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SEEING READING IN FIRST-YEAR COMPOSITION

Matthew Felumlee

253 Pages

This dissertation focuses on a study of reading-into-writing strategies employed by students in two sections of first-year-composition (FYC) that were paired with a support course as part of an accelerated learning program (ALP) at a community college. Each FYC course was comprised of 11 students whom the college had deemed college-ready without the ALP course, and 11 students who were deemed at remedial levels in reading and / or writing and who were subsequently required to enroll in the ALP course. The study employs grounded theory methodology to identify and consider the many factors that influenced how reading was portrayed, conceived, taught, learned, and assessed within this context, and ultimately focuses its analysis on the teaching, learning, and assessment of reading and writing that occurred.

Texts examined for this study include articulation initiatives, college-wide essential competencies for learning, writing program and course outcomes statements, assignment descriptions, rubrics and instructor-to-student feedback, instructor reflective memos and, most importantly, student writing.

This dissertation presents five discrete but related findings regarding the role of reading in FYC. The first finding suggests that evidence of student reading practices can be made visible via a specific method for reading and analyzing student writing. The “seeing reading” method is then extended to other texts and contexts (institutional and instructional) and yields additional insights: the second and third findings analyze institutional texts, such as college-wide learning

outcomes, and their relationship to the formation of course outcomes, which in turn appear to bear some influence on the curriculum, assessment, and instructor attitudes and dispositions towards reading instruction. The final two findings deal with the immediate teaching-and-learning context of the classroom setting studied, and detail the ways in which in/explicitness of instruction in reading strategies relates to student activity—and especially the activity of using source texts in one’s own writing.

This dissertation concludes with recommendations for a more intentional, mindful approach to the integration of reading instruction into FYC. Suggestions include writing program self-studies to identify student and instructor values concerning reading, and how reading is portrayed in pedagogy, curriculum, and assessment practices. Careful and intentional alignment around a more explicit conception of reading can help students develop as readers, which in turn relates to reading-into-writing performance that is so key to success in college. Composition instructors are called upon to advocate for those values to curriculum committees and the like in ways that can help foster a more dynamic conception of reading not only in FYC but across the curriculum.

KEYWORDS: College Composition, Reading, Remediation, Basic Writing, Writing Assessment, Integrated Reading and Writing, Community College

SEEING READING IN FIRST-YEAR COMPOSITION

MATTHEW FELUMLEE

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of English

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

2019

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SEEING READING IN FIRST-YEAR COMPOSITION

MATTHEW FELUMLEE

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am most grateful to my committee members, Drs. Bob Broad, Joyce Walker, and Ellen Carillo, each of whom contributed so much time, talent, and care to my project. Thanks to Bob and Joyce for playing “musical Chairs” so willingly and ably, and to Ellen for offering to read and comment from afar, despite not knowing me personally before embarking on this journey. Bob, you have influenced my development as a careful qualitative researcher, and while I still have a lot to learn, you have set me on a principled path I will continue to follow. Joyce, your willingness to dive in to my topic and project so enthusiastically put wind in my sails when I needed it most—you prodded me to be so much more careful when considering the pedagogical implications of my findings and arguments, and my project is much stronger for it. And Ellen, your work in reading was a big part of the impetus for my dissertation in the first place—so I feel truly honored that you found it worthy of your time and efforts.

I also feel a deep debt of gratitude to so many faculty and staff at Illinois State University who helped guide me during this process. There are so many forms, timelines, policies, and procedures to navigate during the dissertation process, and Dr. Angela Haas and Sherrie Howe went above and beyond to help ensure my success. Your commitment to graduate students at ISU is admirable and inspiring.

Many others at ISU served as trusted advisors and mentors during my coursework and exams. I would like to especially thank Drs. Chris DeSantis, K. Aaron Smith, and Amy Robillard for their time, advice, and assistance at various points along the way.

Dr. Julie Collins Bates, thank you for sharing so much of your own dissertation journey with me—your advice and encouragement were a gift I hope to pay forward someday.

I am also blessed to have so many dedicated colleagues and friends at Heartland Community College who supported my work in so many ways. Special thanks go out to my Dean, Dr. Tom McCulley, for supporting the sabbatical during which the bulk of this dissertation was written, and to colleagues Richard Seehuus, Stephanie Kratz, and Zach Petrea for being willing to read, listen, and talk about my project. Your passion for teaching and learning inspires me daily. I am indebted to Distinguished Professor of Reading Lisa Cole for her willingness to share her expertise with me—I appreciate the journey we have taken together to better serve our students.

And last but certainly not least, none of my academic pursuits are possible without the support of my loving family. As a nontraditional student completing my degree part-time over the course of eight long years, I relied often on the support of my wife Joelle, my sons Colin and Owen, my parents Dan and Charlene Felumlee, and my in-laws David and Galeen Driscoll. Joelle spent many nights home alone with one—and then two—small children to care for, while I attended night class after night class. My kids' support is typified by Colin's attempt (at age 5) to make me note cards and study aids for my linguistics exams. Our parents' support during this entire process was a gift I can never repay. I'd like to think that Galeen, a life-long educator now sadly departed, is nodding her approval from up above. We miss you, grandma Booboo.

M. F.

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CHAPTER I: BEYOND REMEDIATION: RECONCEPTUALIZING READING FOR COMPOSITION

Seeing Reading: An Introduction

In 2015, I was developing a first-of-its-kind course for my institution—a developmental-level integrated reading and writing course that would serve the college’s lowest-placing students. Previously, these students had been placed into separate developmental reading and writing courses—each course with its own curriculum, its own instructor (reading courses taught by reading instructors, and writing courses taught by faculty in English), and separate administrative oversight. This new course would replace the previous iterations.

Ultimately, I left this project feeling good about what my co-teacher and I had created, what I had learned, and the ways in which the developmental-placing students were being served by the new course. However, I quickly turned my attention back to the credit-bearing courses in first-year composition that comprise the bulk of my teaching load. And I was hit with a stark realization: twenty years into my teaching career, I am just now learning about and paying close and careful attention to my students as readers, and not just as writers. Why have I have mostly taken for granted that my first-year students know how to carefully and critically read our assigned texts, or those they self-select when researching for their projects? After all, I have virtually no evidence to support this assumption—and in fact, across my discipline--perhaps all disciplines other than reading—these assumptions about student reading are common, while very little research has been done that might serve to support or resist them.

At the same time of the development and implementation of the new integrated course, I was also watching my oldest son work his way through kindergarten, first, and now

second grades. I was in awe as he began his own lifelong journey of literacy—and I noticed that for him (and his classmates), reading and writing are at first not “separate” at all, but very much interconnected activities. Inspired by these observations, my inquiry extended into the K-12 system in the United States, where I noticed that while *writing* is taught in very explicit ways throughout both K-12 and higher education, explicit *reading* instruction seems to largely disappear after about 4th grade, after which point “reading class” becomes the domain of special education. Questions about why I took my college students’ reading for granted can be extended to K-12 as well. Why do we expend so much energy nurturing our students as writers, while relegating student reading to the realm of special education and remediation? This is likely a contributing factor to why so many of my students attach feelings of shame to their perceived shortcomings as readers.

These questions were the beginnings of the inquiry that forms the heart of this study, which focuses on learning to “see” reading in and around college composition—an inquiry that initially yielded even more questions. How can we look at student writing not only as evidence of a student’s writing practices, but also as at least partial evidence of that student’s reading practices? What does reading “look like” in our first-year composition (FYC) curricula, pedagogies, and individual instructor philosophies? What notions of reading are at work in our transfer agreements, articulation initiatives, college-wide competencies, writing program statements, and course descriptions? What are the relationships between and among all these facets, and how do they relate to teaching and learning?

Of course, these questions and their respective answers are in some ways deeply contextual—a study of these questions at any given institution would yield its own unique

insights. However, as I hope the following study will show, such an examination can also yield findings that hold important implications beyond the immediate institutional context. In this case, my study of two sections of FYC (English 101, in this case) taught by two different instructors at one community college yielded many interesting and useful findings, five of which are featured here, and each of which carries with it important and immediately-applicable implications that might be explored and applied in various other contexts. In this study, I set out to “see reading” in ways that would help me grow as a teacher and as a scholar, and that would contribute something of value to the field of composition more broadly. The resulting findings support a simple yet significant argument: yes, we can learn to see reading in these various places, and we can all learn from what we see.

This first chapter reviews the literature on reading emanating from composition, with a focus on the somewhat fractured history of reading / writing and remedial / first-year composition (FYC) relationships. The review surveys this history, up to the present moment, to justify a call to be more mindful of the place and space for reading within current writing theory. Chapter 2 describes the methods, methodologies, and contexts for project, which is a study of two sections of an Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) English 101 class at a Midwestern community college, and outlines the grounded theory methodology used to collect the data for this study. Chapter 2 concludes with a detailed explanation of the methods employed towards the aim of “seeing” student reading practices vis a vis their writing—a project that informs all data analysis for this study.

Chapter 3 details the first of five total findings analyzed for this study by enacting the method for “seeing reading” in student writing articulated in Chapter 2. Chapter 4 details the

next two findings analyzed, both of which extend the concept of “seeing reading” from student artifacts to institutions and instruction, respectively. The first finding presented in this chapter suggests that if compositionists wish to become more intentional about teaching and assessing student reading, it is imperative to understand the ways in which outside forces, such as political mandates that limit remediation offerings, work to shape what reading means at colleges and, thus, in our classrooms. The second finding in this chapter examines teaching artifacts, from personal statements to assignment prompts, and locates many apparent disjunctures between what the teachers *say* they value (“close,” “intensive,” “comprehensive” types of reading) and the types of reading actually called forth in much of their day to day assigned work (“skimming” or “scanning,” for example). Such disconnects likely exist in all instructors’ pedagogies, and this finding suggests a means for seeing and addressing them productively.

Chapter 5 presents the last two findings, both of which deal with the idea of “explicitness” of reading in composition classrooms. These findings examine the importance of explicitness within writing instruction (finding three) and assessment (finding four), and the relationships between explicitness (or lack thereof) and student activity. Chapter 6, the final chapter, argues that current pedagogical values, such as metacognition and critical reading, largely assume, disregard, or ignore their precursors: cognition and comprehension. The chapter proceeds from these points of omission to then detail considerations, strategies, and tools that can be applied towards the development of writing pedagogies that account for reading more fully, directly and intentionally. Chapter 6 concludes by exploring key implications for the future of reading within composition, including writing placement practices, and the

need for more longitudinal studies that explore relationships between students deemed “college-ready” and “remedial” via these practices and procedures.

Review of the Literature

This chapter investigates the multiple and conflicting ways “reading” is defined in composition scholarship past and present, both explicitly and implicitly, and the ways in which these conflicts have worked to prevent sustained attention to reading from within composition. This chapter then examines various ways scholars in composition and in writing assessment are currently working to bridge this gap by making reading more visible in both theoretical and practice-oriented realms of writing instruction. There are two predominant themes that will be explored here: the first is that when composition does talk about reading, it often does so in a limited and limiting way, glossing over the multiple and complex “decoding” aspects of reading processes that are key to effective reading comprehension, in favor of a focus on more “advanced” or privileged types and purposes for reading, such as reading to analyze, synthesize, or evaluate—reading types that are most often assessed, not coincidentally, via their representation in student writing.

Second, when the “decoding” aspects of reading are acknowledged, they are often presented in an oversimplified form. Whether intentional or not, this rhetorical move is used to justify the situating of comprehension aspects of reading as “mere” remedial concerns, distinct and separate from more desirable, higher-order “skills” like analysis, evaluation, and application, and thus not the purview of first-year composition. I explore these themes here for purposes of bringing them to light, and ultimately testing their many assumptions throughout

this study via a close analysis of student writing for evidence of reading practices and processes.

In short, this current study concludes that student reading and writing practices that might indicate comprehension struggles are prominent across the work not only of students placed into remedial classes, but also of students enrolled in first-year composition—findings which challenge commonplace distinctions between first-year composition and remediation.

The aim of this historical overview is to promote a more nuanced and multifaceted understanding of reading in composition than is evident in most of the scholarship—one that acknowledges the complexity of reading as a process (or rather, as a complex of processes); one that acknowledges and exposes the complexity of even “basic” decoding abilities required for reading comprehension; but one that also describes and accounts for the more advanced critical reading skills and strategies needed to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate texts and ultimately to learn, apply, and transfer that knowledge to and through college-level coursework, as assessed most typically, again, through writing. Such an understanding might work to blur the typical and unfortunate hard distinction often drawn between “remedial” and “college-level” reading and writing instruction (and more consequently, perhaps, between remedial and college-level readers and writers), in that it forces writing teachers to come to know their students’ *actual* reading processes and practices, instead of teaching largely to assumed or *imagined* ones. What is called for in this moment is a compelling, coherent, and comprehensive working knowledge of reading / writing re/integration that the field of composition might then deploy as it confronts important, immediate questions about what it means to read; how effectively our students read; the role of cognition, metacognition,

predisposition, and context in student reading; and how we know—questions that are crucial to the present and future of college writing instruction.

In one sense, reading and writing are seemingly so intertwined that it is very difficult if not impossible to develop a theory of writing that is not also a theory of reading, at least implicitly: one cannot write without also reading, even if that reading is merely of one's own writing. Often, though, reading is relatively unexamined within these theories—even in the field's most current theories that emanate from areas seemingly ripe for integration of reading, like genre studies, cognitive studies, and transfer theory. This chapter aims to identify several of those gaps and to propose ways (often, very simple ones) they might be bridged.

As will be demonstrated in this review, historical influences on composition's conceptualization of reading endure in unsettling ways. The history of college composition as a discipline has in fact always been not only a history of writing, but also one of reading / writing integration. As early as 1783, Hugh Blair, "who had enormous influence on the shape of rhetoric, stated: 'The same instructions which assist others in composing will assist them in judging and relishing the beauties of composition'" (qtd. in Jackson 146). However, even in this early statement, one can notice ways in which reading has been subtly subordinated by its integration into what is first and foremost an ostensible theory of writing. To Blair, it seems, teaching writing is enough—and reading skills will somehow materialize along the way. Now, more than 200 years later, this conception is still surprisingly prevalent, to varying degrees, at all levels of writing instruction in the United States, including K-12 education, mentioned later in this chapter. So, while writing has always been an explicit object of study in composition,

reading has not received the same sustained attention—often, though certainly not always, subverted or rendered invisible by our own writing-centric theories.

More recently, reading has been subsumed by phrases and resulting pedagogies like “reading to write,” the idea being that the purpose of reading is ultimately as inspiration for or to provide models for writing (Jackson 160). One might also question whether the rise of terms and concepts like “literacies” has done unintentional harm to our conception of reading by inextricably linking it to writing and other dimensions of literacies. Even the now-former International Reading Association recently changed its name to the International Literacy Association, to account “for the fact that educators nowadays need not only to teach and promote reading, but also a broad range of related skills in order to prepare students for life and work in the 21st century” (“International Reading Association”). While well-intentioned, the shift from “reading” to “literacy” has unintended and undertheorized consequences for reading, at times rendering it almost invisible. Given this history, as composition seems to be re/turning to reading in a more deliberate way, especially in terms of theories and practices for reading / writing integration in first-year composition (FYC), it is understandable that these efforts seem somewhat scattered.

The lack of sustained attention to the development of coherent theory has given rise to commonplace assumptions teachers make when students seem not to have read the assigned reading for the day. Most teachers have overheard hallway discussions where it is claimed that “students are not interested,” or that “the reading was not engaging.” We might hear (or even say) that students “did not spend enough time on the reading,” or “did not read it closely enough.” In this dissertation, I will explore another distinct possibility—one I believe to be true,

based on my own classroom-based research: sometimes, our FYC students face significant challenges when attempting to engage with, reflect on, or even comprehend the assigned reading to a meaningful degree due to a lack of adequate skills, dispositions, processes, and strategies needed for effective baseline comprehension of the text at hand.

This is an uncomfortable discovery: students in a first-year, credit-bearing composition class, whose apparent reading comprehension “abilities” (a loaded concept to be unpacked later) do not match our expectations and assumptions—assumptions which we base primarily on students’ educational attainment and presumptions about what “should have” been taught in high school or prior, or what “should have” been diagnosed or addressed earlier, in college writing placement procedures or via prior required remedial coursework. The discovery is uncomfortable because unlike with the commonplace assumptions we make about “bad reads,”—all of which place the onus on the student to become more interested, more engaged, more active, less lazy—the responsibility for providing curricular and pedagogical interventions that might effectively address students’ reading challenges lies with the teacher, the pedagogy, the program. The responsibility in this case lies with us, not them.

Impacts of The Great Divide(s) on Reading

The history of composition is rife with tales of splits of various sorts, and space does not permit full treatment of them all here. A brief list would include: various “lit / comp” splits (1800’s and 1980’s); FYC’s work, past and present, to distance itself from developmental composition and remediation; distinctions, both assumed and codified, between 2-year and 4-year schools and their respective student populations; composition’s shifting relationships with

rhetoric, assessment, and creative writing; and even the figurative and often literal “distance” in two-year colleges between developmental composition and reading programs. While the tales of these splits have been told and re-told in more general terms, this chapter presents a brief overview of the ways each of these splits has worked to disrupt how those in the field(s) have come to view reading specifically, and the relationship(s) between reading and writing more generally.

This history in the United States would likely begin in the 1870’s with the birth of writing programs and composition courses, most notably at Harvard—a development that marked the slow transition of rhetoric from “the art of speaking well” to “the art of writing well.” In 1874, Harvard famously instituted an entrance essay exam in English Composition for the first time. Brereton writes, “This moment, we have come to believe, marks one of the origins of our field because it led to (a) a reaction of shock among Harvard faculty over the students’ performance, (b) the almost universal practice of examining college entrants on their writing abilities, and (c) the subsequent widespread establishment of first year composition required for entering college students at many colleges” (32). While his aim in this piece is ultimately to disrupt that familiar narrative, it persists nonetheless.

The birth of composition and writing programs led, consequently, to the first of many notable “splits” between reading and writing, in part via disciplinary tensions between literature and composition, and regarding the place of reading within both. In 1884, Thomas Hunt advocated for the inclusion of literary studies at the college level, with the caveat that “the writing one does about literary studies is different from literature,” thus Jessica Yood notes that “the segregation between literature and writing . . . was born” (527). Importantly,

this initial tension, like those that followed, was not about where or how students might best learn how to read or write. Instead, this early split, like later ones, was primarily a disciplinary turf war concerned with self-preservation and prestige of disciplines and professions. In this sense, reading has often been co-opted to serve other purposes, and in the process, reading itself has been neglected. This trend, with roots in the earliest days of composition, endures and persists, and continues to frame ways we talk about reading in composition.

Our collective struggle with questions of reading naturally spills over into our conversations about teaching. Ellen Carillo opens the introduction to her book *Securing a Place for Reading in Composition* with a recounting of a 2009 WPA-L thread in which Bob Schwegler, University of Rhode Island, asked “How well do your students read complex texts—other than literary texts?” Dozens responded—and Donahue observed that the replies tended to veer in one of two directions: “towards literature, saying that’s what those people teach; or towards developmental reading specialists, trained in more qualitative methods. But we don’t refer to the substantial body of work done on reading in our own field . . . particularly on the interrelationship of reading and writing. Why not?” (qtd. in Carillo 2).

In the first half of her statement, Donahue is alluding to another widely-known reading / writing “split” that occurred through the 1980’s and 1990’s, which has its own well-documented history, and even its own catchy moniker: “The Great Divide.” The touchstone in this alleged splitting of Literature and composition is what came to be known as the “Tate / Lindeman debate,” two divergent essays (by Gaty Tate and Erika Lindemann respectively) on the relationship between Literature and composition that appeared in *College English* in 1993. Salvatori and Donahue explain: “In his essay ‘A Place for Literature in Freshman Composition,’

Tate argued that the exclusion of literary texts from the freshman writing course made it more difficult for students to improve their writing” (206). The problem, to Tate, is that rhetoric, in largely displacing literature in freshman composition classrooms, contributes to “the increasing professionalization of undergraduate education in this country” (320). “By elevating nonfiction prose and the discourses of various disciplines to sacred heights,” he argues, we are “ignoring an enormously rich body of literature” that might help students join conversations outside of, rather than within, the academy (321). Tate’s primary focus here is on what students read, and to what end.

In “Freshman Composition” on the other hand, again according to Salvatori and Donahue, Lindemann argued that “for many years, students in writing courses had been harmed by a literature-centered pedagogy . . . one that focused on textual consumption rather than production” (206). Lindemann though, unlike Tate, does take up the question of reading in more detail: she mentions that some turn (back) to literature as part of a “welcome resurgence of interest in reading-as-process” (312), though it is not clear in her argument why the writing course she imagines could not also take up reading as process as part of its content. She sees first-year composition as a space to “offer guided practice in reading and writing the discourses of the academy and the professions” (312). In Lindemann, like in Tate, there is a concern not only with *what* to read, then, but also with the purposes for student reading.

I recount this history first because of the “status” of this debate within the field. But this reality has other unintended effects: among them, the fact that this debate frames “the reading question” as one concerned primarily with *what students should read* and *where they should read it*. What get lost in this discussion, of course, are questions about how our students read in

the first place and how we might come to know or care. Lindemann, like many in composition past and present, consciously distances FYC from anything we might call “remedial” since “to see freshman composition as remedial is to undervalue its importance as the only required course remaining in most college curricula” (312). To be sure, composition also has its own political reasons for constructing reading as remedial. “Some scholars claimed that composition / rhetoric specialists abandoned reading as they sought to ‘professionalize’ their sub-discipline . . . because reading instruction is often viewed as remedial” (Harkin 2005 quoted in Bosley 286). It is past time to question both the conscious and unconscious moves to abandon reading, as well as the assumptions that underlie conceptions of reading as remedial.

The “What We Read” paradigm endures even today, as evidenced by scholarship that still posits it as something to acknowledge, resist, and work against. Gerald Graff’s “Why How We Read Trumps What We Read,” written in 2009, is one of many examples. In this essay, Graff alludes back to his own 1992 assertion that “it is not only the text that makes reading difficult but also how students are expected to read it . . . they become difficult because students have to (or should have to) talk and write about them in rigorously analytic ways instead of simply enjoying them unreflectively as leisure entertainment” (67). It is worth noting here that “difficult” is the desired state of a given reading to Graff: in this model, a text is something to complexify, rather than to simplify—a fact which rests on an underlying assumption of student reading comprehension that, again, is not fully examined. In other words, the project of complexifying a text requires, first and foremost, the ability to effectively read and comprehend that text. And this “ability” is of course both *individual* (with at least cognitive and

metacognitive dimensions) and *socially situated*. Composition simply does not have the evidence, currently, to support its many casual underlying assumptions about student reading.

Graff's central premise is that there is no "necessary relation between the complexity of a text and the degree of difficulty in studying it," that "any text becomes challenging when subjected to the right kinds of analysis" (67). But complexity of a text is, of course, a relative distinction, one made by each individual reader and predicated at least in part on that student's antecedent knowledge (of the topic at hand; of the genre of text; etc.). Suggestions otherwise are rooted in the same presumptions about students-as-readers already mentioned. And while his argument is framed around the project of complexifying a "simple" text, and may be true within that context, it certainly would not hold in the opposing context: if the text in question was an undeniably complex one in relation to its reader(s). In other words, if readers do not have the lexical or prior knowledge to even approach a text, then we might say that meaningful study of that text is, for the moment, impossible. When comprehension breaks down, in other words, Graff's argument does not hold.

He concludes, "Serious education means assigning texts that possess intrinsic richness, complexity, and value" (73), with his point being that this "complexity" can be found in unexpected places, if we ask the right questions of a text. While overtly focusing on "how we read," Graff actually spends considerable time defending pop culture and multimedia texts as objects of study—a "What We Read" consideration. And so in these examples at least, Tate / Lindemann endures in terms of its impact on how the field conceptualizes reading: FYC and remediation are still framed as largely separate entities; the teaching of the many strategies known to enhance students' foundational reading effectiveness is still conceived as the work of

remediation; and questions of “what students should read” are taken up far more often than questions of how well our students can read.

Lindemann’s argument that seeing freshman composition as remedial in nature undervalues its importance perhaps unwittingly promotes a second notable split that still endures in the present moment: that between FYC and remediation. Arguably, this split has done more damage to reading in FYC than the literature / composition divide that is the ostensible focus of the Tate / Lindemann debate—at least, or especially, in two-year college settings. In fact, one might, perhaps controversially, argue the opposite of Lindemann’s claim: that if reading remediation, as currently conceived, is needed even among traditional first-year students, and if there is but one space in a student’s curriculum where this remediation might occur, then it is our job, first and foremost, to learn how to recognize these needs and to work to address them in FYC. Further, if after careful study composition comes to find that what it has been referring to as remedial instruction in reading is in fact necessary or at least beneficial for many if not most first-year students, perhaps it is time to re-think the compulsion to frame all perceived reading “deficits” as remedial in nature. That is in fact the position suggested by the data analyzed for this study, which elicited very few significant differences between FYC and at-risk or remedial students in terms of reading-into-writing skills or strategies.

In the second half of Donahue’s earlier statement, where she laments our turn to developmental reading specialists for knowledge about reading, she too is working to reinforce the notion that there is immense pedagogical and theoretical distance between “remedial education” (which is deemed the work of community colleges and adult education programs) and traditional first-year composition (at a four-year school, as it is typically imagined in our

scholarship). This binary has allowed scholars in composition to resist and even reject discourses surrounding *how* or *how well* college students read. Carillo points out that in the 1980's and 1990's scholars managed "to redefine reading instruction as something other than remedial" (4). Perhaps we would be better off if it had been redefined as something that is *not only* remedial, since this latter statement does not foreclose on the idea of reading as foundational skill set that not all "college-ready" students possess to the degree we assume. A result of the "other than" paradigm is that even today, "most English professors view reading as a skill that college students should have already mastered" by the time they reach our classrooms (Helmets qtd. in Bosley 286), despite very little evidence to support this view.

Other Touchstones in the 1980's and 1990's

It is true that reading in a broad sense has certainly received significant scholarly attention within composition scholarship past and present, though it is also true that the bulk of this work was published in the 1980's and 1990's, including but not limited to "great divide" scholarship. Salvatori and Donahue explain that in the 1980's, prior to Tate-Lindemann, reader-response theories shifted the scholarly attention from "what texts mean to how readers make them mean"—a realization they characterize as "earth-shattering" at the time (202). For the first time, readers were situated "at the center of the interpretive exercise . . . Thanks to readers, texts snap into life. Without readers, texts are inert, expressionless, empty, mute" (202). During this time period, "the reader's activity" was conceived along "multinational, multicultural, racial, ethnic, and gender lines" for the first time (203), which created a space for much more complex notions of readers and, consequently, of reading.

While the 1980's gave rise to "the question of the reader, which brought attention to the question of writer qua reader," these questions were unfortunately most often framed as *problems*, according to Salvatori and Donahue (203). This framing, they explain, coincided historically with the formation of composition departments as separate from literary studies (and its emphasis on theory). Composition turned its focus to production of writing—rather than "consumption" of text (i.e. reading), the latter of which was constructed within composition as largely "passive, automatic, and derogatory" (204). In other words, this move away from "literary" reading in composition resulted, unfortunately, in a shift away from reading entirely. In short, "higher" forms of reading became the apparent domain of literary studies, while "lower" forms of reading became the domain of remedial education. This left little space for composition to engage reading on its own terms. By the end of the decade, "to write is to read is to write" was the "sheltering metonymy" of compositionists (204)—one that privileges writing and largely elides the possibility of reading as activity separate and distinct from writing.

The Reading Revival in Composition

Many scholars note a distinct lack of reading scholarship in composition that followed this brief period of activity in the 1980's and 1990's. Salvatori and Donahue note that from 2001-2011, reading was almost entirely invisible, at least in terms of the CFP categories and conference programs for the yearly CCCC convention (207). This invisibility, they argue, was not necessarily due to a view of reading as unworthy of critical attention, but more likely due to conceptions of reading as omnipresent in composition. Yet as Torodov argues, "what is

omnipresent and commonplace becomes unknown, unknowable, or unworthy of inquiry” (qtd. in Salvatori and Donahue 212). In other words, “omnipresence” can ironically manifest as something akin to invisibility, and in the case of reading, this attitude fostered a critical period of distinct neglect.

A recent revival of reading as a more explicit area of concern is visible throughout composition currently, however. For example, there is a Special Interest Group through CCCC called “The Role of Reading in Composition Studies.” An area cluster called “Postsecondary Reading / Literacy” is featured on the program for the 2019 CCCC Annual Convention, where proposals on the following were solicited:

- Integrated reading and writing instruction
- Teaching reading in first-year/advanced writing
- Politics of postsecondary reading instruction
- Culture of reading in postsecondary contexts
- Pedagogical approaches to teaching reading
- Assessing reading in first-year/advanced writing
- Disciplinary literacy
- Faculty training in reading instruction
- Academic literacy
- Reading-writing connections (“Area Clusters”)

Further, scholars throughout composition, many of whom are featured throughout the remainder of this chapter in much greater detail, have returned to reading with renewed focus on theorizing the relationships between reading and writing. This work includes but certainly

not limited to Ellen Carillo's call for a mindfulness approach to student reading in composition (*Securing*); Horning's theory of "expert reading" ("Manicules," mentioned later); Tanya Rodrigue's work that studies the relationships between digital reading and writing ("The Digital Reader"); Dan Keller's call for a renewed interest in reading pedagogy and the ways multimodal literacies are impacting what it means to read and to write (*Chasing Literacy*); and Mike Bunn's open-source textbook chapter that calls on students to read like writers ("How to"). While the renewed sense of importance of reading to composition is encouraging, the vast majority of the present scholarship mirrors that of the past in that it largely avoids, undertheorizes, or takes for granted comprehension as a crucial dimension of student reading—a gap this current study aims to address.

Much of the recent composition scholarship on reading has taken up questions of reading / writing integration (Jackson; Saxon, Martirosyan, and Vick; Bosley; Marsh), often under the umbrella term "Integrated Reading and Writing" (IRW), a growing specialization which has also spawned dozens of new textbooks—most of which are directed towards a FYC audience, however, and not students in basic writing contexts. Others are concerned with how *much* students are expected to read (see Robillard) and student anxiety about reading (Robillard; Carillo, "Making")—both Robillard and Carillo are very much invested in affective dimensions of reading.

There has been considerably less work in English studies highlighting *differences* between reading and writing—"interconnectedness" seems to be the default in much of the scholarship, and is a position with much historical precedent (beginning with Blair, earlier). Part of the reason for this is likely that any careful articulation of said differences would entail

meeting reading on its own terms—something that composition as a field is not yet prepared to do, at least in part due to a general lack of reading expertise among compositionists.

Several scholars, most notably Sharon Crowley, dispute and disrupt both the “interconnectedness” and the “writing-centric” narratives as they pertain to composition by arguing that a humanist education actually privileges “the act of reading” over that of writing. “The point of a humanist education, after all,” argues Crowley, “is to become acquainted with the body of canonical texts that humanists envision as a repository of superior intellectual products of Western culture” (qtd. in Carillo *Securing* 13). Carillo is quick to point out Crowley’s casual shifts in her argument between reading as a verb (“the act of reading”) and as a noun (as in, “the body of canonical texts” with which one ought to become familiar). In other words, Crowley’s argument commingles “how we read” with “what we read,” without necessarily differentiating them. Moreover, as Carillo questions, *if* Crowley is correct that reading has been privileged over writing, “then why hasn’t reading become one aspect of the teaching of composition?” (13). In this current study, that question remains.

The “interconnectedness” narrative is also disrupted by many outside of composition, such as in The National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth finding that “reading skills were necessary but not sufficient by themselves to improve the writing skills of ELL students” (qtd. in Jackson 158). There are vast differences between the “decoding skills” needed for basic reading comprehension and the “encoding skills” of writing. Among other differences, “readers are constrained by author’s words, whereas authors choose from an unlimited number of words” (Fitzgerald and Shanahan, qtd. in Jackson 159). While IRW might be a useful model for approaching reading in a composition course, it is important to remain

aware of potential limitations of “interconnectedness” narratives, lest they too become unexamined commonplaces.

Among other limitations, it is notable that most of the current IRW scholarship emanates from English (composition), rather than from reading, and so the integration framework is inherently slanted towards “connecting reading” (the unknown) with “writing” (the known) rather than the other way around. In fact, reading has most often been theorized in terms of how it might serve writing or writers first and foremost, such as in Salvatori’s earlier project of “using ‘reading’ as a means of teaching ‘writing’” (441). While that project is now more than twenty years old, it is still perhaps as true in composition today that “to foreground and to teach—rather than just to understand—that interconnectedness is a highly constructed, unnatural, obtrusive activity—one that requires a particular kind of training that historically our educational systems and traditions have neither made available nor valorized” (445). Certainly, though, “unnatural” and “obtrusive” are relative terms, and speak even further to the relative obscurity of reading knowledge in composition.

It is important to note that reading, of course, has its own distinct history *outside* of its history of integration into composition studies. Whereas composition evolved from oral rhetorical traditions of Greek and Roman origin, “tradition in reading curriculum relied on British notions of primary instruction (for method), on religion (for content), and by the later 1800’s on scientific experiments (for theory)” (Langer and Allington qtd. in Langer and Flihan 2). In composition, the co-opting of reading does not acknowledge this distinct history; instead, much scholarly emphasis has been placed on articulating *similarities* between reading and writing—despite many obvious *differences* between reading and writing as social cognitive

activities. Scholars have often noted that “reading and writing are both meaning-making activities;” that reading and writing are “similar composing activities in that writers and readers use similar kinds of knowledge . . . in the act of making their meanings” (Langer and Flihan 5); that “at the heart of both reading and writing is interpretation” (Berthoff, qtd. in Carillo, *Securing* 5).

Salvatori and Donahue ask: could the renewed attention to reading in composition “suggest that, given changes in student population, this attention to reading signals renewed attempts to confront and to embrace the fact that we cannot make simple (simplistic) assumptions about what and how students read, and how that affects their writing?” (214). Hopefully, this is precisely what this attention suggests. To work against these assumptions, a more careful definition of reading is called for, one that would need to account for the vast complexity of reading as involving both social and cognitive processes, which include but certainly are not limited to the mechanisms involved in lifting of words from page in order to begin making meaning. I contend that a noted lack of ability of students to meaningfully engage college-level readings in a college-level class is, in fact, possible evidence of reading challenges that will require specific reading-based pedagogical interventions to address—interventions that need not be constructed as “remedial,” given the negative connotations of that term and the “have / lack” binary it tends to reinforce. As my later data analysis will demonstrate, for example, very few significant differences were observed in the ways that both “traditional” and “remedial” co-enrolled FYC students employed various reading-into-writing strategies. Even codes that might be linked more explicitly to reading struggles were similarly distributed among both populations of students—a finding that challenges conventional wisdom.

Further, given the decline in reading-specific programs and remediation in general, this important work will fall to composition instructors more often going forward, and especially those teaching at two-year colleges. It is time, then, for composition to acknowledge, address, and assess not only writing skills and practices, but also those of reading. The general *lack* of sustained attention to reading, when coupled with what seems to be a sudden reemergence of interest in reading, suggests that this history is one to be learned from so that we might avoid repeating it.

Impacts of K-12 and Common Core

In order to better understand how we conceive of reading at the college level, it is worth investigating the way that reading is approached in K-12 schools in the United States. After all, the vast majority of college students in the United States are products of this system, and regardless, the influence of K-12 on higher education in general and perhaps community colleges more specifically is undeniable. Even a brief examination of this system underscores the inherent problem with assuming sophisticated reading skills of incoming college students. For example, the Common Core, a set of educational standards now adopted by forty states, breaks reading down into three different categories for teaching and, ultimately, assessment purposes, as listed below, each with a sample outcome. Note that all three examples provided are from Common Core 5th grade ELA outcomes, since, importantly, this is the highest grade level with all three areas attended to:

1. Foundational Skills (Grades K-5): “Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.”

2. Informational Text (Grades K-12): “Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.”
3. Literature (Grades K-12): “Explain how a series of chapters, scenes, or stanzas fits together to provide the overall structure of a particular story, drama, or poem.” (English Language Arts Standards)

To reiterate: in the area of “foundational skills,” students are expected to apply grade-level skills in decoding words—and these skills are assessed from grades K-5. After 5th grade, it is largely assumed by the system that these decoding skills (which have cognitive and social roots and include but are not limited to things like phonological awareness and lexical knowledge) will continue to manifest on their own with time and practice, despite, of course, increasing complexity of the “grade-level” vocabulary in question. It is after successfully navigating 5th grade reading assessment, then, that most students in the U.S. educational system are declared “able readers” from a comprehension standpoint, and explicit reading comprehension instruction is largely discontinued for these students. In fact, explicit instruction in foundational skills in reading continues past 5th grade generally only for students declared learning-disabled, for whom reading instruction then becomes part of a broader special education curriculum. This fact explains the inclination of composition teachers to turn to developmental education specialists for pedagogical expertise on reading; it also largely explains the default position that foundational reading instruction belongs in remedial / developmental programs in higher education, and is not the purview of first-year composition.

