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“IN COLLEGE, I’M THE ONE PEOPLE GO TO”: LESSONS FROM SUCCESSFUL
DEVELOPMENTAL LITERACY STUDENTS ABOUT THE TRANSITION TO COLLEGE-
LEVEL COURSES ACROSS DISCIPLINES

By

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

“IN COLLEGE, I’M THE ONE PEOPLE GO TO”: LESSONS FROM SUCCESSFUL DEVELOPMENTAL LITERACY STUDENTS ABOUT THE TRANSITION TO COLLEGE-LEVEL COURSES ACROSS DISCIPLINES

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This study focused on the institutional issue of alignment between developmental literacy courses and college-level coursework. Research suggests alignment between these courses is a key condition for successful transfer of learning (Grubb, 2013; Grubb & Cox, 2005; Roueche & Roueche, 1999; Tinberg, 2015). This collective case study aimed to understand the ways in which community college students who initially placed well below the cutoff score for college level English, but successfully passed developmental literacy coursework, experienced the alignment between their developmental literacy and college-level coursework.

This study was conducted at a community college in New Jersey. Participants were interviewed during and after the semester following their developmental literacy course. In these interviews, they described the strengths and challenges they experienced meeting the literacy demands and expectations of college-level courses in disciplines other than English. In addition, disciplinary faculty completed a survey about the reading and writing they assigned in their courses and course documents were collected. Data was analyzed through the lens of Lea and Street’s (1998/2006) academic literacies approach and Ivanic’s (2004) discourses for writing framework.

Findings suggest that participants were able to apply many reading and writing strategies learned in their developmental literacy courses to the reading and writing they did in college-level courses across disciplines. In addition, participants reported affective benefits from their developmental literacy course, such as increased confidence and motivation, that positively impacted their performance in college-level courses. Participants also reported important differences between the two courses and some challenges related to both meeting the disciplinary literacy expectations in their college-level courses and transitioning between a developmental literacy course to a discipline-specific college-level course.

The results of this study provide insight into what conditions and instructional approaches increase the likelihood of student success and learning transfer across contexts and have implications for both developmental literacy and disciplinary college-level educators. Implications for future research are also addressed.

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Dedication

To my children: Nicholas, Julian, and Gabriel

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

One of the defining characteristics of the United States is its promise of a second chance; this promise is central to our vision of ourselves and to our economic and civic dynamism. When we are at our best as a society, our society, our citizens are not trapped by their histories (Rose, 2012, p.xiii).

The community colleges of the United States are our country's second chance institutions. In a community college anyone with a high school degree or equivalent, regardless of their educational or financial background, is given an opportunity to start on the path of postsecondary education, whether it be to start up or start over. This dynamic matters because a college degree is considered by many to be the gateway to a financially stable and fulfilling life. College graduates can expect, on average, substantially higher annual and lifetime earnings and lower instances of unemployment, and the benefits of a college credential extend beyond these financial gains to include positive life outcomes such as better health, a longer life expectancy, and a significantly higher levels of happiness (Trotsel, 2015, p.1-2).

One characteristic of a community college, open admission, is central to its mission and role as a second-chance institution. Open admission means that opportunities to enroll in college are provided to many who would otherwise not have access to higher education, but it also means that some of those individuals will not arrive with college-level literacy competencies and will be placed in developmental courses to make up the gap. The Community College Research Center (CCRC) estimates that 60% of students entering community college are required to take at least one developmental course (Bailey & Cho, 2010, p.1) because they are not deemed college ready by placement tests.

About 34% of students in two-year colleges are required to take developmental coursework in English (Bailey et al., 2010, p.259; Complete College America, 2016)

Statement of the Problem

Developmental literacy education, defined as developmental courses in reading, writing, or integrated reading and writing, in community colleges exists in large part so that the promise of open access to higher education for all students can be fulfilled, but there are questions as to whether developmental literacy education actually advances that goal. There is a widely-cited body of research that has analyzed large quantitative data sets in order to evaluate the effectiveness of developmental literacy coursework as measured by students' ability to successfully exit developmental coursework, complete college-level credits, and earn a degree or certificate. While some researchers report some positive effects of remediation (Bettinger & Long, 2009; Boatman & Long, 2010; Moss et al., 2014), others have found little to no positive effects and some negative results (Calcagno & Long, 2008; Martorell & McFarlin, 2011; Scott-Clayton & Rodriguez, 2012; Noble & Sawyer, 2013). While the results of these large scale studies may tell us something about state and national trends, they don't provide local, contextual information about what works and what does not work in developmental literacy education. The fact that this body of research is often used to argue that developmental literacy education is ineffective without regard to these local and contextual factors has many in the developmental education field concerned and defensive (Goudas & Boylan, 2012; Grubb, 2001; Rose, 2012).

Much of the concern is based around the idea that these large scale analyses mask any evidence of local success by combining data from many different institutions within

a state or across states. In other words, if there are some effective programs and some ineffective programs represented in a large data set, they could potentially cancel each other out and lead to the conclusion that programs are ineffective overall. Grubb (2001) calls these types of evaluations of developmental programs “black box” evaluations and argues that they are not useful because they don’t look at what developmental programs do or provide useful implications for improving outcomes or the quality of developmental literacy coursework (Cox, 2015). This is problematic because it is important to understand the specific strengths and weaknesses of developmental literacy programs, as the service they provide could be essential to ensuring success for the many students that start community college unprepared. In the case of developmental literacy, effective programs can provide students with the literacy competencies they need to complete college-level work. This understanding is important as research suggests that college-level literacy competencies are essential for success in college-level courses, both in English and across disciplines (Bahr, 2010; Danenberg, 2015; Danenberg, Cull, & Buechner, 2009; Goldstein & Perin, 2008).

There are a number of ways that the need for more local and contextual information about the effectiveness of developmental education could be addressed. As pedagogical approaches and course designs vary greatly across contexts, one approach would be to investigate these issues at a classroom level. A limited body of research suggests that certain instructional approaches are more effective than others in helping students gain literacy competencies (Caverly et al., 2004; Grubb, 2013; Jaggars & Bickerstaff, 2018; Perin, 2013; Simpson et al., 2004; Simpson & Nist, 2000; Voge, 2006). This type of research is important to continue because it can provide information

about what types of approaches seem to help students meet the learning goals in developmental literacy courses. In addition, students who completed developmental literacy courses can provide valuable information about their specific experiences in developmental literacy courses and what they did and did not find helpful, (Fallon et al., 2009; Grubb & Cox, 2005; Schnee, 2014) .

The objective of developmental coursework is to prepare students for the academic demands of college-level coursework (Perin, 2002). However, it is also important to consider the role of the developmental literacy course in preparing students for the literacy demands in college-level courses throughout the college. While there is evidence that developmental literacy education can help students achieve the levels of literacy needed to be successful in college-level coursework (Boatman & Long, 2010; Crews & Aragon, 2004; Goldstein & Perin, 2008; Moss & Yeaton, 2006; Southard & Clay, 2004), research on transfer also suggests that transferring learning from one context to another can be difficult, especially in the community college (Adler-Kassner et al., 2012; Beaufort, 2007; Hassel & Giordano, 2009; Tinberg, 2015).

One key factor in the transfer of learning from one context to another is the alignment of literacy demands across disciplines. Grubb and Cox (2005) explain: “good teaching, in developmental education as elsewhere in the college, must be a collective process” (p.94). In other words, when developmental literacy education occurs in a silo, without communication and coordination with faculty in other disciplines, it is not possible for developmental education to fully achieve the goal of preparing students to successfully navigate the literacy demands in their college-level courses. This is in large part because literacy learning is contextualized, and different disciplines have different

ways of reading and writing and different ways of determining what “counts” as quality literacy work (Bartholomae, 1997; Beaufort, 2012; Blaauw-Hara, 2014; Downs & Wardle, 2007; Elbow, 1991; Holschuh & Paulson, 2018; Ivanic, 2004; Sommers and Saltz, 2004; Wardle, 2009; Wingate, 2012). Still, some theorize that there are literacy concepts that are common across disciplines and when instructors and programs agree upon those concepts and work to align developmental literacy programs to emphasize the understanding and transfer of those concepts, it can help students apply their literacy learning from one context to another (Adler-Kassner et al., 2012; Blaauw-Hara, 2014; Grubb & Cox, 2005; Tinberg, 2015).

At Forest River Community College (pseudonym), the community college where I work and where this study takes place, “credential-seeking” students, defined as students who completed at least 12 credits over two years, who place well-below the cutoff in English are taking and passing developmental literacy courses, and most are subsequently passing college-level English courses well above the national average. This suggests it is an ideal location to conduct this study because the data indicate a successful effort to prepare students for college level English. Institutional data were gathered for the Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA) Internal report on a two-year cohort of 2,176 students who enrolled for the first time at our institution in Fall 2016. Of that cohort, 1,547 students were considered “credential seeking students.” This report shows that 46.7% of those in the cohort were required to take some developmental coursework (*VFA Internal Outcomes Report*, 2019). Because students near the cutoff for ENGL 111 are still able to take this course along with a workshop college-level option, students at our institution who are placed in developmental courses are well below the college-level

cutoff. Of those, 17.3% were required to take developmental literacy (integrated reading and writing) coursework, 13.7% took a developmental course at one level below college-level (ENGL 060) and 3.6% at 2 levels below college-level (ENGL 050). Of those students required to take developmental English, 98.9% of them in the credential-seeking cohort attempted a developmental English course (*VFA Internal Outcomes Report*, 2019).

This data means that almost all the “credential-seeking” students at Forest River Community College who are referred to developmental literacy courses enroll in them. Of those that did enroll at our institution, 96.6% of the credential-seeking cohort passed that developmental course within two years (*VFA Internal Outcomes Report*, 2019). Finally, 75.4% of developmental literacy students in the credential-seeking cohort at Forest River Community College completed a college-level composition course by the end of two years (ENGL 111) (*VFA Internal Outcomes Report*, 2019).

Therefore, at Forest River Community College, most “credential-seeking” students get through the developmental sequence, and a high percentage successfully complete college-level English. The VFA report did not report how many students at Forest River Community College who passed developmental courses actually enrolled in college-level English, so the percentage of students who actually took college-level English and passed may be higher. In other words, most of our students are not getting stuck in the developmental pipeline and most of them are successful in college-level English courses. That suggests that the developmental literacy courses at FRCC are doing something right in terms of preparing students to be successful in college-level English. Yet, less is known about the experiences of these students in courses outside of English. Interviewing students who took developmental literacy courses at FRCC, where most

students are passing college-level English, provides insight into whether success in college-level English translated into success with the literacy demands in college-level courses in other disciplines. This study provides information from students who did well in developmental literacy and were well-positioned to be successful in their college-level composition courses. Their perspectives on how well their developmental literacy courses prepared them for the reading and writing in courses across the college can provide valuable insight into the ways in which developmental literacy courses serve, or neglect, the broader needs of developmental students as they strive to meet their higher education goals.

Research Questions

This study investigated the experiences of students who were assessed as well below college ready when they entered the college but who successfully completed their developmental literacy coursework and enrolled in college-level courses. A particular focus was how students experience the literacy demands of college-level reading and writing in courses other than English. To that end, this study addressed the following research question: From the perspective of students who placed well below the college-level cutoff on literacy entrance exams and who successfully completed their developmental literacy course, how do the literacy demands and expectations in their developmental literacy courses align with the literacy demands and expectations in college-level courses other than English? The following secondary questions were also addressed:

1. What literacy challenges do they describe and what strengths do students feel they bring to their courses?

2. How do students' perceptions regarding literacy expectations align with the stated objectives and descriptions of courses and assignments as they are expressed in course documents?

Purpose of the Study

It is important that students are able to transfer the literacy competencies they developed in developmental literacy courses to the literacy demands in their college-level courses. Yet, there is a gap in the literature on the specific classroom and program practices in developmental literacy that help students successfully complete college-level literacy coursework. In addition, there is very little research on how well developmental literacy coursework aligns with literacy coursework in college-level classrooms across disciplines, and alignment is a key condition for successful transfer (Grubb, 2013; Grubb & Cox, 2005; Roueche & Roueche, 1999; Tinberg, 2015). This goal of this study was to understand the ways in which students described the alignment between their developmental literacy and college-level coursework. I looked closely at how developmental literacy student completers subsequently described the literacy demands of college-level courses across disciplines in relationship to their preparation during their developmental coursework. I examined what literacy tasks they felt prepared to accomplish and what tasks they found challenging.

This research was a collective case study of the experience of developmental literacy students after they left developmental literacy courses and navigated the literacy demands and expectations of their college-level courses. The participants were students at the suburban New Jersey community college where I am a faculty member. They had

completed the developmental sequence and were taking a college-level English course and other college -level courses. These study participants were students whose initial placement scores were well below the cutoff for college-level courses and were initially placed in and successfully completed one of two developmental literacy courses, ENGL 050 or ENGL 060.

Findings were reported based on student perspectives of how well their developmental literacy courses prepared them for the college-level literacy demands their college-level courses in disciplines other than English, and how well they felt the courses were aligned. Qualitative data was collected through participant interviews, a faculty survey, and document analysis. The primary source of data was two interviews of each student participant, one during the semester of the college-level course they were taking and one after the semester was over. I also collected course documents such as course outlines, syllabi, and assignment instructions in both developmental literacy courses and college-level general in disciplines other than English.

The decision to focus on courses outside of the English department was informed by the fact that those of us that design and teach developmental courses are very familiar with the reading and writing assigned in college-level English courses. Most faculty that teach developmental literacy courses also teach college-level composition courses. While there is always room for improvement, institutional data suggests that developmental literacy students who take ENGL 111 course are passing the class at rates similar to, and sometimes better than, students who place directly into college-level English. Informally, based on reports from former students, and our own classroom observations, students who pass our developmental literacy classes, particularly those who do well in those

classes, are usually well-prepared and successful in our ENGL 111 classes. On the other hand, the English department does not have a good sense of what types of reading and writing students are being asked to do across the college, and we don't have any information about whether students who leave developmental literacy courses feel prepared for the reading and writing they are doing in courses other than English. In addition, the literature on transfer suggests that transfer of learning is more likely when contexts are similar, such as from a developmental English course to a college-level English course, what Perkins and Solomon (1992) call "near transfer." In contrast, transfer of learning from quite different contexts, or "far transfer," is more difficult. The transfer of learning from one discipline to another would often be considered "far transfer." Since college students are expected to successfully transfer learning from developmental literacy classes to the reading and writing they do in other courses, and there is limited research on students' experiences doing so, this study helps to add information to address that gap.

When they were able to, participants brought samples of their student writing so that I could have a more complete understanding of the assignments they discussed. These multiple sources of data provided a comprehensive picture of the alignment, or lack thereof, between the literacy expectations of developmental literacy courses and college-level courses in other disciplines, students' performance in their college-level literacy work, and how students experienced the transition from developmental literacy courses to college-level literacy work. This provided insight into the ways in which developmental literacy courses and college-level courses supported students successful

transition from developmental to college-level literacy work, and the ways in which they could improve.

This research focused much needed attention on students who initially placed well-below the cutoff for college-level English courses. These students are underrepresented in the literature on developmental literacy effectiveness as many of the studies focus only on students close to the college-level cutoff score. Bailey and Cho (2010) are critical of developmental education but admit that little is known about the impact of developmental literacy coursework on students well below the college-level cutoff. This is problematic because these students represent a particularly vulnerable population in that they are less likely to ever complete college-level courses than students who place close to the college-level cutoff score (Bailey & Jaggars, 2016). In addition, the limited research there is on this population suggests that developmental literacy coursework may be most needed by and can be most beneficial to developmental literacy students at lower levels (Boatman & Long, 2010; Moss & Yeaton, 2006). This suggests it is critical to conduct more research in order to better serve these students.

It is important to look closely at the stories successful developmental literacy students tell about their experiences in developmental literacy classrooms, particularly in light of the negative rhetoric that currently surrounds developmental education, in order to get a sense of what they learned in developmental literacy courses that was useful to them in meeting the literacy demands and expectations in college-level courses.

Unfortunately, these are rarely the stories we hear (Rose, 2012; Webb-Sunderhaus, 2010). As Mike Rose (2012) explains, “There’s not a lot of close analysis of what goes on in classrooms, the cognitive give and take of instruction and what students make of

it...Student portraits, when we do get them, are too often profiles of failure rather than of people with dynamic mental lives” (p.138). Being able to create “student portraits” of successful developmental literacy students in this study provided information from students who actually participated in and successfully completed developmental literacy instruction. In other words, these were the students that received not only the instruction that they were supposed to receive, but demonstrated, by institutional measures, that they were ready for college-level work. They represented the most successful students in the college’s developmental literacy courses. They were uniquely positioned to provide valuable information about their strengths and the challenges they experienced as they engaged in the literacy work in college-level courses and provide insight into the alignment between those courses and developmental literacy courses.

