

# illuminating Reading as Intellectual Labor: Cultivating Readerly Behaviors in the Writing Classroom

Zack K. De Piero

Pennsylvania State University, Abington

---

## ABSTRACT

*Composition scholar-practitioners have theorized numerous roles for reading in the writing classroom, suggesting that this tacit intellectual labor shapes students' writing development in consequential ways. A mixed-methods inquiry into novice writing instructors' reading pedagogies offered further insights into the omnipresence of students' reading activity in first-year composition. Via surveys and follow-up interviews, participants revealed a wide range of readerly behaviors—an all-encompassing term used to describe what readers think, feel, or do before, during, or after the act of reading—that were perceived to play pivotal roles in students' writing development. These findings suggest a need to reconceptualize pedagogies that predominantly focus on students' writing by also explicitly guiding students' reading. The piece concludes with practical strategies for more proactively teaching reading by integrating reader-response pedagogies.*

Throughout the ten, twelve, or sixteen weeks of a given first-year composition (FYC) course, students typically compose source-based written assignments—what have been casually, and perhaps controversially, referred to as “research papers” (Brent, 2013), along with more nuanced characterizations that attempt to account for a wider range of research-based genres with the term “researched writing” (Howard, Serviss, & Rodrigue, 2010). Though the focus of each FYC course can shift quite dramatically, from writing about racism and socioeconomic identity (Villanueva, 2014) to writing about social media (Reid, 2014) to writing about

writing (Wardle & Downs, 2014), all FYC courses require students to write. Typically, students must demonstrate a commitment to the writing process by crafting multiple drafts of each major assignment, and most likely, these major writing assignments—along with a cumulative portfolio of revised written work—comprise the vast majority of each student's grade.

So where does that leave reading? In order to complete their written assignments, students likely undertake a considerable amount of reading that requires deceptively complex cognitive dexterity, especially for first-year students. While the assigned

readings typically lay the conceptual foundation for course content, the assignment prompts tacitly shape how students are expected to engage with those assigned readings.

Scholarly texts, for instance—a feature of many approaches to FYC—place considerable demands on novice academic readers, from grappling with theory and methodology, to gaining an awareness of how and why scholars communicate with another. In effect, students become tasked with comprehending texts that were intended for an academic audience with expertise in a disciplinary field. When students are required to integrate scholarly texts into their own written work, more challenges abound: navigating the search engines of library databases, using disciplinary keywords to locate appropriate sources, and determining which configuration of sources might yield the strongest paper. These subtle actions become consequential steps in students' emerging development as academic readers.

Reading and responding to classmates' writing places yet another set of demands on students' reading processes. Sophisticated participation in peer review workshops requires privileging higher-order concerns for early drafts which oftentimes presents challenges for FYC students whose prior educational experiences encouraged surface-level edits of classmates' work. What typically accounts for the majority of each student's grade, though, is their own writing, so learning how to effectively revise and edit become indispensable, high-stakes reading tools.

The aforementioned texts—from assignment prompts, to scholarly pieces, to classmates' first drafts, to students' own work—range quite considerably in terms of genre, complexity, intended audience, length, and draft iteration, further complicating notions of reading as a one-size-fits-all activity. Suffice it to say, in order to write successfully in FYC, students need to read successfully. Still, this complex work becomes easily overlooked by instructors when we fail

to explicitly account for it in our teaching and assessment practices.

In his contribution to *First-Year Composition: From Theory to Practice* (Coxwell-Teague & Lunsford, 2014), Inoue addresses the importance of theorizing the role of labor in FYC courses, contending that, oftentimes, “when teachers grade documents or provide feedback, [they] neglect the labor and effort that produced those documents” (p. 73). Consequently, Inoue proposes valuing the “work of the mind,” thereby framing his assessment of students' labor with a wider-angle view that accounts for their holistic literate activity. “A productive way to design and teach a first-year writing course,” he states, “is to conceive of it as labor: to calculate course grades by labor completed and dispense almost completely with judgments of quality when producing course grades” (p. 71). Essentially, Inoue envisions a more inclusive valuation of labor by implementing a contract grading approach that systematically integrates students' behind-the-scenes work into the course framework. In that light, the semantic nuances that differentiate “labor” from “work” draw parallels to pedagogies that disentangle process from product.

Inoue's aspirations offer an opportunity to extend Salvatori's (1996) crucial call to make students' reading activity more visible. This tacit intellectual labor can, and should, be brought to light for two primary reasons: ethical principle and prudent pedagogy. First, compensating students for their hard and necessary labor associated with reading creates fairer assessment practices—particularly for historically disadvantaged students (Inoue, 2014)—by more accurately redistributing the piecemeal valuation of students' holistic labor. Second, because reading and writing are reciprocal and mutually-reinforcing activities (Tierney & Pearson, 1983; Horning & Kraemer, 2013), when instructors illuminate reading—that is, when they foreground the reading process with reader-centric

assignments and in-class activities—they can more proactively guide each student’s individual reading practices and, in turn, strengthen their writing development.

