UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

EMERGING VOICES OF UNDERGRADUATE WRITERS:

A STUDY OF THE PHENOMENON OF WRITING CHANGES

DURING THE COLLEGE YEARS

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

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EMERGING VOICES OF UNDERGRADUATE WRITERS:
A STUDY OF THE PHENOMENON OF WRITING CHANGES
DURING THE COLLEGE YEARS

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND
ACADEMIC CURRICULUM

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Long a dream of mine, the opportunity to earn a doctoral degree has been a kind of resurrection for me. It has provided me new life intellectually in the texts and people I have encountered. It has provided me new life professionally through a broadened view of who I am and what exists around me. It has provided me new life in my teaching, the career I chose early in life and have cherished for thirty-five years. My "new life" has not been achieved without the assistance of many, and to them I owe much thankfulness.

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ABSTRACT

Writing development spans a lifetime, but until the middle 1990's, few had studied the particular changes experienced by students during the undergraduate college years. In this phenomenological study, I interviewed eight undergraduate students, diverse in their field of study, analyzed an inventory they took, and examined writing samples that spanned their college years, to come to some understanding of my research question: How do students construct themselves as writers during their undergraduate college years?

Change was apparent in all participants. In some ways, each participant's story was unique, but there were a number of similarities in the undergraduate experiences of these writers. All believe that grammar plays a role in good writing. During their undergraduate years they developed skills for research and synthesis of resources, facility with language and detailed support of ideas, and audience awareness. During their undergraduate years, they moved from a focus on grades and the teacher to a focus on personal satisfaction of clear communication of their ideas. The writing samples indicated that these students had matured in T-unit length as well as complex construction of ideas. The smooth inclusion of resource information was also a characteristic of the style of these senior writers.

College faculty can support the growth of undergraduate writers by establishing a learning community focused on learning as motivation. Conferences that provide specific, concrete suggestions, as well as leading questions, can support the developing college writer's evolution into a more mature writer who is also capable of supporting other college writers. Composition faculty must extend

communication about writing across disciplines to facilitate a stronger and unified

support system for undergraduate writers.

Emerging Voices of Undergraduate Writers:

A Study of the Phenomenon of Writing Changes during the College Years

<u>Introduction</u>

> *Writing is not superficial to the intellectual life but central to it; writing is one of the most disciplined ways of making meaning and one of the most effective methods we can use to monitor our own thinking. We write to think – . . . to discover meaning that teaches us and that may be worth sharing with others. We do not know what we want to say before we say it; we write to know what we want to say.*
> -Donald Murray (1985, p. 3)

When I consider my journey as a writer and a teacher of writing, I realize that I have much to learn. The writing of this dissertation, if Murray is to be believed, is a "discovery" and will help me to understand what I know and think about writing. In this, the introductory chapter, I will provide an introduction to me as researcher, the identification of my question, and the rationale for my study of the question: How do students construct themselves as writers during their undergraduate college years?

<u>Introduction to the Researcher</u>

"Teaching holds a mirror to the soul!" -Parker Palmer (1998, p.2)

In fall, 1978, I stepped in front of my first college English Composition class as an adjunct faculty member. I was nervous. The course called for me to teach such topics as parts of speech, sentence patterns, the essay, and the research paper. The content did not concern me; I had a solid grasp of grammar and literature, and I had been teaching similar material to eighth graders in a prior teaching position. So I was surprised that these students did not already understand the concepts <u>I</u> thought they should have learned from <u>their</u> eighth grade teachers. And I told them that! . . . We all survived the semester.

Fast forward 28 years: In fall, 2006, I stepped in front of my college English composition class as a full-time, ranked faculty member. I was nervous. (Some things just do not change!) Study of parts of speech or sentence patterns no longer exists in the freshman course requirements, but the essay and research paper remain staples. I still had confidence in my knowledge of the discipline content. That confidence, along with years of teaching experience, attendance at a variety of conferences, readings in professional journals and texts, and course work at graduate and doctoral levels, has provided me an eclectic tool bag for teaching. But I struggled for a clear vision of my role in a student's growth in writing. I struggled with the role of the freshman composition course. I struggled to identify the written communication skills a student needs during the college years. And I struggled with identification of the written communication skills a student will need for the post-college world. My struggles have led me to recognize the need to understand exactly what happens to students as writers during their college experience. I typically see mostly freshman students, at the beginning of their college studies, but how does their story continue as they develop as writers during their undergraduate years?

"Change" refers to "alterations that occur over time in students' internal cognitive of affective characteristics" (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, p. 16). Changes are characterized as "orderly, sequential, and hierarchical," reflecting movement toward complexity in "the ways that individuals think, value, and behave" (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, p. 18). Development refers to changes that occur over time that are presumed to represent growth that is valued. These changes are "systematic . . . and thought to serve an adaptive function, i.e., to enhance survival" (Pascarella &

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Terenzini, 1991, p. 16). The college years reflect a period of change and development, even though research cannot always provide a causal link between the experience of college and the change and development that occur. I will focus specifically upon the change that occurs in writing during the undergraduate college years.

Underlying this research is my drive to understand my role in the development of a college student's writing skills. Moustakas (1990) recognized that the heuristic researcher must experience an "intense interest, a passionate concern, . . . that holds important social meanings and personal, compelling implications" to complete research. My "passionate concern" has not only fostered the movement toward my research question, (How do students construct themselves as writers during their undergraduate college years?), but it has also influenced my approach and use of the rich material I have gathered. There must, according to Moustakas (1990), be an autobiographical connection for a researcher to investigate phenomenon. My autobiography begins with recognition of myself as learner/thinker. According to Kolb's (1984) learning style indicator, I am a blending of the converging and assimilating learner/thinker. That is, as a converger, I tend to "think and do," finding a concise, logical approach to what I study, and as an assimilator, I think things through. I am a problem solver, willing to experiment with new ideas, and to search for practical applications. These qualities place a spin on the "passionate concern" I have chosen to study. I am, by nature, a heuristic researcher, "seeking to understand the wholeness and the unique patterns of experiences in a scientifically organized and disciplined way" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 16). I seek relevance for myself in my

research. Thus my goal is to improve personal effectiveness as a college composition teacher through my research in student writing development during the college years. From the research will emerge indications for teaching practices that will enhance the development of the college writers that sit in my classroom and in the classrooms of colleagues.

I am also influenced by the constructivist theory. Constructivism is a movement that has a number of influences and interpretations. Piaget, Vygotsky, behaviorists and others have contributed to the movement. Constructivists see learners as actively involved in constructing learning. They define teachers as guides who establish rich environments where individual and collaborative learning occur. Teaching methods begin with assessing students' knowledge and experience and employ a variety of techniques such as problem and activity based inquiry, modeling, discussion and negotiation. Students become active members of the entire process, including variations in representation of student learning. The focus of constructivism is the learner. As a constructivist, I realized that my question had to focus not on me or my teaching strategies, but on my students. And I had to follow those students out of my classroom and through their college experience.

<div align="center">Identification of Research Question and Research Design</div>

Watch most National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) sporting events on television and you will no doubt see at least one commercial that features an athlete performing incredible physical feats. The commercial ends "There are 360,000 NCAA athletes, but most of us will be going pro in something other than sports" (Brown, 2003). Likewise, there are thousands of students in freshman composition

courses each year, and most of those students will be going pro in something other than writing! Unlike the athletes who will generally leave their athletic gear and sport-related game strategies behind them when they turn pro in a non-athletic profession, college students will continue to use written communication skills after college. The recognition of the need for lifelong writing skill development generated potential directions for research.

I began by looking at why students struggle with writing. In *When a Writer Can't Write*, edited by Mike Rose (1985), I found Bartholomae, Daly, Graves, Harris, Murray and Rose – each with insight into why writers have problems with production of text. The Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Scale provided me an instrument to identify student beliefs and practices that impeded the completion of an effective paper (Daly & Miller, 1975). Studying students who were affected by extreme anxiety over writing seemed a potential approach. Daly's article, however, cautioned that drawing a causal link between apprehension and performance would be a mistake. And I realized that looking at obstacles to writing would not lead me to understanding changes in writing over time. My time spent researching impediments to writing development culminated in attention to teaching strategies to counter apprehension, but it did not focus on college writers and how they interacted with those strategies. As a constructivist, I wanted to clearly focus on student learning.

After considering classroom environment, motivation, and additional teaching strategies, I realized that my focus still had not reached the actual writers. I encountered potential factors that might impact writing development, but I was not yet looking at writers. In order to understand writing development, I must look at

writers. In other words, I must determine what college students know about writing and about themselves as writers. I must attempt to understand how and in what context they initiate and develop their writing-related knowledge. I must identify the factors that impact their writing, recognize the skills they possess as writers, and listen to them as they describe themselves as writers. As I learn about their writing experiences during college, I can ask about what they believe influenced their changes as writers. By gathering their stories, I can attempt to describe a pattern of attitudes and habits that impact the students as writers.

I turned to Steven Covey's (1989) exhortation to "Begin with the end in mind" (p. 95). Covey's advice suggested that I must understand what happens during the years a student spends in college as an undergraduate. I must come to understand who the senior is as a writer and how that senior writer has emerged from the freshman writer. I must understand what factors positively and negatively impact writing development in the college student. I must identify what factors emerge when college students tell their stories about writing.

By identifying the information I wanted to discover, I also identified the design of my research study: phenomenology. Creswell (2003) recognized that phenomenological research is a philosophy as well as a method because it seeks to understand the "lived experiences" of participants. Indeed, the philosophy of understanding, as well as the method of listening to college students, (who alone can tell their stories of writing in college), were instrumental in my choice of the phenomenological approach. In phenomenology the researcher seeks in-depth interviews to provide a detailed description of the lived experience. The participant's

story is the focus. In order to understand writing development in college, this is the path I chose to take. The phenomenological design using interviews is also suggested in the call for research from Wendy Bishop (2000). Because research in the field of composition generally has focused on the process and product of composition rather than on the composer, (the writer), Bishop's directive seems salient. Bishop specifically expressed concern about research which distances the researcher. Bishop (2000) wrote "we're researching at or on students when we could simply ask them" (p.6). Bishop's point is worth noting. To understand how procrastination or choice affects a student's writing process, for example, we must ask the student writer. Bishop continued that "Information is sparse on students' views of writing teachers and classrooms and where school fits in their lives and world views" (p. 6). The only accurate sources for descriptions of the college students' experiences are the college students themselves. College students can provide the missing information by describing and reflecting upon their experiences with writing during their college years. Jackson (2000) concurred with Bishop on this approach. Rather than searching for new theories or other matters: "we need to study our students, their writing processes, their cultural influences, and their cognitive changes" (p. 232). Both Bishop and Jackson suggest that we need to stay close to the students themselves. Their suggestion to concentrate on students themselves lends credence to my approach to interview students to collect their stories about undergraduate college writing development. And so I have arrived at the focus of my study: to understand how undergraduate college students construct themselves as writers during their college years.

In 1966 about fifty individuals "concerned . . . with the teaching of English" gathered at what has come to be called the Dartmouth Seminar (Dixon, 1967, p. vii). In *Growth through English*, a report of the Dartmouth Seminar, Dixon reported recommendations to understand writing as a process, to use workshops in classrooms, and to train teachers in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Those ideas still impact the field of writing today as evidenced in The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) "Beliefs" statement on writing. Published in 2004, the Beliefs can be found at the NCTE website and reflect the current mainstream thinking about writing. According to NCTE, everyone can write, but everyone needs practice. Writing is a process and "a tool for thinking." The Beliefs reflect the acknowledgement that reading, writing, and speaking are interrelated skills; that "literate practices are embedded in complicated social relations;" and that assessment is integral to improvement. Murray (2002) and others call attention to the link between writing and thinking. In his text *Write to Learn*, for example, Murray (2002) calls writing "a voyage of *discovery*" (p. 1). Not surprisingly, the Beliefs statement draws directly from the work of researchers and teachers of the past several decades. And all imply the same conclusion: writing is important.

Writing, like reading, is a lifelong activity. The National Commission on Writing for America's Families, Schools, and Colleges (2003, April) declared that "Writing today is not a frill for the few, but an essential skill for the many." There are few who would dispute that statement. In fact, written communication continues to gain emphasis as a literacy skill, one of the language arts strands (reading, writing,

speaking, listening, viewing and producing) recognized as essential in language arts development. The link between writing and thinking has also received attention. Nickerson (1984) noted the relationship between writing and thinking when he described writing as "not only a medium of thought but also as a vehicle for developing it" (qtd. in Marzano, 2003, p. 691). Similarly, Donald Murray (1985) wrote "Meaning is not thought up and then written down. The act of writing is an act of thought. This is the principal reason writing should be taught" (qtd. in Spandel & Stiggens, 1997, p. 143). Further, Marzano has described writing as a process involving multiple and interdependent decisions, which make writing a difficult cognitive act, an act that impacts a teacher's methods. Teachers must plan instructional activities, according to the work of Hillocks (1986, ctd. in Marzano, 2003), with a high level of student autonomy and interaction about problems faced in writing. With this approach, thinking is positively affected. Because writing is perceived as an essential skill, the study of writing development is important in the field of English Education research. Writers continue to develop in personal style, and in awareness of variations in audience, content and genre, during undergraduate college years (and beyond). It makes sense, then, to study the development of writing during the undergraduate college years.

While writing development has been the focus of many studies in elementary, middle, and high schools, there has been less attention focused on the college student as a developing writer. Little research attention has been directed to the continued development of written communication skills at the college level. Crowley (1998) noted that "university faculty do not write or talk much about composition, unless it is

to complain about the lack of student literacy" (p. 1). The university setting for my study is no exception to Crowley's notation. While there are often complaints that students "can't write," few faculty members gather to discuss how to create more mature writers.

Mina Shaughnessy (1977), in her study of adult basic writers, contributed much understanding not only of how basic writers develop, but also of the picture of the mature writer (the goal for the basic writer). In her study of basic writers, Shaughnessy described the struggles of emerging writers, the necessary errors those students must experience to mature, and suggestions for activities that will support growth. This seminal study prompted attention to the process of development. And recognition for the field of composition blossomed with the publication of Shaughnessy's study. This recognition created an interest in composition, composition theory, and composition strategies. Despite this recognition, college composition has faced identity shifts and conflicts in the last several decades.

In her historical study of *Composition in the University*, Crowley (1998) defined the curriculum conflict related to the role of literature and composition in the freshman year. English professors, often graduates who come to the college classroom with a degree based upon the study of literature, seldom possess the desire to be composition instructors and find teaching freshman composition an undesirable labor. It is not surprising, then, that freshman composition often includes a literature study focus. But the objectives of literature study and composition study are not synonymous. The study of literature is often charged with "transmission of a heritage" whereas "composition pedagogy focuses on change and development in

students" (p. 3). Some argue that the reason to keep literature in freshman composition is to legitimize the study of writing and to forestall the movement to establish freshman composition as simply a service course to satisfy the call of colleagues to teach students to write the papers they assign in their disciplines. This philosophy is consistent with the suggestion that "composition is still not widely regarded as a legitimate field of study" (Crowley, 1998, p. 4). It seems a dilemma that, on the one hand, there is a cry for instruction in writing, while on the other hand, there is little recognition of the study in the field of composition to implement practices to improve writing. Claywell (2000) has cautioned against moving

> the attention of composition classrooms away from a focus on writing per se to writing about literature, service, politics, humanities, and so on, because, just as technology poses political problems, so do such content classes. They threaten to remove a concentration from "writing" as a concrete, measurable subject of study and as a worthy academic enterprise. They also mystify writing style and fluidity so that composition becomes mysterious, inaccessible, or not important at all and thus reaffirms the myth of the lonely writer in the garret. (p. 61)

The point to be made here is that there is a need to discover just exactly what kind of composition training students received during their college years. Does the study of writing extend beyond the freshman composition course(s)? If so, where does that happen? And how does that happen? Once again, those best able to answer these questions are the college writers themselves.

<center>Rationale for Study Design</center>

The purpose of this study is to identify how undergraduate college students construct themselves as writers over time. The writing experience includes student attitudes, their approach to the task of writing (aka writing processes), and characteristics of the written work of college students. Because the study seeks to

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describe the experience of writing, the phenomenological approach is a sound research fit because it "uses analysis of significant statements, the generation of meaning units, and the development of an 'essence' description" (Creswell, 2003, p. 191). By gathering and analyzing statements, I can seek to identify patterns in the attitudes and habits of college writers.

The phenomenological approach seeks to understand the lived experience through "comprehensive descriptions that provide the basis for a reflective structural analysis that portrays the essences of the experience" (Moustakis, 1994, p. 13). The researcher gathers "naïve descriptions obtained through open-ended questions and dialogue" and then uses "reflective analysis and interpretation of the research participant's account or story" to determine the "structures of the experience" (Moustakis, 1994, p. 13). In coming to an understanding of the experience under study, the researcher must attempt to avoid judgment and pre-determined descriptions. Analysis begins with the descriptions provided by the research participant. Moustakis (1994) described the research question as one which focuses clearly on a lived experience, to be studied in a qualitative manner. The question "does not seek to predict or to determine causal relationships. It is the "renderings of the experience" that yield the understanding to be gained (p. 105).

<u>Summary</u>

Through a phenomenological study, I seek to understand the lived experience of change in writing that undergraduate college students experience. I need to know college students' stories. My journey to research has arisen from thirty years of teaching and an awareness of college students as developing writers. My challenge

now is to gain some understanding of how undergraduate college students construct

themselves as writers during their college years.

Chapter 2

"I came to theory desperate, wanting to comprehend – to grasp what was happening around and within me."
                                                                -bell hooks, Teaching to Transgress

This chapter provides an interpretive framework for study related to college students and writing. Part I examines theory and research related to college students. It begins with research related to college student development theories to provide background on what researchers have found regarding change in college students in general. Next the section offers descriptors of current college students, referred to in current literature as millennials. Research related to adult learning theory, motivation, and flow theory complete this first part to provide the backdrop for college students, learning, and teaching college students. Part II relates to writing development research. This section provides an overview of studies related to lifelong development of writing skills; descriptors of good and mature writing in college; writing apprehension; assessment; and the teaching implications suggested by these studies.

Part I: Understanding and Teaching College Students

College Students: Developmental Models

The college years represent a time of great change in a student's life. "Change" refers to "alterations that occur over time in students' internal cognitive or affective characteristics" (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, p. 16). Changes are characterized as "orderly, sequential, and hierarchical," reflecting movement toward complexity in "the ways that individuals think, value, and behave" (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, p. 18). Development refers to changes that occur over time that are presumed to represent growth that is valued. These changes are "systematic . . . and

thought to serve an adaptive function, i.e., to enhance survival" (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, p. 16). The college years constitute a recognizable period of change and development. Some students actually attend college in search of change and growth. Others are not aware of such purpose, but are motivated to attend college for other reasons. All college students, regardless of intention, change.

Although research cannot always link why or even that the experience of college, (as opposed to simply aging four to six years), is related to change and development, there seems to be indications that the college experience does impact development. Certainly students of traditional college age (the focus of the work behind both the Pascarella & Terenzini and the Astin texts) change between the ages of 18 and 22. Some of the change may be inevitable, but much change is immediately impacted by the college experience. Examining different theories can inform college personnel about the development of students during the college years. The psychosocial theories of Erikson, Marcia, and Chickering, the cognitive-structural theories of Perry, and the typological model of Myers-Briggs are particularly helpful in providing insight to development during the college years. Development theories (psychosocial, cognitive-structural) and typological models have several common features which relate to substance, process, and role of environment in change.

Psychosocial theories "view individual development essentially as a process that involves the accomplishment of a series of 'developmental tasks'" (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, p. 19). The development perspective is the common element for these theories. One of the leading psychosocial theorists is Erik Erikson, who explained that everything has a growth plan that leads to a functioning whole. An

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individual experiences a crisis that requires choices which result in progression, regression, or stasis. Students enter college generally at the "identity versus identity confusion" crisis stage. Erikson's theory has several similar features to that of James Marcia, who focuses on crisis and commitment as factors influencing identity. Without crisis, Marcia explained, growth is limited. Commitment that precedes a crisis is "foreclosed," limiting growth. Both Erikson and Marcia, then, see crisis as important for true development, a kind of trigger for growth.

Another leading psychosocial theorist is Arthur Chickering, who identified seven vectors of development. These vectors are influenced by the college experience through variables such as institutional objectives, institutional size, residence hall arrangements, faculty and administration, and the social culture of the institution. The first three vectors of Chickering's model (achieving competence, managing emotions, and developing autonomy) are precedents for development of the fourth vector (establishing identity). Establishing identity, then, impacts the development of the final three vectors (freeing interpersonal relationships, developing purpose, and developing integrity).

While the psychosocial theorists dealt with the development of the psychological and social aspects of the individual, the cognitive-structural theorists focused instead on how students think and on how the shifts that occur in thinking can be described. Because these theorists approach the thinking shifts as developmental, they tend to describe development in a series of stages just as the psychosocial theorists did.

The cognitive-structural theorists have several components in common:

1) Each theory describes a series of stages individuals pass through toward development.

2) Stages are hierarchical.

3) Progression is irreversible.

4) Stages are universal and transcultural.

5) The focus is on *how* meaning is structured.

6) New information is handled through assimilation or accommodation.

7) The developmental process is seen as a series of constructions and reconstructions.

One noted cognitive-structuralist is William Perry, whose work is based upon extensive interviews with Harvard college students. Perry does not speak in terms of a crisis, as Erikson and Marcia did. Rather, Perry begins with an approach to development as intellectual and ethical, and then shifts to development which seems similar to the identity studies in the psychosocial theories. In fact, in his identity descriptions Perry resembles many of the vectors described in Chickering's theory.

William Perry's (1999) work on describing the intellectual and ethical development of college students must be considered a seminal work for anyone who seeks to understand the development of a college student (and, in the case of this study, of a college writer). I base this statement upon the belief that writing and thinking are inextricably linked, and that Perry's work deals directly with the intellectual and ethical development of college students. Perry's study describes the intellectual and ethical development of college students through stages and positions. In the early positions, students move through the stage of dualism. They move from a right/wrong, black/white, true/not true world into positions of recognizing

multiplicity in their world. In dualism, professors are the authority with the answers and the students seek to provide what "they" (the professors) want. As students move through the positions of dualism, they recognize differences and come to develop some critical thinking skills while moving closer to "independent" thought. As students move to the stage of contextual relativism, they elaborate their world view, moving from the distinct dual vision of the first positions to one which accommodates new, often contradictory, knowledge into their schemes of thinking. They move away from thinking about what "they" want to a position which assimilates learning into the developing complex scheme of their world view. In the final stage, the anticipation and experience of commitment, students move to the thoughtful realm of commitment. By commitment, Perry means "acts of choice, and the personal investment" made in those acts. In commitment, "one affirms what is one's own" and this requires "the courage of responsibility, and presupposes an acceptance of human limits, including the limits of reason" (p. 150). The level of commitment is revealed in the acts and decisions related to them, as "an act is in an examined, not in an unexamined, life" (p. 151). This stage reflects a conscious examination of values and knowledge to establish one's own thinking, independent of what others might want or think. Perry's model recognizes that a student does not always move through the positions and stages smoothly. He notes that retreats and escapes often result when a person "feels unprepared, resentful, alienated, or overwhelmed to a degree which makes his urge to conserve dominant over his urge to progress" (p.65).

The typological models identify individuals by stable differences among the individuals. Since these models are based upon natural tendencies, there is no

developmental aspect related to them. This distinguishes the typological models from the psychosocial and cognitive-structuralist theories, which are described through development stages. Typological models typically use four categories which can then be mixed in a variety of combinations to identify personality types. Common characteristics of the typological models are that they hold that

1) Styles/types are developed relatively early and are comparatively stable.

2) Individuals can demonstrate characteristics of other types but one type is dominant.

3) Types describe tendencies or preferences shared with others of the same type.

4) Types description does not attempt to explain change or the process of change.

Basically, typological models help individuals understand themselves and their relationship with others. "Development" in the typological models is related to a decision to develop a tendency that is not a preference, often for some personal improvement or gain. The mother-daughter research team of Katherine Cook Briggs and Isabel Briggs Myers approached the typological model as dynamic rather than static. They identified the preferences and combinations that can describe personal tendencies. But they also believe that the individual could "develop" various tendencies which were not natural preferences. The decision to develop makes the model dynamic.

In their description of preferences, Myers-Briggs saw four areas for consideration: perception (how we receive information), judgment (how we make decisions), attitude one (our focus of attention and source of energy) and attitude two (our interaction style with the world). Each area of consideration has two preference

possibilities and by combining the areas in different ways, Myers-Briggs identified sixteen personality types. Each of the sixteen combinations was described as a personality preference type. By recognizing one's natural preferences and the preferences of those around us, individuals can achieve better personal understanding and improved interpersonal relationships.

As students attend college, they are at a point in their life development to come to understanding of self (personality insights) and move through stages of development. The college experience can promote development through such aspects as assignments, residential setting, and extracurricular activities. The college experience can also impact understanding of personality types by including the study and implication of typological models. By attending to the development described by the theories and models summarized above, college personnel can more effectively design a college experience to support and encourage development.

<u>College Students: Profiles of Millennials</u>

Author Rebecca Huntley (2006) in *The World according to Y*, described today's 18-25 year olds as "Optimistic, idealistic, empowered, ambitious, confident, committed and passionate" (ctd. in Gross, 2006). They "view insecurity as a natural part of life" and they "respond to uncertainty with optimism and resilience." The icon for Generation Y, according to Huntley, is the mobile phone because it represents "choice, flexibility, freedom, connectedness, and reliance upon technology" – all trademarks of the lifestyle of these young adults.

An August, 1993 editorial in *AD Age* first named the present generation of college students Generation Y; others call this demographic group Echo Boomers.

But Neil Howe and William Straus, (2000) in their book *Millennials Rising,* referred to those born between 1982-2000 as "millennials," a name that has gained acceptance. These students are generally children of the Baby Boomer generation and tend to share social views with the Boomers, while sharing culture with GenX. The January 28, 1986 Challenger explosion, the 1991 fall of the Soviet Union, the First Gulf War, and a widespread use of personal computers and the Internet provide the context of the early years for this demographic group. And defining moments for the generation include the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center, the Afghanistan and Iraqi Wars, the "war on terror," Hurricane Katrina, the Indian Ocean tsunami, the Columbine High School shooting in 1999, (and the resulting effects in security), and instant connectivity through cell phones, instant messaging, and blogs.

The context and defining moments of their young lives may well suggest what created millennials as "civic-minded and socially conscious . . . individuals, consumers and employees" (Jayson, 2006). Awareness of the world no doubt stems from their connection to the Internet. The defining moments in their life "scarred their youth and adolescence" but they are "creating their own brand of social consciousness." Key statistics of description, based upon data collected by Jayson (2006) include

- Sixty-one percent of 13- to 25-year olds feel personally responsible for making a difference in the world
- Young people want to help their country by working for the government
- Two-thirds of college freshmen believe it's essential or very important to help others in difficulty
- Volunteerism by college students increased by 20% from 2002 to 2005

Jayson's descriptions seem consistent with other researchers, when he explained that millennials "prefer directness over subtlety, action over observation, and cool over all

else." Involvement, volunteerism, and a sense of making a difference are characteristics of millennials.

Regarding their education, Carlson (2005) noted that "Millennials expect to be able to choose what kind of education they buy, and what, where, and how they learn." Some college professors will decry the lack of discipline, a quality often attributed to previous generations, of millennial students. Wallace, Jackson, and Wallace (2000), for example, in profiling entering freshmen, wrote "They do not read. They watch television. They are employed. They play sports, hangout, and 'party'" (pp. 84-5). Further, Wallace, et al (2000) declared that, although millennials have been in a world seemingly inundated with technology, many are not computer literate. And yet, millennials "are more apt to take control of their learning and choose unconventional, technological methods to learn better" than those who preceded them (Carlson, 2005).

In describing the millennials, Richard T. Sweeney, university librarian at the New Jersey Institute of Technology, characterized millennials as "no brand loyalty" people who "make choices and customize the things they choose" (qtd. in Carlson, 2005). They are "more educated than their parents and expect to make more money." They often change their majors and expect to change jobs and careers frequently once they enter the work force. Carlson insists that millennials want to create their own majors. Because their formative school years included collaboration, they like group study. For millennials, collaboration is "both in-person and virtual." Creativity is a prime characteristic. In addition, "playing with gizmos and digital technology is second nature to them." They multitask; "Millennials consume and learn from a wide

variety of media, often simultaneously." These descriptors seem to suggest particular classroom environments and teaching strategies that would enhance student motivation to learn.

Not all is rosy for millennials, however. The pressure to succeed has impacted them as they "have to maximize what they get done in a given time" (Carlson, 2005). And this pressure impacts millennials as they begin college. Faust, Ginno, Laherty, & Manuel (2001) observed that "In 1998, 29% of entering first year students felt overwhelmed during the past year" and they often described themselves as "crunched for time." From these pressures, millennials have come to understand the importance of networking. This networking has become a part of their approach to learning and their approach to the work place environment.

In her 2005 article for *USA Today*, Stephanie Armour described how the "speak-your-mind philosophy" of millennials affects their work ethic and lifestyle. Her description recognized that "work-life balance isn't just a buzz word." In light of the defining moments of these students, there should be no surprise that they recognize the fragility of life and therefore value it. Change has been their mainstay, and they are a generation of multitaskers. Armour noted they "believe in their own self worth and value enough that they're not shy about trying to change the companies they work for." They dress casually and have "total comfort with technology." Because they grew up in a child-centered generation, they expect feedback instantly and frequently, yet "They seek out creative challenges and view colleagues as vast resources from whom to gain knowledge."

Adult Learning Theory

Discussion of general development during the college years and description of the students currently sitting in college desks must be linked with attention to theories for teaching these young adults. How is college teaching distinct from secondary education? What turns the contemporary college students into lifelong learning? The answers to these questions are addressed in adult learning theory.

Theories of learning generally divide into two camps: behaviorism and cognition. The work of Thorndike produced a theory of learning as a change in behavior. Behavioral psychology was used by Thorndike and others in defining adult learning. Thorndike proposed the law of effect, which can be summarized as a reaction to the result of an action. Thorndike found that "Responses to a situation that are followed by satisfaction will be strengthened; responses that are followed by discomfort will be weakened" (ctd. in Ormrod, 1995, p. 18). Learning, according to Thorndike, consisted of trials, and was affected by response to the situation. Ormrod noted that "the idea that the consequences of responses influence learning continues to be a major component of behaviorism today" (p. 19). For the college student, this is certainly relevant. Generally thrown into a new environment and stripped of past reliable support systems, college students will repeat that which leaves them satisfied and avoid that which is uncomfortable. In many ways the entire college experience is uncomfortable, so college personnel (including faculty) must consciously establish new support systems to ensure satisfaction in the classroom and outside of it.

While Thorndike examines learning from a behavioral perspective, others take a cognitive approach. Those who view learning as a cognitive change will turn to

brain study for insight into learning. Cognitive researchers know that the brain changes throughout life, reorganizing and accommodating new knowledge and experiences as we gain them. They talk about brain changes as learning, which "involves the creation of meaning" (Hill, 2001, p. 79). Learning is unique to each person because, as Hill pointed out, "People's experiences differ and so do their brains" (p. 79). Thought, memory, and learning are part of the most flexible part of the brain in the cerebral cortex. Hill, in discussing the brain and consciousness, determined that rote learning is the hardest for adults. Adults learn through experience. In addition, Hill emphasized that "Information that is contextually embedded is easier to learn" (p. 79). To place material in context, "Discussion of values and adult students' concerns for the world around them connect experiences to the world." Further, a teacher working with adults should employ multiple sensory experiences because they help to activate learning. But beyond context is the emotional state of the learner which has proven to be a link between learning and memory. For example, stress – something with which most adults struggle – can affect the brain adversely. Learning to cope with stress while learning is one of the lessons most college students must achieve. To retain "mental agility," Hill suggested education as a contributing factor.

In the 1970s and 1980s two newer theories, andragogy and self-directed learning, emerged from the cognitive theory side. Malcolm Knowles defined andragogy as "the art and science of helping adults learn" (qtd. Merriam, 2001a, p. 5). The term "andragogy" was coined to differentiate teaching adults, from the term "pedagogy," teaching children. It is influenced by humanistic psychology and

ssociated with a learner who is "autonomous, free, and growth-oriented" (Merriam, 2001a, p. 7). According to Knowles, andragogy is based upon five underlying assumptions about the adult learner. These assumptions are that the adult learner is someone who

- has an independent self-concept and who can direct his or her own learning,
- has accumulated a reservoir of life experiences that is a rich resource for learning,
- has learning needs closely related to changing social roles,
- is problem-centered and interested in immediate application of knowledge,
- is motivated to learn by internal rather than external factors. (ctd. in Merriam, 2001a, p. 7)

Understanding adult learners implies understanding the context of establishing a learning environment for adults. Adult classrooms, according to Knowles, should make adults "feel accepted, respected, and supported" with a "spirit of mutuality between teachers and students as joint inquirers." Knowles' classroom description is quite similar to that later described by Mezirow when he looks at transformational learning. Mezirow (2000) believes adults need a "safe open and trusting environment that allows for participation, collaboration, exploration, critical reflection, and feedback" (qtd. in Baumgartner, 2001, p. 20).

Self-directed learning, as the term indicates, reflects a belief that the development of the learner's capacity becomes self-directed. Self-directed learning is considered "emancipatory learning" and links with social action (Merriam, 2001a). Critical to the process of self-directed learning is the learners' use of critical reflection as a means of fostering learning.

In the 1990s, attention shifted from andragogy and self-directed learning to transformational learning. In transformational learning, "the adult learner is seen wholistically" (sic) and "the learning process is much more than the systematic acquisition and storage of information" (Merriam, 2001c, p. 96). The critical reflection of self-directed learning maintains a key position in transformational learning. Mezirow, a leading voice for transformational learning, focuses on rational thought and reflection. He identifies a "disorienting dilemma" as the start of learning (qtd. in Baumgartner, 2001). Adult learning must emphasize "contextual understanding, critical reflection on assumptions, and validating meaning by assessing reasons" (Mezirow, 2000, p. 3). Critical awareness is a distinguishing characteristic of Mezirow's theory. Knowing how one knows is the focus of the theory, which views learning as a process with both individual and social dimensions and implications. Open discourse is a goal, and open discourse is founded upon "trust, solidarity, security, and empathy," thus the classroom environment mentioned earlier is essential (p. 13). Making meaning requires "understanding one's frame of reference, the role of a disorienting dilemma, critical reflection, dialogue with others, and conditions that foster transformative learning" (Taylor, 2000, p. 287), and is not accomplished in the same way for each person. In fact, "The journey of transformation is . . . individualistic, fluid, and recursive" (Taylor, 2002, p. 292). Thus each individual must accomplish his/her development in a manner which seldom mirrors the journey of those around him/her. The classroom environment must be conducive to creating a community effect that encourages all and each in transformation.

Constructivism as a Teaching Philosophy

Teachers have long labored over selecting an appropriate teaching philosophy and strategy to create a classroom of successful learners. Philosophy and corresponding instructional strategies are chosen as a result of study of research and past practices. With the rise in popularity of constructivism, once again teachers are asked to answer such questions as: What is learning? What is knowledge? What is the teacher's role in knowledge acquisition? Constructivism seems particularly matched to writing development, as it requires attention to each student as a learner. To use the constructivist philosophy effectively, teachers must clearly understand the development of the theory, its interpretation, and the application of constructivism to the classroom.

Constructivism, described by David Perkins (1999) as having many faces, is actually a movement and is best understood by examining its underlying influences. Airasian and Walsh (1997) described constructivism as "an epistemology, a philosophical explanation about the nature of knowledge . . . a theory about how learners come to know." But practitioners of constructivism are generally only familiar with practices related to it without examining the underlying theories.

Harris and Graham (1994) described three idealized paradigms of constructivism: endogenous, exogenous and dialectical. Though in some ways each paradigm overlaps the others, each is based upon different influences. The constructivist classroom typically employs bits of each.

