutor Educators

Harris argues for increased attention to reading in writing tutoring because "tutors must learn to recognize

students' need for the reading skills that are so integral to writing skills and then have strategies to help students acquire those skills" (239). We observed from their subsequent tutorials and workshops that the gallery walk and annotation sessions had successfully positioned our tutors to see and respond to reading needs, and because our tutors were clearly becoming active practitioners of reading support in our writing center, we were ready to proceed through a "gradual release" model of instruction (Pearson and Gallagher) in our tutor education practicum.[6] While our earlier sessions had been largely instructor-led, characterized by our creating prompts for discussion and delivering direct instruction about strategies, our tutors were now ready to become collaborators in our shared mission to include reading in our praxis. Thus, our next sessions were tutor-led, taking as their raw material the work tutors were performing in tutorial and classroom spaces.

Scenario-based learning is a hallmark of tutor education, which is apparent from even a cursory review of popular tutoring guides and writing center publications. Leigh Ryan and Lisa Zimmerelli, for instance, often provide prompts that invite developing tutors to contemplate real tutoring scenarios, like "Tom" who sits down and says, "Here are my notes...I have a bunch of ideas, but I'm not sure which ones would be good to use" (6), or the "brand-new freshman" who can "barely speak above a whisper" (33-35). They even devote an entire chapter to "Coping with Different Tutoring Situations" such as "the unresponsive writer" (100) and "the antagonistic writer" (101). Some of the scholars we have cited here also use scenarios to extend the nuances of their discussions (Adams; Harris), and Julia Bleakney's survey about writing tutor education reveals that reflection, especially on tutorial sessions, is a "touchstone" of tutor education. Bleakney emphasizes, too, how "listening to tutors" is a key way to cultivate "tutor buy-in," and we were particularly interested in providing a way for our tutors to feel truly invested in reading support in the writing center.

Thus, our next sessions were led by our tutors, whom we asked to come in ready to discuss real tutorial and embedded-classroom experiences that called for support of reading practices. They presented their scenarios as "case studies" to the group, and we discussed the efficacy of the tutor's chosen interventions as well as alternative or future support strategies. The scenarios they share below detail practices that provide insight into the depth with which our tutors collectively reflected on and problem-solved ways to support our student reader-writers—often in conversations that spilled outside of the classroom into the informal collegiality of our writing center space, which was testament to our successful integration of attention to reading in our writing tutors' developing praxis.

Tutors

These scenarios helped us think through our work with more nuance by workshopping the ways we were negotiating consultations that called for reading support. These discussions also built our confidence in using reading as a writing center intervention, which was a really important step for us: as Kelsey Hixson-Bowls and Roger Powell find, increased self-efficacy about tutoring is crucial as writing tutors develop stronger praxis.[7] Many new writing tutors contend with feeling inexperienced in their early tutorials, and that was especially true for us when we found ourselves confronted with reading and writing in disciplines we knew close to nothing about content-wise. Over time, however, we found that focusing on reading in these appointments—that is, discussing reading skills and asking students to try out some strategies—helped our students develop their writing and that helped us view our tutorials as effective.

Sarah, for instance, discussed with us a student who wanted assistance in preparing her lab report for organic chemistry. The student had listed all of the information in the appropriate order, but had trouble phrasing the information in full sentences within organized paragraphs. Because the student struggled with putting the report together for a reader, Sarah thought to co-read a model lab report with the student, which entails one person reading aloud while the other follows along, the pair pausing frequently to discuss the text. Their purpose for reading was a strategy we learned from one of the assigned articles in our tutoring course, Bunn's "How to Read Like a Writer." Bunn claims that a writerly reading strategy is to

> work to identify some of the choices the author made so that you can better understand how such choices might arise in your own writing. The idea is to carefully examine the things you read, looking at the writerly techniques in the text in order to decide if you might want to adopt similar (or the same) techniques in your writing (72).

Co-reading the model lab report paragraph by paragraph and analyzing the ways the writer presented information and ideas to a reader prompted the student to turn to her notes and strategize stylistic choices appropriate to the lab report genre. This type of reading for a purpose gave the student inspiration for her own writing—specifically in the areas of transitions and voice—that fulfilled the requirements of the lab and also created a

much more readable final product. Co-reading also taught her to use "reading like a writer" as strategy, so that in the future she has a stronger way to approach model papers in service to her writing.