But while all students certainly continue to *read* throughout K-12 and college (in fact, independent reading is by far the predominant “activity” of learning at both levels), they do not

generally receive continued instruction in *how to read* or how to read better at a foundational level. Further, beyond those early years, the effectiveness of students' reading is not often assessed, except perhaps indirectly, through students' writing. And even then, the assessment emphasis shifts in ways that often construct possible reading challenges as, instead, writing deficits. Importantly, and in addition, these are not the only two choices. Surely, there is "space" between reading and writing that we typically do not work very hard to define or access—the activity that occurs as a student moves between a thought generated by reading and the expression of that thought in writing. This sort of "third space" is largely under-acknowledged and unexplored.

In contrast, despite a lack of attention to reading beyond grammar school, almost all students *do* continue to receive required, explicit instruction in writing, up to at least FYC and in most cases beyond, including writing-intensive "capstone" courses required of many students in their senior year of college. In contrast to how we think about reading instruction, we consider this practice of near-perpetual writing instruction to be normal and necessary—likely because it simply reaffirms the place of composition in higher education. This valuing of writing over reading in composition has consequences across the curriculum, as teachers across all disciplines are quick to point out what they consider to be serious writing deficiencies in their college students—yet similar complaints about students' reading are not often voiced. Further, any typical composition handbook will still prominently and unapologetically feature chapters on what might be considered "basic" grammar and mechanics (sentence structure, subject/verb agreement, etc.), without referring to these concerns as "remedial" in nature, and while

neglecting reading except in the form of related practices like research strategies or citation instruction.

The realities of our K-12 reading framework ultimately serve to reinforce the too-casual assumptions college writing instructors tend to make about their students' reading abilities (i.e. that four-year college students most certainly *can* read effectively): by the time a typical U.S.-educated student reaches college, the educational system has mostly been declaring these students "able to read well enough" for six or more years. A lack of adequate reading skill is then often equated with disability, and / or the student in question is deemed in need of remediation—which is not the role of FYC as currently conceived. It is at least partly as a result of this K-12 model as described here that FYC teachers often resort to those commonplace assumptions when a classroom discussion of an assigned reading, for example, does not go as well as she had hoped: the reading perhaps "did not engage the students" or wasn't interesting; the students are just "too busy" (or, worse, "too lazy") and "did not do the reading;" or the students seemed to have done the reading, but "did not spend enough time on it" or perhaps "did not read it closely enough." An analysis of our broader educational approach to reading instruction and assessment leaves open another obvious possibility: perhaps, in some cases, many students are unable to comprehend the text sufficiently enough to meaningfully engage it at the level required or expected. One possible cause of these reading issues, of course, is that teachers at all levels have been neglecting student reading within the curriculum.

Student Reading in College Contexts

As English composition returns to reading, important questions are emerging. David Jolliffe and Allison Harl argue that “We need to know how students are learning to read before they come to college, how we continue to foster close, critical reading throughout the college years, and how our students develop reading abilities and practices that they will continue to inhabit and improve after college” (599). In order to contribute to narrowing this gap they set out to study “empirically what, how, and whether college students actually do read and how reading thus figures in the transition from high school to college” (600). In particular, they “studied the reading habits and practices of twenty-one first-year composition students” as they approached midterm in their first semester of college (600). Importantly, this kind of information cannot be gleaned from a standardized test—and yet is crucial to the development of students as readers.

They found that in some ways their study merely provided local confirmation of national surveys which suggest that students don’t spend as much time reading as their instructors think they should. In addition, however, their project produced some unique insights in that they found students who were not disengaged from academic reading entirely, but who were instead “actively involved in their own programs of reading aimed at values clarification, personal enrichment, and career preparation.” They “discovered students who were extremely engaged with their reading, but not with the reading that their classes required” (600).

This purported “disengagement” from reading that is supposedly “required” for class has been studied within a two-year college context most recently, with findings that would likely alarm classroom teachers as well as two-year college administrators. Del Principe and

Ihara, in “A Long Look at Reading in the Community College: A Longitudinal Analysis of Student Reading Experiences,” conducted case studies of five students and found that “by the end of their time in our CC, all of our student subjects had learned the lesson that reading isn’t truly ‘required’ in their classes and that it’s very possible to ‘get by,’ and even succeed, in coursework without doing much, or even any, assigned reading” (183). Ultimately, they argue that their work points to a “‘hidden curriculum’ of reading as nonessential across much of their curriculum, with college composition being perhaps an exception” (203).

Whereas the existing studies focus primarily on habits, practices, and attitudes of student writers, no other studies exist that examine specifically how students are “taught” to value, think about, and practice reading, and how they then “use” readings in their writing in a first-year composition course, and at a community college specifically. Such work might reinforce or resist the idea of a “hidden curriculum” that devalues reading, in that it could more definitively articulate how we are asking students to read and to demonstrate comprehension and / or deeper understanding of both assigned and student-selected readings. The closest analogs to this work, elaborated upon later, are in L2 studies, where researchers have studied how students “take up” assigned prompts when completing required writing exams. This is an important distinction to make: whether students “do” the reading, and even whether they can succeed in specific courses without doing assigned reading, are different, but related concerns from how and to what extent students employ assigned readings in their academic writing. Such an inquiry can yield new insights into how we might begin to “see” evidence of reading (or misreading, or not reading, or more) in student writing.

This work creates space for new possible narratives: a student's self-reported "difficulty" or "ease" in comprehending a reading is related to but distinctly different from a qualitative analysis of the ways in which that student is asked to demonstrate and apply reading comprehension, and in which student writing might be viewed as evidence of that comprehension. While Del Principe and Ihara conclude that the students in their study "were assigned and expected to read in their composition courses, and their performance in those courses was tied strongly to whether and how well they had read" (204), they rely primarily on students' self-reporting of their own experiences to draw these conclusions, and these self-reports, especially among newer college students, are most certainly rooted at least in part in these students' K-12 experiences. In contrast, my study of two sections of ALP-based FYC aims to analyze both instructor artifacts (assignment sheets and rubrics, as two examples) and actual student writing to more definitively answer questions pertaining to how our assignments and assessments might encourage (or discourage) student engagement with readings, how we might hold students accountable for reading, and how we might come to "see" evidence of reading skills and strategies, including but not limited to evidence of comprehension, in writing they produce for specific academic tasks.

Reading: Resisting Definition

But what does it *mean* to read, exactly—or even generally? Note that this is a distinct question from *how we read*, though the two are often conflated. Amy Robillard notes that the question of what it means "to read" has been "variously attended to over the years by pointing to its status as both verb and noun (Helmers) or by noting that in its verb form it is visible in the

home (Brandt) but invisible at school (Scholes)” (202). But I contend that even in scholarship that poses the question quite directly, such as when Mariolina Salvatori and Patricia Donahue ask “What *is* reading?” there is apparent resistance to answering it. In the case of Salvatori and Donahue they note that although the question and others “provide context for our discussion, we cannot provide definitive answers” (200). They are perhaps unintentionally making an important point: that “reading” is so dependent on and articulated to so many other variables that defining it is not only difficult, but perhaps even inadvisable.

But until composition *can* devise a compelling definition of “reading”—flexible and tentative as it would need to be—it is difficult to proceed with the project of developing reading scholarship that is useful for classroom teachers. Perhaps the utter complexity of reading as a confluence of cognitive, social, and cultural processes, in combination with most compositionists’ limited study of reading, make defining reading a daunting task—one that scholars either avoid altogether in some instances, or oversimplify in others. But if composition is to meaningfully engage questions of how effectively college students can read, and how we know, some working-yet-flexible understanding of reading is required. These latter questions are often shrugged off as being the concern (or problem) of K-12, English education, or developmental education—especially when the working definition of “reading” is “mere decoding.” Surely, the thinking goes, our incoming college students can *read* in this sense of the word . . . and if they can’t, “that’s not my problem.”

As a consequence of this resistance to more fully define reading, teachers who choose to be mindful of their FYC students’ reading comprehension skills and abilities are left with overly-simplistic notions of what it means “to read,” and they are prompted to go outside (or

beyond) composition scholarship, as Donahue laments (see Carillo, *Securing* 2), when seeking resources to help them develop robust, explicit reading pedagogies. But what if in the course of asking the questions above, it is determined that many FYC students, whether enrolled at two-year or four-year colleges, cannot read “well enough” to succeed in some key contexts? How might the field respond to such a call to action?

As of this moment, however, anything resembling a common understanding of what it means “to read,” much less how to approach the teaching of reading in a writing classroom, remains elusive. Consequently, the question of *how effectively* college students can read in given contexts has been largely neglected—at least in part, I argue, due to the inconsistent attention paid to reading, which has resulted in a lack of reading theory that one might engage in answering it. “Historical patterns have worked to bring reading and writing together and to push them apart,” argues Janna Jackson (146), in reference not only to the liminal history of reading within English studies, but also of the interplay of influence between K-12, English education and English departments.

At its core, it is perhaps an ontological question with pedagogical consequences: until we arrive at a coherent understanding of what reading is, it’s certainly difficult to know how to teach it. Before questions regarding how well our students can read can be answered, we first need a coherent and generally accepted working definition of *reading*. At this point, such a definition is not forthcoming, at least not in composition. Carillo notes that “for the most part, discussions of reading as it relates to composition focus on *which* texts one should read in the composition classroom, rather than the practice of reading itself” (*Securing* 7). In these cases,

she notes that we are dealing with “reading” in its *noun* form (readings as *things*—with a focus on *what* to read) and not its *verb* form (reading as an *action*—with a focus on *how* we read).

In order to begin the project of defining reading, a project I return to in a later chapter, I wish here to extend Carillo’s and Robillard’s separate noted distinctions between “noun” and “verb” forms of “reading” as follows: even in its verb form, *reading as action*, there are at least two different but related conceptions we might use as starting points. Carillo hints at this further layer of distinction when she argues “certainly students do know how to read—as in decode language—when they get to college, but most are not prepared to deliberately engage in sophisticated forms of reading that are defined by inquiry” (*Securing* 8). And so we are offered up both a definition of *reading* (“decode language”) and a claim that certainly incoming college students know how to do this thing. Then, a further distinction is made: that between knowing how to read, and being able to deliberately engage *sophisticated forms* of reading, a distinction that is relative, and that privileges some forms of reading over others by setting up a dichotomy between sophisticated and unsophisticated (or less sophisticated) forms.

Clearly, this ability to engage a text critically, while dependent upon “decoding” skills sufficient for the task at hand, is also in many ways distinct from the decoding the work. Perhaps it is best conceived as an extension of the decoding aspects of reading, rather than as a separate dimension of reading. It seems evident in this distinction, however, that these two activities cannot be entirely conflated. Further, it is important that they are neither fixed nor stable, but instead contingent on too many variables to list, including but not limited to the student-reader’s antecedent knowledge as it might pertain to either the “decoding” work (i.e. lexical awareness) or the “critical” work.

The reading definition that seems to be the quick default, “decode language,” is inadequate not only because it is incomplete, but also because it lacks any qualifying criteria. One possible implied assumption, in other words, is that anyone with any discernable ability to “decode language” on any level knows, then, “how to read,” and so it is our primary enterprise in FYC and beyond to teach students how to “deliberately engage” those existing skills on more sophisticated texts. This begs the questions: at what point does one “know how to read”? Certainly, the answer to this question begs context, and in that sense is impossible to answer except in individual cases. To give an extreme example, my eight-year-old son is a “good reader” in the sense that he exhibits “advanced” decoding skills and abilities “for his age,” so say his teachers, and his performance on the assessments he has been administered to date. Is it fair to say that he “knows how to read”—just because he can indeed decode many grade-appropriate texts with relative ease? Where, how, and why do we declare one “able to read,” much less “able to read effectively”? Why are such declarations so rigid, resulting in absolutes such as labels of “literate” or “illiterate”? And importantly, who has the authority to make such declarations (or to deny them)? Any such proclamation—like those made at the conclusion of college placement exam processes—enacts a specific, prescriptive and narrow definition of reading, even if only implicitly.

The *NCTE Position Statement on Reading*, originally written in 1999, defines reading as “the complex act of constructing meaning from print,” an act which necessarily goes beyond the skill of “decoding language” or lifting words from the page, but is certainly predicated on it. The *Statement* proceeds to then list strategies that promote, or that are prerequisite for, effective reading: “prediction, comprehension monitoring, phonemic awareness, critical

thinking, decoding, using context, and making connections to what we already know” (1). Those with background in English education may identify many of these as referencing common K-12 teaching methods—and in this sense this list confirms Donahue’s observation that composition tends to look outside of its own scholarship for its understanding of what constitutes “reading” and how those in composition might teach it more effectively.

Reading is defined by the field of educational psychology, according to Carillo, as “a complex cognitive process that involves decoding symbols (i.e. letters) to create meaning.” Both the “decoding” and “meaning-making” are “dependent upon a series of other abilities, including background (or prior) knowledge, experience, and linguistic knowledge” (Carillo, “Reading and Writing” 121). Carillo proceeds to explain various perspectives on reading across disciplines: from cognitive psychology (which recognizes both cognitive and social influences on reading); to English education (and its focus on explicit comprehension strategies); to composition (with its noted de-emphasis on decoding skills in favor of a focus on more advanced meaning-making).

Salvatori and Donahue note that “reading” is “a complex term that signifies a range of ideas, practices, assumptions, and identities” and that this complexity is intensified when it is understood that “different theories of reading lead to different approaches to the reading of texts” (203). Their statement is compatible with that of Adler-Kassner and Estrem, in that it situates reading as complex and with multiple possible meanings. And as should be clear across these various definitions, any casting of “reading” that either limits its meaning to “decoding” (a remedial concern) *or* that overlooks decoding in favor of what might be referred to as “critical reading,” is necessarily incomplete.

Alice Horning, in “Where to Put the Manicules: A Theory of Expert Reading,” develops a theory not of reading, but of readers, who she categorizes as “novice” or “expert” largely based on a theory of metacognition through which she is able to identify specific abilities and skills that mark expert readers as opposed to novices. “Manicules” are “hand-drawn symbols used by medieval readers to mark important parts of a text,” and Horning argues that though there are other useful distinctions, the ability of readers to place literal or figurative manicules appropriately often separates expert readers from novices (1). The ability to place manicules is related to other text-processing skills, she argues: especially the abilities to analyze, evaluate, and apply reading content to new situations. Novices can be said to “lack” these abilities and “urgently need to develop” them “in order to be successful in any major in college and in their personal and professional lives” (1).

Horning defines reading as “an enormously complex activity that involves the interaction of the reader and the writer as they meet in and through the text,” and as such, “it is a challenge to access directly what is happening as reading takes place” (3). Reading comprehension, specifically, “involves both understanding the content of the text . . . and also integrating it with prior knowledge of the domain;” “as readers develop knowledge in some domain, they can use it to understand specific texts” (3). She deems “expert readers” then as both experts in the content and knowledge of their fields, and also “literacy experts” more generally, a term that denotes an array of abilities she defines in this way:

Expert literacy is best defined as the psycholinguistic processes of getting meaning from or putting meaning into print and / or sound, images, and movement, on page or screen, used for purposes of analysis, synthesis, evaluation and application; these

processes develop through formal schooling and beyond it, at home and at work, in childhood and across the lifespan and are essential to human functioning in a democratic society. (4)

Citing literacy scholar Stephen Kucer's work, she notes that these dimensions of literacy include the cognitive, linguistic, social, and developmental—and that “every literacy event entails the interaction of these dimensions” (4). Further, Horning notes that Kucer's model accounts for both “bottom-up” views of reading (that focus on building “up” from sounds to letters, words, and sentences to make meaning) and “top-down” models (that focus on the ability of a reader to get the “whole meaning of a text in the context of other texts”).

Given Horning's theory of how literacy skills develop—in and out of school, from birth and throughout one's lifetime—her statement that the goal of improving students' literacy skills “can be achieved through teachers' understanding of what experts do, through specific instructional scaffolding activities . . . that will help students learn these skills” seems ambitious. In other words, there exists a demonstrable gap between what we know about the life-long process of literacy skills development—much of which has already occurred before students reach college classrooms—and the expert-reader skills of analysis, evaluation, and application. Horning's theory mentions the necessity of students “getting meaning” from texts, but then jumps too quickly to an emphasis on the development of these higher-order “text-processing skills” like analysis, evaluation, and application. She writes of students' need to “understand the content of the text,” but curiously takes comprehension somewhat for granted. This is precisely the gap that needs to be addressed as composition continues to theorize about reading.

Prior Knowledge and Metacognition: Bridging Writing and Reading

Many theories of reading, including Alice Horning's theory of "expert reading," rely on theories of prior knowledge and metacognition that are also—and more commonly—utilized in theories of writing. While there are undoubtedly many factors that impact reading in addition to prior knowledge, and even prior knowledge as applied to reading features many sub-domains, such as prior disciplinary knowledge, prior linguistic knowledge, and prior textual knowledge at a minimum, the idea of grounding some discussion of reading in prior knowledge is potentially useful as it can serve as a needed bridge between current pedagogy in writing, and needed pedagogy development in reading. Among other benefits, grounding an understanding of student reading in prior knowledge promotes a conceptualization of reading that is not fixed or rigid, but is instead deeply contextual, unstable, and contingent. The pedagogy that might evolve from such an understanding of reading would reflect this complexity.

Metacognition, it should be noted, is related to but distinct from cognition in important ways. While the relationship between the two is perhaps obvious (i.e. metacognition as a concept is dependent upon existing cognition), it is notable that while "cognition" is often present in definitions of reading (as evident in the many references to reading as a "complex cognitive process" above), composition's uptake of learning transfer emphasizes metacognition. Howard Tinberg, in *Naming What We Know: Threshold Concepts of Writing Studies*, distinguishes between cognition and metacognition as follows:

Cognition refers to the acquisition and application of knowledge through complex mental processes . . . but the effective accomplishment of writing tasks over time

requires even more. It calls upon metacognition, or the ability to perceive the very steps by which success occurs and to articulate the various qualities and components that contribute in significant ways to the production of successful writing. (76)

While Tinberg's focus here is writing, not reading, it can be argued that merely substituting "writing" above with "reading" yields useful insights: first, that the cognitive dimensions of reading are important, since initial comprehension and application of reading are dependent upon it. And second, there are important implications for metacognitive approaches as they might foster successful reading, rather than just successful writing.

While the above insights might seem obvious, much existing scholarship in composition unnecessarily and perhaps artificially isolates writing from reading via its application of prior knowledge theory. Robertson, Taczak, and Yancey recount how, over the past decade, scholars in composition studies have "investigated how students 'transfer' what they learn in college composition into other academic writing sites," with a focus on "how they take up new writing tasks," and "applicability to writing tasks across a college career" (1). Of course, the same questions can be asked of and applied to reading, since all college writers are also—and perhaps first and foremost—readers. The question might be reframed as: How do college *readers and writers* make use of prior knowledge as they take up new *literacy* tasks?

This subtle yet significant shift from "writing" to "reading and writing" in learning transfer scholarship would likely enrich the current focus on learning transfer for writing and would also acknowledge and better capture the complexities and articulations of both reading and writing. Sommers and Saltz's focus on how students "write into expertise;" Davis Russell's interest in the activity system in which writing is situated; Robinson and Burton's study of how

students become motivated to improve their writing (all referenced in Robertson, Taczak, and Yancey): these strands of inquiry are simply enriched by the addition of reading. The activity system in which writing is situated, after all, quite often includes vast and diverse readings.

And while reading has much to offer writing studies regarding learning transfer, it is also true that the many models of transfer developed through writing studies can in turn complexify how we think about and teach reading. The National Research Council's definition of transfer as "an active, dynamic process rather than a passive end-product of a particular set of learning experiences," and their statement that "new learning involves transfer based on previous learning" (qtd. in Robertson, Taczak, and Yancey 2), should inform the development of new reading pedagogies and assessment practices.

The theory elaborated by the NRC suggests that prior knowledge can function in one of three ways: it can match the demands of the new task; it can be a bad fit, at odds with the new learning situation; or a student's "prior knowledge—located in a community context—might be at odds with a given writing situation" (3). Since my study takes place in a two-year college and within the context of courses that are comprised of a mix of college-level and developmental-level readers and writers, if their course placements are to be taken as legitimate, the idea of mapping students' prior knowledge with the many dimensions of a given reading task holds promise, since identifying specific strengths and weaknesses and perhaps comparing them across student groups might inform placement practices, for example. Further, given what we know about the impact of home literacy environments (from birth and through a lifetime) on successful reading, conceptualizing home literacy as a contribution to prior knowledge that can impact reading is important. In many cases, for example, prior knowledge might be at odds with

a given reading situation in ways that need to be more explicitly and actively acknowledged in our teaching. And the same case can likely be made for other dimensions of prior knowledge, whether textual, linguistic, or content.

Making Reading Visible

Regardless of how reading is defined, questions surrounding the “visibility” of student reading remain. Until we can conceptualize ways to “see” reading, it remains elusive and difficult to define, teach or assess. Alternatively, oversimplified models might lead to damaging pedagogy that merely reinforces the “have / lack” binary that is so present in remediation discourses. What does it mean to “make reading visible”? For whom and to what ends should we aim to “see” reading? Robert Scholes argues that “we do not see reading. We see some writing about reading, to be sure, but we do not see reading. I am certain, though, that if we could see it, we would be appalled” (165). To Scholes, the mistake we have made in teaching reading (or, perhaps in failing to teach reading) relates back to the composition / literature split as recounted earlier, which he sees as “an unfortunate error that we need to correct” (165).

He describes the reading problem as having two distinct parts: “One is the failure to focus sharply on the language of the text. The other is a failure to imagine the otherness of the text’s author” (165). Scholes finds irony in the gap between the intents of the New Critics, who “defined as a fallacy any attempt to read a text for its author’s intention” (166), and the effects of their theory. In short, argues Scholes, “The author must live before the author can die” (166), the idea being that literature has fostered a conception of reading that proposes only distance from the author—this distance itself being symptomatic of, and thus reinforcing, a larger

cultural problem: “We are not good, as a culture, at imagining the other,” he argues (166).

Scholes proceeds from here *not* with an argument about how to make reading visible—work that would help justify and support his claim that we would be appalled by what we see—but instead with more of a “what students should read” argument in the vein of Graff, mentioned earlier and cited by Scholes.

The issue of visibility is taken up explicitly by Ellen Carillo, who argues that “If we are going to foreground the relationship between reading and writing in our first-year writing courses (and ultimately beyond those courses), we must find ways of making reading as visible as writing so we can work as deliberately on reading as we do on writing” (*Securing* 132). In a teaching report titled “Making Reading Visible in the Classroom,” Carillo begins by posing the following questions: “So how can we make our students better readers? What might we do to enable ourselves to see our students’ reading so that we can help them achieve this goal?” (38). In this way, Carillo is picking up where Scholes left off, and her work proposes possible answers to the question of visibility that Scholes does not address.

Other scholars have taken on projects that bear some similarity to that undertaken in this dissertation, in that they seek to “see” or uncover evidence of student reading in specific ways. Tanya Rodrigue conducted a qualitative research study that explores “how students engage with digital texts and use them in source-based writing,” with findings that most students are “beginning” digital readers, and as such mostly draw on readings at the sentence level (or even below, at the word level), as opposed to making more sophisticated connections across the body or argument of a text (4). While students in her study were able to demonstrate “sophisticated reading invention work” during think-aloud protocols in ways that

suggested solid comprehension, “this verbal invention work did not emerge in their writing” (4), a finding that reinforces the idea of a disconnect between reading practices and writing practices for many students. Further, the finding of effective reading comprehension in the think-aloud sessions possibly complicates earlier work by Howard et al. that suggests that low levels of engagement with source texts in writing “may indicate reading and comprehension issues” (4).

The visibility of reading comprehension in student writing has also been studied with more quantitative approaches. In one of their many *Citation Project* publications, Sandra Jamieson and Rebecca Moore-Howard conducted a study of research papers of 174 students from 16 disparate colleges and universities and found that students cited only from the first two pages of a source about 70% of the time. From this, they conclude “that these papers offer scant evidence that the students can comprehend and make use of complex written text. Maybe they can; but they don’t” (111). Their findings get at the difficulty of “seeing” student reading comprehension in their writing, and in context with Rodrigue, highlight the complexity of such a project: student writing in some cases presents as an intersection between what the student “can” (or can’t) do, and what they choose to do (or resist doing). While we perhaps cannot make objective claims about a student’s reading comprehension abilities based only on their writing, we can perhaps make claims about the student’s writing itself and the extent to which it provides evidence of sophisticated comprehension—or, alternatively, of possible comprehension difficulties. After all, in most contexts institutional and otherwise, “the writing itself” is the artifact that is ultimately “assessed” or judged by its audience—it is largely the space where the merits of one’s thoughts, ideas, or arguments are determined.

Within the field of writing assessment, most work that aims to see reading emanates from L2 studies, and focuses on making reading visible not to students or instructors, but to the raters and evaluators of standardized tests. Ruey-Jiuan Regina Wu, in “Native and non-native students’ interaction with a text-based prompt,” “examines the effects of essay prompts on examinees’ writing performance” on a university-wide reading-to-write test. It is worth note here that within the three L2 writing assessment articles I am describing in this review, these integrated reading and writing tasks are variously referred to as “reading to write” (Wu), “reading into writing,” (Chan, Inoue, and Taylor) and “writing-from-sources” (Plakans and Gebril), all of which position this kind of writing in juxtaposition to “independent writing-only tasks,” which while common in L2 testing contexts are not frequently observed in higher education—a gap these assessments aim to bridge. Further, these studies and analyses are all concerned with defining and measuring reading-into-writing tasks only within the unique context of these high-stakes standardized testing scenarios, since L2 students’ proficiency scores on these exams impact a student’s course of study (college acceptance and admission, for example). Mapping the implications of this work for college-level composition pedagogy is simply not within the scope of work in this area.

In Wu’s analysis, she divides students into four groups for purposes of comparison—based on their scores on the exam, and whether they are native or non-native speakers of English: High Native (HN); High Non-Native (HNN); Low Native (LN) and Low Non-Native (LNN). Wu’s finding is that the “higher-rated native group outperformed the other groups in their ability to identify topical information and in a better sense of what details from the source text to include” (202). The two non-native groups lacked “native writers’ ability to readjust their

selection of material according to the author's epistemological stance," and the lower native group often "paid little attention to the source text and merely used the substance of the text as a 'springboard' to elicit their own opinions in response to the topic" (202).

While Wu's work differs from my project in the sense that her focus is on comparing L2 and L1 students, I reference it—and the other L2-focused work that follows—for its relevance to my project in other areas. In its analytical framework, Wu's project aims to make reading skill explicit and visible for assessment purposes—and as mentioned previously, virtually no work in L1-focused assessment is currently undertaking this project. Wu's assessment framework aims to assess the effectiveness of students' reading by investigating: 1) "the use of lexical items from a given prompt and background reading in the examinees' writing" and 2) "the use of propositional material from a given prompt and background reading in the examinees' writing" (204). Wu's framework informs my thinking about how to code and analyze my student writing data. When utilizing readings, for example, how often does a student quote directly from the source; paraphrase the source; or loosely summarize the source? What are the implications of each strategy in a given context, and how, where, and to what effect they are employed? How is the student using readings in relation to her own argument or claims? Qualitatively, how might these strategies function as evidence of a struggling reader, a novice reader, or an expert reader?

In work that bears some important similarities to that of Wu, Plakans and Gebril focus on how L2 students use sources in what they call "writing from sources" tasks. They cite earlier work where "results showed that source use serves several functions" for L2 students, including "generating ideas about the topic and serving as a language repository" (Leki and Carson, qtd.

in Plakans and Gebril 18). Whereas L1 students, in my experience, often tend to bemoan source-related writing tasks (preferring to write extemporaneously about their own experiences or opinions), L2 writers in Liki and Carson's study "liked using source texts because the texts provided ideas as well as rhetorical structures, vocabulary as well as sentence structures" (19). The authors concluded, however, that for the L2 students in their study, "summarizing and paraphrasing taxed their language proficiency and linguistic flexibility," findings worth considering in relation to how L1 writers tend to use and relate to source material (readings) in reading-to-writing tasks.

Plakans and Gebril reference Grabe's delineation of decisions all writers need to make when deciding how to integrate reading into one's writing:

1. How much information should be taken from the text; which information should be taken?
2. How does this information fit with task and writer's goals?
3. How accurately should the information be represented when going from text source to student writing?
4. What formal mechanisms should be used for transforming or using the textual information? (Grabe, qtd. In Plakans and Genril 20).

The authors cite other research which concludes that "the source use issues in integrated tasks are complex, multifaceted, and in need of further research" (20). "These issues need to be studied further to understand how writers interact and rely on source texts as well as how resulting scores reflect source use," they argue (19). While the authors' findings are not as directly relevant to my study of primarily L1 writers (for example, they note the tendency of the

studied writers to think and write in Arabic and then translate to English), their concern for the fairness of scores in relation to what those scores purport or aim to measure is somewhat universal across all writing assessment work. Further, Grabe's list of decisions writers make when interacting with sources can inform any pedagogy which aims to carefully consider reading.

Within the broad field of writing assessment—and especially within the specializations of testing and measurement in which most L2 work is generated—what it means “to read” or “to write” is typically studied within the context of a specific reading or writing task, with the point of determining the validity and reliability of the instrument for assessing work produced in that context. In other words, what it means “to read” in one assessable context is not necessarily the same as what it means “to read” in a different setting. Chan, Inoue, and Taylor, working specifically within L2 studies, take on the project of defining “the construct of reading-into-writing ability” for designing a range of tasks and assessments for L2 students at various proficiencies. Where “the writing construct” and “the reading construct” have both been studied in relation to specific tasks and assessments, the idea of “reading-into-writing” as a specific construct in need of its own tasks, practices, and rubrics has received considerably less attention, they argue (20). More often, language proficiency tests “apply a common set of rubrics to their independent and integrated tasks” (22), a practice that is fraught with obvious problems. While the focus of this article is rubric design for standardized testing scenarios, the questions of whether and to what extent “rubrics reliably distinguish reading-into-writing performance” (23) are directly relevant to my project of developing pedagogy, curriculum, and assessments that aim to teach, “see,” and assess reading within writing contexts.

Further, Chan, Inoue, and Taylor's framework for assessing students' performance on reading-into-writing tasks is promising in that it represents a bold attempt to assess students' reading within the context of their writing. The rubric they developed articulates "features" unique to reading-into-writing assessment, including: "Understanding of source materials;" "Selection of relevant content from source materials;" "Ability to identify common themes and links within and across the multiple texts;" "Adaptation of content to suit the purpose for writing," and "Use of paraphrasing and / or summarizing" (26). Challenges faced by exam raters employing reading-into-writing rubrics across these studies are surely analogous to those faced by classroom teachers in attempting to assess for these dimensions of reading / writing performance: determining the "quality" of source text integration; distinguishing between source and student language; and the need to be familiar with the source texts in order to assess how effectively those texts are being represented among them (22).

Conclusion: External and Internal Exigencies for Reading Pedagogy in Composition

It is encouraging that after a relatively long absence, reading is making a resurgence in composition as an explicit object of study. The renewed focus on reading is likely the result of many factors—not all of them encouraging. For one, there is growing political sentiment against remediation, and in some states remedial coursework is being legislated to the brink of extinction. TYCA notes that states "from Florida to Washington, from Connecticut to Colorado, are mandating reform," and that these reforms target everything from "admissions to four-year colleges, placement into developmental or college-level courses, curriculum and program design, and support programs" ("TYCA White Paper" 227). Four-year colleges in some states are

now prohibited from offering remedial coursework, “which pushes students into already-overburdened two-year colleges” (227).

Paradoxically, at my own institution (a two-year college) and others, remedial reading course offerings are on the decline, due to funding cuts and increased pressure to “accelerate” students to degrees. As standalone remedial reading offerings wane, the work of understanding, assessing, and improving students’ reading skills, however defined, is increasingly falling to composition, or is simply not attended to at all. For community college writing teachers who choose to take on this challenge—or who in many cases are forced to do so—the net result is that “two-year college faculty are frequently charged with implementing these initiatives and asked to make decisions about program redesign with little time for study and without training or compensation” (227). In cases where faculty are provided with time and compensation, it is at least true that resources, in the form of scholarship on how they might meet these challenges, are scant.

And yet, beginning college students’ reading skills are a concern both inside and especially outside of composition—a fact that also likely fuels the recent re/turn to reading. An influential study by Educational Testing Service reported that nearly half of all potential college students, those who took the ACT test in 2004, were not prepared for college-level reading tasks (Lewis, qtd. in Bosley 285). Other more recent studies report that between 28% and 40% of new students require at least some remediation upon entering college (“Hot Topics”). At the same time, it should be noted that “readiness” is a hot-button concept in the testing world, and is anything but absolute, despite often being cast as such in attention-grabbing headlines about student readiness or, more often, lack thereof. The raw numbers regarding students requiring

remediation upon entering college, for example, do not necessarily tell us anything at all about readiness, since placement practices vary widely, and the validity and reliability of many common placement tools are questionable at best. These statistics merely tell us how colleges (and, importantly, other stakeholders) are perceiving and measuring readiness, rather than what readiness entails. In fact, most readiness arguments casually presume a fixed and stable conception of “readiness” that does not exist.

One of many limitations of “readiness” measures “is that they focus solely on selected core academic knowledge and skills,” such as GPA, class rank, and ACT or SAT scores, “without considering noncognitive skills or other cross-cutting cognitive capabilities” (Mattern et. al 4). “These conceptualizations,” it is argued by the authors of an ACT Research Report, “represent missed opportunities as a growing body of research has now demonstrated that both cognitive and noncognitive skills are important to success in education and the workforce” (4). It remains to be seen what impact more holistic conceptions of “readiness” might have on remediation statistics, placements, and perceived need. In short, however, this is yet another illustration of the point that the assumptions we tend to make about students’ reading skills and abilities do not match the existing data. And while one can and certainly should question the soundness of the data, composition would do better to position itself as willing and able to participate meaningfully in this emerging conversation.

Given the external pressures, composition would do well to formulate and advocate for its own interests (and those of students) regarding reading and writing. But within composition’s own fractured history, the tenuous interdisciplinary connections have failed to yield much in the way of useful reading pedagogy resources for writing teachers. Lisa Bosley

argues, “although improvement in critical literacy is an often-cited objective of many freshman composition courses, there is little research that describes how composition instructors teach critical reading strategies” (285). Bosley argues that there is a perceptible gap between “sociocultural theory in reading scholarship” which “posits that reading is a complex, socially grounded process, one that different readers approach differently” (287), and classroom practice, where reading, too often, is presented as a “neutral process of decoding authorial intent” (Harkin and Sosnoski, qtd. in Bosley 287). Bosley’s study of actual classroom practices highlights the different words teachers use to talk about reading: “interpretation,” “close reading,” and “rhetorical reading” among them, with one composition teacher in her study describing reading as a “slippery term” (298).

Bosley argues, then, that students arrive in our classes with very little exposure to these terms or their attendant practices—meaning that they “need to be taught explicit strategies for this type of engagement with texts” (298). While the participant instructors in this current study mostly just used the term “reading” with students, the finding presented later suggest that various unnamed types of reading were encouraged in practice: skimming, scanning, and close reading were all valued and reinforced at different points, though none were meaningfully differentiated for students. In her conclusion, Bosley refers to the growing body of research that suggests that “reading and writing are best taught as reciprocal processes,” but that in practice, we still tend to “assume that students are reading at a college level” and fail to integrate reading and writing instruction explicitly enough to be effective (298).

Similarly, Linda Adler-Kassner and Heidi Estrem explain that “at the same time as instructors ask for more explicit guidance with reading pedagogy, that pedagogy is rarely

included in composition research, graduate composition courses, or first-year writing programs' developmental materials" (36). They note that one possible explanation for this is the conflation of "reading" and "readers' *roles*" in WPA, program, and FYC course outcomes at the program level (37, emphasis mine). These outcome statements, which tend to begin with language such as "by the end of this course, a successful student should be able to . . ." foreground student *activity* ("critically analyze," "engage," "consider") without explicitly addressing what reading *is* or defining skillful reading in any instructive way.

Ultimately, Adler-Kassner and Estrem call for instructors to be mindful of *how* they frame reading in their pedagogies—with the point being that we might define reading differently in different contexts. They propose terms like "content-based reading," "process-based reading," and "structure-based reading" as ones that more accurately define what reading is (and what it is not) in a given context. Their framework is certainly a step in the right direction, as it aims to complicate the term while also grounding it in the expected activity of student-writers. In this regard, their scholarship also then provides a bridge to classroom practice, and in doing so promotes the development of pedagogies that explicitly name, define, support, and teach reading.

The study that proceeds from this chapter aims to contribute to addressing the dearth of resources that exist for writing teachers who wish to take more intentional, mindful, and pedagogically-sound approaches to student reading. The project of learning to "see reading" in our institutions, programs, pedagogies, and most importantly, in student practices is an important step towards understanding more about how the ways in which we conceptualize and teach reading impacts how students come to comprehend the various kinds of texts we

assign in our classes. Once we learn to see reading, we can understand it, we can study it, and can aim to build meaningful programs, courses, pedagogies, and curricula that recognize and support the development of our students as readers.

CHAPTER II: CONTEXTS, METHODS, AND METHODOLOGIES

Quality is elusive, hard to specify, but we often feel we know it when we see it. In this respect research is like art rather than science.”