Due to its expansive presence within the academy and its prospects for leveraging transfer across the disciplines, FYC offers a productive research site for exploring the relationship between reading and labor in the writing classroom. According to recent estimates by the National Census of Writing (2013), 96% of four-year colleges required students to complete FYC. While students’ academic experiences in any single course cannot possibly embody the wide range of literate activity that students will encounter throughout their college careers, it is reasonable to claim that students’ labor in FYC, to some extent, reflects academic activity across the university, particularly in general education courses. Consequently, studying the range of reading activity required to achieve success in FYC offers insights into students’ labor well beyond the course.

### **Expansive Possibilities for Reading Pedagogies**

Pointing to historical trends in the composition field, Salvatori and Donahue (2012) and Carillo (2015) have acknowledged a lack of research on reading in the writing classroom. Despite this pronounced gap, some composition scholar-practitioners have taken up Salvatori’s (1996) call to make reading more visible, thereby extending Rosenblatt’s (1978) influential work on reader-response. Compositionists have introduced a range of reading pedagogies— attempts to shape reader-text interactions— towards various ends, including cognition, self-regulation, reader-response, social learning, reading-writing connections, stance, and emotion.

Cognition and self-regulation have been targeted through procedural techniques that prescribe step-by-step reading strategies—

and, more generally, skills-based study strategies—such as Armstrong and Lampi’s (2017) use of PILLAR: preview, identify, list, look, attempt, and read. Oftentimes, such acronymed strategies prime students’ pre-reading awareness of the content or context of a particular text before they begin reading, although other strategies include mid- and post-reading steps. For instance, the “N” and final “R” in S-RUN-R (Bailey, 1998) stand for note-taking and reviewing those notes. Despite their simplistic allure for cultivating fundamental skills, acronymed strategies have drawn criticism. Fisher-Ari and Ari (2017), for instance, claim that they tend to “positio[n] the purpose of reading, writing, and learning as directed by and for others—i.e., teachers or those placed in positions of authority—rather than positioning learning, as it is—an active, personal, self-constructed, and ongoing project” (p. 20). Furthermore, it is unclear whether their sequential nature authentically reflects the reading processes of real readers, particularly advanced and expert-level readers.

Other reading pedagogies—and the intellectual labor that they require—move readers’ attention beyond the text towards creating knowledge about the author, the context, or other circumstances surrounding the production of the text. Downs (2010), for instance, asks his students to situate texts within discourse communities or communities of practice. “Reading and writing,” he asserts, “should be taught as reading and writing the particular genres of particular activity systems, through an apprenticeship process that sees not ‘right or wrong’ but ‘more or less expert’” (p. 26). Downs finds it especially problematic when “texts and readers seem to come ‘out of nowhere,’ with no histories, backgrounds, or reasons for being” (p. 23).

Other reader-response pedagogies strive to uncover each reader’s unique experience. Annotations, which Goldschmidt (2010) refers to as “marginalia,” are one such example. Her comparison of faculty and students’ marginalia revealed insights for

understanding the differences between novice's and expert's reading practices; faculty annotations focused on four categories—comprehension, evaluation, extension, and rhetorical analysis—while students' were primarily limited to comprehension.

Asking questions—about the text, the author, or the content—is one type of marginalia that transcends each of Goldschmidt's (2010) four expert-level categories which suggests that it likely holds considerable value for transfer-oriented pedagogies. In fact, Wardle and Downs (2014) contend that “questions are the most stable, ‘universal’ aspect of [understanding] writing” (p. 278). Considered alongside Goldschmidt's findings, it appears that advanced readers annotate their texts with wide-ranging intent. Such actions embody Inoue's (2014) intellectual labor and, therefore, merit valuation in the writing classroom.

As a means of extracting and enhancing an individual student's reading experience, other reading pedagogies, paradoxically, attempt to leverage social learning. Blau's (2003) literature workshops repurpose traditional peer review workshops by cultivating a process-centered, collaborative approach to constructing meaning in literary texts. As they read, students track their reactions, particularly moments of difficulty, then bring these points of confusion forward for small group discussion. In a similar way, Goldschmidt (2010) facilitates activities for teaching marginalia that focus on discussion, revision, and refinement as a way of “teaching texts, teaching readers, and teaching writers simultaneously” (p. 64). Yet another way to guide students' reading in social settings is through technology; Miller's (2016) employs social bookmarking technologies (e.g., Diigo) to cultivate curiosity and encourage exploration.

Reader-text interactions are also shaped by the unique stance that readers bring to any given reading engagement. Theorists frequently associate stance with writers, such

as when Soliday (2011) notes, “No content is free floating but must be governed by someone's angle of vision, or stance [...] writers do more than present information: they perceive and judge it in some way” (p. 36). However, this notion of stance also holds important implications for understanding readers' meaning-making processes. For example, Tierney and Pearson (1983) offer the following account of how stance can impact recall and retention: Before reading a description of a house, two groups of readers were asked to assume different identities—those of prospective homeowners and burglars—which primed what particular information each group was better able to recall. In FYC, specifically, reading rhetorically and reading critically are perhaps the two most valued readerly stances, as evidenced by their extensive presence in programmatic learning outcomes.

Reading researchers have also noted how emotions impact the reading experience, which dovetails with stance. Bunn (2013) contends that writing instructors can enhance students' motivation to read by explicitly teaching reading-writing connections, especially those that are essential for upcoming assignments. Lockhart and Soliday (2016) suggest that integrated reading and writing FYC curriculum can lead to gains in students' confidence and self-efficacy associated with postsecondary literacy.