Endogenous constructivism is based on the work of Piaget. Although the work of Piaget generally predates the term constructivism, Iran-Nejad (1995) declared

Piaget to be constructivist because his theory "implies the process of building, creating or making mental structures instead of merely absorbing or reproducing product." The emphasis is on development, and Piaget's stages of development suggest that appropriate developmental tasks be chosen to support learning. Student-determined exploration and guided discovery lead to learning in this format. The teacher provides rich, stimulating environments to encourage questions from the students. "Teaching" is the process of engaging students through activities. Active problem solving and testing of predictions, rather than explicit instruction are the techniques used in this interpretation.

Exogenous constructivism (Harris and Graham, 1994) is influenced by a melding of behaviorist theory, social learning theory and information process theory. Using empirical abstraction, learning is defined through behavioral change. To achieve the change, extensive modeling, discussion and explanation are used. Teachers base educational goals on authentic learning in natural environments, embrace the central position of context, concentrate on students' learning strengths and needs, and endorse instructional approaches not strictly classified as behavioral, such as reciprocal teaching and peer tutoring.

Finally, Harris and Graham (1994) defined dialectical constructivism as a combination of endogenous and exogenous constructivism and cited Lev Vygotsky as the influential theorist. Emphasizing dynamic interactions, Vygotsky (1962) noted that "mature thought develops in social contexts" (cited in Harris and Graham, 1994). The emphasis here is on the social, rather than individual, construction of knowledge. Sociocultural theory holds that knowledge construction is achieved through an

individual's interaction within a social milieu. The result is a change in both the individual and the milieu. It is important, then, that the individual be provided multiple milieus. This can take the form of learning centers, field trips or alternate learning sites, all set in a social context. Learning occurs because of the social and cultural environment of the classroom.

While Piaget, Vygotsky, and the behaviorists are most frequently linked to constructivism, there are others whose work has influenced the constructivist movement. Among those, according to Fogarty (1999) are John Dewey, Reuven Feuerstein, Howard Gardner, and Marian Diamond. Calling them "architects of the intellect," Fogarty summarized their impact as follows: John Dewey (1938) emphasized learning through experience, particularly when that experience reflected life; Reuven Feuerstein (1980) encouraged metacognition and used mediated learning theory to develop IQ; Howard Gardner (1983) provided his conceptualization of intelligence as multidimensional; and Marian Diamond (1998), a neurobiologist, described the growth of dendrites in the brain, thus suggesting the need for rich learning environments. By recognizing the contributions of these theorists, one can begin to understand the movement as eclectic. Constructivism is not a neatly packaged curriculum. It includes an "intuitively appealing rhetoric about children constructing knowledge, [but] has not been translated into a systematic, applicable body of pedagogical methods or a coherent curricular approach," wrote Lindshitl (1999). So it is the teacher who must translate the principles of the theorists into classroom practice.

Constructivism begins with the belief that learning is natural. Each learner brings knowledge and experience to a learning situation and will construct individual knowledge as much as he/she is interested and engaged in the process. The goals for the students in the constructivist classroom, according to Brooks and Brooks (1993), are for the students "to take responsibility for their own learning, to be autonomous thinkers, to develop integrated understandings of concepts, and to pose – and seek to answer – important questions" (p. 13). Clearly, the focus is on the learner and his/her knowledge construction. Windschitl (1999) explained that constructivism is

> premised on the belief that learners actively create, interpret, and reorganize knowledge in individual ways. These fluid intellectual transformations occur when students reconcile formal instructional experiences with their existing knowledge, with the cultural and social contexts in which ideas occur, and with a host of other influences that serve to mediate understanding. (p. 752)

Understanding of learners as active and fluid, and understanding learning as socially and culturally based, carries strong implications. Students must become involved in experiences through which they learn how to interrelate and apply concepts, factual examples, and generalizations.

For learning to occur, students must participate in experiences to accommodate the constructive belief of learning. These experiences include, according to Windschitl (1999), problem-based learning, inquiry activities, dialogues with peers and teachers, exposure to multiple sources of information and opportunities for diverse demonstrations of understanding. Students involved in such activities will learn to think for themselves. While the teacher designs and implements the techniques, it is the student who engages in the learning. This results, according to Olsen (1999) in a student who can proceed with less focus and direction

from the teacher, who does not wait for explicit teacher directions, but expresses individual ideas clearly in original language, who revisits and revises constructions because he/she is not immediately forced to move on to a new concept or idea without reflection. Students become problem solvers. They learn the principle, the process and the implementation of problem solving. In short, students are expected to become active in the learning process. This description of learning mirrors the essential factors necessary for writing development.

The teacher's translation begins with understanding the common principles of constructivism. According to Geelan (1997), there are two guiding principles. The first is that knowledge is actively constructed by learners rather than transmitted by teachers. The second is that knowledge is constructed on the foundations of students' existing knowledge. Others, including Harris and Graham (1994), Brooks and Brooks (1993) and Fosnot (1996, cited in Olsen, 1999), have expanded the principles, but all concur that a constructivist classroom is based upon the teacher's belief in how learners learn. A review of their work will lead to the following description of constructivism: 1) Students are inherently active, self-regulating learners who actively construct knowledge in developmentally appropriate ways while interacting with a perceived world. 2) Previous knowledge and experiences are a starting point for new learning. 3) Teachers pose problems of emerging relevance, structure learning around primary concepts, seek and value students' points of view, adapt curriculum to access students' suppositions, and assess student learning in the context of teaching. 4) Socially situated activity, enhanced in functional, meaningful, and authentic contexts, is encouraged through dialogue that furthers thinking. These principles

provide the standard for describing the learner, the teacher, and the classroom in the constructivist movement. While the teacher is certainly the guiding force in a constructivist classroom, it is the learning – actually, the learner – who is the focal point of the movement. The epistemology related to the learner must be the first discussion.

Windschitl (1999) related that teacher epistemology, nestled in the learner's ability to construct knowledge, requires planning: a skillful orchestration to develop an environment where students will acquire an understanding of key principles and concepts as well as critical thinking skills. The teacher's role, as guide/facilitator, is to establish a rich environment that accepts diversity in learning and in representation of learning. That environment must be safe, free, and responsive, one that encourages disclosure of student constructions. It must avoid a closed, judgmental system.

Once the teacher has understood the role of epistemology and its effect on environment, the teacher must design a curriculum consistent with constructivist principles. In designing curriculum, the constructivist teacher follows the design principles outlined by Windshitl (1999): Teachers first find out "where students are" intellectually before instruction, and then monitor how students gradually make sense of the subject matter. Next, teachers must provide students with early investigative experiences relevant to the subject matter rather than start with explanations. During the learning experience, students, often working collaboratively, are given frequent opportunities to engage in meaningful problem– or inquiry-based activities. They have various avenues to express to their peers and the teacher what they know. Finally, teachers must encourage students' reflective and autonomous thinking in

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conjunction with these conditions. So, with careful assessment of each student's knowledge and experience, the teacher facilitates learning through careful design of the classroom as a sociocultural learning environment. Techniques, including collaborative (social) learning are also carefully chosen to guide learning.

Constructivist teachers are also reflective practitioners. Their role, according to Iran-Nejah (1995) includes "keen observations, guesses, and hunches about how to create a proper setting for students to construct knowledge for themselves." Teachers refrain from giving answers directly but may use prompting questions that further thought exploration, scaffolding, hinting or modeling to assist students. Brooks and Brooks (1993) also recommend asking for elaboration, getting feedback from the class, and asking students questions to draw out analogies or observations rather than telling them. The challenge for the teacher is to research and devise classroom learning activities that coincide with constructivist principles. It is the process, not the product, that serves as the focus of a constructivist classroom.

Applying constructivism to the classroom means designing a framework for instruction. The classroom is recast as a cultural system. Bloom, Perlmutter and Burrell (1999), Windshitl (1999), and Jaramillo (1996) all described the spirit of community that must exist in the constructivist classroom. The traditional classroom of direct instruction and information processing is replaced by a community in which students organize information, explore the learning environment, conduct learning activities, and monitor their own learning. The constructivist classroom is equipped for active learning, full of centers and real materials for students to explore. It is a social place where social context and social activity influence students' thoughts and

actions. The classroom environment assists students in gaining a sense of belonging. Additionally, the constructivist perspective uses the power of social interaction to instill self-worth and self-esteem. Therefore teachers must pay attention to values, behaviors, language, symbolism, power relationships, and most importantly, the belief systems that give meaning to daily activities.

Teachers are currently finding success in applying constructivism to their classrooms. J. F. Lockwood (1995) is a constructivist who found the constructivist approach to hands-on, collaborative learning to be completely effective in truly learning astronomy. Lockwood believes that this method of teaching leads to lifelong learning. "Doing" science helps students learn to use theory, data, and experimental procedures to generalize and evaluate theories and make arguments about the plausibility or feasibility of specific viewpoints. Similarly, Olsen (1999) suggested an issues-centered approach for the social studies constructivist classroom. This provides the opportunity for "substantive conversation" by including considerable interaction with higher order thinking about ideas, the sharing of ideas in exchanges not completely scripted or controlled by the teacher, and a dialogue that builds coherently on participants' ideas to promote collective understanding. Similar to the science and social studies classrooms, the writing classroom can employ a constructivist approach to foster writing development.

<u>Teaching for Motivation and Flow Experience</u>

Research in the area of motivation has attempted to delineate factors that can be manipulated to prompt student learning. There has been research in classrooms from kindergarten through high school, but learners beyond the age of eighteen are

not frequently studied. Some researchers, however, do provide insight into motivation for college students.

Martin Maehr is typically credited with the personal investment theory of achievement that underpins the work of many researchers in the area of achievement goal theory. According to Maehr's (1984) theory on human motivation, there are three components of meaning: goals, sense of self, and action possibilities. Goals, according to Maehr, are the purpose for engagement. They can be considered in terms of self-regulation, and are influenced by self-control, self-observation, and self-reaction. The sense of self involves self-image, use of planning, and versatility with learning strategies. Action possibilities are often linked with the sense of values related to potential choices an individual considers. These components of meaning affect an individual's personal investment in terms of persistence, direction, activity, continuing motivation, and performance. Maehr's theory also includes four antecedents of meaning. These antecedents are the teaching-learning situation, information, personal experiences, and socio-cultural context. Three of these factors, personal experience, socio-cultural context, and past information, are factors that a student brings to class. The teaching-learning situation, however, can be manipulated to create a classroom climate conducive to student learning. It particularly relates to task design and social expectations. The teacher can also affect the meaning the student constructs.

As a result of their work in creating climate, Maehr & Midgley (1991) supported the development of a school wide climate that focuses on goals as the primary antecedent of motivation. Such a focus, they argued, creates "the

psychological environment [for] qualitative differences in the goals adopted by students" (p. 402). Attending to the identification of "concrete strategies for organizing and managing classroom activities," Maehr & Midgley designed a TARGET (Task, Authority, Recognition, Grouping, Evaluation, and Time) framework to identify the focus, goals and strategies for a school and its classrooms. Included in their work are the steps they identify for establishing a school wide approach to enhancing student motivation. This school wide climate, then, would be an appropriate beginning for establishing the kind of environment to encourage student motivation toward learning through goals.

Carol Dweck, too, has worked to define the role of goals in motivation and learning. Dweck's (1986) achievement goal theory posits that goals provide an individual a purpose for action. Dweck identified two types of achievement goals: learning goals and performance goals. Learning goals are characterized by personal drive to gain competence. This competence is achieved through effort and is typically measured in terms of mastery. Performance goals, on the other hand, are defined in terms of evaluation of competence in relation to others. As a result, a performance goal is viewed in terms of skills in competition with others. Motivation to achieve is driven by the desire to show competence over others or to avoid a negative evaluation in comparison to others. Dweck associated maximum growth as the objective of learning goals, and opportunity to excel as the objective of performance goals. Students with learning goals, according to Dweck, tend to be more self-regulated and tend to employ a greater variety of learning strategies than those with performance goals. Those with learning goals will attempt more challenging tasks due to their

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focus upon growth. Thus, Dweck suggested that, in designing a class, a teacher should choose challenging tasks, maintain a learning oriented context, and address motivational mediators, such as self-efficacy and attributions.

In a study of 306 Introductory Psychology students, Strage (1997) replicated – at the college level – the studies of Dweck and her colleagues. Strage sought to determine the relationship between several factors considered in motivation theories. From Strage's work, the college teacher can take three challenges for classroom climate and planning: build or encourage autonomy, emphasize a learning goal orientation, and convey the belief that intelligence is incremental.

Emphasis on a learning goal (mastery) orientation and emphasis on self improvement were the focus in the work of Ames & Archer (1988), who found that a teacher can increase the investment of students through classroom climate. The study of Ames & Archer (1988) involved 186 advanced students in grades 8-11. Through Likert-style questionnaires given to randomly chosen students, the researchers sought to determine the relation between perceived goal orientation in the classroom and students' learning strategies, task preferences, attitudes, and causal attributions for positive and negative outcomes. Their results confirmed that when students perceived the classroom climate as mastery goal oriented, the students became more involved in their learning and were willing to approach more difficult tasks. The study reported the students also engaged in more learning strategies and more challenging tasks, that they liked the class, and that they credited their own effort for their success. From this study, Ames & Archer (1988) concluded that self-regulated learning was affected by the students' perceptions of the classroom climate.

In a summary of research, Ames (1992) concluded that mastery goals must become the perceived focus in a classroom designed to promote student engagement in learning. Even when the teacher gives performance cues in such a classroom, the student perception of the environment as learning-focused translates into continued student growth. The tasks in the learning-focused classroom will provide variety and diversity, emphasizing personal relevance and meaningfulness. Evaluation and recognition will be individualized and will emphasize personal growth rather than competition with other students. The authority in the classroom moves toward student autonomy. This means the student must focus on personal behaviors related to learning, and classroom interventions will be concerned with how students think about themselves. Ames' summary points to the factors to which a college teacher should attend to promote student learning.

Self-regulated learning and achievement goal theories of motivation have provided insight for college instruction. In an attempt to place the lessons of achievement goal theory effectively within the college classroom, Salisbury-Glennon, Young, and Stefanou (2001) linked the traditional lecture and recitation method to a classroom and the consequences of that choice. The researchers hypothesized that a shift to self-regulated learning would engage students in such cognitive strategies as rehearsal and elaboration, and to metacognitive practices like planning and organizing for learning, time management, goal setting, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation. Although Salisbury-Glennon, et al admit that teachers may have little impact on the self-regulation aspect of student engagement, they do believe, as did Ames & Archer (1988), that student perceptions of the goal orientation of the classroom can become

factors in student motivation. When a classroom is perceived as focused on learning, students tend to choose more challenging and meaningful tasks, use deeper cognitive processing, and engage in self-regulated learning. Salisbury-Glennon, et al also noted that grades and tests – extrinsic motivators – have negative effects on student self-efficacy and self-regulation of learning. They identified three factors a teacher can manipulate to impact student motivation. These factors are: learning-centered classroom contexts, learning-focused instructional practices, and learning communities. The researchers suggested applying the TARGET framework to the college situation.

The two-part study of Archer & Scevak (1998) on the effect of teacher cues related to a learning or performance focus in the classroom provides another perspective on motivation. Aspects to consider for the teacher who wants to establish a mastery goal classroom climate include task choice, task evaluation and student reward, level of autonomy and responsibility provided to students. With a cohort of college freshmen studying child and adolescent development, Archer & Scevak (1998) used a questionnaire for a quantitative component and interviews for a qualitative component in this research. The questionnaire was administered before and after the course, with 354 participants responding to perceptions of achievement goals, study strategies, attitude toward the subject, acceptance of challenging tasks and perceived ability compared to others in the group. Using a Likert scale, Archer & Scevak (1998) found that mastery emphasis encouraged effective learning strategies. But the researchers could not be absolutely certain that the positive relationship between mastery climate and strategy choices was a result of classroom climate rather

than from personal competence of the learners. They observed that in a mastery climate, the attitude shifts from perceived ability to an attitude of finding an effective strategy; thus, grades and competition are not emphasized.

In part two of the Archer & Scevak (1998) study, the same cohort participated, with 319 participants in this section. In this part, the instructor designed a major assignment that had four parts: two submissions (which allowed for feedback and improvement), a booklet on writing and resources, choice of individual or partner work, and choice of topic. Once again researchers used both a questionnaire and interview. In this study, the use of resubmission meant that students perceived a shift in focus from evaluation to effort and learning. The evaluative feedback associated with the resubmission process was perceived by the students as useful. A second observation from the researchers was that the booklet was helpful to some, but ignored by others, depending upon personal perception of competence. A third observation was that the students responded positively to the choice in the assignment. Choice affects the intrinsic motivation to learn and allows the students to choose challenging tasks. There was also a positive response to the choice of whether to make the major assignment an individual or partner project. There were, however, some negative personal responses by those learners who felt unprepared to work as a partner and from those who were rejected as partners. Archer & Scevak (1998) concluded in this second phase of the study that student responses recognized a mastery goal orientation in the class. The manipulation of the major assignment clearly aligned with a mastery goal orientation. Results indicated, however, a need for more research on collaboration and its role in achievement goal theory. Yet this study

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suggests a positive impact can result from giving students choice, feedback, and the opportunity to revise in the writing classroom.

Regardless of the grade level, students in a learning-centered classroom context construct new knowledge through active engagement. The teacher can encourage active construction of knowledge by clearly focusing on learning (Maehr, 1984; Dweck, 1986; Ames & Archer, 1988; Strage, 1997; Archer & Scevak, 1998; Salisbury-Glennon, et.al, 2001). This focus will include choice of tasks, appropriate application of concepts, and use of a variety of learning strategies in a mastery learning context. The teacher will attend to both task design and task challenge, aiming for optimal challenge that is appropriate for the students (Archer & Scevak, 1998). Within the design of the classroom climate the teacher will also maximize student autonomy in order to encourage self-regulation and growth, while avoiding learned helplessness (Strage, 1997; Archer & Scevak, 1998). Techniques such as feedback and resubmission will encourage self-regulation. Action possibilities should also consider the social aspect of learning and so should include opportunities for cooperative learning (Slavin, 1991). Cooperative learning builds interdependence, individual accountability, and deeper understanding. Teachers interested in impacting students' intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy will identify and focus upon learning goals, using a variety of action possibilities such as collaborative learning, feedback and projects, and will encourage sense of self through reflection that leads to cognition and metacognition.

Besides encouraging cognition and metacognition, teachers should be attentive to those contexts which tend to produce mindfulness or flow experience for

students. By attending to these contexts, the teacher may be able to replicate it and by doing so, increase the likelihood of engagement. In 1975 Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi spoke in terms of "mindfulness," an awareness of how one approaches a task. Consistent with cognition and metacognition, mindfulness, Csikszentmihalyi found, "is most common within flow experiences – those actions selected by individuals as expressions of their individuality and self-actualization" (ctd. in Marzano, 2003, 705-6). This flow experience is a "holistic absorption in an activity" (Reeve, 2001, p. 100). Experiencing flow enables students to experience mindfulness. This mindfulness, then, can translate into students' descriptions of what it is like to be in flow.

Flow experience is determined by the relationship between one's skills and the challenges related to a task. Anxiety, worry and boredom are not consistent with flow; on the other hand, a challenging opportunity for which an individual has high skills provides the optimum context for flow experience. So, choice and established criteria for success can impact flow experience. Optimal arousal occurs when one is engaged in a task, fully attentive, and challenged to employ developed skills. Underarousal occurs when a task does not particularly match a skill level in a challenging manner. This can occur, for example, when an individual is using very low level skills or competencies for a task with very low challenge. The result is typically apathy. In another example, a situation which presents high level challenge with equal chance at success or failure in an environment which does not tolerate or allow failure can produce high anxiety. This second example clearly indicates that environment – particularly one which allows or even encourages failure and risk

taking – can be the most conducive to flow experience. In their study of students and flow experience, Csikszentmihalyi and Nakamura (1989) found that American adolescents often reside in states of underarousal or boredom during their day. These states do not lead to the kind of experience people seek to repeat. Motivation to perform tasks which generate boredom are typically related to extrinsic factors. The classroom should instead provide the context for experiences that lead to flow and its accompanying intrinsic motivation. That is, students tend to repeat those experiences which arouse their interest and engage their skills in a challenging way in a learning community that supports their development.

<u>Part II: Writing Development</u>

<u>Historical Context of the Writing Discipline</u>

"Anyone who feared that telephones and computers
would make writing obsolete ought to revisit today's workplace."
-Patrick Sebranek, Verne Meyer, Dave Kemper, and
John Van Rys qtd. in Spandel & Stiggins, 1997, p. 3

Listen to employers and teachers today, and you will frequently hear references to the need for skillful writing. But writing – the skill to communicate effectively in written format – has <u>not</u> always been a focus in schools. In his "History of the Profession," James Squire (2003) makes this point clear. The first textbooks, reported Squire, appeared in the early 20th century. These first textbooks focused on penmanship, manuscript form and elements of grammar and usage. Only in the 1980s and 1990s has writing become a priority alongside of reading in the elementary schools.

Writing was not a focus of the high school curriculum either. Influenced by the 1892 Committee of Ten and by the 1894 National Conference on Entrance Exams

Boards (CEEB), the high school English curriculum was largely focused on literature "designed to develop understanding, expression, and familiarity with good literature" (Squire, 2003, p. 4). From the Committee of Ten and the CEEB came identification of the canon to be studied in school. In 1911 the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) developed, and input from NCTE generally reflected a broadened list of books. Courses focusing on writing continued to diminish, but the influence of the CEEB and Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SAT) meant that teachers began to assign the weekly theme, soon to be the "five paragraph essay." Teachers stressed expository writing and qualities of unity, coherence and emphasis – the kind of writing expected by colleges. It is interesting to note that while the five paragraph essay was used in high school classrooms, little grammar was taught. By 1968 grammar had become a focus in middle school/junior high English, but was largely ignored in favor of experience with literature in high school

In 1949 the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC), a constituent group within NCTE, emerged to focus on the role of composition, with an initial emphasis on college freshman composition. CCCC has since expanded its attention to look at writing instruction from kindergarten to college and continues today to push for attention to the discipline of composition and the need to recognize research in composition as legitimate research. Influences on the high school curriculum were still, however, external (testing agencies and colleges, for example). Dixon (2003) noted that "authority comes to rest in tests and exams, and status depends on who comes out on top. It is a model of external domination" (p. 20). Further, with the rise of New Criticism in the 1950s and the development of AP

programs in 1955, emphasis in high school English classrooms was often narrowed to textual analysis. A 1959 report by Conant stressed that high schools should require four years of English study with a strong writing program (ctd. in Squire, 2003, p. 7). The progressive movement of the 1950s created a temporary adjustment in teaching approach in that the curriculum encouraged "individual choice, . . . student (and teacher) autonomy, . . . independent projects, and . . . active learning" (Dixon, 2003, p. 21). But this movement did not result in permanent change. Instead, high school English returned to analytical study of texts, skills tested in AP exams.

In the 1950s and 1960s cognitive models of learning and knowledge acquisition impacted writing and research. Writing assessment meant identifying and correcting mistakes. Wittrock's review (2003) of teaching trends indicated that students were generally tested on facts about authors in teacher-generated tests. In a study of teachers by Squire and Applebee in 1968, the researchers found that teachers believed that "correcting papers is synonymous with teaching writing." "Correcting" consisted of identifying gross errors in conventions. In fact, "Only 17% of the teachers said that their comments were designed to teach writing and thinking" (Dixon, 2003, p. 21). This era is typified by what is often referred to as the "error hunt" in assessment. As the Cold War era emerged, Neslon and Kinneavy (2003) described writing instruction as reflecting a focus on "arrangement and style, emphasizing mechanical correctness instead of rhetorical effectiveness, assigning topics for writing, stressing paragraph development and teaching students about some abstract qualities of writing, such as unity and coherence" (p. 789). This rather

mechanical approach to writing, emphasizing form and correctness, was long the approach used in schools.

In 1966 a group met at Dartmouth College for The Anglo-American Conference on the Teaching of English, generally referred to as the Dartmouth Seminar. Dixon (1967) reported that from the Dartmouth Seminar, three models of English emerged. These models center on skills, cultural heritage, and personal growth. It is the third model, personal growth, which influences the current trends in English. The personal growth model seeks to describe the development of a writer, and members of the Dartmouth Seminar moved to define this growth as a process. The theory of writing as a process is still the strongest informer for teaching of English. Soon thereafter, a number of voices interested in the teaching of writing were heard. The Dartmouth Seminar suggested implementing "a growth model of learning stressing creativity, expressive writing, and response to literature" (Squire, 2003, p. 10).

In the 1970s Newkirk (2003) identified a movement to use writing as a means of testing. Students' writing skills were used to validate their learning. Types of writing seemed to form a kind of hierarchy. This hierarchical thinking about writing created a kind of bias. That bias in writing as a development model comes from the assumption that abstraction and analysis are higher or more valued than practical writing or storytelling. Despite this somewhat narrow view of writing, however, there were a number of important publications during this decade.

Newkirk (2003) summarized the important publications of the 1970s. In 1971, after studying the process of twelfth graders, Janet Emig wrote about how students

learn to write. In 1972 Donald Murray echoed Emig's conclusion that the focus in writing should be on the process rather than the product. In 1973 Peter Elbow published *Writing without Teachers*, in which Elbow tried to show his readers how "to gain control over words" (p. v) through freewriting procedures, writing processes and revision processes. In the middle of the decade, in 1974, James Gray's work with writers, writing, and teachers of writing evolved into the National Writing Project in which teachers write and teach one another writing strategies. In 1977, Mina Shaughnessey's work with basic writers in college provided insight into the need to write, make mistakes, and, consequently, progress to a mature style. In 1978, Donald Graves led elementary teachers to apply these same principles of process and development in the elementary classrooms. Those who wrote about writing in the 1970s generally concluded that giving students choice of topics produces engagement. They encouraged response from peers and one-on-one conferences for writing development.

In the 1980s and 1990s the focus turned to learning, especially learning in the social contexts. There was also a clear movement to literature courses for the marginalized: African American Literature, women's studies, ethnic literature, etc. And yet research on teaching writing indicates that little had changed in the writing component of language arts education.

To study writing development, in 1983 the Travers study of Boston Writing and Grammar Schools (of students ages 7-14) used achievement tests that covered handwriting, arithmetic, orthography, reading, geography, grammar and history (rpt. in Wittrock, 2003). Although the achievement tests did not actually include writing,

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the use of statistical data to suggest development was typical of research at this time,
which relied on "objective testing" and statistical analysis.

To gain perspective of the classroom environment, Goodlad used a series of
surveys. Goodlad's (1984) study found little student choice in assignments and a
classroom dominated by teacher talk. Written work was typically

> repetitive reinforcement of basic skills of language usage throughout the
> twelve grades – a heavy emphasis on mechanics in the topics covered by
> teachers, textbooks stressing these topics, and workbooks, worksheets, and
> quizzes emphasizing short answers and the recall of specific information."
> (ctd. in Newkirk, 2003, p. 394)

The workbook approach has lost some appeal over the years, but the type of writing
assignments that replaced the workbooks still lacked variation in the 1980s.
According to the 1987 report of the National Assessment of Educational Progress,
(NAEP), 82% of all writing consisted of essays and reports (ctd. in Newkirk). There
was not much personal or creative writing. Despite what was happening in the writing
classroom, Florio and Clark (1982) identified four purposes for writing in elementary
classrooms: to participate in community, to know themselves and others, to
demonstrate academic competence, and to occupy free time. (ctd. in Stotsky and
Mall, 2003). The identification of these purposes seems somehow incongruous with
the approaches used in those very same classrooms.

The status of writing at the end of the 1980s might be summarized by looking
at the commentary that emerged from a meeting of members of a number of
professional associations (NCTE, Modern Language Association, College English
Association, CCCC, Conference on English Education, and others) in 1987. In their
report, published in 1989, members "asserted the importance of process in learning

language and responding to literature, and the value of looking at instruction in relation to the growing capacities of readers and writers and not in relation to inert content alone" (Squire, 2003, p. 13). That report has promoted much debate about goals and standards, outcomes and assessment.

What teachers can conclude from those who have studied and written about their work over the years is a number of beliefs that influence current writing approaches. These beliefs are summarized by Kirby, Kirby, and Liner (2004) as

- Writing is best learned in a social setting with opportunity for real audience and beneficial feedback.
- Consistent practice with coaching is necessary.
- Fluency must be emphasized as a first step. This means that students must read and deconstruct diverse forms of writing. Strategies will emerge as students write, so they must have lots of support in early stages of the writing process for a piece.
- The whole is greater than the sum of the parts. New forms (like the novel written in poetry, the literary memoir, etc.) mean new approaches.
- Assessment must support growth. Not all writing must be "graded." Experience has shown that "Real language used in real ways for authentic purposes that matter to the writer promote writing that matters, that others want to read and discuss, and that students value enough to work on and revise."
- Growth takes time. (pp. 4-9)

Kirby, et al. suggested that as teachers "we must learn to help young writers produce an authentic piece every time they write. There is technical knowledge to be learned, but writing is first to be read and communicated" (p. 7). The empowerment of writers – an attitude which is reflected in contemporary texts like that of Kirby, et al – is embodied in Spandel's recent publication *The 9 Rights of Every Writer: A Guide for Teachers* (2005). Spandel's rights, (each the title of a chapter), include the rights: to be reflective, to choose a personally important topic, to go "off topic," to personalize the writing process, to write badly, to see others write, to be assessed well, to go

beyond formula, and to find personal voice. The work of those who have published

earlier and the movement to writing as process that emerged from the Dartmouth

Seminar are evident in these rights. And the rights are consistent with the NCTE

beliefs about the teaching of writing published in November 2004 by the Writing

Study Group of the NCTE Executive Committee as well. Student ownership and

individual process are emphasized in contemporary writing about composition.

Consideration of the social aspects of writing are reflected in teaching approaches

such as the writing workshop and peer editing techniques.

<div align="center">Writing Development Theories</div>

Theories in English language arts "are always tentative." Because research

must be continuous, any theory is the "best explanation we have at the moment"

(Stotsky and Mall, 2003, p. 133). The attempt to describe writing development has

been somewhat sparse. It is not surprising that in a review of longitudinal studies,

authors have found diminishing material as they search for writing development

research for elementary through college years. Once beginning literacy is developed,

the research generally discusses differences in terms of sophistication or knowledge.

According to the summary of research generated by Tierney and Sheehy (2003),

"What seems missing are those understandings and appreciations of student behaviors

that emerge when researchers follow development of the same individual across time

and when researchers ask themselves to identify the students' views of literacy" (p.

186). One researcher who followed a longitudinal approach was Loban. Loban (1967)

studied patterns of growth by using interviews and a series of tests in a longitudinal

study. The conclusion is not surprising: later success generally follows earlier achievements (ctd. in Tierney and Sheehy, 2003, p. 186).

Writing has been described using both a product and a process approach. As a product, research (and observation) has taught us that children begin to write with pictures, then letter-like graphics, then true letters, then single words, sometimes with invented spellings, to be followed by true spelling, series of words, then clause- and, finally, sentence-length texts. The product approach, then, describes what a writer produces (Berninger, Fuller, & Whitaker, 1996).

Writing can also be described as a process. In this case, planning, pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and proofreading are highlighted. Younger writers, however, often do not use the planning or pre-writing stages as part of their process. And revision at many levels is often simply a process of repairing surface features rather than making substantive changes to content. The Hayes and Flowers model (1980) for describing writing process called these stages "planning," "translating," and "reviewing" (rpt. in Berninger, Fuller, & Whitaker, 1996). A writer conceives of an idea and then puts that idea into written form. The conception of the idea is part of the planning phase. In the translation phase, text generation and text transcription occur. Changing the written text is accomplished in the reviewing phase. Skills related to each phase, according to Hayes and Flowers, develop at uneven rates. Some students are capable of rapid development of ideas, but are stymied by their ability to write. Other students have rapidly developing handwriting skills, but their idea generation is somewhat underdeveloped. In revising their model in 1996, Hayes and

Flowers included the concept of iterative and recursive phases, making the model less linear (rpt. in Berninger, Fuller, & Whitaker, 1996).

In the early grades, writing development includes the ability to show automaticity in transcription. In intermediate grades, "text generation expands to include more mature discourse structures for different literary genre" and revision strategies emerge. In junior high grades, students are influenced by "metacognition of the writing process" (Berninger, et al., 1996, p. 198). Included in writing development is the understanding of revision as a recurring process with varying focus depending upon when it is performed and what it addresses. Although sometimes overlooked, working memory and long-term memory, too, are involved in writing development. Berninger, et al noted that "Noncognitive variables such as affect, motivation, and social context (audience, communicative function of text) play a role in the task environment" (p. 200).

In other research, Langer (1986) studied the development of the cognitive activities related to writing. In studying representative writing samples from students grades 1-9, researchers sought to identify categories of comments and emerging text structures to articulate a linear description of writing development. Conclusions from the Langer study note that

> beginning and developing writers use a small set of algorithms during on-line planning to generate next sentences: Select local topic, then repeat it, or repeat a stem of it and substitute an ending over and over, or paraphrase it, or produce an explanation or reason for it, or provide a fact about it, or state next event, or provide a psychological or physical description of it, or offer an evaluation (opinion, interpretation) about it, or state a consequence/outcome of it, or address comment about it to audience, or make a parenthetical comment about it, or state dialogue or inner thought about it, or offer a qualification about it, or offer a contrast or alternative to it, or state a wish about it, or state a plan about it, or make a prediction about it, or make a

conditional statement about it, or give examples of it, or make a summary generalization to tie together two prior comments, or offer a comment related to a topic in memory but unrelated to a real topic in the text. (ctd. in Berninger, et al., 1996, p. 209)

This study of young writers has provided a sense of development in an upward, linear fashion. Moving to adult learners, in a study of ten students in a Masters degree program, Langer looked at horizontal development, namely, the ability to write a school psychological report. The study looked for expanded skills in new genres. The goal was to "gain access to information about the affective, motivational, and social contextual, as well as cognitive, writing processes of skilled adult writers who were learning a new literary genre" (Berninger, et al., p. 211). Langer found differences between novice and veteran writers in terms of adherence to schema, audience focus, the level of perceived difficulty, and reaction to negative feedback. Langer's study provided insight about the motivation of the writer in relation to the writer's experience. For the novice writer, learning to write something "new" provided intrinsic motivation. For the veteran writer, deadlines or behavioral reinforcers served as motivation. For both, approaches to the process were recursive, linear, and holistic. For the novice writer, negative feedback was disconcerting, but this was not so true for veteran writers.

What can be learned by review of these longitudinal studies is that "Writing development is a dynamic process both across the life span (linear development) and as expertise is expanded to new genres (horizontal development)" (Berninger, et al., 1996, p. 215). Writing development, then, can be encouraged by using tactics that include both linear, (skill development) and horizontal, (broadened experience of genres) tactics.

College-level writing

> *Quality . . . you know what it is, yet you don't know what it is. But that's self-contradictory. But some things are better than others, that is , they have more quality. But when you try to say what quality is, apart from the things that have it, it all goes* poof! *There's nothing to talk about. But if you can't say what Quality is, how do you know what is is, or how do you know that it even exists? If no one knows what it is, then for all practical purposes it doesn't exist at all. But for all practical purposes it really* does *exist. What else are the grades based on? Why else would people pay fortunes for some things and throw others in the trash pile? Obviously, some things are better than others . . . but what's the 'betterness'? . . . So round and round you go, spinning mental wheels and nowhere finding anyplace to get tractions. What the hell is Quality? What is it? . . . A person who sees Quality and feels it as he works is a person who cares.*
>
> -Robert M. Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* in Kirby, Kirby, and Liner, 2004, p. 114

Graves (1985) defined development as change in a writer that occurs "when a child notes a discrepancy or disequilibrium and seeks to right the imbalance" (p. 2). In children, Graves studied conceptual sequences of what children believe to be important in the writing process, the use of the page, and their understanding of audience. While Graves looked at the early stages of writing development, the emerging literacy of childhood, Jackson (2000) looked at the power of writing and its impact on career as seen through the eyes of college students. When it came to learning, Jackson found that "What students do want to learn is how to write better in order to achieve their goals and to negotiate the world" (p. 228). In order to facilitate this learning, we should study a number of factors related to writing development. Jackson believes "…we need to learn how student assumptions about writing instructors and about writing instruction impact their discourse. . . . we need to study

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our students, their writing processes, their cultural influences, and their cognitive changes" (pp. 229- 232).

