

## USING CITATION ANALYSIS IN WRITING CENTER TUTORIALS TO ENCOURAGE DEEPER ENGAGEMENT WITH SOURCES

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Before I became a writing center director, I remember in my own work as a tutor feeling frustrated when students brought in research papers. Most of the students' questions had to do with formatting the bibliographic entries or parenthetical notes, but I would often notice that the sources used to support thesis statements were seemingly arbitrarily chosen (perhaps an encyclopedia entry, two news stories from questionable news outlets, and a couple of other random web sources, such as a blog entry and an organization's website) and often not used effectively to support points. For example, it was not unusual to see very lengthy blocked quotations and quotations dropped into paragraphs with no signal phrases and no interpretation or analysis. I would try to steer sessions toward discussion of more scholarly ways to use source material, but I seldom felt that those discussions went anywhere. When I asked about the high proportion of quoted material, most students told me something along the lines of, "My professor said quoting is good" or "I don't have time to write a good paraphrase—my paper is due in an hour. Can you just check my MLA format?" On the odd occasion when a student did seem interested in working with their source integration, I was at a loss for strategies to use and often resorted to lecturing the student on how to paraphrase. My fellow tutors had no suggestions, and the standard tutoring guides of the time didn't address helping students with research.<sup>1</sup> I also wondered if it was within my purview as a writing tutor to talk with students about their source choices and their source use. None of my training or reading about tutoring had dealt with how to help students with their source use.

Given that much research indicates that students need help finding and using quality academic sources, intervening in students' source selection and integration is important. In their study of how students select and use library and internet sources, researchers Vicki Burton and Scott Chadwick found that students' top priorities when looking at online sources were how easy the source was to find and understand, while whether or not a source was peer-reviewed was thirteenth and "has been cited by

others" came in last of all criteria, at twenty-third. In another study of how students select sources, Randall McClure and Kelliann Clink found that students often prioritize the usefulness of quotations to make a point over the level of authority or credibility of the source. Most recently, the Citation Project, a study of student source use strategies in first-year writing courses, reported that students tend to use reference sources rather than sources that present original research, that students don't seem to read those sources deeply enough to summarize them (relying instead on quoting, patchwriting, and paraphrasing of largely cherry-picked sentences), and that students seem to have little of their own to say (Jamieson and Howard). Danielle DeVoss asks, "Is a writing center doing too much by attempting to address issues related to internet research . . . ? Is it a writing center's responsibility to teach the computer skills often required before rhetorical writing-related issues can be addressed?" (183). I want to take up a slight variation on that question: Is it a writing center's responsibility to address matters related to source selection and integration often required to address writing-from-sources issues? In this essay, I explore briefly why the answer should be yes<sup>2</sup> and then discuss how citation analysis, the methodology of the Citation Project, has been used in the writing center I direct to do this.

### Student Research as Writing Center Territory

Luckily, several things happened that made me feel more comfortable with claiming students' research practices as legitimate writing center territory. A number of librarians and writing center professionals began pioneering collaborations between libraries and writing centers, and in 2005, an entire collection about these collaborations came out: Elmborg and Hook's *Centers for Learning: Writing Centers and Libraries in Collaboration*. A steady trickle of articles on writing center/library collaborations and writing center approaches to information literacy began appearing in *The Writing Lab Newsletter*.<sup>3</sup> As I wrote my dissertation in 2006, I noticed that my own research and writing practices were inextricably connected. I wasn't simply

“writing up” my research; rather, I was finding what Colleen Boff and Barbara Toth assert to be true: “research and writing processes are better treated as consciously related” (148). In fact, I couldn’t say exactly where my research “ended” and my “writing” began. Just as we now tend to see writing as a meaning-making endeavor (Berthoff), library professionals are viewing information literacy as part of a knowledge-making process (Elmborg). It seems to be a commonplace now that writing is recursive rather than linear. We know that writing informs research and research informs writing. To artificially delineate a research process that is detached from a writing process denies this. To separate research from writing and declare that librarians and professors can help students with their research but the writing center can’t seems counterproductive.