To build upon these scholars' efforts to explicitly guide students' reading—and, in turn, to expand traditional notions of what constitutes intellectual labor in the writing classroom—I offer findings from a study that examined instructors' perceptions of the role of reading in their FYC courses. To account for the wide range of reading activity I have outlined, I use the term *readerly behaviors* as a way to capture the cognitive, affective, behavioral, and social outcomes of any reader-text transaction. Conceptually, readerly behaviors characterizes what student-readers think, feel, or do before, during, or after the

act of reading. Using this expansive term, I examined the question: “What readerly behaviors do writing instructors hope to cultivate in their FYC courses?”

## Methods

### Participants and Research Site

To expand my exploratory inquiry in productive ways, I located a research site where writing instructors hold a multi-disciplinary enculturation to postsecondary literacy. In one writing program, FYC Teaching Assistants (TAs) are exposed to contemporary composition theories and scholarship during their training practicum such as teaching for transfer (Yancey, Robertson, & Taczak, 2015), writing about writing (Downs & Wardle, 2007, 2014), and the threshold concepts of Writing Studies (Adler-Kassner & Wardle, 2015). These TAs, however, were also pursuing doctoral degrees in humanities disciplines, thereby lending particular humanities-based “ways of thinking and practicing” (Kreber, 2009; Donald, 2009) to their FYC teaching appointments. For example, when humanities scholars engage with texts—as I learned from TAs’ interview responses—they tend to conduct close readings, translate foreign languages to English, and repurpose texts into research-based arguments. With these dual enculturations, then, I hoped that participants’ reflections on their reading pedagogies would offer expansive insights into a wider array of readerly behaviors.

At this research site, TAs had agency to design their FYC courses in accordance with the course’s stated learning outcomes. A typical course juxtaposed the study of mainstream and scholarly texts with attention to composition ideas such as genre, rhetoric, and discourse community.

### Survey and Interview Construction

This mixed methods study was based on surveys and follow-up interviews that,

together, paint a broad portrait of reading as intellectual labor in the writing classroom. Grounded theory (Charmaz, 2001) informed my research design, coding, and data analysis, and I embraced Spradley’s (1979) claim that “ethnographers must deal with at least two languages—their own and the one spoken by informants” (p. 17) by taking two steps. First, I administered a pilot survey to capture TAs’ existing language about their reading pedagogies and coded their responses to generate a preliminary list of readerly behaviors to include in my final survey. Annotating texts and reading rhetorically, for example, emerged via *in vivo* coding (Saldaña, 2009), while initial coding led to codes that I paraphrased from TAs’ pilot survey responses such as comprehending content (“what they have actually learned about genre”), deconstructing genres (“analyz[ing] genres”), and using sources in papers (“weaving evidence seamlessly and citing properly”).

Next, I expanded this list to include existing terminology used by composition scholars to characterize reading pedagogies. I attempted to ensure that a broad range of reading activity was represented in the survey. Examples of readerly behaviors that I added include being motivated to read (Bunn, 2013) and summarizing and paraphrasing (Bazerman, 1980; Adler-Kassner & Estrem, 2007; Jameison & Howard, 2012). The decision to revise my survey with TAs’ language, coupled with field-wide terminology, helped me strike a balance between embarking upon a purely open-ended inquiry and, conversely, establishing some degree of standardization that could enable me to detect comparative trends across TAs’ perceptions and practices.

The following fourteen readerly behaviors anchored my survey: being motivated to read, skimming and scanning, annotating texts, comprehending content, conducting a close reading, reading rhetorically, applying visual literacy, deconstructing genres, reading critically, reading like a writer, summarizing

and paraphrasing, using sources in papers, analyzing samples, and discussing a text with classmates. To gauge TAs' perceptions about the role that each one played in their reading pedagogy—and thus, to better understand the nuances of intellectual labor required in their FYC courses—I asked TAs the extent to which they agreed with the following Likert scale statements:

- I believe that \_\_\_\_\_ is a readerly behavior that's important for students' success in FYC.
- I explicitly address \_\_\_\_\_ in my FYC teaching practices.
- \_\_\_\_\_ is an important readerly behavior for students to be successful in introductory-level courses in my home department.

Following the suggestion of Singleton and Strait (2010), I expanded the traditional five-point continuum to seven points so that I could conduct follow-up interviews with TAs who held definitive attitudes about a particular readerly behavior that I wanted to learn more about.

My interview questionnaire focused TAs' attention on FYC course design, in-class reading pedagogies, and perceptions of reading bottlenecks. Similar to Middendorf and Pace's (2004) decoding the disciplines approach to interviewing that facilitates faculty's ability to articulate their expert-level tacit literate activity, I used follow-up probes during interviews to elicit penetrative depth. Interviews lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. The ensuing results are based on data collected from 24 survey responses (89% response rate) and 11 follow-up interviews.

## Results

TAs' responses illuminated the omnipresence of reading in writing classroom.