While Jackson's directive seems simple enough, the controversies surrounding college writing are myriad. Marilyn Cooper in her editorial in *College Composition and Communication* (2004) provides a glimpse of some of these issues when she wrote that writing classes are often

> dismally boring places, requiring students to pay attention to forms and styles of writing they encounter nowhere but in writing classes, inculcating in them the idea that writing has nothing to do with achieving any real goals but simply involves following rules and achieving correctness in thought and language (p. 13).

This is often reinforced on college campuses by instructors in a variety of disciplines who define "good" writing as "correct" writing. And when students exit writing classes – generally at the end of their freshman year – they rarely encounter courses or instructors who insist on continued writing development. Rather, it is "correct writing" these instructors insist upon. Thus, the dilemma for many composition instructors is focused upon their role. Are they to serve the academic community and teach academic writing, focusing on correctness – and, consequently, live often at odds with development of knowledge of new genre and personal voice? Or should their allegiance be to the students who will one day write in a community? Do they address the requirements of workplace communications? Or is the long term goal for college composition only that kind of writing required in the collegiate environment? But the view of college level writing is not only the concern of the composition instructor. Beyond the composition classroom, the experience and perceptions of

students, graduates, other faculty, and administrators regarding college level writing can inform what happens in the composition classroom and the college experience.

A 2004 graduate of Indiana University, Mike Quilligan (2006) noted that the shift from high school writing to college writing is a "shift from indicative writing to explicative writing" (p. 297). Students in college must learn to develop effectively the argumentative stance. Amanda Winalski, a member of Temple University class of 2004, was more directive in her freshman year in college. Winalski (2006) was convinced that she had come to understand "the formula for good college writing – or, more cynically, the formula for an A paper. (In a first-year student's mind, there is hardly a difference between the two.)" The formula Winalski found was to focus on her use of adjectives and sentence structure. In high school "style and structure are essential, content optional . . . a thesis sentence guarantees a passing grade" (pp. 303-304). College writing, however, is quite different. Students are expected to think, and then to communicate that thinking through writing. Knowledge of conventions of language is necessary – whether one chooses to follow them or not; word choice and sentence structure are important. But most important may be that "A college writer must anticipate the reader's response" (p. 307). Recognition of audience seems a characteristic of college level writing, but is rarely acknowledged prior to the development that occurs in the college years. Winalski wrote that

> There does not (yet) exist a checklist for the requirements that compose
> college-level writing. The transition from high school to university writing is
> not as simple as the memorization of a few grammar handouts; rather, it
> consists of a student's willingness to learn, understand, and modify the rules
> that govern language in order to communicate ideas. One can easily write five
> pages of nothing that sounds lyrical or drainingly intellectual or fill five pages
> with brilliant thoughts that are presented in bullet statement. To achieve a
> balance between the two is to be a successful college writer; it is a goal to

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which one must aspire every time he or she picks up a pen. Thus, writing at this level is perhaps an ongoing process that necessitates a persistent willingness to try, fail, and try. (pp. 307-8)

Winalski's commentary echoes many conversations I have had with students over the past thirty years. They come with the understanding that they must write correctly. And when their correct writing falls short of showing intellectual engagement, they wonder why their grade is only passing. Those are difficult conversations.

The difficulty freshmen face in transition from high school "correct writing" to college level intellectual writing is the subject of Dombek and Herndon's (2004) *Critical Passages*. Dombek and Herndon asserted that it is the responsibility of the freshman composition instructor "for socializing students into the intellectual life of the university" (p. 2). College writers need to develop as writers to what Dombek and Herndon call "advanced writing" and that advancement requires "active investment, delayed gratification, and an ability to linger in productive dissatisfaction" (p. 9). Translated, this means that their writing must reflect their thinking and voice. For freshmen, this means that they must learn to bridge the engagement of their personal voice with the intellectual argument. They must learn to understand that good ideas take time to develop and will rarely happen quickly and easily. And they must put off the desire to be finished, learning instead to draft and revise multiple times in texts which break "the grip of the five paragraph essay" (p. 11). College writers must be given assignments that "demand they demonstrate thinking rather than just reporting" (Dombek and Herndon, 2004, p. 12). They must learn to ask questions to direct their learning and their personal engagement in their reading, thinking, and writing.

Kimberly Nelson, a 2006 University of Iowa student, talked about her development as a writer in "The Great Conversation (of the Dining Hall): One Student's Experience of College-Level Writing" (2006). She learned that college level writing involves a number of factors. Her reflection on her college development is speckled with references to what she learned through reading, writing, and talking. She quoted Kenneth Bruffee who explained that "Reflective thinking is something we learn to do, and we learn to do it from and with other people. We learn to think reflectively as a result of learning to talk" (p. 286). Understanding Bruffee's idea meant a change in process for Nelson. She learned to "talk through" her essay with others, even before she put pen to paper. Nelson credited two sources for helping her to understand the value of others as audience. She credited Toni-Lee Capossela, who said "Writers improve when they use the questions of a thoughtful reader to shape their work, then eventually begin to ask themselves the same questions." And she cited Hanna Arendt who wrote "For excellence, the presence of others is always required" (p. 291). Once Nelson had come to understand her big ideas, she began to "pay closer attention not only to individual sentences, but also to discrete words and phrases . . . vary [her] tone, timbre, and cadence to draw out that desired awe from [her] audience" (p. 286). Nelson remembered an informal writing workshop that happened in the dorm, as well as trips to the University Writing Center. She developed the habit of writing multiple drafts and employing multiple readers for feedback. As she proceeded through college, the motivation provided by a good grade declined, replaced by validation from a reader who read and valued her words, and feedback that acknowledged her growth as a writer. Lil Brannon and C.H. Knoblauch

wrote that "The incentive to write derives from an assumption that people will listen respectfully and either assent to or earnestly consider the ideas expressed" (qtd. in Nelson, p. 294).

Besides the actual practice of writing, Nelson also credited her experience with reading literature as a source for writing improvement. From reading literature, (she cited particularly *Pride and Prejudice*), she learned "clear thought, crisp organization, interpersonal communication" (p. 287). Like Quilligan, Nelson spoke of her knowledge of the structure of the argument and the value of a thesis as important to her college writing development. She also noted the impact of a conference with an instructor. What Nelson came to understand is that

> college-level writing is a dynamic term that means a number of things. Mastering materials and research methods, engaging the readings, grappling with increasingly sophisticated grammar, and synthesizing information from disparate sources are all part of becoming a college-level writer, but primarily, that degree of attainment requires giving yourself over, as a student and a writer, to the desire to create meaningful and elegant connections between texts, ideas, and readers. (p. 295)

Faculty perspectives are also a factor in understanding the dynamics of college level writing and development. Susan Schorn, the Coordinator of the College of Liberal Arts WAC Initiative at the University of Texas at Austin, reviewed faculty to identify their expectations of college level writing. What she found was that faculty stressed audience awareness. Composition instructors seemed to reflect the controversy discussed earlier in statements such as "Some instructors in other disciplines think of grammar as someone else's problem – namely, ours" (2006, p. 335). Schorn's suggestion is that composition faculty talk to others to understand

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their perspectives and then to communicate to them what is possible. The "possible," however, must not be limited to composition courses.

In his discussion of college-level writing, administrator Chris Kearns (2006), Assistant Dean of Student Services at the University of Minnesota, developed views of the recursive character of college writing. He explained that "our relationship to language maps the surrounding world and orients our attention prior to any conscious decisions on our part. College writing . . . provides an opportunity to form the contents of our consciousness and the effectiveness of our communication and also to shape the constitution of our character" (p. 342). Recursion is a form of "self-governing, circular causality found in the feedback loops at the core of all self-directing systems" (p. 351). These self-directing systems necessitate undergraduates' taking responsibility for their interactions in the community around them. They accept identification of self as a critical reader of their own work, conscious of the implied reader.

Kearns (2006) differentiated prepared college students from under-prepared students by noting that prepared students recognize the interrelatedness of reading, writing, and communicating. The under-prepared students see writing as a "compartmentalized, quasi-mechanical exercise unconnected with the rest of their education" (p. 345). Students who develop mature writing come to understand the connection between writing and thinking, and develop an awareness of audience.

Kearns (2006) also described three common approaches to college writing: writing as a transaction or performance, writing as an extension and declaration of self, and writing as an instrumental tool. Those who see writing as a transaction or

performance, write to please the instructor in order to earn a reward. Those who see writing as an extension and declaration of the self, are expressionists who find writing "an organic process to be evaluated on the basis of its sincerity or intrinsic beauty rather than according to external criteria such as coherence or cogency" (p. 347). The third category, those who see writing as an instrumental tool are "primarily concerned with being right or effective with respect to the larger aims toward which they are directed" (p. 348). In order to truly develop, a writer must respect the reader and come to understand that techniques do not substitute for audience awareness.

Administrators have a decided interest in defining college level writing as well. Administrators can hold differing views, however, depending upon their vantage point. James M. Gentile (2006), Department Chair of English at Manchester Community College, noted that college-level writing has "a significant level of cognitive engagement," yet "Higher-level thinking" is "only beginning to emerge in many first-year college students" (p. 312). Gentile suggested that understanding the expectations of college writing can be achieved by reviewing college syllabi. Gentile wrote, "When we situate the composition course within an institution, it is likely that the formal rather than the cognitive qualities of college writing will be emphasized." The English course addresses formal qualities, such as "clear focus, logical pattern of development, adequate support, varied sentences" and standard conventions of grammar and sentence structure, while courses that are generally outside of the English courses, seek to generate higher-level thinking as an outcome. Often essay exams do not reflect writing ability, as they do not reflect "developing an essay over time with multiple drafts." Even the process of producing the written exam is

different – pen vs computer. So it is that by stated objectives in course descriptions and by context of writing requirements in exams, college level writing development must happen on its own.

Many administrators define college level writing by contrasting basic writers with college level writers: college level students

> demonstrate an ability to write in response to texts, to craft an analytical essay centered on a controlling idea, to develop that idea in the body of the essay, to organize their ideas so that they flow logically, and to express themselves with relative clarity (Gentile, 2006, p. 318-9).

The assignments for basic vs college level writers are also different. For the college level writer, "assignments will be more challenging, the standards for assessment more rigorous, and the independence of the writer greater" (p. 319). It would seem that basic writers, consequently, may be doomed to remain basic, as the expectations do not challenge them to change.

The Academic Senate for Califormia Community Colleges has recognized that the integrated skills related to critical reading, writing, listening and thinking "depend upon students' ability to postpone judgment and tolerate ambiguity as they honor the dance between passionate assertion and patient inquiry" in the college environment (Gentile, 2006, p. 323). This means that a certain degree of cognitive development provides the foundation for successful academic experiences in college. Gentile has considered four factors: the ability to engage cognitively with ideas presented; the ability to produce writing which is formally proficient; the ability to apply recognized linguistic factors; and the ability to argue, fairly, and to use sources correctly. These skills may be "framed by the composition course, modeled and attempted in the course," but must be further developed and reinforced in other

courses throughout the college career (p. 326). This certainly suggests that all faculty must support writing development during the college years.

<div align="center">Overcoming Obstacles and the Road to Mature Writing</div>

The study of writing development often begins with a study of how writing first emerges, from a description of such factors as orientation of the page, orthographic markings, sentence construction, punctuation, development of syntactic maturity, and so on. Along the way, teachers and researchers look at the impact of such factors as learning environment, strategies for learning, use of computers, awareness of process, and teacher influence through conferences and commentary. The goal is a confident writer who produces "good writing" – what Macrorie has described as "clear, vigorous, honest, alive, sensuous, appropriate, unsentimental, rhythmic, without pretension, fresh, metaphorical, evocative in sound, economical, authoritative, surprising, memorable and light" (qtd. in Kirby, Kirby & Liner, 2004, p. 115). Of note here is the fact that – at least in this note – Macrorie does not address correctness or absence of errors in grammatical conventions as a goal.

Writing development can be defined as change in a writer that occurs "when a child notes a discrepancy or disequilibrium and seeks to right the imbalance" (Graves, 1985, p. 2). My four-year old grandson, for example, seems poised on the edge of development. When I asked him recently for a writing sample to use in a Reading and Literacy course I was teaching, he replied "But Grandma, I can't write. I don't know my letters yet." He proceeded to "write" in scribbles for my sample. He exhibited the stage of emerging literacy that recognizes that writing has meaning if one can produce the "letters" to make words that carry meaning. While he cannot yet produce

them, he is aware of what he must do to communicate in written form. With time and opportunity, he will develop.

In his study of emerging literacy related to writing, Graves (1985) identified three categories for study: conceptual sequences; the use of the page, the process, and information; and audience. It is audience which seems to emerge to a certain extent in early writing and then to re-emerge as an important factor in the college years.

At the emerging level, writers use the three basic elements of punctuation: the period, comma, and capital letter. Experienced writers develop the use of question marks, exclamation marks, quotation marks, semi-colons, parentheses, hyphens, dashes, and "academic" marks, such as ellipsis dots, brackets, and underlining, in a manner that adds "flexibility and meaning" to the writing (Shaughnessy, 1977, p. 17) But writers do not develop full use of all punctuation marks equally. Understanding the "meaning" carried by each punctuation mark is a sign of maturity. Such understanding necessitates a certain degree of experimentation and risk- taking, something which develops differently in each writer. In addition, in order to use punctuation effectively, the writer must gain the ability to review his/her work from a reader's perspective.

Besides the development of the use of punctuation, syntactic development – that is, the use of phrases, clauses, and sentences – has been used to describe a writer's development. Hunt (1965) studied syntactic maturity work in terms of a T-unit. A T-unit consists of an independent clause plus any dependent clauses or elements that may be attached to or embedded within it (rpt. in Weaver, 1996). By using T-units and the number of words per T-unit, Hunt developed a description of

maturing writers. This research prompted much of the sentence combining movement of the 1960s and 1970s. According to his work, the average T-unit for a fourth grader is 8.6 words; the average for an eighth grader is 11.5 words; the average for a twelfth grader is 14.4 words, and the average for a superior adult writer is 20.3 words (ctd. in Weaver, 1996, p. 125). It is clear that this research suggests that sentences lengthen as a writer matures.

But the T-unit does not tell the entire story. How students combine basic kernel sentences into more complex sentences is also indicative of growth and maturity. Elements of interest include coordination, and subordination, as well as use of appositive phrases, participial phrases and absolute constructions. In his text, *Image Grammar*, Harry Noden (1999) suggested that we teach these constructions directly and creatively. To improve syntactic complexity, a teacher must encourage reading and provide the opportunity to write and to receive teacher and peer help with their writing. It is this direct instruction and opportunity to practice which will support a writer's movement toward syntactic maturity. It is Weaver (1996) who summarized a syntactically mature writer as "one having a substantial reservoir of syntactic resources to call upon and the ability to suit syntax to his or her purpose, audience, form of discourse, and so forth" (p. 130).

Further discussion of syntactic maturity considers the manner of achieving difference in sentences. In Loban's longitudinal study, evidence of development was cited when students used elaboration or modification to make longer sentences, a recognizable difference between weak and strong writers. Dependent clauses, along with elaboration and modification, are used by older and better writers (rpt. in

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Newkirk, 2003). Weaver (1996), too, noted the complexity of the grammatical system that develops as writers grow. It is interesting to note that in the analysis by O'Donnell, Griffin, and Norris (1967) of the syntactic constructions used in oral language by elementary students, that those students already used most of the thirty-nine specific structures and functions analyzed in that study (rpt. in Newkirk, 2003). The study looked at main clauses, headed nominal constructions, nonheaded nominal constructions and adverbial constructions. The only patterns unrepresented in the speech of kindergarteners were noun plus adverb constructions, indirect objects, and objective complements. Although these constructions do not yet all appear in the written work of kindergarten students, it is clear that they can use the constructions (ctd. in Weaver, 1996).

Shaughnessy (1977) has called the movement from simple construction to complex subordination and coordination in sentence constructions, "syntactic resourcefulness" (p. 89). Attention is given to the construction of the sentence and to word choice that is sensitive to purpose and audience. To Shaughnessy,

> the mature writer is recognized not so much by the quality of his individual sentences as by his ability to relate sentences in such a way as to create a flow of sentences, a pattern of thought that is produced, one suspects, according to the principles of yet another kind of grammar – a grammar, let us say, of passages. (p. 226)

It was also Shaughnessy who drew attention to the fact that writers must take risks which often result in making mistakes. In fact, Shaughnessy was emphatic in declaring that "A paper with no errors does not necessarily indicate 'good writing" (1977, p. 11). The writer who writes safely is often the writer who does not experiment with punctuation, language, and construction which are indicative of

development. In considering the risk of error, Weaver (1996) noted that errors

become more sophisticated as writers develop. Besides, a study of professional

writers would indicate that those writers do not subscribe 100% to the rules and

regulations used in classrooms. While an argument can certainly be made that one

must know the rules before deciding when to break them, the fact that they can be

broken – and broken effectively – should be included in writing development.

Weathers (1980), Schuster (2003), Bishop (1990), Bishop and Ostrom (1997), Noden

(1999), and Romano (2004) have written significant works that encourage

experimentation with writing style, breaking the rules, and writing maturity.

In her work with basic writers in the New York State college system,

Shaughnessy has delineated the challenges faced by these developing writers. Basic

writers, Shaughnessy concluded, need

> to experience consciously the process whereby a writer arrives at a main idea
> or point; the need to practice seeing and creating structure in written language;
> and the need to recognize specific patterns of thought that lie embedded in
> sentences and that point to ways of development of large numbers of
> sentences into paragraphs and essays. (1977, p. 274)

The message to teachers is to model writing and to have students write.

Understanding and practice of the process of writing will lead to improved writing.

Weaver (1982) also pointed out that writers must learn that writing is not a single

draft job. She wrote "The key, I believe, is to think of writing as involving more than

one draft. In the first draft(s) we can then afford to encourage writers to take risks, the

risks that will result in both growth and error. By allowing for error, we can

encourage growth" (qtd in Weaver 1996, p. 72).

I would add that a key to encouraging the kind of writing practice and process these researchers recommend means that a teacher must establish a learning community that produces engagement on the part of the writer. In describing two high school students doing a research paper, Larson (1985) showed both in frustration. One began with enthusiasm for the subject but became overwhelmed by deadlines; the other developed enthusiasm which turned into obsession with the project and perfection to the point of depression. Larson explained that "These students lacked the skills to accomplish the grandiose papers they kept imagining, and they were unable to establish expectations for themselves that were consistent with what they could realistically do." The result is "a nightmare of worry, frustration, and internal anger" (p. 23). This "nightmare" effect resulted in failure for both students, something which mystifies the writing teacher. In addition, teachers are often presented with what Larson calls "underarousal," a situation in which a student finds the actual writing task boring. One student told Larson,

> Writing it, that's a bore; because when I have all these note cards it's all there, but it's a job to put it down on paper. I know what I want to say, but having to put it into words was boring. I'm just kind of a robot repeating what other people say. (p. 27)

Reading Larson's report on students' reactions to research papers is somewhat disheartening. Students reported "no feelings, no excitement, and no personally meaningful challenge." They were "unable or unwilling to play with ideas" and found writing the research paper a "mechanical task" or "pointless exercise" (p. 28). Clearly, there is a lack of excitement and a lack of personal engagement for these developing writers. To counteract the "robot" effect, teachers must develop assignments which call for continued engagement throughout the assignment.

Romano's work (1999; 1995) with multigenre papers presents one approach for combating underarousal. Macrorie's (1988) I-search process – because of its metacognitive component – is another. Attention to style and voice, as suggested by other writers and researchers is also useful.

Alternate approaches to writing, and providing students with choices, have been useful in engaging students in the writing experience. This engagement is aimed at developing situations for experiencing flow. Larson (1985) found that the ability to get into flow, to use internal self-regulation and create enjoyment, led to "patience and command of thought to lay out his materials in such a deliberate and compelling fashion" (p. 38). The ability to enjoy writing is neither a cause nor an effect of good writing, but it is related to investment in the activity. "It is likely that enjoyment as both cause and effect contributes to creating and sustaining flow in writing, that the conclusions that create enjoyment and that create good writing are closely related" (p. 39).

Ultimately, the criteria for good student writing require description. And there is no shortage of opinions on what constitutes good writing. A difficulty in evaluation, however, is the temptation to quantify writing – an impossible task. Murray (1985) lists an abundance of information, a sense of order, clarity, and an air of authority as the most important initial indications that a writer has potential. Kirby, Kirby, and Liner (2004) identify two qualities for evaluation: writing must be interesting and technically skillful. "Interesting" includes such aspects as voice, movement, light touch, information, and inventiveness. "Technically skillful" means that the writer has a sense of audience, detail, rhythm, and form, and that the writing

itself makes sense and uses mechanics effectively. For Macrorie (1984), the well written paper includes strong verbs, vivid detail, inventions of all kinds, ironies, oppositions, and a strong, personal voice (ctd. in Kirby, Kirby, & Liner, 2004, p. 106). The presence of these qualities is sign of development for Macrorie.

If development of variation is considered part of writing development, writers often find obstacles with those who teach them. Teachers do not have skills as responders; they become editors, critics or proofreaders, according to Kirby, Kirby, and Liner (2004, p. 104). Regarding academic writing in college, few teachers respond with recognition of the well turned phrase or important use of detail. Instead, they assign a grade, often devoid of meaning because it is not even linked to an articulated set of rubrics. Few professors of biology or history or philosophy present models of good writing for examination; even fewer model their own process in development of a piece of writing. What faculty often note are errors in the mechanics of writing. But teachers cannot focus on the negative or the grammatical error hunt, and then expect that student writing will improve. Dixon (1970) acknowledged that students will write beyond the English classroom. In academic pursuits other than English, as well as in workplace and other contexts, the mature writer must learn to use language "in new ways, and with new variety" (p. 66). They must develop vocabulary and structure that will reflect maturity in writing.

<u>Summary</u>

The first part of this interpretive framework was developed to serve as a foundation for understanding college development in general, and to gain insight into the specific students in college at this time. Although researchers cannot always

defend a causal link between college attendance and change, there is certainly research evidence to support the occurrence of change. Students typically move toward an autonomous status, making decisions which consider complexity rather than duality. Current students, frequently referred to in literature as millennials, are media conscious, technologically savvy, active learners who are aware of the constant change in our world. Current approaches to teaching these young adults are informed by androgogy and the constructivist philosophy. Teaching to encourage developmental change is supported by the work of those researchers who have studied adult learning, motivation, and flow experience. The results of their findings suggest that social contexts, active involvement in a learning centered classroom, and goal orientation benefit the learner. The first half of this interpretive framework, then, served to establish the context for examination of change for current college students.

The second half of this interpretive framework focused upon writing. Researchers have identified developmental changes in writing often described in terms of T-units and sentence complexity. These developmental models have concentrated on writers in early grades, with limited description of change during the high school years and beyond. And studies have suggested that classroom climate, assignment design, feedback and teaching approach can impact a writer's change in writing. The definition of good or mature writing – the standard by which readers assess writing – has also received attention. Syntactical complexity and audience awareness are two factors that characterize mature writers. Research has suggested that there is a developmental flow to writing maturity. From the emergence of making marks on a paper to the complex use of language and syntax – writing reflects

development in facility with words and maturity in thinking. Along the

developmental path, writers typically make mistakes as they take new risks and learn

to use communication tools, such as punctuation and sentence complexity, to

communicate effectively. Thus, this interpretive framework provides an informational

backdrop against which I can analyze the data I have collected as I examine how

students construct themselves as writers during their college years.

Chapter 3: Methodology

"Research is formalized curiosity.
It is poking and prying with purpose."
                    -Zora Neale Hurston (qtd in Falk and Blumenriech)

This chapter recounts the journey to define my research design and methodology. After considering a heuristic study, I turned to action research before I shifted to a phenomenological approach to capture the experience of undergraduate college students and their writing development. Recruitment and identification of participants, and the process for collection and analysis of data are included here. To facilitate different perspectives for analysis, I opted to use an inventory developed by Lavelle (1993) to characterize writing process, a taped interview to collect personal stories for analysis of change, and writing samples to examine the participants' products.

Identification of Strategy for Inquiry

My experience as a career college composition teacher, along with my need to find practical application in my research study, fostered my intense interest in the topic of writing development in undergraduate college students. While I have a deep respect for the numbers generated in quantitative study, I am drawn to the "feel" of qualitative work. I agree with Falk and Blemenreich (2005) that "truth can be found in the living, telling, retelling, and reliving of stories" (p. 17). Qualitative research holds, for me, the richness of the participants' stories – the individual experiences – I wanted to capture. Drawn to the qualitative approach, I examined the methods of qualitative researchers who "examine the details of life close-up through a 'thick,' rich detailed description that gets beneath the surface of the experience" (Falk &

Blumenreich, 2005, p. 10), and this description suited both my topic and my goals. The characteristics highlighted by Creswell (2003) for qualitative research moved me to this choice. Creswell (2003) identified qualitative research as situated in "the natural setting" using "interactive and humanistic" methods in a manner which is "emergent." In a qualitative study, the researcher "systematically reflects on who he or she is in the inquiry and is sensitive to his or her personal biography and how it shapes the study" (p. 182). My "personal biography" as a career college composition instructor has clearly shaped my question, and my study of qualitative research has increased my recognition of the need to focus upon the stories of the *participants*. Once I had determined that my study would, indeed, be qualitative, I began with a careful investigation of the potential of pursuing a heuristic study.

Moustakas (1990) noted that heuristic research seeks to reveal more fully the essence or meaning of a phenomenon of human experience, seeks to discover qualitative aspects, rather than quantitative dimensions of experience, engages one's total self and evokes a personal and passionate involvement and active participation in the process. Heuristic research does not seek to predict or to determine causal relationships, and is illuminated through careful descriptions, illustrations, metaphors, poetry, dialogue, and other creative renderings rather than by measurements, ratings or scores. I found myself clearly drawn to many of these characteristics, in particular the revelation of "the essence or meaning of a phenomenon of human experience," the "passionate involvement," the "careful" study, and the creative renderings. But I realized that a heuristic study would not answer my question "How do college students construct themselves as writers?" In other words, a heuristic study would

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focus on me rather than on the students and their experience. Further, while the six stages of heuristic study (initial engagement, immersion, incubation, illumination, explication, and creative synthesis) attracted me as a process, they did not strike me as an appropriate design to focus on college writers and their change over time. So, while I have experienced the heuristic stages in compiling data and writing my study, a heuristic study would not suit to answer my question. So I abandoned the heuristic design option. I have maintained, however, a heuristic tone to writing this dissertation. As justification for that tone, I cite Moustakas (1990), who wrote that a "qualitatively oriented heuristic scientist seeks to discover the nature and meaning of the phenomenon itself and to illuminate it from direct first-person accounts of individuals who have directly encountered the phenomenon in experience" (p. 38). Moustakas helped me discover both my research design and my research voice. Because I sought "direct first-person accounts" of college writing experience, I designed my research to exact those accounts. Because my purpose in choosing my research question is based on my determination to understand writing development and my role in that development for college students, I have chosen to use my "first person account" in reporting my research and its impact.

Once I had moved away from a heuristic study, I turned to action research. Bishop (2000) recommended action research as an appropriate approach for maintaining contact with students. In fact, Bishop even suggested topics for study. She suggested that inquiry into the lived experiences of students should include asking students about the impact of grading on writing, as well as "what writers actually do and feel like" when they write (p. 6). These suggestions influenced the

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development of my interview protocol, but action research was also not the fit I was looking for, so I examined phenomenology.

Because phenomenology seeks to understand the lived experience, it is both a philosophy and a method (Creswell, 2003). A phenomenological study "aims to identify and describe the subjective experiences of respondents. It is a matter of studying everyday experience from the point of view of the subject," (Schwandt, 2001, p. 192). I perceive the subjectivity of the lived experience to be the strength of this approach. It seeks the richness of the reality provided through the participants' personal stories of their writing experiences in college. This approach demands that the researcher secure "comprehensive descriptions" that form the basis for a reflective analysis that "portrays the essences of the experience" (Moustakis, 1994, p. 13). Additionally, Creswell, (2003) noted that the phenomenological procedure "involves studying a small number of subjects through extensive and prolonged engagement to develop patterns and relationships of meaning" (p. 15). In the process of gathering data and analyzing it, the researcher, according to Nieswiadomy (1993) "'brackets' his or her own experiences in order to understand those of the participants in the study" (ctd. in Creswell, 2003, p. 15). In the description of phenomenology I found an appropriate strategy of inquiry that would suit both my persona as college composition teacher and my role as researcher of the question "How do undergraduate college students construct themselves as writers?"

<center>Identification of Data Collection Process</center>

As I moved to the specific means of gathering data in this phenomenological study, I determined to look at multiple methods of data collection which would

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provide me the richest picture of how undergraduate college students perceive themselves as writers. I chose to use Lavelle's (1993) Inventory of Processes in College Composition (IPIC), taped interviews, and writing samples. Lavelle's instrument would enable me to identify the students' writing process and to identify deep vs. surface approaches. This instrument would provide a uniform approach to the question of change. The taped interview, designed to capture student response to topics (including attitudes and knowledge of writing, description of writing experiences and feedback, and discussion of writing samples), would record the story of each participant as a unique writer. In each interview, I wanted to emphasize the importance of self-reports "so that the research participant felt his or her contributions were valued as new knowledge . . . and as an illumination of meaning inherent in the question" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 110). I wanted each participant to understand that his/her story was valuable. And, finally, I gathered texts chosen by participants as examples of their work during their undergraduate college years. The IPIC, interviews, and texts provided the perspectives necessary for analysis. Mining the data, looking for patterns, would help me to discern possible answers.

Once I had identified the collection procedures, I moved to recruitment of participants, securing of informed consent, and administration of instruments.

<u>Recruitment and Participants</u>

The sample selection of participants was drawn from a small four-year liberal arts college in the Midwest. Using a list of students with senior status organized by areas of study, I applied a stratified random sampling process to get participants with different majors. Once the pool was selected, I contacted each individual through an

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email request, intentionally omitting the topic of the study because I did not want potential participants to "de-select" due to a perception of themselves as poor writers. As a participant agreed to become part of the study, I provided the participant with an informed consent for signature. The informed consent identified the topic and purpose of the study and described the participant's role in the study. (See Appendix A for informed consent.) Once the informed consent was signed, the participant became part of the study. Ten students agreed to participate – six males and four females. Their majors include history, communications, social studies education, English education, psychology, theatre performance, sports psychology, marketing, and visual arts. Eight of the ten are "traditional" students in that they entered college directly from high school. Two male participants began college about five years after high school graduation. The ACT scores (self-reported) of the participants ranged from 20 to 29, in an institution which lists the average ACT scores of its student body as 22. Eight of the ten completed the study, 5 males and 3 females. Two participants could not complete the study because their schedules did not afford them the time to complete the interview process.

<div align="center">Data Collection</div>

<u>Inventory</u>

Participants began by taking the Inventory of Processes in College Composition (IPIC), a 71-item true-false "Questionnaire" designed by Ellen Lavelle (1993) to "measure stylistic variation in college writing" (p. 490). The IPIC was created from existing instruments that considered deep vs. surface learners, self-efficacy, and strategies students use to complete tasks. Phase one of Lavelle's study

was item construction. Items were selected from "student self-report instruments, Inventory of Learning Processes (Schmeck, 1983) and Student Behavior Questionnaire (Biggs, 1987)" to measure strategies, motives, and conceptions about college writing (Lavelle, 1993, p. 491). This process resulted in a survey of 212 items, which Lavelle then tested with 423 undergraduates in general education courses in phase two. After a series of tests, correlation analysis and factor-analysis, Lavelle identified five factors represented on the survey: Elaborationist, Low Self-efficacy, Reflective-Revisionist, Spontaneous-Impulsive, and Procedural. In phase three, Lavelle's goal was to establish validity. The process involved administration of the IPIC and the Inventory of Learning Processes (Schmeck, Ribich & Ramanaiah, 1977) to 95 college participants in a second semester composition course. Lavelle used interscale correlations and then followed with a regression analysis using grades as a dependent variable and scale scores as predictors. The final form includes 71 items. (See Appendix B for IPIC Questionnaire developed by Lavelle.)

The conclusions drawn by Lavelle (Lavelle & Zuercher, 2001) are that the IPIC isolates five independent college writing styles (previously listed). Two styles, Elaborative and Reflective-Revision, represent a deep level writing process. The other three styles, Low Self-Efficacy, Spontaneous-Impulsive, and Procedural, represent a surface level writing process. The Elaborative writer is characterized as focused on "personal meaning" and "self-investment" and views writing as symbolic (p. 376). Yet, while the Elaborative writer makes considerable personal investment in his/her writing, the writing itself may not be competent academic writing. This description considers process, not product. The Reflective-Revision approach, the second deep

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level process, is "based on a sophisticated understanding of revision as a remaking or rebuilding of one's thinking" (p. 376). This approach, because of the attention to ideas and revising, generally results in writing that earns high grades. The Low Self-Efficacy approach is described by Lavelle as a "fearful approach" (p. 376). The Low Self-Efficacy writer, one of three surface level approaches, dislikes the writing task and has no confidence in his/her abilities as a writer. The writer typically concentrates on grammar issues rather than personal expression in writing. The Spontaneous-Impulsive writer employs a surface level approach which, as the name implies, is "impulsive and unplanned." The spontaneous-impulsive approach "represents overestimating skill and fear of fully dealing with what the writer perceives as limitations; the approach is defensive" (p. 377). The writer sees written communication as simply talking on paper and views revisions as minor adjustments in grammar. The final surface level approach is the Procedural approach. A Procedural writer uses a "method-driven strategy" that follows rules. There is little personal involvement in the writing task, but the writer does seek to "please the teacher" with the final product (p. 377).

IPIC Administration

The first phase of my study involved completing the 71 item Inventory of Processes for College Writing (IPIC) developed by Lavelle. The Inventory required approximately twenty minutes for completion, and participants took it twice. The IPIC was taken at our first meeting to identify current attitudes and processes of the senior participants; the IPIC was taken a second time at the opening of the second meeting. For the second completion, each participant was directed to "take the survey

this time by trying to remember how you would have answered the inventory when you were a freshman." The intent was to discover perceptions of change from the student's perspective. The data from both inventories were analyzed for change. Two changes were considered: change in approach, and change in individual statements.

The Interview

Each participant completed an audio taped interview. The interview followed the protocol recommended by Moustakas (1994) in that each began with a social conversation to create a relaxed and trusting atmosphere. (See Appendix C for interview questions and protocol.) It was important that participants felt comfortable so that each could provide a detailed account of his/her writing experiences. I used a general guide for questions, and then included follow-up questions to assure that I was gathering a "rich, vital, substantive description of the experience of the phenomenon" of writing (Moustakas, 1994, p. 116). The interview with participants had two parts. Participants began by completing the IPIC a second time, as noted above. After completing the inventory, the participants were asked about their general knowledge, attitudes, and skills related to writing, as well as their writing experiences during their undergraduate college years. The questions were open-ended to solicit the richness of the lived experience. I was aware of my responsibility as the researcher to gather "naïve descriptions obtained through open-ended questions and dialogue" and then to use "reflective analysis and interpretation of the research participant's account or story" to determine the "structures of the experience" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 13). In coming to an understanding of the experience under

study, I attempted to avoid judgment and pre-determined descriptions. My analysis began with the descriptions provided by the research participants in their interviews.

All interviews were transcribed verbatim. Next, transcriptions were analyzed from two perspectives. The purpose of the first perspective was to capture the unique story of each writer's college writing experience. The purpose of the second perspective was to look for patterns across writers. For the second perspective, the transcriptions were analyzed to find meaning or meaning units. These units were analyzed to cluster them by themes. The themes were then used to develop the textual descriptions of the experience.

