My motivation to restructure the Writing Center’s tutor training process grew from a need to facilitate the academic and professional development of Moravian students who work as peer tutors and as Student Advisors in First Year Seminar courses. Our tutors and advisors provide crucial support to student writers across campus. Tutors often desire to learn more about tutoring pedagogy and wish to extend their practice beyond the typical four hours per week that most spend in the Writing Center. With the support of the CAT Summer Pedagogy Grant, I was able to research and develop a new course, English 296: Tutoring & Writing, which addresses these needs.

Presently, Writing Center tutors and FYS student advisors participate in a half-unit training workshop that presents basic pedagogical theories as well as concrete strategies for working with student writers. Due to the nature of a half-unit course, however, hopeful tutors and I rarely have the opportunity to delve into information beyond that which is necessary to develop a solid foundation of tutoring techniques. As a result, my objective in establishing English 296 was to allow for greater engagement with theoretical background and current scholarship on tutoring, while still providing opportunities for hands on learning—practice responding to real student work, observations of Writing Center sessions, and discussions about the day to day routines in the writing Center.

I began my planning by combing through recent articles on tutor training published in *The Writing Center Journal* and *The Writing Lab Newsletter*, and by gathering information from WCenter, an email listserv for those involved in writing center work. Though I found a great deal of information from published sources, the conversations that unfolded on the WCenter listserv proved to be the most valuable resources in my endeavor. It seems that I was not the only one
revamping a tutor training course over the summer. I eagerly read and occasionally participated as emails detailing the merits of particular texts and assignments regularly landed in my inbox, and I’m grateful for the generosity of other writing center directors who freely shared their ideas and experiences with various systems for tutor training. From these resources I was able to gather a number of articles to supplement those used in the previous training course, as well as to troubleshoot assignment ideas.

As I built my syllabus and wrestled with the course calendar, I arrived at a mix of a seminar and a workshop model. Half of our class meetings will be spent reviewing and discussing the week’s assigned readings, which are organized thematically and centered around a variety of topics. Some of these topics are of particular relevance to the Moravian student population (developmental writers, adult students, and English Language Learners), while others address our evolving relationship with technology (multimodal projects, online tutoring, and digital writing tools). The other half of our class meetings will allow time for students to develop their academic writing skills through work on in-depth projects that combine scholarly research with a hands-on, concrete product of use to tutors, students, and instructors across campus. For example, students in this semester’s class have already established plans to create an anti-plagiarism workshop, a workshop for ESL/ELL writers, and a comprehensive guide to tutoring services on campus.

Because the course is still unfolding (it runs in Spring 2015) there are some unanswered questions about what these student projects will look like upon completion—but I am excited about the possibilities. Writing Center scholarship is an area where undergraduate voices are uniquely welcomed and encouraged, so it is my intention that students enrolled in English 296 will present their research at regional or national conferences, submit reports of their progress to
print and online journals, and, of course, make their work available to Moravian students and faculty.

I am optimistic that the implementation of English 296 will allow for the academic and professional growth many of our Writing Center tutors desire and deserve. In turn, the entire campus community will benefit from their growth as more skillful tutors, and academics who are able to engage meaningfully with a variety of students in a variety of ways across campus.
Selected Works Consulted