Another scenario we discussed became a helpful model for ways to implement a concept we first learned during our gallery walk: using textual features such as headings to navigate a text efficiently. Gissel supported a student on an assignment for her social work class that required her to identify different components in a journal article. She needed to identify the independent and dependent variables, the study's sample size, and its focus question, as well as locate other specific details. The student expressed that she did not know what some of those terms meant and she was not sure how to find them in the article. This appointment became focused on reading, as Gissel realized the student needed help decoding the journal article and navigating its structure. After prompting the student to consult her course text to gain a general understanding of terms like "independent variable," Gissel explained how journal articles in the social sciences generally have headings throughout —like "methods" and "results" —that tell the reader what each section contains. Together, they looked at the different section headings and used them to determine what information they might be able to find in each section. They then looked at her assignment questions to determine a purpose for reading, and the student was able to use the headings to locate the information she needed efficiently. The student not only finished her assignment, but also became more confident in her ability to use research studies as sources. When we discussed this scenario in class, we focused on how this approach to reading journal articles will now become a key component of the disciplinary literacy this student is developing as a social work major. She learned to navigate a research study format, which she could later apply to future reading assignments as well as writing assignments, such as an article critique, a literature review, or a study design. Furthermore, those of us who were ourselves outsiders to social science reading strategies gained this insider knowledge that we now felt empowered to use and pass on during our own consultations.

The scenario discussions also prompted a discovery: as we encourage an emphasis on reading, it may be important to be patient and transparent with students about why we are integrating this surge of reading support into the work that we are doing with them. Many of the students who come to the writing center do not expect to read or learn new reading strategies, especially if they arrive with a draft in hand. We must make our reasoning plain to students and cast the

strengthening of reading processes as integral to stronger and more effective writing processes is paramount. In response, one of our peers who was embedded in a first-year writing center course chose to facilitate a workshop for her students about the moves strategic writers make when they read. It was an effective way to normalize reading as an important feature in the writing classroom and the tutorial space.

It is also important to remind ourselves that the integration of literacy practices may have no immediate effects for some students because they still need to learn the skills that will enable them to benefit from stronger literacy practices. However, by introducing reading strategies to the students who come to the writing center, we are enabling them to understand and communicate with texts in a way that they may not have before, which will benefit their writing as well as their other academic work long term.

ELL Specific Support: Adapting the Interventions

Tutor Educators

Eliciting scenarios from our tutors also revealed their interest in finding ways to support English Language Learners more thoroughly as both writers and readers. Given that writing center scholarship has not yet built a strong archive about reading support, it was not surprising to us that little was available regarding ELL writers as readers, specifically. In fact, Adams actually cautions against the assumptions about ELL differences that can cause

> ELL students' struggles with reading [...to] be quickly dismissed as due only to their ELL status (82):
> I do not see such a gulf between ELL readers [...] and readers with English as [sic] first language (L1) or native English speakers (NES) [....] I argue that, rather than perpetuating a gulf, we should...avoid simply saying 'these' students need different instruction (81).

Because Adams believes that "the reading help ELL students require is representative of the struggles NES and ELL students have," he claims that "we would do well to approach that work [of supporting ELL readers] not as simply ELL work but as reading work" (82). Indeed, when Jennifer E. Staben and Kathryn Dempsey Nordhaus promote several strategies for supporting ELL writers that are staples for writing center tutoring in general, two speak directly to the importance of reading support: close reading of writing assignments and co-reading the rhetorical features of model texts (81; 84-85).

With Adams' cautions in mind, and because we were motivated by the excellent outcomes of our tutor-led discussions of reading support scenarios, we elected to continue the conversation by providing our tutors with scholarship about supporting ELL writers, we chose from Shanti Bruce and Ben Rafoth's edited collection ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors. We asked tutors to draw connections among this scholarship, our previous coursework focused on reading support, and their experiences with ELL students in our writing center. What we learned with and from our tutors as they continued to develop their praxis reveals how reading support strategies can be implemented in ways responsive to the needs of ELL reader-writers, and that reading support may be a key feature of the ways writing centers can work with ELL students.

Tutors

Largely, our work with ELL students became the "scenarios" for subsequent discussions that were now further enriched by a research base. Here, we review a few of those ELL-specific scenarios that underscore how we approached reading support for this population. We view these interventions as only the beginning of our developing praxis for applying reading support for ELL writers.

A relatively significant population of ELL students visit our writing center, and Mary works with several of these students quite closely. Through her experiences, we have concluded that wait time, while important for any student who is trying to comprehend something they are reading, is especially crucial for ELL students. Wait time, in one respect, means the tutor is willing to co-read slowly with student, and in another respect, means practicing with more frequency techniques such as asking questions that prompt understanding, or checking to be sure a student is following along. One particular student, an international English language learner, spends at least half of her appointments with Mary in silence. This silence is not awkward or disengaged, but purposeful. In her characterization of English language learners who visit writing centers, Ilona Leki notes that:

> international students take longer to process texts and may need to reread several times in order to understand what domestic students can grasp in a single read (8).

