

Work History:

The majority of my writing has been for classwork or enjoyment. For enjoyment, I've written fiction. For classes, I've written both fiction and done technical writing for my math classes. Below, both of these will be present. I don't have any professional writing experience. My technical writing consists of working through problems and using proofs in mathematical scenarios. My fictional work consists of both poetry and fiction. I have also written several research papers.

The work below that I am presenting consists of a short fiction story that got published in *The Wabash Review* for the school year of 2021-2022. The second work is an opinionated research paper on how to improve consulting for writing centers. The last work is a technical piece covering a multivariable calculus problem.

L'Appel du Vide

Against the purple palette of a brisk, crisp morning, a harsh light enveloped my view. I flicked the wheel to the right, stopping on the curb. I stared, from the seat of my car. An apartment, a part of a much larger complex, was billowing flames and smoke, of yellow and black. I opened the door of my car and stared upwards. The apartment sat on the second floor.

“Help! I’m trapped!” The words were as clear as day. I could not distinguish whether it was male or female. There wasn’t enough time to think. I began to run. On the backswing of my arm, it knocked my phone out of my pants pocket. There wasn’t enough time. Without any hesitation, I continued forward, rushing into the complex.

I cleared the set of stairs with ease, quickly approaching the apartment. I stood adjacent to the door, delivering a powerful kick to the ball-shaped doorknob, taking it clean off. I stopped at the entrance, my face and lungs catching a ball of flames. I recoiled, spluttering to clear my chest of the harmful materials. For the first time, I found myself hesitating.

The doorway was completely engulfed in the same color I saw coming out of the window. Was it suicide to just run in? I paused.

There was a story on the news a few days ago. Linnea and I sat on our bed, sipping coffee in the comfort of our sheets. It was a story of a man who had stopped by the side of the road to help a car that was performing a balancing act on the edge of a mountain road. He opened her passenger side door, the one pointing away from the edge of the cliff and reached inside. As she leaned towards him, one of the rocks underneath the front left tire went out,

sending the car downwards, but he managed to save her. He grabbed her hand and pull her safely from the vehicle.

“What a hero.” I remarked.

“Hm.” Linnea, ever the contrarian, shook her head.

“How can you possibly say he’s anything less?” I asked. Instead of a verbal reply, she pointed out towards the TV. The screen displayed the man with his family and two kids, both appeared to be elementary school age. “Yes?”

“He could’ve given that up. What if he leaned too far forward and died? What if he left his family for dead?” She argued.

“I’m sure they’d be proud to know that he gave up his life trying to save someone.”

“That’s just great.” She began to mock me. “Well, now we have to make ends meet and my kids will go through development barely even knowing their dad. The son will never properly know how to be a man. He won’t be able to learn how to shave, how to tie a tie, how to perform basic tasks that men have to perform all because his father decided to play superhero in his forties.”

“Are you really mocking a man for saving someone?” I raised my voice. I can’t even remember the last time I did that.

“All I’m saying is that he has a family to look after. Prioritizing a stranger over family for the sake of being a hero isn’t a wise choice in my opinion.” I understood her argument but couldn’t help but disagree. I could sense a disarming tone in her voice. With a deep sigh I turned my attention from her back to the TV. “If you ever find yourself in a situation like that, god

forbid you try something like that. Ginny and I need you, y'know?" She placed her mug on the nightstand and rolled over to me. Her thumb grazed the stubble of my cheek.

"Of course."

"I'm sorry." I apologized as I ran through the smoke. I immediately began to cough. Any breath I took only caused me significant pain. My chest began to tighten, as if it was trying to constrict me from allowing anything more harmful into myself. After blindly running for a moment, I was able to locate the window. I dropped to a knee and stuck my head out, gasping for air. I saw a woman down on the ground, her face covered in soot. She was surrounded by firemen, some of whom were holding onto a trampoline.

I had to get out of here. I stood up again and turned. Through the smoke, I could see that the fire had spread through the rest of the apartment. I was trapped. With no other option I ran. The flames quickly caught onto the flammable substance of my pants. Due to this, I hesitated through the rest of the fire, causing feet to get caught under me. I slammed against the ground. The fire caught up to me, swallowing me whole. I screamed as my body began to be digested, quickly melting away like a wick. After what felt like an eternity, I stopped, accepted defeat and relaxed.