Seale, qtd. in Corbin and Strauss 297

Introduction to This Study

The data for this dissertation was collected during the fall 2017 academic semester at Midwestern community college I'll refer to as Prairieview, in two sections of English 101, each of which was paired with an ALP (Accelerated Learning Program)-based helper course, English 099, a unique structure which will be described in detail later. I began my study with a broad-based curiosity: How might we begin to better understand college students' reading? This inquiry elicits further questions, such as: How does reading competency, however defined, manifest itself in student writing? How might writing teachers learn to “see” evidence of student reading comprehension, attendant strategies, and potential in their writing, so that we might begin to learn how to teach and assess reading more explicitly within writing contexts? These broad questions were then refined in preliminary stages of data analysis as follows:

- 1) What conceptions of reading are operating in the instructors' assignments and assessments, and how do those conceptions reinforce or resist the instructors' stated beliefs, values, and intentions regarding the teaching of reading?
- 2) What types of reading and what reading strategies do student writers employ when utilizing readings in their writing, and how might these strategies be described for purposes of exploring their implications?

- 3) What meaningful relationships, if any, exist between the “traditional” English 101 students and their ALP counterparts in regard to reading? Do the “labels” institutions place on students as writers (“college-ready” vs. “developmental”) have any observable relevance regarding reading?

Research Context

Prairieview is a Midwestern two-year college with enrollment of approximately 5,200 students for the fall, 2017 semester, most of whom are Associate’s-degree-seeking students who then transfer to four-year schools (“Fast Facts”). The primary employers in the local economy are in the insurance, education, public services, health care, and agricultural sectors. The community college district serves a population of approximately 230,000 which, like many throughout the Midwest, has experienced a steep decline in manufacturing jobs, but the district is generally stable economically, with an unemployment rate of 4.0% as of October 2018, which compares to a state-wide average of 4.2% (not seasonally adjusted) (“Illinois Unemployment”).

Minority enrollment at Prairieview is 31%, in contrast to the minority population of the district at large, which is 16% (“Population”). While detailed socioeconomic demographics of Prairieview students are not publicly available, 39% of undergraduate / credit students receive financial aid, mostly in the form of Pell grants, which are indicative of household income of \$30,000 or less; whereas median household income for the county is \$63,000 (“Population”). Institutional statistics on remediation are in line with nationwide trends: multiple studies confirm that approximately 35% of new students entering a community college require at least

one remedial course in their first year (reading, writing, or math) (“Community”). At Prairieview, approximately 40% of enrolled students are placed into a developmental course, a number which includes ALP-101 placements, since those students are also required to enroll in English 099, a developmental composition course.

For many reasons, it is important to foreground the fact that Prairieview is a two-year college. First, both instructors who consented for this study are tenured, full-time faculty members in English. In contrast to large four-year colleges, where little if any first-year composition is taught by tenured instructors, this is usually not the case at two-year schools. At Prairieview, for example, 45 of the 69 sections of composition offered during the spring 2018 semester are taught by tenured faculty (65%). However, to the extent that volunteering to participate in a study might seem like “extra work,” I acknowledge that perhaps full-time faculty were more likely to respond to my call for participants. A large-scale study of teacher attitudes towards or approaches to integrating the teaching of reading into writing classes would surely need to represent adjunct faculty at a rate consistent with actual staffing of such courses at two-year colleges.

Second, it has been documented that “students at two-year colleges have lower rates of prose, document, and quantitative literacy than their peers at four-year institutions” (Baer et al. qtd. in Del Principe and Ihara 185). “There is also evidence to suggest,” note Del Principe and Ihara, “that the reading requirements are less demanding at the community college level” (185). They cite a National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE) literacy skills study which concluded that:

- 1) “Reading and writing in these community colleges is not very cognitively challenging;”

- 2) “The ‘information load’ is higher than in high school, but students aren’t asked to do much with the texts they read;”
- 3) “Performance levels students are asked to achieve are modest;” and
- 4) “The reading material still presents a challenge to students.” (185)

This study and many others suggest that a two-year college experience is commonly different and distinct from a four-year college experience in ways that matter for both teachers and students. That said, this distinction is not made for purposes of limiting the application of this dissertation to two-year colleges. Instead, it is intended to help illuminate the very specific contextual aspects of this study, as well as to foreground the particular relevance of this work for community colleges generally.

The NCEE findings, when considered all together, necessarily inform how I approached my data, especially when looking at the instructor artifacts, like assignment descriptions. For example, when examining how students “take up” a reading assignment in their writing, a question studied by Robertson, Taczak, and Yancey, and others, it is also important to consider the many pedagogical and curricular underpinnings of that work: what students were asked or required to read (including but not limited to text length, complexity, genre); how, if at all, students were expected (via the assignment) to put that reading to use in their writing or other coursework; what kind of “reading” the assignment may have implicitly or explicitly encouraged (skimming, scanning, comprehensive reading); and how or whether students were taught to meet those expectations; and how, ultimately, they were held accountable for meeting those expectations via the embedded and apparent assessment practices. Since most Prairieview students are degree-seeking and do in fact transfer to four-year schools, any observable

disconnect between two-year and four-year expectations and requirements deserves careful consideration.

The writing program at Prairieview has a long history of cutting-edge curriculum reform in both first-year and developmental composition: the program was an early-adopter of a robust portfolio system in the 1990's, and employed a unique communal grading system for many years. More recently, the program has received national recognition for its ALP model of developmental education that allows higher-placing developmental students to enroll in English 101 with the stipulation that they also co-enroll in a 3-hour, non-for-credit, developmental-level helper course, English 099, that is designed to offer additional instruction in areas such as grammar, reading, and affective dimensions of learning. The “accelerated” component at Prairieview does not mean that students take “shorter” or compressed versions of courses—it merely means that by allowing some developmental students to co-enroll in English 101, instead of in a standalone developmental-level course, students’ time to degree is potentially shortened. The student enrollment cap for the English 101 sections is 22 students, with each section consisting of 11 “traditional” English 101 students and 11 “ALP” students who are also then co-enrolled in the helper course, English 099, as follows:

Figure 1. English 101 ALP model at Prairieview

The courses meet consecutively, and the same instructor teaches both courses. The idea behind this ALP configuration is that the “cohort” model works to create a sense of community that encourages persistence and ultimately academic success.

The writing program at Prairieview also recently redesigned its first-year credit-level courses (English 101 and English 102) to more effectively distinguish between them; adopted new placement practices; and developed an in-house IRW (Integrated Reading and Writing) manual that instructors can voluntarily choose to employ as a resource for their teaching. It is also important to note that instructors at Prairieview have complete curricular freedom to decide how best to teach to the shared course outcomes and learning objectives as articulated in the required course syllabus. There is no required textbook or common / shared assignment,

though many faculty members in the program report that they often collaborate with others on shared assignments and assessments.

Like many two-year colleges, Prairieview is experiencing somewhat of a contraction of its developmental course offerings in English, in part due to historically low student retention, success, and persistence rates in the lowest levels of composition. Unlike many of its peers, however, these program revisions have not occurred due to any external / political mandate. The decisions to scale back developmental offerings have been collaborative, shaped by input from instructors, the Chair of English, the Dean of the division, and program coordinators and deans in other areas, such as Adult Education, Disability, and Student Support.

Going back a decade, the English composition course sequence was as follows:

Table 1.

Circa 2007 Writing Program Course Sequence at Prairieview

Course	Brief Description
English 080	Grammar fundamentals for low-placing students
English 090	Short essays often grounded in reading of short novels
English 094	Beginning source-based essay writing
English 095	Intermediate source-based writing
English 101	Introduction to college writing skills—multiple shorter writing projects

(Table Continues)

Table 1. Continued

Course	Brief Description
English 102	Advanced college writing skills—longer, sustained research project

As of 2017 and after a long and gradual process of revising placement procedures and phasing out courses, the program today features just four total courses:

Table 2.

2017 Writing Program Course Sequence at Prairieview

Course	Brief Description
English 098	An intensive (6 credit hour) Integrated Reading and Writing course co-taught by an English faculty member and a Reading faculty member
English 099	An ALP helper course for higher-placing students still below the English 101 threshold for placement—students are co-enrolled in English 101
English 101	Introduction to college composition via an emphasis on genre studies, learning transfer, and metacognition
English 102	Multimodal composing

Whereas the program ten years ago featured up to four levels of standalone developmental education before English 101, the current program is limited to one true developmental course, English 098. Students who place below the English 098 threshold are referred to Adult Education for additional consultation, after which they are referred to one of many various

programs: Adult Education, ESL, or Community Education (where they can take shorter intensive classes in reading fundamentals, for example, and then reassess).

Similarly, the college's reading program has experienced a corresponding decline in its offerings: in fact, there is currently no true standalone developmental reading course at the college, whereas for many years there were up to three such courses. As with composition, this contraction in course offerings was driven largely by extremely low student success rates. Reading instruction that historically occurred on the credit side of the college through the reading program has largely been shifted to Adult Education, which allows the college to utilize grant funding to provide reading remediation to students at very low cost to the student and the college.

Further, however, faculty at the college note a subtle shift in the focus of adult education at the institution: whereas the previous emphasis had been on orienting students towards the academy (degrees and certificates), the current focus is on job training and placing students into the workforce upon completion of their adult education curriculum. If true, this trend poses a further future risk to remediation programs at the college.

As with many colleges, the English (literature, composition, and developmental composition) and reading programs at Prairieview have historically been separated in almost every way: the campus has separate reading and writing centers that do not coordinate their services; reading and writing faculty offices and classrooms are in separate buildings on campus; writing faculty meet, plan, and develop and revise course offerings separately from reading faculty; and until recently, faculty in the two areas reported to different academic Deans. The English 098 course, a recent development, represents an effort to collaborate and

to provide more streamlined reading and writing remediation to students. Early results for the new course are mixed, with overall success rates not much different from when the courses functioned separately.

The reading and writing programs have also recently collaborated on a significant overhaul of the college’s reading and writing placement processes, moving to a more holistic “literacy placement” model, rather than discrete “reading” and “writing” placements, that allows students’ various reading and writing placement results to inform each student’s final placement. The college currently has ACT and SAT cutoff scores which exempt some students from the placement process (and place them directly into English 101). For students who fall below the cutoffs, or who have no ACT / SAT scores to report, a two-step system is employed as follows:

Table 3.

Literacy Placement Process at Prairieview

Placement Mechanism	How it is Used
ACCUPLACER Reading Comprehension exam	Scores at or above the cutoff result in direct English 101 placement—no remedial courses required.
Placement Essay	Students who fall below the threshold for direct English 101 placement write an untimed essay exam in response to a brief prompt. ACCUPLACER scores are considered alongside the essays, which are read by English faculty for final placement decision.

Prairieview is an example of a small but growing trend of using mass-market *reading* tests as opposed to *writing* tests to inform writing placement decisions. This is in part due to the questionable validity of mass-market “writing” placement tools, which tend to consist either of grammar-based multiple-choice exams, or computer-scored writing samples, neither of which represent the writing construct adequately, according to Prairieview’s faculty. In contrast, the reading comprehension exam does seem to measure relevant dimensions of students’ reading comprehension with a level of validity that is generally acceptable to writing faculty, especially given that the ACCUPLACER score is only one of two measures employed, and that faculty who read the placement essays make the final placement decisions for these students. The ACCUPLACER score informs final placement, but faculty have the final say in each student’s final placement.

In a further attempt to integrate reading and writing instruction beyond the English 098 course, several faculty members received paid reassignment time during the summer of 2017 to develop an IRW manual that instructors can use at their will as a resource to more explicitly integrate reading instruction and assessment into their writing courses. The manual consists of background readings in IRW and “best practices” oriented ready-to-use ideas for assignments and activities that emphasize teaching and assessing student reading. The emphasis of the manual is “mindfulness”: strategies by which writing teachers who are not trained reading specialists can nonetheless employ in order to begin to simply pay more attention to students’ reading comprehension, strategies, and processes. Use of the manual is completely voluntary as of this writing.

Research Methods

Currently, no studies exist which focus on my precise lines of inquiry: How do the instructor participants conceive of reading within their curriculum? How do those operating conceptions align with their stated beliefs and values? What strategies do student writers employ when utilizing readings in their writing? As mentioned in the literature review, the closest analogs to my study emanate from L2 studies, and compare native with non-native students (Wu); focus on developing rubrics for L2 reading-into-writing exams (Chan, Inoue, and Taylor); or investigate how students use sources in integrated L2 writing tasks (Plakans and Gebril). Other recent studies aim to capture students' self-reporting of their reading experiences during their college career (Del Principe and Ihara) or what college students reading and why (Jolliffe and Harl). Tanya Rodrigue's study of students' digital reading strategies, and how those strategies translate to source-based writing, also has important implications for this project. While these works inform how I will approach my data, none consider important questions about how student writing authored by predominantly L1 writers might be analyzed to develop a framework for understanding, teaching, and assessing not only student writing, but also reading.

I employed a constructivist grounded theory approach to qualitative research and the initial data analysis. Grounded theory, as defined in Corbin and Strauss, is "a specific methodology developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) for the purpose of building theory from data" (1), and that springs from the desire to "develop knowledge that will guide practice" (11). Grounded theory methods like those I employ here "consist of systematic, yet flexible, guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories 'grounded' in the

data themselves” (Charmaz 2). One of the tenets of grounded theory—and perhaps of all qualitative research—is the ability of the researcher to “live with ambiguity” (13). Admittedly, my project in this dissertation involves “looking for” something—evidence of students’ reading comprehension—that I am not accustomed to looking for in my past twenty years of reading and assessing student writing. In a way this is—and should be—an uncomfortable and unfamiliar process.

Phase 1: Data Collection

My approach to data collection was decidedly hands-off—I did not want to influence what or how instructors taught their students, but instead just wanted to be afforded a bird’s eye view of how these instructors in this program currently teach reading and writing, and of how students take up these pedagogies in their writing. My initial call for study participants involved an email to all writing program faculty at Prairieview, followed by a brief presentation at a writing program meeting where I described my project. I made it clear in my presentation that my study was intentionally unobtrusive in terms of the classroom-based research, and that I would merely be requesting access to their curriculum and evaluations of student work, and to their consenting students’ work and writing, after their classes ended. Instructor participants were also informed of my intention to communicate with them regularly, during and after the semester, for written reflections, brief interviews, and limited requests for clarification or follow-up.

Two instructors responded to my call for volunteers; I’ll call them Sam and Zarina. Both are experienced, tenured, and promoted full-time professors of English at Prairieview; both

have served in leadership roles in the program, including the course and program redesigns previously mentioned; and both are experienced instructors in the college’s ALP model. Also important to my study: both instructors began the semester with a stated intention to take new approaches to the teaching of reading in their courses. I considered many researcher “roles” for this study, including that of an observer, but ultimately limited my direct contact with students to the presenting and discussion of the informed consent. I did not wish to intervene in the instruction of either course, as my intent is to study my participants’ pedagogies and the student activity they produced, and not the effects of specific planned interventions. My only direct interventions were with the instructors: I sent broad, open-ended reflection prompts at midterm and again at the end of the semester; sent follow-up questions to both via email; and conducted brief in-person interviews with each instructor.

Table 4.

Summary of Instructor Data Collected and Analyzed

Data Collected	Data Coded / Analyzed
Midterm reflective memos	All Coded / Analyzed
End of semester reflective memos	All Coded / Analyzed
Email correspondence as follow-ups to reflective memos	All Coded / Analyzed

(Table Continues)

Table 4. Continued

Data Collected	Data Coded / Analyzed
All course materials including syllabi, assignments, rubrics, and assessment feedback, all via instructor's Blackboard shells	Syllabi were coded / analyzed. Assignments and rubrics coded / analyzed include all materials from Zarina's course unit titled "Create," and from Sam's unit titled "Genres and Conventions," as described below

Table 5.

Summary of Student Data Collected and Analyzed

Data Collected	Data Coded / Analyzed
Rhody Secondary Reading Attitude Assessment (early and late semester)	All Coded / Analyzed
DRP (Degrees of Reading Power) Reading Assessment (early and late semester)	All Coded / Analyzed
All student writing, including process work, discussion board posts, quizzes, rough and final project drafts	Coding and analysis was limited to student work generated during Zarina's course unit titled "Create," and from Sam's unit titled "Genres and Conventions," as described below
Student assignment and course grades	All Analyzed (Coding n/a)

The Rhody (see Tullock-Rhody and Alexander) was developed in 1980, and for use in secondary schools, as the title indicates. That said, it has been employed by the reading program at this institution for many years, and is viewed by the reading faculty there as a

worthwhile piece of data to gather and track. Several instructors in the writing program administer the assessment for informational and early diagnostic purposes. The DRP exam is a multiple-choice reading comprehension exam, though it differs from the ACCUPLACER reading comprehension exam that is used at this institution for writing placement. Like with the Rhody, use of the DRP exam is voluntary and is merely used as a diagnostic tool to give both teacher and students a “big-picture” view of students’ attitudes towards reading, and of students’ possible strengths and weaknesses regarding reading comprehension. Ultimately, there were too many inconsistencies in the administration of these assessments for them to be useful, except in ways they might have informed individual case studies—a path I ultimately decided not to pursue, in favor of a more holistic analysis of student data. Multiple student absences, either on pre-test day, post-test day, or both, resulted in a very small sample size.

Other Data Collected / Coded / Analyzed:

Other data collected, coded, and analyzed for this project included documents both internal and external to Prairieland that inform and influence the institutional context in which teachers and students work and participate. These include texts such as transfer agreements, college-wide competency statements, and writing program outcomes statements, for example.

Phase 2: Data Selection

While I was granted access to *all* teaching materials and student writing from the two sections that submitted to my study, I initially scanned both courses in a search for potentially fruitful intersections or divergences in these instructors’ approaches to teaching, assigning, and

otherwise utilizing readings in their classes. Coding and analyzing *all* student artifacts to which I had access seemed unnecessary and even limiting for my purposes of analyzing how students use readings in their writing. Since both courses consisted of a series of major projects that were organized and sequenced similarly, my intention, after closely inspecting the entire data set, was to select *one* unit from *each* course section as the primary object of my student-related coding and analysis work. The desired criteria heading into the selection process were as follows:

- As a first priority, I aimed to identify a reading-intensive unit in each class that also involved or culminated in a major writing assignment, so that I might be able to study how the reading was utilized in the students' writing.
- Second, I also wished for the selected unit to involve robust process work (instances where students were expected to practice and demonstrate various activities related to their reading and writing) in addition to a "major essay" project. My desire was to see reading in action over time, and across a spectrum of instructional activities.

Sam and Zarina each plan their respective courses similarly, around major "units" or projects. Sam's course featured four discrete content units with the titles "Literacies," "Discourse Communities," "Genres and Conventions," and "Rhetoric." Zarina's course was organized around three major units titled "Advertisements," "Compare," and "Create." All units in both courses utilized multiple short reading assignments of texts of various types (many from online, open-source anthology *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writings*, Volume 1); discussion prompts or brief quizzes that aimed to hold students accountable for the readings; and process assignments that are common to many first-year composition classrooms (outlines, drafts, and

peer response prompts). In short, all major units in these classes would have fit my initial selection criteria.

Early in the process of reviewing my data, however, I noticed that both Zarina and Sam had assigned a common reading, a chapter titled “Backpacks vs. Briefcases: Steps Toward Rhetorical Analysis” by Laura Bolin Carroll (from the aforementioned *Writing Spaces* anthology). Further, both utilized and ultimately held students accountable for this specific reading in multiple and very different ways throughout the respective units that featured this text (reading quizzes, discussion posts, reflective memos); and further, both instructors listed the article as a “required” source for a major writing assignment. Thus, I selected the writing and other materials generated during the unit titled “Create” from Zarina’s class, and the unit titled “Genres and Conventions” from Sam’s class, as the student artifacts to code for analysis. Zarina’s “Create” unit culminated in two student artifacts: a 4-page, 5-source “solution” essay based around a community-based problem each student had defined previously, and a reflective essay that articulates the choices made in the solution essay. The final student product in Sam’s “Genres and Conventions” unit is a 500-word rhetorical analysis of an argumentative text of the student’s choice. Zarina’s “Create” essay is purportedly directed towards an outside audience, whereas Sam’s students’ reflections are directed towards an audience of classmates. Attention to these differences in scope, audience, and purpose of the various student artifacts is important, since it is reasonable to assume that student reading-into-writing practices might be affected by the contexts for which the writing is intended to be read.

Based on the promise of these respective units for my project, in that they appeared to fulfill my selection criteria, I also limited my initial selection of instructional materials to those related in some way to this one common reading assignment, with the exception of course syllabi, and with the understanding that I could always broaden my inquiry to include more content, if this seemed necessary or useful. For instructor Sam, this specific reading was first assessed via a reading quiz. The chapter also was a suggested resource for the culminating major project of the unit, in which students were asked to “discuss the rhetoric of an argumentative text” of their choice. Unlike Sam’s use of the reading quiz to assess baseline comprehension of the reading assignment, Zarina takes a UDL (Universal Design for Learning) approach to assessing student reading: students are given the opportunity to choose from multiple means of expression of their understanding of a text, including answering reading questions, making a graphic organizer, or writing a summary / response. However, as noted later, despite the many options provided, all of Zarina’s students chose to represent their understanding of the text by answering the reading questions. The article was then listed as a required source in the culminating writing project called “Design and Reflection,” where students were asked to design a solution for a local problem of their choice, and to “write a reflection where you explain and justify your choices.”

While I did not code and analyze student writing for *only* the application of this one source, the suggested or required use of this reading in writing assignments that were otherwise very different struck me as an interesting and useful parallel between the two courses. Further, since I am familiar with this article (having assigned it in the past and now having re-read it for purposes of my data analysis), I was able to quickly identify when students

were quoting directly from the source; when they were paraphrasing from it; and I was able to make qualitative distinctions regarding *how* students integrated this reading into their writing. While I also investigated many other readings and sources utilized by individual students, as a means to analyze, for example, how students chose to integrate and represent other readings, the idea of a shared reading was appealing on both practical and theoretical levels.

Phase 3: Data Analysis

Once selection of data was finalized, the data was divided first into three broad categories: 1) instructor artifacts (reflections, syllabi, teaching materials related to the selected units, transcripts from follow-up emails); 2) student artifacts (quizzes, reflections, and other process assignments from the selected units; and major essay project submissions, grades and written assessment feedback from the selected units); and 3) institutional artifacts (transfer agreements and outcomes statements and the like as detailed above).

All teacher and student materials were downloaded from email or from the instructors' Blackboard course shells, and student work was anonymized in accordance with my IRB protocol. Each individual artifact was then uploaded into NVIVO qualitative data analysis software, which supports this kind of work by allowing the researcher to quickly and easily upload, code, and analyze data produced by mixed-methods qualitative research. Once data has been coded, the researcher can query the data in many ways, to identify emerging themes and trends.

Once the data was organized, I began the process of "open coding," which involves "breaking data apart and delineating concepts to stand for blocks of raw data," while at the

same time “qualifying those concepts in terms of their properties and dimensions” (Corbin and Strauss 195). In short, the aim of open coding is to identify themes for consideration in later phases of analysis. The tension in open coding is obvious: whereas the researcher has specific questions in mind that he would like for the data to help answer, the researcher also has an obligation to try to make his data support interpretations other than those he might favor. In my first broad pass over all of these materials, I merely aimed to pay attention to reading: how it is defined, represented, taught, and ultimately, how we might be able to “see” or identify evidence of student reading practices in their writing.

I began my analysis with the instructor reflections, and for several reasons: chronologically, they were the first pieces of data I received, as per my IRB protocol. This allowed for a brief phase of concurrent analysis—I was able to use the instructor reflections to plan later interview questions, and to help guide my thinking about data selection. The instructor reflections were relatively brief, and a few stark themes emerged almost immediately, as will be shared in detail in the next chapter. To preview, I noted immediately that both instructors stated intentions to take some new approaches to reading during the semester; I noticed both instructors’ frank uncertainty about whether their teaching of reading was explicit enough, and whether it was ultimately effective. I observed many “pedagogical wishes,” instances where these instructors were being mindful of what was and was not working, and how they could make changes for future classes.

I then proceeded to analyze the remaining instructor materials before moving on to the student writing, coding for specific reading strategies mentioned, implicit and explicit instances of reading instruction; and the “kind” or “type” of reading a given assignment might elicit from

a student. For example, in light of other study findings that students often tend to merely “scan” or “skim” assigned readings, I wanted to study these trends from the instructional side as well: what kinds of reading does a given assignment allow / endorse / encourage?

During the coding process I referred often to Bob Broad’s claim that it is “the qualitative researcher’s responsibility to encourage the data to ‘resist’ the researcher’s presuppositions and expectations . . . by actively pursuing alternative interpretations of events and attempting to account for them all” (30). In some sense, the idea of “open coding” is perhaps a myth—all coding is limited to the possibilities that the researcher is able to see in the data; all coding is of course informed by the researcher’s past experience. Since I began this work with an idea that there might be observable differences between the two different “groupings” of students (traditional English 101 placers and ALP students), I did not want my coding scheme to evolve around any sort of unconscious attempt to manufacture these differences. By design, then, not until the initial coding was complete did I begin to query my data in any way that might have confirmed or denied any relationships between the traditional FYC students and ALP students, thus potentially shaping my approach to the data. And in the end, my analysis in fact demonstrates far more commonalities than differences between how students in both groups tended to utilize class readings in their written work—a finding that, while unexpected, is very important to my project.

I also remained consciously aware of my own extensive history as an “evaluator” of student writing, and of the challenges this history presents when the goal is to merely note *what students are doing* in their writing, as opposed to my own judgment of *how well they are doing it*. Admittedly, I found myself constantly resisting the urge to assess and evaluate the

perceived “quality” of the student work. To counter this impulse, my initial approach to the coding was decidedly “descriptive” in nature—I first turned my eye to “what” students were doing with readings, as explained above. In my later analysis, I was then able to make some qualitative distinctions between individual instances of a given code—distinctions that were necessary in order to fully elaborate the coding scheme.

Admittedly, based on my own previous research in integrated reading and writing assessment, I approached the student data with some expectations about what I would and would not “see.” I was also fully prepared to cast any or all of these possibilities aside if they did not seem applicable to my data set. Some of the many possibilities considered include:

- Grabe’s delineation of decisions writers make when integrating readings into writing:
 - How much information / which information student writers decide to use
 - Whether / how the information fits with writer’s purpose or goals
 - How directly or accurately the information should be represented in writing (qtd. in Plakans and Gebril 20).
- Johns and Mayes’ concept of “distortions,” a term they used to refer to plagiarism or other “incorrect” or unacceptable representations of sources in the writing of L2 students (qtd. in Plakans and Gebril 20). While I did not encounter any explicit plagiarism in these samples (though I did mark some passages as perhaps requiring citation), I applied the “distortions” code to passages where students attempted to “use” a reading in a way that clearly demonstrated a fundamental misread (or misunderstanding) of the source text. This turned out to be one of my most predominant and most useful themes.

- Wu's differentiation between L2 vs. L1 student use of "lexical items" and "propositional material" from background reading material—and in particular, the challenge of the student writer to "identify topical information and to distinguish relevant from trivial material in the reading text" (Kintsch and van Dijk, qtd. in Wu 210).
- Wu's concept of "springboarding," which is a documented tendency of struggling native writers to pay "little attention to the source" and merely use the source as a "springboard to elicit their own opinions in response to the topic" (202).

Ultimately, as my later analysis will show, I did apply many of these concepts in the form of codes that helped me identify themes in the data. Admittedly, some of these codes that seemed promising initially, like Wu's "springboarding" concept, were simply not prominent features of my data. However, even some of these lacks have significant implications: do some assignments seem to invite or encourage "springboarding," while others discourage or resist this approach?

I also took great care to leave room for other trends to emerge through the open coding process. For example, many of the codes ultimately generated came about due to their emphasis in the specific assignments analyzed (codes like "Statistical Information" and "Definitions," for example, emerged in student work via assignments that explicitly called on students to provide this kind of information), while other codes (like "Missed Opportunities") were unanticipated, but clearly features of the student data.

Phase 4: Close Analysis and Verification

Finally, after the selected data was coded a first time and initial themes were explored, I refined the coding scheme by grouping similar codes together, and also by exploding some codes out into multiple new ones so that the full complexity of the students' work could be captured more effectively. As an example of the latter, during my first pass at coding the student work, I paid close attention to *what* students were doing with readings: whether they were quoting directly, summarizing, paraphrasing, etc. But these codes did not tell me much about *how* or *why* or *to what end* students were employing these practices.

During later coding sessions, then, codes like "Definitions" and "Statistical Information" were developed—codes that helped me to identify specifically what elements of the readings students were utilizing in their writing. Then, other codes, like "Application," "Evaluation," and "Analysis," helped me identify what kinds of "work" students were trying to use the readings to help them do. After several rounds of refinement along these lines, coding was concluded and the scheme finalized. A summary of the entire coding scheme appears at the end of this chapter.

The results of the coding process were then used to shape the project before you, one which aims to exemplify a careful and self-aware striving to trace reading across the instructional arc—to make reading visible in our institutional and programmatic practices, in our teaching and assessing of student work, and most importantly, in student writing.

Key Terms: Purposes for, Types of, and Strategies for Reading

Before proceeding to the findings, it is important to review the interplay between three terms as I apply them in this study: *purposes* for reading; *types* of reading; and reading *strategies*. The phrase “types of reading” in this study is used as a synonym for what also are often referred to as reading “styles” or “techniques.” “Reading” is used here in its verb form (i.e. to refer to the physical and intellectual activities involved in reading and comprehending a given text), meaning that “types of reading” refers to the specific way or ways a reader might approach the reading of a given text—decisions that, when made intentionally and strategically, are derived at least in part by the *purpose* of the read as ultimately determined / enacted by the reader, though influenced by a multitude of additional factors.

Note that the *motivations* for choosing a reading purpose or purposes can be external (i.e. an assignment that asks the student to analyze a text or to use it to solve a problem) and / or internal (i.e. a student might also read an assigned text out of personal interest with an aim of using the information in some other context); in fact, most reading that occurs within academic contexts likely involves a confluence of external and internal motivations. Ultimately, however, the choices regarding reading purposes, and the application of accompanying types of reading and reading strategies, are made by the reader, even if unconsciously—though undoubtedly those choices are influenced by external forces, such as assignment descriptions and pedagogical interventions. The following image, while an oversimplification, illustrates the possibilities for interplay between purposes for reading, types of reading, and reading strategies:

Figure 2. The differences between purposes for reading, types of reading, and reading strategies as used and applied in this study

In the graphic above, each box could of course be filled with dozens of additional purposes, types, and strategies for reading. And further, the boxes are not necessarily discrete—as mentioned previously, “skimming a text” while conceived here as a type of reading might also be productively viewed as a strategy for reading. These findings set their sights on the importance of pedagogical consistency for delivering reading instruction to composition students. While one emphasis here is on “pedagogical mismatches” (i.e. teaching / assignments

that seem at odds with an instructors' stated intention), for example, the concept of mismatches is a complex one that might also be extended to include disconnects between what a student understands a task to be, and their skills for completing the task.

To further illustrate, if the *purpose* of a reading event is to attain the most general sense of what the text is communicating at a literal level, and to do so quickly, then the *type* of reading most likely to be applied can be described as "skimming." Alternatively, if the aim of a reading event is to locate a specific term or definition, then the type of reading might be referred to as "scanning" the text for information. To give a final example, if the goal of a reading is deep understanding of the content, then the type of reading might be referred to as "critical reading." Other synonyms for critical reading in practice include "close reading" and "comprehensive reading." These choices can be made consciously or unconsciously, and again are not necessarily discrete (i.e. a reader might skim some chunks of text while closely reading others). While there are surely more types of reading than these three, and while "critical reading" could be parsed much further, I will limit my application of "types" here to skimming, scanning, and critical, since these are the three most prominent features I identified and coded in the data, and the distinctions between them are more significant, for purposes here, than those that might be drawn between different sub-types of critical reading.

It is also important to note that all of these "types" of reading, as they are most typically assigned and assessed, largely assume adequate reading comprehension skills and abilities for approaching the text at hand. For example, if one's approach to teaching reading is limited to instruction in critical reading strategies, this takes for granted, for example, that the reader has the lexical capacity to make meaning of the text in the first place (with lexical comprehension

being just one of many dimensions of reading comprehension). In practice, this will vary from text to text for all readers. Note that one important function of reading *strategies*, then, is to aid in improving the various dimensions of reading comprehension as needed in a given context.

For example, the use of a dictionary to look up unfamiliar terms is one of many *strategies* that can aid in improving a reader's lexical comprehension of a text. Other common strategies, like summary writing, questioning, or taking notes can improve other dimensions of comprehension. Even strategies as simple as making a reading plan, or choosing a reading environment suitable to the reading type and purpose, are potentially significant in their effect. In any case, an effective reading pedagogy certainly must recognize and differentiate between these three general areas of concern, and must do so explicitly so students can understand the different choices and decisions that successful readers make before, during, and after reading.

Seeing Reading in Student Writing: The Method

We normally acknowledge, however grudgingly, that writing must be taught and continue to be taught from high school to college and perhaps beyond. We accept it, I believe, because we can see writing, and we know that much of the writing we see is not good enough. But we do not see reading. We see some writing about reading, to be sure, but we do not see reading. I am certain, though, that if we could see it, we would be appalled.

Robert Scholes, "The Transition to College Reading," p. 166

While many types of teacher, student, and institutional documents are analyzed in this study, perhaps the most central project to this work is that of learning to "see" reading in student writing. Many if not most of the codes generated in this analysis spring from a desire to

understand first and foremost *what students do* when charged with representing their reading via their writing, and of course to ultimately speculate productively about *what this might mean*. While many of the codes generated are unique and specific to the instructor or institutional materials, all of those codes in this project can and should be read within a broader context that also includes the student writing itself. To that end, while this chapter focuses on describing how the student writing was coded and defining specific codes that were generated via this process, the next chapter enacts this coding scheme and explores the student writing as a finding. While this act of seeing student reading in student writing is perhaps best categorized as a method (and one that can be easily replicated in other contexts), the findings presented here are unique to this study and this data, and deserving of their own attention as a way to help us understand the dynamic relationships between how students read (or, more accurately for this study, how students tend to use readings in writing), and other factors, such as the writing assignments that students were responding to.

This current section, then, is intended to serve as a bridge between this chapter, and its focus on methods and contexts, and the next chapters, which detail the insights yielded by my efforts to learn to see reading not only in student writing, but in other places, too: in institutional contexts (such as articulation agreements and college-wide competencies statements); in pedagogies and curricula; and in writing assessment. The data analysis in this study, when considered as a whole, ultimately disputes Scholes' claim that we cannot see reading. If one aim of composition pedagogy going forward is to improve student reading, then it is imperative that we take on this project: we cannot effectively teach or assess that which we cannot name, see, and describe.

This section describes the process emanating from a close examination of students' practices and strategies for using readings in their writing, a project which yields a new method and methodology for reading student writing, and that also provides new insights into student reading practices. While I examined many different types of documents for this study, the possibility of "seeing reading" in student writing is perhaps the central element of the findings presented in the next chapters—findings which yield information we can use to better understand, teach, and assess students as readers (and not just as writers) in ways that can help them grow as both. This student writing coding project presents a dozen themes that may be evolved into assessment criteria for understanding / seeing / assessing student reading in their writing. In this analysis, I consciously differentiate between student *strategies* (i.e. moments of intention and agency) and *practices* (which are, in many cases, examples of *ineffective* habits or uses of readings in writing), since both are relevant to helping students improve as readers and writers.

It is important that we learn to "see" reading not only in student writing (as in the next chapter), but also in the institutions, pedagogies, and curricula that comprise the instructional dynamics in first-year composition (as in Chapter IV). However, learning to see reading in student writing is central in that if we wish to describe the interplay between institutional and curricular contexts and students, it is imperative that we begin by developing an understanding of students' reading and writing produced in and by these existing contexts. Learning to see reading in student writing, then, is important for many reasons. First, this kind of visibility is crucial for developing a deeper understanding of our pedagogies and curricula: seeing is an important first step to understanding, assessing, and ultimately cultivating classroom cultures

that make more effective reading possible. Second, and perhaps more importantly, in order to help students grow as readers and writers in first-year composition, it becomes imperative to see the writing not only as a culmination of writing processes and practices, but as the manifestation of a complex of reading processes and practices as well. After all, when we ask students to write an essay in which they analyze or evaluate a text, the writing they produce in response is, to some extent, a result of their *reading* practices, not just their writing practices.

In some respects, learning to see reading in student writing can be a subtle move. Presumably, when we assess those analysis or evaluation essays, we are of course mindful of the features that comprise “good analysis” or “good evaluation”—relative terms, but hopefully established in classrooms in ways that students understand and can aspire to. But we tend, in our assessments and in our feedback, to view student writing as the result of writing processes, rather than as the result of perhaps first and foremost reading processes that are then made manifest in writing. So, the shift to viewing “stronger analysis” as a manifestation of expert reading and writing practices, and “weaker analysis” as a manifestation of novice reading and writing practices, while subtle, is also a significant step towards shifting value from writing practices to reading and writing practices. It is a crucial step towards a more integrated view of reading and writing.