Writing Samples

Students selected writing samples from their college years to serve as a focus for the second half of the interview. These samples were copied, to allow the researcher to analyze the writing. Once the writings were gathered and copied, participants engaged in a taped interview to ascertain 1) general knowledge, attitudes, and skills in writing; 2) writing experiences in the college years; 3) feedback received from written assignments and the impact of that feedback; 4) selection and evaluation of writing samples; and 5) construction of self as writer. Interviews were transcribed and analyzed for meaning units used to identify themes. The themes formed the basis for a textual description of the experience. The emerging themes helped to formulate a suggestion for college writing development and the factors that affect it.

The writing samples themselves were also analyzed. I considered: types of writing, quantity of writing, and commentary on past writing. Samples were studied

using Hunt's T-units, syntactic variation, and Spandel's traits analysis and additional mature or good writing traits stylistic techniques.

<center>Analysis of Data</center>

Using the key provided by Lavelle for interpretation of the IPIC, I scored responses for all participants and charted both the current senior evaluation and the remembered freshman responses. Next I created charts disaggregated by writing process approach to note any differences in procedural, spontaneous-impulsive and low self-efficacy statements – all surface processes. I did the same for the deep level processes of reflective revisionist and elaborationist statements. This process allowed me to look for general changes in process approach as well as to look for changes in particular responses within each category. By looking at specific questions as well as the broader category, I used the statements to correlate with themes I found in the interview and in the writing samples. The Inventory provided another angle from which to view the general perception of participants on their writing process in the freshman and the senior years of college. The individual statements in the survey were reviewed to corroborate potential themes in the interview.

The written texts provided by each participant offered tangible evidence of written work over time. Texts were evaluated for changes in T-units, with emphasis on characterizing the sentence structure changes. The texts were also reviewed using traits analysis. The traits identified by Spandel & Stiggins (1997) provide one perspective of analysis. Because this study is focused on change, the analysis will identify change, rather than evaluate quality, regarding the traits of ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions. This data was

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compared to student commentary on the papers, suggesting students' awareness of themselves as writers, including their identification of change, their identification of their strengths and weaknesses, and the factors which have impacted their change. Use of text analysis provided a concrete example of what products the students had produced.

The most important analysis involved the interviews. Analysis of transcriptions allowed me to "mine that data" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 65). By repeated "listening" to what and how the participants tell their story, I could identify codes, the "tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 56). Coding data included observing repeated patterns. The analysis was "not a structured, static or rigid process" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 58). Rather, the major aspects of analysis involved the data collected and the researcher's interpretations. Yet the interplay between the two was also a factor to consider. Therefore, it was "preferable to self-consciously bring disciplinary and research experience into the analysis" to "enhance" rather than "drive" analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 59).

As part of the process I kept a journal, as Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest, to note how codes shifted during the process of identifying them. I identified descriptive, interpretive and pattern in the emerging codes. Phenomenology is

> fundamentally interpretive. . . . [T]he researcher makes an interpretation of the data . . . developing a description of an individual or setting, analyzing data for themes or categories, and finally making an interpretation or drawing conclusions about its meaning personally and theoretically, stating the lessons learned, and offering further questions to be asked (Wolcott, 1994). It also means that the researcher filters the data through a personal lens that is situated in a specific sociopolitical and historical moment. (Creswell, 2003, p. 182)

Because I have been in the college environment for over thirty years, my experiences will no doubt sensitize me to significant problems and issues in the data and allow me to see alternative explanations and to recognize properties and dimensions of emergent concepts.

Summary

The phenomenological approach involves a "return to experience in order to obtain comprehensive descriptions that provide the basis for a reflective structural analysis that portrays the essences of experience" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 13). There are two levels to this approach. On the first level, "The original data is comprised of naïve descriptions obtained through open-ended questions and dialogue," while on the second level "the researcher describes the structures of the experience based on reflective analysis and interpretation of the research participant's account or story" (Moustakas, 1994, p 13). The analysis includes a search for a series of meaning units, reflects on the units and determines the essence of the situation. "The researcher synthesizes and integrates the insights achieved into a consistent description of the structure of learning" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 14). The goal is to describe the wholeness of the lived experience of the participants. By looking at the wholeness of the picture provided through multiple stories, I have sought common themes and outlying variations.

The final narrative that emerges from the analysis of study will reflect, according to Strauss and Corbin (1998) the "evolution of thinking that occurs over time through immersion in the data and the cumulative body of findings that have

been recorded" in my journal entries and data charts (p. 144). From the analysis will

emerge the storyline.

Chapter 4: Findings

"The greatest compliment that was ever paid me was when one asked me what I thought, and attended to my answer."
-Henry David Thoreau.
"I like to listen. I have learned a great deal from listening carefully."
-Ernest Hemingway

<u>Overview</u>

Three women and five men participated in this study of the writing experiences of eight undergraduates. Their self-reported ACT composite scores ranged from 20 – 29 and their college GPA, (also self-reported), ranged from 2.7 – 3.97. Maurice (28) and Harry (26) are "non-traditional," in that they did not migrate directly to college upon high school graduation; each worked for a time instead. Maurice is an ESL student raised in Europe. None of the participants listed the same major, although two (Emily and Harry) are education majors. This variation is a result of the design of the stratified random selection process. By using a list of seniors organized by majors, I was able to get a cross section of students from different majors.

This chapter mirrors my process for reviewing my data. It includes a summary of each participant's interview in vignette form, an analysis of the interviews organized by topics, a discussion of the findings of the Inventory, and an analysis of the writing samples provided by the participants. Because I began with study of each individual, this chapter begins with a vignette of each writer extracted from his/her interview. Labeled with the name of the participant, each vignette provides a brief description of the participant and a detailed summary of the writer's narrative of his/her emergence as a writer written in an attempt to capture the richness of the individual writer's experience. After I had come to "know" each individual through

review of the interview transcript, I studied the transcripts again to identify points of similarity and differentiation. I looked specifically at the descriptions of writing experiences, attitudes towards writing, process, change, and identification of self as writer. As I returned to each individual interview, I searched for subjects covered and attitudes presented. This allowed me to look for patterns or differences in respondents. So, after the introduction to each participant, the chapter continues with a topical review of the transcripts. Next, I analyzed the Inventory taken by each participant. These findings are reported in light of what I had learned about each participant in the interviews and previous analysis. Finally, I reviewed the sample papers provided by the participants. I examined length of T-units, sentence construction, organization, and voice. My finding from analysis of the papers ends this chapter.

Jackson: Artist Writer

Jackson, nearly 23, entered college immediately following graduation from a public high school in a major city in the Midwest. He is a visual art major and has completed his senior paper, along with his senior show and presentation. He will spend the summer as an intern with a state arts council, working in the state capital building. He has one course to finish to complete all requirements for his degree. Jackson, who identifies himself as Caucasian, will be the first in his family to earn a college degree; his older brother and parents do not have college degrees. He entered college with an ACT composite of 20 and has earned a 2.7 GPA for his college career. Jackson is articulate in his understanding of himself as writer and provides a

fairly thorough description of his development, though he describes himself as "not the best writer on the block."

As a freshman, Jackson characterized himself as "intimidated." He often waited "until the last minute" to complete assignments and concluded that he "had more potential my freshman year to do better, but . . ." he didn't have the skills for understanding an assignment and researching "developed yet." Jackson made a distinction between errors ("I didn't have a lot of mistakes.") and interest ("But they weren't the most interesting essays."). He described himself as "a learner that lagged behind on the curve in certain things. . . . So, my writing skills – they developed a little slower." He recalled how he wanted to be "happy" with what he wrote. If he demanded too much perfection on a paper, however, he often did not turn it in because the product did not meet his expectations. As a freshman in college, he often found writing "intimidating," because "if you haven't developed those very basic skills . . . people look at you weird. They see your C when everybody else got a B+ and they look at you as odd. That was intimidating for me."

In identifying "good writing," Jackson pointed out three areas: vocabulary, lucid development of ideas, and flow. A writer's vocabulary, according to Jackson, should be "recognizable, but at the same time complex. The goal is to meet the needs of a variety of readers. When a reader can "envision" the writer's words, then the text is lucid. And flow assists the reader to follow the text and understand the ending. When he discusses writing, Jackson uses his artist's perspective; his interview is laced with art terms and art topics to summarize his writing development. He explained

> Art isn't just canvas. It is anything we have passion about. That's my definition. Anything we have passion about has the potential of being art, whether it's writing an essay, or it's writing a novel. If we have a passion about the subject we are writing about, it's going to be artful.

An example of Jackson's passion became evident when he spoke of his senior paper, a historical review of the art magazines. When he had completed his discussion of the paper through a detailed summary of its content, Jackson reflected on what would have happened if he had been asked to write such a paper as a freshman. He commented,

> It would never have been turned in. A paper of this importance scared me at first. . . . being precise, having read the right references, having all very pretty, made me nervous. . . . as a freshman, I wouldn't have had the art history and I don't know if I would have had that particular interest, so I don't know if it would have flowed very well.

Clearly, he recognized his changes as a learner, as an artist, and as a writer.

As he considered his college writing history, Jackson found a connection between his papers in terms of his development. He summarized that connection in this way:

> All the papers I have written before were just a stepping stone in my career as a student to help me . . . I did worry about this but not as much as some of my other papers because I knew I could knock this out . . . enough to get a B easy. I was confident by that point that I could do it."

Jackson improved from paper to paper in skill and in confidence, a significant improvement for one who understood himself to lag behind his peers. In terms of his future and writing, Jackson sees himself writing letters and, perhaps, art criticism. He will consider graduate school but worries "whether I write well enough." He got somewhat philosophical about his worries, however, noting "But that's just a normal, you know, butterfly thing in my stomach." In concluding his discussion about his

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college writing experiences, Jackson remarked "I've really tried to improve and I think I have." He calls his change an "evolution," which came in a wide variety of areas for Jackson.

The most significant change for Jackson came in his vocabulary development and his increased use of figurative language, especially metaphors and similes. Jackson explained that "good writers . . . use words that are recognizable, but at the same time complex." They write, he continued, in a way that makes their ideas "lucid" and engages their readers. In developing his language, Jackson has not simply used words with which he is already familiar. He likes to use a thesaurus to broaden his choices, and has found that reading poetry has also given him an awareness of syntax and "words with a double meaning." Jackson discovered that "a lot of poetry really pushes syntax" and uses words "in a strange way or a foreign way." The similes and metaphors in poetry encouraged Jackson to use them as well, although he admitted "You know, I don't think I could've written a good metaphor before I became a sophomore. I didn't grasp it." Another way that Jackson's vocabulary has changed comes from his realization that "Every field, every subject has its own language. So picking up on that is part of the process" of improving his language. Jackson returned several times during his interview to language-related change in his work.

Another area of change for Jackson was his use of time for writing and revising. As a freshman, he wrote a paper once and then turned it in. But his approach has changed. He now looks for development of an angle when he writes. He noted that "a lot of students leave it [writing a paper] until the last minute. They don't find

that angle. And angle helps engage people." Angle is what, for Jackson, represents what would be "visual" in art. Lacking the pictorial aspect of art, writing must still have an angle, the conception. Angle comes particularly from the point that intrigues the writer and, consequently, helps the writer determine perspective on the topic.

When asked to describe his process for writing a paper from assignment to product, Jackson once again aligned his writing process with his visual art process. He defined that process as follows:

> When I create art, I try to take one piece and find something that I like about it and bring it on to the next piece and develop it that way. That's generally how series works, a series of works. You start with a style, you develop that style further and one thing may appear in every piece in that series. So it's very process oriented as far as conceptual, conceptually. Writing can be the same way.

Jackson likes process. Because writing reminds Jackson of the process of painting and drawing in the development of a style or angle, it "intrigues" him. Some people, he noted, "consider painting poetry with a brush." In further discussing how art and writing can be compared, Jackson recalled a performing artist who provided a room and markers for anyone to write "whatever they wanted." Jackson found this "like the epitome of writing. No censor. Nobody saying 'you gonna write that? Really?' So, the freedom of it." The freedom and passion of self-expression are valuable factors in writing for Jackson, even within the discussion of process.

Jackson often gets lost in his work as he creates his art pieces, and he has had the same experience in writing. He described his experience of working "in the zone:" "If I get carried away, it usually comes in the initial stage of freewriting, which is always the most liberating, of course, and then the research dulls that out a little bit." His freewriting is often preceded by doing something related to the topic of his paper.

He might, for example, use art, literature, movies or music to "open" himself up. He might "go to church and center a little bit" before writing about a theology topic. Or he might read a book on history, (which he finds "sort of a little redundant"), before he begins to write about history topics. These practices of doing something and then freewriting reflect Jackson's visual and kinesthetic learning preferences. Once he has motivated himself to write,

> the process of getting into the zone is taking resources and absorbing them and, . . . you mix it up. You're trying to build on that and so sometimes that will pull you in a little bit more, . . . allowing you to experience that better.

The resources get some specific focus from Jackson when he writes a paper. Through his college experience, Jackson has learned to check references listed in his text books as a starting point for reading additional resources. He has become comfortable with Internet and Ebscohost searches and has found that instructors often have valuable references he can use when he researches. In his research papers, Jackson has learned about "finding the right people to quote. Some people aren't the best to quote. Some are more scholarly than other people." This insight came from discussions with faculty and from reading in various disciplines.

Once Jackson has identified his topic, he has found that an angle for writing typically emerges as he researches. He demands interest and intrigue in both his topic and product for himself. If interest and intrigue exist for him, then he can communicate that to his reader. And, while Jackson has become aware of audience during his undergraduate years, he admitted that "learning to write for an audience is still something I have to build on."

Jackson uses freewriting to begin writing a paper; next he drafts the paper; and then he revises his work. Sometimes Jackson has a conference with a faculty member and he finds conferences helpful. But he also seeks students for assistance in revision. He said that one particular student is "a stickler on structure" and, consequently, has helped Jackson understand the potential of using an outline to address structure. Another student is "quite slick" and has helped him especially on response papers, identification of run-ons and improper use of semicolons. By asking other students to read his drafts, Jackson has found that his product improves. He explained that "sometimes I get off subject, which can hurt ya. Leaving stuff out, details teacher look for, especially in history papers" is also detrimental, so having readers give him suggestions for improvements has been beneficial for Jackson. It is important to Jackson that he "be pleased with writing" because it motivates him "to write something else."

Jackson has used feedback effectively to improve his writing. His comment that "compliments can make a student better, even if it's just a little one," suggests an important approach for faculty to consider in giving feedback. The strength of this recommendation was further highlighted when Jackson discussed a "low point" in his college writing experience. The low point in his writing occurred for Jackson when a teacher returned a paper "marked up pretty well." Yet Jackson actually benefited from this low experience because it "kinda opened my eyes." After getting the returned paper and considering how many drafts it might take to fix the paper, Jackson wanted "to not only fix the grammar or whatever, but also to make it to

sound like me." This low point actually suggested a philosophical pattern Jackson employed in writing. He believes,

> If you see a mistake, don't make the same mistake twice. . . . Find your mistakes. Move to the next paper. Try not to make those mistakes. That's what learning is.

The philosophy of using mistakes as a learning tool marks a change in attitude for Jackson. As a freshman, Jackson approached class time for feedback with "a little bit lackadaisical" attitude. But he has changed that attitude. He has grown in confidence and he has identified suitable responders to make feedback useful to him. Almost as an aside, Jackson commented that feedback from faculty that is not legible is not useable. So, he actually prefers a verbal discussion of his work in progress.

Jackson believes that freshmen need encouragement. His high school English courses were not "strenuous" and so Freshman Composition was a challenge. He remembered that even when he was ready to write, he "was scared to write." He did not perceive himself as a "natural writer," and so he has learned to get appropriate assistance when he writes a paper. When asked to summarize his experience as a college writer, Jackson replied:

> Writing for me is like a really long road trip. At the end, the Grand Canyon. In the middle, 'Are we there yet?' At the beginning, 'don't forget to pack everything.' So that's been my trip.

<u>Scot: Theatrical Historian</u>

Scot, a 20 year old Caucasian with an ACT composite of 29, entered college in the fall after his high school graduation as a political science major. During his first two years in college, he switched majors twice – to theology and to education – before changing for a final time to history. During his college years, Scot was a

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frequent actor in college theatre productions and has performed in college talent shows. He shares a kind of artist perspective with Jackson, but Scot is more of a performer of art than a producer of art. Scot comes from a large city in a Midwestern state, but attended college away from his home state. He is the youngest child of a family of five and is the only child to choose marriage rather than a religious vocation, a decision which has impacted him deeply. In fact, Scot has started to write an autobiography about himself and his life decisions as "the only one who does not take up the cloth." As he described himself and his undergraduate writing experiences, it was evident that Scot sees himself as a writer.

Although he admitted that it was "kind of hard to conceptualize" himself as a writer when he was as a freshman, Scot knows that he has changed considerably "A) as a person and B) most definitely as a writer." He began with his current definition of good writing. Good writing, according to Scot, has several characteristics: "originality," the ability to keep the reader's attention, (which should be caught "at the very beginning"), "good grammar, good punctuation, good spelling," and finally, "good organization." Noting that poor writing is "lacking" in those areas, Scot added that the poor writer might have "technical errors," use contractions, misuse pronouns, and have "total disorganization." He laughed as he added, "like my freshman year."

Scot developed his beliefs about writing through "lots of practice." As a freshman, Scot wrote only to fill assignments, whereas now he will "write just for the sake of writing." He thinks about writing, writes, and considers whether or not what he writes would make a good article. Although he admits to being his own "biggest critic," he does feel "much more accomplished" as a writer than he did as a freshman.

As Scot talked about his changes, he used a chronological approach. He recalled his high school English teacher from junior year. That teacher, Scot said, told the class "how to write for college." Scot summarized the lessons by identifying the role of the introduction as getting the reader's attention and providing a "thesis with three things." These "things" were then developed into paragraphs, followed by a conclusion. Scot called this the "five paragraph essay." His teacher directed the students to "tell 'em what you are gonna tell 'em, you tell 'em, then you tell 'em what you told 'em. Intro, body, conclusion." Scot followed that format and found that it worked for him well into the first years of college. He found the format a "training to organize your thought." As a freshman, Scot remembers that "all I wanted to do was make the teacher happy," and he found that writing was a "breeze" when he followed the format. But that changed in his junior year, when he found that teachers now wanted "more."

The demands of upper division history courses required that Scot move beyond the five paragraph format. He found himself returning to the use of note cards and outlines - a skill he had learned in the 8th grade and then abandoned "because it was too much work." In fact, Scot found a detailed outline, while difficult and time-consuming to create, made his actual writing easy. Besides re-discovering process, Scot also found that teachers expected analysis in his papers. He experienced historiography and learned to attend to how <u>he</u> viewed history. It was during his junior year that Scot wrote a paper on Khrushchev for a Russian Revolution course. Scot called that paper "probably one of my proudest papers throughout college." Not only did he impress the instructor with the content of the paper, but, he noted, "people

were able to tell a lot about me through reading the paper." It first showed the "passion" he feels for history. History courses took Scot to "reading primary source documents" and researching other historical elements. The excitement he felt in the Khrushchev study motivated him to make the decision to study history as a major.

When Scot talked about his process of completing an assignment, he identified changes in his actions and in his attitudes. Wryly, Scot admitted that when he first gets an assignment, he puts it "on the back burner for a little bit," because he has developed what he called a "bad procrastinatory attitude" during his college years. Even though he does no visible work, he has come to understand that he plans out the paper in his head, so that when he begins to write he knows "exactly what directions I'll be wanting to take." He begins with "a basic outline" and then heads to the library to read. He has developed the art of skimming, so that he now understands that he does not have to read an entire book to find specific information. He credited one of his history instructors for teaching him skimming. After the reading, Scot creates a "detailed outline," which is followed by reading and highlighting material. For a time, Scot turned next to writing note cards from the highlighted material, but now he types the material onto the computer with citation references. Scot "use to just shell out the paper, get it done the night before and hand it in and make a good grade. I didn't really care about, you know, a few grammatical errors." But this attitude has changed. He has come to "want to be completely satisfied." He has come to "never really be satisfied with anything but my best" in an assignment. Once Scot has drafted his paper, he revises and reviews the paper several times. He has others read his work. His goal in these revisions is satisfaction with his text. At times, he admitted, he has

not agreed with teachers about how he should approach a particular piece. He has grown in confidence to the point that his work must be "satisfactory to me" and "most audience members who have read it" and so he has followed his own instincts rather than the advice of a teacher at times. He agreed that his current attitude is to satisfy himself more than to satisfy his teachers, a real shift from his freshman desire to "make the teacher happy."

In chronicling his college writing experiences, Scot listed freshman papers in courses such as sociology, composition, political science and history. In his sophomore year, the one identified as his "easiest" year, Scot wrote reflections in philosophy and theology classes, and some take home essay exams. When he reached his junior year, Scot found that his assignments, while less frequent than his first two years, were longer, required more research, and included more analytical thinking. His senior year writing included his senior thesis, an opportunity for Scot to combine his two passions (theology and history) in a paper on the religious inquisitions.

Scot says that sometimes he can get "so absorbed that I'll forget to eat" when he writes. At these times, Scot is "able to just let my thoughts kinda guide my hands." He does not always see this as a benefit, however, because he feels that "when you start typing . . . so fast, you lose your critical eye." Consequently, he will get up and walk around to maintain the critical edge to review his work for poor writing or weak thought processes.

Although Scot does not believe that he can set up a situation to get "absorbed," he does understand where he works most efficiently. He cannot write in a group setting and he described the dorm room atmosphere as "a horrible place to

work." Scot needs "a quiet place, where it's just me and the computer and stacks of books all around me." So Scot has used the library. He goes to the study room in the library "that <u>nobody</u> uses" to write.

When Scot writes, he described his approach as "just talking" on paper. With a chuckle, Scot conceded that perhaps some people should not "write as they talk." But because he believes he is able to "articulate" his thoughts, he imagines his audience and "talks to, not at" them. His goal is to create a piece that his audience will be "engrossed in what they read."

Audience for Scot is broad. He defines his audience as "anyone who would read the paper." Scot explained that when he writes, he likes to think as "if I was writing an article for *Time* magazine or a history magazine, or any kind of periodical." He wants to "maintain and keep the attention of his reader," and to keep <u>his</u> <u>own</u> attention as well. When he completes a paper that he appreciates, he wants "everyone and their dog to read it, even if they are not interested in the topic." This motivates him to write in a way that will create interest in the reader.

Low points for Scot in writing have occurred when he didn't have his "head on straight." He explained that "if I'm not focused on school, it shows up in my writing." His "work ethic" slips. During the second half of his junior year, he "had other distractions," and so his writing was affected. Consequently, he sees a necessary goal for himself is to stay focused.

It was during the first semester of his junior year that Scot said he "really learned to write." This was the semester in which he wrote the paper on Khrushchev that he "was so proud of" that he made his Dad read it. When the instructor returned

the paper, he told Scot that it was the best paper in the class and that he (the instructor) had "learned a lot from it." Scot was proud that he could teach his teacher – who had an earned doctorate – something about Russian history. The instructor's comments still resonate with Scot.

When Scot spoke of feedback he reflected that he has not received much in terms of commentary on a returned paper. The instructor might write something like "good thought process" or "closes well," but Scot "really appreciated the ones who wrote a long paragraph or who would sit down with me and just say 'Where are you going with this?' or 'I'm not following you here.'" Conferences helped him improve the quality of a paper.

Scot admitted that his attitude "changes from class to class" in regards to goals and grades. Because he delayed taking some required general education courses until his senior year, he wrote some papers for those classes "just getting the assignment done and getting my grade on the paper. It was just enough." He didn't care much about those pieces. The result, he explained, was that "you will see, even in my senior year, some freshman year looking papers." If he did not care for the class ("I hate science"), he did not focus on the writing much.

Papers Scot chose to share, he suggested, "show[his] transformation through the years." The freshman paper ("the first paper I wrote") shows his "high school coming through" in the five paragraph "serious organization." It is "an opinionated paper, with nothing to back up the opinions. . . . It uses contractions. It is not a well written paper in my mind, [but] it shows you the very beginnings." In the sophomore year take home tests, Scot believes a reader will be "able to see <u>my</u> thoughts come out

on the paper." A junior year paper on Ethiopia includes a "catchy title" and Scot's "first ventures into using Turabian Style." Other junior papers come from a theology class in which he compared and contrasted the ideologies of Malthus and Marx. Scot's senior year is represented by the senior thesis and a cover letter.

In summarizing what the papers show, Scot remarked that "in the papers that I really focused on, . . . I knew what I wanted to talk about; you can tell what the thesis is." The Ethiopia paper, while "not a bad paper," was written on a topic for which Scot had little background, so "it was all new." If he were to improve the papers, he would "like to see more analysis in some." Scot finds that his thinking has changed over the years. He has "a more open mind, in some ways." When he entered college as a freshman, he described himself as a "straight and narrow, black and white personality." He now sees himself painted in a "grey spread."

When asked to define himself as a writer, Scot quipped that his writer image is "undefinable." After a thoughtful pause, however, Scot said "I aim to please, in general. I guess it's part of my theatrical personality. . . . I want to put on a show . . . when I write. I want everyone to enjoy the show." In the future, Scot sees himself writing work-related material. But he also sees himself writing in graduate school, "maybe even a doctorate." And his "dream" would be to "be published in some periodical or the *New York Times* best seller" for that book he wants to write.

<div align="center">Brandi: Process Writer</div>

Brandi is a 22 year old Caucasian from a metropolitan area in the Midwest. Her major is business with an emphasis on marketing. A member of her college women's soccer team, Brandi remembered her ACT composite as "20?" and has

earned a 3.79 GPA in her course work. Her future plans include a return to her home town where she will interview for an entry level position with a major insurance company. After graduation, Brandi may consider joining a women's soccer club, and had at one time considered coaching a team. But the time required to coach may prohibit her involvement as she begins her professional business career and, she realizes that "It's hard to get people to really care about it [soccer] when you are in love with it. That's the hardest part for me." It is likely, then, that Brandi's association with soccer will likely end at graduation as her business career begins.

When asked to describe good writing, Brandi responded first by defining poor writing as having "a whole lot of grammatical errors. It's just hard to read because you can't concentrate on anything but the mess-ups." Good writing, besides having an absence of errors, includes examples and "support from outside resources." So the two distinctions Brandi used to differentiate poor and good writing would be grammatical correctness and use of support and examples.

Like Scot, Brandi likes organization. She brought from her high school writing a sense of creativity ("metaphors and similes and stuff like that") – an opinion also held by both Jackson and Scot. In college, she learned to use examples and to write the research paper. When she writes, Brandi begins with "a thesis statement and . . . starting out sentences and then . . . examples" to organize her writing. Although she claims that she doesn't have "the best grammar skills," she has worked hard to make sure that grammar errors do not negatively affect her writing. She credits her Mom (a teacher) for helping her to recognize errors and eliminate them. She sets high goals for herself, defined in grades, and adds that "I care about what I'm doing

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whenever I'm working on something. It's because I am a hard worker . . . I have developed an understanding of my language [which] has improved."

Language development has been critical in Brandi's business degree. Terminology in the field shifts depending on the specific area of business she studies. For example, in accounting, the terminology is "specific" and differs from the "deep" terminology of economics. Brandi struggles to understand those areas. But in marketing, the strategies and their implementation suit Brandi well and, consequently, led her to choose a marketing emphasis in her degree plan. She has come to understand the requirements of business format, especially memos, as she has proceeded through her course work. In fact, following format has actually served her quite well as she naturally focuses on regulations.

Researching is a skill Brandi particularly associates with her college experience. Her organizational skills seem apparent in her description of the process she uses to complete an assignment. She begins by reading the assignment "over and over" to understand the instructor's requirements. She circles key words so that she will focus correctly. Next, she outlines her response, noting whether or not opinion is to be part of the paper. Brandi's outline will include a thesis and three points to cover. Then she begins her research, finding resources that she reads and highlights according to the outline she has constructed. Once the research is complete, she begins to write. Brandi explains "I usually try to start with my intro paragraph because it bugs me to start in the middle. I have to start in the beginning." The beginning will generally start with "something real catchy or just interesting . . . And then I'll perfect my first paragraph and I won't move on to anything else until it's the

way I want it." The last sentence of the first paragraph ("usually the thesis") does not require perfection at this time because she may change her mind, but she does include it. Brandi then proceeds to write each paragraph, following the outline and including her resources as she writes. She insisted, however, that she "usually won't write a whole paragraph without revising. I always revise. Because I don't like the red underlining [from the computer]; actually, it bothers me." After she has written the conclusion, she reviews the first paragraph "because I want it [the conclusion] to be similar." She avoids using the "same words" but she wants to end with the same ideas. She credited freshman year composition for the process she follows and explained that she revises and reads over her work. Then she "puts it away . . . to come back to it, either the next day or a couple of hours later . . . [to] read over it again and then I'll be done." Brandi's process, learned as a freshman, has remained consistent through her college years.

Brandi's "perfect environment" for writing would be outside "if it's a sunny day and not too hot, just because I'm an outdoors person." This "ideal place" would help Brandi produce her best writing because she must "be away from everything," including music and the TV and noisy roommates.

Audience, for Brandi, is the teacher who gave the assignment. She contrasted her dream journal for a psychology class ("no real need for formality") with the memo format for her business profession which is "very specific in format and formality." So, Brandi considers format and content according to "whoever assigns it." When she writes press releases for SIFE (Students in Free Enterprise), she recognizes the need for attention to format and formality. The challenge in the more

formal work, for Brandi, is "How do you get your personality across and still stay formal?" When she writes to businesses, she struggles with the personality of her audience and the tension between showing her personality and remaining formal. Her business professor gave her advice on finding out about the business people to whom she writes, suggesting that "they're gonna care about you if you care about them."

Brandi's attention to detail in an assignment and her process for completing an assignment are fairly structured. It is not surprising, then, to hear her response about her feelings about writing in general: "I just don't like that it takes me a long time because I'm kind of a perfectionist. It'll have to be something that I am quite proud of in order for me to let other people see it. . . . It's just not very fun." At times, Brandi gets absorbed in her writing and that "makes the paper go quick . . . because my ideas are flowing and I don't get frustrated."

Brandi's goals in writing are to "address the assignment" and "really make it professional." She wants "no grammar errors" to "make it easy for people to read." Brandi could not identify any particular low points or obstacles she has faced in her college writing experience, although she did recall one economics paper on product forecasting that she found difficult because she didn't completely understand it until a partner helped her clarify the concepts. Brandi doesn't mind asking for help, but for most papers she has written, Brandi expected to earn an A or a B, so she doesn't worry too much about her work. Yet Brandi was "always trying to get an A. That was my goal." Brandi's determination to earn an A translated into following direction carefully and writing without error. This approach will follow her into her future employment. In the work force, Brandi will look for direction. She explained that if

"my job was to write up a business plan or write up a memo to a company or something, I would definitely have my boss look it over because I know that it's important to everyone, and not just me." When others are relying on her work, Brandi does not want to do it alone and do it wrong.

In college Brandi learned that teachers want students to "follow directions: and not "make any errors on grammar." In addition, they want material cited correctly. Finally, she added, that her argument must make sense and have "a strong point." Brandi believes that those are the elements that translate into high grades "because so many people neglect those." Because those skills are strengths for Brandi, she has been successful.

Pride was a recurring theme in Brandi's interview. Whereas Scot spoke of the need for satisfaction in his final work, Brandi spoke of pride. In fact, Brandi chose to bring as samples only those papers that she was proudest of. Those papers included a Dust Bowl review from a history class in her freshman year, a critical theatre response from her freshman year, the dreams journal from a sophomore psychology class, a book report from a business course, and samples from across her business courses. She discussed each piece as a point of pride in her work. The history teacher, for instance, expected lots of memorized facts in the review paper and the paper was the "first paper I wrote here that I felt really proud of." For the critical theatre review, Brandi remembered "not struggling with it at all because I really enjoyed the play and the whole time I knew I was going to have to write a response and so I was trying to think of things that I was going to have to write about. So it was really easy for me because I prepared myself for it, I guess." She recalled noting the topics she was to

address in the paper and so she watched specifically for those things. Her goal was to show the teacher that she had "learned something" in the class and could apply it to an actual theatre performance. Brandi called the dreams journal a "pain in the butt" because it was a semester long assignment, yet she "didn't have to worry about" formality or content. She found that her journals were longer if she wrote them immediately after waking, but she also found that writing often helped her to recall the content of her dreams. For the business book report, Brandi was a bit surprised with the A she earned because she did it quickly over a break when she wasn't feeling well. She mused that she didn't know "if my writing was really that good or if she [the teacher] was just happy that someone followed directions." Brandi explained that she may have been the only person with an A in that class. She added, however, that she hoped that the paper was better than others and "deserved the A." The business papers were generally "informational" and Brandi noted that information and persuasion were the goals of much of her work, because, she claimed, that she is "not really good at" persuasive papers. Her strength is in finding and presenting information to support an idea.

In reviewing her papers, Brandi remembered being "really scared about the grade" in her earlier undergraduate years. In examining one early paper, she expressed some dismay at its quality. She concluded "Maybe [the paper] was better than I thought it was. I don't know." She characterizes herself as a writer who is "goal or task oriented." She explained that "As a writer, I keep things in my long range to make sure that I am attaining whatever goal I am supposed to reach for my audience. I tailor things to my audience." She believes that she is "a little needy on my

direction" and will want an employer who will provide her with direction. This belief seems consistent with Brandi's goal to please her identified audience, whether a teacher or an employer.

During her college years, her "process has been defined. I know that I have to outline first." She clearly recognizes her need to define the task, to outline, and then, through a diligent work ethic, to successfully complete the task. She sees her writing skills as helpful in "advancing" herself in a company and she believes that she will one day use her writing skills to help her own children to write well.

Art: Fact-finding Sports Writer

Art is a 23 year old Caucasian communications major who seeks a career in sports writing. His medium may vary, as he has experience in radio and newspaper writing through internships, but he plans to work in radio at graduation. His immediate goal would be to work in radio as the sports writer for a professional basketball team. Within a few years, however, he hopes to be in television sports. Art began college in the fall after graduation from high school. He lists his ACT composite as 23 but notes that he scored high ("like 28") in English on the ACT and so was invited to enroll in an Honors Composition course. Like Jackson, his passion for his career field (sports) is evident in his interview as he consistently uses his experience and writing in the field of sports as his examples.

Art has played soccer since he was four and feels comfortable writing and talking about all of the major sports. His love of sports comes from his Dad who was "really intrigued by sports." Art and his father, who has served as a sports trainer, a PE teacher, a principal, and an athletic director, watched sports on television from the

time Art was two. Art summarized his attention to sports with "I have been around sports my whole life. I love sports. It doesn't even matter to me which sport." To highlight his sports focus, Art revealed that the TV at home is set on the ESPN channel, so he doesn't even need a remote control when he watches.

Besides his father, Art's family also includes his mother, his stepfather, and an eight year old brother. They are supporters of Art's development through college. In fact, Art laughed about how his collegiate dean's award and prize winning article share a spot on the refrigerator with his brother's accelerated reader points.

Perhaps because he recognizes himself as a writer and sees his profession in the field of writing, Art's interview had a flavor to it that was far different from most of the other participants – the exception being Scot, who sees writing in his career. When Art started college, he admits that he "didn't take constructive criticism well." His attitude was "probably arrogant about [his] skills in writing." So, when his first paper in Honors Composition was returned and "the entire thing was red," his reaction was "I don't like this guy" and he dropped the course. In his next encounter with composition, the instructor used individual conferences and asked questions about Art's text to assist him in clarifying his ideas. Art said that in that class he "realized I wasn't as good as I thought and I had a lot to learn." He concluded that, in hindsight, he "was probably a little too confident" about his skills in his freshman year. He does, however, differentiate between the paper covered with red ink – which he described as "just being mean" – with the discussion approach used by the second instructor who guided him to clarify and elaborate on ideas. The second approach was

"the kind of criticism [he] needed" to recognize when something in his text called for improvement.