No, this wasn't how I was going to let it end. I rolled on the floor, putting myself out almost instantaneously.

"What?" I questioned. I was shocked that my Hail Mary attempt had worked. Now I stood up, flailing my arms around the room. I needed to find something, anything. The fire didn't kill

me, but if I wasn't fast, the smoke inhalation would. My hand found a wall. I followed it, walking along until I found a door. I opened it, walked through and closed it. I finally found myself able to breathe. The room was completely dark. I fiddled around again until my hand touched a light switch. The flash of light startled me. I kept my vision pointed towards my toes. Most of my pants were long gone, black at the edges. Shockingly, my skin showed no signs of damage. In fact, the only evidence that I had been in any sort of flame at all was the raggedy, burning breaths that, like sandpaper, seemed to take a layer of flesh off every time a breath was taken in or released.

In all honesty, I was scared to look at my face. I counted, one, two, three. I flicked my chin upward and opened my eyes.

"Nothing?" I asked. I don't know who the question was to. Was it to the higher being that was protecting me? Was it even to myself? Was I just lucky?

In disbelief, I grazed my finger against my right cheek. I yelped in pain and looked down at my finger. The top layer of skin had been burned off. I was sure that wasn't there earlier. I stared back up at the mirror, asking my face for an explanation. It gave me one. Like sap from a tree, my flesh was slowly running down my face. I could see my cheek bone poking through liquified skin, like the peak of a mountain piercing the clouds. I stared into my own eyes. I couldn't even identify if I felt any emotion. You don't see things like this. This isn't real. Even as I was thinking this, my skin didn't stop. The lava running down the face of the volcano doesn't stop. You can stare, wish for time to freeze. Like an avalanche, the rest of my face began to crawl away from me. Foolishly, I attempted to run from it, from my own body. I opened the door, preparing to inhale another plume of smoke.

There's an old quote. "Never go to bed angry. Stay up and fight." If there is a single disagreement of ours that has annoyed me the most, it would revolve around this quote.

My eyes were closed. I could feel the lull of sleep pulling me further into the bed.

"I need you to promise me that you'll never pull a stunt like that man on the news."

"What?" I groaned. I sat up and turned on my nightlight.

"You seemed distant just then." Her eyes moved from the foot of our bed to my eyes. "I need you to promise me that you'll never do something like that."

"Linnea, please."

"Promise." The words whistled through clenched teeth.

"I can't do that." I shook my head. Linnea released a frustrated breath.

"Why not?"

"Do I have to explain? Can we just go to sleep?" I rolled over, reaching for my light when I felt a hand on my shoulder.

"I'm not going to sleep until you tell me why." She fumed. "At least tell me that."

"Why are you getting so worked up over this?" I rolled back.

"We have a child on the way, Andy." She spat. "That is why."

"Really? Does my life now have some value to you now that you have a baby inside you?"

“You don’t think it does? We’re relying on you. I quit my job because of Ginny. Plus, don’t you feel like you have a new purpose, to raise a life together?”

“I’m just a little irked that you seem to only really want me around for the sake of the baby.”

“Pah!” She scoffed. “Do I need to bring that up? Of course, I would still want you around regardless. I thought it goes without saying. Ginny just adds some more meaning.”

“Listen,” I paused. “If I saw someone who was dying and could be saved, why would I not help them? If I see someone hanging from a cliff, do I not save them because I have a wife and kid? Wouldn’t you want someone to save you?”

“What is with these rhetorical questions? Don’t talk down to me.” Her face scrunched up. She was clearly holding back tears.

“I would expect someone to save you as I would save them. From one human to another, we’re there for each other.”

“We aren’t the same though! You can’t compare a stranger to us.” She sobbed. “I can’t believe you would give up everything for a random stranger because, what? It looks good. Your appeal to the human race?”

“Yeah. Each life is precious.” I was amazed that I kept my tone to a minimum at this point, but now my exhaustion was beginning to present itself.

“I’m going to get a glass of water.” She stood up and left the room in a haste. She didn’t even look at me before she left the room. I rolled over and turned off my light. By the time she would be back, I would be asleep. She was not going to get me up this time.