In other respects, the act of seeing reading in student writing can require a more drastic shift in the ways we read and respond to student work. It can involve paying much closer attention to the intricacies of how students utilize readings in their writing, and how those applications might be read as evidence of expert readers or, alternatively, struggling readers. For example, the “springboarding” trend discussed earlier—the documented tendency of

struggling readers to use the topic of a reading as a “springboard” to writing about a related topic rooted in personal experience in lieu of engaging the reading—is traditionally addressed in assessment practices as a “writer’s issue”: the writer needs to “get organized around the purpose” or “stay on topic” or “maintain focus.” The willingness to see student reading in their writing entails making the move to see “springboarding” as possible evidence of a reading struggle that needs further attention. After all, if an underlying issue in this case is a lack of sufficient comprehension of the source text, then it’s not a question of organization or focus—instead, it’s a matter of identifying and addressing the reading issue. This latter approach is more drastic in the sense that it also calls on the instructor to not only value reading and to learn to see it—but also to design productive interventions into this kind of instructional challenge.

The remainder of this section involves explaining and exemplifying the initial coding of the student essays, whereas the next chapter offers a careful walk-through of the process of distilling and refining this scheme into a useful, applicable form. While this scheme as presented here is obviously produced in response to the data on hand, and would certainly have evolved differently with different data, I contend that the bulk of this work, both in terms of the processes delineated here and the general themes discussed, might reasonably be applied or modified as a way to make student reading more visible in any source-based writing.

In some ways, this section is a continuation of the previous one: to fully answer the question posed there—regarding identifying the conceptions of reading that are operating in the instructors’ assignments and assessments—one must also be able to read student writing for the presence of those same traits. For example, if a given assignment emphasizes student

analysis of texts, then we must make that student analysis work visible, both in the student writing and in the assessment of that writing; and we must do so in a way that conceptualizes that analysis work of the student as an act of reading, not just of writing. This “move” is certainly one that can be applied to any instructional context, and is exemplified below in many forms.

In the process of explaining and applying the coding scheme derived in response to the student writing, this chapter turns its focus to the following research question posed earlier: What strategies do student writers employ when utilizing readings in their writing, and how might these strategies be qualified for purposes of exploring their implications? By design, the coding scheme elaborated here results from a long, slow look at student reading-into-writing practices, not for purposes of diagnosing problems with the ways that we teach reading—or with students as readers or writers—but instead to acknowledge the nuance and to shine a light on the significance of reading practices for student writing.

As Bartholomae suggests, “If we look patiently and sympathetically at what they do—at their version of a reader reading—we can get a better sense of the nature of the task that is expected of them and at the problems of transition that are, at once, problems of reading, writing and teaching” (93). While even the “negative” traits below do not necessarily isolate “reading” from “writing” (a distinction that is perhaps not possible), the coding scheme does aim to acknowledge and in some ways foreground reading within the reading / writing system.

By design, to the extent that this method contributes to the theoretical and pedagogical model of reading for composition elaborated later, it does so from the “bottom up.” In other words, I did not approach this data with a settled idea about how to identify student reading,

elements of reading comprehension, or reading struggles in their writing. Instead, as the first question suggests, I simply started reading the students' work, with an eye on "what happened" when students are faced with the task of providing evidence of their reading in writing or other manner of expression (as in Sam's reading quiz, or Zarina's graphic organizer assignment). It is through the careful coding of "what happened" in these students' work that later models are derived.

The Student Artifacts

This table offers a big-picture preview of the initial coding scheme that evolved from analysis of the student artifacts. Codes are grouped here as "Neutral," "Positive," and "Negative," which are explained immediately after the table, with an additional note regarding total instances coded throughout the data set. Note that all students present on the day I attended class to seek informed consent, 100% consented to be studied for this project. After accounting for a few students who subsequently dropped their class or did not submit the unit I selected for coding and analysis, it is coincidence that the total number of students studied is 28, which represents an even 14 / 14 split between Sam's and Zarina's sections. Given class caps of 22 students and typical retention rates of less than 75%, these numbers are representative of "typical" sections.

After a brief explanation and depiction of further refinement to the coding scheme that was performed to make the scheme more coherent and applicable, the next chapter takes up the project of defining, explaining, and exemplifying the scheme via references to specific instances of each in the student essays.

Table 6.

Coding Scheme Preview

Code Category and Title	Sources coded (n = 28; 14 from each section studied)	Total Instances
“Neutral” Traits		
Direct Quotations	22	64
Application	17	37
Evaluation	16	39
Analysis	15	29
Interpretation	14	29
Background	13	23
Summary	13	21
Statistical Information	13	17
Definitions	12	34
Paraphrase	11	26
“Positive” Traits		

(Table Continues)

Table 6. Continued

Code Category and Title	Sources coded (n = 28; 14 from each section studied)	Total Instances
Strong Follow	17	43
Strong Lead	10	26
“Negative” Traits		
Missed Opportunities	20	51
Distortions	14	28
Weak Follow	13	26
Fuzzy Syntax	12	30
Unclear Reference	10	18
Weak Lead	9	16
Springboarding	3	3

Once the initial and subsequent rounds of coding were completed, the scheme was refined to account for differences in the “types” of codes. Specifically, whereas some codes were more “neutral” in nature, and require more context in order to be usefully applied, other traits coded seemed inherently more “positive” or “negative” by definition, and are described

as such. The presence of these codes, then, would indicate possible reading strengths or reading struggle, respectively, without any further context needed.

The following chapters and the findings they present all result from a careful application of the methods and methodologies described in this chapter. In short, I began this project with the premise that learning how to look for and ultimately how to see reading in these various contexts in and around first-year composition was likely worthwhile and perhaps overdue. The methods employed here offer multiple and flexible ways to see reading in places where it is most often ignored. These acts of “seeing” have resulted in findings that have far-reaching implications for FYC and across the college.

CHAPTER III: “SEEING READING” IN STUDENT WRITING

Finding Summary: When the methods for seeing reading as described in the previous chapter are applied to student writing, what emerges is a more complex understanding of student reading-into-writing practices, which is a necessary first step to conceptualizing how those practices might be connected to conceptions of reading that operate in other institutional and instructional contexts.

Documents Analyzed for This Finding: Student writing artifacts produced in response to the instructors’ major project assignments.

This chapter is a continuation of the previous one in the sense that while the methods employed in the development of the coding scheme for “seeing reading” are explained there, this chapter offers a deeper dive into the actual analysis of the student work that undergirds the scheme. The traits outlined in the coding scheme were ultimately categorized as “neutral,” “positive,” or “negative,” as described and defined below. Please note that they need *not* be divided in this way—and that different data might yield altogether different categories. In this project, this division of codes allows for some useful analysis that fuels later findings, and that help shed light on the complex relationships between students’ apparent use of readings in their writing and other factors, such as writing assignments or learning outcomes.

“Neutral” Traits Explained

Several of the codes presented in the table at the end of the previous chapter are neutral in that they are merely direct observations regarding *how* students chose to reference a reading in their writing: “Direct Quotations,” “Summary,” and “Paraphrase” each describe the writing strategy students employed to bring a reading into their writing in a given instance.

Other codes are neutral in that they simply note *what kind* of information students chose to utilize from their readings, without aiming to evaluate their appropriateness or effectiveness within the context of the assignment or the student writing more broadly: “Background,” “Statistical Information,” and “Definitions” are all examples of this.

Many of the codes above are neutral in that they aim to describe, rather than ascribe value to, the observable presence of specific types of critical thought: “analysis” and “evaluation” are examples of this. While these codes are more interpretive in nature (i.e. two readers might reach different conclusions about whether a given passage is more analytical or evaluative in nature), the codes are neutral in the sense that they aim to note the presence, rather than the quality, of a given trait as it appears in the student artifacts.

For example, the mere presence of “analysis” in a student essay is not necessarily a “positive” attribute—though it may well be—and even if “analysis” is the desired attribute of the student writing in a given context, not all analysis is “good” analysis. In these cases, more context is needed to assess the student work in relation to the trait—and that context would be shaped by the instructor and / or by the class. For purposes of this project, these codes are most useful in that they allow for the study of relationships among stated instructor values, values apparent in assignments and assessments, and actual student writing.

“Positive” Traits Explained

While I mostly resisted ascribing “value” to student work through the coding scheme (i.e. I merely noted and described the *presence* of analysis work in student essays, without aiming to judge its merit), a few codes seemed more directly “positive” or “negative” and were

coded as such from the onset. The “positive” codes employed here were titled “Strong Lead” and “Strong Follow.” Described in more detail below, these codes mark specific instances of students introducing and situating source material into their writing (“Leads”), both mechanically and conceptually; and instances where students worked to then connect that source material back to their own arguments (“Follows”). Since vast and obvious differences in student effectiveness with these strategies emerged immediately, these were noted as “Strong” (or “Stronger”) or “Weak” (“Weaker”) and were coded as such throughout the data.

“Negative” Traits Explained

In contrast, the presence of some other codes in student writing can be read as possible signs of reading struggle—or, at least, as signs of difficulty representing or applying reading in writing. For example, a code like “Distortions,” which is applied to passages where the student writing portrays a fundamental “misread” of the source text, is always and only “negative” in the sense that distorting the meaning of a source text—even if done intentionally—is arguably never a desirable feature in a student essay, and would far more often indicate a potential reading issue. It might be argued that *all* reads are in some ways “misreads,” since to state otherwise is to imply that texts and meaning are fixed, absolute, and objectively knowable. Note here that when I apply the term “misread,” and thus the code “Distortion,” I am referring to instances in writing that portray stark misunderstandings of the source text.

Thus, my attempts to assign “meaning” to the source texts in this study—as well as the coding of student writing as “distorted” in spots, is intentionally limited to cases, like those exemplified below, that portray inarguably inaccurate representations of the source text. On

one level, distinguishing these kinds of “misreadings” from “miswritings” is not possible simply from reading the student writing; in other words, it is possible that the student read, comprehended, and understands the source text adequately, but struggled to represent this understanding in writing. The interplay between reading practices and writing practices—the “what happens” when a writer moves from reading a text to somehow utilizing some aspect of that text in his or her writing—is yet another dimension of reading / writing integration about which very little is known or understood. In classroom settings, analysis of individual instances of a given “negative trait” for possible explanations for the apparent breakdown is an important step that individual instructors might take towards building a pedagogy that addresses student reading more explicitly and more completely.

While most of the codes developed were “neutral” and in need of context to be further qualified, several codes that emerged in the data, including “Distortions,” can be read as indicative of likely or at least possible reading struggles, especially when contextualized within the full coding of a given essay, and with the other available data an instructor could apply in a classroom setting. This being the case, the coding scheme as presented earlier was refined as follows for purposes of presentation in this chapter:

Neutral Traits Exemplified

Direct Quotations / Summary / Paraphrase

This first cluster of codes seems obvious enough: when faced with the task of bringing readings into their writing, writers have but a few available options for doing so: they can quote directly from the source; paraphrase the source text; and / or summarize some aspect of the source

text. Quantitative “tracking” of when students have enacted these various possibilities is perhaps not so useful on its own. However, further study of how, when, and why students choose one practice as opposed to others might yield valuable insights. For example, an instructor-as-reader might “expect” to find more quotations than anything else, as this is perhaps the most direct way—and in some regards also likely the “easiest” way, since it does not require any interpretive moves by the student—to “meet the requirement” of utilizing readings in writing. And in fact, “Direct Quotations” is the most prevalent code assigned to this data, both in terms of sources (22/28, or 79%) and instances (64, or just more than two per student text).

These codes take on more significance as they manifest in combination with later themes that were noted, which aim largely to qualify this work by examining the intricacies of how these quotations, summaries, and paraphrases function within the larger framework of the students’ texts. At that point, I begin to qualify and describe, and not merely quantify, these different representations of readings within the student texts, and to think about their implications for understanding student reading.

To this end, most direct quotations were double-coded (at least) in an attempt to more completely describe how the quotation functions in the student text. For example, text coded for “Direct Quotation” might also be coded for other neutral traits, like “Statistical Information” or “Definitions,” to more accurately account for how the source text was being utilized. After all, not all quotations, paraphrases, or summaries serve singular functions within writing—what matters, in terms of using these instances to gain insight into student reading, is *how* and *to what effect* these strategies are employed in student writing. This understanding can then be

used as a starting point for analyzing this student work within the even broader contexts in which it was produced (i.e. in response to a specific assignment or task, etc.).

Further, student writing before and after these moments of source integration was also coded for traits from any of the categories (neutral, positive, negative) or from *multiple* categories: for example, student text leading into a quotation could be coded for “Strong Lead” (positive); the quotation itself might be coded as “Statistical Information” (neutral); and the student text immediately following the quotation might be coded as “Weak Follow” (negative). This layered approach to coding, while time-consuming, allows for a complex and deeply descriptive picture of the various ways readings appear to be functioning within a given student text.

Statistical Information / Definitions

Upon closer analysis of specific instances in which students were integrating readings into their writing, I started to pay more attention to *what* aspects of source material students were bringing into their texts. In doing so, I noticed two distinct trends: first, a tendency of students to frequently cite statistical information from sources; and second, frequent citation of definitions of various terms. I believe these quantitative data points to be instructive, and to raise important pedagogical questions about the ways in which certain assignments seem to call forth or elicit certain kinds of source use, while perhaps eliding others—a point explored in a later finding. Later analysis of instructor materials will show, for example, that assignments and assessment feedback in some cases encouraged, and in a sense worked to produce, precisely these kinds of student interactions with source texts. Since statistics and definitions

are often relatively simple aspects of a reading to “locate,” often with application of only skim / scan reading strategies, assignments that call for, encourage, or reward these uses of readings primarily may inadvertently, then, also work to discourage more comprehensive readings.

Examples of student text coded for these themes include:

“Statistical Information”

Illinois has 17,920 children in foster care, and 3,347 of these children are waiting to be adopted by loving/nurturing families. Nationally in 2015 the number of foster kids was 427,910, this being 52% that’s 222,849 male and 48% females that’s 204,999.

September 30, 2015 the mean age was 8.6 and the median age was 7.8 (“Adopt Us Kids”).

“Definitions”

I also wanted to utilize the alignment “design, alignment refers to the placement of elements on a page” (Klien 6) of the page, so where I placed the pictures specifically, I wanted to make sure the pictures were near the donate button so this pictures would create emotion among the reader, then seeing the donate sign instantly would make them more likely to do so.

Within the context of Zarina’s assignment, which asks students to “identify a current problem that is in need of being addressed,” the use of statistical information as a means to establishing the problem makes sense. In fact, 13 out of 14 of Zarina’s students cited statistics in their final

essays; none of Sam's students cited any statistics whatsoever. The student above, whose project was a redesign of *The Baby Fold's* web site, reflected on the potential impact of statistics on an audience when writing, "I feel as an agency there should be statistics on there to let seekers know how serious this is. I would've liked to include more statistics into my paper, but it was difficult to find them, especially finding them locally." Here, statistics are used to set the stage for the discussion of solutions to a problem.

The "Definitions" example, which is excerpted from another of Zarina's students, is perhaps a different story. Zarina's students were also much more likely to provide definitions than Sam's students (8 vs. 4). But whereas Zarina's assignment perhaps called for or encouraged the use of statistics, this is not necessarily so for definitions. The assignment calls for students to *explain* the terms (presumably in their own words), an act which goes beyond just defining the terms (in someone else's words).

Some students cited these definitions as a way in to providing their own explanations; in other cases, the definitions functioned as more of a stand-in for the student's own explanation. In this way, citing definitional material can in fact be a strategy for *avoiding* explanation (and, thus, for avoiding close reading, or otherwise compensating for a difficulty with an assigned reading). The passage above was also coded for "Weak Lead" given the awkward syntax in the integration of the source, and also for "Strong Follow," given that the text following the definition portrays a clear understanding of the design concept of "alignment" and how it applies to the student's own project design.

Application, Evaluation, Analysis, Interpretation, and Background

While the codes referenced above provide some insight into how students chose to represent readings in their writing (i.e. via direct quotations, summaries, or paraphrases), and what kind of information students chose to integrate from readings (i.e. statistics, definitions), more coding was needed to get at the functions that the information from the selected readings played in the student writing. While these are familiar terms and concepts, a brief explanation of how each is applied here is called for.

“Application” refers to instances where students were attempting to apply content from a reading to another situation outside of the reading. “Evaluation” refers to moments in their writing where students were judging the value, worth, or effectiveness of some aspect of a reading. “Analysis” is applied to moments in students’ writing where they were singling out one dimension of a reading and discussing its relationship to a larger whole. “Interpretation” is used to represent moments in student writing where they were “explaining” or trying to come to an understanding of a reading (with or without also applying that understanding to a different situation outside of the reading). Finally, “Background” is used to capture moments where students were using a source primarily to provide additional context for their topic or issue.

These passages are also “double” or “triple” (or more) coded for other features, as mentioned above. For example, a passage that is directly quoting statistics from a web site to establish that web site’s credibility (or ethos) might be coded for “Direct Quotation,” “Statistical Information,” *and* “Application.” Also note that these codes are not evaluative in nature: “Analysis” is not akin to “Good Analysis,” and so what is coded here is the mere presence of attempts at what often get referred to as higher-order critical thinking skills. The effectiveness

of those attempts is vitally important to the project of “seeing reading” in writing, and is an issue taken up by individual instructors—including the instructor participants—via writing assessment and student feedback. Student examples include:

“Application”:

The text focuses on telling the audience how great donating and volunteering is for the community, which is a part of the logos effect of the webpage. Logos defined as “the appeal to logic, means to convince an audience by use of logic or reason.” (Bernanke). It makes it seem logical to help because the more money and volunteers Salvation Army receives, the less people there are on the streets making crime less likely and allowing children to have a better environment to grow up in.

“Evaluation”:

I do not think Spacey is all that credible because as he stated he was drunk when he thinks this encounter happened. He may have been in a different state of mind so his statement can’t be that sincere and genuine if he does not even recall it happening. If he does actually remember this encounter and does not say so for the sake of his career than he’s even less credible, he’s trying to save his own skin.

“Analysis”:

Kevin tries to appeal to people’s emotions. He displays this act as sort of a slip-up that could happen to anyone because he was intoxicated. He comes out as being openly gay

to try and appeal to a specific community to receive I'm assuming some type of support from.

“Interpretation”:

The context is a mix of political and persuasive. The author thinks that Colin is not good enough to be a starting quarterback in the NFL and that may be true but that does not mean he can't be a backup. The authors purpose is to persuade the reader into agreeing that Colin is past his prime and the reason for him not being on a team is purely talent based. The author uses logic and gives some of Colin's mediocre stats. He uses these to compare Colin to other quarterbacks in the league and says based on his stats that he should definitely be a starter in the league.

“Background”:

Nationally the club serves over 4 million people annually with there being 4300 clubs nation ally. There is also 900 children with attend the smaller community that is the *Boys and Girls Club* here in town. There is a yearly membership of \$25, however each child costs approximately \$500, so they have to raise funds and rely on donations. *Boys and Girls Club of Bloomington-Normal* is driven to help bring down all the problems which the youth of today face, whether that be from helping them further their social skills, workplace skills, life skills or how to handle themselves mentally and physically.

In the “Application” example above, the student is defining the term “logos” via a course reading, and then is making moves to demonstrate that knowledge by applying that definition to another text. In this case, the application is to a discussion of the student’s own design of a web page for the Salvation Army. This was a consistent pattern of development throughout both sets of essays: defining a key term, and then applying the term to another text (whether to a reading, or to the student’s own project) as a way to demonstrate understanding of the term or concept in question.

In the “Evaluation” example, the student is writing about actor Kevin Spacey’s apology statement that he issued in the wake of sexual assault allegations by a fellow actor. The student is not “defining” the term credibility here, but instead is using her understanding of the term to state an opinion on the effectiveness of Spacey’s attempt to cast himself as a credible speaker / writer in the context of the apology.

This contrasts to another student’s read of the same apology statement in the “Analysis” example. Without directly referencing “pathos,” the student is using the term as part of an analytical framework by isolating Spacey’s “appeal to emotions” within his broader apology. The student is not judging the effectiveness of Spacey’s use of emotions in his statement, but instead is describing this one element of the statement and how it functions within the statement as a whole.

The “Interpretation” example above notes an instance where the student was engaged in explaining the reading—without an immediate aim towards analysis or evaluation, though often to set the stage for later work of those types. The language here can be characterized as descriptive and somewhat objective in comparison to the analytical and evaluative passages.

Finally, the “Background” example was characteristic of writing done in response to Zarina’s assignment. In fact, 13 of 14 of Zarina’s students’ essays were coded for at least one instance of “Background,” and none of Sam’s students’ essays were coded for this theme. This suggests, again, that some pedagogies or writing assignments call for this kind of work more than others. Zarina’s assignment, which asked students to identify a problem in need of a solution, seemed to elicit this kind of “work,” whereas Sam’s analysis / evaluation assignment did not. In this example, statistical information regarding the Boys and Girls Club sets the stage for a discussion of the need for more funding for the organization.

“Leads” and “Follows” Exemplified

The themes I call “leads” and “follows” are ones that begin to broaden the scope of the inquiry by noting how students connect the readings to their own texts (whether that means connecting a reading to the student’s own claim, argument, or line of reasoning, or to another reading). I first developed two codes, “leads” and “follows,” which are straightforward: I coded student text “leading into” the integration of a reading as “leads,” and coded student text “following from” the integration of a reading as “follows.” Like with direct quotations, these initial steps were placeholders for deeper analysis that would come later.

After the first round of coding was complete, I revisited these instances after observing, again, that not all “leads” or “follows” are equal—and that merely quantifying students’ uses of these oft-taught strategies does not tell us much about how these strategies are functioning in a student text as possible representations of students’ reading practices. To this end, I sorted these “leads” and “follows” into two admittedly broad categories: “strong” and “weak.” I

applied the “strong” label liberally—if the student-writer made some obvious and intentional effort to connect the reading to his or her own writing, and if that effort displayed even the least bit of coherence, I labeled the lead or follow as “strong.” Examples of a “strong lead” and a “strong follow” include:

“Strong Lead”:

The limitation of space also influenced me to use proximity and separate the advertisement into three simple and clear groups. The article going over the four design principles states that “Proximity is the grouping of elements that have something in common.” (Klein, 336).

“Strong Follow”:

He wants everyone to know that the purpose behind them kneeling during the national anthem is not to be disrespectful towards the country, but towards police brutality, as I explained earlier.

In the “strong lead” example above, the student is first discussing the design term “proximity” and relating it to the constraint of space in which to place her design. She then transitions into referencing an assigned reading on design principles to provide definitional information regarding proximity. Note that while the quotation itself is perhaps not necessary, and has grammatical (spelling / typographical) and mechanical (citation formatting) issues, the “lead” was qualified on its own in terms of its relation to what follows.

In the “strong follow” example, the student is following up on a quotation from the author, who is relaying details of a reported conversation with then-NFL player Colin Kaepernick, whose actions catalyzed the “take a knee” movement that swept across professional and amateur sports in 2016-2017 and that endures as of this writing near the end of 2018. The student quoted the author’s explanation that Kaepernick was taking a knee in protest of “many of the issues that face our community, including systemic oppression against people of color, police brutality and the criminal justice system.” The student’s “follow” then represents an attempt to connect the quotation to his own claim about the purpose of the article.

I reserved the coding of “weak” leads and follows, then, for instances where the strategy seemed merely mechanical, i.e. it was obvious that the student had at some point been “instructed” to introduce or follow up on integrations of readings into writing, but the use of the strategy did not actually function conceptually. Leads and follows were also coded as “weak” if, in using the strategy, the student seemed to fundamentally misrepresent the source in some way. This current study does not aim to judge whether these misrepresentations were done intentionally (bending the argument of a reading to fit the student-writer’s own purpose), or unintentionally (as the result of an ineffective read of the source text, for whatever reason), but within a student-instructor relationship, getting at the reasoning behind the misrepresentation seems important and instructive. In other cases, some of the “weak” leads and follows were somewhat nonsequiter—difficult if not impossible to follow in terms of their representation of the text, or their effort to connect the reading to the student’s own writing.

While my analysis cannot truly get at the “causes” of weak leads or follows, their presence indicates at least the possibility of a reading struggle of some kind.

“Weak Lead”:

I wanted to persuade the audience by doing so I had to include these three contexts: Logo’s, Pathos and Ethos. I used these three elements to bring all the information together.

“Weak Follow”:

For many, this situation in the NFL has been viewed by many that come from different backgrounds.

In the “weak lead” example, the student-writer is going through the motions of attempting to introduce material from the “Backpacks vs. Briefcases” chapter, but the awkward use of “contexts” to describe rhetorical devices, and the vague statement about using these “elements” to “bring all the information together” does not give a reader any indication that the student actually understands the terms in question.

The “weak follow” example is similar in that it appears to be largely mechanical—it is a gesture towards a “follow,” but it does not actually communicate anything of substance. It is a combination of empty platitudes that might apply to any “situation.” As such, since it does not effectively refer back to the reading, it may be read as a possible symptom of a “bad read” of the source text.

Negative Traits Exemplified

Missed Opportunities

Keeping in mind that I have personally read and assigned some of the texts required and assigned by Sam and Zarina (and most notably, Carroll's "Backpacks vs. Briefcases" chapter referenced earlier), I was also aware, in my reading of the student work, of instances where students seemingly missed opportunities to engage these assigned texts in their writing. I limited my application of this code to moments in student texts where use of the assigned readings was clearly called for, and where students neglected (again, whether intentionally or not) to engage the reading in their text.

I also recognize here that my use of the term "clearly" in the previous sentence is somewhat subjective, and also rooted in my knowledge, and my "reading," of the source text. In many of these cases, the student essays coded for this trait were incomplete in the sense that they did not meet the established minimum criteria for using / citing sources, and the passages coded would have been opportune moments to employ readings if for no other reason than to meet these requirements.

In the two examples below, even if broadened out to a larger context, neither the "Backpacks vs. Briefcases" chapter nor any other assigned reading was referenced, even though doing so would have helped to substantiate the students' respective points in these cases:

"Missed Opportunity" Example 1:

I think Alanah is using pathos, logos and ethos in an effective way to educate more people in microtransactions and the effects they have.

“Missed Opportunity” Example 2:

He has won several awards for his editorial cartoons, which makes me think that he is very credible with all of the things that he has done.

In these examples, students missed obvious opportunities to refer back to the assigned chapter: the first student is using (but not explaining or exemplifying) the rhetorical “terms,” and in the second, the student is discussing credibility but not linking it back to “ethos,” which is what was called for in the assignment.

While my analysis cannot pinpoint the exact *reasons* for these or any apparent oversights, I argue that student writing that is *characterized by* these kinds of omissions might be symptomatic of a larger issue with reading. In a classroom setting, the student’s writing could be contextualized with other available information for a more comprehensive assessment. For example, the “missed opportunities” theme might have a different kind of relevance for a student with low reported motivation to read, and / or a student with low reading comprehension test scores, as opposed to a student with high motivation and high scores. Once placed in this broader context, we could begin to treat these holistic results as more usefully diagnostic in nature.

Distortions

The code “distortions” was applied to instances where the student’s representation of a reading was clearly and undeniably at odds with the intended meaning of source text. Note that my use of the phrase “intended meaning” here is not meant to conjure up larger theoretical

discussions about whether there is any such thing as “intended meaning,” or whether an author’s intended meaning can even be known. Instead, I am referring here to inarguable misreads / fundamental misapplications of a reading, such as in these instances:

“Distortions” Example 1:

I wanted to persuade the audience by doing so I had to include these three contexts: Logo’s, Pathos and Ethos. I used these three elements to bring all the information together. First is logo’s, Big Brothers Big Sisters has a logo which is not used in the design, but it represents a Bigger person with the young one. With logo’s in the design it brings all the listed information about the event closer.

“Distortions” Example 2:

The contrast is that the people that are in this situation feels like the world does not want use here e.g. parents abusing you from an early age, or a child that is thinking about suicide because of the bullying or other things that is a lot more than a person at that age should have. The repetition in this is that these situations e.g. child abuse and abortion, suicidal and adoption, is that if we help you, we will help your life to get it back to where it belong, or help another person life so they are not living in a foster for the first part of their life.

In the first example above, the student uses the rhetorical term “logos,” which roughly corresponds to the English word “logic,” as, instead, the plural of “logo” (as in, symbol or

insignia, i.e. a company's logo). This misuse of the term is unmistakable evidence of a breakdown in comprehension or memory / recall of the source text, which in this case is "Backpacks vs. Briefcases."

In the second example, the student uses "contrast" and "repetition" in ways that are completely at odds with their use in visual design contexts (which is how they were discussed in the assigned reading), and instead takes up their more common definitions and uses. Their misuse here elicits many possibilities: the student simply did not do the reading; attempted the reading but could not comprehend it usefully; or was not able to transfer and / or apply the knowledge from the text into a new context. The student seems aware of a "requirement" to "use" the design terms, but their use represents a significant break from—and distortion of—the source text.

Fuzzy Syntax

This code is applied in instances where the students displayed linguistic or syntactic difficulty in integrating the reading into the grammatical flow of their own writing. While this code might be critiqued as pertaining more to grammar, style, or "mechanics" rather than "reading," it was a prevalent theme nonetheless, and seemed worthy of consideration if only in context with other criteria. For example, are students with syntax issues *also* more likely to employ "weak" leads or follows or distortions? If so, what might the coexistence of certain themes in one student's work indicate? These possibilities are explored in more detail later in the analysis.

“Fuzzy Syntax” Example 1:

He uses pathos when he says “The officers that were doing this killing were not being held accountable for their killings,” an emotional Sharpe contended. “We keep saying he’s disrespecting of the flag. We have yet to address the issue of what he tried to bring attention to” (Tornadoe 2), said by Shannon Sharpe, a Fox Sports host. I chose this quote from the article because I think that it represents really well what the article is trying to say.

“Fuzzy Syntax” Example 2:

An example of ethos or the appeal to ethics” means convincing someone of the character or credibility of the persuader” is the words live band with a picture of a band and the use of the pictures of the kids meaning this event is made for the children.(backpacks and breifcases).

In each of these examples, the student has difficulty integrating the quotation into the syntactic flow of the writing. In the first case, the writer is attempting to quote a speaker (Shannon Sharpe) within another source (written by Tornadoe)—a finer point of documentation to be sure. In the second, the student awkwardly inserts a definitional quotation in the middle of a sentence, where it would work better either before or after.

Unclear Reference

Admittedly, I hesitated to label any of the student writing I encountered as “plagiarism.” In fact, I encountered no writing in this data set that I would characterize as plagiarism in my own teaching. I did, however, notice in several writing samples instances where the student clearly seemed to be referencing source material, and where that source text was not adequately referenced, or where it was not referenced at all. One might in fact refer to at least some of these instances as plagiarism. However, in the broader context of the respective assignments and units, in situations where these sources were read and discussed in class, and where they are referenced on works cited pages, it seemed evident to me that these “unclear references” were more incidental than intentional. As an instructor, these become “teachable moments” in the classroom rather than cases where the “plagiarism” (or, worse, “plagiarist”) label is applied—a label which carries its own set of consequences for the student.

“Unclear Reference” Example 1:

Sexual abuse against children is on the rise.

“Unclear Reference” Example 2:

Not only is poverty a problem locally but nationally the poverty rate is decreasing rapidly.

These examples are both from Zarina’s students, who, again, were tasked with establishing a local problem and designing a solution. Perhaps the students read and did not cite statistics;

perhaps these claims strike their writers as obvious and therefore not requiring citation. In the second example, it appears that the student intended to write “increasing” instead of “decreasing”—otherwise, the entire sentence becomes problematic in terms of determining its intention. While this analysis does not give access to the reasons for these oversights or omissions, their mere existence, in context with other coded features and available student information, can begin to suggest some prototypes for student-as-reader that can usefully inform how writing instructors approach student reading.

Springboarding

Lastly, “springboarding,” which as previously discussed is the documented tendency of low-performing native writers and readers to use the subject of a reading as a “springboard” to tangential writing about personal experience (and, thus, avoiding the substance of the reading almost entirely), was a theme I expected to find, but that ultimately did not materialize in any significant way: it was present in only 3 of the 28 sources analyzed. I include it here because I think that while its presence would have been interesting, the relative absence of this theme is also important.

In short, I think that this absence has important pedagogical implications that are worthy of exploration later: I argue that some writing prompts are more likely “springboards” than others—and that the assignments analyzed here are just generally not conducive to this “strategy.” This being the case, it becomes important to consider what strategies our assignments invite, and which ones they resist. Assignments that discourage this particular

brand of springboarding and other similar approaches might work, then, to encourage more careful reading, in that they seem to require more focused writing.

“Springboarding” Example 1:

The main idea of this article is to discuss Colin Kaepernick and how he is not on an NFL team at a little more than halfway through the regular season. It is a huge topic of conversation about how Colin Kaepernick has not been signed by a team and many have different opinions. Some say it is because all of the owners are racist or that they don't believe in what Colin was protesting. Throughout all of this debate it sometimes gets lost on what Colin was protesting for. Others say it is because he is not good enough, but I disagree.

“Springboarding” Example 2:

Some say he hasn't been re-signed because of his political beliefs but others like me think it's a matter of talent and he doesn't have what it takes anymore to be the superstar quarterback he used to be a few years ago.

These examples are from Sam's students, who were asked in their assignment to discuss the rhetoric of a selected text—which is quite different from writing about whether you “agree” or “disagree” with the argument of the text itself. Both writers here are weighing in on the Colin Kaepernick story, which dominated headlines for months around the time of this assignment. But whereas the assignment is to analyze the rhetoric of the texts, the students are instead

taking the opportunity to weigh in on the controversy itself: “I disagree,” “others like me feel that.” This is an example of a “tactic” in the place of a “strategy,” in that it is one way to resist the assignment (i.e. to resist the strategic work of close analysis) and still produce “text.”

These few instances of “springboarding” might also be read as a student “falling into” a genre that is likely familiar to them. After all, Prairieview’s own writing placement exams asks students to read a brief passage, decide whether they “agree” or “disagree” with it, and then write an essay in which they map out their argument. By the time students reach college classrooms, they have likely had much practice with, and exposure to, this way of responding to a reading.

The coding scheme as presented here can do important work on its own: open coding projects of this sort can be used to help individual instructors, programs, or institutions better understand the reading practices of their students. A table that illustrates the complete coding scheme, along with the quantitative presence of each code across the student artifacts, is attached as APPENDIX A. Such an understanding can then be used to improve teaching, classroom-based assessments, courses, or programs regarding student reading. Within this study, however, the coding project as presented here is more a beginning than an end: with an understanding of “what students did” in response to the assigned reading-into-writing tasks, we can now analyze this data alongside those tasks, as a way in to answering other important questions about the role of reading in the future of writing pedagogy and writing assessment.

CHAPTER IV: “SEEING READING” IN INSTITUTIONS AND INSTRUCTION

[T]he impression that college students do not know how to read usually results from the fact that they do not know why they are reading assigned texts. This lack of purpose, in turn, results from the way that reading is typically assigned in undergraduate courses: as an undifferentiated, solitary activity to be completed for the vague purpose of knowing what the text contains.

Keith Hjortshoj, *The Transition to College Reading*, p. 125

Introduction: Purposes for, Types of, and Strategies for Reading

This chapter details two distinct but related findings regarding the teaching of reading in composition at Prairieland: first, institutional contexts at Prairieland shape conceptions of reading in many ways that often go unexamined; and second, the reading pedagogy and curriculum actually deployed in the subject instructors’ classrooms are at odds in important ways with the instructors’ stated intentions and goals for student reading. The resulting pedagogies can be analyzed in terms of “matches” and “mismatches” between instructors’ stated goals and students’ experiences and written performances of reading within these contexts.

These findings are related in the sense that the institutional factors undeniably impact things like course descriptions and individual course outcomes—even if those outcomes are otherwise at odds with individual instructors’ stated philosophies and goals for reading in composition. And since comparable institutional dynamics surely exist everywhere (i.e. each community college must craft its FYC courses in ways that ensure transfer of those courses, and is thus subject to transfer agreements and institutional mandates of various types), the findings

detailed here, while unique to Prairieland in some ways, are in other ways generalizable to other settings.

The initial guiding inquiry for these findings was as follows:

What conceptions of reading are operating in the instructors' assignments and assessments, and how do they reinforce or resist the instructors' stated beliefs, values, and intentions regarding the teaching of reading?

Just as we need to learn to "see" student reading in student writing, reading also needs to become a more visible component of writing pedagogies, so that instructional approaches to the teaching of reading, and their attendant effects, can be studied, theorized, and refined. This chapter aims to make reading visible at the institutional and instructional levels, and for this very purpose. We need to understand how purposes for reading are established in our classrooms, curricula, and assessments, both explicitly and implicitly, so that we might then study how those purposes impact student reading practices and strategies, which is a more explicit focus of the next chapter.

For many reasons outlined earlier, this is not easy work. The relative inattention to reading in composition historically means that resources and models on which to build are scant or fraught with inconsistencies. As a result, establishing a framework for this kind of project is especially challenging. For example, the first theme explored below, "Purposeful Reading," which was the most prominent theme I identified in the data, is itself a difficult category to delineate, since "purposes for reading" as a category of analysis is often conflated in the literature with "types of reading" and "reading strategies" and other similar terms, as mentioned earlier. Further, "types of reading" as a category is also often referred to as "styles

of reading” or “reading techniques.” And a concept like “reading to evaluate” is alternately situated as a *purpose* for reading, a *type* of reading, and / or a reading *strategy*.