This particular student liked to take that extra time to consider the reading closely and plan how to articulate her thoughts before sharing them with the tutor. At first, silence in an appointment can be alarming to a new tutor; however, Mary knew that pushing too many questions would confuse, overwhelm, and disrupt the student's careful thought processes. Instead of being tempted to "fill the silence" by rephrasing the question (a strategy we might use regularly with domestic students) or hinting at what the reading is saying (which, based on our experience with ELL students, is likely to prompt a nod of agreement but not necessarily actual understanding), we pose a clear question and then leave time for a productive silence. It allows the students to develop their own understandings of texts and express those understandings after they have had adequate time to formulate the words in English.

Research and practice also inform us that cultural background is an important factor tutors must consider when working with ELL students. During one session, Gissel worked with an ELL student whose assignment required her to identify the themes of a reading. Initially, she tried to help the student understand theme by using the same strategy she had used with native speaking domestic students: choosing a well-known children's story on which to practice determining theme and then prompting the student to transfer the skill to the assigned course reading. Though she had found success in this endeavor in the past by using "The Three Little Pigs," Gissel realized she had made a mistake in tutoring strategy when she learned the ELL student was unfamiliar with the story. As Harris notes, ELL students often do not understand cultural references with ease (231), and Gissel was seeing first-hand what we had discussed in our tutor education course: our cultural backgrounds contribute to the prior knowledge we bring to our reading and influence how we navigate and understand it. They also influence how willing we are to convey our processes of (mis)understanding to our instructors and tutors, and in this case, the student had not readily expressed her unfamiliarity with the story. Guiding a student through the process of identifying theme was itself an appropriate approach, but doing so with a culturally unfamiliar text added unnecessary complication to the tutorial, confused the student, and wasted time. Once Gissel decided to focus the strategy on the reading that was assigned, they found success in this shared context, and she was able to prompt the student to review the reading slowly while locating patterns and key points in order to identify theme. This scenario helped us realize that often, the strategies for reading that we promote can be successful when applied to ELL work, but we must take care in modeling and practicing those strategies in culturally accessible ways.

Another important discovery we made was that focusing on reading is a great way to shift the focus of an appointment for an ELL student—indeed, any student—narrowly concerned with fluency. Jennifer E.

Staben and Kathryn Dempsey Nordhaus point out that it is common for ELL students to begin a session by saying they want to focus on grammar because they see that as the most pressing concern for their work; however, many times grammar is not the primary issue the tutor sees in the piece (78). For example, one ELL student came in worrying that her short essay answers did not make sense because of her imperfect standard written English grammar. When Sarah read her work, however, she saw that the student had not responded to the content of the prompts in the assignment. After asking the student to explain the prompts in her own words, Sarah realized the student's understanding of the questions was incomplete. Thus, they switched focus to decoding the professor's questions together, much in the way Adams describes his support of ELL reading practice:

> We went through the article sentence by sentence, with the students saying back to me their understanding of each, discussing places that held them up, and looking up definitions of words (Adams 80).

Clarifying word meanings as they read together and prompting the student to highlight key phrases she might use later, Sarah drew on decoding and annotation as reading strategies appropriate to supporting this ELL writer. Sarah emphasized, too, that reading the prompts carefully would help her formulate stronger responses, especially since she could use some of the terms in the prompt to draft her responses. Privileging reading strategies that may not have been the original focus of the appointment can be difficult, but they often create a fruitful opportunity for students to strengthen their reading and writing skills.

Conclusion: Reading and Reading Support Education as a Process

As collaborators promoting reading support in writing center spaces, all of us have come to understand reading as a key component of the writing process—and indeed, as a practice requiring a process in its own right. It is the intertwined nature of these processes that requires tutor educators to support tutors as they work with students as reader-writers in states of continual becoming.

Likewise, writing center staff are also in states of continual becoming—as reader-writers ourselves, as well as reading-writing tutors, tutor educators, and researchers. We agree, for instance, that we now more mindfully implement and interrogate the efficacy of reading strategies in our own work, and we have found better, more nuanced ways to talk about our reading and writing processes with students and colleagues. We are also reflecting on our reading and writing tutoring praxes and using that reflection to drive our next steps in professional development. In the case of our center, that means that we must now contemplate how to empower and create a formal structure for returning tutors to support new tutors in our ongoing literacy initiatives, which have proven to enrich the work we do with students as well as the sense of self-efficacy with which tutors and tutor educators approach reading and writing support.