One way to get more detailed and nuanced descriptions of the ways in which developmental literacy courses prepare students to complete college level coursework successfully is to ask the students about their coursework experiences. Researchers have made compelling claims about the ways in which learners can inform evaluation and improvement of their educational experiences. Schnee (2014) emphasizes the need to listen closely to the voices and experiences of developmental students as part of a balanced evaluation of developmental education. Fallon et al., (2009) emphasize that students can provide valuable information when asked directly about their literacy learning. In addition, Grubb and Cox (2005) assert that there is a clear need to “understand how developmental students think about their education” (p.95); this study helps deepen such an understanding.

This study adds to the current literature on effective developmental literacy instruction in the community college in a few key ways. First, the findings of this research complement large scale quantitative studies on developmental literacy by providing rich and contextualized descriptions of the actual literacy experiences of successful developmental students as they navigated the literacy demands of their college-level courses. In addition, these descriptions provide insight into the alignment between students' developmental literacy education and the literacy work that they are actually being asked to do in college-level courses. The results of this research inform local practice, but also have implications for developmental literacy and college-level educators in other contexts and for further research on the specific ways developmental literacy instruction benefits students and the ways in which it can be improved.

Theoretical Framework

I approached this research from a social constructivist understanding of literacy as social practice (Oldfather, 2002). This study was informed by two overlapping and related frameworks: Ivanic's (2004) discourses for writing framework and Lea and Street's (1998, 2006) academic literacies approach.

Lea and Street's (1998, 2006) Academic Literacies framework is informed by an academic literacies perspective. They explain that "an academic literacies perspective treats reading and writing as social practices that vary with context, culture, and genre" (p.368). From this perspective Lea and Street (2006) argue that "approaches to student writing and literacy in academic contexts could be conceptualized through the use of three overlapping perspectives or models: (a) a study skills model, (b) an academic

socialization model, and (c) an academic literacies model” (p.368). In the study skills model, the focus is on students developing individual cognitive skills that are thought to be easily transferred from one context to another. In contrast, the academic socialization approach sees literacy as a set of practices that are discipline specific. From this approach, students aim to “acquire the ways of talking, writing, thinking, and using literacy that typified members of a disciplinary or subject area community” (Lea & Street, 2006, p.369). While this approach does acknowledge the social nature of literacy, it also sees these disciplinary discourses as generally stable and assumes that once they are learned, they can be easily reproduced.

The academic literacy approach includes elements of both approaches, but also assumes that literacy is complex, nuanced, and impacted by institutional practices. In other words, while this approach does include the idea of disciplinary discourses, it views the process of moving through and within disciplinary discourses as more challenging and complex than the academic socialization model accounts for. Lea and Street (1998) explained: “from the student point of view a dominant feature of academic literacy practices is the requirement to switch practices between one setting and another, to deploy a repertoire of linguistic practices appropriate to each setting, and to handle the social meanings that each evokes” (p.159). This description illustrates how difficult and multifaceted this process is. From an academic literacies perspective, when students in community college who are moving from a developmental literacy classroom into a college-level course in a particular discipline, they are not just simply required to transfer skills from one context to another. Instead they need to make complex judgements about what is common between contexts, navigate the shifts that need to be made, and negotiate

what new practices need to be developed in order to meet the literacy demands and expectations of the new setting.

Ivanic's (2004) framework is explicitly informed by Lea and Street's (1998, 2006) academic literacies approach to literacy that "takes account of the cultural and contextual component of writing and reading practices" (p.158). In many ways Ivanic's framework maps onto Lea and Street's (1998, 2006) model (Ivanic, 2004; Lillis, 2003). Ivanic (2004) explained that her goal was to develop "a more comprehensive framework and a more fine-grained set of distinctions which are not specific to one particular sector of education, but can be used as a tool for analysis of data about the teaching and learning of writing in a wide range of formal and informal settings" (Ivanic, 2004, p.222).

Ivanic's (2004) framework for research on writing pedagogy identified six discourses related to the teaching of writing: a skills discourse, a creativity discourse, a process discourse, a genre discourse, a social practices discourse, and a sociopolitical discourse. Each discourse implies specific ideas and beliefs about writing and the teaching of writing. Ivanic's (2004) skills discourse maps neatly onto Lea and Street's (2004) study skills approach in that it focuses mostly on teaching the surface features of text and skills such as grammar and punctuation. There is an emphasis on accuracy and the text as product. Ivanic's genre discourse shares many of the qualities of Lea and Street's (1998/2006) academic socialization approach. A genre discourse also emphasizes the text but focuses on specific text-types for specific audiences and purposes. This approach, like Lea and Street's (1998, 2006) academic socialization approach, acknowledges the social context that shapes a text, but considers these text types to be

relatively stable and easily identifiable by a number of “linguistic features” that can be explicitly taught.

Ivanic (2004) separates a social practices discourse from a sociopolitical discourse, but both have similar assumptions as Lea and Street’s (1998, 2006) academic literacies approach. Both discourses emphasize that literacy learning is inextricably bound to and informed by social context and is best learned by reading and writing for a specific and meaningful social goal. A sociopolitical discourse is similar to a social practices discourse in most respects, but also considers how writing is shaped by broader political forces. From this view, writing is impacted by issues of power and privilege; therefore, the teaching of writing should involve developing a critical awareness of how these societal forces impact writing and assessment.

Ivanic (2004)’s framework includes two additional discourses that do not map as neatly onto Lea and Street’s (1998, 2006) framework: a process discourse and a creativity discourse. In a creativity discourse the focus is less on accuracy and more on content, meaning, and style. Underlying this discourse is a belief that writing is learned by writing about personally relevant topics. A process discourse may overlap with a creativity discourse and focuses on the process of writing rather than the product, in contrast to a skills discourse. A process discourse approach uses both explicit and implicit instruction to emphasize the cognitive aspects of writing through various recursive stages such as planning, drafting, revising and editing. It is important to note that, similar to Lea and Street’s (1998, 2006) model, while some of the ideas and beliefs within the discourses in Ivanic’s (2004) framework may sharply contrast with one another, there is also significant overlap among them. Just as Lea and Street assert that a comprehensive

approach to literacy instruction may draw from multiple approaches, Ivanic suggests it may also be informed by beliefs and from multiple discourses in Ivanic's (2004) framework.

While Ivanic's (2004) framework does focus on writing, she (2004) explicitly stated that it can be adapted to apply to reading and literacy (integrated reading and writing) as well. She outlined these six discourses as a framework that can be used to analyze data related to the teaching of writing. Analyzing interviews and course documents in this study through the lens of this framework provided insight into the underlying assumptions about literacy and the teaching and learning of literacy that guided the decisions made in both the developmental literacy courses and the college-level courses participants took (Ivanic, 2004, p.220). Using these discourses, in conjunction with Lea and Street's (1998, 2006) model as a framework for literacy research provided a language to describe certain points of tensions and places of alignment that existed within and between courses and disciplines, and were experienced by student participants in this study.

Gee's conception of Discourse was also be used as a lens to understand the complexity of participants' attempts to transfer literacy practices from one context to another –essentially the goal of developmental literacy courses. He pointed out that reading and writing discourse is not uniform across disciplines and contexts and suggested that a college student must learn to successfully navigate these variations. Gee (2008) defined Discourse as the following:

A Discourse with a capital 'D' is composed of distinctive ways of speaking/listening and often, too, writing/reading coupled with distinctive ways of acting, interacting, valuing, feeling, dressing, thinking, believing, with other people and with various objects, tools, and technologies, so as to enact specific

socially recognizable identities engaged in specific socially recognizable activities. (Gee, 2008; p.155)

This suggests that there is no such thing as “academic discourse,” a general type of academic writing that can be taught to students and applied throughout their academic writing. This is view that is shared by other composition scholars (Downs and Wardle, 2007; Elbow, 1991; Wardle, 2009). In this view, literacy skill instruction cannot be separated from the content and context of how and where it is to be used. This suggests a disconnect is likely between the type of writing students are doing in their composition and literacy courses and the writing they might be doing in courses across the college.

While not everyone agrees that treating “academic discourse” as a set of generalizable skills that can be learned and applied across the disciplines and for all purposes is problematic, there is considerable consensus that it is important for literacy educators to help students understand and learn to navigate the fact that different academic disciplines have different ways of using and applying language (Bartholomae, 1997; Beaufort, 2012; Downs and Wardle, 2007; Elbow, 1991; Holschuh & Paulson, 2018; Sommers and Saltz, 2004; Wardle, 2009; Wingate, 2012). It is suggested that if this fact is not made clear to students, it can lead to them having the false sense that what they write in a composition classroom is the same as all academic writing that goes on in the rest of the academy and in all spheres of public life.

While the difficulty of preparing students for different discourse communities causes in writing instruction and student development is widely accepted, there are different suggestions as to how to address it. Bartholomae (1997) suggested that students need to learn how to “invent the university” which requires giving students a “place to

begin” by giving them the opportunity to try academic discourse as a novice by composing what he calls “approximation discourse”, and then eventually starting to position themselves as part of the larger academic conversation (p.600). Braun (2008) and Ruecker (2011) also emphasized this idea of students participating within a larger academic conversation. Elbow (1991) takes a different tack and advocates for a transparent approach that brings students in on the “secret” that expectations and forms of writing are far from universal. Therefore, students explicitly learn about discourse communities and discourse knowledge in Elbow’s (1991) composition courses. Beaufort (2012) also named “discourse community knowledge” as one of the 5 “knowledge domains” needed to become an “expert writer” and advocated for, as Elbow (1991) suggested, explicitly teaching discourse community knowledge to students. Wardle (2000) argues that composition courses should “not promise to teach students to write in the university but rather teaches students about writing in the university” (Wardle, 2009, p.765). In other words, writing becomes the content of the course, and rather than reading and writing about various interdisciplinary topics in a course, students engage in a “writing about writing approach, introducing students directly to what writing researchers have learned about writing and challenging them to respond by writing and doing research of their own” (Wardle & Downs, 2017, p. v). Other scholars suggest that composition instructors approach literacy instruction from a rhetorical approach that helps make students aware of the rhetorical concepts like purpose and audience and their impact on writing (Beaufort, 2007; Braun, 2008; Elbow, 1991; Ruecker, 2011). This shift back to a rhetorical approach allows writing to be contextualized socially and historically (Braun, 2008; Reucker, 2011).

In this study, participants' descriptions of the ways in which the expectations and demands of their developmental literacy course(s) aligned, or did not align, with the literacy expectations and demands of their college level courses were analyzed through the lens of Lea and Street (1998, 2006) and Ivanic's (2004) frameworks. In addition, Gee's (2008) theory of Discourse was used to understand the complexity and challenge of participants' experiences transitioning from the literacy demands in one context to those in another.

In the next chapter, chapter two, relevant literature on developmental literacy, including research on effective instructional approaches, transfer, alignment, and student experience is reviewed. In chapter three, the study design and research methods are described. Chapters four and five, the findings chapter of this study, describe participants' perspectives on the strengths and challenges they brought to the literacy expectations and demands in their college-level courses. In chapter six, themes from the findings that provide insight into what conditions and instructional approaches increase the likelihood of student success and learning transfer across contexts are discussed. Recommendations for practice in both developmental literacy and disciplinary courses are suggested, and implications for future research are addressed.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

As has already been established, at the heart of any discussion about developmental education is the concern that far too many students who are placed in developmental coursework do not complete that coursework and fail to achieve their higher education goals (Bailey et al., 2010). The literature that illuminates these concerns and how they relate to developmental literacy instruction are quantitative studies that measure the effectiveness of developmental literacy based on outcomes such as performance in first-year composition (FYC), credit completion, and degree attainment. Factors that contribute to the mixed results of these studies will also be discussed. In many cases, these data raise more questions than they answer, and suggest the importance of research on literacy practices at the instruction and classroom level, and the inclusion of student perspectives. To that end, this chapter will include a discussion of literature related to high-quality developmental literacy instruction, including literature on specific teaching and learning strategies, research on transfer, and literature on the alignment developmental literacy courses and college-level courses in various disciplines. Finally, this review will explore literature on affective and other non-academic factors, and students' attitudes and beliefs about their learning.

In describing the research relevant to this study, it is important to clarify that course requirements and course labels vary across institutions and studies. The literature in this review includes studies of coursework labeled as developmental writing, developmental reading, and developmental literacy. Some institutions use the term “remedial” or “basic” instead of developmental. I will use the term “developmental literacy” as a blanket term to include coursework designed to address skill gaps for

entering college students that focuses on reading or writing or that integrates reading and writing instruction in one course. Furthermore, while some of the studies focused on both math and literacy developmental education, for the purposes of this review, I have focused only on the those that relate to developmental literacy education.

Concerns about the Effectiveness of Developmental Literacy

There are a number of quantitative studies that have attempted to evaluate the effectiveness of developmental literacy education based on outcomes such as performance in first-year composition (FYC), credit completion, and degree attainment. This section will explore and critique some of that research, but it is important to first acknowledge that the effectiveness of using standardized placement test scores as the only tool for referring students to developmental education has been challenged (Hassel & Giordano, 2015; Scott-Clayton, 2012). In addition, placement policy and practice has been shown to disproportionately place Black students and Pell recipients in developmental coursework overall (Braithwaite & Edgecombe, 2018). In addition, Black students and Pell recipients are most likely to be placed in the lowest levels of developmental coursework, which is correlated with much lower rates of gateway English Completion rates, and lower rates of overall persistence in college (Braithwaite & Edgecombe, 2018). Placing students based on multiple measures is often recommended (Hassel & Giordano, 2015; Scott-Clayton, 2012), but there is also evidence that adding certain measures may increase the disparities in placement based on race and ethnicity (Braithwaite & Edgecombe, 2018). Despite the ongoing conversation on the best and most equitable way to identify students in need of developmental education, relying on placement test cut scores is still common in practice and most of the research

in this section focuses on identifying students in need of developmental education this way.

While some research has found no positive effects of literacy remediation on the number of college credits attempted and degree attainment (Calcagno & Long, 2008; Martorell & McFarlin, 2011; Scott-Clayton & Rodriguez, 2012), others have found mixed results or positive results (Bettinger & Long, 2008; Boatman & Long, 2010). Studies that have measured the effectiveness of developmental literacy courses based on students' performance in first-year composition (FYC) also show mixed results. Among these, some even found that being assigned to developmental literacy courses not only failed to benefit students in terms of their grades in college-level FYC, but that many developmental literacy students may have fared better if they had skipped the remedial courses and enrolled directly in the college-level courses (Bailey et al., 2010; Calcagno & Long, 2008; Scott-Clayton & Rodriguez, 2012). Yet, other researchers found that students who take developmental literacy courses have similar, or sometimes better, outcomes in college-level FYC than students who were not required to remediate (Boatman & Long, 2010; Crews & Aragon, 2004; Moss et al., 2014; Moss & Yeaton, 2006; Southard & Clay, 2004). In particular, Hodara and Xi (2016) found that students who took developmental English had stronger labor market outcomes compared to the gains attributed to earning college-level credits.

One way to make sense of the mixed and sometimes contradictory results of these studies is to look at the difference in study design. The researchers who found no positive effects, which they defined as remedial students achieving better outcomes than their non-remediated peers, only examined developmental literacy students that were just

below the cutoff for college-level courses in comparison to students who scored just above the college-level cutoff. This type of regression-discontinuity (RD) design allowed them to compare two groups of students that have essentially similar test scores but differ in that one group was referred to a remedial course and the other was not. The conclusion in these studies was that the developmental coursework was not effective because students that scored slightly below the cutoff did not perform better than students with scores just above the cutoff. Yet, this design only provides information about one segment of the developmental literacy population. While these findings may raise concerns about the effectiveness of developmental literacy education for students that demonstrate literacy levels very close to college level or raise questions about the reliability of the cutoff score, they tell us nothing about the outcomes of students that place in lower levels of developmental courses (i.e., with far lower literacy skills).

In fact, one RD study that found mixed results (Boatman & Long, 2010) did not only study students at the cutoff for college level, but also looked at students placed in lower-levels of developmental literacy. Like other researchers, they did not find positive effects for students whose scores were very close to the cutoff for college-level courses, but did find that students in the lowest level of remedial writing seemed to persist at coursework in greater numbers and had higher levels of degree attainment than those students in the next highest remedial writing course (Boatman & Long, 2010). This is consistent with other research that found positive outcomes for lower-level developmental literacy students and suggest lower-level students may benefit the most from remediation (Moss & Yeaton, 2006).