The presentation of data analysis in this study traces reading visibility across not only an instructional arc of classroom-based teaching and learning, but also an institutional arc marked by articulation initiatives, transfer agreements, and college-wide competencies statements. Most studies of student reading-into-writing practices focus only on the student work produced in a given classroom or examination setting—a narrow scope which effectively erases the influence of the dozens of contextual factors on that work and setting. This project aims, first, to situate and examine the institutional factors which work to shape the operating conceptions of “reading” at Prairieland, conceptions which then trickle down to programs and courses in ways that greatly impact student learning.

By learning to see reading in these institutional documents, we can better understand the backdrop against which instructors develop and teach courses in first-year composition. Since these external factors shape the contexts in which students read and write in tangible ways, it is imperative to understand how reading is conceived in those spaces beyond the classroom. This is not to imply or impose a linear or chronological structure to these arcs of influence: of course, all factors change over time, and no two instructors will be influenced by a transfer agreement or course outcome in the same way. Further, even a single instructor’s disposition towards a given institutional factor will change over time; for example, a new and untenured instructor might very consciously design her course so that it aligns neatly with college-wide essential competencies. In fact, she may even be *required* to do so at some early point in her career, as reflected in annual evaluations and tenure decisions. Later, she may find

herself on the very committee that is tasked with revising those competencies; or she may distance herself from them entirely. Nothing is stable.

It is also important, then, that the instructors' own positions and attitudes towards reading be analyzed against this backdrop, since these dispositions were not developed in vacuums, but again, within the unique context of accreditation, transfer, and college-wide initiatives which surely influence individual instructors. Analyzing the participant-instructors' stated philosophies and goals alongside their curricula and assessments provides useful insights regarding the development of a framework that helps recognize when a given assignment works with or against an instructional goal. In particular, the finding presented here that the instructors' actual curricula often work against their stated goals suggests tension between personal beliefs or wishes regarding the teaching of reading, and learning outcomes that are to some extent prescribed by accrediting bodies, curriculum committees, and the like. In short, due to the hierarchical power structures within institutions of higher education, the project of revaluing reading in and for composition classrooms will also involve learning how to advocate for useful conceptions of reading "up" the ladder.

The opening quotation from Hjortshøj speaks to a theme that was ever-present in the data for this current study: "purposes for reading," or purposeful reading. While the idea of purposeful reading was mostly notable for its consistent presence across the data, it was also sometimes noteworthy for its absence where it might reasonably be expected. Whereas writing teachers spend time planning activities, assignments, and assessments that lead students towards purposeful *writing*, how do the operating conceptions of reading promote purposeful

approaches to *reading*, and where and to what ends are those purposes most visible in one's teaching?

In my data, purposes for reading are evident in everything from writing program materials, where learning outcomes or course materials set the stage for the role reading is to play in the curriculum, to student writing, which can be fruitfully examined for the purposes for reading which are evident there. This is not to say that these purposes for reading were established by conscious design and planning of the subject instructors, although much care and intent is evident here. But it is also true that purposes for reading are always already present—even if they are of the “vague” and “undifferentiated” kind as Hjortshoj notes above.

Surely, the most effective teaching of reading in a writing class would employ a carefully-considered construction of reading purposes, implemented consistently throughout the curriculum, and clearly valued in student writing via sound assessment practices. A careful study of purposes for reading at Prairieview, as evident in program documents, the subject instructors' philosophies and actual teaching, and as manifest in their students' writing, can be used to inform pedagogical models that foreground purposes for reading as a way to be explicit and mindful of the many roles of reading within writing processes.

Part of learning to “see” reading in students' writing involves learning, also, to identify and understand how reading gets defined, both explicitly and implicitly, in one's own teaching. And most often, reading is defined in a classroom not literally or explicitly, but via the purposes, practices, and strategies that get taught and valued via assessment practices. In other words, students who have been taught to read in specific ways—or for specific things—are certainly more likely to utilize those strategies than students who have not been taught or instructed to

do so. And in enacting these purposes and practices, students are changing as readers. One resulting question, then, is to what effect. While this study involves only two instructors at one two-year college, I argue that the methods I employ here in my attempt to “see” reading in these instructors’ philosophies, pedagogies, curricula, and assessments are relevant and potentially useful to any teacher with an interest in coming to know their own teaching regarding reading. This kind of self-knowledge is an important first step to understanding how to teach, see, cultivate, and assess student reading practices.

What gets taught and thus valued in any class is at least partially influenced by the instructional backdrops provided by the institutions and programs, via articulation agreements and competencies statements, that get manifested in course descriptions and syllabi. For example, the instructors in this study reference various requirements for the teaching of reading within their classes: things like articulation agreements (which ensure that the courses will transfer to other institutions) and course outcome statements. This study suggests that these institutional forces have significant influence, to the extent that the implementation of any meaningful change in our approach to reading in composition will surely need to involve significant changes at the institutional level.

Before proceeding further with presentation and analysis of the theme of “purposes for reading” across this data, it is important to delineate just exactly what this means in my analysis—as well as what it does not mean. It is necessary to distinguish “purposes for reading” from, as mentioned earlier, what might be termed “types of reading” and “reading strategies,” which will be discussed later. While I do not contend that the framework presented here is absolute, I do argue that any framework needs to make intentional and careful distinctions

along these lines, if for no other reason than internal consistency. In this project, then, I will apply the following terms and concepts in the following ways as illustrated in Tables 7 and 8.

Table 7.

Purposes for Reading, Types of Reading, and Reading Strategies

Purposes for Reading	Types of Reading	Reading Strategies
<p>“Why we read”—the end goal for reading. There are at least 3 dimensions to this:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) <i>How institutions situate reading:</i> Articulation agreements, essential competencies, course descriptions 2) <i>Why teachers assign reading:</i> “to expose students to the language and arguments of the discipline,” for example. 3) <i>Students’ own purposes for reading</i>—which may align with teacher goals, or may be very different, i.e. “to complete the assignment” or “to prepare me for the test.” 	<p>I mean this in the verb sense of the word: as in, the ways that readers approach a text more generally. These are also often called reading “styles” or “techniques.” Ideally, reading type should support purposes for reading and likely will involve employing relevant reading strategies.</p>	<p>“Strategies” are things that readers employ to help them comprehend a text, or to help fulfill reading purposes. There is much overlap in practice: “skimming,” “scanning,” and “evaluating,” for example, are often listed as purposes, types, <i>and</i> strategies.</p>

Table 8.

Relevant Codes from Data for Reading Purposes, Types of Reading, and Reading Strategies

Codes for “Purposes”	Codes for “Types”	Codes from “Strategies
<i>Institutional:</i>	Skim	Assigning parts of a text
To solve problems	Scan	Chunking
To apply to new situations	Comprehensive	High task load
Recognize and respect others’ values	Serious Contemplation	Implicit reading instruction
<i>Instructors:</i>		Learning journals
To analyze		Making connections
To apply to new situation		Questioning
To define terms		Read aloud
To learn background / context		Reflections
To explain		Rereading
To summarize		Speed dating
To evaluate		Summaries
To solve problems		Wikis
To meet IA and WP requirements		Word lists
To present course materials		
To give students practice decoding		
<i>Students:</i>		
“I only read what I have to”		
“I only read things I like”		
“It can take you away”		
To see new perspectives		
“To be able to do the assignment”		

Finding 1: Institutional Influences on Reading

Finding Summary: Purposes for reading as established at the program level and then enacted in classroom instruction at Prairieland were strongly influenced by many factors external to the classroom: things like articulation initiatives and transfer agreements, documents that are unmistakably high-stakes in terms of their impacts on curriculum and instruction. These influences are not often studied, and yet their effects are likely profound. Close inspection reveals that there was often an observable path from articulation and transfer agreement language to stated course outcomes, which in turn shaped operating conceptions of reading in assignments and assessments. One implication of this finding is that advocacy for new approaches to reading, as they are discovered in our classrooms via study of and with our students, need to trickle “up” as well as “down” to gain widespread adoption and to foster meaningful change in the ways that reading is depicted and valued.

Documents Analyzed for This Finding

- Articulation Agreement (which ensured transfer of English 101 credit)
- Prairieland’s new college-wide Essential Competencies
- Prairieland’s English 101 course description
- Prairieland’s English 101 course outcomes

Prairieview recently revised what it calls its “Essential Competencies”—core instructional and curricular values that, in theory, are at the heart of all teaching and learning endeavors at the college. The competencies are:

- 1) Communication: Students develop and present an effective message using various modalities suitable to the topic, purpose, and audience.
- 2) Problem Solving / Critical Thinking: Students identify and interpret problems to engage in thinking that is informed by evidence; or students apply strategies and procedures to arrive at a workable solution.
- 3) Diversity: Students recognize their own attitudes and values as well as those of others and demonstrate respect for others with diverse perspectives, behaviors, and identities.

- 4) Ethics / Social Responsibility: Students ethically engage with and respond to academic, civic, social, environmental, technological, or economic challenges and local, national, or global levels.
- 5) Technology: Students appropriately use technology to solve problems, complete tasks, or accomplish goals; or students demonstrate effective adaptability to various technologies.

Likely by design, “reading” and “writing” are absent as explicit terms in the essential competencies, but are arguably present in other terms and concepts: “communication” of any sort involves an exchange (whether spoken / written, seen / heard / “read”). “Reading” is perhaps most visible in the Competencies via verbs like “identify and interpret” and “ethically engage with;” “writing” via “develop and present,” “apply,” “demonstrate,” and “respond.” The essential competencies, then, might be read as an institutional backdrop that establishes important purposes for both reading and writing: according to the institution, we read and write to communicate, to solve problems, and to learn and demonstrate understanding of diversity, ethical action, and technology. All courses at Prairieview are developed (and ultimately approved or denied by the curriculum committee) against this backdrop.

The transfer-level composition courses at Prairieview are also subject to an articulation agreement that guarantees successful transfer of the course credits to most in-state four-year colleges. The AI approval process is tightly regimented and explicitly call for “standardization,” and English 101 courses have strict guidelines that must be met in order to be approved. The complete AI for English 101 is attached as Appendix A (anonymized to obscure its state of origin), but its influence on the course outcomes at Prairieview can be made visible via the

following table, which excerpts from the AI on the left, and shows corresponding English 101 outcomes in the right-hand column.

Table 9.

Articulation Agreement Language Alignment with English 101 Course Outcomes at Prairieview

Articulation Agreement Language	English 101 Course Outcomes
"Comprehend, analyze, and critique a variety of texts including academic discourse"	"Read critically through comprehension, analysis & critique of a variety of texts"
"Engage a topic in which the writer explores writing as a means of self-discovery and produces a text that is designed to persuade the reader of the writer's commitment"	"Contribute, through writing, their own ideas & opinions about a topic to an ongoing conversation in ways that are appropriate to the academic discipline or other context"
"Select, evaluate, and interact effectively with sources, subordinating them to the writer's purpose and creating confidence that they have been represented fairly"	<p>"Recognize and navigate the ethical responsibilities required by complex environments"</p> <p>"Practice efficient research methods by locating & organizing research materials"</p>
"Demonstrate satisfactory control over the conventions of edited American English and competently attend to the elements of presentation (including layout, format, and printing)"	"Control the appropriate surface features of a text, including (but not limited to) syntax, grammar, punctuation, spelling, & documentation"
"Recognize the existence of discourse communities with their different conventions and forms"	"Articulate the role of conventions in shaping & designing rhetorical situations"

The complete Articulation Initiative document mentions “writing” or “writer” 14 times, and “reading,” “read,” or “reader” only three times. Further, in two of those three instances, “reader” refers to the reader of the student’s writing (i.e. the real or imagined audience for the writing), rather than to student-as-reader, which receives only one mention. Student reading purposes are explicitly established as “comprehend,” “analyze,” and “critique,” and in phrasing that appears almost word-for-word in one of the course outcomes listed on the master syllabus. Words that describe readings (i.e. texts to be read), like “source,” “text,” and “materials” are used four times. In the Initiative, the role of reading is not to expand the student’s knowledge, but to support the student’s writing—and “texts” or readings are to be “subordinated to the writer’s purpose.” In many ways, then, the document reinforces existing limited notions of “reading” in relation to writing—especially the idea that the primary purpose of reading is to “serve” writing in some capacity.

Against this institutional backdrop, most of the writing courses at Prairieview are also recently redesigned, and thus can be analyzed for the explicitness of reading and purposes for reading in course descriptions and stated learning outcomes. The Writing Program at Prairieview consists of four courses: two deemed “developmental” and thus not-for-credit (English 098, a standalone integrated reading and writing class; and English 099, a “support” class for at-risk English 101 students), and two credit courses developed to satisfy associate degree requirements and transfer agreements (English 101, titled “Critical Reading and Writing;” and English 102, titled “Multimodal Composition”). All four courses address reading in some way, either in the course descriptions, in the stated course outcomes, or both. The stated

course description of the subject course sections, which are English 101 courses paired with ALP co-requisite courses, English 099, is as follows:

In English 101, students will improve their writing by learning about the integrated relationship between critical reading and writing skills. Students will explore how genres of communication shape the acts of reading and writing, and in the process, will learn how to become responsible and ethical readers, writers, and designers of various kinds of texts. Students gain exposure to a wide range of tools and skills available and necessary to 21st century readers and writers, including collaboration techniques, visual design principles, and how to effectively control surface features of their writing.

In this course description, we see immediate and frequent mention of “reading”—the word appears four times, as opposed to “writing” which makes six appearances. It seems worth noting that in this description, however, “reading” never appears without “writing,” though “writing” appears without “reading” two times: “students will improve their writing by” and “how to effectively control surface features of their writing.”

Despite the frequent presence of reading in the course description, however, the established purposes for reading are somewhat vague. Though the course is presented as “integrated” in its design, it appears that improving student *writing* is the primary aim; reading skills are discussed and valued only within a context of the broader goal of improving writing skills. As noted in the literature review in Chapter 1, this privileging of writing over reading is common in IRW frameworks that emanate from composition.

The course outcomes for English 101 at Prairieview, listed below, make fewer explicit references to reading (two mentions) or writing (three mentions), though implications for reading and / or writing are readily apparent in almost every outcome: the task of “identifying and describing multiple modes of information” would entail both a familiarity with those modes (acquired through reading, at least in part), and a means of expressing the descriptions (in a

writing course, presumably at least some of this expression would occur through writing).

Interestingly, neither the course description nor the outcomes statements define “text” with much specificity, meaning that “reading” in these contexts is not necessarily limited to “alphabetic text,” though most of the assigned readings employed by the instructors were in fact text-centric, though some were primarily available as online texts (i.e. digital versions of print-oriented textbook chapters).

Table 10.

English 101 Course Outcomes at Prairieview

Course Outcomes for English 101 at Prairieview

Identify & describe multiple modes of information

Articulate the role of conventions in shaping & designing rhetorical situations

Articulate how genres shape reading & writing

Identify & define rhetorical concepts

Contribute, through writing, their own ideas & opinions about a topic to an ongoing conversation in ways that are appropriate to the academic discipline or other context

Practice efficient research methods by locating & organizing research materials

Read critically through comprehension, analysis & critique of a variety of texts

Write about texts for multiple purposes including (but not limited to) interpretation, synthesis, response, summary, critique & analysis

(Table Continues)

Table 10. Continued

Course Outcomes for English 101 at Prairieview
Recognize and navigate the ethical responsibilities required by complex environments
Recognize the importance of collaboration in textual production
Control the appropriate surface features of a text, including (but not limited to) syntax, grammar, punctuation, spelling, & documentation

The outcome that addresses purposes for reading most directly is perhaps the statement that successful students will learn how to “read critically through comprehension, analysis & critique of a variety of texts,” which again is almost a word-for-word representation of Articulation Initiative language. And yet in this outcome lie three very different yet related dimensions of reading: students read to comprehend the text at hand; to analyze; and to critique. This is not so much one outcome, but rather three.

It is important to pause for a moment to carefully consider the role of learning outcomes in shaping our pedagogies and curricula. Embedded in such outcomes are explicit yet complex curricular guidelines for instructors, who are tasked with teaching students the strategies needed to enact these specific purposes for reading. This sort of “backwards design” we tend to take for granted as best educational practice is not without challenge. “It is important to recognize that the outcomes are determined before the educational experience commences, even as they describe its end,” notes Chris Gallagher in “The Trouble with Outcomes: Pragmatic Inquiry and Educational Aims” (44).

Citing Pragmatist John Dewey, Gallagher problematizes this “separation of ends and means” by arguing that our fixation with outcomes-based assessment “leads to a fixity and rigidity in the formulation of ends” which in turn promotes a “narrow fixation on singular results rather than openness to emergent consequences,” some of which might ultimately be of more import than the predefined aims (45). When our aims are framed as “outcomes,” Gallagher concludes, this creates an instructional culture of “adopt” or “align” (53), one which places the instructional emphasis “outside” of the instructional context.

While instructors tend to look to course outcomes for guidance when planning instruction and curriculum for a course, what is less often considered, then, is the origin story of those outcomes. In this case, close study reveals significant influence from a rather unexpected source, an Articulation Initiative (transfer agreement) with which most faculty would likely not even be directly familiar. One implication of this finding, to be explored later, is that as composition moves to revalue reading within its curricula, these values will need to be communicated “up” as well as “down,” so that the influence of Articulation Initiatives and like documents can be mitigated in ways that reflect composition’s approach to reading rather than prescribe it. Gallagher’s term for relating teachers’ aims with those of students, administrators, and other internal and external stakeholders is “articulation,” or the careful framing of educational aims “in relation to various other expressions, including other sets of (institutional and disciplinary / professional) aims” (53).

Finding 2: Mismatch of Types of Reading in Theory and Practice

Finding Summary: The instructor participants say they value “close,” “intensive,” “comprehensive” types of reading, yet in much of the assigned process work, my analysis suggests that other types of reading such as “skimming” or “scanning” can suffice for a student to complete an assignment successfully—a finding that is in line with other recent studies. In one case more than the other, the “skim / scan” emphasis then carries over more prominently into the major project assignment description provided for students.

This finding does not place a higher value on intensive reading as compared to skimming or scanning—in practice, types of reading are not necessarily isolated or discrete, and all types of reading have their appropriate applications. This finding is intended merely to illustrate gaps between intentions and practices that surely exist in all teachers’ pedagogies and curricula—and to provide analytical frameworks for identifying said gaps. Once these gaps and their sources are identified, we can work towards theories and practices that productively address them.

Documents Analyzed for This Finding

- Subject instructors’ Reflective Statements
- Subject instructors’ process assignments and assessment tools related to their common “Backpacks vs. Briefcases” reading assignment
- Subject instructors’ and Sam’s major unit assignment descriptions
- Subject instructors’ major unit assessment instruments
- Student writing artifacts

The institutional forces analyzed earlier clearly place a high value on critical reading—the aim of the Articulation Initiative is to promote the development of courses that emphasize “critical skills in reading, thinking, and writing.” As presented earlier, the AI language “Comprehend, analyze, and critique a variety of texts including academic discourse” is represented almost word for word in a course outcome which states that students are to “Read critically through comprehension, analysis, and critique of a variety of texts.” These statements acknowledge comprehension as a dimension of critical reading, which is important, but in combining comprehension with higher-order reading and thinking skills (analysis and critique),

there is little in the way of specific guidance offered towards teaching or learning about reading comprehension. As is often the case in composition, the comprehension dimension of reading is largely assumed or taken for granted.

This course outcome is stated explicitly in Zarina’s major assignment (which is at its core a problem / solution / rationale project), and close reading is implied in Sam’s major assignment via the directive to “analyze the rhetoric of the text”—a *purpose* for reading with an implied *type* (i.e. *only* skimming or scanning a text of any complexity will not yield the level of comprehension needed to analyze it effectively). While skimming and scanning are important approaches to reading some texts for some purposes, they are neither explicitly nor implicitly mentioned or valued in the AI language or in the course outcome statements.

This being the case, a closer analysis of the instructors’ various assignments, including but not limited to the genre (quiz, essay, reflection, etc.) yields an interesting observation: an instructional emphasis, likely unintentional, on skimming and scanning as prominent reading types, especially in process work leading up to major paper assignments, which, in contrast, place much greater emphasis on critical reading. The effects of this disjuncture will be explored in the next chapter via closer examination of that ways in which students used sources in their major writing projects, and how those practices might be read as evidence of the various types of reading, including but not entirely limited to skimming and scanning.

Just as there are varied purposes for reading, it should be noted that there are also multiple purposes for assignments instructors might assign as ways to hold students accountable for the assigned readings. For example, a given assignment or task might aim for mere compliance—encouraging students to read the assigned texts. It may surprise some in

higher education that compliance is a serious problem. Steffy and Bartolomeo-Maida refer to studies that show that 75% of students “believed that simply by attending class they could earn a C, even if they did none of the reading” (60). Even in their study, conducted in a community college and with the explicit intent of encouraging compliance *and* student engagement, “only” 10% of students reported that they were not reading at all for the course, an improvement over a previous iteration of the study (64).

But while compliance should be recognized as both a challenge and an instructional goal, it should be noted that compliance need not be isolated—and, I argue, should not be targeted in isolation. Steffy and Bartolomeo-Maida’s experiment, for example, tracked whether required written reading reflections in their social science classes fostered not only compliance but also student engagement with the readings, and class participation. They found that “students who completed weekly written assignments about class readings had better participation grades and said they felt more prepared for class discussions” (67). Students’ self-perceptions in this case are particularly important, they argue, because so many of their students “are underprepared and under-confident in their abilities” (67).

Zarina took a varied approach to assigning and assessing the aforementioned “Backpacks vs. Briefcases” essay—one which seems to promote not only compliance but also effective comprehension in multiple ways. Zarina’s reading assignment, below, reflects her stated interest in UDL, which emphasizes giving students multiple means of representing their understanding of an assigned reading.

Excerpt from Zarina's Process Assignment:

Goal:

- Introduce rhetorical situations

Assignment:

1. Read the attached article "Backpacks vs Briefcases"
2. Complete 1 of the 3 reading options.

Summary: For many of you, this reading will be a review of English 101 material. However, before we can begin to discuss the demands of the rhetorical situation, we must define what the "rhetorical situation" is. As such, the attached article will serve as a bridge between 101 and 102.

As you read this article, you will need to choose how you want to demonstrate your reading. You can either answer the Reading Questions, or make a Graphic Organizer, or write a Summary/Response. Each option is worth the same amount of points (25 points each), so please make your choice based on what works better for you as a learner.

Discussion Questions for Backpacks vs. Briefcases: Steps toward Rhetorical Analysis

- 1) According to the text, why is it important to learn to do rhetorical analysis?
- 2) Give an example where you prepared for the judgement you knew was coming
(something or sometime where you knew you were going to be analyzed & how you responded beforehand)
- 3) What does rhetoric mean?
- 4) Give an example of something you've seen that was rhetorical.

- 5) What does ethos mean?
 - 6) Give an example where ethos worked for you, and where it didn't
 - 7) What does pathos mean?
 - 8) Give an example where pathos worked for you, and where it didn't
 - 9) How can actions be persuasive in nature?
 - 10) What is an action you've done that was meant to persuade?
 - 11) What are the 3 parts to context?
 - 12) What is exigence?
 - 13) What is audience?
 - 14) What can the audience determine?
 - 15) What is an example of a rhetorical situation that you have found yourself in? Identify exigence, audience, and constraints
 - 16) What is the rhetorical triangle?
 - 17) Which do you like better, the Rhetorical Situation or the Rhetorical Triangle? Why?
-

As stated above, Zarina's students have several options for representing their understanding of the reading: they can answer the discussion questions; make a graphic organizer of the content of the reading; or do a more traditional "summary / response." Of note, all of Zarina's students chose to complete this assignment via answering the discussion questions. While the reasons for their choices are not entirely evident, it is possible that the discussion question format is simply the genre in which they have the most experience and thus in which they felt the most comfortable and familiar. In a reflective memo, Zarina

acknowledges that while her goal is to provide students with multiple options for representing their knowledge of readings—a more recent point of emphasis for her in her pedagogy—she does not spend much time explicitly discussing or instructing students in the various options, though she does take care to demonstrate each strategy.

The discussion question option likely required the most “writing” on the part of the student, and seems to require a close and comprehensive reading of the text. In other words, it is, at least, not the clear path of least resistance, except in its likely familiarity to students. In addition, it is important to note that the other options from which students could choose—graphic organizer or summary / response—would not necessarily require or elicit the same *kinds* of engagement with the assigned reading—though all options do seem to promote engagement in ways that would also prepare students for active class discussion. The assessment criteria for this assignment were unclear, perhaps due to the assessment challenges posted by the varied nature of the options, with individual student responses being marked as “correct” or “incorrect” in most cases. Since no students chose the other options for completing the assignment, it is not possible to compare the ways in which these multiple options might have been assessed.

There are instances in the process assignments where the embedded reading strategies, while actively promoting some form of compliance, might also work against the kinds of reading that are called for in the culminating essay assignments. For example, strategies like “skimming” or “scanning” a text, while useful for supporting comprehension in some contexts (when a specific piece of information needs to be located quickly, for example), are not well-suited for certain tasks and purposes. Specifically, strategies like “skim” and “scan,” if employed

exclusively, do not immediately support comprehension, analysis, or critique—the purposes that are otherwise embedded in the program, the assignments, and the instructors’ stated philosophies on reading.

I applied “Skim” and “Scan” to questions 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 14, and 16 in Zarina’s reading quiz above. Importantly, however, many of Zarina’s reading questions go farther in that they require students to engage with the text by applying many of the text-based concepts to their own lived experiences (2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 15), and also to state a preference for one of the two rhetorical models they have been introduced to in class (17). These latter questions were coded for the likelihood of requiring the student to employ a more “critical” or “comprehensive” type of reading to carry out the assigned task successfully, and exemplify cases where compliance can be achieved alongside other more substantive goals. Further, these questions are more in line with the purposes for reading established in the assignment descriptions for the major projects which follow, and in that sense much of the process work directly supports the types of reading expected in the culminating essay project.

This disjuncture of types of reading called for in the process work as compared to the larger assignments is perhaps more evident in Sam’s reading quiz assigned after the “Backpacks vs. Briefcases” reading assignment. For example, when Sam’s reading questions were coded individually for the type of reading a student might employ in answering the question, all were coded *only* for “skim / scan.” While skimming and scanning are strategies that expert readers regularly employ, and strategies that novice readers often need to learn in order to become experts, it is also obvious that a pedagogy that emphasizes or privileges skimming and scanning over other forms of reading, in practice, would work against the stated intentions of the

instructors and of the course, since these strategies, employed in isolation, are not conducive to the deeper kinds of engagement with text that the instructors claim to value, and that the course outcomes call for.

Process work that can be completed *only* with skimming and / or scanning can work against critical reading by actively, if unintentionally, discouraging it. Steffy and Bartolomeo-Maida note that while some studies suggest that short periodic quizzes—or even the threat of quizzes—may increase reading compliance, “it is not clear that they encourage the kind of student engagement with readings that promotes comprehension and critical thinking,” and are often critiqued as teacher-centered or perceived by students as punitive, which can in turn “impair the professor-student relationship” (60).

In fairness to Sam, however, it needs to be noted that for this study, I am merely analyzing documents, and was not present in class to observe how the quizzes were situated within the larger instructional framework. Nonetheless, most any community college faculty member teaching a full course load can likely acknowledge instances where compliance was emphasized its own sake, in hopes that compliance might also promote other goals. Sam’s reading quiz, which follows, illustrates what might be described as the pedagogical and intellectual costs of a forced-choice quiz, likely assigned in the name of assessment efficiency.

Sam’s Process Assignment:

1. When an ad or a campaign appeals to your emotions, it is using
 - ☐ A. logos
 - ☐ B. pathos

- ☐ C. ethos
 - ☐ D. kairos
2. According to Lloyd Bitzer, the three parts to understanding the context of a rhetorical moment include
- ☐ A. tone, critical thinking, and grammar
 - ☐ B. voice, development of ideas, and spelling
 - ☐ C. exigence, audience, and constraints
 - ☐ D. presentation, voice, and audience
3. When writing to persuade an audience, context refers to
- ☐ A. finding clues within the readings to understand what is being offered
 - ☐ B. the information within the writing
 - ☐ C. the tone of the message
 - ☐ D. a specific situation for which the writing is being created
4. Constraints of a rhetorical situation include
- ☐ A. beliefs, attitudes, and motives
 - ☐ B. not understanding how to use the computer
 - ☐ C. being terrible with grammar and spelling
 - ☐ D. not knowing what to write about
5. According to Carroll, one reason why we need to learn how to do rhetorical analysis is because
- ☐ A. all of these answers are correct

- ☐ B. we are saturated in media and its images every day and need to know how to respond
 - ☐ C. knowing rhetorical analysis will help us improve our grammar and spelling
 - ☐ D. none of these answers are correct
6. Understanding rhetorical messages is essential for
- ☐ A. getting excellent grades in English class
 - ☐ B. making sure we are informed consumers
 - ☐ C. helping us assess the ethics of messages
 - ☐ D. all of these are correct
-

In order to determine what type of reading approach one might utilize to answer a given quiz question, it is necessary to have the source text on hand as a reference, since text type, text structure, and text features all work together to encourage or resist certain types of reading. In other words, short, informal “sequence”-based texts which feature numerous bolded headings and numbered or bulleted lists invite and encourage quick skimming and scanning; whereas extended informational prose often requires a more comprehensive approach, if in-depth understanding and application of the text is the reading purpose or goal.

The source text is 13 single-spaced pages of dense academic prose, though it is written for an English 101 student audience. The text makes sparing use of headings (there are five), lists (four) and discussion questions (three). There are no visuals of any kind. The text is approximately 5,000 words in length, and Microsoft’s “Review” tool scored the reading at a 10.7 grade level for Flesch-Kincaid reading difficulty, a widely-used measure that accounts

mostly for lexical complexity and sentence length. In other words, the text is aimed perhaps slightly below college level in terms of overall difficulty, but would also require a significant investment of time, in addition to a well-developed reading process, if deep comprehension and ability to apply text concepts are valued reading goals.

It is notable that in the quiz above, all questions are potentially “seek and find” in nature, meaning that all answers can be located *in* the text—no question asks for the reading to be applied to a new situation; for the author’s examples or reasons to be questioned, complicated, or extended in any way; or for the students to make any sort of interpretation or judgment about the text. The quiz does not require any inference or interpretation—merely “identifying” or locating can suffice. The quiz can be successfully completed by locating the following excerpts of text within the essay (note: the numbering below corresponds to the quiz question numbers above):

1. “Few of us are persuaded only with our mind, though. Even if we intellectually agree with something, it is difficult to get us to act unless we are also persuaded in our heart. This kind of appeal to emotion is called pathos” (53).
2. “In an article called ‘The Rhetorical Situation,’ Lloyd Bitzer argues that there are three parts to understanding the context of a rhetorical moment: exigence, audience and constraints” (48).
3. “One of the first places to start is context. Rhetorical messages always occur in a specific situation or context” (48).
4. “Constraints can be ‘beliefs, attitudes, documents, facts, traditions, images, interests, motives’ (Bitzer 306)” (49).

5. and 6. “Media is one of the most important places where this kind of analysis needs to happen . . . Understanding rhetorical messages is essential to help us to become informed consumers, but it also helps evaluate the ethics of messages, how they affect us personally, and how they affect society” (46).

Granted, it may take a student a good bit of time to “locate” these passages—however, given that the reading is online in PDF format, a savvy *student* (whether struggling, novice or expert *reader*) could simply search the text for “emotions,” “Bitzer,” “context,” “constraints,” and “rhetorical,” and likely complete the quiz in a matter of minutes—and, most consequently, without actually reading or taking in the author’s argument in any substantive way. In my coding, then, all questions above were marked for “skim” or “scan” only in the sense that this is the most time-efficient method for completing the task at hand.

It is important to note here, however, that this study does not and cannot determine what type of reading students applied in practice—though the methodology applied in the process of “seeing reading” in student writing provides evidence and traces of specific types and approaches. Instead, in the case of the assignments, my aim was to determine what type of reading is called for or necessary to complete a given task. While Sam’s quiz *could* be completed successfully via a skim / scan approach, it could also, then, be completed successfully via a more comprehensive approach. However, it seems clear that if the instructional goal is to teach critical reading, then the corresponding assignments should emphasize and reinforce that approach.

If the point of the process work is to reinforce and work up to the major paper project, then we might expect to see a coordinating “skim / scan” emphasis there, too. However, this is not quite the case. Take, for example, this excerpt from Sam’s major paper assignment sheet:

Excerpt 1 from Sam’s Major Assignment:

Section 1: Description – In this section of the analysis, put aside whether you agree or disagree with the ideas, and simply describe the text. Use specific examples from the text to support your ideas.

- What is the **main idea** communicated by the author?
 - What is the **context** of this message? Why is this idea being communicated? In what situation (political, social, economic, etc.) does this text appear?
 - What is the author’s **purpose**? What does the author hope the text will accomplish?
 - How does the author use logos, or **logic and reasoning**, to support the main idea of the text?
 - Who is the author? What **credibility** does he or she draw on to write on this topic?
 - Who is the **audience** for this text? Why would this audience be interested in this text?
 - How does the author use pathos, or **emotions**, to try and convince the audience of his or her opinion?
-

In stark contrast to the reading quiz, none of the above bulleted items were coded for “skim” or “scan” reading types; and all were coded for “critical” or “comprehensive” in terms of the type of reading most likely required to meet the purposes as assigned. In Section 1 of the

prompt, various purposes for reading are established: read to describe; read to identify main points; read to identify rhetorical features. Students are prompted to describe their selected text and are given a framework through which to do so. Much of what is called for here might be labeled summary writing (“What is the main idea communicated by the author?”) that supports, requires, and in some way can be read as a potential measure of reading comprehension.

But unlike in the reading quiz, much of what is being called for here resides outside the text itself (“What is the context of this message?” for example) and in that sense invites or requires application of more close and critical reading strategies. Students are also at this point expected to apply knowledge from the previous assigned reading (ethos, logos, pathos, audience, credibility), and so in some ways, while students are being guided towards comprehension of their source texts, they must simultaneously go outside of the text (to context) *and* demonstrate an ability to apply knowledge gleaned from previous readings.

The second section of the assignment, as excerpted below, transitions from descriptive and analytical purposes for reading to “evaluation,” another purpose that is prefaced on advanced comprehension that can only be acquired through effective critical reading.

Excerpt 2 from Sam’s Major Assignment:

Section 2: Evaluation – In this section of the analysis, use your knowledge of the context to determine whether the text is effective. You may conclude that parts of the text are effective and others are not. Use specific examples from the text to support your ideas.

- Is the **logos** effective? In other words, did the author effectively use logic and reasoning in his or her attempt to persuade the readers? How and why?
- Is the author's **ethos** sufficient to help him or her persuade you? In other words, is the author credible? Why or why not?
- Is the use of **pathos** effective? In other words, did the author's use of emotions work?
- Is the author **successful** in accomplishing his or her purpose? Why or why not?

In your response, incorporate at least one quotation or paraphrase from any course text like "Backpacks vs. Briefcases," "What Aristotle and Joshua Bell Can Teach Us About Persuasion," or "The CRAAP Test" video. You may also use other sources as appropriate. Using MLA or APA (your choice), document your source(s) accurately using both in-text citation and works cited/references.

In Section 2 of the prompt, which Sam calls "Evaluation," students are asked to move from description to determining whether the rhetoric of the text is effective. As in section one, key terms are intertwined in ways which may be difficult for students to parse out: "analysis" is explained as being part of an "evaluation" or critique rather than as a distinct activity that might be a prelude to evaluation. Again, students are provided with specific guiding questions to consider, with the aim being to build an argument about the rhetorical effectiveness of the selected text. In some cases, the evaluation asks students to consider the effects of this text on its intended audience ("In other words, did the author effectively use logic and reasoning in his or her attempt to persuade the readers? How and why?"), and in others, students are asked to discuss the effect of the text on them personally—whether they are the intended audience for

that text or not (“Is the author’s ethos sufficient to help him or her persuade you? In other words, is the author credible? Why or why not?”).

Lastly, it is important to note the role that “source use” plays in the assignment. In completing this analysis and evaluation work, students are required to “incorporate at least one quotation or paraphrase from any course text” and may use other sources as appropriate. Documentation of source use is required, a concept introduced to the class in an earlier unit. The required source use here seems minimal in relation to the kind of analysis students are asked to perform, however—a reality that seems in line with earlier findings in the literature that while instructors in two-year colleges “assign” a fair amount of reading, the expectations for how students put this reading to use are often modest.

Those modest source use expectations seemed to play out in Sam’s students’ writing as well: only 14 instances of direct quotation were coded across the 14 sources (compared to 49 in Zarina’s class), and 1 paraphrase (compared to 25). These quantitative findings will be analyzed more qualitatively in the next chapter, which focuses on the relationships between what students were asked to do in the major paper assignments, and what they actually did / wrote in response and are previewed here as a way to illustrate possible links between pedagogy and curriculum and students’ activity:

Table 11.

Instances of Direct Quotation and Paraphrase in Sam's and Zarina's Students' Writing

Instructor	Instances of Direct Quotation	Instances of Paraphrase
Sam's students' writing	14	1
Zarina's students' writing	49	25

When the assignment only calls for one direct quotation, it seems that's all students are likely to incorporate. In fact, it was generally true across the data, in terms of utilizing readings in their writing, that students mostly tried to do exactly what they were explicitly asked or required to do—a finding that is explored in more detail in the next section.