Our experimentation with reading support has also led us to define a problematic implication of our tutor education methods and outcomes: in final course reflections, several tutors in the course exclusively discussed reading as a skill that must be in place before writing, as a foundation without which writing cannot happen. While it is certainly true that reading is foundational, it is not true that reading support—and the students who benefit from it—need only be characterized as remedial. For instance, disciplinary literacy, a high-level activity, involves "understanding both disciplinary content and disciplinary habits of mind," which include "ways of *reading*, writing, viewing, speaking, thinking, reasoning, and critiquing" (Fang and Coatoam 628; italics ours). Reading practices are a key part of disciplinary literacy, practices that are often honed at the college level as students enter the discursive spaces of their majors, minors, and general education courses. Timothy Shanahan and Cynthia Shanahan maintain that approaches to supporting disciplinary literacy go beyond

> prescrib[ing]...reading approaches that can help someone to comprehend or remember text better (with little regard to type of text)" in order to "descri[be]...unique uses and implications of literacy use within the various disciplines (8).

As several scenarios we discuss above suggest, reading support in college writing centers is often best implemented with discipline-specific contexts in mind. Given that Chris Thaiss and Terry Myers Zawacki found in their study of college writers that reading in a discipline plays a significant role in the development of writers in a discipline (128-129)—including reading in other disciplines as a way by which to understand differences in disciplinary practice (129)—then certainly writing centers, already doing the work of supporting writing in the disciplines, are well positioned to approach the work of reading in the disciplines as well.

Thus, going forward, we have become more careful about the ways we discuss reading and the processes by which we engage reading. Such care does not mean that we are moving entirely away from our earlier model;

rather, we emphasize that reading support for college students can be understood on a spectrum, from supporting readers with recognizable challenges, to supporting readers approaching mastery. We acknowledge that since our tutors were all embedded in first year courses, as a group we tended to focus on more entry-level and early college level literacies, and that, implicitly, we emphasized the importance of literacy support by using a sort of "lack" model—as in, if students lack this, they cannot do much else. Indeed, Harris also implies such a model when she mentions the ways writing centers can remedy "inadequate reading skills" (240), and so we must all take care to recast reading as an ongoing process—a discursive process—much in the way growth as a writer is ongoing and continual. Adding disciplinary literacy as a formal lens for our reading support work can help writing centers resituate reading as a companion to writing along the entire spectrum of development. We might also consider reading strategies as part of the pre-writing stage. Often in writing centers we understand "pre-writing" to refer to practices such as brainstorming, concept mapping, and outlining, but reading strategies such as setting a purpose and annotating are also ways to prepare for the drafting stage.

It is our hope that the narratives we have provided in this piece support both tutor educators and tutors as they develop their approaches to reading in the writing center. We also hope that our models of tutor education and tutor praxis provide a platform for promotion and critique of the work we, as a writing center community, must continue to do to support student reader-writers. We also echo Carillo's call in "Reading with a Purpose" for empirical studies about the role of reading and reading support in writing centers, so that we can build a stronger picture of the ways that attention to reading enhances our practice and our scholarship.

Acknowledgement

Notes

1. At the time of the interventions discussed in this article, Amanda M. Greenwell was the Writing Center Administrator at the University of Saint Joseph, CT.
2. The special issue on reading of WLN: A Journal of Writing Center Scholarship contains a tutors' column by student tutor Amanda Fontaine-Iskra, in which she details how tutors can attend to notions of audience for student writers by emphasizing the readerly practices of that audience. While the column does not, as we do here, discuss tutoring writers by way of promoting reading strategies, her contribution does represent the voice of a tutor discussing one viable way to work with reading in the writing center space.

3. We also refer our readers to King's recent study of a single reading-focused tutor training workshop. King's work was not available to us at the time of our own planning and training, but her work corroborates some of our motivations, experiences and insights. For instance, we agree that "reading can be profitably and explicitly addressed through tutor training" (66), and our extended rather than "brief but direct attention to reading" (66) answers her call for and provides to the field examples of ways that we can become "more explicit with the range of strategies available to students and tutors alike and work with our tutors to make reading knowledge unambiguous" (67).

4. For an incisive review of the scholarship on reading from the fields of composition, psychology, and english education, see Carillo's "Reading and Writing Centers: A Primer for Writing Center Professionals." For an extended discussion about reading in the field of composition, see Carillo's Securing a Place for Reading in Composition: The Importance of Teaching for Transfer.

5. These statements resonate with several strategies widely underscored in reading scholarship. Boardman et al.'s brief for the Center on Instruction, for instance, identifies and explains habits of successful readers that promote strong reading comprehension as well as best practices in the field of reading instruction. Among them are setting a purpose, activating prior knowledge, previewing textual features, and monitoring understanding (21-26). Adams's inventory also echoes the primacy of some of these concepts, and, as mentioned earlier, Carillo's work has emphasized "reading with a purpose" as a foundational approach across several disciplines' attention to reading.

6. The "gradual release" model was first introduced by Pearson and Gallagher in the context of literacy support in elementary schools and has since become a widespread method by which to scaffold student learning across levels and disciplines.

7. King also finds that stronger tutor confidence is a crucial result of reading-focused training intervention.

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