As he proceeded through his college years, Art wrote in his composition classes, and in philosophy, theology and literature classes. But mostly he referenced his writing in his communication classes; he took every course that was available in communications. In addition, he wrote for the school newspaper and a radio station during his internship semester. These courses, and the feedback he received through critique sheets at newspaper workshops and conferences, have helped him develop his concepts of good writing. He sees the use of detail as the critical issue. He summarized what he had learned with:

> characteristics of good writing are good detail, but not so much detail that you make the reader feel like you are talking down to them. The person who is going to read your paper is as smart as you are, if not smarter, so if you talk down to them then you are giving too much detail. Weak papers don't have enough detail and then the reader will feel lost. So there's a . . . happy medium in there to have a good paper.

He actually learned this philosophy from his experience in newspaper workshops. Articles sent to workshop reviewers are read and the writer receives a sheet of commentary. One year he was advised to reduce detail, which he did the next year. But that next year he was advised to give more details. After consulting with his college faculty advisor, he came to understand the principle of "a happy medium." To emphasize this point, Art gave the following explanation:

> Give enough detail to make the reader feel like they're sitting there watching the game. But not so much that they have to wait for the plays to go by. You are moving everything along quickly. If you use two or three lines to explain what happened in a thirty second period, great. But try not to use five or six lines to describe what happened in a thirty second period. Then you're using too much space on the paper. You're going to lose your audiences.

Art's description of his development was generally linked to specific writing experiences, so another area for development for Art involved his use of quotations. In news stories, Art favors the use of quotes. But one article he wrote with 70% quotes ("because I thought there were a lot of good ones") was critical in teaching him that his practice was excessive. He was advised to use no more than 35%-40% of his material as quotations. And that percentage, he was advised, was only for "a very long story."

The learning experienced through the trial and error process of use of details and quotations epitomized for Art his shift in attitude from his freshman to his sophomore year. Because he did not take constructive criticism well in his freshmen year, he "didn't like getting those sheets back telling me what I wasn't doing well." His attitude changed, however, by his sophomore year. By that time, Art insisted, "I was better at taking criticism. So, . . . I enjoyed getting those sheets back. I could improve and get better. I am competitive. . . . So I want to read all of them . . . and follow them the best I could and so maybe I could win an award." In fact, Art did win three awards for his writing in newspaper competitions during his undergraduate college years.

Although Art feels "confident about many different types of writing," he notes that "to me sports writing comes naturally." It is in this area that he has the most confidence in his ability to produce a good article. His experience in writing has included persuasive and informative writing. He wrote one story about a major Midwest city and pitched it as "the city on the rise." The purpose of the paper was to promote the city as a location for a professional athletic team. He also wrote an

informative paper for speech informing listeners of the dangers of the use of anabolic steroids. And he has written feature stories on important leaders on his campus – one was an informative piece that had an investigative edge when he interviewed the president of the university about university finances. In fact, that piece, in which he informed a skeptical student body about exactly where their tuition and fees were spent, earned him a second or third place award at a newspaper competition.

Art's approach to writing is determined by the "kind of writing assignment it is." If the paper requires the use of resources, he is careful to determine the availability of resources before he finalizes his topic. His senior thesis, for example, shifted when he found limited resources for the topic he first identified ("how sportscasters have an impact on society's view of athletes"). He shifted to a topic "that I knew got talked about all of the time and I had an opinion about it." Having an opinion on the topic affected his research process. For the side he favored, he "didn't need as much research to help me out with the cause," but for the counter argument, he prepared an outline. That forced him to identify the arguments on the other side and to find information to support them – even though he "didn't even want to present it." The use of the outline was a strategy he used when he didn't feel comfortable about the topic. Art explained that "if I don't like the topic, if it doesn't interest me, I have to create an outline. But if I like the topic, then, unless the teacher requires one to be turned in, I don't make one up. That's my style of writing." As an example, he described writing a "very detailed outline" for a paper defining what art means to him. After writing a page and a half on his initial ideas, he created the outline and then read different articles to see which resonated with him.

Art was quick to explain his process of writing, which generally omits the outline. He "knows the steps in [his] head . . . the intro, a couple of body paragraphs, and a conclusion." If an assignment is due in five days, he sits down the first day and just writes "as many pages as I can possibly get out," and often doubles the required length on this first day. On the second day, he returns to the work to "throw out a lot" and "maybe rephrase it" and sometimes "I'll just hit the enter button and go down a few lines and start a new idea." He prefers printing what he does at this point, so that he can cut and paste and move things around, omitting sentences or rearranging them. He explains that "by the third day I can have it completely done." Some of his professors will provide feedback on papers completed early, so he will ask for a review of what he has written and change it according to the feedback he receives.

When professors provide feedback, Art noted that they will sometimes point to places where he "re-explains an idea." He then determines the best way to change the idea that has been repeated. Sometimes it means he combines the paragraphs and edits them; sometimes he revises one of the paragraphs; sometimes he simply "cuts" the second explanation.

I asked who served as audience for Art. But he responded, "I don't know that I necessarily write for anyone. I try to make it to where I like what I've put down." He explained that he "knows that writing's not going to please everybody," so if 50% of the people who read his work like it, he "considers [that] to be pretty good." He added, however, that when he writes for the newspaper, "I write to please myself." But he does have others, especially his girlfriend, read his work to catch unclear ideas or misspelled words which he admits he cannot find himself.

When given an assignment to write a paper, Art generally asks questions to determine exactly what an instructor wants. He also reads grading rubrics when they are provided. He particularly wants to know if the instructor wants information, opinion, or a combination of the two. He added wisely that "in some classes, following what the teacher says is more important than your content of a paper." As an example, he noted that he struggled with required transitions in a speech class because he found it "an odd way of transitioning topics;" but because he recognized that the rubrics called for the student to follow the rubric, he learned to adapt.

Because he wrote "blurbs" in his internship with a radio station, he has learned to shift to meet the expectations of various writing situations. The blurbs require "sentence fragments . . . bad grammar," because the blurbs are treated as topics upon which the radio personality expands. So, Art explained, the writing "looks like a four-year old wrote the sentence." For example, Art might write "David Ortiz. Hit ball. Bottom of 8th. Homerun." The announcer would then treat that "almost like a PowerPoint presentation" to expand it on the air. Art identified the difference between that writing and the writing he uses for course work:

> For that type of writing – radio station and TV – it is short and sweet and to the point. For school, you've gotta write more detail because when you're reading it, there has to be enough detail for your reader to understand. But not too much detail. In radio there has to be fairly little detail so the person talking doesn't get caught up. Because if the person reading it gets caught up, then they start mumbling words or mispronouncing words and then it sounds bad.

Learning to understand and execute the necessary expectations in each of these writing situations has provided Art with flexibility in writing.

In his college career, Art has developed a fairly practical approach to writing and grades. At first he wanted "to impress my parents, impress my classmates." But

he developed a diversified attitude about grades. In his communications courses, he strove to achieve A's, but in other courses, including his senior capstone, B's were sufficient. He said "A's are nice, real nice. I love seeing them. But B's will get me the diploma. Once I get the diploma, for the field I'm working in, unless I'm working for a newspaper, all the writing stuff I've ever learned here goes out the window and doesn't matter because I have to learn a whole new style of writing." That "new style of writing" is the kind of writing he began to develop in his internship with the radio station, where "it took me a month of working every day to finally not write too much." He is confident in his ability to be successful in the field. He noted that "I still have some to learn, but I am grasping it fairly quickly."

Art explores the Internet for tips about writing. He has come to agree with advice he found there about not using analogies or metaphors. The Internet advice claimed that using metaphors, clichés, or analogies detracts from presenting original ideas. And Art concurs.

The low point in writing for Art, not surprisingly, was the Honors Composition course from his first semester in college. When he exited that course, he recalled that, "I didn't think I was a good writer at that point. I didn't want to be in newspaper any more." But he credits other instructors with helping to restore his confidence in his ability to write. In fact, he credits one instructor's requirement to write poetry as a powerful influence on his understanding of the value of words, rules, and communication of self. In that class he wrote a poem which began:

> I know I am strong
> I know I am wise
> I know I am confident
> I know I am brash.

When he showed the completed poem to his Mom she said "This is you." And with the writing of that poem, Art claims to have learned the lesson of using enough detail to have the reader know him.

Art's high point was an article he wrote for the college newspaper that earned him a first place for sports writing. The article addressed the BCS and included an interview from a source integral to the BCS itself. In writing the article, Art began with a question and answer approach, but soon decided that that approach was too easy. So he moved away from the "generic question and answer article" and created instead an article that combined the information he had gathered through research with the information he had gathered through the interview. "Being adaptable" is the quality Art believes helped him to write a prize winning piece.

In describing himself as a writer, Art explained "I am interested in the facts and getting as much information as possible so that I can present my audience with as much information as I feel like they need to understand it." His goal is to avoid "gaps" in information that would confuse his audience. He wants his articles to include "sources with credibility behind them." He understands the value of the use of quotations, and he understands the value of reading the work of those he respects in his field. From these writers, he can gain the "format" for success which he can imitate while his own persona as writer evolves. As Art explained, "Using the same format maybe as Rick Riley, who's a famous sports writer is not a bad idea." The writers Art admires write with facts and emotion. They have the ability to make their readers respond. It is from these writers that Art believes he will continue to learn. He sees himself continuing to develop his skills in the future. According to Art, "I'm

going to be writing for most of the rest of my life because of what I want to do." He feels confident in his ability to do so.

<div align="center">Harry: Capturer of Thought</div>

Harry grew up in a small town near the colleges he has attended. At 26, he has earned an Associate Degree from a two year college and, at the time of his interview, was completing the semester prior to his student teaching internship. His discipline is social studies, but he has nearly enough credits for a second degree in philosophy. Harry, a musician, is married and works full time in a juvenile detention facility. He lists his ACT composite as 27 and has earned a 3.8 GPA during his college years.

When asked to define good writing, Harry immediately responded "freedom." Although Harry never expressed concern about his skills as a writer during the interview, he did repeat in different ways the freedom he needs as a writer. When he began work on his associate degree and enrolled in composition courses, Harry expected expansion of writing from his high school experience. Instead, he found "expansion of the rules." While he says that he does not mind rules, he finds them "harrowing" because they "made [him] feel restricted." The restrictions in the classroom, he thinks, caused him to turn to writing poetry outside of class. He calls poetry his "actual writing, something I felt passionate about at the time." In class he produced "writing I was forced to" write, but outside of class he wrote poetry for himself. The writing outside of class particularly expressed "the way I feel at the moment." He says he tends to "visualize when I write. I take the concept or picture and try to put it into words." He also uses pictures when he reads. Harry explained

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that if material is interesting to him, he "sees more pictures;" if the material is "boring, I only see the words."

When Harry reads something he would characterize as good writing, he says it "has to be from the heart," with "a bit of that person [the author] in it." He enjoys reading material that is "educational as well as entertaining," but prefers work that is not excessively long. He describes appropriate length as "enough length to cover your point, get everything across, not be doddling around the idea, reiterating what you have already said." Harry also dislikes writing that "expounds too much in details." He believes that this shows "insecurity" on the writer's part.

Harry describes himself as an "abstract poet." While he says he can write poetry that rhymes, he finds rhyming restrictive, as if the author were "trying to mold . . . [his] thinking." Harry believes that his writing has "evolved" during his college years. By that he means that he has "learned to push the envelope." He does not confine himself by the rules of grammar. He doesn't have problems in the area of grammatical correctness, but he writes, for example, what he calls a "paragraph sentence." He gets "over-involved" with an idea and simply writes. He has moved away from a process that involved outlines and taking notes, to a process of "just writing as I think." He no longer completes a draft and then uses several revision drafts. Instead, similar to Brandi, he goes through "this constant revision process," but his revision occurs in his head as he writes. As a result, Harry feels "confident when I have finished the paper that I don't have to revise it. I mean, maybe that's due to the nature of reflection or ego or something."

When Harry started college he felt confident ("maybe a little cocky") about his writing skills. As he completed the second semester of composition in college his instructor called him into her office and told him "You've missed 48% of my classes, but you have all your work done. And you write well. Punctuality is something you need to work on." Harry has maintained his confidence. He sees himself as "stepping outside the boundaries" and calls himself a "wordsmith." He finds language ("the way it's put together") to be important. But rules that were "just drilled into my head for two years" were things he hated. In fact, he "hated" the five paragraph essay format with its "thesis, three main points, thesis again, conclusion." Harry mused that "constructing sentences and stuff seemed boring, but when I found poetry, it was 'ahh, I don't have to use rules.'"

Harry likes analogies; he uses descriptive words; and he "totally enjoys" reflection papers. When he writes reflection, he doesn't really scrutinize his opinions. He "just writes it and lets it be." He does this because he thinks that "if you overdo something, it loses the essence. It becomes the rules instead of the actual writing itself." This comment certainly echoes the emphasis he places on freedom. Admitting that he is a procrastinator, Harry defended this approach because he believes he works "better under pressure." When he gets an assignment, he reads it and lets it "simmer" in his head. He described it like this:

> It's almost like the ideas are bouncing around. Then I open the floodgates and they kinda come out the way they go on the paper. I try to make it like to where everything's in an order and can be understood. I had a teacher once tell me that my writing was very "esoteric."

Harry makes it clear that he "writes for [himself] first and foremost."

Harry's process includes the use of music. He tries "to find music without words" so that he doesn't "pick up on the words and start typing them." Harry also likes "solitude. Being isolated." When Harry gets truly "engaged" in his writing, "it's almost like a direct link between the word, what I'm writing and the computer and my brain. It's like talking, talking to the paper." When he reads over what he has written, he wants to see where he has been "listening." He characterized it as "a personal conversation. And at the same time it is like a mirror." The paper becomes a "function of what it comes from" and in this engaged time, "everything else kinda fades away." To attempt to get himself engaged, Harry wants "music, low light, a solitary lamp in the sea of darkness in the room." With that environment, he can focus on his writing exclusively.

Harry typically writes in the middle of the night. He works until 11:30 PM, so he comes home, showers and then proceeds to his homework. When he gets engaged in his writing, Harry experiences the "feeling of creation and . . . a sense of power." Harry reflects on the source of the power when he says, "what I believe to be God has given us this opportunity to create, to be creative, and in the image of a creator that just shows I'm living in my experience instead of bystanding." Personal involvement in his writing is a strong theme with Harry.

Harry provided an overview of his college writing as he reviewed his papers stored on his laptop and his notebooks filled with class notes and poetry. In his freshman year, Harry wrote essays of comparison/contrast and persuasion as well as a term paper. He was not happy with the term paper; in fact, he remarked "I still loathe the paper." He wrote arguments in science and history courses. He especially enjoyed

the debate approach in his history course. He also wrote a variety of speeches. In his speech class, Harry learned the importance of following an instructor's format. His first speech, a group project which Harry characterized as "awesome," earned only a C because it did not follow the required format. Although Harry was "furious" and let the instructor know that, he also adjusted to follow the instructor's guidelines. In that class, Harry also wrote a eulogy – for himself.

With his associate degree completed, Harry transferred to a four-year university, where he "shifted gears again." He became interested in the fields of philosophy and social studies, particularly history. His time since has been devoted to lots of reading and writing. In an advanced government course, Harry remembered learning to adjust to his instructor's expectations. In his first chapter response during the course, Harry wrote "<u>extensively</u>," and was advised to cut back on his length. For the next chapter he "didn't write enough." Once he found the "middle point," however, he "had that teacher with me. He was impressed." It was also in his junior year that Harry was introduced to the reflection paper in education, philosophy and theology. He found the reflection an approach that suited him. Whereas he had become accustomed to reading text and then summarizing it, he was not "given freewill" to take what a text said and "put my own twist on it." He enjoys the reflection approach to writing. In a philosophy class he was asked to combine research and reflection and he found that process, too, to be "interesting" and enjoyable. He called it a "brain thickening" experience. A required book review for a history course, however, did not receive a similar response. He "disliked" the book review because he had "to go back to the rule thing."

Sometimes Harry's audience includes others, such as one of his philosophy instructors. Harry recounted his outlook on audience with: "If I can convince myself, I can convince someone else. So, I basically argued with myself." Harry did not generally use others in his writing process. He did, however, learn from his graded papers. He looked at notes and comments as a guide to improvement for his next paper. The comments helped him to identify "what the teacher wants" and so Harry then gave the teacher what was expected. Although Harry sees each teacher's comments and expectations as "unique," he believes "they all kinda search for the authentic idea of what you actually did. . . . They want expression." While Jackson looked at written feedback on his papers and Art read his competition critiques, Harry spoke most pointedly of using written comments to improve his writing.

When asked about obstacles or a low point in his college writing career, Harry responded, "If it's a low, I'm the one who knows it. Because I know the amount of bs, to be polite, that I put in there." Those weaker pieces have come when Harry was "not inspired." After pausing to consider the idea of a "low point," Harry expanded his idea to cover several factors in writing:

> I see it [his writing] as still fine. I mean, certain aspects have been left out. Like, it's not purely creative, like the poetry. It's not purely restrictive, as in rules. But it's somewhere in the middle. . . . that's an evolution that needs to take place. Cause creativity is raw. It's just raw thought, and words that don't necessarily have to go together at the right angle. . . . I think the low point might actually be that research paper because I can't honestly tell you what I had written, but I turned it in.

These words show a writer committed to his composition and aware of the need to balance outside requirements with personal preferences. When Harry turned to high points in his writing, he commented that he "always finds [himself] going back to

poetry." He has abandoned his practice of writing poetry because of the various roles

he plays. He feels "pulled in so many ways" that he "can't center." His high point in

writing, he believes is "really some where down the line, when I will have the

freedom to write like I want to. I aspire to keep writing."

Harry admitted that "maybe behind the scenes I write for an A." But because

he claims he is his own worst critic, he "sometimes feels like the A is lazy" for him.

He knows that he could write a better paper, but is not willing to exert the effort when

he already has an A. He explains that "the effort is not necessarily wasted, but

unappreciated." It is the "recognition" of his writing, more than the grade, that is

important to Harry.

When Harry speaks of his writing, he is generally referring to his poetry.

Harry first started writing when he was 16. He said that his parents were somewhat

"restrictive," and so it was at 16 that he "started getting exposed to the world. He

wrote from "frustration" and "feeling isolated." His topic was

> of course, relationships. The constant attempt to relate to people. The constant
> realization that people aren't aware of what's happening. They are more
> caught up in things; they're like shells.

He often wrote his poems in the notebooks with his class notes. For example, he read

a poem he wrote in a history class as he was studying the Dawes Acts which dealt

with North American land and tribal recognition. Because he did not agree with those

events, he wrote

> White bleaching skin to adapt, Stripping culture from your mind, Raping your
> will, Fastening blinds the bias of race and all the faces that breed the disease
> of racism. Why must Anglo-Saxons try to make and mold people throughout
> history into their image? Because God created Adam in his image.

Without prompting from me, Harry immediately began to reminisce about the meaning of his text. Harry explained,

> It's almost like, white people come in. This is not their land. They come in and steal their religion. And steal their idea of what reality it. . . . They turn these people from people of the land that live in pretty much harmony with what they do. There is no pollution. There is no race. They were fine. But we don't think it's right because it's "savage." It's "uncivilized."

Harry asserted that his writing focuses on "what is important to me at the time." So, in another poem he wrote "As I gaze in the eyes of the shells around me, I see emptiness. Exceptions are made with hue of green." Here Harry stopped reading briefly to note that there was a girl who sat near him who "had green eyes" before he continued to read

> They know nothing of life, of reality, of now. My brain crawls with thought of sickness and stupidity. The only thing this ghost has to look forward to is to sympathize with their hearts but not with their minds.

Harry recognized that as he read the work he had written that his "sensory response kinda brings them back to front page." He can remember the way he was at that time. Next Harry found a poem he had been looking for, a poem called "The Individualist," so he read that poem to me as well. As he leafed through his notebooks, Harry recounted a story about a young man incarcerated at the juvenile detention center where Harry works. The young man told Harry that he wrote poetry, and Harry began to communicate with him. The young man challenged Harry to write something and so Harry wrote a poem that he said described himself and how he was "trying to talk with him." In part, the poem read

> Analytical by nature, esoteric in stature . . . Fear not my passive inquiry. The tide is a bit murky. In time the mist shall fade and a new acquaintance will be made. Patience is a virtue learned by most, but known by few. So learn the art

of toleration so both will share emancipation. Listen. Learn. Don't fear my days at all.

The young man - Harry's audience for this poem - was standing beside Harry as he wrote. Finally, Harry read his eulogy which he described as "a projection of the ideals and qualities that I wanted to attain between that point and the time I die." When he finished reading the eulogy, he discussed some philosophical ideas he had been wrestling with and then remarked that he does not always go back and read something after he has written it. He believes that what he writes is true of himself at that time. So, when he does return to read past work he thinks, "Oh, I thought like that?" He does not change his past writing, but retains it as the truth of his thought captured in time.

Harry can "still see an evolution happening" in his writing. When asked about revision, he said that if he were to revise, he believes he "would lose the soul" expressed in the work. He sees his writing as an authentic representation of who he is at a particular time. He does, however, revise in grammar and spelling, which he calls "rewording." His "rewording" occurs when he runs a spelling and grammar check. But he avoids other revision. He equates writing with working with clay. In working with clay, he explained,

> You start with a ball of clay. Then you form it. You get it in a certain shape. When you go to pull, that first pull is gonna set the shape of the ball or whatever you're making. If you mess with it too much, it falls in on itself and you've got clay everywhere. Writing is like that. If I mess with it too much it falls apart.

Harry believes that his most obvious change in writing is his "eloquence." Poetry, for Harry, captures his creative side, while "the stuff I wrote for class, was more cut and dried." Reflections, however, have allowed him to combine creativity with other,

more prescribed, writing. When asked to describe himself as a writer today, Harry paused for a long time. Then he said, "I am a capturer of thought." He explained that he felt that by reading his writing to me, that he could "get that feeling" of what he thought at the time he wrote. Then he remarked that the writing he does now "is for a grade. But at the same time I'm still keeping some of who I am in the writing, which is very important." He described this current writing as "distanced from what I want to write about, or the way I really want to write."

Writing for Harry has "always been secretive." He thinks that this comes from his view of writing as something for himself. He remembers writing on such items as an enrollment sheet and a napkin to preserve thoughts he had. He noted that he has "maintained my cockiness [about his writing skills] while having the paradox of being afraid of what others would think . . . I think that's the fear of being misunderstood." This belief suggests why Harry read his texts to me and then proceeded to discuss/explain them and the circumstances of writing them.

Harry sees writing "present" in his future, but he currently has "no 'me' time" for writing. Once he has graduated, he believes that he will find more time to write. He said, "I long to write poetry. . . . It is for self-satisfaction."

<u>Jeanne: Narrative Writer</u>

Jeanne is a 23 year old Caucasian psychology major who scored a 21 composite on her ACT and has earned a 3.3 GPA in her undergraduate college course work. She entered college the fall after her high school graduation in a large Midwest city, and she identified psychology as her major and has not altered her choice. During her four years of college she has worked for a law firm in her home town and

some of the attorneys at the firm have discussed creating a job for her when she graduates. Jeanne has completed an internship at a counseling center and has been offered a part time position with that center. She has also looked at a shelter for mentally disabled adults where she would "do basic activities" and "assess" the clients. Her senior paper reflects her passion for studying autism, a passion she shares with her mother who has worked with autistic individuals in her career. A recurring theme with Jeanne is her "constantly changing skill" in writing. In attitude, content, and process, Jeanne has changed throughout her undergraduate writing career.

When contrasting poor and good writing, Jeanne began with "knowing good grammar skills and punctuation" as the basic difference. She believes that a writer must have an idea before writing, must do "proper research," and sometimes should seek the help of others "because someone else will point out mistakes" that the writer might not catch. This, for Jeanne, constitutes good writing. These ideas were gleaned from her teachers. Although Jeanne described most of her English teachers as "horrible at teaching grammar," she had a teacher in her senior year of high school who helped her to understand "everything there is about grammar." She found this teacher so effective, in fact, that her freshman composition teacher actually suggested that she change her major to English "because he liked the way [she] wrote." She, however, did not think that she was a good writer because she struggled with writing. The "positive reinforcement" from the teacher helped her to look back over the work she had written during the semester as she prepared her freshman writing portfolio and she remarked that she "really saw how [she had] improved." As she reviewed her writing for this interview, she once again expressed "surprise" at how well she writes.

When asked to characterize the changes she found, Jeanne listed three areas: getting the reader's attention, using examples, and paying "extra close attention to all my punctuation." She finds punctuation important because "it emphasizes what is being said. If you put a comma in the wrong place in a sentence, then you may have a completely different meaning than what you are intending." Her approach to punctuation may imply consideration of convention, but her focus is actually on punctuation and meaning. Jeanne is not the same writer now that she was when she began college. But the changes Jeanne noted resulted from "kind of a slow process."

Much of Jeanne's attitude about writing comes from her perception of her abilities. According to Jeanne, "I hated writing when I first came to college because I didn't think I was that good." She saw herself at that time as "pretty low" compared to other entering freshmen, but in hindsight, she "was probably at the same level that they were all at. I was just critical about my own writing." The concept of herself as lower than others as a freshman, however, served to motivate her to "work harder." As a senior, she rates herself "right where I need to be." She identified herself as one who will "always strive for the perfections in writing and I still find errors, but I think I can definitely tell that my writing is that of an upper classman, compared to my freshman ability."

One area of change for Jeanne is her process in completing a writing assignment. When Jeanne is given an assignment, she begins by taking considerable time to identify her topic. For an upper division sociology course on the family, for example, she began to think about a topic as soon as she received her syllabus in January. By February she had identified her topic and had a working thesis statement

ready for approval by the instructor. When she got approval, she began to research. Once she had a start on the research, she created an outline. Then she worked through the articles she had located, reading and highlighting each. She next transferred her information to note cards so that she could sort the ideas and get the paper in order. As a freshman, Jeanne said, she would have written the paper the night before, with no note cards or sorting. She concluded: "I would have a six page paper thrown out in about five hours and now it takes me so much longer!" In writing the draft of a paper, Jeanne, like Art, likes to exceed the page limit assigned. That helps her to make sure that she covers all the points and perhaps change directions, an open-minded approach like that of Brandi. Then she revises the paper to fit the page limitation of the assignment.

The impact of grades has also shifted for Jeanne. As a freshman she wanted the high grade, but as a senior, "getting an A or B on a paper doesn't mean that much to me any more." Instead, she wants to put her "heart and soul into the work." She expressed that "I am ending my college career and I am really valuing what I got here." Jeanne's college writing career included a variety of pieces, involving opinion pieces and information pieces (her preference). In science she wrote papers that required a "different type of statistical backing," while in English she wrote pieces that were "a little bit more thoughtful, kinda personal things." She might be asked, for example, how she felt about a certain poet. In psychology, she most frequently wrote "general research," by "borrowing ideas from theorists and putting them together." In her work at the law firm she has written business letters to clients and other law firms and has helped with court documents and created charts and graphs. In writing for the

law firm, she has addressed "the perfectionist side of writing" in writing perfectly in a formal way.

Another area of change for Jeanne is her "confidence" in her writing. As a freshman, like Jackson, Jeanne described herself as "afraid of what other people thought and since I thought my writing was below average, I was always worried about what other people would say. I looked at it as a put down." As she continued through her college career, however, Jeanne's attitude changed. Similar to Art's change in attitude about feedback, Jeanne explained "I started looking at it [feedback] as maybe this would help me in telling me where I am weak . . . to help me become a stronger writer." In fact, Jeanne says that she now "begs" for others to read her work and suggest ideas for improvement. She seeks "an honest critique" of her work. Whereas in her freshman year she would have experienced "hurt feelings" from criticism, she now finds criticism a means for "improvement."

Sometimes Jeanne finds herself absorbed in her writing. She finds that it is "a great feeling knowing that you can get that involved in your work." For one paper in particular, she remembered she had decided "to devote a couple of hours that night" to writing the paper and suddenly realized that it was 3:00 AM. Although she regretted the loss of sleep ("I need my sleep"), she thinks "getting that involved in the research helps out . . . because I am more focused and I can remember in detail" what she wants to write.

Environment affects Jeanne's writing. She needs a "quiet place" without any noise, TV, or background noise of any kind." She prefers to be alone, with the "temperature set right," and she can't be hungry. When the setting is right, she "can

just jump right in and just be engrossed in it for hours." Her revision includes several reviews. She commented that she likes "the fact that I can do several revisions and make sure everything has been checked before I turn it in." And part of Jeanne's ending process includes letting the paper sit for "a day or two" before she revises it. This allows her to "catch errors" more easily.

One difficult paper Jeanne had to write was one in which she had to write "about a topic that [she] didn't agree with." Jeanne identified that paper as her biggest college obstacle in writing. Although the paper turned out well, she found it "difficult" and much more time consuming ("twice as long") as other papers on topics with which she agreed. She "felt negatively" about the paper. In discussing how she approaches topics which she has not chosen, Jeanne explained that "if I am given a topic that I don't necessarily prefer to write about, I try to find a way to make it interesting to me."

On the other hand, her senior paper was her "greatest product." Her goal in the year-long project was "to leave here with my senior paper being the best I wrote." And Jeanne believes that she was successful in achieving that goal. She strived to write "the perfect paper." The perfect paper, for Jeanne, has no errors. It explains a topic, using "examples . . . to clarify points. Smoothly flowing from one paragraph to the next," a perfect paper has "a very strong thesis statement, a good introduction to set up the reader, and a very strong closing to wrap everything up." He senior paper went through a number of revisions, but Jeanne feels she "nailed" it.

Jeanne employs a number of people for feedback: her mom and step-dad, classmates and instructors, and, occasionally, an attorney or two in the firm where she

works. They give her feedback on repetition of words and use of "they" instead of "he or she." Commas, also, are subject to review by her readers. One instructor recommends the omission of passive voice and indirect construction, so she attends to that advice as well.

In terms of audience, Jeanne listed two people – her mom and her grandmother. Her mother works with autistic children and Jeanne "values her opinion" because of her knowledge. Her grandmother, who died five years ago, was Jeanne's "greatest influence when it came to [her] education." So when she writes, Jeanne thinks "What would grandma say? or what would Grandma like to hear?" And then she writes her assignments for her grandmother.

In freshman year, Jeanne wrote a definition paper, a process paper, a description paper, and a research paper in Composition I. For each paper, she conferenced with the instructor, who asked leading questions to help identify places in the paper she could improve. In biology class she wrote an informational paper on cystic fibrosis which called for her to select sources carefully. The biology paper was simply handed in and returned with a grade; Jeanne said it "would have been nicer" to have comments indicating suggestions for improvement, so she found that biology paper less satisfying than others. In Honors Psychology Jeanne wrote a paper called "Mind Control in Cults," a topic that engrossed her because she "got to hear some actual real life stories and situations" from the instructor of the course.

In her sophomore year, one of Jeanne's psychology instructors gave her "positive feedback" which helped to build her confidence in writing. In U.S. History, the instructor pointed out comma problems and areas which seemed to repeat

information. The history instructor's comments helped her to understand the need for details and the need to minimize summary. The instructor noted that she wrote "very well," but called attention to some misdirection in her paper. Jeanne found the comments to be "a good learning experience." From that feedback she learned to understand the appropriate length of summary, the need to focus on what an assignment calls for, and to be sure that "content fits the paper." In reviewing a sophomore level psychology paper, Jeanne described it as "good at the time." From her perspective as a senior, she thought she should have spent more time on the paper and should have added details. But she probably wrote the paper, she mused, in her phase of "just sitting down and writing a paper in six hours, not putting too much effort into it." During the first two years of college, Jeanne was content to get a grade and think "my writing is still looking pretty good." But that attitude changed.

In the last two years of college, Jeanne not only read comments on papers, but also approached instructors for suggestions on improving her work. She explained that "Now when I get a 92 and it says 'good paper,' I go and see . . . where I could have made it stronger. That way it's a learning experience for me." During her junior year, Jeanne wrote an observation paper that she labeled "fun" and a research paper on Freud and Post-Freudian Hypnosis. It was this second paper that so engrossed her that she wrote one night until three in the morning. It was also during her junior year that she "started spending more time on [her] writing." For the hypnosis paper, she read fifteen books before deciding to use seven of them. Although the final paper was only four pages in length, she had accumulated thirty piles of note cards to write what she called "a pretty good paper." Her excitement for the topic and the final product

was clear, but she did not remember the grade and didn't seem to mind that. She liked the paper the way she organized it, using three theories to show the conclusions drawn about hypnosis, its purpose and its results. Also during her junior year, Jeanne wrote a paper for theology titled "Mental Health and Spirituality" in which she addressed the role of spirituality in having a "healthy mind." And she "had a lot of fun writing" "Dreams and Memory," a paper that came from a dream seminar course.

Jeanne's senior paper was "a challenge - a good challenge though." Attending to format and use of the best resources were both challenges for Jeanne in the senior paper. Her instructor directed the class to write the abstract last because that would be "easiest." But Jeanne wrote it first because she knew what she wanted the paper to say. Because Jeanne "couldn't get motivated to actually write the paper," she started by writing the abstract. That worked to get her started and she "didn't have to change any of it because it fit the paper." This senior paper was completely drafted and initially revised in the fall. But she was not content with the discussion section of the paper, so when her instructor identified the discussion section as her weakest component, she was ready to revise it. The completed paper, a study of autism and treatment options, reflects Jeanne's "passion about the subject." She believes her passion, and the year she spent working on it, affected the product in a positive way. And, she noted, her passion for the topic meant that – even after a year's work – she was "still not tired of it." The final paper brought Jeanne "a real sense of pride."

In characterizing herself as a writer, Jeanne began with her attitude:

My freshman year I hated it. Sophomore year I disliked it and I did my writing to get by. Now I do my writing more in a way of telling a story. Showing not only my knowledge, but giving a part of myself to the reader. I think that is something very valuable, and being able to leave a piece of myself with

someone is a good gift to give. I think as a writer, whether it's an essay or research paper or your biography, the ability to leave your reader with wanting more or taking a piece of the author with that person, I think that is one of the greatest gifts a writer has. Hopefully people will look back and say "That's a really good paper." Especially my senior paper. I want people to remember that.

Obviously, Jeanne seeks connection with her reader when she writes. Her narrative approach is "other-oriented," with a belief that written work is not only about product, but about connection. In language like that of Brandi, Jeanne described herself as a "structured type of writer. I have to have a certain format that I follow each and every time." Among the structured strategies she uses is writing note cards. She also finds her ability to organize a strength. She can "sway from her structure" if necessary, but she focuses clearly on "the final outcome." An important change in Jeanne's college writing experience, she concluded is "I don't hate to write anymore."

Maurice: Opinion Writer

Maurice is a 28 year old Caucasian from Europe, for whom English is a second language. After high school, Maurice worked at various jobs and discovered that work without a college diploma was "not that great." He will complete his bachelor's degree in theatre as a performance major because technical theatre, his preference, was not an available option at the institution he attended. Shortly after the interview, Maurice married his college sweet heart. Maurice plans to attend graduate school at some point in the future, but will work for a time before going to graduate school. Describing himself as a "hands-on person," Maurice listed his GPA as 3.97.

When asked to think back upon his writing start in college, Maurice called it "scary" because he had never written an essay before, explaining "That's not something we do back home." His high school experience in Europe called for tests –

generally, objective tests with some short answer responses – as a form of assessment. Consequently, he had "no idea" of how to write an essay and felt "kind of poorly" about his writing skills, "especially since it had been six years" since he had been in school.

For Maurice, "grammar is an important part of writing." And the content of any paper reflects the expectations of the teacher. Some want opinion, while others want support from research. He explained that he uses resources when professors assign a research paper because "you obviously have to know what you are writing about," and resources provide information. He discussed finding and using sources to back up his ideas as important to the research process. Having a "clear idea," rather than just taking an approach to "just write, write, write," is important. According to Maurice, good writing "has a point."