The survey data revealed noteworthy patterns in the perceived value that these fourteen readerly behaviors held for students' FYC performance and TAs' FYC pedagogy. The qualitative data indicated the extent to which reading was embedded in the writing process, opening up considerations for reconceptualizing labor in and beyond the FYC classroom.

### **Quantitative Results: A Broad Portrait of Readerly Behaviors as Intellectual Labor**

The percentages offered in this section reflect the overall percentage of the 24 TAs who definitively agreed with each Likert scale statement—that is, those who agreed or strongly agreed, omitting tepid attitudes (somewhat agreed, neutral) and expressed disagreement (somewhat disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree). The results indicated that the ability to adopt a wide range of readerly behaviors is an essential component for achieving success in the writing classroom. At least 75% of the TAs definitively agreed that 8 of 14 readerly behaviors were important for success in FYC. This sizable threshold suggests that reading, broadly, holds considerable value in the writing classroom and merits pedagogical attention as intellectual labor.

Four readerly behaviors were perceived to be especially vital at this site: An overwhelming 88% or more of TAs definitively agreed that comprehending content, reading rhetorically, reading like a writer, and using sources in papers were important for success in FYC. With the lone exception of applying visual literacy, at least 40% of TAs definitively agreed that each of the 14 readerly behaviors was important for students' success. Table 1, below, depicts an overview of these perceptions. Readerly behaviors are listed in the approximate sequence of how student-readers adopt them before, during, and after the act of reading.

Table 1. *TAs' Perceptions of Readerly Behaviors*

Readerly Behavior	Percentage of TAs who definitively agreed with statements about each readerly behavior	
	Important for students' success in FYC	Explicitly address in FYC teaching practices
Being motivated to read	67%	38%
Skimming and scanning	42%	50%
Annotating texts	55%	42%
Comprehending content	88%	50%
Conducting a close reading	50%	38%
Reading rhetorically	88%	79%
Applying visual literacy	29%	29%
Deconstructing genres	79%	92%
Reading critically	78%	67%
Reading like a writer	96%	92%
Summarizing and paraphrasing	44%	47%
Using sources in papers	88%	84%
Analyzing samples (of genres that students will be writing)	83%	84%
Discussing a text(s) with classmates	75%	79%

The decisive quantitative trends across this survey data suggest that students undertake a considerable amount of reading-based labor in their writing courses, and it also indicated that this labor holds substantial intellectual value. Of course, these survey results are limited; they only offer an impressionistic portrait of the relative value of different—and admittedly, overlapping—readerly behaviors in one curricular context. Nonetheless, this comparative snapshot of TAs' perceptions attests to the multi-faceted role that reading plays in the writing classroom. A closer look at TAs' articulations of their reading pedagogies further illuminates the complexity of reading activity, providing a stronger case

that, within the writing classroom, reading requires considerable intellectual labor.

**Qualitative Results: Nuanced Readerly Behaviors, Nested Reading Activity**

The qualitative data from TAs' interviews and open-ended survey responses added depth to the amount, complexity, and importance of reading in students' FYC labor. Upwards of forty readerly behaviors emerged from TAs' FYC reading pedagogies, aligning with the range of reading activity that can shape reader-text interactions: cognition, reading-writing connections, reader-response, modes, self-regulation, and stances.

When students were required to integrate

others' written work into their own, TAs facilitated students' source selection and usage with four readerly behaviors: using disciplinary keywords in search engines, cherry-picking sources from the Works Cited/References section, gauging source-assignment chemistry, and refining source selection. Once students found a promising source, TAs' reading pedagogies addressed compiling insightful quotes into a pre-drafting document, quoting sources, and applying the mechanics of citation attribution.

Cultivating readerly behaviors more directly associated with generating meaning through reader-response—that is, those that encourage readers to act on texts by bringing forth their uniquely individual reading experiences—was a paramount feature of TAs' reading pedagogies. Taking notes while reading and making real-world connections emerged as two specific ways of strengthening students' comprehension. Exploring personal opinion, considering curious or interesting language, and formulating insights and observations were three readerly behaviors intended to spark invention. Asking questions about a text/author, interrogating claims/points, and evaluating textual qualities tended to be taught in conjunction with participation in peer review workshops.

TAs' reading pedagogies addressed four different modes of reading: reading aloud, reading silently, re-reading, and slowing down. When students read their own work, revising, editing, and reverse outlining were identified as ways of enhancing a student's ability to self-regulate their own work. Stance-oriented readerly behaviors included avoiding autopilot reading, distancing the self from the text, harnessing selective attention, maintaining direct textual engagement, and reading with the writer/text, which is similar to Elbow's (1998) "believing game" (p. 147).

Finally, TAs pinpointed numerous textual features—from a text's lower-order surface-level inscriptions (e.g., punctuation, syntax) to the higher-order ideas (e.g., argument,

organization) within it—that they wanted students to focus on. The textual features that factored into TAs' reading pedagogies included argument, claims/points, conclusions, evidence/examples, grammar, intertextuality, introductions, metadiscourse/signposts, methodology, narrative-based "I" language, organization/structure, punctuation/mechanics, style, syntax, transitions/flow, and word choice. Such textual features play a unique role in reading inquiries. Since encoded language embodies the foundation of alphanumeric texts, reading requires engaging with a wide array of textual features. By necessity, then, many of the readerly behaviors outlined in this study require readers to also process various textual features. For example, when readers evaluate textual qualities—a reader-response-oriented behavior—they ultimately make determinations about specific textual features (e.g., introductions, transitions, paragraphs) and their interactions, leading to readerly judgments such as a compelling introduction or a tight transition between paragraphs. Readerly behaviors, in other words, are oftentimes inextricably bound to a reader's ability to process various textual features.