Rebecca Moore Howard uses the term “writing from sources” to describe writing that draws on source material. I prefer this term to the more widely used—at least on my campus—“research paper” because it acknowledges that not all writing that grows out of research becomes a “paper,” but more importantly, because it emphasizes writing. As a writing center director, my goal is to have my tutors facilitating students’ writing processes and their metacognitive awareness of those processes above all else. When students are writing from sources, the selection, comprehension, and integration of those sources is part of their writing processes as much as experiences that shape a students’ opinions are part of their discovery processes, which we routinely assume to be part of writing processes. We cannot separate source gathering, selection, reading and understanding, analyzing, and synthesizing practices from writing practices in any meaningful way.

One obstacle to claiming students’ research processes as part of writing center territory is that students don’t think of the writing center as a place to go for help with source selection or citation. Mardi Mahaffy’s 2008 study of students’ likelihood of working with a writing tutor in the library versus working with a librarian in the writing center found that students are much more likely to ask for writing help in the library. In fact, Mahaffy notes that students were so unlikely to seek out library help in the writing center that the number of students the librarian [in the writing center] assisted averaged about two per week, *with several weeks resulting in no traffic whatsoever*. Changing the times the librarian was available did not improve matters. When students had the opportunity to sign up for appointments, few people chose to do so. [italics mine] (176)

Mahaffy’s study had librarians in the writing center, while I am suggesting that writing center tutors themselves should be prepared to help students with some research concerns, but the fact that students are so unlikely to think of asking for research help in the writing center remains an obstacle regardless. In fact, faculty and tutors at my university, too, were at first skeptical about whether students’ source selection is legitimate territory for writing center work.

Interestingly, our library staff had no reservations at all about the writing center working with students on source concerns and generously provided several trainings for my tutors and me on library resources and research strategies. These trainings sparked conversations among the tutors about how many aspects of writing involve research, such as topic selection and development. In discussing her writing center’s taking on technology issues, DeVoss points out that “writers and writing are our focus . . . not computers” (181), and I would make the same point about our taking on of students’ research practices. The writer and his or her development remains our focus, and in as far as the writer must also be a researcher to write effectively, we work with the student on research concerns.

The question, then, is how can writing center tutors work productively with students who are writing from sources? When I was introduced to the methodology of the Citation Project in 2010, I immediately saw applications for writing center work.

### Citation Analysis

At the 2010 Conference on College Composition and Communication, I attended an all-day workshop facilitated by Sandra Jamieson, Rebecca Moore Howard, and several of the contributing researchers on the Citation Project. In their study of student source citation practices, the Citation Project researchers gathered research papers written by students in first-year writing courses at 16 institutions and described the source-citation moves the students made in those papers. Comparing the source material cited with the students’ papers, researchers coded each of the 1911 citations found in the 174 papers that were studied, highlighting material that was copied verbatim, summarized, paraphrased, and patchwritten (the term Howard coined for an attempt at paraphrase that stays too close to the original wording and syntax), in different colors. The purpose of the workshop was to train participants in this methodology, citation analysis. As used in the Citation Project, citation analysis involves four steps:

1. Identifying source citations in the student's draft (the "boxing" I refer to below, as researchers draw a "box" around citations in students' drafts to set that text apart from other text).
2. Reading the source material and describing the strategies used by the student in citing the source: copying, either marked as quotation or not; patchwriting; paraphrasing; or summarizing.
3. Highlighting the cited material to indicate the strategy used: blue for copying, yellow for patchwriting, green for paraphrasing, pink for summarizing.
4. Recording on a spreadsheet the source name, the page of the source where the cited material is, and whether copying/quoting, patchwriting, paraphrasing, or summarizing was used.

The resulting coded and highlighted paper shows at a glance the proportion of cited material to original material.<sup>4</sup> The spreadsheet clearly indicates how many times each citation move was utilized, how much each individual source was relied upon, and how many pages into each source citations go.

I realized that writing center consultants could use boxing and highlighting to help students better understand their own source usage. But I quickly became bogged down in practicalities: I wondered how to teach students in a 40 minute tutorial to do what it was taking the workshop facilitators all day to teach me how to do. I wondered how I could possibly get anything in place before "research paper season"—the last four weeks of every semester—hit, as it was already late March. And I wondered how my tutors—a mix of professional tutors and peer-tutors—would react to my suggestion that we, in effect, code student papers with them.