Writing has become "easier" for Maurice, who labeled himself as "the world's biggest procrastinator." It is not surprising, then, that Maurice described his writing as a one step process. He explained that "I procrastinate because I don't like writing research papers." He admitted that "I can write a paper in a few hours and still get an A on it. . . . it's usually, what I write is, the first time. I just write and look up some sources." By skimming the sources he finds what he can use. Although Maurice recognizes that starting early and revising would improve the "final product," he did not indicate that he intended to shift to that approach unless an instructor forces him to do so through the structure of the assignment and its deadlines.

When asked about the impact of his procrastination tactics, Maurice commented that the stress of the impending deadline may help him to get started. He

often waits until the early morning hours to begin work and then includes many

behaviors (checking TV listings and email, getting coffee) that effectively delay the

start of writing. He concluded that "It's hard for me to get going. But once I get

started, then I get into the zone." Getting into the zone, for Maurice, is "just flow of

ideas basically, and you don't really care about anything that's going on outside of,

you know, your little computer screen type keyboard world." This is the time when

Maurice can complete his work. But he doesn't believe that he can intentionally

create the zone effect in any way. Getting into the zone occurs

> as soon as I start writing that first sentence. It kinda happens. Sometimes it
> doesn't depending on the lack of enthusiasm or sleep. Usually after a couple
> of sentences, its starts, you know.

> Maurice seems to be able to predict the success of his written work in a type

of reverse order. He described it as

> kind of weird because usually when I think I've written a good paper, my
> instructors don't like it. But when I write a paper that I think is, shitty, they
> like it. . . . So I have to write a really bad paper and turn it in and they like it.

When asked to describe the difference between the two papers (good and bad),

Maurice explained that his instructors like to see lots of quotations from sources. He

described it as original "ideas that are not well worked out but lots of quotes and

sources or paraphrasing from somebody." These are the papers his instructors like.

But Maurice prefers papers in which he has read the sources, synthesized the ideas,

and then written about his acquired knowledge of the subject, quoting "little bits of

sources." He finds the result of <u>his</u> approach "a good paper because I know what I

was writing about; it's clear; it's detailed." I detected a sense of frustration in his

conclusion: "I guess good writing is getting lots of sources and very little detail from

yourself." So, in a rather practical approach to his learning, Maurice has come to recognize what an instructor prefers and to adjust to that. Because he adjusts his work in any given course to his understanding of the instructor's expectations, he sees the instructor as his sole audience.

As mentioned earlier, Maurice does not like writing research papers. The low point for him in college writing "is usually having to write a research paper about tedious crap that I don't really care about." Despite the fact that he has generally been given choices in the topic of any research paper, he finds the process uninteresting. He does not view it as an active process. A take home exam from a philosophy class – a class in which students engaged in discussion – was Maurice's high point. In that exam he was encouraged to "say whatever I wanted" because that was what the instructor wanted. Once Maurice has turned in a paper, he puts it behind him. He said that he does not "read them after I turn them in. I'm done. That's also that procrastination thing. I'm done; that's it." When the paper is returned, he glances at the grade and is then completely finished with the paper.

Maurice's vocabulary has grown since his freshman year. Growing up, Maurice learned English by watching movies and television in English. Feedback from instructors has also helped him improve his grammar. And reading, especially scholarly work, "which often, like, just goes over your head" has also improved his writing. He likes class discussion, particularly about material the class has read. He acknowledged that discussion helps him expand his English language skills and assists him in learning course content.

Despite having written several research papers, Maurice has never really come to understand development of bibliographic entries. He wrote papers, sometimes using the MLA style format and sometimes using the Turabian style, but he never came to understand how to use them correctly. Consequently, the formatting of a research paper is stressful. On the other hand, grammar has improved "enormously" for Maurice.

Perhaps because he was only first learning essay and research paper writing as a process in his freshman year, "the process really hasn't changed all that much . . . [yet] it has gotten easier." But Maurice finds the challenge of thinking a welcome part of writing. In fact, he enjoys the challenge of taking a position in an argument contrary to his personal beliefs. He explained why: "You know I like to write stuff . . . that I don't agree with. . . . I like to do that to see the opposite side of what I think." He asserts that tackling the opposite side leads to respect for others ("to tolerate other people") and better thinking. In addition to the challenge of arguing an opposing position, Maurice claims that he likes "to be open to, well, maybe to change my mind, or not." Brandi and Jeanne had also remarked about being open to changing their mind, but neither placed that change option in the context of "the other side" of an argument. When asked whether or not the instructor liked his approach. Maurice responded "I think he did. I mean, I got an A on the paper."

In describing himself as a writer, Maurice replied "I am not a recreational writer." He does not choose to write; he writes when he is required to do so. Yet, Maurice believes that

> if I set my mind to it, I can, you know, get some good writing done, mostly
> scholarly, if I have to. But I like to write more, what my opinion is, my views

on certain stuff, but in a way, that is somewhat scholarly, like backing it up with facts or principles, some sort.

It is not hard to conclude that Maurice's picture of himself as writer is not the same as that of Harry or Scot or Art or Jeanne. Writing for Maurice is a task assigned by someone else, a task for which he has the skills, but he does not necessarily seek opportunities to exercise the skills.

Emily: Computer Composer

Emily is a 22 year old Caucasian with a 3.34 GPA. Her field is education, with an interest in English language arts at either the elementary or secondary level. Her ACT composite was 23. Emily is an "only" child who lives with her mother in a small town in a Midwest state when school is not in session. She plans to teach after graduation, but has not yet secured a position, a source of great stress for Emily. Emily's senior action research project, aligned with her student teaching experience, considered how multiple intelligences affected the learning of sixth graders.

Emily perceived that her greatest writing change during her college years was her shift in rule orientation. As a freshman, she was focused on rules and making her writing "correct." But she relaxed that focus as she proceeded through college.

When asked about what makes good writing, Emily said, "It's easy to say grammar." But she continued that, while grammar should be considered, "how the paper comes across" is more important. The meaning of the paper must be clear and the reader should find the paper enjoyable and perhaps learn something from it. If those goals are achieved, then the paper is a good one. For Emily, a good paper means putting herself into it. Her personal experiences serve to get her "into the

assignment," and she looks for the angle that catches her attention. To develop a paper, she listens for what teachers say to get the specifics of the assignment.

Emily described her writing skills in her freshman year as "above basic." She understood the parts of an essay and what should happen in the opening, middle and closing of an essay. She tried to make her work "entertaining." Emily did not expand much in terms of her changes. She indicated that in high school she drafted her assignments with pen on paper, and then revised. In college, however, she has come to write directly on the computer, and she revises as she goes along, similar to the approach described by Brandi and Scot. Otherwise, her process is generally the same. She begins by going over what a teacher wants until she understands it. Then she goes to the computer to write. She concluded that she can no longer write on paper. It has become more "natural" on the computer and revision is much easier when the text is on the computer. In fact, she disclosed that she writes a few sentences and then revises. She uses this same recursive process until the paper is complete. When asked about engagement in the act of writing, Emily responded that she rarely gets lost in the writing process. She claimed "If I am into it [the writing], I might write it fast." But she is "not generally excited" about writing.

Emily was far less detailed in her responses to her college writing experiences than the other participants. During her college career, Emily has written research papers and many reflection pieces. Sometimes she has been asked to write short answers to questions. She has written lesson plans and journals. Emily does not set writing goals when she writes. Instead, her goal in writing is to get a good grade, "an A or sometimes a B." In some papers she wrote, there was no grade attached to the

assignment and so she did not "try." The assignments were simply given a check mark and so, while the length in them improved, they were "not great" pieces of writing. In her senior year, Emily has had "lots of writing, a ton of papers and lesson plans." She also wrote her action research paper, a senior capstone experience. Outside of class, Emily has written in a personal journal "off and on." In that journal, she "just writes" for herself.

When asked about any low points or challenges in her writing career, Emily answered simply "I cannot write; I'm not good at it." This comment seems somewhat at odds with Emily's assessment of her "above basic" status as a freshman. When asked about her strengths, Emily noted her ability to create "word flow" and her knowledge of "correct grammar." As she has proceeded through college her ideas have become more developed. She feels she has grown as a writer and learned something. She described the quality of her papers as "better." Her conclusion is that she knows that she has "grown, but [she doesn't] really see it." Despite claiming that she does not see her changes, Emily said that she can now write longer pieces and that she finds the length much easier to achieve. Her vocabulary, too, has expanded, particularly through her reading. She uses "bigger words" and she develops her ideas in-depth. This is a contrast, Emily said, to her freshman year's work which she described as lacking depth.

Emily sometimes considers audience as she writes. That audience is "sometimes the teacher; sometimes myself; sometimes the class if I am reading aloud." When she writes for herself, then she is "less conscious of sound and word flow." For the teacher, she is "concerned about correctness, grammar, and

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misspellings." When she considers the class, she wants her ideas to be well thought out and expressed clearly. So audience is part of her conscious decision making when she sets out to write a course-related paper.

Emily has sometimes used classmates for response to her writing. One friend, particularly, helps her with revision. Emily explained that she feels comfortable with getting the right "sound" to her paper, but that she is not strong at revision. By "revision," Emily meant grammatical correctness because she believes that she can identify work that needs more detail. She generally adds the detail in her revision as she writes. On the other hand, Emily commented that teacher feedback she has received has suggested that she attend to even more detail in her writing. So I perceived a discrepancy between Emily's self-evaluation of her use of detail and the evaluation by her readers. Emily noted that she had never received teacher feedback that made her "feel awful," but she did not make reference to any feedback that she actually used to improve her writing either.

If Emily cared about a topic and found it interesting, then the resulting paper received more attention. As evidence for this comment, Emily pointed out an art reflection paper which she felt she had written well because "I liked art." Likewise, her senior research paper on multiple intelligences was one that interested her and, consequently, she worked hard on it. She liked the fact that she "had the chance to put my own spin on it."

Of all the participants, Emily revealed herself as least engaged in her writing, in herself as writer, and in her participation in the interview process. She walked through the process in a rather mechanical manner with little amplification of

response despite refocused questions. And yet, Emily hopes to teach writing one day. Emily does not, however, see <u>herself</u> writing much in the future. Eventually, she plans to go to graduate school and she knows that she will use her writing skills there and in writing letters to friends and family.

<p style="text-align:center"><u>Summary of Participants' Writing Experiences</u></p>

All participants in this study had similar writing experiences in their first two years of college. They wrote in classes that included composition, history, speech, psychology, government, biology, and philosophy. They wrote essays of description, persuasion, process, definition, comparison/contrast, and information. The writings included essays, book reports, and research. Maurice noted that he wrote more in humanities courses than in science courses. While others did not comment on this directly, their list of courses and writing assignments would suggest that this was true for all of them. The participants' writing in their freshman and sophomore years is typical of general education course work. Only Scot varied somewhat from the others. He chose to take several upper division courses in his sophomore year, delaying some of his general education course work until his senior year. Although writing requirements in the general education courses did not vary for Scot as a senior, the timing of his enrollment made a difference. The difference can be described in two important ways: 1) Scot was an experienced college writer as a senior; yet 2) he was not concerned about effort in the general education course he took as a senior. The consequence was that, when compared to the freshmen and sophomores in the class, Scot's experience in writing and thinking earned him high grades with minimal effort.

When the participants described their upper division writing experiences, there were several clear shifts from their general education experiences. The table in Appendix D provides a summary of the participants' reports of their undergraduate writing experience. As they proceeded through their college years, writing assignments changed from the foundational and somewhat generic work in courses like composition or government or speech or biology to the more specified writing within disciplines. In discussing writing in their junior and senior years, participants identified discipline specific requirements in their chosen fields of study. Participants expressed an increased concern for content and scholarship in these discipline-specific writings. It is not surprising, then, to see that case studies and business plans were Brandi's experience, while Scot wrote history research papers and Maurice completed script and character analysis. Art wrote sports and news stories, while Jackson wrote press releases and artist's statements. Harry and Emily, both education majors, developed a portfolio, and wrote lesson plans, response papers, and reflections. Each found the writing in his/her field of study required specific form and content. Writing outside of the classroom also showed some variation, with Maurice, Scot and Emily indicating little specific writing outside of course work. Brandi, Art, Jackson, Jeanne, and Harry used email, wrote at work, or communicated with family or a landlord.

A shift in attitude and attention characterized these participants as they entered upper division course work. Jeanne noted that when she wrote as a junior and senior she "started spending more time on [her] writing." She had "fun" with the papers and found that she had a passion for the topics she wrote about. Harry felt that

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upper division course work allowed him "freedom," something he must have as a writer. In his upper division history study, Harry found that instructors expected him to read and then to apply his own "twist" to the material. He called this "freewill" in writing. Because he felt that his general education courses required writing "restricted by rules," he balked when, in his senior year, he had to write a book review on a historical book, because he "had to go back to the rule thing." Scot found that he "learned to write" in his junior year in a Russian Revolution course where he discovered he "had to push [himself] and the teacher would push [him]" as well. In this, and other history courses, Scot found himself really writing well. Art found that he was versatile as a writer, shifting easily between the requirements demanded by various types of writing and audience. Jackson found a parallel between writing and art, in that writing is a kind of "painting with words." The movement from general formulaic writing to discipline specific writing was a clear point for change for these participants. The discipline specific writing was also aligned with satisfaction about choosing a personally relevant topic. Consequently, the upper division course work was motivational because these writers were studying topics of choice in their chosen disciplinary field. The result was an increase in the "passions" these writers felt about their writing and an increased determination to write well.

Defining "Good Writing": Grammar, Voice, Details, Language, Audience

Each participant was asked directly to describe "good writing." Four participants – Brandi, Maurice, Jeanne, and Emily – mentioned grammar at the top of their description, making it the most frequently first mentioned factor. Scot and Harry also made mention of grammar. Brandi's initial response to defining "good writing,"

was to turn to poor writing, which she described as having grammar errors that made the writing "hard to read." Good writing, she then concluded, would be free of errors. When Brandi discussed her own papers later in the interview, she again mentioned grammar. She noted a distinction between formal and informal work as having a direct link to grammatical consideration and correctness, and commented that she didn't remember checking grammar in her informal dream journal. Maurice also noted first that "grammar is important." As an ESL student, Maurice explained that he learned English as a child by watching television, but that his grammar has improved "enormously" as he has experienced the language through discussion and writing. Jeanne took a practical approach to her identification of grammar as part of good writing. She identified "knowing good grammar skills and punctuation" as foundational. In fact, she explained that punctuation is important because it "emphasizes what is being said." As an example, she explained that a misplaced comma may generate "a completely different meaning than what you are intending." Emily, although she didn't seem as adamant as the others, commented that it is "easy to say 'grammar'" when asked to define good writing, but said that grammar is not the "biggest part" of good writing, yet still a factor. Emily recognized that she was more concerned about the rules (grammar) as a freshman than she was as a senior. Finally, in defining good writing, Scot concentrated on other qualities, but added – almost as an after thought – "also, good grammar, good punctuation, good spelling, and good organization." In a kind of opposition to other participants, Harry found grammar to be rules that narrowed and confined him as a writer. It is not surprising, given his dislike for rules, that Harry defined good writing as "freedom." He found

that in his upper division classes he was free to forget the restrictions of rules. At the same time, however, Harry does perform a spelling and grammar check as a last step prior to submitting a paper.

Including a sense of self in writing, (what I would identify as voice), was a second strong theme. As he discussed what makes writing good, Harry called it writing "from the heart" with "a bit of that person in it." Scot had similar sentiments when he said that good writing "contains a lot of originality." He expanded this discussion to explain that the ideas need not be a "new discovery," but that the writer makes "whatever is in the essay, [the writer's]." It seems that Harry and Scot look particularly for evidence of the writer's voice. Art spoke of "originality," even when using a formula, as target for sports writers who want to gain notice. And Jackson spoke of how he would use a series approach to connect his work and imprint himself on it. Emily, from a different angle, came to a similar conclusion. Her best writing, she declared, came when she put "herself" into the writing. Finally, Jeanne emphasized giving "a part of myself to the reader" as "one of the greatest gifts a writer has."

The use of details, examples, and support was mentioned frequently by the participants. Brandi listed examples and details and use of resources as the identifying characteristics of good writing (along with the absence of grammatical error). Art discussed use of detail in depth. His experience has taught him that writers in his field can use too much detail, thus insulting and alienating an audience; or writers can use too little detail, thus boring and losing an audience. So, Art talked of finding balance in providing detail, qualified by the purpose of the writing with the time (for radio) or

space (for print) available. Harry, like Art, commented that too much detail can be a detriment. In fact, Harry believes that writers who "expound too much in detail . . . show insecurity in [their] writing." Harry believes in directness, providing "enough length to cover your point, get everything across, not be doddling [sic] around the idea, reiterating what you have already said." Maurice commented that support is required for scholarly work. In fact, he commented somewhat wryly that his experience has taught him that "good writing is getting lots of sources" and citing them, with little personal commentary. This use of quoted material does not sit well with Maurice, who would prefer to read and learn material and then write what he knows with minimal quotation for support. But his evaluation of professor's preference in use of resources is a clear part of his learning. Jackson also noted that professors "look for details" in any work that is supposed to be informative. So he has identified use of details through references a significant requirement.

Vocabulary was also addressed by several of these undergraduate writers during the interviews. Jackson's first remark in describing good writing dealt with words. He expects "recognizable," "lucid" use of language that creates a flow in the ideas. While no other participants listed language/vocabulary as a characteristic of good writing, each of the participants discussed their vocabulary development as a factor of their writing improvement. Brandi noted that she has become acquainted with business terminology through her reading and has come to understand the necessary language shifts within the business areas, such as accounting, economics, and marketing. Art discussed his reading on the Internet which has addressed the use of cliché, analogies, and metaphors in sports writing. Maurice and Emily both

commented on improved vocabulary, but Jackson and Harry spent considerable time discussing vocabulary. Jackson has improved his "understanding of language, different meanings of words, different ways to express" ideas. Jackson credits reading literature, particularly poetry, with his language development. He commented that "poetry really pushes syntax . . . using words in a strange or foreign way." His reading has developed in Jackson the awareness that "every subject has its own language." So, he concluded, "picking up on that is part of the process" of learning and developing as a writer. Similarly, Harry, who described himself as a "wordsmith," believes that "language, and the way it's put together" are most important. He finds words "fascinating because they can mean so many things," and actually appreciated the instructor who required that each student learn five new words each week over the course of the semester. Harry likes to use words that might make people "have to get a dictionary out." Even though only Jackson used language specifically in his description of good writing, the response of others suggested that language development has been a factor of their development as writers.

Scot added audience as a factor in his description of good writing. He noted that "catching their [the readers'] attention at the very beginning" is important and that "keeping attention is extremely important." Jackson, too, identified engagement of the reader as an important characteristic. He spoke of identifying an "angle" that would be engaging. He described the angle as "able to pinch the nerve of the reader." In discussion of the role of audience on their writing, participants had varying remarks. Maurice writes for his instructors. Brandi finds an unknown audience to be a challenge for her, so she researches audience when she writes in business. Jeanne

writes with her mother and grandmother in mind, and focuses on what they would need or want to hear on her topic. Jeanne sees a direct link to her reader when she writes. In fact, the value of giving herself to her reader is demonstrated in her comment that "the greatest gift a writer has" is giving a part of herself to another in writing. Emily writes for the teacher, for herself or for a class; her identified audience determines certain elements for attention in her work. When she writes for the teacher, Emily is "concerned about correctness, grammar, and misspellings." When she writes for herself, she is "less conscious of sound and word flow." But when she writes for her classmates, she wants her ideas well thought out. Scot says he always writes for a "very broad audience" and thinks about writing for *Time* or a history magazine or "any kind of periodical." His goal is then to maintain the attention of the reader, so that when someone – anyone – sits down and starts to read his work, they will be "interested" enough to finish it. Harry, on the other hand, writes for himself "first and foremost." While he keeps assignment guidelines in mind, he is his own audience. He explained that "if I can convince myself, I can convince someone else." Art, similar to Harry, views himself as audience. But rather than "convincing" himself, Art writes to "please" himself. Brandi and Jackson think of audience in terms of levels of formality or appropriate language and examples. So, these writers adjust their words to meet the perceived needs of their identified audience.

Finally, I found it interesting that only Maurice discussed having a "clear idea" or thesis as an indication of good writing. When they discussed their processes, many participants noted that they identify their thesis or main idea and include it in the introductory material, but they did not mention it as a characteristic of good

writing. The discussion of support, and the use of details and resources, would also suggest that they at least unconsciously recognized the existence of a point/thesis in their writing. But even in discussion of support, the word "thesis" was not used. Perhaps this omission is a reflection of the assumption that having a thesis is simply synonymous with good writing rather than a characteristic of it. But I found the omission of references to thesis noteworthy.

<div align="center">The Process of Writing</div>

Each participant was asked to describe his/her process of moving "from assignment to product." All eight participants identified their start as reading the assignment and, soon thereafter, identifying their topic and/or thesis. All of the participants searched for resources next. Whereas Art and Maurice rarely outline and Emily goes directly from reading the assignment to writing on the computer, Brandi, Jeanne, Jackson, Harry and Scot include an outline as part of their process. Three of those who outline (Brandi, Jeanne, Scot) use the outline early in their process to help them identify relevant material to read in their resources. Harry decides what he wants to say and then finds readings for support. The others let the resources suggest their direction as they skim and identify useful material. From there, the process varied according to how each participant uses time. Scot, Harry, and Maurice identified themselves as procrastinators. Harry reads the assignment and related materials and then lets it "simmer." He explained: "it's almost like the ideas are bouncing around, then I open the floodgates and they kinda come out the way they go on the paper." Scot also puts the assignment "on the back burner" until he has decided "exactly what directions I'll be wanting to take." Those directions have been worked

out in his head by the time he writes. Maurice, on the other hand, is a procrastinator because his time is committed to classes, theatre, and family, so he often begins his writing in the wee hours of the morning "usually the night before" an assignment is due.

All but Emily commented on their use of resources. They mentioned strategies such as skimming, highlighting, and using note cards for gathering and retaining information. After they read resources, they proceed to write their papers. Emily uses only the computer, calling it "more natural" and easier for revising than using pen and paper. Art and Jeanne both write far beyond the required length to allow them to revise effectively or, as Jeanne pointed out, to be "surprised" if ideas change directions. Jeanne, Art, and Jackson mentioned time specifically. Art, for example, writes twice as much as required on his first writing day, then revises to "throw out" some on the second day as he "rephrases" and organizes for "sense," and then rereads, revises, and sometimes consults with an instructor on the third day. While she did not identify her process by days, Jeanne follows much of the same procedure, using revision to narrow, organize and refine her work. Brandi, Jackson, and Scot, too, plan time for revision as part of their process. Brandi, for example, wants to have time for her paper to sit for a day or two before she rereads it a final time. Emily, however, writes and revises as she proceeds, rarely writing more than a paragraph without revision. And Harry's revision process "happens internally;" that is, he says he revises in his head as he goes. He explained "I feel confident when I have finished the paper that I don't have to revise it. . . . Maybe that's due to the nature of reflection or ego or something," but he does not really revise, he "rewords." In other words,

when he completes his text, Harry has the ideas ordered as he wants them. He then edits for errors in conventions. Maurice, because it was a required component of assignments in freshman composition, did considerable revision in that course, but does not revise much any more.

Most fascinating to me in the discussion of revision, were Harry's comments. Harry's revision "comes in grammar and spelling check" – his "rewording." But otherwise, he avoids revision of his work. If he revises, he believes he "would lose the soul" of his work. He sees his writing as an "authentic reflection of who he is at the time," so revision would mean an abandonment of the true person of the moment. His comparison of writing to pulling clay summed up his belief that "If I mess with it too much it falls apart." This explanation is consistent with the close association of self with his writing that Harry holds. In his interview, as he reread what he had written over the last several years, he could recall where he was and what he was feeling at the time he produced the text. That experience of revisiting himself in the past was significant for Harry.

Only Scot and Art mentioned directly seeking the feedback of others as part of their process; and Jackson, Jeanne and Emily – in later discussion about feedback – said that they sometimes had other people read their work. Emily has a friend who reads her work for the sound of it and another who reads sometimes to check grammar. But, because she feels confident in her grammatical skills, Emily does not use the grammar reviewer often. Jeanne, on the other hand, used instructors, classmates, her parents, and even co-workers to review her work. She seeks an "honest critique" from these reviewers in such areas as need for expansion for clarity,

order, repetitious wording, and grammatical errors. Scot uses different reviewers for different purposes at different points in his process. In the beginning, he wants reviewers to look at flow and level of engagement; later, he looks for reviewers to check punctuation and content. So, Scot has identified "quite a few peer evaluators" with skill in a variety of areas. He also asks for faculty review for feedback on content.

In terms of their process, the participants spread from Brandi – who is really set upon her routine – to Maurice – who has little routine. Brandi's process, delivered in business-like precision is: read the assignment, outline, read and highlight sources, write the introduction ("it bugs" her not to start with the introduction), "perfect the first paragraph," proceed to each point as identified in the introduction, add support and revise each paragraph before moving to the next, and write the conclusion by returning to the introduction to make it "similar." She rearranges as needed and revises again, lets it sit for a day or two, and then rereads it for final revision before submission. Maurice, on the other hand, reads the assignment, uses sources to get ideas and narrow his point, skims resources for relevant material, and writes "usually the night before" the paper is due. Both Brandi and Maurice said that their process has not really changed over their college years. Emily, somewhat like Maurice, writes at the last minute. Her description of her process was unenthusiastic and brief: "go over what they want, understand it, get on the computer and start writing." Jackson looks for an angle that "intrigues" him and often uses some motivational tactics to get himself started. He might read poetry before writing a literature paper, sit in a church prior to writing a theology paper, or watch a relevant movie before writing a history

paper. Before they write, Harry and Scot let their assignment and research "simmer," processing their ideas in their heads, organizing their arguments, finding their support, and finally, setting up their environment: music for Harry, silence for Scot. Jeanne researches in depth; Art seeks details and facts for his assignments. What was clear to me was that each participant has come to understand his/her process at this point.

<p style="text-align:center">Attitudes (Feelings) about Writing</p>

It was in discussion about how they felt about writing that participants indicated their greatest change. When they began their college college, Jackson and Maurice were "scared" about their writing and Jeanne said she "hated to write." Jackson, who still identifies himself as "not the best writer on the block," described himself as "below the curve" as a freshman. That made small group feedback uncomfortable for him. Maurice, because his experience in European schools had not required much essay and research writing, felt "poorly" about his writing skills. Jeanne did not conceive of herself as a "good writer" because she "struggled" with writing. Although in hindsight she believes she was as apt a writer as her peers, in her freshman year, Jeanne felt "low next to [her] peers." She described her confidence level in writing as that of "a sophomore in high school" when she entered college. On the other hand, in terms of confidence, Harry and Art were quite confident as freshmen. Harry described himself as a freshman as "confident . . . sometimes maybe a little cocky." Similarly, Art described his freshman writing self as "confident . . . probably arrogant." And Emily described herself as "above average" as a freshman writer.

As a senior Emily is "not always excited about writing." This sentiment is shared by Brandi, who concluded that writing "is just not very fun." The arrogant attitude Art entered college with at first kept him from listening. When an instructor returned a paper filled with red marks, Art's reaction was to drop the course. Only in the next semester, with a different instructor, did Art decide that perhaps he had something to learn about writing. This turned into a thirst for learning about writing. He now feels confident about many different types of writing.

Scot ("I am my biggest critic.") and Jeanne spoke of self-criticism. Scot wants to impress his readers, but also himself when he writes. Harry, who also writes for himself, does not like to "feel constricted" and seeks "that feeling of creation. It kind of gives you a sense of . . . power. It makes me feel that I'm living in my experience instead of bystanding [sic]." Brandi, Scot, and Jeanne mentioned pride in their papers. Jackson and Art remarked about the importance of being "pleased" with their writing. Scot and Jeanne spoke directly about their shift from pleasing the teacher (in their first two years of college) to focusing on content and quality of writing in their junior and senior years. Five of the participants listed personal strengths as writers. For Brandi the list included meshing creativity with thinking, researching, and using resources in a way that emphasizes "fit and flow." For Jackson it is the use of a thesaurus, "interesting syntax," and word choice for double meanings. For Jeanne, it is structure and organization. For Scot, it is the ability to "articulate" and get his readers "engrossed" in what he writes. For Emily, it is word flow, grammatical correctness, and development of ideas. All participants seemed aware of their strengths, their improvements, and their growth in confidence.

<u>Perceptions of Self as Writer</u>

At the climax of the interview, all participants were asked to describe themselves as writers and to identify changes during their college career.

Brandi is a "goal or task oriented person" who "tailors" her writing to her audience. She described herself as "needy" in terms of direction. In terms of change, she has clearly "defined" her process and she is well aware of not only how she writes, but what environment and time requirements best suit her as a writer. Brandi is a rule follower.

Brandi's opposite would be Harry. Harry described himself as an "abstract poet." He "aspires to keep writing," but "writing" to Harry is free from the confinement of rules and requirements. He longs for "the freedom to write like I want to." After a thoughtful pause, Harry described himself as "a capturer of thoughts" and declared that reviewing his writing was "like an outside rereading of myself." His "eloquence" has improved over the years and he sees his writing as "greatly evolved." He attributed his evolution to the fact that he "learned to push the envelope" and to "not be confined by rules of grammar." Because he writes for himself, he called his "actual" writing "secretive." He entered college confident and said he "maintained [his] cockiness while having the paradox of being afraid of what others would think . . . the fear of being misunderstood."

Art, who, like Harry, entered college "confident," described himself as "interested in the facts and getting as much information as possible" into his papers to establish "credibility." His opinion on the use of quotations has changed considerably during his college years. As a freshman, Art resisted the use of quotations to write in

a way he considered "original." Now, however, he has found that effective use of quotations establishes the credibility he seeks in news and sports writing. He has also come to decide that "using a formula that works is not a bad idea." While creativity is still important, he now finds creativity in the way that he synthesizes material.

Similar to Art, Scot considers how he impacts his readers. Scot puts on a "show" for his readers and actually seeks recognition for his work. When asked to define himself as a writer, he chuckled and responded "indefinable." Then, after a pause and a repetition of the question, he answered, "I'd say I aim to please in general. I guess it's part of my theatrical personality." Scot's changes have come in his organization. Scot characterized his freshman papers as "total disorganization." Even more significant, however, is the fact that, as a freshman, Scot would have never written "just for the sake of writing," whereas he does that now. As a freshman, he thought about format and making the teacher happy. In his junior year, he shifted to using original and detailed analysis in writing historiography. He added depth to his writing and his goal was to satisfy himself more than to satisfy his teachers. Reviewing his papers, he remarked on his "transformation through the years," describing his changed approach as "more open minded in some ways." He explained that he had "changed from the straight and narrow, black and white personality, to someone who has grey spread."

While Scot can clearly identify his "transformation," Emily said she has "grown as a writer and obviously learned something" but she "does not see" her growth – a bit of a paradox. Emily says she has developed her vocabulary and that her ideas have more depth. She writes longer papers as a senior and finds length easier to

achieve. She writes exclusively on the computer now, whereas that was not true of her as a freshman.

Like Emily, Maurice is less verbal about himself as a writer. He offered: "I am not a recreational writer. I don't write song lyrics or poems or short stories. . . . I'm not sure how to describe myself" as a writer. In terms of changes, Maurice commented that "I think if I set my mind to it, I can get some good writing done." He prefers to write from his opinion, adding scholarly references for support of his opinion. During his college career, writing has become easier for him and his vocabulary has improved through his reading and class discussions.

Jackson concluded that "I have a ways to go but I think to this point I have done well." Perhaps because he is an artist, Jackson-as-writer likes the process. "The process," he explained, "reminds me of painting; it reminds me of drawing. And that intrigues me." Jackson got fairly philosophical about his changes. He believes that "all the papers I have written before were just a stepping stone in my career as a student." His process changed from last minute writing as a freshman to full understanding of assignments and researching as a senior. Compared to other students, Jackson believes his writing skills "developed a little slower," but his senior paper "sounds reasonable," is "precise" because he has read and used the right references, and "flows." He was "very nervous" about his writing as a freshman and found writing "intimidating" then. Jackson would never have been able to turn in a paper like his senior thesis as a freshman, but he is "confident" in his ability to accomplish the paper as a senior. Currently, he tries to "improve every day in everything" and describes his changes over the past years as a "really long road trip."

Of particular importance to Jackson has been his improved vocabulary and his increased attention to revision.

In describing herself as a writer, Jeanne began "When it comes to writing poetically or creatively for just the fun of it, I'm horrible at that." But, she added, "my master works come in my research, . . . because of the organization and structure, the time I put into it." She has come to attend to her reader, especially in the use of examples to help clarify complex ideas. She has completely reversed her opinion of feedback. As a freshman, she feared instructor response and saw it as a confirmation of herself as a weak writer. As a senior, she seeks out feedback as a means for improvement of her writing. Jeanne summarized her changes in this way: "My freshman year, I hated it [writing]. Sophomore year I disliked it and I did my writing to get by. And now I do my writing more in a way of telling a story." Jeanne summed up her writing experience change with "I don't hate to write any more."

Holding the interviews, transcribing their content, and analyzing the transcriptions provided a rich narrative of individual journeys of these eight participants as undergraduate writers. The participants have individual experiences and voices. But there was also ample data to suggest the themes discussed in this past section. I now turned to the other data I had collected to look for additional insight. I first examined the data provided by Lavelle's inventory and then reviewed the participants' work samples.

Inventory of Processes in College Writing (IPIC): Describing Writing Factors

In development of the Inventory of Processes in College Writing (IPIC) Lavelle (1993) sought to identify factors that characterize the processes of college

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writers. These factors, characterized as "surface" or "deep" suggest both attitude and process in the writing experience, and imply a kind of maturation of writers. The surface factors in Lavelle's inventory are named procedural, spontaneous-impulsive, and low self-efficacy factors, while the deep factors are reflective-revisionist and elaborationist. All writers have characteristics of each factor, but vary in the intensity of the factor. The title of each factor suggests the characteristics of the writer.

The surface writers have some common features, but are distinguishable in other features. For instance, the procedural writer tends to adhere to rules and shows minimal involvement in producing text. The spontaneous-impulsive writer is a method-oriented writer for whom producing a text is often a one-step process. This writer, like the procedural writer, attends to rules, also with minimal involvement in his/her writing. There is little planning for this writer, who may see him/herself as either a good writer or a weak writer. The low self-efficacy writer, on the other hand, doubts his/her writing ability, claims few writing strategies, and finds writing painful. This writer, as the other surface writers, focuses on the rules of grammar. The low self-efficacy writer has high fear and anxiety about writing and believes he/she has little control over produced text. One might expect young writers to bear qualities of each of the surface factors as they begin learning writing skills. And, given the changed environment and unknown target of college writing, it would not be unusual to see some of the surface factors in college freshman. One might also expect, however, that the college writing experience would move writers to a deeper approach in production of text, characteristic of the reflective-revisionist and elaborationist factors.

The reflective-revisionist writer focuses on revision, using writing as a tool for creating meaning and exploring ideas. For the reflective-revisionist writer, writing is intentional, aimed at support of a central thesis. Because the processes are somewhat contradictory, a writer who factors strong as a reflective-revisionist writer, will generally factor low in spontaneous-impulsive. The reflective-revisionist writer plans and revises in multiple steps and attends less to method and more to meaning. The elaborationist, like the reflective-revisionist writer, seeks meaning. This writer finds personal meaning from writing and is actively engaged in the work, recognizing an audience and a personal voice as writer. The elaborationist approach involves personal meaning and self-investment. There is a deep, personal orientation to writing. The writer who factors high as an elaborationist will typically factor low on the low self-esteem factor, since the self-investment and personal meaning the elaborationist finds in writing would be inconsistent with the doubt and lack of control perceptions of the low self-esteem writer.

A natural expectation would be that students become less like surface writers and more like deep writers during their years of writing in college. (See Table 1: Comparison of IPIC Factor Scores) In fact, all eight did indicate a movement away from the low self-efficacy factor. And six of the eight participants showed a diminished tendency toward a procedural approach, while two (Brandi and Jeanne) had identical scores. But the spontaneous-impulsive factor provided mixed messages: one score remained the same, four scores showed movement away from the spontaneous-impulsive factor, but three showed movement toward becoming more

spontaneous-impulsive. (A further discussion of these factors with a possible explanation of the changes follows shortly.)