Another factor that might contribute to the mixed results of studies on effectiveness is that the researchers did not use consistent sample criteria for inclusion in their studies. Some researchers included all students who were referred for remediation in their analysis, even those who did not complete a developmental course (Bailey et al., 2010; Scott-Clayton & Rodriguez, 2012). In contrast, others studied only developmental completers, those students who had completed their required developmental literacy courses before taking college-level FYC (Boatman & Long, 2010; Calcagno & Long, 2008; Crews & Aragon, 2004; Moss et al., 2014; Moss & Yeaton, 2006; Southard & Clay, 2004). Of the three studies that reported no benefit in college level FYC performance for students assigned to developmental coursework (Bailey et al., 2010; Calcagno & Long, 2008; Scott-Clayton & Rodriguez, 2012), two based that analysis on all students that were assigned to developmental literacy, regardless of whether they took the developmental literacy course (Bailey et al., 2010; Scott-Clayton & Rodriguez, 2012).

In contrast, Crews and Aragon (2004) compared community college developmental literacy completers to “nonparticipants,” or students that were recommended to developmental literacy courses, but chose not to take them. They studied 669 students, 384 developmental literacy course participants and 285 nonparticipants, and found that students who completed the developmental writing course had significantly higher college-level FYC grades than nonparticipants. In a similar study, Southard and Clay (2004) compared the FYC performance of developmental literacy completers to that of their non-developmental peers. They analyzed the transcripts of two groups of community college students that were enrolled in the same sections of college-level FYC. One group of 58 students had taken and passed a

developmental literacy course, and the other group of 794 students had not been in need of remediation and had enrolled directly into college-level FYC. They found that developmental completers had higher pass rates and lower withdrawal rates in college-level FYC and passed with fewer attempts than their non-developmental peers.

There is disagreement about whether it is appropriate to include only developmental completers in studies on the effectiveness of developmental coursework. On the one hand, researchers argue that studies that include only students that complete developmental coursework include a select group of students with the motivation and determination to succeed that might not provide an accurate measure of the quality or effectiveness of the developmental coursework or program (Bailey et al., 2010; Bailey et al., 2013). On the other hand, others argue that it is impossible to judge the effectiveness of developmental literacy instruction unless you are studying the group of students that has actually taken the coursework (Attewell et al., 2006; Moss & Yeaton, 2006).

Another consideration is that most of the literature discussed thus far, and certainly most of the literature that is widely cited in critiques of developmental education, use quantitative measures to study large numbers of developmental literacy students, across many different classrooms, and often across many different colleges. While these “black box” studies (Grubb, 2001) can provide valuable information about how well developmental programs and systems are working as a whole, a major limitation of this research is that it does not provide any description of the remediation itself, although this might be relevant to understanding its impact. We know that developmental literacy program quality can vary widely from context to context, which can completely alter outcomes of participation. Again, while we know that

developmental literacy education may not be working as well as it could for some students, we don't know that much about why that might be the case. It is crucial that judgments about the effectiveness of developmental literacy education are based on both larger studies using more general measures of coursework and programs effectiveness, and research that looks at what is actually happening within specific developmental literacy programs and classrooms.

The Role of Enrollment and Persistence in Developmental Coursework

In order to get a more complete picture of what happens when students are referred to developmental literacy courses, some researchers have looked at patterns of student enrollment in them. Research suggests that many students that place in developmental courses never enroll, delay enrollment, or drop out of the sequence before completing it (Adams et al., 2009; Bailey et al., 2010; Bahr, 2012). For example, Bailey et al. (2010) found that 33% of students that were referred for reading remediation never enrolled in those courses. In addition, 16% of the students who did enroll exited the developmental sequence after withdrawing or failing a course, and another 8% exited the developmental sequence without failing a class. So, while developmental literacy students generally do well in college-level English courses when they get to them, more than half of the students placed in developmental education never get there. Furthermore, students that delay their developmental coursework by waiting at least a semester to begin it are less likely to attempt or pass the next course in the sequence (Bahr, 2012; Crews & Aragon, 2004). The negative effects of this delay seem to be cumulative, as students that delay one course tend to delay others, and this creates a pattern of negative impacts on those students (Bahr, 2012). In addition, Bahr (2012) found that "low-skill"

students (students who score at the low end of the developmental population) were more likely to delay taking their first developmental class, so these negative impacts were greater on those students.

One way this problem is often conceptualized is to think about developmental coursework as a pipeline. Adams (2009) “concluded that the longer the pipeline the more likely there will be ‘leakage’ from it – in other words, the more likely students will be dropping out before passing first-year composition” (p.53). Adams (2009) suggests that getting developmental literacy students into college-level coursework more quickly, and thus shortening the pipeline can help students stay enrolled and be more successful. Other researchers support this approach and additionally recommend a one-semester developmental course for students who score well below the college-level cutoff (Braithwaite & Edgecombe, 2018; Hern & Snell, 2013). Some promising reforms have emerged from these findings that aim to shorten the pipeline for students that place just below the cutoff into college-level courses (Adams et al., 2009; Glau, 2007).

Adams et al., (2009) launched one of the best known and most replicated of these programs, the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP). An ALP is defined as a program in which “students placed into upper-level developmental courses are ‘mainstreamed’ into college-level courses in that subject and are simultaneously enrolled in a companion ALP course (taught by the same instructor)” (Bailey & Cho, 2010). Adams et al.’s (2009) study of the English ALP program at the Community College of Baltimore found that students in the ALP program had more success taking and passing college level English and lower drop-out rates than students taking the traditional developmental English courses. This suggests that this approach, which essentially allows students to skip the

developmental sequence altogether, can help students both stay enrolled and succeed at college-level English. In addition, there are several other corequisite models, not as widely studied as ALP, that have been implemented in community colleges. These models also provide corequisite developmental support for students in college-level courses in different ways, such as through paired courses or extended instructional time (Daugherty et al., 2018). Yet, similar to the focus of large-scale research on developmental students, these models have only been implemented with the highest scoring students who did not initially make the college-level cutoff. It does not address the immediate needs of students that place well below the cutoff score. It is true that this approach could shorten the “pipeline” for students who place well-below the cutoff by providing them access to college-level credit sooner, but these students will still need some developmental literacy coursework. In addition to continuing reforms like ALP, it is imperative that we understand how developmental literacy instruction at lower levels can better serve those students.

High-Quality Developmental Education Instruction

While one approach to improving the outcomes of students who miss the testing cut off for college level courses is to find ways to have them skip it, other researchers have aimed at improving it. Educators know from experience that there are students who successfully move through developmental education and succeed in college-level classrooms. Researchers have tried to identify key factors that contribute to their success. Some are beyond the control of institutions to address, such as students’ family and work responsibilities, health, and financial challenges (Grubb, 2013; Rose, 2012; Roueche &

Roueche, 1999). Yet, indisputably, effective pedagogy is central to quality education, and providing high-quality instruction is a key responsibility of any institution of higher education (Cox, 2009; Grubb & Cox, 2005; Hern & Snell, 2013; Jaggars & Bickerstaff, 2018; Roueche & Roueche, 2009). In addition, an important part of effective pedagogy includes framing learning in ways that will help facilitate transfer from one learning context to another (Beaufort, 2007; Carillo, 2016; El-Hindi, 1997; Engle et al., 2012; Holschuh & Paulson, 2018; Jaggars & Bickerstaff, 2018; Pacello, 2019; Perkins & Solomon, 1988, 1992; Simpson & Nist, 2000; Simpson et al., 2004).

It is also crucial to include student perspectives on the instruction they receive and their experiences in developmental literacy courses to fully explore the impact of developmental literacy courses on students. There is a need, as Higbee et al. (2005), state for “research that listens more directly to students’ voices and perceptions of their own college experiences” (p.8). Similarly, Fallon et al. (2009) in their study of learning transfer from English to psychology argued that “listening to what our students tell us when we ask them directly about their learning can yield useful information that has an impact on teaching and learning” (p.49).

The following sections describe literature on some of the key characteristics of and factors contributing to high quality developmental literacy instruction. Research on the impact of college-level instruction, the importance of alignment with college-level courses, integrated reading and writing courses, strategy instruction, and facilitating the transfer of learning will be explored. In addition, the impact of affective and other non-academic factors on student learning in developmental literacy courses and literature on students’ beliefs and attitudes about literacy and learning will be reviewed.

The Importance of College-Level Materials in Developmental Literacy Courses

There are some concerns about the quality and effectiveness of approaches to teaching developmental literacy, particularly those that treat reading and writing as a set of decontextualized skills rather than as integrated complex processes. Grubb (2013) studied the teaching practices of developmental instructors in about 20 community colleges, and found that the dominant approach to instruction was what he calls “remedial pedagogy,” an approach that assumes literacy is a specific set of subskills that can be taught through “drill and practice” (Grubb, 2013, p.52). In these classes, developmental literacy instruction did not reflect or prepare students for college-level reading and writing. Armstrong and Newman (2011) make a similar argument about what they call the “deficit or remediation approach,” characterized by mostly “skill-drill-type instruction” (p.7). In fact, Bahr (2012) cites “remedial pedagogy” as a potential reason so many students drop out of developmental courses, but not out of college completely. He theorizes that students may not see these developmental courses that include “remedial pedagogy” as relevant and connected to the learning they need for their lives including for other college courses (Bahr, 2012, p.687). And even if students don’t drop out, it is important to consider that “these classes are poor preparation for either college-level courses or transfer [of learning], which are the goals of most basic skills students” (Grubb, 2013, p.55).

In contrast to “remedial pedagogy,” research suggests high-quality developmental education aligns with college-level course expectations by engaging students with college-level materials and assignments (Armstrong & Stahl, 2017; Barragan & Cormier, 2013; Bickerstaff & Raufman, 2017; Callahan & Chumney, 2009; Edgecombe &

Bickerstaff, 2018; Hern & Snell, 2013; Perin & Holschuh, 2019; Scrivener et al., 2018). Sullivan (2006) defines “college-level” writing as that which responds to “an article, essay, or reading selection that contains at least some abstract content” (p.16-17) and suggests that, ideally, students would read multiple texts organized around a theme in order to explore the complexities of and the connections between the texts. This definition is salient to the recommendation that developmental literacy courses include text-based writing (Armstrong & Newman, 2011; Armstrong & Stahl, 2017; Bickerstaff & Raufman, 2017; Scrivener et al., 2018), and that students write in response to multiple texts organized around a theme (Armstrong & Newman, 2011; Bickerstaff & Raufman, 2017; Scrivener et al., 2018).

When developmental courses are front-loaded with discrete instruction on the skills students are lacking, they are not likely to get experience with the type of college-level assignments they will be required to do in other courses. While developmental literacy students may not be reading and writing at the college level, engaging with college-level materials in carefully supported ways can provide an experience Barragan and Cormier (2013) describe as “productive struggle” (p.3). In other words, when instructors “scaffold” the learning by challenging students while providing them with the tools they need to address frustration and experience success, students learn more than when instructors lower expectations and reduce rigor in fear of overwhelming or frustrating students (Armstrong & Newman, 2011; Barragan & Cormier, 2013; Gruenbaum, 2012). Similarly, Hern and Snell (2013), suggest that instructors teach the specific skills and strategies at the time they need them for a particular college-level assignment. They call this “just in-time remediation” (Hern & Snell, 2013, p.8). When

students are given the support they need to tackle appropriate college-level assignments, rather than taught decontextualized remedial skills, they are more likely to be motivated to learn and learning is more likely to be successful (Barragan & Cormier, 2013; Hern & Snell, 2013).

In their work on remedial writing courses Callahan & Chumney (2009) illustrate the difference between the impact of “remedial pedagogy” and instruction focused on college-level texts and assignments. They compared the experiences of students enrolled in a developmental English class at a research university to those of students enrolled in an equivalent developmental English class at a community college. The community college coursework was what Grubb (2013) would call “remedial pedagogy,” and centered on grammar instruction, reading passages to find the main ideas, and writing five-paragraph essays that did not require textual analysis. Students who took this course reported that it did not adequately prepare them for the literacy demands of their college-level courses.

In contrast, the university course was informed by the belief that in order to be successful with college-level assignments across disciplines, students needed to be able to critically engage with college-level texts and write arguments supported by textual evidence. So, in these courses students were provided with opportunities “to critique academic texts and to construct high-quality arguments in written form” (Callahan & Chumney, 2009, p.1636). The university students said this work was helpful in their college-level courses. These findings support the assertion that students need to do college-level reading and writing in their developmental literacy courses in order to be prepared for college-level work.

Alignment Across Disciplines

In addition to including challenging college-level texts and materials, it is important that the broader curricular goals of developmental literacy courses are aligned with the literacy requirements and demands of college-level courses across disciplines. In other words, it is not enough that students read and write at the college-level in developmental classroom, alignment is important on the department level. For example, developmental English courses should prepare students to be successful in college-level English composition courses. Furthermore, it is also important that developmental coursework is aligned with a broader set of literacy demands for college-level coursework (Armstrong & Stahl, 2017; Grubb, 2013; Grubb & Cox, 2005; Roueche & Roueche, 1999, Tinberg, 2015). As Perin (2002) states, “The main purpose of remedial education is to prepare students for the college-level academic demands. Therefore, the quality of remedial instruction can be considered in terms of its alignment with the college curriculum” (Comparison of Mainstream section, para.1).

Misalignment in skill development and expectations could be one reason that some research has shown that students in developmental courses do not seem to be adequately prepared for college-level courses (Grubb, 2013; Grubb & Cox, 2005), and successful alignment could be why some developmental literacy students do seem to leave these courses equipped with the literacy competencies they need to be successful. In addition, research on transfer between developmental and college-level literacy/composition courses suggests that alignment is an important factor in the transfer of learning from one context to another (Adler-Kassner et al., 2012; Beaufort, 2007; Hassel & Giordano, 2009; Tinberg, 2015).

There are very few studies that specifically investigate developmental literacy and college-level course work alignment, but one recent study addresses that gap. Armstrong et al. (2015) performed what they call a “curriculum audit” at a community college in the Midwest. As part of their investigation, they defined literacy expectations for developmental reading courses, college-level general education courses, and career technical education courses, and then analyzed how those expectations aligned. Through observations, textbook analysis, and faculty and student surveys and questionnaires, they determined that developmental reading courses had different literacy and text expectations than general education and career technical education courses. The developmental courses focused on using texts as a way to check students’ comprehension, for the development of discrete skills (such as finding the main idea), and to teach strategies at a procedural level. In contrast, the general education and career technical education courses used course texts (books, PowerPoints, outlines) to either support or supplement the course content.

Furthermore, when they looked at alignment, they found there was a “potential mismatch” between the “text practices” of developmental reading courses and general education and career technical courses. “Text practices” involved the text types, tasks assigned, and goals in a course (Armstrong et al., 2015). In other words, because general education and career technical courses used a variety of different types of texts (including PowerPoints) as a way to deliver content and developmental literacy courses taught students literacy skills and strategies through written texts, it was possible that developmental courses were not preparing students for the type of reading and writing they would do in courses outside of English. They also discovered communication issues

between both faculty and students. Neither students nor discipline area faculty were clear on the goals of the developmental reading course, and there was no evidence that developmental faculty had communicated with disciplinary faculty to get a sense of the literacy demands their students would face in their college-level general education/career technical education courses. Armstrong et al. (2015) argue for more local level investigations of alignment between developmental literacy coursework and general education coursework and encourage others to use the audit model described in the study in their own institutions.

Other scholars have echoed the findings of Armstrong et al. (2015) and argue that developmental literacy instruction should be based on the actual literacy demands students will face in their college-level classrooms (Armstrong & Stahl, 2017; Barragan & Cormier, 2013; Perin, 2002; Simpson et al., 2004; Voge, 2006). While Armstrong et al. (2015) did not look specifically at how these students performed in their college-level coursework, the findings do suggest that the lack of alignment between students' developmental coursework and their college-level literacy demands likely means that the developmental literacy coursework is not as effective as it could be in preparing students for their college-level work. This is supported by Perin et al. (2015) who investigated how well developmental reading and English students were prepared for college-level writing, as measured by a writing task typical of high-enrollment introductory courses with significant literacy demands, namely sociology and psychology. They found that, on average, students did not demonstrate readiness for college-level reading and writing. It is yet another lens through which developmental literacy education should be viewed to get a full picture of the ways in which developmental literacy courses succeed or fail at

preparing students for college-level literacy work. Alignment could be another reason that findings on the effectiveness of developmental literacy instruction vary across studies and institutions as some programs may be much better aligned than others.