### Implementation

In the airport waiting for my flight home, I hastily planned a training session for my tutoring staff for the following week. The training was chaotic but productive. After demonstrating the techniques and giving tutors time to practice and talk with each other about whether something was patchwriting or summarizing or paraphrasing, I asked them to play with the ideas in small groups, either directly discussing ideas they had for integrating the techniques into tutorials or simply sharing concerns, thoughts, and ideas about citation analysis. Several tutors thought that simply having a student box all his or her citations would give the student an instant picture of what proportion of a draft was his or her voice and

what percentage was from sources. Others thought that having students highlight a few pages' worth of citations would help them see how much paraphrase, patchwriting, summarizing, and copying they were using. Others thought that keeping a log sheet, similar to the Citation Project spreadsheet, in which students recorded how long their sources were and which page of the source their citation came from would help students see how their reading habits and levels of critical reading might be undermining their ethos.

Tutors began slowly integrating citation analysis strategies and ideas into their tutoring in their own ways, some more than others. Some tutors immediately began looking for opportunities to integrate citation analysis, while others were much more tentative. In my observations and discussions with tutors, an interesting problem became apparent. As tutors reported back to me on how citation analysis was working in their sessions and how they were incorporating it, we began to recognize the problem I had experienced myself as a tutor so many years before: students don't ask for help with their source integration; they ask for help with formatting bibliographic entries and parenthetical notes. This puts all the pressure on the tutor to bring up sources and their integration.

About 40% of our sessions are "research writing tutorial" sessions. The students requesting these sessions typically want help with bibliographic entries and then other general writing issues. Almost never do they ask specifically for help with how they selected or used a source. They often assume one source is as valuable as the next, so it doesn't make sense to them to ask for feedback on source selection; and as the Citation Project findings show, students tend to rely on quotation over more complex forms of source use, and they don't usually reflect upon this practice, so again, it makes no sense to them to ask for feedback on that (Jamieson and Howard).

As in most writing centers, tutors and students negotiate an agenda for their tutorial, usually based first on what motivated the student to come to the writing center and then by concerns raised for the tutor during a quick perusal of the draft or brainstorming or other writing the student has brought. Because students do not typically think to ask questions about their source usage and don't seem to have concerns about their citations beyond the formatting, when the agenda is being negotiated, students don't bring up their source selection or use. Tutors admitted they often forget to bring it up because the student doesn't mention it or ask about it. As one tutor explained, "I start sessions by asking, 'What would you like to look at today?' They never

say, ‘How I used my sources.’ Maybe they want help with the bibliographic entries. It’s up to me to say, ‘Why don’t we look at how you’ve used those sources in your draft?’”

In year-end conversations with me, about a year after I first introduced citation analysis to the tutors, several tutors said they still needed help simply talking with the students who came in about source material. That led to me writing a set of questions over the summer that tutors could integrate into tutorials. The questions relate to source selection, such as “Why did you choose this source?”, and engagement with sources, such as “What argument does this source make?”<sup>5</sup>

In our most recent year-end meeting, five years after first integrating citation analysis into tutorials, tutors reported that it’s becoming more second-nature to them to ask students about their sources, and that occasionally a student will even ask about source selection or integration—usually a student who has had a productive writing center session using citation analysis in the past, or, as happened recently, a student who heard from a friend who had used the writing center that we had “a really cool way to help [with source use].” Most of the time, however, the pressure is still on the tutor to raise the issues of source selection and integration. We talked about the importance of having visual cues in the writing center to remind tutors to bring it up. We joked about having the tutors wear buttons saying, “Ask me to ask you about your sources,” but settled on the more conservative approach of printing some prompts for the tutors onto fluorescent paper and taping those to the tables where tutoring takes place.

While we continue to look for ways to discuss source selection and integration with students, our practice has shifted noticeably toward treating source use beyond the formatting of bibliographic entries and parenthetical notes.