I opened the door, and I was back at the entrance of the apartment. I rubbed my eyes, shocked at what I was seeing. I turned and saw nothing. No door. There was no evidence of anything that I had just experienced. I opened the door to the apartment in curiosity.

The smoke billowed out of the room, throwing me back briefly. I ducked low and forced myself to move forward. Beyond the loud crackling of the fire, I could hear the sirens blaring from an approaching firetruck. I moved with the intention of finding the balcony.

My foot caught something, sending me to the floor. I was sure that wasn't there before, but I didn't question it. I had somewhere to go. I had burned up before, I wasn't going to do that again.

I reached the balcony and stared down like I did last time. I sharply inhaled when I saw nothing, the firetruck wasn't there. I rushed back into the room, back to where I had tripped. I brought my face close. I could make out a hand, then an arm. I followed it back to where a head should be.

I had to act. Whether what I was seeing was real or not was irrelevant. I grabbed her arm and pulled her, back to the front door of the apartment. I grabbed the knob and pulled us through the doorway.

I coughed and spluttered to send the smoke and ash out of my lungs. I dropped from my hands and knees to my stomach, gasping for each fresh breath that I could take. A silence fell over me. All I could hear was my own raspy breaths. I rotated my head to look at her.

I couldn't see her chest moving. Her eyes were closed. I crawled over to further investigate. My heavy breaths shook my throat as I crawled. It was difficult to even move myself a few feet.

“Miss.” I shook her. No response. I placed my fingers on the side of her neck. I could feel no heartbeat. She was dead.

“God fucking damnit!” I slammed my fists into the floor. I repeated this action. Again, and again and again.

My punches began to slow. I was so tired. I rolled onto my back. I released a few long, burning breaths.

“Fucking pointless.” I snickered.

That morning I woke up and grabbed my coffee like usual. Linnea was asleep. I had hoped that she had forgotten about everything. I was done talking about it.

I understood her perspective, I just disagreed. What bothered me more than anything was her unwavering, hard-nosed style of arguing for it.

Should we not be our brothers and sisters’ keepers? Should we not value every life as sacred as it is? Is that not the most noble and respectable opinion to have? Shouldn’t we all strive to reach a point where we whole heartedly believe that?

I heard the creak of the stairs and turned to face her. Her face was expressionless, her hair was a mess. It was typical to what I saw in the mornings. Squinted eyes adjusting to the sunlight and lazy steps thudding against the staircase.

“Good morning.” I greeted.

“Good morning.” She mumbled. There was no emotion yet, just exhaustion. She meandered over to me and wrapped her arms around me. I raised my arms, not expecting her affection. “I had a dream you saved me from a fire.” I hugged her back.

“That’s funny.”

“Yeah.” She chuckled. “I appreciate that you’re a good soul, Andy. If you’re doing it for the right reasons, then it’s okay if you save someone.”

“If I’m doing it for the right reasons?”

“Yeah.” She pushed away from me. “I know how much of a people pleaser you are. Don’t ever do it for the fame or admiration. Do it out of the goodness of your heart.”

“Okay.” I gave her a smile. As I did this, I saw hers fade. “I should get going.” I grabbed my keys off of the counter and left the house.

My drive to work consists of a drive along a barren country road in the early morning before the sun even rises. Once I get onto the main highway, however, I’m in the heart of the city. I appreciate this tranquil ride on a lonely, straight road though. It’s almost meditative. Sometimes seeing nothing can be a benefit. In the context of a busy workday, this is a wonderful break.

As I pulled onto the single lane road, I saw a blaze in the distance. As I approached closer, a burning farmhouse came into view. As I approached, I could see a man in the window. His tortured screams made it to my ears, sending a chill down my spine. I pressed the accelerator to escape the whole situation. I didn’t want the tranquility of the early morning to be ruined for any longer.

When I pulled in front of the burning building, the main thing that caught my eye was the massive crowd surrounding the apartment. It must've been at least a hundred people. The woman's weeping was pouring from her balcony onto the silent crowd. I stopped at the back. I glanced up and took a deep breath.

"I'm going in!" I announced, pushing through the crowd.

"Go dude!"

"Be careful!"

The lines of encouragement fueled my legs, sending me forward, shooting me up the stairs. As I distanced myself from the crowd, their words meshed into cheers. I was a hero. This was all I wanted. The admiration, the love, the glory.

