

# *The Efficacy of the Care and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy for at-Risk Students in Online Teaching and Learning*

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# Learning Outcomes

- Gain some knowledge of the tenets of the Care and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in higher education
- Shed new light on the efficacy of the Care and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy for linguistically at-risk students in online teaching and learning
- Better assist at-risk students in coping with achievement challenges
- Reflect on online teaching practices for at-risk students at the UofT



# Pedagogy of Care

- Inclusivity
- Care and active concern
- Sympathy
- Cultural Empathy

-Care is “relational ethic” (Beck & Cassidy, 2009) and the “ethics of care” (Rider, 2019, p. 197).

# Cultural Responsive Teaching

**Culturally Responsive Teaching** is “the pedagogy that recognizes the importance of including students’ **cultural references** in all aspects of learning” (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

**Culturally Responsive Teaching** is “inclusive,” “empowering,” “transformative,” “emancipatory,” and “humanistic” (Gay, 2018, p. 38-44).



# At-risk Students

**At-risk students** refer to those with extremely low-academic language competence, resulting in their struggle to cope with academic reading, writing, understanding lectures and meeting other academic expectations.

higher rates of failure in the first year of university, compared to linguistically competent peers (e.g. Fox, 2005; Roessingh & Douglas, 2012)

“linguistically at risk” (Elder & van Randow, 2008, p.176)....these are referred to as Band 1 students in our study



**1. What challenges have you encountered with low English proficiency students in your courses?**



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## 2. What would you wish for these linguistically at-risk students?



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# Supporting at-risk students during the pandemic

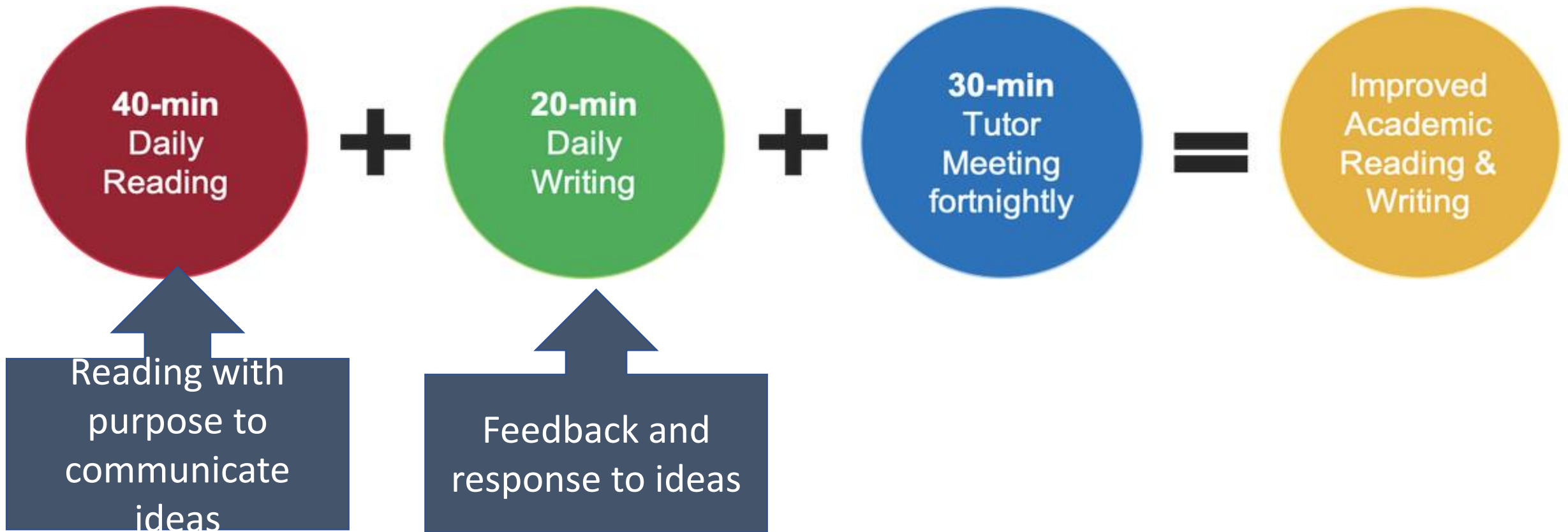


**The Reading and Writing Excellence (RWE) Program:**  
A non-credit program to develop students' academic language competence

- Shortened to 1 month
- Pivoted to fully online



# From student perspective: **Language usage and development using their course readings**



# Instructor perspective: **personalized support to meet individual student needs**



- Learner-centred: learner agency, learner self-regulation in language usage and practice in genuine communication
- Personalized feedback and guidance from writing instructor
- Inclusivity and empowerment
- instructor responses modeling language usage and critical thinking in supportive ways



# Methodology

## Research Question:

What is the efficacy of the Care and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy for at-risk students in online teaching and learning during the pandemic?