Table 1: Comparison of IPIC Factor Scores

	Jackson	Scot	Brandi	Art	Harry	Jeanne	Maurice	Emily
Procedural (10)	10-6	7-6	9-9	9-6	8-4	6-6	9-5	9-4
Spontaneous-Impulsive (13)	7-6	9-5	2-4	11-11	5-11	10-3	8-6	1-10
Low Self-efficacy (13)	7-5	6-2	6-3	8-3	7-2	3-2	5-3	4-2
Reflective-Revisionist (11)	11-8	4-9	6-8	3-8	4-9	5-6	7-10	7-8
Elaborationist (23)	18-20	4-23	14-15	10-15	6-20	12-17	11-7	12-16

Note: Each participant is listed across the top row; each factor is listed down the column. The possible score is listed under the factor. Scores for freshman-senior years are provided for each factor for each participant.

Changes in the deep level factors reflect what one might predict. Seven of the eight participants actually appear to have become more focused on deep level factors in that their scores increased. Only Jackson, in the reflective-revisionist factor, and Maurice in the elaborationist factor showed lower scores as seniors.

I did not, however, find looking at the general trends for the inventory as useful or insightful as looking at the specific statements and comparing them to comments made during the interviews. That analysis provided a richer picture of the participants as evolving writers. Their writing tendencies were often impacted by their interests and personal commitments. (For a complete listing of statements and scoring, see Appendix E.) What follows is a review of findings that looks at the statements and changes for each factor.

The procedural writer focuses on rules. As freshman, all eight participants agreed that they would "stick to the rules." But as seniors, only Brandi and Scot still marked that statement as true of themselves. Brandi, who characterized herself as organized and procedural, is not a surprise. In fact, Brandi scored herself high on the procedural factor (9 of 10) both as a freshman and as a senior. Her concerns about being "needy" as a writer would confirm that Brandi lacks the kind of self-confidence that would allow her to break away from a focus on rules. I was somewhat surprised, however, about Scot's fairly high response to the procedural factor, (7 as a freshman and 6 as a senior) because he exudes confidence as a writer. The procedural factor does, however, imply a certain awareness of rules and a tendency to abide by them. And Scot, who often assisted other students in revising their work for grammar, did know and apply the rules. His high score may suggest thorough knowledge of rules rather than focus on rules. Of significance to me was the fact that seven of the participants (Jeanne was the exception) responded positively to the statement "The main reason for writing an essay or paper is to get a good grade on it" as freshmen. As seniors, however, only Brandi and Emily agreed with the statement. This movement away from a focus on grades was evident in the interviews. Jeanne epitomized this shift for these participants when she noted that A's and B's are important to freshman, but as a senior she puts her "heart and soul" into her work to "put everything of value" into an assignment. And Scot spoke of getting his thoughts on paper as more important that a grade. As freshmen, the group was more concerned with "how much time" writing would take (7 responses), but only two (Emily and Brandi) still worried about time as seniors. In fact, Jeanne – who, as a senior, often

started a paper shortly after getting the syllabus at the start of the semester – used time to her advantage by pacing her research and her writing, along with multiple revisions. The other big shift in the procedural factor was in identification of audience. While seven identified the teacher as "the most important audience" as freshmen, only two said the same as seniors (Brandi and Jackson). One statement ("I like written assignments to be well-specified with details included.") received a 100% response from all participants as both freshmen and seniors. Given the circumstances of college, however, I do not find this surprising. Students appreciate an identifiable target, so a detailed assignment would provide students the parameters within which they can work. I was, therefore, not surprised to find the unchanged response, given the context of the participants' writing.

In terms of change in the spontaneous-impulsive factor, the aggregated scores show very little difference between the freshman and senior year responses. Looking at individual shifts, I found that four participants (Brandi, Art, Jackson, and Maurice) showed no or little change. But four participants did change considerably. Jeanne and Scot became less spontaneous-impulsive. Their comments indicate more planning, use of outlines, and more revision of text. As seniors, they both see themselves as part of their audience. Each thinks more about what and how they write and each seeks the assistance of others as they go through various revisions. But Harry and Emily both shifted to a far more spontaneous-impulsive stance as seniors. When I looked at the statements related to the spontaneous-impulsive factor and considered the attitudes expressed in their interviews, I believe I can suggest an explanation for this shift. Harry felt so confined by rules that statements like "just happens," no "specific time"

for writing, and "never think about how I go about writing" would seem consistent with his immediate response that good writing is "freedom." His belief that what he writes captures the purity of who he is and what he thinks at the moment would incline him toward a factor which minimizes planning ahead and revision. Emily, however, probably comes to her shift in spontaneous-impulsive tendencies for different reasons. Emily has a certain degree of confidence in her ability to write, hence her agreement as a senior with the statement "I often do written assignments at the last minute and still get a good grade." She also commented in her interview that she writes like she talks, a statement almost identical to one for spontaneous-impulsive factors. Emily also found little joy in writing and felt pressured by finances and a fairly heavy work schedule. Combining these issues probably made Emily a spontaneous-impulsive writer.

The third surface level factor, low self-efficacy was particularly rich for speculation for me. As a composition teacher who addresses the issues of sentence structure I was disappointed (but not surprised) that no one as freshmen and only Art as a senior indicated that they could "write simple, compound and complex sentences." No participants spoke of their writing in terms of syntactical analysis. Yet all participants used simple, compound and complex sentences in their texts. An interesting trend – indicative in the Inventory of a movement toward having low self-efficacy was the statement "Studying grammar and punctuation would greatly improve my writing." Three participants – Jackson, Brandi, and Maurice – thought this to be true as freshman. It is not hard to understand these responses: Jackson saw himself as "below the curve" as a freshman writer; Brandi aligns herself favorably

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with rules; Maurice did not write English as his first language. But as seniors, three additional participants – Scot, Art, and Jeanne – joined the first three in marking "true" for this response. I surmise that these writers – who all noted that they have difficulty spotting errors in their texts – believe in perfecting their text by abiding by the rules of grammar. But while they believe that knowledge of grammar would "improve their writing," only three seniors (Brandi, Jeanne, and Maurice) agreed that "the most important thing in writing is observing the rules of grammar, punctuation, and organization." Because Jeanne remarked about the importance of organization in communicating ideas and because she actually explained how punctuation clarified meaning, I believe her agreement with this statement is more indicative of her maturity in the subtle and not-so-subtle elements of writing rather than a reflection of low self-esteem.

Not so surprising is the response of seven of the participants as freshmen that "having my writing evaluated scares me." Only Jackson still felt that way as a senior. Surprisingly, Brandi did not indicate fear as either a freshman or a senior. But she did indicate that she considered herself a good writer and had been successful (defined by high grades) throughout high school and expected the same in college. Finally, seven participants aimed for the exact word count as freshmen, but only Art and Harry continued that trend as seniors. I found it interesting that Art's process (described in his interview) begins with writing far more than required in a first draft so that he can discard and revise to meet specifications – a process that suggests at first that he eschews looking at word count requirements. So I interpret his positive response to

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this statement as an indication that he is aware of space constraints as he approaches the completion of a text.

In general, seven of the eight participants indicated a movement toward deeper level writing as reflective-revisionists. Jackson was the exception. The two writers whose scores changed most dramatically are Scot and Harry. Both indicated through their responses that they revise more than once and that they believe that there is more than "one best way" to complete a text. Both agree that an assignment provides direction for the writing approach, but Scot outlines, whereas Harry does not create a plan and stick to it. In their interviews, both Scot and Harry clearly defined the thinking they do prior to writing. This reflection (Harry's favorite type of activity and writing approach) provides significance for each in that they see their texts as extensions of themselves. In terms of general trends gathered from the statements, I found that six of the participants as freshmen saw revision as a "one time process at the end." Only Emily still believed this as a senior, which is consistent with her process of writing at the last minute and revising as she proceeds to write on the computer. As freshmen, seven participants believed that there was "one best way" to complete an assignment, but only Brandi still marked this as true as a senior. Half of the participants as freshmen used "some ideas to support other, larger ideas," but all eight used this strategy as seniors. This would suggest that the role of support and subordination of ideas may be skills developed during the college years.

Seven of the eight participants became more elaborationist during their college years; only Maurice indicated that he did not. The statement "Originality is highly important" drew agreement from seven participants as freshman and all eight

as seniors. The greatest shifts in the elaborationist factor came in five statements which showed a change in attitude and process from their freshman responses. Most participants, as seniors, agreed that writing makes them "feel good," that they sometimes find "deep personal satisfaction" from writing; that they "sometimes get sudden inspiration;" that they go "beyond the specifications" of an assignment sometimes; and that they "compare and contrast ideas" for clarity. Five called their writing "symbolic" and five compared writing to "a journey." The outlier for the factor of elaborationist is Maurice. As a freshman he marked eleven of the statements as true, but he marked only seven statements as true of him as a senior. While this indicates a shift in the opposite direction from what one might expect, a simple tally of numbers does not really reveal the changes in Maurice. Examined another way, Maurice actually shifted answers on twelve of the twenty-three statements! The trends suggest that – for whatever reason – Maurice no longer cares whether or not he likes what he writes; he does not use assignments as an opportunity to learn; he has little concern for audience; and he does not think about how he writes. While a bit disconcerting, I believe that Maurice's circumstances have influenced this trend. He is a theatre major with hours of commitment to production. He is about to be married and so he has added work and family to his responsibilities as a student. He wants a degree to enable him to find employment beyond minimum wage factory stints. And, for him, English is a second language, making writing somewhat laborious.

Analysis of the responses to the IPIC suggests a consistency between what participants indicated on the inventory and what they said in their interviews. While the IPIC provided some useful data in aggregated scores, it was actually more useful

to re-view the interviews from the "perspective" of the individual inventory statements to come to a deeper understanding of changes.

Student Papers: An Examination of Product

As part of this study of undergraduate writing experiences, I asked each participant to provide writing samples from their college years. These samples were to serve as a reference and review for a portion of the interview process because I planned to ask about the assignment, process and feedback received for each paper. I intentionally provided no guidelines for the choice of texts other than that they be written during the college years. The reason for this non-direction was to allow me to ask about each participant's selection process. Because I used this approach, I did not end up with useful samples from every participant. But I did find that the choice provided some insight into each participant as a writer.

Four participants were eliminated from the product review portion of this study for different reasons. One participant, Art, did not bring any samples. He said he did not understand that he was to do that and promised to bring some at another time, but he did not follow through with that promise. The absence of papers, however, did not seem to affect Art's abilities to speak about his work and his perceptions of his products and his change. Jackson brought only his senior paper, a source of pride and what he described as the culmination of his college study. He said that his other papers were a "stepping stone" for this final piece and, since he perceived himself as slower to develop as a writer than other students, it seemed appropriate for him to bring only his best, his high point. But only one paper meant that I could not compare his changes through the papers he produced and so I did not

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include Jackson in this portion of the study. Emily brought two informal pieces – a summary of an observation and a reflection on the integration of art into content area work. Emily said that she really could not find other work and her computer had recently crashed. Because her texts were informal and Emily had not written them as polished pieces, they were not really appropriate samples for study for this research. Emily's lack of engagement in her writing has been consistently expressed: she doesn't invest much in writing and so she has not saved her work for retrieval.

Finally, Harry brought a hand-written copy of his eulogy and a disk full of his poetry. Only the eulogy had been written for a college course (speech) and it lacked the formality of a polished written text. While Harry clearly understood that I wanted samples of his writing for review, his choices reflect what he calls his "actual" writing – his poetry. Harry's poetry captured his "true person" and his thoughts at a given point in time, and this was clearly important for Harry as writer. Harry's choice, then, was also consistent with Harry as a writer; nevertheless, the writing Harry provided could not be used for analysis. That left four participants' texts for analysis.

Brandi, Maurice, Jeanne, and Scot provided papers appropriate for analysis and comparison. I determined the papers to use by looking at examples from each year and by looking for papers which were "formal" - essay or research in type. Brandi brought five papers: a freshman theatre review, a sophomore book review, her junior year dream journals, her senior marketing report, and a senior research paper. Because the dream journals were informal and because the senior marketing report differs vastly in format, I omitted them from the study, leaving me with three papers –

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one each from her freshman, sophomore, and senior years. Maurice gave me three papers for analysis: a freshman research paper, a take-home exam from his senior year, and a referenced literary analysis from his senior year. Because of the format of the take-home exam, I eliminated it from the study, giving me two research papers that represented Maurice's writing in his freshman and senior years.

Jeanne brought multiple papers from each of her years at school. She discussed a number of them in her interview before I asked her to choose a representative paper from each year. So, gave me four researched papers, one from each year. Finally, Scot left me an opinion paper from his freshman year, a comparison of the theories of Malthus and Marx from his sophomore year, a junior year research paper, and a senior year research paper. Because I had one paper from each year which fit my criteria, I did not eliminate any of the papers that Jeanne or Scot provided.

Once I had chosen the papers to review, I began to study each paper. I counted sentences and sentence length, noted types of sentences, connections, organization, and complexity of sentence construction. When I had completed my first readings, I compiled a table to examine each student's work "by the numbers." (See Table 2: Text Analysis Figures.) The average length of sentences did increase for each participant, with Jeanne showing the least increase (19.11-19.25) and the other three increasing by over six words per sentence. The range between shortest sentence and longest sentence did not vary significantly. Each participant showed solid variety in sentence lengths and seemed to use those variations effectively across his/her college experience.

In looking at types of sentences, the numbers indicate a movement away from relying on simple sentence construction. Yet only for Brandi does this seem really significant. Brandi moved from using 50% simple sentences in her freshman and sophomore papers, to 22.5% simple sentences in her senior paper. Maurice shifted from 34% simple sentences as a freshman to 30% simple sentences as a senior. Scot, too, shifted slightly, from 40% to 37%. Jeanne, on the other hand, used 21% simple

Table 2: Text Analysis Figures

	Ave. Sent. length	Shortest/ Longest	Percent Simple	Percent Complex	Percent Compound	Percent Compound Complex	Percent Quotations	*Percent Fragments
Brandi ** (freshman)	18.37	6/35	50%	46%	4%	--	--	--
Brandi (sophomore)	18.37	8/36	50%	46%	4%	--	--	--
Brandi (senior)	24.82	9/41	22.5%	42%	--	8%	27.5%	
Maurice (freshman)	18.15	5/48	34%	34%	4%	9%	19%	--
Maurice (senior)	25.43	4/60	30%	31%	1%	7%	30%	--
Jeanne (freshman)	19.11	5/40	21%	55%	7%	2%	15%	--
Jeanne (sophomore)	16.5	8/35	57%	34.5%	5.5%	3%	--	--
Jeanne (junior)	13.03	4/29	52%	43%	--	1%	4%	--
Jeanne (senior)	19.25	8/59	36%	44%	5%	2.5%	12.5%	--
Scot ** (freshman)	13.5	4/28	40%	45%	5%	10%	--	--
Scot ** (sophomore)	15.63	1/45	51%	25%	8%	8%	--	6%
Scot (junior)	17.19	2/53	44%	33%	8%	3.5%	11%	.5%
Scot (senior)	19.59	1/55	37%	34.5%	8.5%	3%	15%	2%

Note: *Fragment here refers to intentional use of word/s that comprised less than a grammatical sentence. **Indicates a paper without references.

sentences in her freshman paper, compared to 36% as a senior. While this seems a reverse of the trend found in the other papers, the simple sentences actually became more "complex" in that they followed a cumulative pattern of adding modifiers to the base stem of the sentence, thereby increasing length and flow and "sound" while retaining the simple status in structure. The freshman paper that Jeanne provided may also have been atypical of her work at that time, as her sophomore and junior papers show a much higher percentage of simple sentences (57% and 52%) than either her freshman or senior papers.

Scot's texts are the only ones that include the use of fragments for effect. This use was evident in all but his freshman paper. He also used questions frequently as he presented his ideas. In his sophomore paper, for example, he began one paragraph with "What causes famine? DANGER! Population growth." His use of the question and two fragments, one typed in all capital letters – indicate a confident writer willing to stretch writing conventions to engage his reader. This is also true of his texts from his junior and senior years. Scot's personal approach – his "writing like talking," his humor, his determination to keep his readers interested – are shown in his use of fragments in his senior piece. In that paper, a chronological analysis of Napoleon's movement to anti-Catholicism, he ends a paragraph which outlines Napoleon's battle with Rome on Holy Days and Feast Days with "The Pope's response? Excommunication! Napoleon's response? Much less Sacramental." Scot's humor was no doubt aimed at what he perceived as an appreciative, understanding audience and it reflects what he called his "theatrical" approach to writing.

Besides sentence lengths and sentence types, I also reviewed the texts for organization and sentence openings. Brandi's papers all follow an easily identifiable format. In all three papers examined, the thesis comes at the close of the opening paragraph, along with an indication of the order of development in the paper. Her conclusion echoes the introduction, summarizing her development and reiterating her thesis. Her papers are easy to follow, as she includes clear directional words. The body paragraphs for her sophomore paper, for example, begin: "Initially." "Another," and "Finally." The conclusion begins "In conclusion." This approach is consistent with Brandi's attention to expectations and rules. She follows well the five paragraph format (which Scot actually defined in his interview). In terms of the manner in which she opens sentences, Brandi used an adverb, a conjunction, and two prepositional phrases in her freshman paper, so that 7% of the sentences opened with something other than the subject. In the sophomore paper, however, this percentage increased to 33%. She added dependent clauses to her repertoire of openings. Finally, in the senior paper, Brandi varied openings in only 18% of the sentences, but added participial phrases and adjectival infinitive phrases as techniques. So, her work suggests that she has learned a variety of writing strategies used by mature writers.

In his freshman paper, Maurice opened with his thesis and followed with three sentences which indicate the order of his text's development. His conclusion opens with a repetition of the thesis, using identical language. He follows the repeated thesis with an echoing of his development, mixed with evaluative comments. A difference between his freshman and senior research papers is his use of lead-ins before any quotation – something he omitted as a freshman. The result is improved flow. In his

senior paper, Maurice uses a two paragraph introduction with a thesis in the second of the two. The final sentence of the second paragraph provides the order of the ideas to be developed. Maurice varies the opening in 20% of the sentences in his freshman paper and in 25% of the sentences in his senior paper. In both papers, he uses prepositional phrases, dependent clauses, adverbs, and a participial phrase - suggesting that his awareness of sentence variation may have been more advanced than the others in his freshman year. But Maurice, a non-traditional freshman, was older than the others, even in his freshman year, so the additional experience he had gained, simply by age and life experiences, may have influenced his writing.

Scot's freshman paper opened with his thesis and his first paragraph ended with the three points he developed in that five paragraph essay, an opinion paper with no requirement for references. His sophomore paper opened with an invitation to read by announcement of his topic: "Robert Malthus and Karl Marx were two of the most influential thinkers of the late nineteenth century." While there is no sentence which could be identified as the thesis, the organization and purpose of the paper – to contrast the theories of Malthus and Marx on "poverty, politics, and population" – is provided in the closing sentence of the introduction. Scot's junior paper opened with a quote and ended with the thesis and its implied organization: "Ethiopia – through the uses of Nationalism, Unification, and even Capitalist Westernism – held steadfast against the threat of colonization from all of Europe." The paper continued in a chronological order, with references to support Scot's analysis. Finally, Scot's senior paper is organized in a manner similar to the junior paper. The senior paper also opened with a quote and proceeded in a chronological order, but the thesis is fairly

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clearly stated as the last sentence of the introductory paragraph. In his sample

freshman essay, Scot uses a prepositional phrase to open two of his twenty sentences;

the others began with the subject. In his sophomore sample, Scot used adverbs,

prepositional phrases, participial phrases, and a dependent clause to open his

sentences, but this accounted for only about 14% of the total. The junior and senior

papers reflected an increase to 20% openings other than subject, with use of an

adjectival infinitive phrase as an additional technique.

Jeanne's papers, even in her freshman year, reflect the passion she feels for

her chosen topic. Her freshman paper opened with a story of the September 11

terrorist attack and then moved into a discussion of using national ID cards as a

security measure. The lengthy introduction (18 sentences) moved toward her

conclusion that "citizens of America should not be required to carry ID cards,"

followed by three sentences set up in identical parallel construction which provided

the reasons for her conclusion and the order of the paper. The paper itself is an

argument and Jeanne moves from her side to the opposition ("on the other hand"),

and then to her dealing with the opposition ("however"). Jeanne's passion is easily

heard, even through the formulaic style of the argument paper. Jeanne's sophomore

paper opened with a brief introduction (4 sentences) which ended with her thesis:

"Substance abuse causes serious mental and physical affects [sic]." This thesis is the

most blunt of the samples, but the paper, like her others, follows logically through her

points of support and ends with a repetition of her point. Both the junior and senior

papers follow the same organization as the sophomore paper, in that Jeanne uses a

logical approach to lay out her findings. There is careful attention to order and

transitional elements to create a coherent text. Jeanne opened 26% of her sentences with something other than the subject. She used adverbs, dependent clauses, and prepositional phrases to create the variations. Her sophomore paper, with 22% variation, used the same techniques. The junior paper decreased to 14% in variation, but she added the use of an adjectival infinitive. The senior paper, at 21% variation, added no additional techniques.

Throughout the papers, sentence constructive took on a cumulative pattern; that is, the base clause was modified by phrases after the subject, the verb, and/or the object. Such adding on lengthens the sentence even though the sentence remains simple in type. The richness and variety of modification result in mature writing. For example, in Brandi's senior paper on the Lexus she wrote "The Thailand BOI sees the advantages in using an open economy to attract even more investors, especially investors with a more attractive financial backing." This construction, achieved by adding the expanded explanation "especially investors with a more attractive financial backing," is not evident in Brandi's earlier writing. Her senior paper is still organized in the five paragraph format, meeting the expectations for introduction, body, and conclusion, and organized by attention to thesis and order of development provided in the opening. But her maturity shows in her expanded sentence construction. Another example of this cumulative effect is evident in Maurice's senior paper (an analysis of the character Caliban from *The Tempest)* in sentences such as "The first chance Caliban gets to meet some new people, he grabs and treats them like gods, offering to even kiss their boots or feet." The opening and closing modifiers both show a freedom to use sentence construction to make his point, a sign of writing maturity.

Maurice showed considerable flexibility in sentence construction as a freshman; his senior work, however, goes further in lengthening his sentences with additional modifiers, and the senior work feels more natural in doing so.

Voice is most clearly shown in Scot's writing. He seems to feel free to stretch the boundaries of formality and to add a mildly sarcastic tone to some of his analysis. His sophomore paper contrasting the theories of Malthus and Marx, for example, ends:

> Both have some solid arguments, though we do not reside in a Utopian world. Sorry fellas. It will never happen.

In this example, Scot seems to speak directly to the subjects of his paper rather than to his audience. He defies convention with the fragment ("Sorry fellas") with its informal version of "fellows" and its direct address to the subjects of the paper, Malthus and Marx. His conclusion, however, is quite clear: "It will never happen," indicating that he found flaws in both theories. The other three writers were more formal in their language choice, their consistent audience, and the absence of intentional fragments. Yet their individual voices were evident in their organization and topic choice. It is clear, for example, that Jeanne cares deeply about the treatment for autism, the subject of her senior paper. Her conclusion, for example, begins:

> Finding a working treatment for autism is important because the correct treatment can, in many cases, help a person with autism progress into a fairly normal life quickly. Most people with autism know they are different and they want to be like everyone else. Acceptance and independence are major accomplishments for them. By being able to develop a working treatment, individuals with autism can learn to form independence. Once they know how to communicate and what is socially acceptable, acceptance from others will come naturally.

A reader can hear the vision and hope in this conclusion. The paper itself is well documented through explanations of the variety of treatments and interventions appropriate for individuals of varying ages. She expresses understanding with sentences such as "Most people with autism know they are different and they want to be like everyone else." So, while she remains formal in her language use, her voice is resonant.

As students proceed through their college writing experience, their use of parallel construction also increased. Scot, for example, ends his junior paper on Ethiopia with

> In the end, Ethiopia came out on top, regarded by Europe as a people unwilling to budge or break. In the end, Ethiopia was the only country that could because it truly had the desire, the knowledge, and the history to help it do so.

The repetition of "in the end" connects the two sentences and adds an element of accumulation to the paper. The list of "the desire, the knowledge, and the history," a parallel list, is more effective because of the parallel phrases at the opening of the sentences. Another point to note is that Scot's paper is titled "The Little Country that Could," no doubt an allusion to the Watty Piper book *The Little Engine that Could*. This represents an intertextual reference that is unique from other papers in this study.

True to their discussion of good writing, the papers from these four students are generally free of error. I say "generally," because the freshman papers did contain a few errors which their writers did not find and correct: a fragment (unintended), an error in possession, a comma splice, and confusion of "affect" for "effect," for example. But I found no such errors in the senior papers; they had effectively revised to eliminate errors in convention.

Summary

This chapter has provided a detailed summary of the eight participants in this study, presented in the order I analyzed the data collected. Beginning with vignettes, each student's story is provided as a narrative of their college writing experiences, an attempt to capture their understanding of their writing, their process from assignment to product, their approach to audience, and their concepts of themselves as writers. Following the vignettes, their stories were analyzed to discover how their experiences were similar or dissimilar. In defining "good writing," the participants discussed grammar, voice, use of details, language, and audience. Further discussion covered comparisons of participants in their process, their attitudes and their perceptions of themselves as writers.

Following the vignettes and analysis, I have used the IPIC inventory to discuss change in deep and surface level factors related to writing. I analyzed statements and responses in the inventory in light of the interviews. Finally, I examined the writing samples provided by four of the participants to identify changes in T-units, sentence construction, and style.

Chapter 5

"As a young teacher, I yearned for the day when I would know my craft so well, be so competent, so experienced, and so powerful, that I could walk into any classroom without feeling afraid. But now, in my late fifties, I know that day will never come. I will always have fears, but I need not become my fears – for there are other places in my inner landscape from which I can speak and act. "

-Parker Palmer qtd. in Kirby, Kirby, & Liner. 2004, p. 1

Personal Interlude on Process

In chapter 1, I discussed the need for this study, noting that writing is "a lifelong activity" and that there has been little attention given to the college student's experience of writing. As I proceeded to read, attend conferences, collect data and speak with colleagues, I became aware of *Time to Know Them: A Longitudinal Study of Writing and Learning at the College Level,* the work of Marilyn Sternglass (1997), and *Persons in Process: Four Stories of Writing and Personal Development in College,* the work of Anne Herrington and Marcia Curtis (2000), as well as the Harvard Writing Project, started in 1997 under the direction of Nancy Sommers. I quickly gathered these materials and began to read them. Then I stopped. I did not want to influence my own interpretation of the data I had gathered by first reviewing the work of these established researchers. Therefore, their work was not part of my interpretive framework. When I completed chapter 4 and my first draft of this chapter, I turned to Sommers, Sternglass, and Herrington & Curtis. I have incorporated their work here, along with that of Carroll (2002), in a kind of conversation on the emergence of mature writers during the undergraduate years. My research study confirms what others have found in recent longitudinal studies on the development of undergraduate writers.

<u>Overview</u>

This chapter presents the "so what?" of my phenomenological study to examine the change in writing that college students experience. In my research journey, influenced by my thirty years of teaching college students, I have strived to capture the stories of college students through interviews and additional data gathered from an inventory and analysis of student papers. My focus has been to analyze how college students construct themselves as writers during their college years. In this chapter, the narrative that has emerged from analysis of data will reflect the "evolution of thinking that occurs over time through immersion in the data and the cumulative body of findings that have been recorded" (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p. 144).

In some respects, I was surprised as I listened to the participants' stories, and so I begin this chapter with commentary of my expectations going into the interviews. The chapter then proceeds by looking at the "so what" I have discovered in personal change, student texts, and motivation and audience awareness, linking my conversation to that of others in the composition field. Then I examine the limitations of this study. Next I provide some implications suggested by this study, and, finally, I offer recommendations for further research.

<u>Initial Expectations</u>

As I designed and implemented this study, I was anxious to see how students would speak about their writing and themselves as writers. I wondered which aspects of their writing would most intrigue them. But even with the initial interview, I realized that my expectations of the participants' storylines had been too narrow. In

fact, my thinking reflected much of the reading I had discovered that described development in terms of T-units, sentence types, and so on. I expected the participants in this study to recognize and discuss their expanded use of complex sentence structures, their careful use of transitional phrases, their new-found facility with absolutes, appositive, participial phrases, and so on. But the participants did not discuss their writing in those terms. And even though my analysis of their papers later showed that these eight participants, had, in fact, achieved all of the skills I "knew" should be evident in college papers, they did not discuss them.

There was also limited discussion of such factors as thesis or careful thesis placement, and no references to topic sentences. Participants did, however, discuss organization or structure, and use of details and supports. Because I wanted to let the participants tell <u>their</u> stories, rather than to meet my composition-teacher's need to hear discussions of topics I address in freshman composition, I chose not to direct their conversations to these factors. The evidence of their ability to implement all of the constructions they did not discuss was present in their texts, but they did not discuss them. Whether they lacked the vocabulary or interest in these topics, or they had simply moved beyond the need to talk about them, I do not know. Their stories suggest that these eight participants have learned the craft of writing. But it further suggests that they had come to understand that writing is – and reflects – thinking. Their thinking and their ability to communicate thought were their focus as seniors.

Although my English teacher heart was pierced by the fact that the participants did not speak of their joy in mastering parallel construction and so on, what I found by listening carefully and then reading thoughtfully was a rich picture of

students describing their personal journeys. And, because an honest description of their stories was my goal, I believe my decision not to press discussion of syntax was sound. I was able to capture the writers as they characterized themselves, and that is what I sought to answer by my question "How do students construct themselves as writers during their undergraduate college years?"

<u>Normal College Millennials</u>

So what can I say about these participants? Change is clearly evident in these eight participants. They have, as studies indicated they would, changed over the course of their years in college. Their depictions of themselves emulate the stages relevant to college-age individuals. In fact, Scot's summary of his personal changes as reflecting "a more open mind" with movement "from the straight and narrow, black and white personality to someone who has grey spread," is indicative of the findings of Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) and Perry (1999) who identified shifts from conservative systems to more liberal systems, and movement from dualistic thinking through contextual relativism toward commitment as normal college-age transformations. Scot's broadened view of thinking was not unique. Other participants also discussed their changes in thinking. Jeanne, Jackson, and Brandi, for example, liked to write to see how their thinking might change as they write; Maurice enjoyed taking the side of his opposition in an argument because it often helped in building tolerance and opening his mind; Harry spoke of reflecting on what he studied. I would conclude that these writers are moving toward Perry's commitment stage. The "acts of choice and the personal investment," as well as the affirmation of their own thinking can be found in participants comments' about their choice of

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topics, of making an assignment their own by - in Jackson's words - finding an "angle." Their personal engagement with their texts and their awareness of changes suggest that these participants have moved toward the independence one might expect.

These eight undergraduates, with their use of electronic searches and computers, appear typical of the profile of millennials. While I did not seek to profile their entire college life, their interviews produced stories that included the "overwhelmed" feeling they experienced as entering freshmen, the tendency "to take control of their learning," to make choices, and to "customize the things they choose," – all characteristics discussed in the work of Carlson (2005). These participants seem to fit the pattern – particularly as writers. Several of the participants expressed concern over their writing abilities as freshmen, but all were clearly in charge by their senior year, identifying senior topics and self-directing their work. Another millennial characteristic – creativity – was addressed directly by several of the participants and indirectly by others. In their stories, these participants represent a normal segment of contemporary college students.

<u>Change: Sentences, Language, Grammar, Genre, Research</u>

So what change occurred in the writing of the participants in the study during their college years? Despite the absence of their discussion of syntax, the participants' papers showed change. The average length of T-units in the papers reviewed increased from 17.28 words in freshman level papers to 22.27 words in senior level papers, an increase of nearly five words per sentences. Additionally, all showed more variation in sentence types and in sentence openings, while the sentences also

increased in syntactic complexity. And even though participants did not discuss these elements of their writing, they <u>did</u> discuss their development in language. All participants mentioned language development in some manner. Brandi, for example, explained that her vocabulary had grown and that she recognized the differences in language usage between the various fields of business. Art and Scot discussed their attention to language and their audience, and both aspired to "originality" in their texts. Harry's fascination with words included their sound and the way words can be put together to achieve certain effects. Jackson's love of language (as well as awareness of syntax) grew as he read (especially in reading poetry). Maurice, Jackson, Brandi, and Emily also attributed their growth in language and vocabulary to reading.

Grammar received attention from each of the participants, but their attention to grammar changed during their college careers. As freshmen, grammar conventions and correctness were often the focus of their writing. As long as they wrote correctly, they believed, they would get good grades. While none of the participants changed their attitude about the importance of correctness in outstanding papers, they did change the level of emphasis. As seniors, they no longer saw grammar as "the" focus. It remained a factor indicative of good writing, important to create flow and ease in reading. But the focus of the writers as seniors had shifted to content rather than correctness. Grammar had become for them a vehicle for effective communication, but not the communication itself.

Because the participants had been required to write a variety of texts in their general education courses and their discipline studies, they expressed growth in

flexibility and genre work. All eight participants said that they began their college writing careers by writing to an assignment and seeking instructor approval. By their senior year, while they all still attended to assignment details and they looked carefully at rubrics attached to assignments to identify quality standards, they attended more consciously to personal satisfaction in their writing, which they aligned with choice of topics, passion, and clarity. So, it would seem, they have become characteristic of the adult learner of Knowles' descriptions: self-directed learners motivated by internal factors. Several mentioned the ability to "adjust" to both assignment and instructor, indicative of flexibility as writers. As they entered college, these writers saw writing as a means for completing an assignment; but near graduation, writing meant communicating their ideas.

Several participants began their college careers with an understanding of the five paragraph essay as "the" way to write. While Brandi and Jeanne still used the organization of the five paragraph essay as seniors, all had moved away from the idea that that was the exclusive model for writing. They had, as Langer's (1986) study suggested, shown horizontal growth in writing different genres. Moreover, this horizontal growth varied from one individual to the next. While all shared common experiences in their general education courses, (composition, history, philosophy, government, science, and so on), their upper division course work reflected vast differences. Art wrote news articles and sports reports; Brandi wrote business plans and marketing campaigns, with accompanying memos; Scot wrote history research papers and book reviews as a historiographer; Emily wrote observations and lesson plans; Jackson wrote artist's statements and art history papers; Jeanne wrote dream

analysis and case study reports; Maurice wrote director's notes and character/script analysis; and Harry wrote philosophy papers and reflections. Their writing experiences, then, expanded across disciplines in their general education courses and expanded within their disciplines through their upper division course work. These experiences demanded flexibility and attention to variation, and these participants recognized their acquired versatility in writing in a variety of genre.

Each participant shared the common experience of research and research writing during their college careers. They discussed their process of identification of topic, of seeking resources, of gathering information, and of synthesizing the material into a final text. Along the way they learned to identify scholarly material and to find a balance between stacks of quotations and personal opinion without support. Carroll (2002) identified similar development in identifying college skills that require "reading and evaluating difficult texts . . . [with] diverse viewpoints on complex issues, . . . integrating new knowledge with personal experience and values, understanding and employing the conventions of new genres of writing," while facing a college audience with expectations raised from that of the high school environment (p. 118). The Harvard Writing Project study also found similar results. In the guide that accompanies *Shaped by Writing*, a film on the study, the point is made that "The biggest challenge undergraduates face as they make the transition from high school to college writing is learning how to conduct themselves as academics" (Sommers, 2003). Conducting themselves as academics includes the ability to work with sources, synthesizing the ideas of written resources with personal interpretation and concepts. The eight participants in my study, as well as those in the four-year Harvard study

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and Carroll's Pepperdine study, learned to synthesize material and write coherent text with a balance of referenced material and personal analysis. They learned to put themselves into their work. They became more adept at moving from their own words into those of a cited resource through effective lead-ins. And they showed the ability to use the appropriate style manual to format papers. All spoke confidently of their ability to write researched papers, a distinction from the fear and inexperience that characterized them in their freshman year. The research paper development suggested that these students had met the factors Gentile (2006) ascribed to cognitive development: the ability to engage cognitively with ideas presented; the ability to produce writing which is formally proficient; the ability to apply recognized linguistic factors; and the ability to argue and use sources correctly. Herrington &Curtis (2000) found similar results. In their longitudinal study of four basic writers, Herrington and Curtis sought to find development of the individuals and their writing. The conclusion was that the students' writing became "more fully developed, more coherent, and more surely articulated." Their texts reflected "more authority" from the writers who included a "sense of personal assurance and of purpose in communicating with readers" (p. 357). While Herrington & Curtis followed four basic writers during their four years of undergraduate work, and I asked eight regular undergraduates to review their experiences at the end of their undergraduate years, we seem to have discovered similar changes in individual writers and their work. Sommers and Saltz (2004) captured the essence of growth during the college years when they noted the need for students to "locate them[selves] in the academic culture, . . . [with] a sense of academic belonging" (p. 131). It seemed to be the ability to design and complete

research that provided these participants with the perception of themselves as academics. This process began with freshman papers and evolved to their senior capstone works.