This overlap extends across many other readerly behaviors as well. A reader could enact a particular mode (e.g., reading aloud, slowing down) and strike a distinct stance (e.g., reading with the writer/text, reading critically) during the act of reading, so multiple readerly behaviors can—and in all likelihood, frequently do—govern any given reading experience. If that sounds complicated, it is: The interconnectedness across readerly behaviors reflects the complexity of reading activity. This tacit labor requires considerable intellectual dexterity, even for advanced readers. By guiding students' reading with purposeful goals, however, FYC instructors can take thoughtful strides towards shaping students' writing development in productive ways.

## Discussion: Illuminating Reading in the Writing Classroom

The quantitative and qualitative data point to the omnipresence of reading in the writing classroom. It is clear that the act of reading is not a reductive, one-size-fits-all activity. Nevertheless, even once we realize that reading requires intensive intellectual labor and shapes students' writing development in consequential ways, difficult questions remain: How can writing instructors make this oftentimes tacit labor visible in their day-to-day teaching practices?; which particular readerly behaviors should instructors foreground, when, and why?; and what assessment methods might most effectively capture the complexity of students' reading activity?

The data I have presented offer a starting point for addressing these questions. While 88% of TAs definitively agreed that comprehending content was an important readerly behavior for students' success in FYC, only 50% of TAs definitively agreed that they explicitly addressed this readerly behavior in their teaching practices. A similar divide existed for being motivated to read; 67% of TAs perceived it to be important, while only 38% of TAs addressed it in class. Such gaps expose opportunities for re-aligning instructors' goals and practices.

Other data indicated that reading, overall, is not comprehensively addressed in these 24 TAs' teaching practices. Only 50% of TAs definitively agreed that they explicitly addressed skimming and scanning and comprehending content. Less than 50% of TAs definitively agreed that they explicitly addressed being motivated to read (38%), conducting a close reading (38%), applying visual literacy (29%), and summarizing and paraphrasing (47%). Put another way, according to TAs' self-reported perceptions, a majority of TAs did not explicitly address half of the fourteen readerly behaviors that anchored this study.

On the one hand, these findings could be attributed to the still-untapped reading pedagogies of one particular group of novice writing instructors. However, their thoughtful responses throughout the qualitative portion of the study, coupled with their exposure to contemporary composition theories during their TA training practicum—including scholarship on guiding students' reading (Bunn, 2011; Rosenberg, 2011)—would suggest otherwise. Instead, I interpret these findings as a glimpse into the complexity of reading in FYC. While it is expansive, it is tacit. Though it might seem simplistic, it is likely very messy. And although it is perceived to be valuable, it appears to get overlooked in instructors' reading pedagogies.

From an opportunity cost perspective where value is conceptualized as a trade-off of resource allocation—that is, devoting resources to one area means that those same resources cannot be committed elsewhere—guiding and assessing reading in the writing classroom might seem like a misallocation of pedagogical resources. Any time directed towards teaching reading, in other words, is time spent away from teaching writing. The findings from this study, however, indicated that readerly behaviors, collectively, comprise the tacit intellectual labor that is necessary for students to successfully write their assignments. Correspondingly, how students read is a consequential aspect of students' writing development. The range of readerly behaviors that emerged from this study further reinforces the notion that reading encompasses a considerable amount of labor that students must undertake in the writing classroom. In light of these findings, instructors can cultivate reading pedagogies that adequately treat reading as intellectual labor by slowing down the curricular pace, leveraging social learning, and foregrounding the reading-writing process.

To these ends, I draw upon the survey data to offer assignments and activities for more robust reader-response pedagogies that

target a wide range of readerly behaviors. With each suggestion, I reference scholarly work that can help instructors further theorize the relationship between reading and labor in their writing courses. These suggestions are organized according to how they might sequentially unfold throughout a semester.

### **Scaffolding Learning and Cultivating Metacognition with Weekly Reading Process Logs**

Cover letters are a popular accompaniment for major writing assignments because of their ability to reveal students' behind-the-scenes literate activity. Oftentimes, though, the primary purpose of these metacognitive reflections is to showcase students' writing process—not necessarily their reading process—further reinforcing writing as the nearly exclusive determining factor in evaluating students' collective labor. Instead, instructors can foreground the need to consistently practice reading in increasingly sophisticated ways by assigning weekly reading logs.

Each week, instructors could use reading logs as an opportunity to scaffold students' learning by illuminating a particular readerly behavior with attention to the trajectory of the course. Annotating texts, for example—a readerly behavior that a majority of TAs definitively agreed was important for success in FYC—is likely best leveraged at the beginning of a course so that students can continue annotating texts throughout the duration of the course with, presumably, greater facility. Weeks later, when students begin taking decisive steps towards shaping an upcoming paper, they can provide insight into their thought process as it pertains to the readerly behaviors required to successfully work with texts: locating sources, using disciplinary keywords, and gauging source-assignment chemistry. By seeing the “mental moves” (Salvatori, 1996, p. 447) that students have made before, during, and after the act of

reading, instructors can reward, respond to, and recalibrate students' reading processes.