This code has a useful correlation with another code, "Missed Opportunities," or instances where students seemingly had ripe opportunity to utilize a source in a more detailed way, to further illustrate or support a claim or idea. Sam's students' writing featured 33 such missed opportunities, while Zarina's students' writing contained only 18 passages. For example, in an essay about downloadable content in video games, one of Sam's students writes that:

I think Alanah is using pathos, logos and ethos in an effective way to educate more people in microtransactions and the effects they have.

While this would be a good opportunity to cite from, or at least reference, the "Backpacks vs. Briefcases" article or another class reading, the student glosses over the terms without much

explanation. The student's essay is one of the rare examples from Sam's class that includes more than one direct quotation, but the explanation and application of the terms, which is a key aspect of the assignment, is lacking. One question that cannot be fully answered is whether the earlier skim / scan emphasis affected students' comprehension of the assigned readings to the point that their ability to then use those readings in more sophisticated ways in later writing assignments was negatively impacted.

As with Sam's major project assignment, Zarina's assignment description is also lengthy, and is excerpted here for the sake of flow. As in all of Zarina's assignments, the course outcomes featured in the given assignment are listed first, and course outcome 4b., "Read critically through comprehension, analysis & critique of a variety of texts," is referenced in a list that includes seven other outcomes. The assignment description references the previous assignment, and so there is a sense that the current project is building on and is in some ways an extension of the previous one, which emphasized "critique" of multiple texts.

Excerpt 1 from Zarina's Major Assignment:

You ended Project Paper 2 by critiquing the strengths and weaknesses of 2 texts designed to address a local issue. Your final project paper will ask you to design a solution of your own (or revise a design of someone else), and write a reflection where you explain & justify your choices.

The emphasis in this project switches from the apparent "study" of a local problem, to designing a "solution" for the problem. The stated requirements for this project are four typed pages of text, and five sources, cited in MLA style. While it is not immediately clear how those sources might function within the project, it is clear that in order to answer some of the

questions posed in the assignment sheet, some initial reading and research is required: students are directed to “Identify the issue of concern and give the current status” and “Describe the solutions currently being tried.” In other words, students are asked to provide a summary understanding of their issue in its current context. Beyond that, however, most of the emphasis of this assignment is on justifying the student’s own choices made in designing a solution to the selected problem.

While students are given concrete guidance regarding sources to consult and cite in this project, it is less explicit about how these sources should be used, other than to answer the assigned questions or to complete the assigned tasks as identified below:

Excerpt 2 from Zarina’s Major Assignment:

Why did you choose the particular genre for your design?

- What does the genre & event say about the Target Audience?
- Were there any limitations that forced you to choose one mode over another?
- Were there specific affordances which you knew you wanted to utilize?

Explain the *Ethos*

Explain the *Pathos*

Explain the *Logos*

Explain the *Contrast*

Explain the *Repetition*

Explain the *Alignment*

Explain the *Proximity*

Explain the Forum

Explain the Audience

Conclusion (1-2 par):

- What were the most significant challenges?
- What were your most significant successes?
- What would you do differently if you started over (what lessons have you learned)?

Works Cited

- Agency's Mission
- "Backpacks versus Briefcases" (EPL)
- "Beyond Black on White" (CRAP)
- *Forum's Mission (if applicable)*
- Local issue source
- National issue source

The assignment, then, relies on students to make the needed connections between tasks such as "Explain the ethos," and, for example, the "Backpacks vs. Briefcases" article, which defines "ethos" and provides examples. The assignment does call for more than just summary-level use of readings here in the sense that students are being asked to apply the knowledge from the readings to an analysis of their own written work.

The findings in Zarina's students' work are interesting, especially in context with the work produced by Sam's students. Sam's process emphasis on "skim / scan" was generally at odds with the focus of the major paper assignment, and students seem not to have been hampered much by the apparent disconnect—at least in terms of the kinds of work they attempted to do with readings. This is an instance where students from both "groups" (both ALP or traditional) appeared to display surprising flexibility in switching from tasks for which

skim / scan might suffice, and those which call for more sophisticated types of reading.

One possible reason for this seeming ease in switching between reading types and purposes could be explained by additional classroom context: in other words, as previously acknowledged, this study focuses explicitly on teaching documents and artifacts, and does not account for the many discussions and activities that occurred in these instructors' classrooms, except to the extent that both Zarina and Sam share their own reflections and explanations for how they tried to emphasize reading in their classrooms. Further, this study mostly avoids qualifying "degrees" of analysis or evaluation, for example, except in those cases where those attempts result in one of the negative traits. In other words, more careful scaffolding of the teaching of reading purposes may have resulted in *better* or *more effective* reading, however defined—but my study focused on *what students did* in response to various prompts and assignments, with less emphasis on *how well they did it*. The latter, while mostly beyond the scope of this study, is the purview of the teacher-student context and relationship. The emphasis here on "seeing" these student practices—and conceptualizing them as, possibly, *reading* concerns rather than or in addition to *writing* concerns—can contribute to and inform that more intimate context.

Zarina's process work, on the other hand, placed much more of an emphasis on critical reading, in that it required application of the content to other contexts. In the writing produced for the major essay assignment, however, Zarina's students were much more likely to employ readings in ways that can be executed via a skim / scan approach. There were 13 instances of "background" and "statistical information" respectively (compared to 0 for Sam's students), and 30 instances of "definitions" (compared to 4 for Sam's students). Only 4 sources were

coded for any kind of analysis work (compared to 11 for Sam), and 2 for evaluation (compared to 14 for Sam). In a later finding, it will be suggested that this disparity is at least partly attributed to the assignments themselves, and the explicit and implicit instructions they provide regarding how students should use sources in their writing.

Table 12.

Instances of Background, Statistical Information, and Definitions in Sam's and Zarina's Students' Writing

Instructor	Instances of Background Info	Instances of Statistical Info	Instances of Definitions
Zarinas's students' writing	13	13	30
Sam's students' writing	0	0	4

Examples of Zarina's students' source use included many passages similar to these (the first of which was coded for "Background Information;" the second for "Statistical Information;" and the third for "Definitions"):

Example 1. Big Brothers Big Sisters mission is, "Provide children facing strong and enduring, professionally supported one-to-one relationships that change their lives for the better, forever" (Mission).

Example 2. Illinois has 17,920 children in foster care, and 3,347 of these children are waiting to be adopted by loving/nurturing families. Nationally in 2015 the number of

foster kids was 427,910, this being 52% that's 222,849 male and 48% females that's 204,999. September 30, 2015 the mean age was 8.6 and the median age was 7.8 ("Adopt Us Kids").

Example 3. Pathos or the appeal to emotion and is "a way of convincing an audience of an argument by creates and emotional response." (backpacks and briefcases)

To be sure, these are all common, valid, useful ways to put readings to work in one's writing. However, Zarina's students' writing was characterized by a strong reliance on these strategies when compared to Sam's students, which suggests a difference in pedagogical emphasis. While Zarina's assignment ostensibly required "more" source use, the lack of specific guidance regarding *how* to put these sources to use produced more instances of student writing that seemed to integrate sources in ways that were somewhat superficial and mechanical.

Of course, these trends, in isolation, do not tell a complete story about how or to what effect these teachers' students employed readings in their writing. Instead, this current finding merely intends to shed some light on a few important moments of apparent disjuncture between the instructors' stated philosophies and aims regarding reading and their actual practices as evidenced by their actual assignments and the kinds of reading often espoused there. To be sure, such gaps between intentions and practices exist in every teacher's curriculum. Identifying these gaps is a first step towards bridging them.

The next finding examines more specific instances of source use in writing from students in both classes, and places them in context with each instructor's assignment to show that most

often, students tried to do what they were asked to do—a simple finding with important implications.

CHAPTER V: IN/EXPLICITNESS OF READING INSTRUCTION

Introduction: Seeing Reading in Student Writing

With an understanding of the institutional context in place, the project of learning to “see” student reading practices in their writing becomes central to this study, in that if improving student reading is a goal, we must develop ways to make it visible not only in our teaching, but also in students’ uptake of that teaching. This kind of visibility was introduced briefly in the previous chapter and is elaborated here. This visibility allows, then, for meaningful analysis of certain themes across all data compiled for this study. The analysis of student writing presented here, while perhaps specific to this project, is arguably not entirely unique to the data on hand: strategies and features like summary, paraphrase, quotation, analysis, and evaluation are of course common in source-based writing. The point, here, is learning to see and track those features—to conceive of them not only as writing practices but also as possible evidence of reading practices; and to use the resulting analysis as a way in to thinking about the pedagogy, curriculum, and other conditions that fostered them; and to then be able to reconceive writing assessment as, in a way, reading assessment.

Both findings presented in this chapter illuminate the various ways in which students respond to pedagogy, curriculum, and assessments in relation to the explicitness of the instruction or artifact. In contrast, however, both subject instructors in this study openly admit that consistency and explicitness, while prominent features of their writing instruction, are more evasive in their reading instruction—a finding that is likely explained by the instructors’

extensive backgrounds in teaching writing, while the habit of being more mindful of students' reading practices is a more recent point of emphasis for both instructors.

Finding 1: Relationships Between Explicitness of Instruction and Student Activity

Finding Summary: The purposes for reading desired and valued by the instructors are more consistently evident in student writing when made explicit in assignment descriptions and teaching materials. Largely, my research suggests that most often, students tried to do what they were explicitly asked to do—and generally did not do what they were not explicitly asked to do. The chapter that follows these findings will explore ways to address this apparent gap.

Documents Analyzed for This Finding

- Sam's and Zarina's Purpose Statements (who and how they value reading in their curricula)
- Sam's and Zarina's midterm and end-of-semester Reflective Statements
- Sam's and Zarina's respective major project assignment descriptions
- Student writing from both classes

Whereas the previous finding placed analytical emphasis on reading *type* (skim / scan / critical reading), this finding, while closely related, turns its attention to *purposes* for reading as articulated by the instructors in their assignments and as enacted by students in their writing. On its surface, this might seem like two findings, rather than one: one related to teacher explicitness and another more concerned with student uptake. I aim here to analyze both themes together due to their closely-connected nature in my data. As mentioned earlier, one's purpose for reading, a seemingly simple concern ("Why am I reading this text?") is in practice quite complex. An earlier finding outlined the roles and relationships between institutional forces (Articulation Agreements, college-wide competency statements) and conceptions of reading that then get manifested in course descriptions, which in turn shape curriculum and

instructional approaches to reading. Instructors then must work with or against these previously-established purposes to create and deliver meaningful reading instruction to students.

While instructors often have their own purposes in mind that they wish to impart to student-as-reader (like Sam's purpose "to help students gain exposure / access to the language of an academic discipline," for example), in most cases, academic reading tasks are "assigned," and so one student-reader's construction of reading purpose might be as simple as "I read to complete an assigned task." And for *all* students, reading to complete the assigned task is one dimension of the reading purpose. Ideally, of course, students can construct additional, more personally fulfilling purposes for even assigned reading—purposes that may or may not be in line with instructional goals, or that fulfill other goals for the student, whether personal or academic.

We have already seen that in Zarina's and Sam's process assignments, skim / scan reading types were prevalent, via assignments like reading quizzes that established corresponding purposes for reading (reading for definitions, for example). Here, we will take a closer look at the purposes for reading (and writing) desired by the instructors, as evidenced by their stated purposes for assigning reading in their reflective statements and as established in the major essay assignments that followed. I will then consider those purposes in context with the student writing generated in response to each instructor's major essay assignment, with an analytical focus on "what the student did" with reading (i.e. how the used the reading, and the purposes reflected in those uses), in relation to "what the student was explicitly asked to do" with reading (i.e. the embedded purposes they were charged with enacting).

Whereas the previous finding shed light on instructional mismatches (important differences between stated values and actual curriculum and pedagogy), this finding focuses on the explicitness and clarity of instructions and assignments, and how students responded. The general finding presented here is that most often, students enact reading-into-writing practices that align closely with what they were explicitly asked to do via the given assignment: in other words, when they are asked to analyze, they most often try to analyze; when they are asked to merely define, they do so. When required to integrate one quotation or cite from one reading, they most often *only* integrate one quotation and one reading. This is a simple finding, but one with important implications for the development of pedagogy and curricula that work to reinforce instructional goals.

To more closely analyze the potential influence of the institutional forces on my subject instructors' teaching, and to gain insights into their motivations for assigning readings, I asked them to prepare brief "purpose statements" regarding their approach to reading in their teaching of writing. The instructors wrote in response to the following prompt, which was delivered via email:

In short, *why* do you ask students to read? What are your "explicit" purposes for reading (in other words, think about how you explain this to students, either verbally or in your assignments), etc.? If you have any "hidden" or more implicit purposes for having students read, what are those?

In their purpose statements, the instructors indicated many motivations for integrating reading into their curricula, including:

- To present course materials

- To practice decoding messages
- To complete the assignment
- It is important
- The Writing Program requires it
- The Articulation Initiative requires it

Then, at midterm and again at the end of the semester, the instructors were asked to provide brief reflective statements—informal memos by design. Instructors were provided with a bulleted list of general questions to consider, and to answer “any or all” as they saw fit.

Questions posed for that memo that are relevant here include:

- How are your 099 / 101 sections going?
- Are you trying anything new this semester to target reading specifically?
- If so, how’s it going? Early thoughts / impressions?
- If not, why not?
- Do you have any pedagogical success / failure stories to share?

Both the instructor statements and reflective memos contained many direct references to purposes for reading—and even some frank uncertainty about how and to what extent it is necessary or desirable to establish a sense of purpose for students as readers. In their statements and memos, the instructors drew important distinctions between establishing a purpose for a *specific* reading assignment (they exhibited certainty that they do this consistently) and instilling in students a framework for constructing purposes for the activity of reading *in general*, an area where they seemed less sure of their explicitness and effectiveness.

In their purpose statements and reflective memos, both instructors mapped out numerous reasons for including readings in their curriculum. Sam said:

I ask students to read for several reasons. First, readings often present course material. Since I strive to present course concepts in multiple ways in order to keep my courses UDL-friendly, a text that summarizes these ideas is helpful. It compliments what we do in class.

I also ask students to read to get practice decoding texts. Some of these texts are more complex than others, but to be educated people, students need to know how to understand the messages sent by others who are trying to communicate with them.

In this statement we see reading situated, in part, as just one aspect of a flexible learning environment (such environments are in fact a hallmark of UDL). In this statement, traditional forms of reading are not necessarily privileged above other forms of content delivery / intake (such as lecture, discussion, watching a video, or listening to an audio recording); instead, reading becomes one of many ways to deliver content, or for students to encounter it.

Further, we see a reference to the “decoding” aspect of reading, most commonly understood as the ability to translate written symbols into the “sounds” of a language. The quotation, however, suggests a broader conception of decoding practice than is often present in the literature: Sam wants students to read as a way to get practice *making meaning* from written texts, which is to say, *comprehending* the readings, which is an outcome predicated on—but also in many ways distinct from—decoding skills. To Sam, this seems to be a prerequisite for being “educated” and literate. Further, the emphasis here on comprehension aligns with one of the three purposes for reading codified in the course outcome discussed earlier—an outcome which values comprehension, analysis, and critique.

Sam continues: “I also think it’s important for college instructors of all disciplines to share and discuss texts with their students since, as we learned from research, much reading instruction doesn’t happen beyond middle school. If we expect students to read difficult texts, we need to teach them how to do it!” In short, both seem to believe that reading is important for its own sake as a part of student learning in their classes, or as Sam implies, perhaps in all college courses.

Zarina noted other motivations for including course readings—including some external and institutional factors:

Now the reason of why I have the source requirements is part Articulation Initiative (we must use sources), part Writing Program (we decided that we are rhetorically based hence “Backpacks & Briefcases”), and part my own estimation of student import (affective understanding is “good” for students).

The articulation initiative referenced here is a transfer agreement that ensures that English 101 taken at this two-year college will transfer successfully to most four-year schools in the state. The AI agreement for English composition courses establishes strict guidelines for minimum reading and writing requirements in first-year writing that all colleges must contend with when submitting courses for AI approval, and even lists specific types of writing that must occur (“source-based writing,” “research papers,” etc.), while perhaps remaining intentionally vague about what counts as a “research paper.” In this sense, certain “amounts” and “kinds” of reading and writing are simply required—a reality which privileges volume and genre of reading materials and writing products as ways to normatively regulate the work of programs, teachers, and students.

Zarina also references the Writing Program’s own distinction as being “rhetorically-

based,” which seems to indicate that reading, to some degree, is required as part of the practice of learning and understanding rhetorical principles and practices. Zarina, like Sam, also indicates a sort of implicit drive to have students read: Sam’s statement that “students need to know how to understand the messages sent by others” echoes Zarina’s “own estimation of student import” of reading.

The instructors present varying degrees of certainty (or perhaps uncertainty) about how they impart this sense of purpose for reading to students, however. Sam says:

I’m not sure that I tell students why I assign readings. I often talk about why I’ve chosen specific readings, however. “We’re reading these essays to give you one example of how these accomplished Americans learned how to read,” for instance. But I don’t often discuss in class why reading itself is important. I guess I assume that’s a “given.” Perhaps I will discuss it now, though!

Here we see the distinction referenced above—between establishing a purpose for reading, generally, and *a* reading, specifically. I developed a code I call “Pedagogical Wishes,” a theme in the instructor data that represents instances where the instructors reflect on things they intended to do but did not, or that they may approach differently in the future. The questioning of the “given” nature of reading as important, and the suggestion that “perhaps” this will be discussed more explicitly in the future, are two of many examples of the “wishes” the instructors expressed as they worked towards more mindful approaches to reading in their classes.

Zarina also reflected on the explicitness of her establishment of purposes for reading with her students:

I could easily see an argument that my readings are not explained or given a justification beyond the discrete assignment, but I would make the argument that the reading they are doing to complete the discrete assignment has benefits beyond that assignment.

This comment speaks to a question to be explored in more detail in the next chapter: to what extent do students need to be directed, explicitly, towards making connections between what they are learning (whether via reading or writing or otherwise) and how that learning might be of benefit to them in the future and in other learning contexts? Does a lack of specificity on the part of the instructor for creating purposes for reading necessarily result in the kind of “vague” sense of reading that Hjortshøj describes (125)? Or can students be expected to make these connections—perhaps taught how to make connections on their own, rather than being instructed in which specific connections are to be made? The answers to such questions are theoretical in nature and can and will be used to build more effective reading pedagogies.

For Sam’s major essay assignment, students were to “discuss the rhetoric of an argumentative text.” The explicit purpose for writing, as stated in the assignment description, is to “practice writing about rhetorical concepts.” There are specific parameters set forth for the writing: 500 words in length, and organized into two discrete sections labeled “Description” and “Evaluation.”

There were 18 instances of “summary” coded across 11 individual essays written by Sam’s students, a number that is in line with the assignment emphasis on describing the text being analyzed. Despite the limited direct use of additional readings, however, Sam’s students tried to meet the assignment on its terms regarding the purposes for reading set forth in the prompt: the assignment emphasis on analysis and evaluation resulted in a corresponding frequency of passages coded for these traits (11 and 14 essays were coded for analysis and evaluation respectively, compared to 4 and 2 respectively in Zarina’s class, where the

assignment had a different emphasis), with total instances of each as follows:

Table 13.

Instances of Analysis and Evaluation in Sam's and Zarina's Students' Writing

Instructor	Instances of Analysis	Instances of Evaluation
Sam's students' writing	23	38
Zarina's students' writing	6	2

Sam's students produced many passages like these below, which make clear references to rhetorical concepts in attempts to analyze their selected text, but do so without directly referencing any of the many specific course readings about rhetoric. These examples all focus directly or indirectly on the rhetorical appeal of "logos" and in addition to being coded as "Analysis," also exemplify the code of "Missed Opportunities."

"Logos" Example 1:

I think the author could have used a little bit more logos in this article. There is a couple examples like the money being spent and how many different places allow animals.

Another example of logos would be how the author talked about a specific officer that is trying to make a law to stop this illegal act.

“Logos” Example 2:

I find the logic he uses to get readers on his side works to get people on his side. By the way, he points out that gaming is moving more toward being more online-focused and if we don't step in now to crack down on racism in online gaming it could become a much more significant problem later down the road.

This trend of Sam’s students—to attempt analysis work, but without the benefit of direct references to course readings—held true throughout via corresponding passages that address “ethos” and “pathos” in similar ways (i.e. analytical, yet missing opportunities to support the analysis work with course readings). This trend might suggest a disjuncture of sorts: that students are aware that displaying an understanding of ethos, logos, and pathos is an important aspect of the assignment, but less aware that one way to exhibit this understanding is via utilizing specific examples from the readings to support this kind of work.

“Ethos” Example:

It also helps that he has a background in gaming and can bring his own experiences of dealing with racism in online games, which makes the reader connect more to the points he brings up about racism and hate speech that happens.

“Pathos” Example:

A lot of the emotions conveyed in the article is very touching when looking at how people projected this protested as a bad thing. Tornoe talks about how people have

twisted this protest from being a disrespectful act toward the flag, when the real issue was he took a knee to protest for the way African-Americans like himself had been mistreated and killed by police officers in this country.

In short, however, despite the apparent difference in instructional emphases between the process work and the major paper assignments in both courses, in each case above and in most cases generally, Sam's students tended to attempt to do what was called for or required. The exclusively "skim / scan" emphasis of Sam's reading quiz did not spill over into the students' writing, except in the sense that perhaps a more explicitly analytical approach to the process work would have resulted in more sophisticated early reads of the source text and, thus, more complex analyses in the actual essays. Sam's students' writing was coded lightly for codes that might suggest skim / scan reading: no essays were coded for "background" or "statistical information," and there were only four total instances of definitional material. In other words, Sam's students used sources as they were asked to in the major assignment, instead of as had been perhaps reinforced by the quiz assignment.

None of this research is intended to suggest that using sources for background information, statistics, or definitions indicates that students *did* skim or scan the text, or that they *only* skimmed or scanned the text. However, I believe it a fair assumption that if tasked with locating a definition, for example, from a long expository text, most readers, whether expert or struggling, would likely scan the text for the needed information. This might even be considered "good practice" in this case: the reader selected the strategy needed for the goal. I contend, however, that an assignment that encourages and reinforces these kinds of reading-

into-writing practices *in isolation* from more comprehensive reading types is potentially harmful, since a heavy reliance on skimming is known to breed “cognitive impatience” as well as to contribute to “the potential inability of large numbers of students to read with a level of critical analysis sufficient to comprehend the complexity of thought and argument found in more demanding texts” (Wolf). Student writing rife with these kinds of uses of sources—especially in relation to a writing task that seems to require a more complex read of a given text—should give us pause.

Zarina’s assignment was very different from Sam’s in terms of how it situated and explained purposes for reading and writing: Sam’s assignment was explicitly labeled as a “rhetorical analysis,” and Zarina’s was introduced as a problem / solution assignment. Of course, problem solving is both rhetorical and analytical, so in that sense the kinds of thinking, reading, and writing called forth by each assignment is similar. It seems, however, that Sam’s explicit naming of students’ work as “analysis” may have influenced how students aimed to integrate readings into their writing. One might expect “analysis” to be a more prominent feature of student writing in response to an explicitly analytical assignment, and that finding appears to hold true in this data.

Zarina’s assignment also places a more explicit emphasis on students referencing specific key terms in their writing from a list that includes: “Forum, Target Audience, Genre, Purpose, Mission Statement, Ethos, Pathos, Logos, Contrast, Repetition, Alignment, Proximity.” The importance of definition-related work is reinforced further in the rubric where the highest level of the “Development” outcome reads: “Key terms and positions are thoroughly defined and the writer’s position is effectively situated and justified.”

It is perhaps no surprise, then, that Zarina’s students used readings as sources of definitions far more often than Sam’s students did (30 passages coded for “definitions” in Zarina’s students’ work, compared to just 4 for Sam’s students). And given the focus in Zarina’s assignment on students identifying a current problem, it is also no surprise that Zarina’s students used sources to provide background and statistical information far more often than Sam’s students did, as was illustrated in the previous finding and in *Table 11*.

Zarina’s students, also writing about rhetorical appeals, were far more likely, then, to define the terms ethos, logos, and pathos than Sam’s students. They did so with and without referring to course readings, such as the “Backpacks vs. Briefcases” article that was assigned in both courses—but like with Sam’s students, most of Zarina’s students did their definition work without much direct reference to sources. This, again, can likely be attributed at least in part to the minimal source use requirement in the assignment prompt itself.

“Definitions” Example:

Ethos refers to the credibility of the person posing the argument or stating the facts . . .

Pathos refers to appealing to a person by influencing their emotions . . . Lastly, logos

refers to an appeal to reason based on logic.

Zarina’s assignment focused on solving a problem, and students often utilized readings to provide background information about the problem or the organization they had chosen to study, which resulted in many uses of readings of this type:

“Background” Example:

Big Brothers Big Sisters mission is, “Provide children facing adversity with strong and enduring, professionally supported one-to-one relationships that change their lives for the better, forever” (Mission).

And finally, the problem-solving nature of the assignment also elicited many passages like this one, where students used statistical information to create a sense of “need” or to establish the urgency of their topic:

“Statistics” Example:

Illinois has 17,920 children in foster care, and 3,347 of these children are waiting to be adopted by loving/nurturing families. Nationally in 2015 the number of foster kids was 427,910, this being 52% that’s 222,849 male and 48% females that’s 204,999. September 30, 2015 the mean age was 8.6 and the median age was 7.8 (“Adopt Us Kids”).

The point here is not to argue that analysis is “good” or that using sources primarily as sources of definitions or statistics is “bad”—instead, the important implication of this finding is that instructors simply need to be acutely aware of the kinds of reading and uses of readings in writing that their assignments elicit, and the ways in which those established purposes and expectations for source use (and, thus, for reading) also impact the types of reading and reading strategies with which students are then most likely to engage. In the data for this study,

the relationships between the two are clearly evident.

To conclude this section, I will note a final related theme that emerged in my analysis. While this finding primarily explores student uptake of reading in their writing in relation to how the expectations for reading were established in the assignments, it is noteworthy that the subject instructors also openly struggle with being explicit and consistent regarding establishing and maintaining purposes for reading, especially when compared to purposes for *writing*. This reality, in context with the larger finding presented here, suggests an exigency of sorts for writing instructors to be more mindful of how purposes for reading get established and reinforced throughout their teaching.

For example, while the outcomes and tasks in the subject instructors' assignments are generally set forth as purposes for *writing*, it is also true, even if less explicitly established, that the assignments are also setting forth purposes for *reading*. For example, consider the following explicit instructions mentioned in Sam's assignment. An analysis of the action verbs used in the assignment description show more explicit and direct references to "writing tasks," whereas tasks that are directly related to reading are more mechanical in nature, and / or more broadly conceived:

Writing-related verbs (emphasis mine):

- *"Discuss the rhetoric"*
- *"Practice writing"*
- *"Analyze the rhetoric"*
- *"Describe the text"*
- *"Support your ideas"*

While many of the above tasks are of course dependent upon effective reading of the source texts (especially “analyzing” and “describing”), the emphasis, not surprisingly, is on analytical writing (the product) rather than on analytical reading (an aspect of the process). The more directly reading-related purposes and tasks are set forth as follows (emphasis mine):

- “*Determine* whether the text is effective”
- “*Incorporate* at least one quotation”
- “*Use* other sources as appropriate”

The act of “determining effectiveness” of a text seems to be presented in the assignment as a precursor to the writing (i.e. first, read the text and determine whether it is effective; then, write about what you decide). The second instruction is rather mechanical in nature—a formal requirement of the writing, but with no guidance on how one might carry it out thoughtfully. And the final instruction is perhaps the most vague and open-ended, leaving the student to decide whether additional source use is appropriate and necessary (overwhelmingly, and perhaps not surprisingly, students decided that using other sources was “not appropriate” given that they rarely went beyond the minimum requirement). Given the emphasis of the assignment on analyzing rhetoric, and the array of assigned readings that student might utilize in this analysis, the source use requirement here seems somewhat vague and minimal.

The more obviously writing-related tasks from Zarina’s assignment include (emphasis mine):

- “*Design* a solution of your own or *revise* a design of someone else”
- “*Write* a reflection where you explain & justify your choices”
- “*Make* an initial draft of your solution”

- “*Explain* how and why your solution would be effective and persuasive”

While the most explicitly reading-related task includes only the following (emphasis mine):

- “*Identify* a current problem”

As in Sam’s assignment, the verbs used to assign writing tasks are numerous and mostly tangible and concrete, while those used to encourage reading are scant and / or relatively abstract in comparison. The instructor uncertainty about how and in some cases whether to establish explicit purposes for student writing, in concert with the resulting few and vague ways in which those instructions get established in their assignment, suggests the need for writing pedagogies that are more clear, consistent, and mindful of the role of reading and readings in writing processes. Further, the strong positive correlation between what students *were* explicitly asked to do with readings and what they actually did or tried to do suggests that a more intentional reading pedagogy will yield results regarding student reading and writing practices.

Finding 2: Vague Reading Assessment

Finding Summary: The writing assessment tools and practices in use in this data often paint reading with a broad brush, via vague assessment language like, “serious contemplation of readings and content” that do not directly suggest how the student might learn from the assessment. In other cases, one general reading assessment tool will be used across multiple and very different types of reading assignments—especially process assignments that aim to assess students’ comprehension of or engagement with an assigned reading. The reading assessment tools and practices here reflect many missed opportunities for meaningful interaction with students as readers. In contrast, the instructors’ writing-specific assessment categories and instruments seemed much more refined, explicit, and clear.

Documents Analyzed for This Finding

- Zarina's and Sam's Major Project Rubrics
- Zarina's and Sam's written feedback to students' major project draft submissions

In many ways, this finding is a continuation of the above, in that an inconsistent approach to the teaching of reading will almost necessarily culminate in an equally inconsistent approach to assessing reading. This current finding is also perhaps expected, due to the admitted “newness” of attention to reading by the subject instructors; to their vast experience teaching and assessing writing as somewhat distinct from reading; and to the relatively “tangible” nature of writing when compared to reading. At this point I wish to consider the role of writing assessment, both in the form of assessment instruments and written comments and feedback, in establishing roles, functions, and expectations for student reading practices and skills. I present and analyze the instructors' assessment tools in terms of their design, and more specifically how they characterize and emphasize specific aspects of student reading and, more often, student writing.

This finding generates useful insights regarding the creation of sound reading assessments for composition, a project taken up in the next chapter. As a preface to this section, I will note that all formal written assessment of student writing in these two sections was conducted within Blackboard and using the onboard rubric generator tool. This is both an affordance, in the sense that the assessment tools integrate seamlessly into a student's learning experience, and a limitation, in that the rubric tool itself is not especially flexible and only allows for two different “views” (list or grid).

The implications of this and similar tools for reading assessment will be explored in the

next chapter, but for now, I will mention that Blackboard's rubric tool forces instructors into boxes, quite literally, in that interrelationships between rubric categories are difficult if not impossible to illustrate (Sam's and Zarina's rubrics are referenced later and are attached at the end of this section). The rubric tool discourages holistic scoring, in that it requires the listing of discrete competencies that must be scored in isolation from others and must be weighted individually. Effective teachers can work around these limitations by making comments that, either in-text or on the rubric, explain and justify "category scores" in terms of their relation to other "categories."

Sam's summative rubric for the major paper assignment, attached as Appendix A, accounts for reading primarily in the descriptions of areas labeled "Content Understanding" and "Responsible Support" and via the following descriptions:

Content Understanding: Discussion posts show serious contemplation of readings and content, revealing awareness of implications and complexities.

Responsible Support: Sources used support author's ideas, are original (unexpected choices), and are integrated properly.

Remarkably, the rubric language does aim or purport to make student reading visible via writing and writing assessment: in the first criterion, "serious contemplation" and "awareness of implications" are not immediately accessible, after all, and are only able to be discussed and assessed once articulated or demonstrated in some way. And in this case, that visibility occurs through writing (and via the instructor's reading of that writing). The second criterion is perhaps less explicitly a reading-based outcome, as it is more concerned with the student's choices of *what* to read and presumably with the more mechanical aspects that might comprise

“proper” integration.

Referring to Sam’s original assignment, its stated emphases on summary and description are not immediately evident in the rubric. What is emphasized here instead is “serious contemplation,” though it is not immediately clear how that might be made visible and thus assessable via student writing. Perhaps it can be argued that the instructor’s assessment itself is an instantiation of this visibility: by rendering an opinion as to whether a student’s writing does in fact provide evidence of serious contemplation, this at least opens a conversation about “serious contemplation” with the student.

In a process-based pedagogy where students are offered the opportunity to revise and resubmit their work, these conversations can inform students’ approaches to revision, and “serious contemplation,” however that has been negotiated between teacher and student, can be attempted through a revision process. In Sam’s class, student feedback in this area was nested in a rubric area called “Content Understanding,” and was characterized by comments like these (note that each comment is for a different student):

Comment 1: “Your understanding of rhetoric is not coming through in this analysis. You seem to have missed the main point of the article which is a call for lawmakers to put rules in place to make it clearer which dogs are legitimate service dogs and which are not. Instead, you've written about store owners and disabled persons as the audience. Your explanation of how the author is credible is vague.”

Comment 2: “You've made some good analytical points, but they get lost in the very-long paragraphs. Be sure to add a paragraph break each time you switch the discussion to a new main idea. This sometimes requires you to write a bit more about certain parts of the post.”

Comment 3: “Good understanding of the concepts overall. One thing that's missing is a discussion of the context of analyst Lewis' comments.”

Comment 4: “Your post is more a summary of the issue than an analysis of the article.”

Each of the examples above portrays an element of what might be called “serious contemplation” of a text, or lack thereof: student writing should be analytical in nature; should demonstrate a clear and accurate understanding of the author’s main points; should recognize the context in which quotations are situated. While it is not clear how or whether “serious contemplation” was articulated during face-to-face activities, Sam’s rubric and associated feedback do lay the groundwork for meaningful assessment of a seemingly abstract concept.

One aspect of “visibility” of reading that seems an important consideration of rubric design: whereas it is often clear when a student has *not* completed or comprehended a reading assignment, such as is described in the “Not Acceptable” category of Sam’s full rubric below, affirming that students have not only “completed” a reading but have “contemplated it seriously” seems a much more complex and nuanced assessment task. In other words, when evidence of effective reading is “invisible” or unavailable, that “lack” is rather simple to assess—a point that is exemplified later in the written assessment feedback provided by both Sam and Zarina, most of which focuses on lack and absence rather than presence and degree. Perhaps the emphasis on lack is a sort of unintended response to the reality that differentiating

between reading that was “contemplated seriously” as opposed to merely “completed” seems a much more difficult assessment project.

Other aspects of source use, such as documentation and proper integration (“Responsible Support”) mentioned here do tend to appear on most rubrics for source-based writing, perhaps because they represent dimensions of reading that are much easier to “see,” even if only indirectly. This being the case, source use mechanics can be quantified and qualified quickly and easily. Further, this kind of control over the mechanical aspects of source use is valued highly across the curriculum—perhaps overvalued in some contexts where it can serve as a weak proxy for meaningful engagement with a text. While what we might call citation “mechanics” should not be used as stand-ins for measures of effective reading, this is often the case in writing assessment generally. Further, across the curriculum, source use mechanics in the form of good working knowledge of MLA and / or APA citation styles are frequent mentions in terms of how others expect first-year composition to function within a broader general education curriculum.

Zarina’s assessment, attached as Appendix B, utilizes more outcome categories than Sam’s (8 vs. 5), and assesses proficiency across a wider range of descriptors (5 vs. 3). This approach allows for more apparent nuance, but is also more visually intimidating and complex. Reading is not named specifically on the rubric, though it is assessed most directly here under categories called “Context,” “Development,” “Supporting Evidence,” and “Supporting Documentation” as follows:

Context: The composition explores ideas and considers the ongoing discourse and situation in which it responds.

Development: Key terms and positions are thoroughly defined and the writer's position is effectively situated and justified

Supporting Evidence: The composition provides in-depth engagement with support which enhances credibility

Supporting Documentation: All support is fully documented in complete and correct style

The assignment requires reading in the form of familiarizing oneself with the “ongoing discourse” regarding the selected topic, which is something of a “what to read” concern, and in that sense is an assessment of a student's decision making in this regard. On the assignment description, this appears to come in the form of one required “local issue source” and one “national issue source,” and one might question whether this is *enough* reading to constitute an adequate construction of an “ongoing discourse” in the first place. In this sense, in light of the earlier finding that students generally do (only) what they are asked to do, the minimal reading requirement set forth in the assignment might work against a student's ability to be successful here.

Like in Sam's rubric, whereas a lack of engagement with sources is rather easy to identify, deciding what constitutes “in-depth engagement” seems more difficult. And like in Sam's assessments, most of the written feedback that addresses this aspect of reading does so by identifying near-complete lacks or shortcomings, rather than suggesting how “competent” engagement might become “proficient,” for example. Lastly, similar to Sam's rubric, “documentation”—in terms of its “completeness” and “correctness,” is assessed as its own rubric item, as is commonly the case in rubrics for reading-based writing assignments. Again,

this kind of assessment is generally expected and often called for by other stakeholders and is also quick and easy to assess due to the objective nature of “correctness” in this case.