Integrated Reading and Writing Courses

In addition to the need for using college-level materials that are aligned with college-level courses, courses that integrate reading and writing into one course are recommended (Armstrong & Stahl, 2017; Bickerstaff & Raufman, 2017; Hern & Snell, 2013; Scrivener et al., 2018). Bickerstaff and Raufman's (2017) research explores the impact of different approaches to integrating developmental reading and writing courses. They interviewed faculty members in Virginia and North Carolina about their experiences integrating their developmental reading and writing courses. They identified two approaches to integration. The "additive approach" is when faculty "added new activities or assignment to previously used course material as a way of integrating the two disciplines" (p.9). In contrast, other faculty created "integrative" courses that included "integrated assignments, assessments, activities, and instructional objectives and that would minimize reading- and/or writing-only components" (p.15). Bickerstaff and Raufman (2017) found that the "integrative" courses included elements that were consistent with other models of high-quality developmental literacy education. For example, these courses required text-based writing organized around themes and included embedded strategy instruction within assignments. Coursework was also designed to increase students' "metacognitive understanding of reading and writing" (Bickerstaff & Raufman, 2017, p.15).

Bickerstaff & Raufman (2107) found that while faculty were generally positive about integrating reading and writing courses, those who used the “integrative” approach were more comfortable and satisfied with their approach. In addition, when some respondents transitioned from an “additive” approach to a more “integrative” one, they believed that learning increased and that their students were more engaged (Bickerstaff & Raufman, 2017). These findings suggest that integrating developmental literacy courses can help improve developmental literacy quality if the course design includes high-quality, truly integrated components.

Strategy Instruction

In addition to integrating reading and writing, effective instructional approaches in integrated developmental literacy courses focus on cognitive, metacognitive, and contextualized strategy-based instruction. (Armstrong & Newmann, 2011; Bickerstaff & Raufman, 2017; Jaggars & Bickerstaff, 2018; Perin & Holschuh, 2019; Scrivener et al., 2018). Research suggests instructors model the selection and use of these strategies, often by thinking out-loud as they demonstrate their process (Armstrong & Newman, 2011; Scrivener et al., 2018). In addition, as previously discussed, instructors can scaffold instruction by supporting and guiding students through challenging new learning and breaking up larger high-stakes assignments into smaller, low-stakes, activities. This approach can increase both students’ proficiency and confidence (Armstrong & Newmann, 2011; Barragan & Cormier, 2013; Gruenbaum, 2012). There is some promising research on the benefits of this pedagogical shift (Bickerstaff & Raufman, 2017; Caverly et al., 2004; Perin, 2013; Perin & Holschuh, 2019; Simpson et al., 2004; Simpson & Nist, 2000; Scrivener et al., 2018; Vogue, 2006).

Many of the high-quality developmental literacy practices identified by researchers and experts are included in the CUNY Start program developed at the City University of New York (CUNY). The program includes an integrated reading and writing course that is based on the “cognitive apprenticeship model” that aims to teach and model to students the “ways of thinking and techniques of expert readers and writers” (Scrivener et al., 2018, p.33). Like the “integrative” approach Bickerstaff & Raufman (2017) describe, the CUNY Start curriculum includes a variety of different course texts, and writing is text-based. In addition, “metacognitive logs” are used to help students think about and reflect on their reading and writing processes. Students respond to texts informally through “discussion journals” and complete more formal “short analysis papers” that compare multiple texts. Similarly, Armstrong & Newman (2011) advocate for using multiple texts when teaching reading in the community college developmental classroom and asking students to make connections between those texts to engage more deeply with course material. In addition, reading and writing strategies are taught in the context of course assignments and by instructor modeling and coaching. “Coaching” is described as the process of providing feedback to students that requires them to return to the text or writing assignment for clarification or enhanced understanding (Scrivener et al., 2018). While this term is not explicitly used in the other literature reviewed, this process reflects strategy instruction that is embedded within course reading and writing assignments, a characteristic of high-quality instruction (Bickerstaff & Raufman, 2017; Armstrong & Newman, 2011).

An early evaluation of the CUNY program found that when compared to a control group, students in the program made more progress through developmental courses,

earned more college credits, and enrolled in credit bearing courses at a higher rate (Scriver et al., 2018). These results suggest that specific curricular and pedagogical interventions can have a positive impact on the success of developmental literacy and that these high-quality programs have several identifiable features.

Other researchers have studied the impact of approaches specific to teaching reading or writing strategies. Grubb's (2013) examples of high-quality teaching include approaches such as Reading Apprenticeship that focus on metacognitive questioning and conversations about reading, and other approaches that privilege student collaboration, critical thinking, and analytical writing. Caverly et al. (2004) studied strategy instruction with "true developmental" literacy students, defined as students scoring significantly lower than their peers on standardized reading assessments, at a state university through two separate studies. The students were taught reading strategies using metacognitive awareness, activating prior knowledge, and rehearsal, all within a self-regulation strategy called PLAN (Preplan, List, Activate, and Evaluate). In the first study, students showed increases in standardized reading scores, scores on a scale measuring metacognitive awareness, and reading comprehension scores. The results were promising, but there was no control group, so it was not possible to ascertain whether reading scores would have improved without the strategy instruction.

In the second part of the study, they studied two groups of students with similar reading ability as measured by standardized reading scores. The treatment group was made up of freshman students that had received specific instruction in strategic reading through the developmental reading course and the control group included students that had not. Caverly et al. (2004) followed students in both groups throughout a four-year

period. They discovered that students that received the reading strategy instruction had higher standardized reading test scores and grades in a reading intensive history class taken in a subsequent semester compared to a control group of developmental students who had not taken the reading course. While the authors admit that a final grade in history includes measures of more than just reading skills, they argue the findings do provide evidence of skill transfer. Positive results were also found in studies of underprepared university freshman that were given direct instruction in reading and summarization strategies (Friend, 2001; Snyder, 2002). However, while these studies use a sample of developmental literacy students, findings at the university level may not generalize to community college students.

Reciprocal teaching is another strategy that has been shown to be effective (Doolittle et al., 2006; Greenbaum, 2012; Hart & Speece, 1998; Palinscar & Brown, 1984). Reciprocal teaching consists of teaching questioning, summarization, clarification, and prediction strategies, modeling use of the strategies, and training students to use the strategies independently as they lead group dialogues. Hart and Speece (1998) compared two groups of 25 at-risk community college students, as defined by low reading scores, to determine the effects of reciprocal teaching instruction. Both groups were enrolled in a course focused on strategies for success in college. One group was made up of students who were taught reciprocal teaching strategies. The other group, the control, were engaged in cooperative learning activities that, like reciprocal teaching, emphasized participation and interaction, but, unlike reciprocal teaching, did not include explicit instruction in reading strategies. Hart and Speece (1998) found that compared to the

cooperative learning group, students in the reciprocal teaching group had significantly higher gains on a strategy acquisition test and a standardized reading comprehension test.

There has also been research on the benefits of writing strategy instruction. MacArthur and Philippakos (2013) found that community college students in eight developmental writing classes made significant posttest gains in writing achievement after instruction in self-regulated strategy instruction. Participants learned process writing strategies for planning, drafting, and revising, and how to apply their understanding of text organization to planning and self-evaluation. They were also taught self-regulation strategies. The researchers completed two rounds of data collection, with revisions and professional development provided in between “rounds.” They found that participants made significant gains in writing quality and motivation.

Other researchers have also focused on the value of process-oriented approaches. Perun (2015) in his qualitative study of developmental English students in an urban-serving community college found that strategic instruction of process-oriented writing strategies helped students learn how to complete college-level writing assignments successfully. Students were provided with detailed assignment instructions and rubrics and then taught a step by step approach to understanding the assignment, pre-writing through free-writing, organizing, drafting, and revising. Instructors modeled these approaches and provided written and verbal feedback on each essay submission. In response to this instruction, all 23 students that Perun (2015) interviewed, who struggled to complete college-level assignments because they were relying on ineffective approaches they used in high school, tried at least once to adjust their approach to completing writing assignments. While 6 students ultimately did not adopt these

practices, the other 17 students were able to use these process-oriented strategies to write successful college-level essays. Similarly, Pacello (2019) found that a course that included metacognitive strategies and was designed to foster a process-oriented approach to writing helped students develop beneficial process-oriented beliefs about writing and the ability to identify the “connections between writing and exploring ideas” (p.194). These studies support the idea that process-oriented writing strategy instruction is an important component of high-quality community college developmental literacy education.

Studies of high-quality developmental literacy instruction suggest teaching students a variety of reading and writing strategies that they can call on in different contexts (Carillo, 2016; Holschuh & Paulson, 2018; Simpson & Nist, 2000; Simpson, et al. 2014). As Paulson and Holschuh (2018) point out in their review of the “foundational terrain of college reading,” there are hundreds of reading strategies, and the usefulness of a particular strategy depends on the individual and a host of different contextual considerations. This is true of writing strategies as well. There is no group of strategies that, taught together, function as a silver bullet. Instead, students must be able to develop the metacognitive awareness to recognize when and where particular strategies may be useful, and when they may need to adapt or replace a strategy (Carillo, 2016; Holschuh & Paulson, 2018; Simpson & Nist, 2000; Simpson et al., 2004).

Facilitating Transfer

One way to think about the effectiveness of a course is to determine whether students learned what was supposed to have been taught. One way to measure this is to consider how useful the learning was in other contexts. In other words, did students

“transfer” their learning? Nelms & Dively (2007) define transfer as “the application of knowledge acquired in one situation or context to a different situation or context” (p.215). They are careful to note that “learning is crucial prerequisite for transfer” (p.215). Despite the fact that many courses are designed around the assumption that students will transfer their learning from that course to other courses, disciplines, and contexts, research has shown that learning transfer is difficult to achieve (Adler-Kassner et al., 2012; Beaufort, 2007; Fallon, et al., 2009; Grubb, 2013; Hassel & Giordano, 2009; Nelms & Dively, 2007; Tinberg, 2015). Still, learning transfer does occur under some circumstances. Researchers suggests that there are instructional approaches and student strategies can help increase the likelihood that it will (Beaufort, 2007; Carillo, 2016; Engle et al., 2012; Perkins & Solomon, 1988, 1989,1992).

The literature on transfer of learning across contexts has important implications for developmental literacy instruction. The goal of most developmental literacy courses is to prepare students for college-level work in English. However, it is also often assumed that students deemed ready for college-level English work are also ready for the college-level reading and writing across disciplines. In fact, at the community college level, placement into, rather than completion of, college-level English is a common prerequisite for college-level courses in disciplines other than English. This suggests that developmental literacy educators should be just as concerned with transfer across disciplinary boundaries as they are about preparing students for college-level English composition.

Perkins & Solomon (1992) identify two different types of transfer. “Near transfer” involves a transfer of learning to relatively similar contexts, and “far transfer” involves a

transfer of learning to markedly different contexts (p.2). They also suggest that transfer occurs through two different learning processes. “Low road transfer” occurs when learning that has been practiced extensively is accessed when students are in a similar context. Perkins & Solomon (1988,1992) posit that “low road transfer” can be facilitated through the process of “hugging.” “Hugging” involves providing simulations and practice with the desired learning outcome. Perkins & Solomon (1992) explain that, “The learning experience thus ‘hugs’ the target performance, maximizing likelihood later of automatic low road transfer” (p.10). In contrast, “high road transfer” involves the explicit “abstraction” of learning and the purposeful “search for connections.” (p.2). “Far transfer” and “high road transfer” are the more complex and difficult forms of transfer, but Perkins & Solomon (1988) argue in “Teaching for Transfer” that in order to increase the likelihood that it will occur, teachers “can point out explicitly the more general principles behind particular skills or knowledge or, better, provoke students to attempt such generalizations themselves.” (p.28-29). Perkins & Solomon (1988, 1992) call this process “bridging.”

The importance of “generalizing” learning and explicitly “looking for connections” in the successful transfer of learning across different context is echoed by other researchers (Beaufort, 2007; Carillo, 2017; Nelms & Dively, 2007). Nelms & Dively’s (2007) research supports the importance of faculty helping students make connections between learning across contexts. Nelms & Dively (2007), surveyed graduate teaching assistants (GTA) teaching first-year writing courses about what “concepts, strategies, and skills” they taught in their 101 and 102 writing classes. Following the survey, they led a focus group discussion with disciplinary faculty teaching

writing-intensive courses in their university's College of Applied Sciences and Arts (CASA) focused around the question: "What concepts, strategies, and skills commonly addressed in English 101 and 102 (as identified in Phase One) seem to transfer to CASA's writing -intensive courses? And if they appear not to be transferring, what might be potential sources of difficulty with regard to transfer?" (Nelms & Dively, 2007, p.219). Their findings suggest that students would be more likely to transfer their learning from First Year Composition (FYC) into their courses in other disciplines if instructors encouraged students to look for connections between their composition course writing and their writing assignments in other contexts. Despite the challenges of transfer, Nelms & Dively (2007) found in surveys and focus groups with faculty that "an understanding of the relationship between thesis and support; a facility for analyzing various texts; and the familiarity with principles governing source citation" were all elements of composition that participants in their study said transferred across disciplines (p.224).

The importance of framing learning in generalizable and abstract ways is echoed in work by Engle et al. (2012) on "expansive" framing. Engle et al. (2012) distinguish between "expansive" and "bounded" framing of "learning concepts." Similar to "near" and "low road" transfer (Perkins & Solomon, 1988), bounded framing involves framing learning as only relevant to the task at hand, a "one-time" event (Engle et al., 2012). In contrast, similar to "far" and "high road" transfer (Perkins & Solomon, 1988), expansive framing involves framing the learning as connected to past learning contexts and to potential future learning contexts. This involves teachers explicitly framing learning for students within these past and future contexts (Engle et al., 2012). For instance, when

introducing a psychology paper assignment, instructors might frame the assignment expansively by pointing out what aspects from their previous composition courses they might apply to this assignment. Similarly, a developmental literacy instructor may use expansive framing to explain how a reading strategy might be applied to the reading students will likely have to do in their science courses.

Carillo (2017) applies the idea of “expansive framing” to the teaching of critical reading. She argues “that we need to teach students about the ways of reading within, open, flexible, and far-reaching contexts” (Carillo, 2017, p.37). In other words, since students will definitely need to use their reading strategies in a number of different contexts, inside and outside of academia, it makes sense to frame the learning expansively and explicitly point out the ways in which strategies might be useful in other disciplines and contexts. Ideally, students can be taught to think about their learning expansively and look for potential connections independently (Perkins & Solomon, 1998).

Metacognitive approaches that teach students how to reflect on their thinking processes and their use of reading and writing strategies can help facilitate transfer and are a key component of high-quality developmental literacy instruction (Beaufort, 2007; El-Hindi, 1997; Holschuh & Paulson, 2018; Jaggers & Bickerstaff, 2018; Pacello, 2019; Perkins & Solomon, 1988, 1992; Simpson & Nist, 2000; Simpson et al., 2004). Perkins & Solomon (1992) identify “active self-monitoring” and “arousing mindfulness” as key conditions for transfer. By “active self-monitoring,” they mean “metacognitive reflection” (p.7) Beaufort (2007) suggests that composition instructors encourage the development and use of metacognitive skills by making explicit connections to prior

learning and assigning a “process journal.” Students can use the “process journal” to reflect on their learning and make connections with past learning and future applications (p.13). Similarly, El-Hindi (1997) used “reflective journals” or “reading logs” with “at-risk” college students and Pacello (2014) used “metacognitive reading blogs” with developmental literacy students to help foster metacognitive awareness about their writing and reading processes, and the connections between them. El-Hindi (1997) asserted that increased metacognitive awareness positively impacted students’ literacy learning and their ability to tackle the reading and writing demands of college coursework. Pacello (2014), observed that the metacognitive blogs helped students see connections between the work they were doing in their developmental literacy courses and the reading and writing they did in other courses and non-academic contexts.

Related to metacognition is the concept of “mindfulness” (Carillo, 2016; Langer 2000). Perkins & Solomon (1992) explain “arousing mindfulness” as learners entering a “state of awareness” about their learning and the contexts of that learning (p.7). Carillo (2017) developed an “expansive framework,” informed by the work of Engle et al., called “mindful reading.” She explains: “I use the term *mindful* to underscore the metacognitive basis of this frame wherein students become knowledgeable, deliberate, and reflective about how they read and what different reading approaches allow and enable” (p.37). Carillo (2016) differentiates mindfulness from metacognition by specifying that mindfulness includes the intention and stance of the reader “who is learning to *be* mindful” (p.11). She goes on to say, “Mindfulness, unlike metacognition, is a way of being” (p.11). From this place, readers can be mindful of the context in which they are

reading, able to reflect on prior experiences, and make intentional choices about what reading strategies might work best in their current context.