Why would I help a stranger? My own benefit of course. Anyone who says they do things out of the goodness of their heart are liars. It's not hard to imitate that either. When I'm paraded as a hero, famous... I can feel my heart pounding just thinking about it. These cheers, they drown out everything else. This is what I live for.

The cries of the woman meshed with the crowd's cheers, and eventually even she was cheering me on. I smiled as I smashed through the door.

My smile quickly faded in the flames. There was no way I would survive this.

Postmortem fame was useless. The last word that escaped my lips was a furious, almost silent, “pointless.”

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English 314

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The Ideal Writing Consultant: Growth and Stagnation of Writing Center Pedagogy

When we started this semester, we began by learning about the early teachings of composition. There was an incredible amount of change in every aspect of composition pedagogy. Classes have from lectures where students wrote down exactly what their teachers were saying to discussions run by students where teachers have little interaction, as we saw throughout this class. Ideal writing has gone from a very specific and rather arbitrary standard based on Latin to something that varies from person to person. This amount of change is incredible. With this in mind, we would expect writing center pedagogy to follow a similar trajectory, with wild change and growth over time. However, this hasn't happened. Writing centers have failed to evolve. Should writing centers be changing? Why has this happened? Who is responsible for this? What characteristics should the ideal writing consultant possess? I will attempt to answer all these questions in this paper.

First off, we must touch on what the goal of the writing center is. According to Kenneth Bruffee, the main focus to find help for students who were struggling with their writing. Many students struggled to adapt to the traditional classroom and rejected professional help that was offered on campus because they saw it as an extension of the classroom. "To provide that alternative, we turned to peer tutoring. Through peer tutoring, we reasoned, teachers could reach students by organizing them to teach each other" (Bruffee 325). From this, we can conclude that the ultimate goal of the writing center is to help students improve their writing. There's a quote that says something similar to this conclusion but I can't think of who said it, so I'll leave it off. Anyway, we would expect changes to the writing center to reflect this goal.

First, writing centers needed to become a major focus in academia. Writing centers or writing laboratories as they were called in their early development, struggled to get off the ground due to the nature of students teaching students being a difficult proposition to make to teachers. Bruffee makes the point that one of the most common objections to peer tutoring is that it is akin to "the blind leading the blind" (332). Many professors were cautious to this new style of instruction. "Nowhere in our field has this tension been more apparent than the writing center, a space where the consolidation of power shifts as the idea of the writing center metamorphosizes from being one whose identity rests on method to one whose identity rests on site, and back again" (Boquet 465). The idea of peer tutoring was one that had a hard time getting its boots on the ground. Writing centers couldn't evolve or adapt in this time.

The mere idea of the writing center was revolutionary at the time. Just as normal schools were revolutionary and the idea of teaching people who were in a lower financial state than nobility was frowned upon for a time, the idea of students teaching students was also met with heavy criticism early on. As I am writing a whole paper on the growth and development of writing centers, it can be concluded that writing centers eventually came to succeed in become more influential in academia. Once writing

centers began to find some success, how did they adapt? We can find the answer in *The Oxford Guide for Writing Tutors* by Ianetta and Fitzgerald. “In the daily work of a tutor, then, theory helps us set our goals and define our vision” (28). A good amount of time was dedicated to developing theory. In this section of *The Oxford Guide for Writing Tutors*, time is spent on the difference between centripetal theory, which emphasizes commonality between writers and writing centers, and centrifugal theory, which focuses on the individuality of each consultant, writer, and writing center (29-38). While I will not spend more time on centripetal versus centrifugal theory, it is important to provide an example of the kind of theory that will come to define writing center development. With this, I must place a focus on the most important debate that is held within writing center development. That is the directive versus non-directive debate.

Peter Carino’s *Power and Authority in Peer Tutoring* is, in my opinion, the best introduction possible to this debate. He digs into Jeff Brooks’ *Minimalist Tutoring*, which is an early example of the non-directive method. The non-directive method of tutoring is characterized by trying to get the writer to think about their writing and how to improve it, rather than outright telling writers what will help them improve. Brooks states, “When you “improve” a student’s paper, you haven’t been a tutor at all; you’ve been an editor. You might have been an exceedingly good editor, but you’ve been of little service to your student” (128). The reasoning behind this seems sound. It doesn’t matter if a paper is improved if the writer learns nothing about why their paper was failing. Brooks seems to have hit the nail on the head in trying to fulfill the writing center’s goal of improving writing. The way to improve writing is by improving *writers*. With this in mind, what could Carino possibly say negatively about Brooks’ philosophy?