Instructor Feedback and Comments

While instructor comments are perhaps most usefully considered within the broader context of a given student’s work, this section analyzes instructor comments holistically and in isolation from the student work for the purpose of identifying themes in the comments themselves. In this way, the comments become an instantiation of what the instructors value in the student writing, and can be set against the instructors’ stated values and philosophies, and the apparent values set forth in their respective assignments. The following table represents an effort to document the written revision advice given to students, to identify themes in the feedback and to link them to explicit and less obvious expectations for student reading.

Table 14.

Instructor Feedback on Student Essays

Code Title	Instances Coded: Sam’s Class	Instances Coded: Zarina’s Class
Needs Explanation	12	8
Needs Evidence or Citation	10	5
Definitions	0	10
Citation Format	4	5

(Table Continues)

Table 14. Continued

Code Title	Instances Coded: Sam's Class	Instances Coded: Zarina's Class
Essay Structure	3	4
Proofreading	5	0
Thesis	0	4
Conflation of Terms	0	3
Summary Not Analysis	1	0

Needs Explanation

“Needs explanation” was applied to instances where the instructor comment noted a “lack” in the student writing as it relates to the expectation that terms, positions, and claims are fully explained given the rhetorical context of the student writing. This code intersects with “Missed Opportunities” as coded in the student work: moments in student writing where terms or sources are referenced or “dropped” into a text, but not fully contextualized or explained to meet the demands of the assignment.

“Needs Explanation” Feedback Examples:

Sam:

“You explain how the pathos examples play on readers' emotions, but you don't explain how the logos examples use logic to support the author's ideas.”

“One thing that's missing is a discussion of the context of analyst Lewis' comments.”

“When you include quotes, you don't explain why they are included. For instance, why did Pearce include the quote about the money that EA makes off of FIFA? You don't tell us why you've referred to that quote. That's one example, but there are more in your post.”

Zarina:

“No explanation of what they have now (what is wrong)”

“No explanation of why”

“No explanation or description of what it is currently”

“How does yours do what you see as wrong in theirs?”

“I have to make this connection, when you are supposed to”

“HOW will you make it more appealing? What was your appeal? Your strategy?”

Nearly all comments above point to issues or concerns that might be considered as reading-related rather than or in addition to writing-related concerns. Sam's comment that the student-writer does not explain logos as completely as ethos could, of course, indicate that the student simply does not understand the concept of logos as well as that of ethos. Arguably, emotional appeals are perhaps more obvious, while logical appeals are more nuanced and predicated on some prior knowledge of common logical structures and fallacies.

Notably, all comments above point out a “lack” of some kind in the student writing—and this is a trend across the written feedback for students. Most references are to something

that is missing, rather than something that is present: explanations, descriptions, discussions, or connections. What is less explicit is that most of these lacks are indeed rooted at least partially in reading and possibly reading comprehension: it is of course difficult if not impossible to explain something that you do not understand. While there are other viable explanations of the various “lacks” noted, reading comprehension issues can be considered here as a potential root cause of the various “absences” noted in the students’ writing.

Needs Citation or Needs Evidence

Though these are two separate codes, I describe them together here because they share some similarities. “Needs citation” seemed to derive from “vague” references to sources—writing *about* a reading in very general terms as characterized by a lack of specificity of information included. This feedback (and the student writing that elicited it) may have been prompted by the minimal citation requirement of each assignment, and the corresponding practice of students to quote as minimally as possible to meet those requirements.

“Needs evidence,” on the other hand, most often refers to student claims that are unsupported—instances where the expectation is for reading to be visible, but it is not (like, below, Zarina’s response to a student’s unsubstantiated claim that sex abuse is on the rise, or to cases where course readings could or should have been applied). Effective and specific use of course readings, in most cases, would have required citation. A link between these two codes is that both represent noted weaknesses or lacks in the student writing that may also or instead be caused by reading challenges, and / or might just represent inadvertent effects of the assignment descriptions and requirements. Both codes (and the student practices which

elicited them) can be considered in context with the minimal source use requirements set forth in each assignment. In short, it is perhaps the case that the assessment expectation for supporting claims with sources cannot be fairly expected or practically achieved via the prescribed source use requirements.

“Needs Evidence” or “Needs Citation” Examples:

Sam:

“No in-text citations. Also, a quote from a course text was required.”

Zarina:

“Sex abuse is on the rise? You must give evidence of that if you claim it.”

Definitions and Conflation of Terms

Zarina’s assignment clearly calls on students to define the key terms—to do so explicitly, and with direct and cited references to the assigned course readings. Zarina’s students’ writing was rife with “definitions” work (30 instances, compared to 4 for Sam), and Zarina’s mention of a lack of adequate definition work is evident in the written feedback as well (10 mentions, compared to 0 for Sam). This definition work seems to have a purpose—and students not achieving this desired outcome often received feedback regarding “conflation of terms,” meaning, for example, that a student perhaps discussed “ethos, logos, and pathos” as a singular concept, rather than as three separate but related rhetorical strategies. Of note and as previously illustrated, definitions can often be pulled from a text via skim / scan reading types,

though superficial use of those terms in writing would often be more obvious than, say, in a reading quiz. While my analysis cannot get at the causes for these conflations, it is again fair to argue that one possible culprit for such oversimplifications is student difficulty in comprehending the persuasive appeals and strategies as discussed in the assigned texts, which then results in the more visible “writing struggles.” And like with the other perceived “lacks” here, yet another possible contributing factor is the minimal source use requirement set forth in the assignments.

“Definitions” and “Conflation of Terms” Examples:

Zarina:

“NO DEFINITIONS of key terms!”

“Ethos, Pathos, and Logos are not 1 idea- they are very different.”

“Key terms are not all the same idea, they don't belong together.”

Citation Format and Proofreading

These two codes are explored together as both relate to mechanical aspects of writing and source use as opposed to conceptual dimensions. In earlier stages of my analysis, I was surprised by how many of Sam’s students mentioned proofreading as being an important course concept in their final reflections (written as letters to future students in the class). Once the assessments were analyzed, however, one possible explanation for this became more evident—Sam mentioned “proofreading” often in assessment comments (5 times), whereas

Zarina did not mention it at all. Both explicitly assessed for the specifics of citation and document formatting.

“Citation Format” and “Proofreading” Examples:

Sam:

“Many proofreading and documentation errors throughout.”

Zarina:

“This is not MLA format; no indent on paragraphs.”

Essay Structure

Both instructors made regular mention of organization or structure in student writing; both frequently provide organizational templates and suggested essay outlines in their teaching materials. Essay structure is not theorized here as a manifestation of effective reading, however—it is treated as solely a “writing” concern. In the next chapter I will explore the possibilities that develop from conceiving of many standard “writing concerns” as also, or instead, visible manifestations of student reading.

“Essay Structure” Examples:

Sam:

“You've made some good analytical points, but they get lost in the very-long paragraphs. Be sure to add a paragraph break each time you switch the discussion to a new main idea. This sometimes requires you to write a bit more about certain parts of the post.”

Zarina:

“I can’t follow main ideas.”

Thesis

Zarina’s teaching is also characterized by an emphasis on many traditional elements of academic writing, and “thesis” is one of many examples. Sam does not use the term (or any equivalent) in any assessment materials. Again, Zarina provides templates for this work, which likely explains her emphasis on student thesis statements in assessment of student writing. Of note, while many writing templates are provided—and students are expected to follow them explicitly—there are no comparable templates that aim to codify or explicitly instruct students in organizing their reading.

“Thesis” Examples:

Zarina:

“Thesis present, but not followed (none of your main points reflect anything about ‘emotion’)”

“It doesn’t explain the strategy used to appeal to younger generation.”

Summary Not Analysis

While the “Summary Not Analysis” code was only applied once and is thus not a theme, it still deserves mention in that it connects to other themes pertaining to summary and analysis in the student work. Since analysis is typically regarded as a higher-order critical thinking skill (and thus presupposes more sophisticated critical reading skills), a noted presence of summary in its

place is significant in that it can also be read as a possible sign of a reading comprehension issue.

“Summary Not Analysis” Example:

Sam:

“Your post is more a summary of the issue than an analysis of the article.”

The assessment analysis here presents an ambitious but uneven picture of how reading is conceived and identified within what is ostensibly a writing course. This point is not lost on the instructors, who remarked often about concerns they had regarding the explicitness of reading instruction and assessment in their courses. In a midterm reflection, Zarina wrote that “Despite my best intentions, I am not including any reading-specific instruction this semester.” And in an end-of-semester reflection, Sam wrote: “I would have liked to add an assignment in which I assessed their reading abilities, but I didn’t because I was unsure what to do and where to fit it in.” Inherent in these quotations are important underlying assumptions: that reading instruction is a thing that is distinct from writing instruction; and that reading cannot be assessed through writing assignments like the ones analyzed here. In the next chapter I aim to map out a pedagogy that challenges these assumptions.

CHAPTER VI: TOWARD A PEDAGOGY FOR READING IN COMPOSITION, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

In their end-of-semester reflections, while Zarina and Sam expressed plenty of optimism about integrating reading into their curricula, much uncertainty remained regarding the effectiveness—and explicitness—of their respective pedagogical and curricular approaches to reading, both during the semester featured in this study and going forward. Sam noted that students gained “confidence in their abilities to read and write,” and “more importantly . . . they gained confidence in asking questions.” But “reading improvement was less visible to me,” Sam noted, commenting further that “I would have liked to add an assignment in which I assessed their reading abilities, but I didn’t because I was unsure what to do and where to fit it in.” Zarina reflected that she did not really do much new with reading after all, despite intentions otherwise. “Part of my emphasis on support was the nudge to include specific evidence (and therefore encourage close reading) but this is, obviously, not the same as reading instruction . . . As you might be able to see, these strategies are dancing around reading instruction, but are not actually instructing reading,” she concludes.

This present and final chapter aims to use the findings gleaned from the data for this study to further inform and refine some of the key concepts articulated in the literature review from Chapter 1, as a way to begin mapping out a reading pedagogy that does not “dance around” questions of reading, but instead addresses these questions head-on by making them central to the curricular and assessment frameworks of FYC. This explicitness—fueled by the

methods employed here to first make reading more visible and hence knowable—is precisely what is missing, and thus needed, in the field of composition currently.

Ellen Carillo, in *Securing a Place for Reading in Composition*, writes:

I hypothesize that we can better promote the transfer of reading knowledge by creating composition courses that encourage the development of metacognitive practices that encourage students to generalize by abstracting the general principles of the reading practices they are taught . . . Mindful reading is best understood *not* as yet another way of reading, but a framework for teaching the range of ways of reading (e.g., rhetorical reading, critical reading, close reading) that are currently valued in our field so that students can create knowledge *about* reading and *about* themselves as readers, knowledge they can bring with them into other courses. (110)

Carillo’s reading pedagogy is in the spirit of Elizabeth Wardle and Doug Downs’ theory that “rather than teaching students ‘how to write,’” a gesture which presupposes such a thing as “good writing” that is fixed and stable, “we should teach them ‘*how to learn* to write’” (Wardle and Downs qtd. in Carillo *Securing* 119). Carillo’s stated pedagogical focus, then, is on “teaching students *how to learn* to read rather than arguing for a particular reading approach, such as rhetorical or close reading” (119). In this chapter, I aim to extend Carillo’s framework to and ultimately beyond my data and findings in part by discussing not only metacognition, but its precursor, cognition, and the ways in which a mindfulness framework might more carefully consider the role of cognition in reading—a consideration perhaps most relevant in community

college and / or basic writing settings, but which has implications for all students' reading and writing.

Further, whereas Carillo's aim is to focus on ways of reading that are valued in rhetoric and composition specifically, a broader application of her framework (including but not limited to applications in community colleges and basic writing settings) could consider ways of reading valued in multiple disciplines and contexts. The goal of this final chapter, then, is to establish some tenets of a mindfulness pedagogy that are informed by my data and findings and that account for both cognitive and metacognitive dimensions of student reading processes. Along with this attention to cognition, the findings of this study call for a more rich and complex understanding of reading comprehension, which like cognition is often overlooked and assumed, even when students' critical reading skills are—or could be—in question.

“Metacognition—literally thinking about thinking—is the hinge upon which transfer depends,” argues Carillo. While this statement is generally accepted as true in the field, it is also true that metacognition, then, hinges on *cognition*. Like metacognition, cognition is a complex concept; unlike metacognition, however, it is often taken for granted. Cognition, as mentioned in the literature review for this dissertation, can be described as “the acquisition and application of knowledge through complex mental processes” (Tinberg 76). Arguably, reading is first and foremost a complex cognitive process—or at least, without privileging one over the other sequentially, reading is *inarguably* a union of cognitive processes that must be navigated with some level of effectiveness before metacognition is even possible.

Howard Tinberg, in *Naming What We Know: Threshold Concepts of Writing Studies*, distinguishes between cognition and metacognition as follows:

Cognition refers to the acquisition and application of knowledge through complex mental processes . . . but the effective accomplishment of writing tasks over time requires even more. It calls upon metacognition, or the ability to perceive the very steps by which success occurs and to articulate the various qualities and components that contribute in significant ways to the production of successful writing. (76)

While Tinberg's object here is writing, it could just as easily be reading—substituting “reading” for “writing” above yields an equally compelling statement. Both rely on cognition for metacognition, and both require metacognition to be fully mindful of the mental processes and strategies for success—strategies that can then aid in transfer. In other words, good reading, like good writing, is intentional, and intention requires both cognition and metacognition.

Cognitive studies is sometimes criticized as being “too narrow in its understanding of context” (Prior, qtd. in Hayes xi), and in particular, social, historical, and political contexts. However, cognition and comprehension as I apply them here are merely two of many dimensions of reading and writing, occurring always within those contexts. I advocate here for a “both / and” conception of cognition as it relates to more ostensibly social dimensions of reading and writing—one which acknowledges that cognition is, in fact, an important part of that broader context. John Hayes argues that:

To start, we should recognize that both social / cultural and cognitive factors are essential for understanding writing. Written language is a cultural product. Language would be impossible without the conventions that have been created through social interaction. Further, the purpose of most writing is social: to communicate with others. But cognitive factors are essential, too. Individuals must learn and remember the

socially created linguistic conventions if they are to have any effect. Indeed, without cognitive processes, such as long-term memory, working memory, and perception, one can neither read nor write. (xi-xii)

To further Hayes' point, I would argue that in some ways, cognition cannot be disarticulated from the social, in the sense that the learning and remembering he positions as being unique to cognition do in fact have undeniably social influences. The idea of "learning" is at once both cognitive and social, for example. As Linda Flower explains, "there is no such cognitive / social split in people, much less in the act of writing" (333). So perhaps it is not only a matter of carving out a space for cognition *alongside* the social, but also of conceiving of cognition as a space within the larger contexts in which reading and writing—and learning to read and write—occur.

A pedagogical re/turn to the role of cognition in reading might also be accompanied by a renewed emphasis on pedagogy and assessment practices that target reading comprehension. As demonstrated earlier, reading comprehension is often depicted as a remedial concern in opposition to "higher order" critical thinking and reading skills; and, further, assessing reading comprehension is an admitted weakness of the participant-instructors for this study and, likely, most FYC instructors. While what I mean by "reading" in this dissertation is not limited to *only* or *merely* "reading comprehension," I turn to comprehension here as a starting point for understanding the complexities of reading itself, in part because comprehension and cognition are closely related and interdependent. While the teaching of reading comprehension is often limited to a few well-worn strategies (like inferring, questioning, and summarizing to name a few)—and while those strategies surely have merit—I wish first to examine more closely some

of the many dimensions of reading comprehension. While the diagram below is necessarily incomplete—in fact, fully mapping the terrain of reading comprehension is likely impossible—effective reading as I will define it here hinges on effective reading comprehension, which includes but is not limited to at least the following dimensions as illustrated below:

- **Cognitive Processes** which work at the “word level” (things like vocabulary and general phonological awareness) and the “text level” (i.e. the ability to quickly recognize and orient to text structures, types, and genres).
- **Strategic Knowledge**, which most often must be taught quite explicitly if the aim is for students to be able to take a mindful and metacognitive approach to reading. Strategic knowledge involves a sort of meta-awareness of one’s approach to reading a given text—and implies additional awareness of the available choices one might make while reading (i.e. monitoring one’s comprehension of a given text while reading, *and* understanding options available for fixing up comprehension in the moment).
- **Social Dimensions** of learning, including but certainly not limited to many aspects of learning that are mostly external to the classroom, yet which affect students’ learning in profound ways. To name one example, it is widely accepted that a student’s home literacy environment from birth and throughout childhood has a dramatic impact on that student’s reading and writing abilities in school and into adulthood. And *that* environment (which is defined by things like whether reading materials were readily available in the home, and whether the student was read to often as a child) is of course inextricably linked to so many other dimensions (household income, race, class, presence / absence of parental figures, etc.).

- **Student Motivation** to read and write effectively—which is linked to affective dimensions of learning (which are, in turn, also linked back to social dimensions).
- **Prior knowledge**, which in most cases will include some combination of all of the following: disciplinary knowledge; textual knowledge; and linguistic knowledge. These elements are not fixed; change from text to text or even passage to passage; and evolve over time and with life experience.

While the data for this study does not provide direct access to many of these dimensions of reading and comprehension (i.e. I did not interview students to inquire about their home literacy environments), such links are well-documented.

The diagram below, grounded in the most basic tenets of reading theory (Horning and others), learning theory (Tinberg and others), and cognitive studies (Carillo; Hayes; Flower; etc.) as discussed in the review of the literature in Chapter 1, as well as reading models developed by my co-instructor for the integrated reading and writing class, Lisa Cole, is an attempt to tentatively map at least some of this terrain.

Figure 3. Reading comprehension map

It is important to recognize as fully as possible the utter complexity that is involved with something as seemingly simple as understanding or comprehending a given text. I will note here that the above visual also represents as separate and discrete factors which would perhaps be most accurately represented in something like a Venn diagram: of course, “socioeconomics” and “home literacy environment” share space with “motivations for reading,” to name but one obvious example.

While many instructors—including myself—have at times fallen back on those tired clichés mentioned earlier in regard to what might seem like a “failed” reading assignment (“the students don’t read closely enough,” “they don’t care about this class / topic / assignment,” etc.), in reality, we likely do not have enough data to drive these assumptions—and if such data

were available it would likely yield a dauntingly complex picture of students-as-readers and the many challenges they face in reading and comprehending assigned texts at the level required for deep understanding and successful application in academic contexts.

So, what is a writing teacher to do in terms of crafting a pedagogy that is more intentional and mindful about student reading? Admittedly, there is much that is out of our control—and students arrive in our classrooms with at least seventeen years of literacy histories, for better and worse, that will forever impact who they are and who they become as literate citizens. However, this is true regardless of how and whether we choose to acknowledge the deep relationships between reading and writing in our teaching, and whether or not we choose to address student reading more intentionally in our writing classrooms.

Simply, in my own teaching, I decided that any potential drawbacks or failures to successfully implement a more mindful and explicit approach to reading in my classes are ultimately of less consequence than doing nothing at all. While not all teachers will have the resources to study reading at their own institution to the depth that *Prairieview* is featured here, it is my hope that aspects of the findings presented here are applicable to the project of developing theories, tools, and approaches that might be modified or implemented in any writing class or program.

What follows, then, is a careful explanation of how each of the key findings from this study can in turn be used to inform and help generate the development of those theories, tools, and strategies that can help teachers and students alike be more mindful of reading and reading strategies; cognition as a pathway to metacognition; and comprehension as a pathway to critical reading. The same approach Carillo advocates for regarding students and

metacognition—namely that we should “encourage students to generalize by abstracting the general principles of the reading practices they are taught”—can also be applied to teachers and those designing the curricula in the first place. In other words, the findings from this study, while not entirely generalizable to all other settings, can be interrogated for principles which may, in turn, be thoughtfully adapted and implemented elsewhere. Note that all of the findings and resulting pedagogical implications that follow ultimately hinge on the “seeing reading in student writing” project explained in Chapter II and demonstrated in Chapter III.

In other words, until and unless we can develop productive ways to inquire more deeply into students’ reading abilities, practices, and strategies, it is impossible to design pedagogical interventions that will help students grow as readers. And the research presented earlier strongly suggests that writing improvement and growth—the ostensible outcome of first-year composition—is dependent on reading improvement and growth and perhaps inextricable from it in many respects. So first and foremost, this chapter, and perhaps this dissertation, is a call for composition to develop ways to see student reading so that it can be understood, valued, taught, and assessed in ways that are meaningful for students.

Regarding Chapter 3: Seeing Reading in Student Writing

Finding Summary: When the methods for seeing reading are applied to student writing, what emerges is a more complex understanding of student reading-into-writing practices, which is a necessary first step to conceptualizing how those practices might be connected to conceptions of reading that operate in other institutional and instructional contexts.

Guiding Questions

- What pedagogies and practices can be developed to help render student reading more visible within their writing?

- Once such pedagogies and practices are applied within FYC classroom contexts, what do we make of what we see?

Considerations

The idea of “seeing” reading—of inventing practices to make visible, in various contexts in and around student reading, what is typically obscured or overlooked—is of course the centerpiece of this project. Arguably, the development of pedagogies and practices that help make student reading more visible within the classroom setting should be the first step. In other words, a deeper understanding of student reading, including but not limited to student reading-into-writing practices, should inform all work that might follow from such an undertaking—whether that might be course or curriculum revision; refinement of course, program, or college-wide placement or assessment practices; or the like.

It perhaps goes without saying that the pedagogies and curricula that might be developed around the idea of seeing student reading practices can and should vary based on institutional context and on the immediate classroom context in which such a project is undertaken. For example, while tenets of the underlying method are consistent, my plan for “seeing reading” looks very different in the developmental-level integrated reading classes I teach when compared to the FYC classes—if only because the curricula differ dramatically between the two courses. Students in my developmental courses are not tasked with large research-based projects, for example, and so the method and coding project presented in Chapters 2 and 3 would yield a different kind of data if applied to the more discrete reading-into-writing assignments and tasks more common to those courses.

Strategies and Tools

Please see Chapters 2 and 3 for a full explanation of the coding project and its grounded theory underpinnings. But in short, this strategy—open coding of student writing produced in response to any reading-into-writing task or assignment—is completely adaptable to any context. Most of what is involved in “seeing” student reading is just a commitment to looking for it in a comprehensive, strategic way. While such analysis can be completed in a rudimentary way in any word processing program, I strongly suggest employing a qualitative data analysis software suite like *NVIVO*, which was used in this study. Annual licenses are affordable, and small, quick projects might even be completed for free within a trial period. In short, the software allows you to track and visualize themes as they develop across sources and source types in ways that would be very difficult to see otherwise.

Such projects need not be undertaken “apart from” one’s curriculum, as was done here. In other words, the project of seeing reading do not need to be “extra work,” but might be integrated into one’s curriculum—and with students on board as co-investigators. Keep in mind that for this study, I was not studying my own students, but rather those of two participating instructors—hence the “outsider’s” view. Unfortunately, Sam’s and Zarina’s students were not privy to the specifics of my project or to the results of my analysis—since the analysis did not occur until after the semester had concluded. It strikes me as much more useful and exciting to pose questions like those above alongside our students—to study reading in FYC explicitly, as recommended and expanded upon below, for its own means and ends. What this current

project lacks in terms of student voices, future projects can further and expand the vision presented here by involving students directly in the analysis and meaning-making.

Further, even the coding work can take on added significance when applied in a classroom setting. Codes like those used to describe stronger and weaker “leads” and “follows,” for example, can of course be used as not mere descriptors of student practices but also as valuable discussion topics and teaching tools. Collaborative analysis of the types of reading implied by certain writing practices can elicit metacognitive reflection and useful discussion about skimming and scanning, for example: when they are useful, when they are harmful, and when other, more critical types of reading and reading-into-writing practices (i.e. selecting what aspects of a text to take up / use / cite in the first place) are called for. This kind of application of the method described and applied in this study seems a logical next step for this kind of work.

Regarding Chapter 4 / Finding 1: Institutional Influences

Finding Summary: Purposes for reading as established at the program level and then enacted in classroom instruction at Prairieland were strongly influenced by many factors external to the classroom: things like articulation initiatives and transfer agreements, documents that are unmistakably high-stakes in terms of their impacts on curriculum and instruction. These influences are not often studied, and yet their effects are likely profound. Close inspection reveals that there was often a fairly direct path from articulation and transfer agreement language to stated course outcomes, which in turn shaped operating conceptions of reading in assignments and assessments. One implication of this finding is that advocacy for new approaches to reading, as they are discovered in our classrooms via study of and with our students, need to trickle “up” as well as “down” to gain widespread adoption and to foster meaningful change in the ways that reading is depicted and valued.

Guiding Questions

The following questions should be posed as a way in to the project of investigating the ways in which institutional and external influences affect operating notions of reading at a given institution:

- What institutional / external forces shape conceptions of reading in a given instructional context?
- How do those institutional / external forces shape conceptions of reading that are at work in a given program, course, or pedagogy, and how do you know?
- What role do composition faculty have—or could they have—in shaping the conceptions of reading (and writing) at a given institution? What role do students have currently? What role might they play in creating the future?

Considerations

At the onset of this project, I did not intend to study institutional and other external factors and how they shape conceptions of reading that are at work in first-year composition classrooms. Rather, I would argue instead that the data led me in this direction, and I felt compelled to follow the path. In particular, I was initially struck by the various factors mentioned by both Zarina and Sam when asked how and why they value reading in their pedagogy and curriculum development. It was their mentions of things like articulation initiatives and transfer agreements, college-wide competency statements, and perceived writing program mandates that shifted my attention in those directions. In other words, I had expected to begin my inquiry at the course level and move “down” to individual instructor approaches and their impacts on actual student writing. I quickly surmised that part of the challenge of developing more meaningful and robust conceptions of reading also involves

looking “up” and considering the influence of those other factors, since this study shows that undeniably, these factors shape what is valued—and even, in some ways, what is possible for teachers and students—at the course level.

That said, I would advocate, still, for beginning one’s inquiry at the level of the individual course in question (and ideally, alongside an analysis of the student writing produced in these contexts): What conceptions of reading are at work in the course description, the learning outcomes? How do those conceptions reinforce or resist the notion of reading you wish to instill? How do they align with the work students are producing and undertaking in the classroom? The answers to these questions will of course vary widely based on individual institutional context, and can be used to determine next steps. For instance, in the case of highly-standardized courses and assessments, individual instructor flexibility to innovate or experiment with reading may be nonexistent except at the level of bringing one’s concerns to the larger program for discussion. In other cases, where individual instructors might have broad freedom to interpret program or course outcomes, the options for intervention might be more flexible.

Strategies and Tools

One common strategy when designing or redesigning a composition course or writing program is to consult the professional organizations (WPA, CCCC, NCTE, and more) and their many outcomes statements to guide course creation and curriculum development. While these various statements are of course valuable tools for this purpose, it is also important to realize their many limitations when it comes to the teaching of reading. As Carillo notes, it is often the

case that “looking to these statements for guidance on how to integrate attention to reading in writing programs turns up little help” (*Securing* 150). While useful in many ways, it is also true that documents like the *WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition* leave much to be desired in terms of how reading is re/presented. For example, the *WPA Statement* makes many references to reading (noting that faculty in all disciplines share the responsibility to teach students “strategies for reading a range of texts in their field,” for example), but makes no direct or indirect mention of reading comprehension or of specific strategies that might be used to meet this responsibility.

As a starting point for investigating reading at the program level, a writing program needs to paint an accurate self-portrait that captures where and how reading is currently valued, taught, and assessed—and well as student practices that are currently occurring within that context. Do teachers teach for comprehension, or is it mostly assumed? Do they aspire to teach for comprehension? Are students displaying adequate comprehension skills and strategies? To my knowledge, there is no better methodology for this kind of work than Bob Broad’s Dynamic Criteria Mapping (DCM), which along with its grounded theory approach guided the methodology employed in this current study. DCM work “yields a detailed, complex, and useful portrait of any writing program’s evaluative dynamics” (13), which is needed in order to understand the current moment. This portrait is useful later, too, in that it can help identify gaps between what is currently being actively “valued” across various teaching, assessment and evaluation contexts, and what instructors claim to value. Further, DCM can be used to yield insights into instructors’ own reading and writing habits and practices. Are reading and writing

lived practices, taught skills, or elements of both? The answers to questions like these can and should inform reading (and writing) pedagogies.

Once these current operating values are identified, they can be mapped and followed down multiple paths, as in this study. Often, an origination point can be located, as in the case of the Prairieview English 101 course outcome related to comprehension, analysis, and critique, which has its direct origin in Articulation Initiative language. But as that value is traced along other pathways, one might find—as is the case in this study—that the trail (of “comprehension” in this case) goes cold as we attempt to follow it through the assignments and assessments that comprise the actual course and that shape the student experience of that course. The next section deals with how to remedy this problem—but first, how and why do these disconnects occur?

The answer is deeply contextual and will vary for each value and at each institution. But this study suggests that when looking for answers, institutional and external influences should be considered as possible explanations. For example, as it pertains to the comprehension outcome at Prairieview specifically, I propose that the presence of “comprehension” in course outcome language, in combination with its relative absence in curriculum and assessment materials, are a direct result of the need to submit an approvable course to the accrediting body. The outcome was copied to the syllabus and pasted almost verbatim from the AI template, and the course was approved. This is not to say that faculty at Prairieview or elsewhere do not value comprehension—I am quite positive that they do. Instead, I argue that since the outcome originated at the institutional level, faculty did not feel compelled—or

perhaps even prepared, as both subject instructors state or imply—to carry the outcome through mindfully and intentionally.

This example also serves as a call to action for composition faculty and writing program administrators to serve as representatives on the various teams and committees that draft such statements in the first place. While formulating coherent program approaches to reading is a daunting task—even more so given the lack of consistent guidance from composition’s own professional organizations—the results of that work need to emanate beyond programs so that they might function to influence the very statements that they must otherwise answer to in consequential ways. Lastly, this call to action also needs to explicitly involve students. One such path to metacognition could involve bringing the language from such institutional texts into the classroom as explicit objects of study and consideration. Open discourse about the expectations embedded in such documents—what they mean, whether they are worthwhile—can provide students with an awareness of the ways their institution “values” reading and the purported reasons behind those values. Such an awareness would be valuable for students—and their answers to questions of whether those institutional goals seem worthwhile can also be used to inform those institutional conversations.

Regarding Chapter 4 / Finding 2: Mismatch of Types of Reading in Theory and Practice

Finding Summary: The subject instructors say they value “close,” “intensive,” “comprehensive” types of reading, yet in much of the assigned process work, my analysis suggests that other types of reading such as “skimming” or “scanning” can suffice for a student to complete an assignment successfully—a finding that is in line with other recent studies. In one case more than the other, the “skim / scan” emphasis then carries over more prominently into the major project assignment description provided for students.

Guiding Questions

- What types of reading do instructors in a program claim to value in their pedagogy and curriculum?
- What types of reading are encouraged or present in the actual pedagogy and curriculum, and how do or how can you know? What are the actual reading-infused activities in a given course plan, and what are the stated and implied purposes for those activities within the broader goals for reading?

Considerations

This study details several pedagogical and curricular mismatches between instructor intentions and actual practice. The clearest example of such is Sam's reading quiz questions, all of which could potentially be answered via quick skim / scan practices—a type of reading at odds with both Sam's stated pedagogy and the rest of Sam's curriculum. Perhaps the most important practice to safeguard against unintentional “mismatches” between what we say we value in our teaching and what values get portrayed in the curriculum is the intentional development of a framework for consistency in one's approach to reading. Some moves that might be considered in the development of this framework include but are not limited to the following:

- Investigating the “hidden curriculum” regarding reading—being mindful of the work required of students to accomplish an assigned task, and what is valued in via the tools used to assess that work.
- Clearly defining course reading goals, and developing curriculum and rich, meaningful assessments around those goals.

- Situating reading explicitly as a complex act worthy of class discussion that moves beyond reading content by also considering ways of accessing and using a given text.

While the unintentional instructional emphasis on skimming and scanning uncovered in this data may be unique to this study, there is much to suggest that skimming and related approaches are becoming more widely-used by readers, often unwittingly and to the detriment of comprehension and more. Maryanne Wolf argues that as texts have changed, reading practices are following suit. “If the dominant medium advantages processes that are fast, multi-task oriented and well-suited for large volumes of information, like the current digital medium,” she argues, “so will the reading circuit.”

These changes have consequences, argues Wolf: “As UCLA psychologist Patricia Greenfield writes, the result is that less attention and time will be allocated to slower, time-demanding deep reading processes, like inference, critical analysis and empathy, all of which are indispensable to learning at any age.” Wolf argues that this “cognitive impatience” has the potential to result in an “inability of large numbers of students to read with a level of critical analysis sufficient to comprehend the complexity of thought and argument found in more demanding texts,” a frightening prospect, and one that is potentially already underway. It is becoming imperative that composition teachers, and in fact all teachers, would do well to be more mindful of what and how they are asking students to read.

Strategies and Tools

If Wolf is correct, then we need to develop strategies and tools that encourage cognitive patience, rather than impatience. Further, students need to be explicitly taught to identify the types of reading that are encouraged or required by various texts, and to thoughtfully apply strategies that are appropriate to their reading goals. This project will likely entail helping students develop a more complex understanding of the various purposes for reading—many of which will require students to actively resist “impatient” skims and scans of texts.

Such a project might begin by developing ways to “see reading” in a given curriculum, as already mentioned. That’s is to say—cognitive patience is best fostered via readings and applications of readings that *require* it. Through this process of reviewing existing curriculum or planning new, a foregrounding of purposes for reading and students’ reading strategies is an important aspect of a mindfulness framework. Such a framework needs to allow for reading to be considered alongside and just as carefully as writing. Just as purposes, practices, and strategies for writing are mindfully and explicitly established, almost as second nature to many trained compositionists, so too does composition need to attend to the teaching, valuing, and assessment of these same aspects of student reading. One challenge to this call to action is an apparent lack of reading-specific knowledge on behalf of most composition instructors. However, as a first step, I argue that mere mindfulness, coupled with general knowledge of sound curriculum and assessment practices generally, is enough to make a meaningful difference.

A few explicit tenets of a mindful approach to reading pedagogy might include:

- Explicit study of the complexity of reading as a social / cultural / cognitive act—as so much more than decoding of characters and images;
- Explicit instruction in various types of reading and reading-related strategies, so that students can make intentional, thoughtful decisions about what and how to read a given text based on their purposes and goals for reading;
- The development of assessment practices that acknowledge, recognize, and aim to “see” students’ reading, both for its own sake and as an aspect of their development as writers.

There are of course some dimensions of reading where mindfulness alone is not enough. For example, deciding to value and attend to students’ reading comprehension skills and strategies does not override the need by most to learn more about how students (and all readers) comprehend texts. And this is perhaps the most significant call of this study: for composition acknowledge its own fractured history and relationship with reading, and to continue on the path of development of new scholarship and pedagogy in the areas of reading and integrated reading and writing—and extending existing composition scholarship in the areas of cognition and learning transfer to make room at the table for reading as a viable and legitimate concern.

Regarding Chapter 5 / Finding 1: Relationships Between Explicitness of Instruction and

Student Activity

Finding Summary: The purposes for reading desired and valued by the instructors are more consistently evident in student writing when made explicit in assignment descriptions and teaching materials. Largely, my research suggests that most often, students tried to do what

they were explicitly asked to do—and generally did not do what they were not explicitly asked to do.

Guiding Questions

- How explicitly established are the desired types of reading and purposes for reading within the instructional context?
- What are the classroom practices and assessment practices through which the desired types of reading and reading strategies are displayed, understood, and assessed?

Considerations

In many ways, this study confirms assertions made in other scholarship: namely, that the teaching of reading (or, moreover, the teaching of *anything*) is more effective when explicit. It should be noted that this does not entail providing students with a “paint by numbers” approach to reading akin to the “five-paragraph theme” model for writing. Instead, by “explicit” here I just mean foregrounding reading and its place and space within a curriculum—not for purposes of dictating how students should or must read, but for purposes of engaging in an intentional study of reading for and with students. The list at the end of the previous section seems a fair starting point for establishing this explicit focus on reading.

We already know that this kind of foregrounding is important. Flower found that “novice” readers could in fact do very sophisticated things with reading—when prompted (“Reflection” 337). “In my classes,” she writes, “I noted that explaining and giving a name to a thinking strategy, in the way textbooks do, did indeed give many students a new sense of power and conscious choice over moves they may have even done without recognizing their value” (337). My study suggests confirmation of Flower’s findings in that almost all of Sam’s and

Zarina's students—whether “developmental” or “college level”—generally at least tried to do what they were explicitly asked to do in their respective assignments. When asked to “analyze” or “evaluate”—and when coached on what analysis and evaluation entail—they generally made frequent attempts at this kind of work. Not surprisingly, and perhaps more to the point, the inverse was also true: students generally did *not* do anything they were *not* explicitly asked to do. In other words, “analysis” and “evaluation” did not frequently appear in the coding scheme except in contexts where they were an explicit and named part of the prompt. Absent these explicit instructions, when “skimming” or “scanning” would suffice to accomplish a task, these were the types of reading most evident in the data. The impact of simply being explicit and clear about reading and writing expectations cannot be overstated.