Metacognitive approaches and mindfulness can increase students' ability to make thoughtful decisions when choosing appropriate reading and writing strategies for a particular learning contexts and determining exactly how they want use them (Carillo, 2016, 2017; Langer, 2000; Perkins & Solomon, 1992; Simpson & Nist 2000; Simpson et al., 2004). As Barragan and Cormier (2013) explain, "For knowledge transfer to occur, students must not only possess sufficient content knowledge but also understand how, when, and why to adapt and apply that knowledge in novel situations" (p.1). Research on effective reading and writing strategy instruction suggests that instructors should provide students with a variety of reading and writing strategies that they can call on depending on what works for them and under what circumstances with regard to the specific task or context (Carillo, 2016; Holschuh & Paulson, 2018; Simpson & Nist, 2000; Simpson et al., 2014). Simpson et al. (2004) explain, "Ultimately, the goal or touchstone of any program is for students to develop a personal theory of these essential metacognitive processes in selecting and using strategies, in a flexible manner, with their own tasks and texts" (p.4).

Here, and in all approaches that encourage students to take an active role in transferring knowledge from one learning context to another, the assumption is that there are generalizable reading and writing skills that can be taught and transferred across contexts. However, this is challenged by those who would argue that reading and writing are always contextual, that there is no generalized "academic discourse" that can be successfully taught and transferred, and that literacy is best taught in disciplinary ways,

particularly in higher education. (Downs and Wardle, 2007; Elbow, 1991; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012; Wardle, 2009). In response to this dichotomy, Perkins & Solomon (1989) argue that it sets up a false choice. Carillo (2016) makes a similar argument by stating that reading is a “general cognitive skill that also depends on domain-specific knowledge” (p.17). Perkins & Solomon (1989) use summarizing as an example to illustrate their point. Summarizing is general skill that can be applied in a number of different contexts, but in order for learners to transfer that skill successfully, they must have enough domain-specific knowledge to know what “counts as relevant” in that discipline. In other words, a learner could learn summarizing in an English class and transfer that skill to a biology class, but they wouldn’t be successful unless the general skill of summarizing was combined with the disciplinary understanding of biology concepts. Mindfulness allows learners to be aware both of the general characteristics of the skill, and of the need to reflect on the disciplinary context and expectations to make an appropriate choice of both the best strategy for the context and the best way to apply it (Carillo, 2016).

Another issue that can impact transfer is differences in the way disciplines define and use composition vocabulary (Nelms & Dively, 2007). For example, Nelms and Dively (2007) observed that faculty used the term “research” in different ways. “Research” in English composition courses usually referred to students using information literacy skills to find and evaluate sources and effectively integrate them into their writing. For disciplinary faculty in CASA, “research” meant work involving the scientific method. In addition, they found that while composition instructors had different terms for different types of writing, CASA faculty tended to name different types of writing in

more generic ways, such as “written assignments” or “papers.” (Nelms & Dively, 2007, p.227). Of particular concern to them, was the different ways that faculty members labeled writing that could be considered “persuasive.” When Nelms & Dively (2007) asked faculty in various disciplines if they assigned “persuasive writing,” those faculty asked for clarification of what that term meant to English professors before they were comfortable answering. Nelms & Dively (2007) report that faculty described writing assignments that they labeled as “justifying an opinion” or “explaining your reasoning.” Yet, they didn’t immediately recognize these as what Nelms & Dively (2007) called “persuasive writing.” They argued:

If the CASA professors do not connect ‘persuasion’ with ‘justifying an opinion’ – or if composition instructors don’t make a point of learning what terms their colleagues in that college use when referring to the concept in question and, then, introduce those terms as well – then how can we expect students do make the connection? (p.227).

In other words, if professors are not making connections across contexts, it makes it difficult to frame the learning in expansive ways so that students can make connections to prior learning and other future learning contexts the way transfer scholars like Perkins & Solomon (1998,1992) and Engle et al. (2012) suggest.

Affective and Other Non-Academic Factors

In addition to the effectiveness of instructional strategies, there are affective and other non-academic factors that have an impact on student success in developmental education. When instructors are aware of affective and non-academic considerations, they can create classroom policies, design instruction, and respond to students in ways that can help build students’ motivation and confidence (Bickerstaff et al., 2017; Hern & Snell, 2013; Paulson & Holschuh, 2018). Motivation has been shown to have an impact on

reading comprehension (Guthrie et al., 2007; Paulson & Holschuh, 2018) and when students feel supported and “seen” they are better able to learn (Hern & Snell, 2013). In addition, Williams (2013) argues that it is important for faculty to understand the way race and racism impacts the lived experiences of their Students of Color and impacts their academic engagement and success. Lancaster and Lundberg’s (2019) study of community college student engagement found that “Students’ sense that faculty were available, helpful, and sympathetic made the strongest contribution to all three types of learning [career learning, academic learning, and personal development] tested in this model” (p.149). This shows how important it is that developmental faculty are aware of the impact of faculty-student relationships on learning and are provided with the tools and strategies to foster those relationships.

One concern is that many students come to college with high levels of fear, particularly about writing. Cox (2009) found that the fear of failure is particularly strong in community college writing courses and often leads students to engage in failure avoidance behavior that can negatively impact their success in the course. Bickerstaff et al. (2017) found that community college students’ fear and apprehension about their ability to succeed in college often resulted in a lack of confidence that negatively impact motivation and effort. For Students of Color, these fears can be compounded by what Steele (1997) calls a “stereotype threat” that can affect people whose identity is tied to a stereotyped group and fears “being reduced to that stereotype” (p.614). This “stereotype threat” can causes anxiety in educational settings that has a negative impact on learning (Acevedo-Gil, et al., 2015; Steele 1997).

Bickerstaff et al. (2007) also found that when students experienced “earned success,” and recognized the strategies and approaches they used to achieve this success, they experienced positive shifts in confidence. These researchers suggest that community college instructors provide frequent feedback, opportunities for student reflection, and support for students’ non-academic needs (Bickerstaff et al., 2017). In addition, while not a focus of this study or a theme that emerged from the data, it is important to include in this review that developmental literacy instructors should also consider the role of race and ethnicity in efforts to support students’ social and emotional needs. Acevedo-Gill et al. (2015) recommend including a “critical race validating pedagogy” in developmental courses that identifies students’ social identities as a source of strength and focuses around a relevant social-justice curriculum. In addition, this approach encourages and validates students’ high aspirations and provides students with “critical but supportive feedback” (p.118). They suggest this approach can mitigate some of the anxiety Students of Color might feel as a result of the stereotype threat and can help them succeed academically. (Acevedo-Gil et al., 2015). Similarly, Williams (2013) argues that readings and materials that deal with race may be more meaningful and relevant to African American students, and suggest that instructors carefully select course readings based on the ways they “represent and frame the impact of race on life experiences of African Americans” (p.56).

Hern & Snell (2013) also recognize the role of fear in writing instruction and include attending to affective needs in their recommendations for high-quality developmental education. In response to moral judgements made by some community college faculty or administrators that underprepared students don’t care or aren’t working

hard enough, Hern & Snell (2013) argue that “fear of failure- not moral failure – is the core issue to address among underprepared students” (p.24). This view is supported by participants in VanOra’s (2012) study of developmental students who expressed strong fears about writing, including calling it a “‘terrorizing’ experience that elicited feelings of inferiority” (p.27). Similar to Cox (2009), Hern & Snell (2013) suggest that “when we understand the emotional dynamics behind self-sabotaging behaviors, we are much better able to help students stay on track” (p.24). They recommend sharing Cox’s (2009) research with students as a springboard for discussion aimed to reduce their fear.

Researchers suggests other affective-oriented interventions related to student motivation and behavior that can help developmental students succeed. For example, Hern & Snell (2013) advocate for what they call “proactive intervention,” which means reaching out to students who are falling behind or not attending class. Students reported to them that they felt like teachers cared about them when they received an email or had a brief conversation with them when they were absent or behind in work. Hern & Snell (2013) argue that often these quick interventions can be “enough to help a struggling student re-engage” (p.23). Along the same lines, Stewart (2006), in his phenomenological case study of a developmental student who became a college graduate, emphasized the positive impact of “individual attention, from tutors, counselors, and advisors” (p.74). Clearly some of this is due to the academic help this student received, but it is also likely that the attention helped provide the student with emotional support.

Careful attention to policies like grading, late work, and attendance is also recommended. Hern & Snell (2013) recommend assessment practices, such as portfolios, that encourage growth and progress, and that aren’t so punitive that students can’t catch

up if they struggle to get started. They suggest grading approaches that provide encouraging feedback which recognizes strengths and gives clear guidance on where students should focus their efforts to improve (Hern & Snell, 2013). In terms of attendance, Hern & Snell (2013) caution that while it is important to be flexible with attendance and late work because students are often juggling many responsibilities outside of school, if students are given too much flexibility they may get so far behind that they can't catch up. Hern & Snell (2013) recommend putting limitations on late work and fair but firm attendance policies. These recommendations are consistent with Barragan and Cormier's (2013) finding that developmental students "report being more involved and becoming more self-directed and confident learners when classroom standards are higher" (p.4). Hern & Snell (2013) sum up the importance of considering the whole student, including their emotional and behavioral dimensions:

Don't we all avoid experiences in which we think we'll be exposed as failures? Aren't we all more likely to complete a task when we know we'll be accountable the next time we get together with people? And learn better when we feel seen? Ultimately, we see addressing the affective domain as simply creating a learning environment for human beings (p.26).

Students Attitudes and Beliefs about Learning and Literacy

Students have varying beliefs and attitudes about learning, literacy, their placement in developmental literacy, and the usefulness of the developmental literacy curriculum. These beliefs can have a significant impact on their learning (Adler-Kassler, 1999; Paulson & Armstrong, 2011; Paulson & Holschuh, 2018; Schnee, 2014; Simpson & Nist, 2000; Simpson et al., 2004). Paulson and Holschuh (2018) argue that "beliefs about literacy are part of the student knowledge base that educators should ideally take into account when planning instruction" (p.33). In her interviews with basic writing

students Adler-Kassner (1999) found that students did not believe that writing and reading would be useful coursework outside of English and in their life outside of academia. Many developmental students also worry about the impact of developmental coursework on their timely graduation prospects (Schnee, 2014).

Other researchers have looked at students' views of learning (as passive or active) and of writing (as product or process oriented) and the impact those beliefs have on their development of academic literacy practices. There is evidence that many college freshmen, including developmental students, believe that learning occurs when something is done to them and that it should be relatively easy. This belief leads to a passive stance toward learning (Simpson et al., 2004; Simpson & Nist, 2000). Paulson and Armstrong's (2011) research suggests that this passive view of learning is connected to students' views of writing as process or product. They studied the metaphors of 128 students in an integrated developmental reading and writing course. They categorized participants' metaphors in several ways. One category was product vs. process. An example of a process metaphor was "College reading is like putting together a puzzle. Each piece you put together, each story you read ties together in some way. Each piece fits." In contrast, one product metaphor was "College writing is like a job. You have to do what is told and when it is due." They found that many more metaphors were product metaphors than process metaphors. Paulson and Armstrong (2011) suggest that "a conceptualization that literacy is a product that can be passively transmitted can be detrimental to their ongoing apprenticeships into academic literacy practices and, by extension, their academic success" (p.498). In other words, when students believe that they don't have an active role in their academic literacy development, they are less likely

to engage in the type of process-oriented experimentation, reflection, and practice needed to engage successfully in college-level work. This “transmission model” contrasts with process-based models that view students as active participants in their literacy learning (Armstrong & Newman, 2011; Paulson & Armstrong, 2011).

Similarly, Adler-Kassner (1999) found that basic writers’ conceptualization of themselves as having a “deficit” was based on their belief that writing was about a “performance” that produced a certain number of paragraphs and reproduced particular ideas in a certain way. And writing that didn’t accomplish this goal “was ‘wrong’ and needed to be ‘fixed’” (p.80). Adler-Kassner (1999) also argues that the conceptualization of writing that focuses only on product is problematic and supports an “alternative conception of writing that frames it as a process that helps writers think, that facilitates communication, that mediates among communities”(p.81). She explains that without a process-oriented mindset, students are left with the belief that writing is about getting the ideas down “right” on the page the first time, a false belief that is not conducive to writing and learning in college (Adler-Kassner, 1999). Similarly, Pacello (2019) argues that students need to develop a process-oriented mindset in order to be fully prepared to “navigate the complex writing demands of college classrooms” (p.187).

One common recommendation to address damaging conceptions about learning that can be applied in developmental literacy courses is to help students cultivate what educational psychologist Carol Dweck (2017) calls a “growth-mindset” (Edgecombe & Bickerstaff, 2018; Hern & Snell, 2013). A “growth mindset” is a belief that the brain changes in response to behaviors like finding the right strategies, practice, and hard work and this leads to improvements in learning and performance. Teaching this information to

students can help them shift towards a “growth mindset” that can positively impact their success (Dweck, 2017; Edgecombe & Bickerstaff, 2018; Hern & Snell, 2013). Barragan & Cormier (2013) suggest that helping students develop a growth mindset towards learning can also help students adjust and respond positively to the increased rigor of college-level work. Some researchers have found evidence that many students do have positive attitudes about their developmental literacy learning. When Paulson and Armstrong (2011) categorized the metaphors developmental literacy students created as negative/nonnegative, they found many more nonnegative metaphors (152) than negative ones (61). Considering the widely accepted idea that students are unhappy about taking developmental courses, Paulson and Armstrong (2011) were surprised by this finding. They noted that the nonnegative metaphors ranged from neutral to extremely positive, and that the negative metaphors focused mostly on “level of difficulty, amount of time needed, amount of work or effort required, and interest level” (p.498).

Along the same lines, Schnee (2014) also found that many of the developmental English students she interviewed developed an appreciation for the role that their developmental English course played in helping them develop college-level literacy skills. This was particularly true over time as participants engaged in college-level coursework and gained a more accurate understanding of the reading and writing skills needed to be successful at college-level work. This understanding eventually led them to “affirm the appropriateness of their initial placement in remedial English” (Schnee, 2014,p.249). And for some students, their positive feelings went beyond appreciation as they “discovered the joy of intellectual engagement” and described how this “enthusiasm buoyed them – in the face of unavoidable personal, academic, and financial challenges

that could have threatened their commitment to college” (p.255). That positive beliefs about learning can greatly impact students’ perseverance, and vice versa, illustrates why many researchers urge those interested in the success of developmental students to understand and address their students’ attitudes and beliefs about developmental education, learning, and literacy (Adler-Kassner, 1999; Paulson & Armstrong, 2011; Simpson et al., 2004; Simpson & Nist, 2000).

Transfer skills may also be mediated by students’ disposition and beliefs about writing. Driscoll & Wells (2012) focused on learning transfer for writing. They argue that students’ dispositions, play a crucial role in in this process. They clarify that dispositions “are not knowledge skills, or abilities- they are qualities that determine how learners use and adapt their knowledge,” (p.1) and that the impact of dispositions can be negative or positive (Driscoll & Wells, 2012). Driscoll & Wells (2012) identified four specific dispositions that they found impacted writing transfer: value, self-efficacy, attribution, and self-regulation. This is illustrated by Bergmann and Zepernick (2007) who studied students in a small midwestern technological university. They found that students were resistant to the idea that what they were learning in First Year Composition (FYC) could be useful in their other courses across disciplines. In fact, the students showed little evidence of transfer. Bergmann and Zepernick (2007) reported that “the attitudes expressed by our respondents suggest that the primary obstacle to such transfer is not that students are *unable* to recognize situations outside FYC in which those skills can be used, but that students *do not look for* such situations because they believe that skills learned in FYC have no value in any other setting” (p.139). In this case, the students’ value disposition negatively impacted their transfer of learning.

Student beliefs and attitudes about literacy have important implications for the classroom. The variety in students' beliefs and attitudes illustrate that developmental students are a heterogeneous population and that there is no "typical" developmental student (Paulson & Armstrong, 2011). Looking at developmental students as whole people and taking into account the way they view literacy and learning is an essential part of high-quality developmental literacy instruction.

Conclusion

As a whole, the research suggests that developmental education could be helping more students realize their educational goals. It is clear that not enough students enroll or stay enrolled in developmental literacy courses and that this has a negative impact on credit completion, graduation, and performance in college-level courses. Yet, there is also evidence that some developmental literacy students are being well-served by effective developmental literacy courses that help them gain college-level literacy competencies and succeed in college.

It is important to remember, however, that some research findings may be showing a kind of false negative on the impact of developmental education. There are many possible explanations for this. First, it is clear that not all the research on developmental education effectiveness is asking the same questions or defining "effectiveness" in the same way. Some of the most widely cited research on the effectiveness of developmental education measures success in terms of credit completion and graduation rates, often at a statewide level. While this information can be useful, maybe most effectively as a signal that more specific investigations should be done, findings from large scale quantitative studies do not provide information about the

effectiveness of any individual developmental literacy program or course. Instead, these large studies have a tendency to wash out the positive impact of effective programs and paint developmental literacy education with a broad-brush. In addition, it is critical to note that much of the research on the effectiveness of developmental literacy coursework focuses on students that are close to the cutoff for college-level literacy placement. Little is known about the impact of developmental literacy coursework on students at lower levels, but what is known suggests that developmental literacy coursework may be most needed by and most beneficial to those students.