Taking the next step of articulating metacognition, however, can present considerable challenges for students. Instructors can support students by modeling how they complete a given literate task, thereby making their tacit expert knowledge available to students. Coiro (2011) reports employing a think-aloud approach to modeling her reading practices for conducting online library research, from outlining how she approaches a specific task to how she evaluates the credibility of the sources she finds. When instructors like Coiro engage in think-alouds to model their metacognitive reflective work, they solidify the act of reading as intellectual labor.

Providing structured prompts with specific directives—especially during the first few weeks of a course—further scaffolds students' ability to create reading logs. Later, as students gain greater facility with engaging in metacognitive reflection, instructors can offer looser parameters. Stylistically, these logs can embrace the spirit of first-order thinking (Elbow, 1983) while maintaining the intellectual rigor of academic labor.

### **Moving Toward the Conversational Model with Annotated Bibliographies**

Burke (1973) and Bazerman (1980) liken postsecondary literate activity to an ongoing conversation. The delayed dialogic exchange—of, first, listening, and then speaking—parallels that of reading and writing. The reader who wants to contribute to the conversation in sophisticated ways must, first, digest a writer's ideas. This type of “[i]ntelligent response,” Bazerman contends, “begins with accurate understanding of prior comments, not just of the facts and ideas stated, but of what the other writer was trying to achieve” (p. 658). Instructors can scaffold the initial stage of this process by assigning annotated bibliographies, which call upon students to demonstrate numerous readerly

behaviors. Some of the discrete literate activity embedded within this unique genre are locating sources, using disciplinary keywords, comprehending content, summarizing, and paraphrasing.

Since summarizing and paraphrasing can each strengthen students' comprehension of content, annotated bibliographies offer a way of practicing pivotal readerly behaviors that can enhance students' participation in scholarly conversations. The survey data, however, suggested that this group of TAs did not collectively foreground these readerly behaviors in their FYC pedagogies: Only 50% of TAs definitively agreed that comprehending content was an explicit component of their FYC reading pedagogy, while slightly less, 47%, held the same attitude towards summarizing and paraphrasing. Such tepid responses could be attributed to the seemingly foundational role these readerly behaviors play in postsecondary literacy. As Adams (2016) has noted, "comprehension" may be associated with "remedial reading skills" (p. 81), so well-intentioned writing instructors might resist what they perceive to be reductive pedagogies.

In pointing to the tacit demands of paraphrasing and summarizing, Bazerman (1980) also highlights the value of these readerly behaviors, stating that:

Paraphrase encourages precise understanding of individual terms and statements; the act of translating thoughts from one set of words to another makes the student consider exactly what was said and what was not [...] Summary reveals the structure of arguments and the continuity of thought; the student must ferret out the important claims and those elements that unify the entire piece of writing. (p. 658)

Of course, asking students to assume a purely reportorial stance in their annotated bibliographies limits their agency to some degree. Instead, instructors can extend purely content-based annotated bibliographies by

asking students to read critically or rhetorically, then exhibit those readerly behaviors within their entries for each source. In this way, annotated bibliographies—like any assigned genre—can be adapted to meet the demands of an upcoming writing assignment.

### **Facilitating Reading-Writing Connections by Analyzing "Moves"**

Of the fourteen readerly behaviors that anchored my survey, reading like a writer received nearly universal support as a prominent feature of TAs' collective reading pedagogy at this FYC site: 96% of the 24 TAs definitively agreed that reading like a writer was important for students' success in FYC, and 92% definitively agreed that they explicitly addressed this readerly behavior in their teaching practices. By teaching students to read like a writer, instructors guide students towards "identify[ing] some of the choices [an] author made so that you can better understand how such choices might arise in [their] own writing" and "looking at the writerly techniques in the text in order to decide if [they] might want to adopt similar (or the same) techniques" (Bunn, 2011, p. 72).

"Moves" is a term that compositionists have used to characterize writers' choices and techniques. Harris (2006), for instance, outlines five broad moves that reflect how academics use texts when contributing to scholarly conversations: coming to terms, forwarding, countering, taking an approach, and revising. Graff and Birkenstein (2010) propose a more concrete application of moves in their popular *They Say, I Say* text—subtitled "The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing"—as a way of describing how scholars deploy signposts and transitions to guide readers through their work. By becoming more familiar with some of the common moves of academic discourse, students can gain greater fluency with more clearly distinguishing between different writers' perspectives on a given topic and

inserting their own voices into the conversation. In this way, Graff and Birkenstein teach moves so students can make reading-writing connections between what they read (i.e., other writers' moves) and what they write (i.e., similar moves they can make in their own writing).

In my teaching practices, I use moves more expansively as a way to invite readers to speculate about any possible writerly decision. Instead of exclusively reading for content, moves becomes a conceptual tool for reading for construction. When students begin to see what I call the "architexture" of texts, they can detect reading-writing connections, then apply those connections in their own written work.