Strategies and Tools

With the above considerations in mind, one can then move towards developing strategies and tools that help implement the framework. First and foremost, the reading framework one develops for implementing in a composition class needs to address the most basic of questions that pertain to purposes for reading. All readers reflexively ask (and answer) the question, “Why am I reading this?” yet in the case of this study, both subject instructors admit to some doubts about their own contribution to this internal discussion. In other words, the answer to the question “Why am I asking you to read this?” should not be held as self-evident, but should instead be central to the course.

The subject instructors wrestle with the differences between establishing purposes for reading “in general” and “in specific,” feeling somewhat more certainty about their work to

instill the former. Sam writes of wanting to help students see the benefit of a given reading “beyond” the idea of reading to complete an assignment, and so the idea of teaching for transfer that is so prevalent in writing studies should also be applied to reading. In short, composition teachers would do best to simply take nothing for granted as it pertains to student reading: any assumption about how or why students might read a given text is a missed opportunity to productively intervene in students’ thinking, reading, and writing processes.

Text selection is obviously important, but careful selection should not be a stand-in for instruction. Texts that are selected mindfully and intentionally to facilitate students’ growth as readers will not serve their intended purposes if the related instruction or assignments do not provide them with opportunities to learn and apply strategies for reading the text successfully; if the assessments call forth only skimming and scanning of the text; or if the students’ expected engagement with readings via their own writing is minimal. Assignments like Carillo’s “Passage-Based Paper” or PBP can work to avoid most of these common pitfalls. The PBP differs from a traditional “reading response” in that it does not ask students for their opinion about a reading. Also, whereas a traditional reading response might ask students to respond to an entire reading (article, chapter, etc.), the PBP, as the name suggests, focuses students’ attention on close reading of a very short passage (3-5 sentences in length). The PBP asks students to focus on “textual elements, including the text’s language, tone, and construction,” and to then “connect this passage to the rest of the work” (“Making” 38).

Assignments like this address explicitness on at least two levels: first, the PBP makes reading processes much more visible to students, in that it gives students the chance to “experience the connections between the interpretive practices of reading and writing,” and to

“grapple with difficult ideas that come up in the texts” they will be reading (38-39). This process ultimately asks students to slow down “and become aware of the process by which they make meaning,” and this awareness is likely heightened when the PBPs are shared in class, and students get to hear similarities and differences between readings of two students who analyzed the same passage, for example.

The PBP also, then, makes certain aspects of students’ reading skill visible to the reader of the paper (instructor and classmates, since the PBPs are shared in class). Since the students have focused on a “very local reading,” the instructor can “see and comment upon” students’ reading practices specifically. “Keeping reading this contained, I am able to see how students proceed in their readings: how they move from looking at certain words and phrases to making claims about them,” Carillo explains (39).

Finally, one gap in this current study pertains to text type, in that most of the assigned readings in Zarina’s and Sam’s classes were somewhat traditional beginning-academic text-based chapters. Increasingly, of course, students are reading digital and multimedia texts, whether for school, for work, or for personal purposes. An explicit and intentional pedagogy for reading in composition should recognize and incorporate texts from a wide range of genres and media, as each is an opportunity to teach accompanying strategies, and in ways that will resonate with students’ broader identities as readers.

Implementation

Implementing these strategies might take some simple forms. As a starting point, an instructor might aim for more conscious and intentional diagnostics regarding students’ lexical

skills. Often, teachers use terms like “critical thinking,” “critical reading,” “close reading,” “analysis,” “evaluation,” and the like for granted as being firmly entrenched in students’ vocabularies. The terms are held as so self-evident as to not need explanation. Instead, discuss key terms openly, and engage students in the process of making meaning of them in, with, and for the class.

The same concept applies to lexical items within a given reading assignment: again, too often teachers either assume that students already have a working knowledge of a given set of terms, and / or assume that students have the strategies needed to “fix up” their comprehension as they go. As a starting point, consider asking students to highlight or write down unfamiliar words in a text, as a supplement to their usual process. In a recent experiment with this simple activity in my own class, students read a short excerpt and collectively listed “implied,” “ecosystems,” “compelling,” “pharmaceuticals,” and “accelerate” as unfamiliar words. This gave us an opportunity to build vocabulary necessary for comprehension, while also building strategies that promote lexical awareness (i.e. the student who was unfamiliar with “pharmaceuticals” was able to recognize the same root as is “pharmacy,” and guess productively from there).

And in the spirit of that exercise, a broader suggestion is to explicitly teach reading strategies with the same rigor—and perhaps *vigor*—as one might teach writing strategies. While teachers of first-year composition don’t assume much in the way of students’ knowledge of available writing skills or strategies (as evidenced by the explicit organization of most courses and outcomes around teaching specific skills, habits, or awarenesses), explicit instruction of even very simple strategies students might employ while reading is absent from most writing

classrooms. My colleague in reading and co-teacher in our Integrated Reading and Writing developmental-level class, Lisa Cole, has developed an inventory of Behaviors, Skills, and Strategies in which we ground much of our classroom activity. The inventory identifies specific things students can do before, during, and after a reading event (BDA), all situated within a metacognitive framework, and includes:

Before Reading: Make predictions; generate questions; formulate a reading plan; preview; reflect

During Reading: Monitor and “fix up” comprehension; use context clues; connect to prior knowledge; look for patterns of organization within the text; annotate; take notes

After Reading: Reflect; connect; summarize; apply

These reading-oriented BDA strategies can also be adapted and applied to the process of using readings within one’s own writing, thus expanding the framework from reading events to reading-into-writing events.

Before Writing: Carefully consider which texts and what kinds of support or evidence might work best, given the context and purpose for writing, including assignment expectations and requirements, and make some tentative decisions.

During Writing: Integrate readings into one’s writing in ways that aim to portray clear and coherent connections between source and text, and in ways that meet audience needs and expectations.

After Writing: Carefully examine instances where readings have been integrated into writing, and question whether the use of the source text is fair, ethical, and accurate.

The BDA's are of course flexible and might be constructed in any number of ways to meet a given instructional context. The important aspect is the idea of a framework that encourages metacognition by asking students to confront important questions about reading and reading / writing integration at multiple points during their reading and writing processes.

Regarding Chapter 5 / Finding 2: Vague Reading Assessment

Finding Summary: The writing assessment tools and practices in use in this data often paint reading with a broad brush, via vague assessment language like, “serious contemplation of readings and content” that do not directly suggest how the student might learn from the assessment. In other cases, one general reading assessment tool will be used across multiple and very different types of reading assignments—especially process assignments that aim to assess students’ comprehension of or engagement with an assigned reading. The reading assessment tools and practices here reflect many missed opportunities for meaningful interaction with students as readers. In contrast, the instructors’ writing-specific assessment categories and instruments seemed much more refined, explicit, and clear.

Guiding Questions

- How explicit and specific are your reading-based assessment tools and categories?
- What do your reading assessments measure, and how does that relate to what you claim or desire to assess regarding reading?
- How can assessment reinforce students’ use of metacognitive awareness of reading strategies and practices to make more informed decisions about reading and the more “visible” manifestations of reading-into-writing practice?

Considerations

Just as being explicit about expectations is an important aspect of the effective teaching of reading, so too is explicitness important in the related assessments. Assessment categories like “serious contemplation of readings and content” are not only vague for students—they are also potentially unfair in the sense that “serious contemplation” is very difficult, if not impossible, to discern through writing. If “serious contemplation” is desired, it is perhaps best taught as an explicit means of engaging a text. It might be assessed, in pieces, as a part of a reading assignment, rather than a writing assignment.

If the aim is to assess “serious contemplation” (or other traits such as “awareness of implications” and “in-depth engagement”) vis a vis student writing, this could result from a collaboration between instructor and students, perhaps, regarding the ways in which serious contemplation might manifest itself. What does “serious contemplation” of reading, for example, look like in a given written text? Asking—and answering—this question is key to the development of meaningful, fair assessments.

Strategies

In addition to the aim of collaborative co-creation of assessments that strive to capture some of the more elusive elements of reading-into-writing practices, there are other areas in which writing assessment needs to be more intentional about how reading is represented in the process. One such strategy is rethinking the established split between “reading concerns” and “writing concerns” in writing assessment tools and practices. How might we learn to “see” typical “writing” outcomes as having potential roots in underlying reading practices? Such a

collaboration might also yield insights into what kinds of textual production might be more (or less) likely to foster the desired outcomes. What do various kinds of student products “do” to make reading visible and approachable?

Hopefully, the groundwork for such a project has already been established in this study. If we can learn to “see reading” in student writing, then the development of sound corresponding assessment practices is a logical extension of this methodology. Some aspects of making this switch are subtle: for example, the realization that “strong analytical writing” does not exist in a vacuum, but is also dependent upon analytical thought and critical reading practices. Writing that does not meet or exceed rubric standards often culminates in a judgment of one’s “writing skills,” when in fact a reading intervention may be called for.

Such teachable moments may be made most visible by aiming to codify some of the “negative traits” identified in the coding work—especially in the most prominent features like “Missed Opportunities” and “Distortions” as described in chapter 2. While these are rendered visible via student writing, they are most directly indicative of possible reading concerns. At the least, attempts to assess student writing for evidence of reading practices opens up potentially-useful discussions and assignments that aim to gather more information which can then be used to develop a more accurate sense of a student-as-reader.

Recall, however, that in this study, the written feedback provided to students was mostly of the negative sort—highlighting “lack” or deficiencies, rather than pointing out “presence” or strengths. This trend, while unfortunate, is likely not unique to this study: in an era of “minimum competencies,” increasing class sizes, and heavy teaching loads (5/5 at most community colleges in Prairieview’s home state), the tendency to focus on “improving

weaknesses” in lieu of also fostering an awareness of strengths is understandable. Further, many of these “lacks” (such as missing citations, or failure to utilize specific terms of concepts) are immediately “visible” and thus quick, easy, and efficient to assess. This reality is not unrelated to the ubiquitous nature of spelling tests, for example, in elementary schools, and the relative dearth of tools and practices for measuring students’ reading comprehension. One challenge, then, is to develop assessment practices that are descriptive, useful, and also more positive.

Implementation

In addition to rethinking typical “writing assessment” as, instead, “reading and writing assessments” as suggested above, it is also important to develop ways to hold students (and teachers) accountable for reading on its own terms, and not just as it might be visible in student writing. Before my experience of developing and co-teaching the IRW course mentioned above, I had of course required students to “take notes” on a given reading assignment; I had even occasionally peeked to make sure they had done so. I had not, however, *taught* note-taking or annotating explicitly, despite many good resources that might help me do so—and despite most of my students reporting to never have been taught anything about taking notes. Further, then, I had never bothered to assess students’ notes qualitatively in any meaningful way. It now strikes me as rather obvious that I had been missing opportunities to peer in on student practices, and on their comprehension.

Additional activities might include having students document their reading processes (noting, for example, when and where they completed the reading; whether they took notes

during or after reading; what terms of concepts have them pause or difficulty; and how they see the reading applying or relating to other readings or to their own prior knowledge or experiences). Such documentation activities might take the place of other compliance measures, like quizzes, mentioned earlier, and avoid some of their negative consequences in the process. This kind of activity, in combination with the kinds of assessment mentioned above, can be used to create a more complex understanding of student-as-reader, which of course informs and complements (and is in some ways indistinct from) student-as-writer. Generally, this dimension of our students as literate creatures is simply neglected—and, at the same time, is immediately accessible with very little effort.

Implications Regarding Writing Placement and Developmental, ALP, and FYC Relationships

A few of the earliest research questions I posed as I began the inquiry that became this dissertation were these:

- How does the institution or program differentiate between college-level, developmental, and adult basic education students and curricula?
- What assumptions are built into those distinctions, and how do those assumptions hold up under closer scrutiny?

In other words, I initially envisioned both college writing placement practices and relationships between the ALP (English 099 at Prairieview) and FYC (English 101 at Prairieview) students' work to be central to this project. In hindsight, while both placement practices and the subsequent “remedial” / “college-level” distinctions that follow remain vitally important to the

project of more mindfully accounting for students' reading practices, they were ultimately beyond the scope of this current study, for reasons I will now articulate.

Reading and writing placement practices at two-year colleges represent a crucial intersection of institutional and program-level goals, motivations, and outcomes for student readers and writers. If, as I argue earlier, institutional forces like accreditation processes and transfer agreements “trickle down” in terms of how they impact classroom instruction, it might also be productively argued that these same processes “trickle up” in terms of how they shape and impact reading and writing placement practices more broadly. My current study does not attempt to account for the many ways in which students are able to place into either English 099 or English 101, in part because this process varies so widely from institution to institution, currently, that my findings at Prairieview might not have many important or useful implications for others. However, the many impacts of any given placement process on students deserve attention at the program level at any school with a formalized placement process.

Further, there are widespread efforts underway in many states to erase these institutional differences in placement processes. In 2018, the Higher Learning Commission in Prairieview's home state approved a “common placement framework” that calls for “multiple measures for placement.” While it is currently “not a mandate” and is instead characterized as a “system-wide agreement,” the long-range goal of the framework is “complete consistency,” i.e. not only multiple measures for placement (a best-practice in writing assessment for at least a decade now), but *the same* measures instituted in the same ways at all community colleges in the state. This on its own is problematic in that institutions are bound to lose flexibility and the ability to innovate in this area.

While Prairieview already uses multiple measures for writing placement (ACT, ACCUPLACER reading comprehension exam, in-house placement essay), Prairieview also has the freedom to use these measures holistically—that is, the placement essay readers also have access to the students’ reading comprehension test scores and can factor those scores into a final placement decision. A student with a “borderline” essay and a solid test score, for example, will most likely receive a credit-level English placement, despite neither component being deemed “college-level” when viewed in unnecessary isolation. In contrast, the intention of the commission is for each of the multiple measures to be used *independently*, the idea being that if a student can show a minimum readiness in *any* area, then the student should be placed into English 101. And in the case of the hypothetical student above, a student whose multiple independent measures do *not* suggest college readiness when viewed in isolation, a developmental placement will likely result.

Further, Prairieview’s use of the ACCUPLACER reading assessment exam is in jeopardy: unless this particular exam becomes one of the compulsory multiple measures at the state level, Prairieland would at some point lose this component of its placement process. This is important because the exam represents an effort, though an admittedly imperfect one, to take students’ reading into account as a valued aspect of their writing placement. Even more importantly, the word “reading” is entirely absent from the final recommendation document published by the state’s commission—a reality which calls into question the place of reading within the writing placement framework. This absence also casts a cloud on the future of standalone developmental reading programs (the entire framework mentions only English

writing and math)—a future with important implications for writing programs and writing teachers most directly.

The earlier finding regarding institutional influences focused mostly on the ways *reading* is depicted or described within these contexts. A closer look at placement mechanisms at most institutions will also yield troubling and limited conceptions of *writing* that are deserving of attention. It is important to note, for example, that many standardized mass-market writing placement exams do not require students to write anything at all. Instead, students are often administered multiple-choice grammar tests, the results of which are then used, often in isolation from any other variables, to make a writing placement decision. Such exams and procedures equate prescriptive grammar and the ability to recognize ASE syntax with “good writing”—or, at least, posit that these kinds of grammar skills are adequate stand-ins for writing, and are accurate, fair, and ethical predictors of student success in English 101.

When it comes to writing placement, Prairieview is perhaps an outlier in many regards. While the idea of DSP (Directed Self-Placement) is still regarded as too edgy, Prairieview has recently adopted a “literacy placement” process which integrates what were formerly very separate processes for “reading” and “writing” placements. Of the various placement products offered by ACCUPLACER, Prairieview utilizes the aforementioned Reading Comprehension test as its primary reading and writing placement tool—a move which recognizes and places importance on student reading ability and its relevance to student success in writing courses. While this too is a multiple-choice exam, Prairieview teachers decided that the validity of the exam was much stronger than that of any of ACCUPLACER’s “writing” tests, in that the reading

test does at least require that students read, whereas the writing tests either require no writing, or the writing is scored by a computer.

Students at Prairieview who do not achieve the cutoff score for direct placement into English 101 are also then provided the opportunity to write a placement essay that is, instead, read and scored by actual English-teaching humans. The essay prompts vary, but all require that the student read a brief passage and respond in some way. While this process has its own limitations—for example, the testing facility on campus is not able to accommodate the program’s wish that the exam be untimed—the essay yields additional information that allows writing faculty to take multiple measures into account before making a final placement decision for the student. Whereas previously, those making English placement decisions did not have access to students’ reading placement scores, those scores now play a vital role in the process.

Further, Prairieview is in the process of piloting additional procedures that allow for some adjustments to be made even after classes begin. For example, students who have been placed into English 098, the college’s lowest level of academic-oriented (i.e. not adult ed) integrated developmental reading and writing, are given early diagnostic assignments in that class, the results of which can allow students to receive modified placements as appropriate. Possibilities include referring the student to the college’s Academic English Language (ESL) or Adult Education programs, or recommending placement into English 099 / 101 (the ALP offering), or in rare cases English 101.

And yet, this specific mix of courses, placements, procedures, instruments, and possibilities likely exists *only* at Prairieview. In practice, reading and writing placement processes vary widely from institution to institution—and even schools that use the same

metrics (GPA, ACT, or SAT scores, to name a few common examples) often use different cutoff scores or criteria. Placement processes are deeply contextual, in that each school faces the task of adopting practices that best serve their own students' needs—and of course can only place students into courses that actually exist. Recall that at Prairieview, there at one time existed four different levels of standalone developmental writing courses; as of the writing of this dissertation, there is only one. Each writing program is faced with the task of finding a voice within its institution, and using that influence to advocate for fair, ethical, and effective program design, course offerings, and accompanying placement processes.

To be frank, I somewhat expected to “see” at least some differences in the ways in which the ALP students utilized readings in their writing when compared to the practices of the traditional FYC students. Ultimately, while my data analysis revealed some minor differences and distinctions, I recognize that the small sample size, in combination with the lack of clear trends, does not support larger-scale generalizations. Further, the limitations of my sample size also became apparent via the stark differences between the two individual classes in terms of how their students' work exhibited various codes. For example, many codes were predominant in one class and almost absent in the other, despite both courses containing an equal mix of ALP and traditional FYC students. This helps exemplify a point that might seem obvious, but that often goes unexamined: different assignments simply call forth and elicit distinct kinds of “work” from students—while also perhaps discouraging or foreclosing on other possibilities. It is important to remain mindful of this reality as it pertains specifically to student reading, since without careful analysis, an assignment or pedagogy may work against the instructor's own stated intentions. Table 14, below, investigates the codes by number of sources coded for each

criterion in each class; Table 15 represents the number of instances each code was observed in each class. The codes that elicited the most significant differences are in bold for emphasis:

Table 15.

Coding Scheme Breakdown by Course (Sources)

Code Title	Sources Coded: Sam's Class (out of 14)	Sources Coded: Zarina's Class (out of 14)
Direct Quotations	8	14
Missed Opportunities	13	8
Strong Follow	6	11
Application	7	10
Evaluation	14	2
Analysis	11	4
Distortions	5	9
Interpretation	13	1

(Table Continues)

Table 15 Continued

Code Title	Sources Coded: Sam's Class (out of 14)	Sources Coded: Zarina's Class (out of 14)
Background	0	13
Summary	11	2
Statistical Information	0	13
Definitions	4	8
Weak follow	7	6
Fuzzy Syntax	1	10
Paraphrase	1	10
Unclear Reference	2	8
Strong Lead	2	8
Weak Lead	2	6
Springboarding	3	0

Table 16.

Coding Scheme Breakdown by Course (Instances)

Code Title	Instances Coded: Sam's Class	Instances Coded: Zarina's Class
Direct Quotations	14	49
Missed Opportunities	33	18
Strong Follow	6	37
Application	7	30
Evaluation	37	2
Analysis	23	6
Distortions	10	17
Interpretation	20	1
Background	0	23
Summary	18	3
Statistical Information	0	17
Definitions	4	30

(Table Continues)

Table 16. Continued

Code Title	Instances Coded: Sam's Class	Instances Coded: Zarina's Class
Weak Follow	9	17
Paraphrase	1	25
Unclear Reference	2	16
Strong Lead	2	24
Weak Lead	3	14
Springboarding	3	0

Tables 15 and 16 are perhaps most noteworthy not for their similarities, of which there are many, but for their discrepancies in key areas that can be linked to reading. For example, almost all text coded for student “synthesis,” “analysis,” and “interpretation” work came from students in Sam’s class. In contrast, nearly all instances of “background,” “statistical information,” and “definitions” were from Zarina’s students. In isolation, these stark differences are perhaps not that significant: again, different assignments just call for different kinds of work, as these results show. However, these tables—and the kind of analysis that was applied in creating them—illustrate one way to make visible the work students produce in different contexts—a kind of visual analysis that can be applied to entire courses or programs as a way to

assess the efficacy of a given curriculum or pedagogy in calling forth the desired skills, habits, and awareness we seek to foster in the classroom.

The project of studying the ALP students' reading in relation to that of the traditional English 101 students would best be undertaken via a longitudinal study that tracked these students not only through English 101, but also through other reading-intensive courses that are a part of the general education sequence at Prairieview. And in fact, Prairieview's own institutional data suggests that while both groups of student pass English 101 at similar rates, the English 101 students are slightly yet consistently more successful in those next courses. Accounting for these differences, while interesting and necessary work, is simply beyond the scope of this current project—however, please note that institutional data available to the administrators and faculty at Prairieview and likely elsewhere make this project a viable one for writing programs to take up individually.

My data does yield some insights that may be useful as an entry point into this kind of work. The coding scheme presented in this dissertation suggests very comparable reading-into-writing strategies and practices between the English 099 and English 101 students. Especially regarding the codes that might suggest reading struggles (“Distortions,” “Missed Opportunities”), the quantitative presence of these traits was minimal across both student categories—a finding that perhaps goes against the grain of the ALP model at Prairieview, which differentiates between “college-ready” and “developmental” readers and writers in part via a placement exam that purports to measure students' reading comprehension skills. In other words, if valid, one might reasonably expect the ACCUPLACER reading comprehension

exam to effectively distinguish between—and thus separate—“stronger readers” from “weaker” ones. My study, while admittedly a small sample, calls such sifting into question.

Notably, all ALP-placing students, as well as many students ultimately placed into English 101, failed to meet the English 101 cut score for the ACCUPLACER reading comprehension exam, and thus wrote placement essays that play a crucial role in final course placement. The essay exam places heavy emphasis on grammatical correctness and error avoidance, and in this sense might work to reinforce assumptions about grammatical correctness as a predictor / correlate with reading and writing “ability” or readiness more broadly speaking—assumptions that might be challenged by my data. Given this emphasis, it is not entirely surprising, then, that the only areas of significant differences were in more “mechanical” and stylistic aspects of source use, such as introducing and situating sources clearly and effectively within one’s writing (see the discrepancies between strong and weak “leads” and “follows” in the table below), as opposed to more “conceptual” criteria—a finding that might suggest more past exposure to the conventions of academic discourse for the English 101 students.

This study did not quantify general writing errors that might be categorized as “surface” or “grammatical” in nature, but results would likely confirm that yes, the ALP students are more prone to surface errors of various types. After all, the presence / absence of such errors is one of the primary “sorting” criteria for students in the ALP sections. Ultimately, however, this data suggests that integration of more intentional reading instruction is needed in English 101, and not just in the developmental realm, due to the lack of significant difference in more substantive areas—including areas that indicate possible reading struggles.

Table 17 compares English 099 and English 101 students and illustrates the quantitative similarities and differences between the two groups in relation to the coding scheme:

Table 17.

Coding Scheme Breakdown by Student Type (099 / 101)

Code Title	Sources Coded / Instances: English 099 Students	Sources Coded / Instances: English 101 Students
Direct Quotations	13 / 31	9 / 33
Missed Opportunities	9 / 25	12 / 26
Strong Follow	9 / 14	8 / 29
Application	9 / 17	8 / 20
Evaluation	7 / 14	9 / 25
Analysis	7 / 13	8 / 16
Distortions	9 / 18	5 / 9
Interpretation	6 / 7	8 / 14
Background	7 / 14	6 / 9
Summary	7 / 14	6 / 7

(Table Continues)

Table 17. Continued

Code Title	Sources Coded / Instances: English 099 Students	Sources Coded / Instances: English 101 Students
Weak follow	7 / 17	5 / 9
Statistical Information	6 / 8	7 / 9
Paraphrase	4 / 12	7 / 14
Unclear Reference	5 / 9	5 / 9
Strong Lead	3 / 3	7 / 23
Weak Lead	8 / 17	0 / 0
Springboarding	1 / 1	2 / 2

To be sure, a deeper dive into a more qualitative analysis of students' deployment of various strategies would yield data that would shed more light on possible relationships between these two groups of students. For example, a closer analysis of *how* students integrated "Direct Quotations" might help identify instructive trends: for example, how often are students quoting from page one of their source text? For students who cite statistics and definitions, is this their *primary* way of utilizing readings across other assignments and in other courses? And while more "positive" codes like analysis and evaluation were equally "present" across both groups of students, surely there are such things as "stronger" or "weaker" analyses

and evaluations. Instructors and writing programs could study and refine their own assessments in ways that could track this data across a course or a program, and over time, in ways that would help answer questions about remedial placed students' reading and writing in relation to those deemed college-ready.

Conclusion

Once the work of fleshing out the findings from this study was concluded (if such work is ever truly finished), my first thought—which I also might refer to as a fear—was that the findings themselves are too simple and obvious. Institutions affect how we conceive of reading. Our instructional practices as they pertain to reading often do not match our intentions. Students respond better to explicit reading instruction. Our reading assessments should match our instructional goals. Presumably, and hopefully, any reader of this study has been convinced not only that these statements are true for Prairieview, but are likely true to varying degrees across various instructional contexts, including but not limited to composition classrooms and two-year college settings.

But while this apparent simplicity initially gave me pause, it now gives me hope for the future of reading instruction in composition. After all, if my findings were too complex or deeply contextual, the path forward—already daunting for many due to the previously-mentioned dearth of resources that might help writing instructors be more intentional about reading—might seem an impossible one to navigate. As I look back now, maybe this project wasn't so much about "discovering" these particular findings. Perhaps the most important elements here were asking these questions, and then giving the responses a voice. Similar

questions have been asked of writing for generations, whereas reading has remained largely invisible. As this work concludes, I now feel better-prepared to both start seeing it and to act mindfully and intentionally on what I see. I hope you do too.

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APPENDIX A: SEEING READING CODING SCHEME

Name	Description	Sources	References
Analysis	Explicit mentions of analysis by instructors or in documents; student work that was analytical in nature	15	29
Application	Moments in student writing where reading was being applied to a new issue / question / problem	18	38
Background Info	Moments in student work where readings were used to provide background information re: a person, organization, problem, etc.	13	23
Backpacks	Any mention of or attempt to use / integrate the "Backpacks vs. Briefcases" article	5	5
Definitions	Student use of definitional material from a text; instructor material that explicitly called for students to define terms	12	34
Direct quotations	Student use of direct quotations in writing	22	64
Distortions	Gross misrepresentations of source ideas—possibly indicative of a "bad read" of the source	14	27
Evaluation	Instances of students evaluating a source text in their writing; Instances where the assignments call for evaluation work by students	17	40

Fdbk Citation Format	All “Fdbk” codes refer to written Feedback provided to students by instructors on rubrics and assessments for the major project. They were coded in this way so they could be easily identified separately as needed—but they also overlap with other codes in meaningful ways. For example, the “Fdbk Definitions” code overlaps with—and is later analysed alongside—the “Definitions” code above.	2	9
Fdbk Conflation of Terms	For example, students representing “ethos, logos, and pathos” as a single strategy	1	3
Fdbk Definitions		1	10
Fdbk Essay Structure		2	7
Fdbk Need Explanation		2	20
Fdbk Needs Evidence or Citation		2	15
Fdbk Proofreading		1	5
Fdbk Summary Not Analysis		1	1
Fdbk Thesis		1	4
Fuzzy syntax	Only syntax issues related to source integration are included in this node--it is to indicate when students have syntactic struggle integrating a source "voice" into their writing	11	29
Instructor Confidence		2	2
Interpretation	Moments in student work where source text is being interpreted by the student-writer	14	21

Missed Opportunities	Moments where student writing seemed to call for / require use of a source or reading, but none was utilized	21	51
Paraphrases	Passages where students are paraphrasing from a reading	11	26
Pedagogical Wishes	Moments in reflective memos where instructors note what they would like to improve for the future	5	8
Purpose of Assignment	These “Purpose” codes are instances in instructor materials where the subject instructors discuss their perceptions about why reading is important in a writing classroom	2	4
Purpose of Reading IAI requires it		1	1
Purpose of reading it is important		1	1
Purpose of Reading to Complete the Assignment		1	1
Purpose of Reading WP requires it		1	1
Purpose to practice decoding messages		1	1
Purpose to present course materials		1	1
Purpose to gain familiarity with an issue		2	4

Reading as Stressful or Intimidating	Moments where instructors or students mentioned or noted reading as a stressful or intimidating act	2	2
Springboarding	Student uses the topic of the text as a launch pad for own opinion / idea but does not engage the reading in a way that would show deep comprehension	3	3
Statistical info	Moments where students cite statistical information from sources; moments where instructor assignments call for or require this kind of source use	13	17
Strategies	These strategies are mentioned by instructors in the reflective memos (i.e. when they describe how they teach reading), or are otherwise evident and explicitly mentioned in course / instructional materials	4	30
Strategy Assigning Parts of Text		1	1
Strategy Chunking		1	2
Strategy High Task Load		1	2
Strategy Implicit Reading Instruction		2	3
Strategy Learning Journals		1	1
Strategy Making Connections		1	8
Strategy Questioning		1	1

Strategy Read Aloud		1	4
Strategy Reading Reflections		1	1
Strategy Reflecting on Difficulties		1	1
Strategy Rereading		1	1
Strategy Speed Dating		1	1
Strategy Summaries		1	1
Strategy Wiki		1	1
Strategy Word Lists		1	2
Strong follow	Moments in student writing where the student follows source integration by explaining it or by connecting to his or her own argument / point	17	43
Strong lead	Moments in student writing which feature an effective introduction to a source integration	10	26
Student Confidence	Instructor or student mentions of confidence level with reading	2	3
Summary		13	21
Types of Reading	“Types of reading” is a broad code meant to capture the many ways in which students are instructed to read texts, and / or to use readings in their own writing	7	33
Source Use Requirements		1	2

Types of Reading Analysis		3	4
Types of Reading Comprehensive		3	4
Types of Reading Documentation		1	1
Types of Reading Evaluation		1	1
Types of Reading Quote Paraphrase		1	1
Types of Reading Scan		1	3
Types of Reading Serious Contemplation		2	2
Types of Reading Skim		2	10
Types of Reading Summary		2	5
Uncertainty about explicitness	Moments where instructors share uncertainty about whether their reading instruction is as explicit as it should be	2	2
Unclear reference	Student appears to be using a source but is not citing or referencing it properly	10	18
Weak follow	Student attempts to connect reading to own writing / idea but is not effective	13	26
Weak lead	An incomplete or ineffective attempt to introduce a source / reading into the flow of the writing	8	17

APPENDIX B: ARTICULATION INITIATIVE DOCUMENT

Note: Document has been altered so that the state to which it applies is not immediately apparent.

C19xx: Writing Course Sequence

(3-semester credits)

C19xxR: Writing Course Sequence

(3-semester credits)

The writing course sequence (1) develops awareness of the writing process; (2) provides inventional, organizational and editorial strategies; (3) stresses the variety of uses for writing; and (4) emphasizes critical skills in reading, thinking and writing. The writing course sequence must include production of documented, multi-source writing in one or two papers for a combined total of at least 2500 words in final version. The panel has compared the AI GECC C19xxR descriptor against the AP English Language & Composition and AP English Literature & Composition exams and determined there is not a match. Feb 2016

Upon successful completion of the writing course sequence (which requires grades of C or better for students entering in Summer 1999 and beyond), students should have the competencies listed below. The student is expected to:

- comprehend, analyze, and critique a variety of texts including academic discourse;
- use various invention, drafting, and revising/ editing strategies depending upon the purpose of the writing, the materials available to the writer, and the length of time available for the task;
- engage a topic in which the writer explores writing as a means of self-discovery and produces a text that is designed to persuade the reader of the writer's commitment;
- demonstrate a theoretical understanding of rhetorical context (that is, how reader, writer, language, and subject matter interact);
- establish a voice appropriate to the topic selected and the rhetorical situation;
- clarify major aims, arrange material to support aims, and provide sufficient materials to satisfy expectations of readers;
- select, evaluate, and interact effectively with sources, subordinating them to the writer's purpose and creating confidence that they have been represented fairly;

- demonstrate satisfactory control over the conventions of edited American English and competently attend to the elements of presentation (including layout, format, and printing); and
- recognize the existence of discourse communities with their different conventions and forms.

APPENDIX C: SAM'S ESSAY RUBRIC

Criteria	Levels of Achievement		
	Excellent	Competent	Not Acceptable
Content Understanding ▼	24 Points Discussion posts show serious contemplation of readings and content, revealing awareness of implications and complexities.	17 Points Discussion posts show readings were completed, and posts respond to all requirements, but discussion is minimal.	14 Points Discussion posts give little indication that the readings were completed or concepts are understood.
Responsible Support ▼	24 Points Sources used support author's ideas, are original (unexpected choices), and integrated properly.	17 Points Most of author's ideas are not supported with sources and/or sources are not well-integrated.	14 Points No sources are used. Textual evidence is flimsy.
Control of Language Conventions ▼	24 Points Post is clear and articulate academic prose, is free of distracting surface-level errors, and uses correct citations.	17 Points Post is clear academic prose but contains noticeable proofreading errors and/or several citation errors.	14 Points Post is sloppy, non-academic, contains multiple surface-level errors that interfere with meaning, and/or contains incorrect citations.
Engagement with Others ▼	24 Points Student demonstrates sincere effort to interact with others and responds to ideas in ways that move the discussion past the obvious. Student makes close-the-loop posts (or responds to peers' feedback). Student follows rules of netiquette.	17 Points Student acknowledges the ideas of others, but posts do not contribute substantially to the discussion. Student follows rules of netiquette.	14 Points Student ignores other posts in the thread and/or does not interact with others or does not interact appropriately. Student does not follow rules of netiquette.
Timeliness ▼	24 Points Posts are distributed according to due dates.	17 Points One or more posts are late.	14 Points All posts are late.

APPENDIX D: ZARINA'S ESSAY RUBRIC

Development Weight 15.00%	100 % Key terms and positions are thoroughly defined and the writer's position is effectively situated and justified	85 % Key terms and positions are defined. But not always justified	75 % Key terms and positions are mentioned but not always defined, developed, or justified	65 % Few key terms or positions not mentioned or are superficial and inconsistently addressed	25 % Key terms and positions not mentioned
Supporting Evidence Weight 15.00%	100 % The composition provides in-depth engagement with support which enhances credibility	85 % Clear main ideas are usually supported with appropriate information, reasoning, or source material in a way that furthers the development of a topic or idea	75 % The composition usually integrates support and evidence from outside sources in a way that furthers the development of a topic or idea	65 % Support is not adequate for the development of a topic or idea and/or only engages in a superficial way	25 % The composition does not introduce or integrate support and evidence.
Supporting Documentation Weight 15.00%	100 % All support is fully documented in complete and correct style	85 % Documentation is present with a few errors in documentation.	75 % Demonstrates a clear conceptual knowledge of documentation, with only minor errors	65 % Documentation is present in final drafts, with many formatting errors	25 % Documentation is not evident in final drafts—no conceptual knowledge of the need to document sources
Design & Mechanics Weight 10.00%	100 % Contains very few errors of spelling, grammar, paragraphing or manuscript format.	85 % May contain errors, but these errors do not interfere with the essay's overall effectiveness.	75 % Contains multiple errors that hinder the essay's readability	65 % Contains many errors that garble the meaning or intent.	25 % Contains serious and multiple errors that seriously hinder the reading of the paper.
Development Weight 15.00%	100 % Key terms and positions are thoroughly defined and the writer's position is effectively situated and justified	85 % Key terms and positions are defined. But not always justified	75 % Key terms and positions are mentioned but not always defined, developed, or justified	65 % Few key terms or positions not mentioned or are superficial and inconsistently addressed	25 % Key terms and positions not mentioned
Supporting Evidence Weight 15.00%	100 % The composition provides in-depth engagement with support which enhances credibility	85 % Clear main ideas are usually supported with appropriate information, reasoning, or source material in a way that furthers the development of a topic or idea	75 % The composition usually integrates support and evidence from outside sources in a way that furthers the development of a topic or idea	65 % Support is not adequate for the development of a topic or idea and/or only engages in a superficial way	25 % The composition does not introduce or integrate support and evidence.
Supporting Documentation Weight 15.00%	100 % All support is fully documented in complete and correct style	85 % Documentation is present with a few errors in documentation.	75 % Demonstrates a clear conceptual knowledge of documentation, with only minor errors	65 % Documentation is present in final drafts, with many formatting errors	25 % Documentation is not evident in final drafts—no conceptual knowledge of the need to document sources
Design & Mechanics Weight 10.00%	100 % Contains very few errors of spelling, grammar, paragraphing or manuscript format.	85 % May contain errors, but these errors do not interfere with the essay's overall effectiveness.	75 % Contains multiple errors that hinder the essay's readability	65 % Contains many errors that garble the meaning or intent.	25 % Contains serious and multiple errors that seriously hinder the reading of the paper.