To do this, we need look no further than the third page of Brooks’ article. Brooks’ advocates for several changes in body language in order to improve the minimalist tutoring methods. This includes sitting next to the writer instead of across the table, making sure the writer is closer to his or her paper and refraining from holding anything during the meeting. There was a line in particular that we made fun of in our class, and has remained in my mind ever since. “Better yet, don’t let yourself hold a pencil in your hand. By all means, if you must hold something, don’t make it a red pen” (Brooks 130). Carino touches on the nondirective method best and adds clarity to the directive versus non-directive debate. “Historical work on writing centers, such as that of Beth Boquet, Irene Clark, and Dave Healy, as well as some of my own, has demonstrated that centers have long been uncomfortable with power and authority” (113). This idea of what level of power and authority that writing consultants possess has been a constant question. It was what made professors at universities so nervous about peer tutoring in the first place. What does Carino have to say about this power dynamic?

One of the major points that Carino addresses is the fact that writing centers don’t provide grades, and as such already have lesser power than any other form of classroom. “Not having to assign grade, however, also becomes a reason to contrast the center advantageously against the classroom. Students can, it is claimed, feel relaxed and unintimidated as they might not in a teacher’s office or in class” (117). This, Carino points out, allows for students to feel more comfortable, so the use of a red pen or sitting across from a table already has a minimal impact relative to the inability of a tutor to give a grade. If we are putting such an emphasis on the comfort of writers who are attending the writing center, then the mere fact that writing centers are entirely separate from teacher and grade already lends itself to the comfort of said writers. The use of the nondirective method might not benefit comfort as much as Brooks would like us to believe with this logic in mind. Another key point is the fact that the nondirective method is, by

definition, beating around the bush. The whole method relies on the consultant avoiding the point of what they are telling the writer. Carino uses some very helpful and excellent examples of some of the frustration that might arise from the use of the non-directive method. “Here the tutor continues nondirective questioning to a fault in the name of preserving the peer relationship. It is obvious that the student lacks knowledge of the conventions of play review, but instead of taking authority for teaching him, the tutor coyly “wonders” about the way the student opens the paper” (120). Despite this point, Carino does not throw all of the benefits of non-directive tutoring away. He includes another example on page 121 where a directive approach leads to a tutor giving poor advice and the writer taking it into his report. This is the kind of thing that stalled the success of the early writing center.

Carino works around this by advocating for teaching and training of tutors in order to allow them to have better judgment when it comes to writing. “When they can do so, they can proceed using techniques—nondirective or directive—based on their position in the tutorial” (123). The main point that Carino makes is that the directive versus nondirective debate should be circumvented by teaching students to be adaptable, as both methods of tutoring can find success in different scenarios. In this essay where he lambasts many of the nondirective methods follies, he still wants to highlight the fact that nondirective methods allow the writing center to have a unique feel and benefit. “Through raising the specters of power and authority in this essay, my purpose is not to turn the writing center into just another impersonal office on campus. Students must face enough of those already, and, as much as possible, writing centers should maintain the atmosphere of a safehouse” (123). Carino doesn’t completely dispute Brooks, but rather advocates for a more focused approach, and is against becoming so non-directive that we fail to adjust to any student who might benefit from a more directive approach. We as writing consultants should stay more adaptable, and Carino does a better job than most as to making this point.

So, with writers such as Carino, how do modern writing centers suffer from stagnation when one of the most reasonable philosophies seems to be focused on adjustability. When we look at such pieces as *Bridging the Gap: Essential Issues to Address in Recurring Writing Center Appointments with Chinese ELL Students*, some writing centers seem to be adjusting well to students with unique cases, such as students who don’t speak English as a first language. However, most writing centers seem to have failed to adjust, especially according to discussions that we have held as a class, and some of the stories that we hear from writing center conferences. Stagnation seems to be enveloping the writing center sphere. Almost all of this stagnation can point to a man who I alluded to earlier in this essay, and who I have specifically avoided mentioning up to this point. Most are content to quote Steven North, run their centers almost entirely off of his ideals and ride off into the sunset. Jeff Brooks is a proponent of North’s work. The reason most of the articles we read off discuss the non-directive method is because North has become accepted as gospel by leaders of most writing centers. Some writing centers refuse to work on grammar or don’t work on what the writer wants to because the consultants should be able to find the biggest glaring issues. These non-directive ideals highlight a major failure in the reliance on North’s work. These centers have taken the non-directive ideals to the largest extremes and have failed to satisfy the goal of the writing center. So many of the readings we hit this semester focus on the consultant rather than the writer.