While there is a need for more research on developmental literacy at the classroom level, what has been done suggests that high-quality developmental literacy education has some identifiable characteristics. It is important that developmental literacy students are given the opportunity to engage with college-level texts and writing assignments. Rather than lower standards and expectations, instructors can provide developmental literacy students the tools they need to tackle college-level assignments. Part of the toolbox instructors need to provide to students are contextualized, metacognitive reading and writing strategies. In addition, it is crucial that students learn how to evaluate learning situations and choose or find the appropriate strategy for a particular context. All of this also needs to be considered in terms of what we know about facilitating the transfer of learning. Finally, we must approach students holistically and understand that their social and emotional needs and their beliefs and attitudes about learning are inextricably linked to their development as readers, writers, and college students.

In addition, experts in developmental literacy instruction caution that investigations surrounding the content of developmental literacy instruction should focus not only on specific instructional processes and content, but also include evaluations of how they are aligned with the expectations of college-level courses, both with English and composition courses, and in general-education courses throughout the college. More research on the literacy successes and challenges that developmental literacy students face in both first-year composition courses, and college-level courses across the disciplines especially, is needed. While there is agreement that developmental literacy courses should be designed around the known literacy demands of the actual college-level courses students will have to take, there is almost no research on whether this deliberate alignment of expectations is happening in community colleges. The sense in the literature is that generally it is not, and the very limited research available supports this notion. This is an area where further research is urgently needed as misalignment has the potential to thwart the effectiveness of even high-quality instruction. The study I conducted aims to address this gap in the literature by examining how students who placed well below the college-level cutoff on literacy entrance exams and who successfully completed their developmental literacy course define and perceive the literacy demands and expectations in college-level general education courses.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This study is a collective case study that focused on multiple individuals that were “bounded by time and activity” (Creswell, 2003). In this case, the individuals were all enrolled in the same community college and were all in the process of transitioning from developmental literacy courses to college-level courses. The goal of this study was to understand how the student participants experienced alignment of the literacy demands in their college-level courses with those in their developmental literacy courses. Each individual case provided a “portrait” of student participants’ experiences. The collective case, constructed by looking across individual experiences (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998) strengthened my ability to gain insights on the alignment between what students felt they learned in developmental literacy courses and what competencies they reported they needed to meet the literacy demands in their college-level courses across disciplines.

This study was situated within an interpretive, or social constructivist perspective as I was interested in how students perceived their reality and approached the study with the view that “reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds” (Merriam, 1998, p.6). Consistent with a case study design, the main source of data for this study was open-ended interviews with student participants about their experience with the literacy demands in their developmental and college-level general education courses. I conducted two interviews with each participant, one in the middle of the semester following their developmental course, and one at the end of that semester. I also surveyed disciplinary faculty about the role of literacy in their courses, their perspectives on their students’ literacy skills, and the reading and writing tasks they assigned in their courses. Finally, course documents and assignments from both the developmental literacy

courses and the college-level courses across disciplines were collected in order to provide more information about the literacy expectations and demands in these courses.

Research site

This study took place from the end of Fall 2016 to the Spring 2018 semester in Forest River Community College (pseudonym), a suburban New Jersey community college where I am a full-time faculty member in the English Department. There were 8,266 students, both full and part time, enrolled during the fall 2016 semester, the academic year this study began. Of those, 41% were full-time and 59% were part-time. In addition, 74.9% of students were continuing/readmitted students, 20% were first-time students, and 5% were new transfer students. In terms of degree and major status, 85.2% were in a matriculate program and 14.8% were undecided. Half the students were male, 47.4 female, and 2.6% unknown. The average age of the student population was 24.4 years old. The Ethnicity/Race of the student population that semester was as follows: 49.3% White, 21.5% Hispanic, 11.3% Black or African American, 6.0 Asian, 0.3% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific, 0.2% American Indian or Alaskan Native, 2.2% Two or More Races, and 9.2% unknown. The 3 year graduation rate for the full-time 2013 cohort was 28.3% (Fact book, 2016). Most of the courses taught by the English department are English Composition courses that are required for all degree programs offered at the college. Students' placement in English courses at that time was based on their scores on three Accuplacer tests: reading comprehension, sentence skills, and Writeplacer (Written Essay). In addition to the two college-level English Composition (ENGL 111 & ENGL 112) courses offered, the department offers two developmental integrated reading and writing courses, Introduction to College Reading and Composition

(ICRC) I (ENGL 050) and Introduction to College Reading and Composition II (ENGL 060). Students who place just below the cutoff for English Composition I, are enrolled in an English Composition I section that is paired with a workshop component (English Composition I with Workshop, ENGL 111 with ENGL 070). This is a policy that aligns with research-based recommendations on developmental literacy to accelerate students who place just below the cutoff score by enrolling them in college-level course whenever possible (Adams et al., 2009; Bailey & Cho, 2010;).

As illustrated in Table 1, placements for students who met the selection criteria for this study depend on a combination of the three scores. For instance, students with low reading comprehension scores (20-61) have three placement options, depending on their sentence skills score and their Writeplacer score: English 050, English 060, or ENGL 111 with ENGL 070. Students cannot place into ENGL 111 unless their reading comprehension score is at least 62, their Sentence Skills score is 83 or above, and their Writeplacer score is above 6. One exception is when students are placed in “ENGL 111 Recommend ENGL 070”. This means that students are recommended, but not required, to take English Composition I with Workshop. This recommendation is made when students meet the statewide writing cutoff for college level English (6+), but have lower scores in Sentence Skills and/or Reading Comprehension, or when students have Reading Comprehension and Sentence Skills Scores of 83 or above, but only a 5 on the Writeplacer. Those students are recommended, rather than required, to take ENGL 111 with ENGL 070 (English Comp I with Workshop), but can choose to take ENGL 111 without the workshop component.

Table 1

How Accuplacer scores are used to determine placement

College English & Math Accuplacer Scores

Reading Comprehension _____

Sentence Skills _____

WritePlacer _____

Reading Comprehension ↓	Sentence Skills →			ENGLISH PATH ELIGIBLE
	Write ↓	0-57	58-82	83+
20-61	1-2	ENGL 050 *	ENGL 050 *	ENGL 050 *
	3-4	ENGL 050 *	ENGL 060 *	ENGL 060 *
	5	ENGL 050 *	ENGL 060 *	ENGL 111 w/ ENGL 070 *
	6+	ENGL 111 w/ ENGL 070 *	ENGL 111 w/ ENGL 070 *	ENGL 111 w/ ENGL 070 *
62-82	1-2	ENGL 050 *	ENGL 060 *	ENGL 060 *
	3-4	ENGL 060 *	ENGL 060 *	ENGL 060 *
	5	ENGL 060 *	ENGL 060 *	ENGL 111 w /ENGL 070 *
	6+	ENGL 111 w/ ENGL 070 *	ENGL 111 Recommend ENGL 070 *	ENGL 111
83+	1-2	ENGL 060 *	ENGL 060 *	ENGL 111 w/ ENGL 070 *
	3-4	ENGL 060 *	ENGL 060 *	ENGL 111 w/ ENGL 070 *
	5	ENGL 111 w/ ENGL 070 *	ENGL 111 w/ ENGL 070 *	ENGL 111 Recommend ENGL 070 *
	6+	ENGL 111 w/ ENGL 070 *	ENGL 111 Recommend ENGL 070 *	ENGL 111

ENGL 050 – Intro to College Reading and Composition I *

ENGL 070 – Workshop *

ENGL 060 – Intro to College Reading and Composition II *

ENGL 111 – English I

Introduction to College Reading and Composition I and II (ENGL 050 and ENGL 060) are both integrated reading and composition courses and are designed to prepare students for English Composition I (ENGL 111). Students who successfully complete the requirements of ICRC I (ENGL 050) or II (ENGL 060) submit a portfolio that includes a self-reflection, a diagnostic writing piece completed in the first week or two of the course, an assigned essay that they selected to represent their strongest work, and a final in-class essay. Instructors evaluate their own students' portfolios using a rubric and then make recommendations for subsequent placement. Then, members of the English department gather for a portfolio reading session that usually lasts around four hours. Each faculty member that teaches ICRC I (050) and ICRC II (060) brings their students' portfolios and completed rubrics. In that session, portfolios are all read a second

time by another instructor. All the faculty readers who serve as second readers teach composition courses in the English department, but not all of them teach developmental literacy courses. If the second reader agrees with the placement recommended by the instructor, then that is the student's placement. If the second reader recommends a different placement, then the portfolio is read by a third reader to break the tie.

As a result of this portfolio review, students completing ICRC I (ENGL 050) can be placed in ICRC II (ENGL 060), English Composition I with Workshop (ENGL 111 with ENGL 070), or English Composition I (ENGL 111). Students completing ICRC II (ENGL 060) can be placed in English Composition with Workshop (ENGL 111 with ENGL 070) or English Composition I (ENGL 111). Students in either course can also be required to repeat the course, which is considered failing. Grades are determined automatically by the placement determined at the portfolio review. Students who place in English Composition I (ENGL 111) receive an A in 050 or 060; students who place in ENGL I with Workshop (ENGL 111 and ENGL 070) receive a B in 050 or 060; and students who place from ENGL 050 to ENGL 060 receive a C in ENGL 050. Again, students who place in ENGL 050 or 060 from the same course receive an F in the course. Based on institutional data collected at FRCC in the Fall of 2015 and Spring of 2016, 12.9 % of all students enrolled in ENGL 050 and 29.9 % of all students enrolled in ENGL 060 received a placement into ENGL 111 and an A in ENGL 050 or 060.

While some students will move sequentially through the developmental courses, this system allows for students to skip over courses and move more quickly into college-level courses if their portfolio suggests that is appropriate. This helps avoid students

getting stuck in the developmental pipeline, which is shown to contribute to student attrition (Adams et al., 2009).

Participants

Purposeful sampling was used to select participants for this study. The selection criteria for inclusion in the study required participants to be current FRCC students who had just completed either ENGL 050 or ENGL 060 the previous semester. In addition, they must have been placed in ENGL 111 after portfolio review, and as a result received an A in ENGL 050 or ENGL 060. Additionally, students needed to be taking at least one college-level class in a discipline other than English during the semester of the study.

These students were purposefully selected instead of students who passed ENGL 050/060, but were placed in ENGL 111 with workshop, because a workshop placement indicates that those students still needed support to do college-level reading and writing. The rationale for this selection criteria was that it would be expected for students who placed in ENGL 111 with workshop to struggle with college-level reading and writing in other courses, so it would be easier to focus on the question of alignment, rather than readiness, with students who had already indicated, through placement into ENGL 111 and an A in ENGL 050/060, that they were ready for college-level reading and writing. Looking at the experiences of these successful students provided valuable insight into how prepared students felt they were in facing the literacy demands in those courses after having been deemed as such by English department faculty, and how aligned our developmental literacy courses are with the actual literacy demands in other courses throughout the college.

One participant was a student who was initially placed in ICRC I (ENGL 050) during the Fall 2016 semester, and the other six participants were placed in ICRC II (ENGL 060) during Spring 2017 or Fall 2017 semesters. At the conclusion of their developmental literacy course (ENGL 050 or ENGL 060) all participants were placed in a college-level English Composition Course (ENGL 111), the highest possible placement, after portfolio review. I selected this group of students, because they scored well below the cutoff score for English Composition I after taking the Accuplacer. This means that their scores indicated serious difficulties with reading and/or writing and that they would not be able to successfully complete college-level English courses at the time of enrollment. This is the population of developmental students who are studied less frequently in the literature (Bailey & Cho, 2010). Students who scored just below the cutoff score for English Composition I would not be placed in ICRC I (ENGL 050) or II (ENGL 060),]; they would be placed in English Composition I with Workshop (ENGL 111 with ENGL 070).

Despite their initial placement, by the end of the semester, the students in this study demonstrated to the English department that that they were ready to complete college-level work by receiving a placement into ENGL 111 and the resulting A in ENGL 050 or 060. All participants in this study achieved that goal in one semester. These students represent the most successful students in developmental literacy courses and were among the most prepared students the English department sent into other courses in the college.

I began recruiting students for the study at the very end of the Fall 2016 semester. Initially, I did not recruit students who had been in one of my ENGL 050 or ENGL 060

classes to reduce any potential bias. After the Fall 2016 portfolio review, I asked my colleagues if they would forward an email from me about the study to the students in their ENGL 050/060 courses who had received an A in the course. After the first round of recruitment, I found only one student who was willing and able to participate and fit the inclusion criteria. At that point, I amended my IRB application so that I could also include students in the study who had me as an instructor. I did two more rounds of recruitment, during the Fall 2017 semester and the Spring 2018 semester. During these rounds I requested a list of ID numbers of students who had taken ENGL 050 or ENGL 060 during the Spring 2017 and Fall 2017 semesters and fit the criteria for inclusion in the study. I then emailed all students who fit the inclusion criteria and asked that they fill out a one question survey on which they provided their name and email if they might be interested in participating. In addition, I sent the email directly to students that had received an A in my ENGL 060 courses. I also visited ENGL 111 classes to talk about the study and ask students who had taken ENGL 050 or 060 and were currently enrolled in a college-level course other than English to reply to my email if they might be interested in taking part in the study. These efforts enabled me to recruit six more participants, two in the Fall 2017 semester, and four in the Spring 2018 semester.

I interviewed the participants during the semester when they were enrolled in ENGL 111 and at least one other course in a discipline other than English. The interview questions focused on their perceptions of alignment between what they learned in their ENGL 050 or 060 course and the literacy expectations and demands in their disciplinary college-level course. The small sample size allowed for an in-depth investigation into each student's experiences. While I did not have enough willing participants to employ

“purposeful maximum sampling” (Creswell, 2007, p.75) which would have allowed me to select students based on criteria other than the basic inclusion criteria, the participants were diverse in terms of gender, age, and educational backgrounds, and did reflect, to a degree at least, the diversity found in developmental literacy classrooms and the community college. I did not ask participants to identify their native language, their race, or their ethnicity. One participant did share that English was not her first language. This diversity provided a range of perspectives on the alignment between the college’s developmental literacy courses and college-level classes across disciplines that may not have been possible from a more homogeneous group. Table 2 presents this diversity in terms of participants’ age, major, developmental literacy course taken and the semester they took it, and the college-level course they focused on in their interviews. Following this, brief descriptions of each participant is are provided. All names are pseudonyms. Since the focus of the study was on their experiences with reading and writing in courses outside of the English department, I only asked participants about their grades in their disciplinary college-level courses, not their ENGL 111 classes.

Table 2

Participant Information

Name	Age	Major	Developmental literacy course/ Semester	College course discussed in interview/ semester
Chloe	19	Education	ENGL 050/Fall 2016	History of Women in the United States/Spring 2017
Sophia	24	Pre-social work	ENGL 060/Spring 2017	American History: Beginnings to 1877/ Fall 2017
Melissa	19	Pre-nursing	ENGL 060/Spring 2017	Introduction to Psychology/Fall 2017

Oscar	32	Pre-nursing	ENGL 060/Fall 2017	Computer Literacy/Spring 2018 (also Ethics/Fall 2017)
Mike	38	Interactive digital media	ENGL 060/Fall 2017	Computer Concepts and Programming/Interactive Multimedia/ Spring 2018
Nadia	31	General science/pre-health professional	ENGL 060/Fall 2017	Introduction to Psychology/Spring 2018
Aiden	19	Visual Art	ENGL 060/Fall 2017	Art History from Prehistory to the Gothic Period

Chloe

Chloe was 19 years old at the time the study was conducted. Initially, she wanted to go to Salisbury University immediately after high school. However, while her GPA was “pretty good,” her SAT scores were not. Because she did not believe she would be admitted to Salisbury, she decided instead to go to Forest River Community College (FRCC) for two years and then hoped to transfer to a university. She said she wanted to come to FRCC to study teaching and that she wants to work in a school system. Based on her placement test results, Chloe was placed in ENGL 050. She explained that she had experienced reading comprehension problems since she was in third grade. She spoke very highly of her ENGL 050 teacher, to whom she credited a lot of her progress and her increased confidence. Chloe was taking History of Women in the United States at the time of the study and talked excitedly about it. She reported finding the content both interesting and eye-opening. At the end of the semester, she reported that she had received a B in the course. Interestingly, when I emailed with her later, she said that she thought talking with me during the interview had a positive impact on her “academic

achievement.” She took six classes her last semester at FRCC and predicted she would be finishing with A’s and B’s. She was planning to transfer to a 4-year university the next semester.