I scaffold these ideas with a three-tiered activity. I return to an assigned text that we have already read, and I ask students to (1) name a move, (2) describe that move, and then (3) evaluate that move's effectiveness. Consider the "Hook and Sinker" as one hypothetical example, where an author uses the same move to open a piece (i.e., the "Hook") as they do to finish it (i.e., the "Sinker"). Another student could call this move the "Full Circle"; the name itself is immaterial. What matters is that students are gaining practice with analyzing texts through an architextural lens and adapting moves to enhance their writing development.

Yet another iteration of moves manifests from the following passage in which Downs (2010) articulates a highly sophisticated reading pedagogy. He does not cast this practice as teaching moves, per se, but he clearly leverages aspects of reading like a writer as a means of empowering students' ability to disentangle logical structures—an activity that also appears to cultivate two readerly stances, reading critically and reading rhetorically. Downs states:

Discussions of claims, argument, and partiality usually start with the problem of objectivity and language. A class can proceed by picking words out of an article

and having students list synonyms, and then asking: 'Why did the author choose *this* word and not *that* one? How did it shape the text?' When students see language as inevitably selective and partial, it becomes possible to question objectivity, and from there to help students see scholarly texts as *more* and *less* objective but always claim-based, not fact-based. (p. 38, emphasis in original)

Based on their survey responses, the TAs who participated in this study would seem to embrace Downs' "claims, argument, and partiality" method. In fact, 78% and 88% of TAs, respectively, definitively agreed that reading critically and reading rhetorically were important for students' success. A slightly smaller percentage, however, explicitly addressed these two readerly behaviors in their teaching practices. Writing instructors in search of ways to integrate these readerly behaviors into their pedagogies might consider adapting Downs' approach.

### **Cultivating Process-Sensitive Readerly Metastances During Peer Review Workshops**

A readerly metastance emerged from TAs' interviews: harnessing selective attention of textual criteria. This readerly behavior suggests that readers, depending on their particular purpose(s) for reading, can benefit by limiting their focus to particular textual features and textual qualities—a distinction Broad (2003) brings to conceptualizing assessment. Instructors can fine-tune this metastance by setting process-sensitive goals. For example, when facilitating peer review workshops, instructors can guide students' reading by asking them to prioritize higher-order concerns for early drafts. Striking such a process-sensitive balance may enhance the likelihood that students will embrace some of Writing Studies' most transformative threshold concepts for reading and writing development: writing is a social and rhetorical activity, all writers have more to learn, text is

an object outside of oneself that can be improved and developed, and revision is central to developing writing (Adler-Kassner & Wardle, 2015).

Peer review workshops afford the prospect of cultivating, perhaps, two of the most prized readerly behaviors in FYC: revising and editing. In pursuit of these goals—before students begin reading and responding to each other’s work—instructors can calibrate students’ selective attention of textual criteria by, first, foregrounding particular textual features and qualities. Once they have been established, the class can practice those readerly behaviors together using a sample text. The results of this study affirm the perceived importance of this method. At least 75% of the 24 TAs, for instance, definitively agreed that analyzing samples, discussing a text with classmates, and using sources in papers were important for students’ success in FYC and were explicitly addressed in their teaching practices. During peer review workshops, students’ selective attention can be directed towards a range of other readerly behaviors: determining authorial intent, disentangling logical structures, evaluating points/claims, asking questions about a text/author, reverse outlining, and gauging source-assignment chemistry.

## Conclusion

In surveys and follow-up interviews, 24 FYC TAs articulated the roles that reading played within their courses. Out of fourteen readerly behaviors—an all-encompassing term used to describe what readers think, feel, or do before, during, or after the act of reading—TAs perceived four to be especially important for students’ success in FYC: comprehending content, reading rhetorically, reading like a writer, and using sources in papers. These findings position the act of reading as significant intellectual labor within FYC and, likely, across the disciplines. An array of additional readerly behaviors emerged from the qualitative data, suggesting that the act of reading plays a complex and nearly omnipresent role across instructors’ reading pedagogies, thereby extending direct implications for students’ writing development. By illuminating readerly behaviors, particularly through reader-response pedagogies, instructors can find ways to systematically scaffold and value students’ tacit labor. Such efforts send two clear signals to students, faculty colleagues, and administrators: (1) the quality of students’ reading matters and (2) good reading requires more than manual labor—it requires intellectual labor.

## References

- Adler-Kassner, L., & Estrem, H. (2007). Readings in the writing classroom. *Writing Program Administration, 31*(1), 35-47.
- Adler-Kassner, L., & Wardle, E. (2015). *Naming what we know: Threshold concepts in writing studies*. Boulder, CO: University State University Press.
- Armstrong, S., & Lampi, J. (2017). PILLAR: A reading strategy for a new era of strategy instruction at the college level. *Journal of College Literacy and Learning, 43*, 3-17.
- Bailey, N. (1988). S-RUN: Beyond SQ3R. *Journal of Reading, 32*(2), 170-171.