<p style="text-align:center">Motivation and Audience Awareness</p>

Motivation for the eight undergraduate writers in this study varied. Brandi and Jeanne found that "writing error-free" (Brandi) and "perfect" (Jeanne) papers were motivational for them. They found this aspect of their writing a challenge that they actually used effectively for quality papers. Other participants noted that they considered or attended to correctness as part of their writing process, but only Brandi and Jeanne actually looked at grammar as motivational.

One aspect of motivational interest for me involved grades. The interviews reflected a change from a strong attention to grades (characteristic of their freshman years), to a heightened attention to content and personal voice/commitment (in the senior year). Several participants reported being concerned about grades as they started college. And, while some of the participants mentioned grades as motivational in different ways (Emily, for example, uses grades to prompt her to do her best; and Harry sees grades as "behind the scene" motivation), Maurice captured the essence of the perception of grades in the lives of these seniors when he said he didn't "dwell" on them. The focus on grades that participants said characterized their freshman year was replaced by focus on content and communication by their senior year. Harry defined this difference as a change from being concerned about a grade to being concerned about getting his thoughts on paper. Brandi talked about how she "cared" more about her writing as she progressed through her college career. Scot, Jeanne,

and Brandi each mentioned the "pride" they had for the texts they had produced. This same pride was evident in the way Jackson and Harry read their texts. Jackson spoke of being "excited" about his topic and of how that excitement moved him to write. So the experiences of these eight participants suggests that student motivation shifts from a focus on the external motivation of grades to an internal focus on a personally pleasing, effective communication of ideas during their college years. This finding, too, is similar to that found in the Harvard Writing Project in which students commented on satisfaction and versatility as gains they had achieved during their college tenure as writers (Telequest, 2003).

I would identify the most significant change I heard from the participants as their awareness of audience. The excitement about topic choice, the desire to capture thoughts on a page, the determination to write the perfect paper – all of these descriptions of motivating factors were linked by the writers to their audience. Whether it was Jeanne's goal to write for her mother and grandmother, or Scot's and Art's concept of a broad (almost universal) audience, the participants had readers in mind when they wrote as seniors. As freshmen, they claimed, they simply finished the assignment with the understanding that if they did it correctly the teacher would read it and reward them with a good grade.

Awareness of audience is essential for growth in constructing oneself as a writer during the college years. This became clear to me through the participant's stories. Art, for example, who entered college "arrogant" about his abilities as a writer, was deterred from his writing career momentarily when his freshman composition instructor filled his paper with red ink. As a result, Art withdrew from

the course. Luckily, Art's next venture into composition was more fruitful. In that course, the instructor conferred with Art about his papers, asking for clarification of ideas, suggesting sections for revision. It was at this point that Art began to realize that his readers had needs which he, as writer, had to fulfill. Thus, audience awareness began for Art near the end of his freshman year. Other participants had similar – though not so dramatic – revelations of the existence of audience.

Audience clearly motivated these participants as writers. When Emily spoke of writing, she spoke of making her work "enjoyable" for her audience. Scot and Jeanne wanted to catch and keep the attention of their audience. Jackson wanted his audience to be engaged in his text and searched for an appropriate "angle" to achieve audience engagement. Brandi recognized that her audience would expect certain levels of formality in her writing and so she routinely identified her audience to determine formality. Finally, Harry and Art, who identified themselves as part of their significant audience members when they draft, write to please and convince themselves and, therefore, their other readers. Awareness of audience became a clear characteristic for these senior writers, something which was not true of them as freshmen.

Changes in Approach

As freshmen, most of these undergraduate writers described their writing as completion of an assignment, frequently completed at the last minute, the "night before." As seniors, only Emily and Maurice still claimed to sometimes write papers the night before they were due. But even Emily and Maurice used more time to complete their assignments. All found that they wanted, and were given, choice in

topic and/or approach for writing assignments. This allowed them independence ("freedom" in Harry's and Jackson's terms) as writers, which resulted in more engagement on their parts in their written texts. In addition, the participants found that they put more of themselves into their texts. This might be phrased as Jackson's "angle," or Maurice's "self" expressed through his synthesis of gathered material, or Scot's personal analysis of historical events. But it was clear that these participants see their writing as their own, not something distanced from themselves to meet a course requirement. During their college years, these participants had developed commitment to their writing, expressed through their dedication of time, self, and organization.

The writers in this study have become more aware of themselves as writers during their college years. They could articulate their process and why it worked for them. They understood their motivation and could articulate their goals in writing. They expressed increased confidence in their ability to write and in their ability to continue to learn to write in different contexts and in different genre. They did not hesitate to define themselves as writers, something I rarely find in freshmen.

<u>Limitations of the Study</u>

This study of eight undergraduate writers has several limitations. One limitation of this study is its size. Eight participants, even though they are diverse in their experiences and goals, can only suggest what might be true of a larger pool. A larger pool (similar to that of the work of Carroll and the Harvard Writing Project) could perhaps add enough stories to present a reliable picture of the development of college writers. The writers in this study, unlike those upon whom Shaughnessy

(1977), Sternglass (1997), and Herrington & Curtis (2000) based their work, are not basic writers. Nor are they the most gifted writers. The eight participants in this study come from the regular population of college students, so they do not represent all strata of college students.

The study is also limited in other areas. There are no Asian, African-American, or Hispanic students in this study and only one Native American participant. Consequently, I cannot comment on how ethnicity might impact writing development. And, although each participant represents a different discipline, only a study of additional students in each discipline would suggest whether or not these individual student's experiences are actually representative of writing experiences within any particular discipline. There is one English language learner in this study, so I cannot comment on how the experience of an ELL student might differ from that of other undergraduates. My goal was to study a "general" population, without attention to the variables of ethnicity or English language experience. Variation on writing within disciplines did emerge as students described their experiences. A concerted effort to study that trend would be a recommendation for further study.

Another limitation of this study is the fact that it is not a longitudinal study. I did not follow the students for four years, interviewing them at a variety of junctures in their college career. Instead, I asked the participants to use their memory/recall to describe their college experiences. The resulting data, of course, is affected by the selective memory of each participant. So, I must phrase my findings in terms of the participant's rich self- *perceptions* of their experience, examining their *personal*

narratives through the support for their experiences as provided by their writing

samples.

<center>Implications for College Faculty</center>

So, how can this study inform college faculty? Some writing development will

occur naturally; that is, given time and experience, writers change. But faculty can be

an important factor in that change. Whether following the narratives of this study or

the longitudinal work of others, evidence of "change" is the common conclusion.

Many researchers have concluded that through classroom environment, thoughtful

assignments, conferences, and feedback, instructors can support (or, sadly, inhibit)

development of writers.

When they enter college, many freshmen will be uncertain of their written

communication skills, fearful of their status as writers, or, as Jackson put it, simply

"intimidated." Others, like Art and Scot and Harry, may feel quite confident. But too

much "red ink," as Art's story suggests, may actually wound even the most confident

freshman. So, these stories suggest that it is important to get to know the freshman

students as writers. Carroll's (2002) longitudinal study at Pepperdine suggested that

freshman composition as a transitional course for developing "metacognitive

awareness" and reflection on individual literacy development. Faculty – especially

those who work with freshmen – must listen to their students carefully for statements

that will suggest what those students need to develop as writers. Using an inventory

can provide some useful information on a student's writing history and attitudes

toward writing. Writing samples, often gathered early in a semester, can establish a

baseline of a student's ability to write. An individual conference to discuss each

individual writer <u>as a writer</u> can allow a student to expand on the data from an

inventory and writing sample and can set the stage for development of awareness of

audience. The faculty member, in discussion of a student text, becomes a clear

reacting audience for the student writer. At the same time, the conference can be used

to help the writer set personal goals for the week, month, or semester. Such goal

setting is learning-focused and personally useful to developing college writers.

Faculty who wish to support writing development can create a classroom

environment that is supportive and interactive, one which would encourage, or even

suggest, risk-taking in thinking and writing. Although risk-taking in writing may

initially increase errors, it is a path toward more mature writing. Peers can be taught

to help one another. Participants in this study sought the feedback of peers even more

frequently than they sought feedback from instructors. Peers, generally more

conveniently available than faculty, can learn to provide useful commentary on

content, organization, and conventions of usage. And faculty can facilitate this

process in a number of ways. In this respect, my findings are the same as those found

by Sternglass (1997), Herrington & Curtis (2000), Carroll (2002), and Sommers

(2003) in that feedback is a significant factor in writing development. Students in all

of these studies noted the importance of support in their growth and development as

writers. First of all, faculty can model how to provide feedback. Feedback can be

modeled in a classroom and feedback can be modeled in private conferences. By

providing time (especially in freshman composition courses), faculty can set up the

context for peer review. Faculty must be aware, however, of the issue presented by

Jackson and Jeanne: some students will feel uncomfortable because of actual or

perceived weaknesses in their writing skills. So, faculty must design the peer experiences thoughtfully and carefully. Having students read their papers to others is one strategy that can accomplish a number of goals. It can provide the opportunity for feedback from a variety of people; it can provide the opportunity to give feedback and thereby learn to serve as a peer reviewer; it can provide the opportunity to gain awareness of audience. Developing writers and peer reviewers occurs most successfully in a learning community.

The classroom learning community must also be a place where writing is modeled. Freshman composition instructors, especially, can model for students the kind of writing expected in general education courses. But instructors in various disciplines also must model the writing in their disciplines. If the instructor does not do this personally, then the instructor can examine samples in the field and discuss those samples with the students. Faculty must make transparent the qualities of good writing in their discipline. This can be accomplished when faculty assign reading, and then discuss not only the ideas in the text, but also the organization and sections that are particularly effective, something strongly recommended by Dombek and Herndon (2004). Faculty should converse with the students about why these sections are effective. Modeling and discussion of discipline-specific writing can guide students in the development of their skills through imitation of the patterns they find in their reading.

Most of all, students must write. They must write frequently and with variety. It is only in writing that students will find themselves improving – in their writing and in their thinking/learning. Curtis and Herrington (2003) pointed out the need for

frequent and varied writing to enhance "self-reflection and self-fashioning" (p.71).

Writing assignments can be designed to suit a variety of purposes in a variety of

courses throughout the college experience. And focus on assignments that require

thinking should be the common denominator. Sometimes, the assignment may focus

on a particular format (as in a business memo, a press release, or a haiku) or may

focus on a particular writing element (as in use of subordination or coordination, a

discipline specific organizational paradigm, or appropriate verb tense for a style

manual) or purpose (to inform, to explain, to persuade). Writing should be discussed

– with conferences during the process for most effective attention to writing

development. Feedback from faculty conferences clearly supported the writing

development of Brandi, Jackson, Art, and Scot. These conferences should be – if we

attend to the suggested advice from Art, Jackson, and Jeanne – a face to face, honest

critique of the work, which includes leading questions to suggest areas for

amplification or reorganization, and supportive constructive ideas for further

development. Jackson, because he commented that "compliments can make a student

better, even if it's just a little one," would no doubt advise that the conference include

commentary on something successful in the text under examination. I might suggest

that this positive commentary be the opening commentary of any conference.

Reflection on a written text before, during, and after writing will help the

writer to focus upon his/her writing. Feedback should be supportive. Faculty must

encourage – through assignments – each student to think. Faculty must encourage –

through assignments – variation in genre. This will help the writers break away from

the idea that there is a one-size-fits-all approach to writing. Faculty can discuss

syntax; even if they do not use "technical language," faculty can point to effective

passages, discuss them, and suggest imitation. Faculty must demand that students

read – broadly and frequently – to achieve the kinds of growth in vocabulary and

language experienced by the participants in this study that they associated with their

reading.

My study has led me to some specific suggestions for freshman composition

instructors. Sommers (2005) wrote that composition faculty

> might be entrusted with the mission of introducing students to academic
> writing, but we will offer them an isolated version, lessons out of sync with
> the rest of the college, if we don't read the work of our colleagues across the
> disciplines, and listen to them talk about what constitutes good writing in their
> fields. (p. 512)

Composition faculty, especially, can solicit colleagues in upper division courses to

talk about writing, to point out effective writing in their disciplines, to have

conferences with students during their writing process. Providing only a grade and a

brief comment like "good paper" or "well organized" or "fine original thinking here"

will not assist students in developing their writing. But a faculty member's feedback

through expanded commentary or through conferences during and after the process of

writing can be effective in calling attention to and supporting development. The

support for writing development, however, can not live only in the courses of

composition faculty. Composition faculty must reach out to faculty across the college

years and throughout the disciplines to support student writing development. As

Sternglass (1997) so aptly concluded, "the expectation that students have become

'finished writers' by the time they complete a freshman sequence or even an

advanced composition course must be abandoned" (p. 296). So composition faculty

must become true colleagues with faculty throughout the disciplines if students are going to receive consistent and specific support in their development as writers.

Recommendations for Further Study

Additional longitudinal studies of students across the ability spectrum are necessary to more fully understand the development of writers during the college years. The work of Sternglass (1997) and Herrington and Curtis (2000) are longitudinal, but each focuses on basic writers. While basic writers' development certainly provides much insight, their participants do not represent the majority of writers in college. Study should also include the regular writers and the advanced writers from entry to exit. The Harvard Writing Project and Carroll's study have started to fill this gap. Continued comparison of ability group development may yield some interesting results for college faculty to consider. Parallel studies at a variety of institutions, small/large, comprehensive/technical, public/private might suggest whether or not writers develop differently in different settings. Does the mission and persona of an institution, for example, influence the development of its students?

To capture the experience of college development, researchers can use interviews, inventories, and paper analysis at intervals throughout students' college careers to capture how they construct themselves as writers, how they change, and to what they attribute their change. By identifying these factors, faculty can establish an environment that supports continued growth of undergraduate writers. Continued understanding of how undergraduates construct themselves as writers should lead to continued success for all writers.

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INFORMED CONSENT
TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

PROJECT TITLE:	Defining Writing Development: A Study of the Phenomenon of Change During the College Years
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:	Marian Salwierak
CONTACT INFORMATION:	St. Gregory's University
	Benedictine Hall, Office 311
	405-878-5181 mksalwierak@stgregorys.edu

You are being asked to volunteer for a research study. This study is being conducted at St. Gregory's University. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are nearing the end of your college career as an undergraduate. The selection pool was determined using a stratified random selection process designed to include graduating seniors from a variety of programs of study (that is, "majors"). Please read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to take part in this study.

Purpose of the Research Study

The purpose of this study is to identify college writing processes and change over time. This includes identifying factors that affect change.

Procedures

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following things: We will meet twice. Between the meetings, I will ask that you collect representative writing you have completed in each of your college years. We will meet first for about one hour to identify your writing process, using the Inventory of Processes for College Writing, a questionnaire developed by Ellen Lavelle. During this meeting, you will respond to the questionnaire and then we will begin an opening discussion about your college writing experiences. In a second meeting, I will interview you about the specific writing samples you have completed during your college tenure. This interview will generally last between one and two hours..

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study

The study has no foreseeable risks to participants.

The benefits to participation are the opportunity to identify yourself as a writer, the opportunity to come to a deeper understanding of your writing development, and an opportunity to reflect upon writing growth.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not result in penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time.

Confidentiality

The records of this study will be kept private. In published reports, there will be no information included that will make it possible to identify the research participant. Research records will be stored securely in a locked file cabinet off campus. They will be destroyed five years after the completion of the study. Only approved researchers will have access to the records. Tapes will be transcribed by either the researcher or a professional transcriber. Tapes, too, will be destroyed after five years.

Participants' names will not be linked with their responses unless the participant specifically agrees to be identified. Please select one of the following options.

☐ I prefer to leave my identity unacknowledged when documenting findings; please do not release my name when citing the findings.

☐ I consent to the use of my name when recording findings and that I may be quoted directly.

Audio Taping Of Study Activities:

To assist with accurate recording of participant responses, interviews may be recorded on an audio recording device/video recording device.   Participants have the right to refuse to allow such taping without penalty.   Please select one of the following options.

☐ I consent to the use of audio recording.

☐ I do not consent to the use of audio recording.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study, (Marian Salwierak), can be contacted at 405-878-5181 or **mksalwierak@stgregorys.edu**   You are encouraged to contact the researcher if you have any questions.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the St. Gregory's University Institutional Review Board Chair Dr. Anne McGuire at 878-5229. In addition, you may contact the University of Oklahoma – Norman Campus Institutional Review Board (OU-NC IRB) at 405.325.8110 or **irb@ou.edu**.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records. If you are not given a copy of this consent form, please request one.

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received satisfactory answers. I consent to participate in the study.

_____	_____
Signature	Date

QUESTIONNAIRE: HOW COLLEGE STUDENTS WRITE ESSAYS AND PAPERS

This questionnaire describes the different ways that college students go about writing essays and papers. There are no right or wrong answers because there are many different ways that work for different students. Just think about what you usually do and respond. The goal is to better understand how students feel about writing and how they complete writing tasks, so that writing instructors can design their courses with students' skills and needs in mind.

Answer **True or False** to each statement. Indicate your answers on the answer sheet provided using a #2 pencil.

A – True
B -- False

1.   When writing an essay, I stick to the rules.

2.   I set aside specific time to do written assignments.

3.   I re-examine and restate my thoughts in revision.

4.   If the assignment calls for 1000 words, I try to write just about that many.

5.   I use a lot of definitions and examples to make things clear.

6.   Writing makes me feel good.

7.   I closely examine what the essay calls for.

8.   Revision is a one time process at the end.

9. There is one best way to write a written assignment.

10. I try to entertain, inform, or impress my audience.

11. I tend to give a lot of description and detail.

12. I keep my theme or topic clearly in mind as I write.

13. When writing an essay or paper, I just write out what I would say if I were talking.

14. The question dictates the type of essay called for.

15. I can write a term paper.

16. Originality in writing is highly important.

17. I worry about how much time my essay or paper will take.

18. My writing 'just happens' with little planning or preparation.

19. Revision is the process of finding the shape of my writing.

20. Writing an essay or paper is always a slow process.

21. Writing is symbolic.

22. Writing reminds me of other things that I do.

23. An essay is primarily a sequence of ideas, an orderly arrangement.

24. It's important to me to like what I've written.

25. Studying grammar and punctuation would greatly improve my writing.

26. I visualize what I'm writing about.

27. My prewriting notes are always a mess.

28. I put a lot of myself in my writing.

29. I can usually find one main sentence that tells the theme of my essay.

30. I never think about how I go about writing.

31. I plan out my writing and stick to this plan.

32. The most important thing in writing is observing the rules of grammar, punctuation, and organization.

33. I compare and contrast ideas to make my writing clear.

34. I use written assignments as learning experiences.

35. Revision is making minor alterations--just touching things up and rewording.

36. In my writing, I use some ideas to support other, larger ideas.

37. Having my writing evaluated scares me.

38. When writing a paper, I often get ideas for other papers.

39. I like to work in small groups to discuss ideas or to do revision in writing.

40. I imagine the reaction that my readers might have to my paper.

41. When I begin to write, I have only a vague idea of how my essay will come out.

42. I often use analogy and metaphor in my writing.

43. I complete each sentence and revise it before going on to the next.

44. I cue the reader by giving a hint of what's to come.

45. My writing rarely expresses what I really think.

46. Writing an essay or paper is making a new meaning.

47. I am my own audience.

48. Writing helps me organize information in my mind.

49. At times, my writing has given me deep personal satisfaction.

50. The main reason for writing an essay or paper is to get a good grade on it.

51. When given an assignment calling for an argument or viewpoint, I immediately know which side I'll take.

52. I plan, write and revise all at the same time.

53. I can write simple, compound and complex sentences.

54. I sometimes get sudden inspirations in writing.

55. My essay or paper often goes beyond the specifications of the assignment.

56. I expect good grades on essays or papers.

57. The reason for writing an essay really doesn't matter to me.

58. Writing is like a journey.

59. I usually write several paragraphs before rereading.

60. The teacher is the most important audience.

61. I like written assignments to be well-specified with details included.

62. I start with a fairly detailed outline.

63. I do well on essay tests.

64. I often think about my essay when I'm not writing (e.g., late at night).

65. My intention in writing papers or essays is just to answer the question.

66. I just write 'off the top of my head' and then go back and rework the whole thing.

67. Often my first draft is my finished product.

68. I need special encouragement to do my best writing.

69. I think about how I come across in my writing.

70. I can't revise my own writing because I can't see my own mistakes.

71. I often do written assignments at the last minute and still get a good grade.

Appendix C

Defining Writing Development:
A Study of the Phenomenon of Change During the College Years

Sample Questions for Senior Interviews

Interview protocol: The interview will open with casual conversation meant to place the student at ease. In this conversation, I will establish such information as the student's major field of study, graduation date, senior project.

The following topics will be the focus of the interview. Questions or prompts that seek to solicit data on the topics are provided for each topic. As interviews proceed, topics may emerge that necessitate additional follow-up questions. In the case that relevant responses occur in succeeding interviews, I will use a follow-up mini-interview with those to whom I did not address the questions.

A. General knowledge, attitude, and skills about Writing

I would like to begin with a general discussion of your understanding of writing in general and your perceptions of your writing.

- Characterize weak, good and excellent writing for me. What criteria do you use to evaluate writing? Does it change when you read your work, the work of other students, or published work? .
- How have you come to your understanding of weak, good, and excellent writing?
- When you started college, how did you feel about your writing skills? How do you feel about your skills now?
- Describe the writing skills you had as you entered college.
- When you are given a writing assignment, describe your process from assignment to product. What do you do? How is your current approach similar to or dissimilar to your process as a freshman? Explain the differences.

B. Writing Experiences during the College Years

Let's talk now about your writing experience in college.

- What classes have required writing? Describe the assignments and the kind of writing that was required. Who was your audience? What was the purpose of the writing?
- Have you written anything beyond class assignments? If yes, describe that writing. Why did you write those pieces?
- When you write, do you ever get completely absorbed in the act of writing? If so, what is that like? When does it happen? How frequently does it happen when you write? What does it feel like? What results do you get in those writing situations? Can you repeat that absorption? If so, what triggers it?

- What goals have you set for yourself in writing as you have moved through your academic career?
- Are there any obstacles that you have faced? Any "low points" to overcome?
- Describe any "high points" in your writing experiences. What are you particularly proud of?

B. Feedback

- When you write, for whom do you write?
- Have your used readers for your work before you submitted it? If so, please describe who provided feedback, how it was provided, and the content of the feedback. How did you use that feedback?
- How have instructors responded to your work? Comment on content and manner of providing that feedback. In other words, did an instructor write comments on your draft or final paper? Or did the instructor speak to you about the work? How did you use instructor feedback or feedback from others in your writing?
- What role does "grading" play in your work as a writer?

C. Selection and Evaluation of Samples

- Why have you chosen the papers you have chosen to represent your experience with writing in college?
- Why did you choose to bring clean/dirty copies? (i.e., papers without or with instructor markings)
- Talk to me about the assignments that lead to these papers.
- Talk to me about your process in writing each. That is, what do you remember about writing each paper?
- Talk to me about what you like/don't like about each.
- How do these papers reflect your experience of writing in college? What experiences are not evident in these papers? What learning is not represented in the writings we have reviewed?

D. Construction of Self as Writer

- You are near graduation. Talk to me about yourself as a writer. Who are you as a writer? What are your strengths? How do you feel about writing at this time?
- Characterize the changes, if any, that you have made as a writer during your college years. This can involve any aspect of the writing experience. To what do you attribute these changes?
- What learning have we not discussed? Have you shared all that is significant with reference to the experience?
- How will you use writing in your future? What challenges face you

<u>Closing remarks</u>: To assure the professionalism of this research project and the confidentiality of those involved, I ask that you not identify yourself as a participant in the study and that you not disclose the content of our discussion today. Thank you.

Appendix D

Upper Division Writing Summary

Participant	Major	Writings for courses	Other writing
Brandi	Business (Marketing)	Case study reports Book reports for marketing; Memo Business reports Business plan	Thank you notes; emails for jobs; letters to landlord
Art	Communication	Sports stories News stories Pitches Blurbs for radio	Work related stories for sports broadcast on radio
Jackson	Visual arts	Artist's statements Press releases Research	email
Maurice	Theatre	Character analysis Script analysis Director's notes Research	
Jeanne	Psychology	Observation journal Dream journal Research	Business letters, court documents, charts and graphs – all from work
Harry	Social Studies education	Book review Reflections Portfolio Research Lesson plans	poetry
Scot	History	Research papers Book review	
Emily	English education	Research paper Reflections Lesson plans Response papers	

Appendix E
QUESTIONNAIRE: HOW COLLEGE STUDENTS WRITE ESSAYS AND PAPERS

Procedural (10 statements)

1. When writing an essay, I stick to the rules. P
7. I closely examine what the essay calls for. P
12. I keep my theme or topic clearly in mind as I write. P
17. I worry about how much time my essay or paper will take. P
23. An essay is primarily a sequence of ideas, an orderly arrangement. P
29. I can usually find one main sentence that tells the theme of my essay. P
50. The main reason for writing an essay or paper is to get a good grade on it. P
60. The teacher is the most important audience. P
61. I like written assignments to be well-specified with details included. P
65. My intention in writing papers or essays is just to answer the question. P

Item # (Year)	1 F	1 S	7 F	7 S	12 F	12 S	17 F	17 S	23 F	23 S	29 F	29 S	50 F	50 S	60 F	60 S	61 F	61 S	65 F	65 S	Total freshman	Total senior
Student																						
Jackson	**T**		T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	**T**		T	T	T	T	**T**		10	6
Scot	T	T		**T**		**T**	**T**		T	T		**T**	**T**		**T**		T	T	**T**		7	6
Brandi	T	T	T	T	T	T	**T**			**T**	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	9	9
Art	**T**		T	T	T	T	**T**		T	T		**T**	**T**		**T**		T	T	T	T	9	6
Harry	**T**			**T**		**T**	T	T	**T**		**T**			**T**		**T**	T	T	**T**		8	4
Jeanne	**T**		T	T	T	T	**T**		T	T	T	T					T	T			6	6
Maurice	**T**		T	T	T	T	**T**		T	T	T	T	**T**		T	T	T	T	**T**		9	5
Emily	**T**		T	T	**T**		**T**		T	T	**T**	T	T	**T**	**T**		T	T	**T**		9	4
Total	8	2	6	8	6	6	8	2	7	7	4	6	7	2	7	2	8	9	7	2		

The statements are identified across the top of each table by their number. Under each number is the year (freshman, senior) for which the participant is responding. The participants are identified down the column. Responses indicate "scoring" a point for this particular factor. (Sometimes, a "false" response scores a point.) Scores in bold indicate a change for a participant. The total score provides an accumulated tally.

Spontaneous-Impulsive (13 statements)

2. I set aside specific time to do written assignments. –SI
13. When writing an essay or paper, I just write out what I would say if I were talking. SI
18. My writing 'just happens' with little planning or preparation. SI
30. I never think about how I go about writing. SI
35. Revision is making minor alterations-just touching things up and rewording. SI
41. When I begin to write, I have only a vague idea of how my essay will come out. SI
47. I am my own audience. SI
52. I plan, write and revise all at the same time. SI
59. I usually write several paragraphs before rereading. SI
62. I start with a fairly detailed outline. –SI
66. I just write 'off the top of my head' and then go back and rework the whole thing. SI
67. Often my first draft is my finished product. SI
71. I often do written assignments at the last minute and still get a good grade. SI

Item # Year	2 F	2 S	13 F	13 S	18 F	18 S	30 F	30 S	35 F	35 S	41 F	41 S	47 F	47 S	52 F	52 S	59 F	59 S	62 F	62 S	66 F	66 S	67 F	67 S	71 F	71 S	Total F	Total S
Student																												
Jackson			T	T			**T**				T	T	T	T			T	T	F	F	T	T					7	6
Scot		**F**	**T**	**T**	**T**						**T**		**T**		**T**		**T**	**T**	**F**				**T**	**T**		**T**	9	5
Brandi		**F**									T	T	**T**			**T**								**T**			2	4
Art	F	F	T			**T**	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	F	F		**T**	T		T	T	11	11
Harry	F	F		**T**		**T**	T	T		**T**	T	T				**T**		**T**	F			**F**		**T**	T	T	5	11
Jeanne						**T**	T		T		T		T		T		T	**T**	F	F	**T**		**T**		**T**		10	3
Maurice					T	**T**	T	**T**			T		T		T	**T**	T	**T**	F	F			**T**			**T**	8	6
Emily		**F**		**T**		**T**	**T**	**T**		**T**		**T**				**T**				**F**				**T**		**T**	1	10
Total	2	5	2	4	3	4	7	4	4	4	7	5	4	4	4	3	5	7	6	6	2	3	4	3	4	5		

Low Self-efficacy (13 statements)

4. If the assignment calls for 1000 words, I try to write just about that many. L
15. I can write a term paper. –LS
20. Writing an essay or paper is always a slow process. LS
25. Studying grammar and punctuation would greatly improve my writing. LS
32. The most important thing in writing is observing the rule of grammar, punctuation, and organization. LS
37. Having my writing evaluated scares me. LS
39. I like to work in small groups to discuss ideas or to do revision in writing. LS
45. My writing rarely expresses what I really think. LS
53. I can write simple, compound and complex sentences. –LS
56. I expect good grades on essays or papers. –LS
63. I do well on essay tests. –LS
68. I need special encouragement to do my best writing. LS

	4F	4S	15F	15S	20F	20S	25F	25S	32F	32S	37F	37S	39F	39S	45F	45S	53F	53S	56F	56 2	63F	63S	68F	68S	70F	70S
Jackson 7-5	T					T		T	T		T	T									F	F	T	T	T	
Scot 6-2	T							T	T		T			T	T						F				T	
Brandi 6-3	T		T		T	T	T	T	T	T													T			
Art 8-3	T	T			T		T	T	T		T				T			T	F		F				T	
Harry 7-2	T	T			T				T		T										F	F	T		T	
Jeanne 3-2	T							T	T	T	T															
Maurice 5-3	T				T		T	T	T	T	T					T										
Emily 4-2			T								T		T	T								F			T	
Total	7	2	2	9	4	2	3	6	7	3	7	1	1	2	2	1	0	1	1	0	4	3	3	1	5	0

Reflective-Revisionist (11 statements)

3. I re-examine and restate my thoughts in revision. RR
8. Revision is a one time process at the end. –RR
9. There is one best way to write a written assignment. –RR
14. The question dictates the type of essay called for. RR
19. Revision is the process of finding the shape of my writing. RR
27. My prewriting notes are always a mess. RR
31. I plan out my writing and stick to this plan. –RR
36. In my writing, I use some ideas to support other, larger ideas. RR
43. I complete each sentence and revise it before going on to the next. –RR
51. When given an assignment calling for an argument or viewpoint, I immediately know which side I'll take. –RR
57. The reason for writing an essay really doesn't matter to me. –RR

Student	3 F	3 S	8 F	8 S	9 F	9 S	14 F	14 S	19 F	19 S	27 F	27 S	31 F	31 S	36 F	36 S	43 F	43 S	51 F	51 S	57 F	57 S	Total F	Total S
Jackson	T	T	F	F	F	F	T	T	T	T	T		F	F	F	T	T	F	F		F		11	8
Scot		T		F	F	F		T			T	T	F	F		T	F			F		F	4	9
Brandi	T	T	F	F			T	T			T	T			T	T		F		F	F	F	6	8
Art		T		F		F	T	T			T			F		T	F	F				F	3	8
Harry	T	T		F		F		T	T		T	T		F		T		F	F	F			4	9
Jeanne				F	F	F				T			F		T	T	F	F			F	F	5	6
Maurice	T	T		F	F	F	T	T	T	T	T	T		F	T	T	F	F		F			7	10
Emily	T		F			F	T	T	T		T	T		F		T	F	F		F	F	F	7	8
Total	5	6	3	7	4	7	5	7	4	3	7	5	3	6	4	8	6	7	2	5	4	5		

Elaborationist (24 statements)

5.   I use a lot of definitions and examples to make things clear. E
6.   Writing makes me feel good. E
10.   I try to entertain, inform, or impress my audience. E
11.   I tend to give a lot of description and detail. E
16.   Originality in writing is highly important. E
21.   Writing is symbolic. E
22.   Writing reminds me of other things that I do. E
24.   It's important to me to like what I've written. E
26.   I visualize what I'm writing about. E
28.   I put a lot of myself in my writing. E
34.   I use written assignments as learning experiences. E
38.   When writing a paper, I often get ideas for other papers. E
40.   I imagine the reaction that my readers might have to my paper. E
42.   I often use analogy and metaphor in my writing. E
44.   I cue the reader by giving a hint of what's to come. E
46.   Writing an essay or paper is making a new meaning. E
48.   Writing helps me organize information in my mind. E
49.   At times, my writing has given me deep personal satisfaction. E
54.   I sometimes get sudden inspirations in writing. E
55.   My essay or paper often goes beyond the specifications of the assignment. E
58.   Writing is like a journey. E
64.   I often think about my essay when I'm not writing (e.g., late at night). E
69.   I think about how I come across in my writing. E

Student	5 F	5 S	6 F	6 S	10 F	10 S	11 F	11 S	16 F	16 S	21 F	21 S	22 F	22 S	24 F	24 S	26 F	26 S	28 F	28 S	33 F	33 S	34 F	34 S	38 F	38 S
Jackson	T			T	T	T	T		T	T		T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T
Scot		T		T	T	T		T	T	T		T		T		T	T	T		T		T		T	T	T
Brandi	T	T	T	T	T	T		T	T	T					T	T	T		T			T		T		
Art	T			T	T	T	T		T	T			T	T		T	T		T	T	T	T			T	T
Harry		T	T	T		T		T	T	T		T	T	T		T	T	T		T		T				T
Jeanne	T	T		T	T	T	T	T	T	T		T			T	T			T	T	T	T	T	T		
Maurice	T	T					T	T		T					T			T	T			T	T	T		
Emily		T	T	T	T	T	T		T	T	T	T		T	T	T		T	T	T				T		
Total	5	6	3	7	6	7	5	5	7	8	1	5	3	5	5	7	5	5	6	6	3	7	3	6	3	4

Student	40 F	40 S	42 F	42 S	44 F	44 S	46 F	46 S	48 F	48 S	49 F	49 S	54 F	54 S	55 F	55 S	58 F	58 S	64 F	64 S	69 F	69 S	Total F	Total S
Jackson			T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T		T	T	T		T	T	T	T	T			18	20
Scot		T		T		T		T				T		T		T		T		T		T	4	23
Brandi	T	T	T		T	T		T	T	T	T	T	T	T							T	T	14	15
Art		T	T	T								T		T				T		T		T	10	15
Harry	T				T	T		T				T		T		T		T		T		T	6	20
Jeanne					T	T		T	T	T	T	T		T		T			T			T	12	17
Maurice	T		T		T		T		T							T					T		11	7
Emily		T			T						T	T	T	T		T		T	T		T	T	12	16
Total	3	4	4	3	6	5	2	5	4	3	3	7	3	7	0	6	1	5	3	4	3	6		