Heading East by Mike Mattison must be touched on. It is an article that is basically a rant against North, but it must be noted. If *Heading East* does nothing else, it challenges that status quo, and for that, it must be analyzed. “I have chosen to get rid of Steven North. Or rather, his work, specifically “The Idea of the Writing Center.” No doubt I am a bit late to the party in some ways. Elizabeth Boquet and Neal

Lerner have articulated some of the difficulties that our field has experienced give the prevalence of North's work, but his "Idea" essay is a piece that has always been on my syllabus" (2). Mattison notes how this idea of ridding himself and his consultants of North has some support, but is still unique given his prevalence. Overall, *Heading East* notes how Mattison wants to start anew. North has become too ingrained in the teaching of writing center philosophy. "We are moving away from North, away from an identity claimed through frustration and ideals. We are, instead, starting with the talk, with research that targets specifically the words exchanged by writers and readers in a one-to-one setting" (5). Mattison provides perhaps the best view into modern writing centers and the stagnation that plagues them.

After analyzing writing centers and the changes and lack of changes that they have gone through, we can now answer the main question behind this whole essay. What does the ideal writing consultant look like? The answer to this question lies in the ideals of Carino and Mattison. Adaptability is the best way to handle any given scenario. In some scenarios, a non-directive approach will work, and in others, a directive approach will. The ideal writing consultant, more than anything, will adjust themselves to any student. They will work with a non-native English speaker as Nan outlines and have the wherewithal to adjust themselves to use an approach that would work with them. A strictly non-directive tutor would drown with an ELL student who doesn't have the best understanding of English conventions and needs more direct advice in terms of how to improve their writing. The ideal writing consultant doesn't abide by any singular ideal. The ideal writing consultant will make their writer feel comfortable while still making sure that work is getting done. This ideal writing consultant might even hold a red pen. The ideal writing consultant would be able to get any student, regardless of background, native language, race, or culture to find success in their writing by putting in the effort to adjust to them, not sticking to a single ideal or style. The ideal writing consultant would listen to their writer and work on what they want to work on. The ideal writing consultant would explain every decision that they make and make sure the writer understood their thought process. In conclusion, the ideal writing consultant is adaptable, patient, understanding, and focused.

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Writing Assignment 8

Ashton Moore

November 29, 2022

1 Question

Consider the ellipse defined by the equation $\frac{x^2}{a^2} + \frac{y^2}{b^2} = 1$. Use a change of variables to find the area of the ellipse.

1.1 Solution

First we must substitute u and v into the equation. Let $u = \frac{x}{a}$ and $v = \frac{y}{b}$. With this change of variables, we then get $dxdy = (ab)dudv$. Our original equation becomes $u^2 + v^2 = 1$. As such the bounds become $0 \leq u \leq 1$ and $0 \leq v \leq 1$. We can then take this and transform it into polar coordinates. Since $dudv = r dr d\theta$, this is relatively simple. Changing the bounds into polar coordinates yields $0 \leq r \leq 1$ and $0 \leq \theta \leq 2\pi$. Now, we can finally create and take the integral. The integral is

$$\int_0^{2\pi} \int_0^1 (ab)r dr d\theta = \int_0^{2\pi} \int_0^1 (abr) dr d\theta. \quad (1)$$

We can then take the first integral which gives us

$$\int_0^{2\pi} \left[\frac{abr^2}{2} \right]_0^1 d\theta = \int_0^{2\pi} \frac{ab}{2} d\theta. \quad (2)$$

Taking the second integral gives us

$$\left[\frac{ab\theta}{2} \right]_0^{2\pi} = ab\pi. \quad (3)$$

Therefore the area of the ellipse is $ab\pi$.