- Bazerman, C. (1980). A relationship between reading and writing: The conversational model. *College English*, 41(6), 656–61.
- Blau, S. (2003). *The literature workshop*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Brent, D. (2013). The research paper, and why we should still care. *Writing Program Administration*, 31(1), 33-53.
- Broad, B. (2003). *What we really value: Beyond rubrics in teaching and assessing writing*. Logan, UT: Utah University Press.
- Bunn, M. (2011). Reading like a writer. *Writing Spaces*, 2, 71-86.
- Bunn, M. (2013). Motivation and connection: Teaching reading (and writing) in the composition classroom. *College Composition and Communication*, 64(3), 496-516.
- Bunn, M. (2016). Reimagining workshop: Recognizing and expanding the role of reading. *Pedagogy*, 16(1), 53-71.
- Burke, K. (1973). *The philosophy of literary form: Studies in symbolic action*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Carillo, E. (2015). *Securing a place for reading in composition: The importance of teaching for transfer*. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press.
- Charmaz, K. (2001). Grounded theory. In R. M. Emerson (Ed.), *Contemporary field research* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) (pp. 335-352). Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.
- Coiro, J. (2011). Talking about reading as thinking: Modeling the hidden complexities of online reading comprehension. *Theory into Practice*, 50(2), 107–15.
- Donald, J. (2009). The commons: Disciplinary and interdisciplinary encounters. In C. Kreber (Ed.), *The university and its disciplines* (pp. 35-49). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Downs, D., & Wardle, E. (2007). Teaching about writing, righting misconceptions: (Re)envisioning “First-Year Composition” as “Introduction to Writing Studies.” *College Composition and Communication*, 58(4), 552-584.
- Downs, D. (2010). Teaching first-year writers to use texts: Scholarly readings in writing-about-writing in first-year comp. *Reader*, 60, 19-50.
- Elbow, P. (1983). Teaching thinking by teaching writing. *Change*, 15(6), 37-40.
- Elbow, P. (1998). *Writing without teachers*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Fisher-Ari, T., & Ari, O. (2017). The STC as a potential framework for college reading, writing, and engaged learning. *Journal of College Literacy and Learning*, 43, 18-35.

- Goldschmidt, M. (2010). Marginalia: Teaching texts, teaching readers, teaching writers. *Reader*, 60, 51-69.
- Graff, G., & Birkenstein, C. (2010). *They say, I say: The moves that matter in academic writing*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Co.
- Harris, J. (2006). *Rewriting: How to do things with texts*. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press.
- Howard, R., Serviss, T., & Rodrigue, T. (2010). Writing from sources, writing from sentences. *Writing and Pedagogy*, 2(2), 177-192.
- Inoue, A. (2014). A grade-less writing course that focuses on labor and assessing. In D. Coxwell-Teague & R. Lunsford, *First-year composition: From theory to practice* (pp. 71-110). Anderson, SC: Parlor Press.
- Kreber, C. (Ed.). (2009). Supporting student learning in the context of diversity, complexity, and uncertainty. In C. Kreber (Ed.), *The university and its disciplines* (pp. 3-19). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Lockhart, T., & Soliday, M. (2016). The critical place of reading in writing transfer (and beyond): A report of student experiences. *Pedagogy*, 16(1), 23-37.
- Middendorf, J., & Pace, D. (2004). Decoding the disciplines: A model for helping students learn disciplinary ways of thinking. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, 98, 1-12.
- Miller, R. (2016). On digital reading. *Pedagogy*, 16(1), 153-164.
- National Census of Writing. (2013). *Four-Year Institution Survey*. Retrieved from [writingcensus.swarthmore.edu/survey/4](http://writingcensus.swarthmore.edu/survey/4).
- Reid, A. (2014). The activity of writing: Affinity and affect in composition. In D. Coxwell-Teague & R. Lunsford, *First-year composition: From theory to practice* (pp. 184-210). Anderson, SC: Parlor Press.
- Rosenberg, K. (2011). Reading games: Strategies for reading scholarly sources. *Writing Spaces*, 2, 210-220.
- Rosenblatt, L. (1978). *The Reader, the text, the poem: The transactional theory of the literary work*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Saldaña, J. (2009). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Salvatori, M. (1996). Conversations with texts: Reading in the teaching of composition. *College English*, 58(4), 440-454.
- Salvatori, M., & Donahue, P. (2012). What is college English? Stories about reading: Appearance, disappearance, morphing, and revival. *College English*, 75(2), 199-217.

- Singleton, R., & Straits, B. (2010). *Approaches to social research*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Soliday, M. (2011). *Everyday genres: Writing assignments across the disciplines*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Spradley, J. P. (1979). *The ethnographic interview*. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers.
- Tierney, R., & Pearson, D. (1983). Toward a composing model of reading. *Reading and Education Report*, 60(5), 568-580.
- Villanueva, V. (2014). For the love of language: A curriculum. In D. Coxwell-Teague & R. Lunsford, *First-year composition: From theory to practice* (pp. 257-275). Anderson, SC: Parlor Press.
- Wardle, E., & Downs, D. (2014). Looking into writing-about-writing classrooms. In D. Coxwell-Teague & R. Lunsford, *First-year composition: From theory to practice* (pp. 276-321). Anderson, SC: Parlor Press.
- Yancey, K., Robertson, L., & Taczak, K. (2014). *Writing across contexts: Transfer, composition, and sites of writing*. Boulder, CO: University State University Press.