### **What Citation Analysis as a Tutoring Technique Looks Like**

Different tutors have operationalized citation analysis in different ways, with some having students highlight their own citations, others focusing on helping students track which page of their sources their citations are from, and many feeling most comfortable simply engaging students in conversations about how they selected, evaluated, and documented their sources. Because of the broad range of ways citation analysis has been implemented in the writing center, I have come to call any technique that results in close readings of source citations, whether in the

student’s own writing or in the source material the student is working with, “citation analysis.” Every table in our writing center has a set of highlighters with labels that correspond to the Citation Project terms: pink for summary, green for paraphrase, yellow for patchwriting, and blue for copying and quotation. While the highlighters serve as a visual cue to remind tutors to consider bringing up a students’ sources, the use of highlighters is certainly not a mandatory element for something to be considered citation analysis. Much of what occurs in the writing center that I consider to be citation analysis relies on discussion and close reading and may or may not result in a color-coded draft.

Applying citation analysis to the source material students are using—that is, when students identify, describe, and highlight source citations in their sources rather than in their own writing—facilitates close readings of source material, using source material as models, and sometimes, fairly nuanced discussions of how source citation contributes to a writer’s ethos. Applying citation analysis to a student’s draft allows the student and tutor to see in a very concrete and visual way what percentage of the draft is in the student’s voice and whether one particular citation strategy, such as copying marked as quotation, is used significantly more than others. This, in turn, can lead to better understanding of sources, better source selection, and better source integration; however, it can also lead to more traditional writing center concerns, as the following example shows.

In a tutorial shortly after the first citation analysis training, a tutor worked with a student who was writing an expository research paper for his junior-level oceanography class. He came in with a ten-page draft and told his tutor he felt something was missing from his paper. He didn’t know if he needed more information, a different organizational structure, or something else, but he felt that somehow, he wasn’t conveying his enthusiasm for the topic. The tutor began reading the paper aloud and at the end of page three, she asked him to rate his level of captivation as a reader. He said it was low and at that point, the tutor worked with him on boxing and highlighting the citations on those three pages. The paper was a riot of color at that point, green for paraphrase and blue for copying predominating. The tutor remarked that she saw lots of “other voices here” but not his. She suggested that his voice was what was missing. The student explained that he wanted to come across as scholarly, and he thought that to do that, he needed to minimize his voice. The tutor asked him to begin boxing and highlighting the one source he had brought with him. They then compared the amount of

highlighted material in the source to the amount in the student's draft and the student immediately saw that the source had much more original material in it. The close reading forced by the highlighting also prompted the student to notice that the source used some descriptive language to create a picture in the reader's mind. He left determined to revise substantially, making his own voice the prominent voice in the paper and adding more descriptive language, which he had shied away from, thinking it "not academic enough."

In a more recent tutorial, a student needed help writing a one-page summary of a single article. As part of the assignment, the student was required to come to the writing center, but she wasn't particularly interested in revising her summary because she felt that it already did what the assignment required. After glancing over the article and the student's draft, the tutor asked the student to explain what a summary is and the student mentioned that it should be in her own words. The tutor asked the student if she thought her summary was in her own words and the student hesitated. At that point, the tutor asked the student to look at the source article and her own summary side by side and highlight every single word in her summary that also appeared in the source. When she finished and looked at her mostly-highlighted draft, the student was visibly shocked. She thanked the tutor profusely and said she knew exactly how she needed to revise her summary.

The final example I want to share gets specifically at one of the Citation Project findings that my tutors and I found particularly distressing: students do not seem to be reading entire sources. In fact, the first three pages of a source seem to be cited much more heavily than pages deeper in a source. Aware of this finding, one tutor worked with a student who was writing a brief position paper for his political science class. The draft was just shy of being three pages long and had three lengthy blocked quotations as well as several other shorter quotations, all from the same source. The tutor asked a few questions about the source and learned it was an article from a peer-reviewed journal. In examining the citations a little more closely, she and the student realized all of the quotations were from the first two pages of the 27-page article. The tutor asked the student about the other 25 pages of the article and the student admitted he had only read the first two pages and then skimmed the rest, which was "just examples and stuff." The tutor asked the student why the author of the article might think those examples are important. Eventually the student got to the idea that if the examples and development are weak, the findings stated in the first

two pages that were quoted might not be legitimate. The session ended with the student deciding to read the entire article closely and come back for another session in two days. When the student came back, he had actually shifted the position he took on the subject and his draft was much more exploratory. In other words, the tutorial had prompted the student to engage in what Nancy Welch calls "excessive revision," emphasizing reflection, fairly radical revision, engaged reading, and dialogue.