Sophia

Sophia was 24 during the time she participated in the study. She was enrolled in my ENGL 060 class during the Spring 2017 semester and was an engaged, hardworking student. Like many community college students, Sophia balanced work and other responsibilities with school. Sophia came to FRCC to get her associate degree in Social Services. During her first interview she told me that she planned to transfer to Rutgers after she graduated. She said that she had always done well in English; in high school it was one of her best subjects. She thought success in college courses depended a lot on figuring out what the teacher wanted and the quality of the teacher-student relationship. She said, “I feel like in order to learn, you have to kind of like your professor and if you don’t, you kind of don’t put [in] the same effort.” She credited ENGL 060 with helping her be more confident and less stressed about her writing. When I emailed with her in March, 2020, she was planning to transfer to Rutgers, Newark after graduation. Sophia graduated FRCC in May 2020.

Melissa

Melissa was 19 years old at the time the study was conducted. She was a student in my Spring 2017 ENGL 060 class. In our first interview, she reported that FRCC was a “back-up plan” after high school. Because she hadn’t done that well in high school, she wasn’t sure what her next steps would be. After high school she took what she called a “gap semester” and made a deal with her parents that after taking a year off of school, she

would go to FRCC for a year and save money. Once she got to FRCC she found that the college was “a lot better than the notion in my head.” She was determined to work hard and earn good grades at FRCC in order to transfer to a four-year university and get a degree in nursing. The study habits she described in our interviews illustrated her hard work and creativity in applying and modifying reading and writing strategies she had learned in ENGL 060 for use in her college level courses. She earned in A in Introduction to Psychology, the course she discussed in our interviews. Melissa was able to meet her goal in the fall of 2018 when she transferred to a four-year university to study nursing.

Oscar

Oscar works full-time as an EMT for a large hospital system. At the time of our interviews, he was 32 and had been working in that job for six years. He was attending FRCC in order to continue his education and become an RN. His goal was to become a mobile intensive care nurse. He explained that this is a nurse who works on an ambulance and does critical care transports. He took my ENGL 060 in Fall 2017; he had been out of high school for 16 years. He identified as a strong reader but not a strong writer. He felt that he needed ENGL 060 to understand the foundations of academic writing, something with which he didn't have much experience. During our interviews, he spoke about his Ethics and Computer Literacy courses. The former, he took simultaneously with ENGL 060; the latter, he took the subsequent semester. He was a very hard worker, and he had a laid-back confidence that, in addition to his maturity, was evident in the way he talked about his experiences in college. He received an A in Computer Literacy, and all his other classes, during the semester of the study. As of fall 2020, he was still at FRCC,

working full-time as an EMT during the pandemic, and still hoping to transfer into the nursing program.

Mike

At 38 years old, Mike returned to school thanks to the Trade Readjustment Allowance (TRA) program, a federal program that he described as providing training funds for individuals whose jobs have been moved overseas. His previous job was building housings for fluorescent lights. To receive the funding, he had to pick a program that trained for jobs in demand. Mike had a passion for film, but because of this requirement, he chose to study interactive digital media. He was in my ENGL 060 during the fall of 2017. When Mike talked about learning, he lit up, and he was able to articulate many connections between the work he did in ENGL 060 and his experiences in school and life. Mike was married with kids and described time as his biggest obstacle to success in his college classes. While he passed his ENGL 111 course and was hoping for a B in his Interactive Multimedia course, he failed his Computer Concepts course. He attributed that failure to the amount of time that he had needed to dedicate to English. Mike told me through email in May 2019 that he had to leave school to go back to work full-time because his benefits had been cut.

Nadia

Nadia was 31 at the time of our interview and she explained that this was her second time enrolling in college. She had enrolled in 2005, but reported that she “kind of went on a bad path” for about 10 years until she “changed [her] ways” and decided to return to college. Her major was general science/pre-health professional. She told me she had plans to transfer to a four-year college/university after completing FRCC. She took

ENGL 060 with another instructor during the fall of 2017. Nadia was soft-spoken when we first met and talked about her responsibilities taking care of her grandfather. She was a dedicated student who had a very good sense of her strengths and weaknesses and had developed several interesting strategies for studying, memorizing, and improving her reading comprehension. She felt like she had become a better reader and writer since starting college, but she still didn't think she read at "college-level." She described a "passion" for learning about the human body. She got an A in her Introduction to Psychology class the semester she interviewed with me, and as of Spring 2020, she was still taking classes at FRCC.

Aiden

Aiden, a 19 year old artist, enrolled at FRCC because it was close to home and he thought he would get a "basic knowledge of art" there which he wanted because he planned to pursue art as a career. His goal at FRCC was to get an associate degree, possibly in Fine Art. In high school, Aiden was in a vocational program and at the time of the study he worked at a graphic shop. He stated that both experiences helped him keep up with the "workforce side" of art. Aiden was very descriptive and engaging in conversation and he talked enthusiastically about learning both in ENGL 060 and his art history class. He told me during his second interview that he passed his art history class, but he didn't specify the grade. As of Fall 2019, Aiden was still enrolled at FRCC and had won awards for his artwork.

Data Collection

Because the goal of the study was to understand the experiences of student-participants, data collection consisted primarily of two individual interviews with each

participant. I also sent out a brief survey to faculty in disciplines other than English about the literacy demands in their classes. I looked at ENGL 050/060 course outlines, syllabi, and assignments. I also asked disciplinary faculty to share their reading and/or writing assignments with me. In addition, I asked participants to share course documents, such as syllabi and assignments from the college-level disciplinary courses in which they were currently enrolled.

Interviews

Interviews were semi-structured and open-ended to allow for the interaction that is vital in a case study (Merriam, 1998). Students were interviewed twice for the study during the semester in which they participated (Spring 2017, Fall 2017, or Spring 2018). The first interview was conducted near the middle of the 15-week semester so that students had the opportunity to get started with their courses and engage in the literacy work required of them. I asked students to select one college level course in a discipline other than English from among the courses they were taking that semester as a focus for the interview. I also asked participants to come to the interview with one or two examples of a reading or writing assignment they had had to do in in that course. Some, but not all participants, brought those assignments. When they did, we talked about how they approached the assignment, the strengths and weaknesses they felt they brought to the assignments, and how it was similar or different to the reading and writing they did in ENGL 050/060. I also copied or asked for an electronic file of the assignment for further document analysis. When they were not able to bring a physical or electronic document with them, I still asked them to think of a particular assignment for our discussion. Interviews ranged in length from about 25 to 45 minutes long. The beginning of the

interview included questions focused on their experiences in their developmental literacy course from the previous semester. Then, the questions turned to students' perceptions of their strengths and the challenges they were experiencing as they navigated the literacy requirements of the focus course. There were also questions about how the literacy demands of that college-level course aligned with the literacy expectations and requirements in their developmental literacy course(s).

The second interviews took place after the end of the semester. This is a difficult time to meet with students, so I was only able to meet with some students right after the semester ended. In two cases, the second interview took place at the beginning of the following semester. Participants were asked to come to that interview with an example of a literacy assignment from the focus course which they found particularly challenging and a sample of an assignment that they thought highlights their strengths. In many cases, there was only one main reading or writing assignment in the course, so participants were not always able to bring more than one assignment. Instead we talked about aspects of assignments that they found particularly challenging and what highlighted their strengths. Students who were willing shared their final grades. Some participants had not received their final grade at the time of the second interview. This interview revisited similar questions included in the first interview, but at this time, students were able to reflect on the literacy demands of the course across the entire semester.

After my final interview with participants, I tried to stay in touch with participants as I worked through data analysis and writing. My first effort was to conduct a planned focus group that would have brought them all together to talk about their experiences. I contacted them by email to try and plan this. I used a Doodle poll in an effort to find a

mutually agreeable time for this, but only heard back from one participant. I also tried via email to find other dates that would work for everyone, but was unable to accomplish this. I also emailed participants to ask clarifying questions or to confirm some basic information like their age, major, and preferred pseudonym. In addition to the information I was requesting during these email exchanges, I also received updates on participants' progress in school and plans for transfer or graduation. In March of 2020, I emailed a summary of my findings to all participants and asked them if they felt the findings seemed representative of what they had experienced and reported. I only heard back from one participant about this, probably partly because students are very busy and partly because at least three participants had already transferred or left the college. The participant who responded said the summary, which included some details about her specific responses, was "perfect."

Survey

I sent out a brief survey to faculty, both full and part-time, across the college in disciplines other than English during the Spring 2017 semester and again during the Spring 2018 semester. Forty-two faculty members responded. In the Fall of 2016, there were 469 faculty members, 127 full-time and 342 part-time. While I did not get a high rate of return, those 42 faculty members represented 19 different disciplines, so I received information from this survey that I was not able to get in the participant interviews. The purpose of this survey was to gather basic information about the kinds of reading and writing activities and assignments faculty include in their courses from as many faculty as possible in disciplines other than English. The survey also included questions about how well prepared they felt their students were for the reading and writing assignments in

their courses. I also provided an opportunity for faculty to add comments about their experiences with student reading and writing skills as demonstrated within their courses. The results of this survey were used to provide context for and additional information regarding the experiences participants described.

Document Analysis

I also collected two main types of documents: student writing and course documents from both the student-selected college-level disciplinary course the students were taking at the time of the study and from their developmental literacy courses taken the previous semester. In some cases, participants shared syllabi and assignments of the courses they were taking during the interview, and in other cases, the instructors shared course documents when I reached out through the survey, and in certain cases through follow up emails. Documents collected included syllabi, writing assignment instructions, tests, drafts of student essays with teacher feedback and final papers, assignment rubrics, and multimedia projects. I also looked at textbooks and other reading materials.

Of the three participants who did not have me as their developmental literacy course instructor, one had a full-time instructor for ENGL 050 and the other two had adjunct instructors for ENGL 060. The adjunct instructors used the same book-length texts and anthology that I used in my ENGL 060 courses. While instructors can write their own assignments, all assignments in ENGL 050 and 060 are required to be text-based and thesis-driven. Many instructors use the sample assignments provided on our department teaching resources page, some of which are assignments I created. I collected syllabi from the two adjunct instructors that taught ENGL 060. Both followed the department template for syllabi, and only varied in terms of the individual readings

assigned from the anthology. The full-time instructor who taught ENGL 050 retired during the study, but I worked closely with her in the department and was familiar with many of her assignments.

In addition to these documents, I also asked faculty that completed my survey and other faculty I emailed to share samples of reading and writing assignments from their courses. I collected syllabi and assignments from faculty from 26 courses in 16 different disciplines. These documents were analyzed in order to gain a more complete picture of the type of reading and writing assignments that students are being assigned across the college.

I also asked participants to bring samples of writing or reading assignments that they completed in their college-level courses. When participants brought assignments, they used them to provide specific examples as they explained their perceived strengths and described the challenges they were experiencing in the course. As described above, not all participants brought assignments, but most did. If they didn't bring the assignment with them, they described it. Four participants brought papers they had written for their classes. Two participants who were taking psychology courses shared or discussed test questions. One of those participants also shared assignments for which students were required to read and analyze a psychological scenario, and one discussed a group presentation project. One participant shared a multimedia project. These artifacts/documents, in addition to those shared by disciplinary colleagues, helped me create a detailed picture of the type of literacy work student participants were asked to do, their perceived strengths and weaknesses, and how well they understood and were able to

execute the literacy requirements of that work. This helped provide insight into how these strengths and challenges aligned with the expectations in developmental literacy courses.

Researcher Journal/Memos

Throughout the study, I kept a researcher journal in order to record ideas and thoughts about the study as well as “emerging theory” (Creswell, 2007, p.67). As the main instrument of data collection for this study was individual interviews, interview memos similar to the “contact summary sheets” suggested by Miles & Huberman (1994) were completed after each interview and included in the research journal, in order to help me move “easily from empirical data to a conceptual level” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.74). In these entries, I recorded important points participants made and my main takeaways and impressions after each interview. I also used this space as a place to record ideas and questions inspired by participants’ responses. I made notes of connections between their responses and my research questions, and any connections to responses from other participants. In this way, I was engaged in what Merriam (1998) calls “rudimentary analysis.” (p.165). I also used the researcher journal as a place to “bracket” my preconceived ideas and biases about developmental literacy instruction and its alignment with college-level coursework. This process, borrowed from phenomenological research, included setting aside my “prejudgments, biases, and preconceived ideas about things” (Moustakas, 1994, p.85). I referred to my researcher journal throughout all stages of the data analysis process, checking back to see what ideas and questions raised in the journal still seemed salient in both the individual and cross-case analysis.

Data Analysis

Data analysis followed Ruona's (2005) four stages of qualitative data analysis: Data Preparation, Familiarization, Coding, and Generating Meaning. In the data preparation stage, individual participant interviews and focus groups were transcribed. Documents that were collected and any notes or memos related to those documents were organized into physical and electronic folders. Participants were given pseudonyms and all identifying information was kept in a locked file cabinet. In the familiarization stage, I read over the interview transcripts in order to identify important themes and get a beginning sense of what the participants were saying by increasing my familiarity with their words. As I did this, I made margin notes with comments and questions about the data. Once I familiarized myself with the data, I moved to the coding stage.

I used Lea and Street's (1998, 2006) academic literacies and Ivanic's (2004) discourses of writing frameworks as a lens for analysis. Based on these frameworks and my research questions, I developed, as Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest, a "provisional 'start list'" (p.58) of a priori codes with which to begin data analysis. This list of a priori codes included "skills"; "creativity"; "social"; or "academic literacy" that identified activities or approaches that align with Ivanic's (2004) discourses and/or Lea and Street's (1998, 2006) framework. I also used inductive codes to mark tension or alignment between approaches in the developmental literacy course and the college-level course. Codes such as "tension" or "alignment" were sometimes combined if the tension or alignment seemed to be based in differing Discourses. For example, I looked for places where there is evidence of discourses, or an "academic discourse" that seemed common across disciplines. Other inductive codes named types of literacy activities, such as

“annotation”; “discussion”; “rereading” or those that named a type of written text such as “five-paragraph”; “argument”; “response.” Lea and Street (1998) found that students often struggled with recognizing and understanding the “specific academic requirements” of a particular context. Codes such as “discipline specific language”: “confusion/clarify of requirements”; “unclear directions”; “terminology” were used to label instances of this.

A systematic process of coding using a variety of data- driven approaches was used. I started by reading through the transcripts and applying some of the codes from my a priori code list. I also looked for data that was consistent with other preliminary codes. As the coding process progressed, some codes were dropped, new codes emerged, some codes were combined into one, and others expanded. To align with the research questions, codes were sorted into broad categories that focused on “What helps” and “Challenges.” These captured data related to both academic and non-academic experiences. Because many codes were under both the “What helps” and “Challenges” category, some are the result of combining codes – for example, “What helps/affective” or “Challenges/affective.” When information coded under “What Helps” and “challenges” also illustrated alignment or tension between disciplinary Discourses, it was coded to reflect that: “tension/writing” or “alignment/reading.” More specific codes were organized under those categories. For example, when a participant said about annotation that “I think that’s the biggest thing that, or the most effective tool that’s helped me and not just in that class, but even in my Java class” it was coded under the broad category of “What helps.” Then it was coded under “alignment/reading,” “comprehension strategies,” and finally “annotation.” An example that was coded under “Challenges” that illustrates a

tension between disciplinary Discourses was when a participant expressed confusion about an disciplinary expectation in an assignment: “Not use, ‘I,I,I’ like it could use, ‘As the readers’ or ‘We readers think,’” This was coded under “tension/writing,” and then “disciplinary expectations.” This process of coding and re-coding continued until it seemed as though “the analysis itself has run its course” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.62). At this point, when I coded the transcripts, no new codes were emerging, and the existing codes were working to label the data in ways that seemed accurate and meaningful to my research questions.

Once the initial coding process was complete, I put related codes into categories that captured concepts related to my research questions. Then, I created charts for each individual participant. Within these charts, I organized specific data from each participant’s interviews by codes and categories of codes. These organizational charts helped me create a picture of how each individual participant described their experiences in both ENGL 050/060 and their college-level courses. I identified their overall view of how helpful ENGL 050/060 was; strategies they said helped them in ENGL 050/060 and were useful in their college-level courses; strengths and challenges in reading and writing that participants reported; strengths and challenges they experienced meeting the literacy demands and expectations in college-level courses; and the literacy demands they described in their college-level courses and how they compared to those in ENGL 050/060. In addition, I identified affective benefits participants described as a result of taking ENGL 050/060. Details in these categories were also labeled with specific page numbers from the interview transcripts where the data came from. In the chart, categories

were identified with labels such as “What helped in ICRC [ENGL 050/060]”; “Challenges”; “Strengths”; “Lit Demands.”