Research Site: Centre for Teaching and Learning, UTSC

Participants: RWE students in Care and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy group (n = 37; 12 in Fall and 25 in Winter)

## Qualitative Research Approach

Qualitative data sources: surveys, students' journal entries, instructor responses and instructor reflections



# The Cohort being supported in RWE in Fall

	Fall 2020
Enrolment	154
% students in <b>Band 1</b> (extremely low Academic English level)	52%
% who are English Language Learners	78%
International students	41%
No. of groups students divided into	8 groups



# Six Strategies of the Care and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

1. Cultural Bridging
2. Personalized Feedback
3. High Motivation
4. Learner Autonomy and Empowerment
5. Teachers as Facilitators
6. Humanize Learning



# 1. Cultural Bridging

- Build scaffolding between students' life experiences and where they are expected to reach in their academic life (Krasnof, 2016)**
- Build bridges between students' existing knowledge and the new knowledge they will acquire**



## 2. Personalized Feedback

- Cater to students' different backgrounds and needs
- Track the changes and improvement in each student's writing



### 3. High Motivation

- **Encourage students to voice their diverse perspectives**
- **Draw on students' capital**
- **Positive feedback followed by detailed suggestions**



## 4. Learner Autonomy and Empowerment

*I noticed my changes in many ways.*

- I started to read!*
- I started to read daily!*
- I found more time in a day to read. (I used to think I was too busy to read).*
- I can complete a full reading in a scheduled time. (I am more focused when I read)*
- I can read faster.*
- I came up with critical ideas easier.*
- I started to enjoy reading, and last but not least, I feel more comfortable in writing and reading assignments for my courses.*

*(Fall 2020 student reflection shared on Quercus with the student's permission)*



## 5. Teachers as Facilitators

-Teachers as collaborators

-Teachers as co-educators

-Teachers as co-learners



## 6. Humanize Learning

**-Care**

**-Compassion**

**-Value instead of evaluating students**



# Among Band 1 students who wrote at least 25 days in a month, how much written output was produced?

Fall 2020 (1 <sup>st</sup> iteration of fully online RWE)	Care + Culturally Responsive Teaching group	7 Other groups with standard RWE Pedagogy
No. of students	3	21
Average total no. of words written in ONE month	7390 words	6748 words

Students in all groups voluntarily wrote such a large volume of words within one month due to the personalized support in RWE. The Care + Culturally Responsive Teaching group wrote more, showing that accentuating the RWE pedagogy with Care + Culturally Responsive Teaching increased language practice for at-risk students.



# Insights we gained

## System set-up

- **Small DAILY investments** (250 words) → **transformative** achievement in 1 month
- Timely **personalized feedback** to serve individual learning needs
- Positive, **supportive, no-risk relationships** with students

## Key motivational strategies

- Make the daily practice task **manageable** (e.g. 20 mins), and students can **self-regulate** and **see own progress**
- Develop **self-worth**
- **Inclusivity** – develop **sense of belonging**



Limitations of the study

- exploratory, small size, so far only 2 iterations



# Application of Care and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

What the data affirms for us:

It is not what we do *for* the at-risk students, but what we do **WITH** them that changes their learning experience to *lead* to learner transformation.



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# Discussion Questions

1. What aspects of the Care and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy do you see possible in your own teaching contexts? This may include more than your formal class contact...think also of your office hours and email communication.
2. What are the challenges of incorporating more of the Care and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy?
3. If you reimagine different aspects of your teaching and communication with students, and your planning for your courses as well as educating them about say academic integrity, how will you apply your understanding of the Care and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy?



# Thank you

Would love to connect with you.

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