These examples show how citation analysis is being used in the writing center to help students, as David Bartholomae would say, invent the university—that is, learn to "speak as we do, to try on the peculiar ways of knowing, selecting, evaluating, reporting, concluding, and arguing that define the discourse of our community" (624)—and recognize places for themselves and their voices in it. As Gwendolyn Pough said in her Chair's Address at the 2011 Conference on College Composition and Communication, "We have to teach [students] to think about what they hear. To listen, really listen" (309). Using citation analysis as a teaching and tutoring tool is one way to do this. Citation analysis can force a deeper, more meaningful engagement with sources, helping students see them as voices they are in conversation with, rather than voices they are reporting on, and also as models for their own work.

### Implications

Clearly, integrating citation analysis, whether boxing, highlighting, or simply doing a close examination of source material, into tutorials can be a powerful way to focus students' attention on the ways they and the sources they cite are in conversation. Despite the growing number of collaborations between libraries and writing centers, students themselves generally do not see their source use as part of their writing process, so writing centers that choose to intervene in students' research processes will need to provide plenty of training for tutors in how to do this. I want to conclude then by sharing suggestions for training that can be integrated into tutor preparation courses or professional development:

- Schedule a session in which a librarian discusses how to help students decide which data bases to use for their research and how to identify keywords to use in data base searches.
- Share the results of the Citation Project with tutoring staff to familiarize them with typical student information behavior, such as not

reading an entire source. The Citation Project's website includes helpful graphics that visually convey findings. The Citation Project's findings are particularly compelling because the general trends--not reading entire sources, quoting much more than summarizing, etc.--were seen across institutions, regardless of whether the school was an Ivy League or a community college.

- Teach tutors how to use citation analysis (boxing; identifying and highlighting copying, quoting, patchwriting, paraphrasing, and summarizing; completing a spreadsheet to record the source use moves noted and the page number for the source citation).
- Have tutors box and code their own writing from sources and then reflect on their findings to help them understand how powerful the experience is.
- Either provide tutors with a list of questions they can ask students about their source use or facilitate a brainstorming session in which tutors come up with questions they might ask, and then give tutors practice through role playing in integrating these questions into sessions.

Finally, let your library staff and instructors of courses that involve writing from sources know that the writing center will be working with students on their source use. The more often librarians and faculty remind students that the writing center can help them with their source use, the more likely it is that students will ask writing tutors for help with source use.

As information literacy gets more attention from faculty across the disciplines, writing centers must be equipped to help students with every aspect of their writing processes, including the selection, comprehension, and integration of sources into their writing.

#### Notes

1. This remains true today. Ryan and Zimmerelli's *The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors*, now in its fifth edition, has one page on working with students who are writing from sources. Gillespie and Lerner's *Longman Guide to Peer Tutoring*, in its second edition, does not have any explicit treatment of working with students who are writing from sources. Rafoth's *A Tutor's Guide: Helping Writers One to One*, in its second edition, has five pages focused on helping students summarize, paraphrase, and document sources. These are all excellent books that I've either used myself as a tutor,

used in training tutors, or both; however, their lack of coverage of working with students who are writing from sources is indicative of how difficult it is for tutors to find resources on this subject.

2. I discuss this issue more fully in "Writing Centers, Ethics, and Excessive Research" in the Fall 2011 issue of *Computers & Composition Online*.

3. See, for example, James Elmborg's February 2006 "Locating the Center: Libraries, Writing Centers, and Information Literacy" and Sam Van Horne's April 2009 "Teaching Information Literacy in the Writing Center."

4. More information about the Citation Project is available at <http://site.citationproject.net/>. The homepage includes an image of a boxed and coded paper.

5. A complete list of the questions is available in "Writing Centers, Ethics, and Excessive Research" in the Fall 2011 issue of *Computers & Composition Online*.

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