Ruona’s (2005) last stage of analysis is generating meaning. In this stage, I analyzed the categories of data and looked for meaningful patterns, connections, and relationships. Merriam (1998) describes, there are two levels of analysis in multiple case studies, within-case analysis and cross-case analysis. To accomplish both types of analyses, each individual case was treated first as a “comprehensive case in and of itself” (Merriam, 1998, p.194). As described, I coded each individual case completely and then looked for meaningful patterns within that case. From the charts I created for each individual participant, I created a portrait of each case that included illustrative examples. After this process was completed, I employed across-case analysis and looked for meaningful patterns and relationships across cases. Using the individual case charts and coded transcripts, I used colored index cards to create a card for each important piece of evidence for each category. Each color represented broad categories like reading, writing, both reading and writing, and affective outcomes. Each card was labeled with participant initials and with sub-category, such as “Introductions”; “Expectations”; “Argument”; “Motivation” and included examples and details from the transcript in bullet points that were labeled by interview and page number. Each card was also coded with other symbols that indicated whether the card contained a student strategy or a teacher strategy (TS or SS); was a challenge or a strength (up or down arrow); was evidence of alignment or lack of alignment (+/-); and whether it was connected to ENGL 050/060 or the college-level course, or both.

In order to synthesize this information to create a cross-case description of the meanings and essence of the experience, I sorted these cards into piles connected by categories and sub-categories. For instance, all the cards related to “Annotation” were put together. This sorting allowed me to see the connections between cases. Then, I organized the information from the cards into an outline. Categories in that outline were then collapsed, combined, and refined in order to create a revised outline. This process led to “generalizing and theorizing” how the data answered my research questions and related to prior research on the topic (Ruona, 2005). From this outline, themes emerged about the findings, a story about what aspects of their learning in ENGL 050/060 helped participants meet the literacy demands in their college-level classes and where they struggled. I organized the findings chapters around these larger themes and the categories within them. As I analyzed, organized, and wrote the findings chapters, I created notes and outlines about implications that emerged from the findings. The entire process was recursive, and each pass through each outline and draft of both the findings and implications chapters produced more notes, revisions, and refinement of ideas.

While I was primarily concerned with analyzing the participants’ experiences with the literacy work in college-level courses from their perspective, documents from the courses and student work was used as secondary sources to provide another angle from which to view the interview data and to understand the participants’ struggles and successes with the literacy work in their disciplinary college-level courses. Documents such as essay assignments helped me understand more about aspects of the assignment which students found difficult or confusing and provided insight into how their difficulties may have stemmed from unclear directions, misunderstanding the assignment,

a discipline-specific expectation, or some other factor. I looked at syllabi and assignments from developmental literacy courses and from college-level courses. While I valued and prioritized the students' experiences, it was important to relate those experiences to the information that course documents provided. Course documents also provided further validation of, or explanation for, participants' confusion about certain aspects of their college-level courses and their observations about alignment, or lack of alignment, between developmental literacy courses and college-level general education courses.

I used a similar set of a priori codes as those used with the interview transcripts to analyze course documents. I looked for places of tension and alignment within and across the course documents through the lens of Ivanic's (2004) and Lea and Street's (1998, 2006) framework. In other words, I looked for the discourses and accompanying approaches to literacy instruction that are evident in the assignments in order to understand the underlying beliefs about literacy that inform the class and the assignment. I looked for places of alignment and misalignment between assignments in the developmental literacy course and those in the college level courses with regard to the types of literacy tasks students are asked to do and the stated requirements of the assignment. I also identified and tallied different features of the reading and writing assignments I collected from disciplinary courses in two charts. In the first chart, I recorded information about the writing assignments I collected: the type of assignment, whether it required an argument, a thesis statement, evidence, textual quotes, and citations/citation style. I also created a chart that listed the types of reading assignments faculty assigned and what type, if any, of response to the reading they required (written, comprehension questions, quiz, etc.).

Finally, the faculty survey results were collected using Survey Monkey. Through that site, I was able to print reports of faculty responses that allowed me to view the data through multiple lenses. I used this analysis to complement the analyses of the interview and document data and provide information that had been gathered from faculty members who represented a greater number of disciplines and courses than those discussed by the participants in the study. This allowed me to see when experiences students reported seemed to be representative of what students would be likely to experience in other courses across disciplines.

Researcher Role

In order to avoid researcher bias, I paid close attention to my role as an instructor in the English Department at the community college where I conducted this research. While I was not teaching any of the participants during the study period, I had taught four of the seven participants in ENGL 060. I was aware that this could potentially put students in an awkward position when they were asked how prepared they felt in their college-level courses after taking developmental literacy courses. They might worry about saying anything negative about the class I taught or they might be inclined to tell me what they thought I wanted to hear. In order to help students respond as authentically and honestly as possible, I tried to make them feel comfortable by emphasizing that the research study was not about evaluating any of their instructors, but rather about gaining an understanding of what students were experiencing in college level courses and how we, as educators, can use that information to inform and improve our course and assignment design as a way to create more connections across disciplines. I also emphasized that the best way to use their experiences as successful developmental

literacy students to help the college serve students better would be for them to be honest about both the positive and negative aspects of their experience.

Another potential concern was that it was possible that participants could enroll in a course that I am teaching after the study is complete. This has not happened, but theoretically it still could. In order to address that potential, I explained that while my design of future courses will probably be informed by what I learned from this study, my role as their professor would be different from my role as a researcher. I emphasized that nothing that they revealed to me in this research study would be discussed or mentioned in interactions with them outside the context of the study. I also made it clear that their names any other identifying information would not be linked to information they shared with me for the study, . This was also stated in the consent form.

This information about the study was provided to students before they agreed to participate, and I also encouraged students to ask me any questions or express any concerns they had about their participation in the study before they agreed to participate.

In addition, as an instructor of ENGL 050/060, I acknowledge that it would be tempting to look for evidence that the developmental literacy courses that my colleagues and I teach are well aligned with the expectations of college level course instructors and that students are well prepared to meet those expectations. In my researcher journal, I “bracketed” my own assumptions and prior beliefs about developmental literacy courses, literacy in general education courses, and students’ experiences in these courses (Merriam, 1998). This brought these biases to the surface, so that I was more aware of them in the process of data collection and analysis. As I worked to interpret the data, I

went back to the original participant interviews to check that my interpretations were, in fact, fully supported by what the participant said in the interview.

Trustworthiness

A number of methods were employed to increase internal validity. First, I used triangulation through the collection of multiple sources of data. In addition, I searched for disconfirming evidence, kept an audit trail, and engaged in peer examination.

Triangulation of Sources

I collected data from a number of different sources in order to validate and check information from one source by looking at information from another source (Patton, 1990, p.467). In this study, data were collected through two interviews, a faculty survey, and documents from both developmental literacy courses and disciplinary college-level courses. I collected documents from faculty from 16 different disciplines, and 26 different courses, including six of the nine courses that study participants discussed. I provided a summary of my findings to all participants. These multiple methods allowed for data to be triangulated to increase validity of the findings (Creswell & Miller, 2000). For example, document analysis provided information about the reading and writing assignments that helped me identify when students' perceptions of the assignment objectives seemed to be aligned with the stated objectives and when they didn't. When similar patterns emerged across data sources, the credibility of those patterns was strengthened. At the same time, when information that emerged from the data is different across sources, I looked to "understand the reasons for the difference" (Patton, 1990, p.467). Establishing these similar patterns and developing "reasonable explanations for

differences in data” (Patton, 1990, p.467) through the multiple sources of data collected allowed me to create a more trustworthy picture of what was happening when students left developmental literacy courses and tackled the literacy demands of college-level courses.

Looking for Disconfirming Evidence

In addition, data analysis included the search for disconfirming evidence that contradicted initial, tentative themes that I believed were emerging. Participants were interviewed twice and asked similar questions that would allow for them to change their mind or provide contradictory information. In the same way, participants were asked different questions that connected to similar ideas. For example, participants were asked whether ENGL 050/060 was helpful or not, but then they were also asked specifically about the ways the course was helpful or not in the context of certain assignments. I sought to understand how any contrasting evidence contributed to the themes and ideas emerging from the data (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Miles & Huberman, 1984; Ruona, 2005). I investigated whether disconfirming evidence represented an outlier, an unusual event, or was evidence that shifted or changed the themes that were emerging from the data. In addition, I analyzed the role my assumptions and biases played in my reaction to the data (Ruona, 2005).

Audit Trail

Throughout the course of the study, I took detailed notes in my researcher journal about the data collection process, the coding process, and how data was analyzed. This audit trail provided a clear picture of how the study was conducted, a record of how

insights were recognized and developed into findings and implications, and how decisions were made throughout the study (Ruona, 2005).

Peer Examination

Another strategy I used to increase the trustworthiness of the study findings was to share my data, codes, emerging themes and findings with my peers and colleagues for feedback (Merriam, 1998; Ruona, 2005). I met with Jennifer DelNero, Ph.D. and James Pacello Ed.D., two former classmates, several times to obtain feedback on whether the codes I developed and the themes that emerged seemed to follow from the data. They are both graduates of the Rutgers Literacy Education doctoral program and currently Jen is an Assistant Professor of Literacy Education at The College of New Jersey. James is an English Professor, specializing in developmental literacy, at Berkeley College. In addition to this peer group, I received feedback from a group of interdisciplinary peers in the Research Writing Group that I am a part of at the community college where I work. Members of the group looked at a small section of one interview transcript, coded the data using my a priori codes and added any codes they thought were useful. It was helpful to see what my colleagues identified as important in the transcript, and it was generally similar to what I had identified in my coding, which was validating. This exercise was followed by a discussion that, even though we only looked at a small piece of data, was very generative to me in thinking from a more interdisciplinary point of view about my data analysis. For example, faculty were very empathetic with a participants' struggle to understand her assignment and they talked about the importance of clear assignments and precise terminology. This illustrated how the data had the potential to provide important implications for practice and professional development.

Limitations

The findings of this study are limited to the experiences of seven students at one particular community college who took and passed a particular developmental literacy course. They are not necessarily representative of other developmental students at FRCC or any other community college. In addition, these students were students who received an A in their developmental literacy course and were placed directly in college-level English courses. This was part of the selection criteria for this study. It increased the chances that the students were engaged and participating in the developmental literacy class. In addition, students who receive an A in developmental literacy courses are deemed “college-ready” by English faculty. Successful stories of developmental students are rarely told (Rose, 2012; Webb-Sunderhaus, 2010). However, this also means that these students may not represent the “typical” developmental literacy students and the results of this study may not provide insight into what aspects of developmental literacy education might be helpful or problematic for those students.

Along the same lines, the participants in this study volunteered to participate in the study. This engagement and willingness to participate might indicate qualities of these particular people that contributed to their success in both developmental literacy courses and their college-level courses. It is possible that the participants of this study may have been successful even if they did not complete the developmental literacy course. While school did not come easily to many of them, and none of them felt they were misplaced in developmental courses, most of them were willing to put in a level of effort that may have allowed them to be successful even without developmental intervention.

Another consideration is that only one participant in the study took the lowest level developmental course offered at FRCC (ENGL 050). The six other participants all took the second level, ENGL 060. These ENGL 060 students still tested well below the cutoff level, because FRCC has an English Composition I with Workshop courses (ENGL 070) where students who tested just below the cutoff would be placed. Still, this one participant may not represent the experiences of other ENGL 050 students.

In addition, this study did not focus on the impact of race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status on the experiences of developmental literacy students, despite the importance of these factors in the analysis and critique of developmental education. Research shows that a disproportionate number of Black and low-SES students are assigned to developmental education, and specifically to the lowest levels of developmental education (Braithwaite & Edgecombe, 2018). In addition, developmental education reforms and practices may continue to privilege certain students and disadvantage others (Braithwaite & Edgecombe, 2018). Because an analysis of race, ethnicity, and SES status was outside the scope of this study, this is a limitation of the data and another way the experiences of these students may not be representative.

Finally, four of the participants had me as their developmental course instructor. I had a good teacher-student relationship with each of them, and they were willing to participate in the study at least in part because of that initial connection. Although I urged them to be honest in their assessment of their experiences with their developmental literacy courses, and stressed that the study was not about me or my teaching, they may still have wanted to be positive in their assessment of the course and its benefits. In

addition, they may have enjoyed taking the class and that may have impacted their assessment of whether the course was helpful in subsequent college-level courses.

Summary of Findings

The findings of this study are presented in chapters 4 and 5. The primary source of data for these findings were student interviews. Secondary sources of data included information from a faculty survey and course documents. Chapter 4 describes the reading and writing strategies that participants learned in ENGL 050/060 that they found helpful in meeting the literacy demands of their disciplinary college-level classes. It is organized around three broad categories that detail specific reading and writing strategies and information participants named in addition to the affective benefits they identified. In contrast, Chapter 5 presents the challenges, gaps, and tensions participants reported experiencing as they transitioned from ENGL 050/060 into college-level courses in disciplines other than English.

Chapter 4: Points of Alignment between ENGL 050/060 and College Level Courses

Introduction

This chapter will outline the ways in which participants felt that their developmental literacy course aligned with their college-level courses in disciplines other than English. The developmental literacy courses at Forest River Community College, Introduction to College Reading and Composition 1/II (ENGL 050/060), are designed to prepare students for college-level reading and writing. The courses share the same course learning outcomes. During the time I was conducting interviews, the course learning outlines were revised in order to make the Course Learning Outcomes the same as the General Education Learning outcomes, which are aligned with New Jersey Council of County Colleges' General Education Goal for written and oral communication. As a result, the participants who took ENGL 050 or 060 during Fall 2016 (Chloe) and Spring 2017 (Sophia and Melissa) took courses that used the General Education Learning Outcomes and the additional course learning outcomes. The participants who took the ENGL 050/060 in Fall 2017 (Mike, Oscar, Nadia, and Aiden), took courses that used only the General Education Learning Outcomes as both the General Education and the Course Learning Outcomes. The department decided to only use one set of outcomes, because the lists were redundant; therefore, this change did not impact the content of the course. Both sets of outcomes are listed below:

General Education Learning Outcomes

At the completion of the course, students will:

1. Demonstrate the requirements for good essay organization (NJ GE 1).
2. Use evidence to support claims (NJ GE 1).

3. Use the writing process for essay development (NJ GE 1).
4. Demonstrate better control of the grammatical and mechanical structures used in academic writing (NJ GE 1).
5. Demonstrate reading comprehension (NJ GE 1).
6. Analyze texts for discussion and writing (NJ GE 1).

Course Learning Outcomes [included in the Fall 2016 and Spring 2017 course outlines, but removed for course outlines effective Fall 2017]

At the completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Write essays using appropriate organization.
2. Demonstrate invention in prewriting, writing, and revising and editing essays.
3. Write sentences using correct punctuation.
4. Use a variety of reading comprehension strategies.
5. Read, analyze, and discuss texts as a basis for original thinking and writing.

The course outlines (both versions) also list some of the “common strategies of reading and writing development” that are covered in the course. These are organized into strategies used at the pre-, during-, and post- reading and pre-writing stages. The following is taken directly from the “Outline of Course Content” section of the 050/060 course outline:

The following outline of course content does not reflect a hierarchical order as the skills are taught in combination and are reinforced throughout the semester. Following a thematic, process-oriented approach, students will read and analyze a variety of fiction and non-fiction texts of increasing complexity, and write narrative, comparative, and argumentative essays organized around a main idea. Students will demonstrate the ability to comprehend and analyze texts for the main idea or meaning and will demonstrate the ability to write essays that reflect

unity and cohesion. To that end, the course content will be organized around the following common strategies of reading and writing development:

After this description, specific strategies for each stage in the reading and writing process are listed. These include strategies such as brainstorming, annotating, summarizing, outlining, and revising for paragraph unity and cohesion.

As both the course learning outcomes and the course content suggest, ENGL 050/060 are informed by what Ivanic (2004) would call a “process discourse” and are oriented toward teaching the processes that effective readers and writers use. Strategies are taught to students to help them engage in both the process of making meaning from texts and in producing their own texts. Also evident are elements of “a skills discourse” (Ivanic 2004) and a “study skills model” in the inclusion of skills such as “summarizing” and “paraphrasing” and learning outcomes that focus on surface features of writing such as “grammatical and mechanical structures” and “good essay organization.” The mention of text types such as “narrative” and “argumentative” essays and the inclusion of a “variety of fiction and non-fiction” texts suggest the influence of “a genre discourse” (Ivanic 2004). Although, I do think it is important to clarify that despite the mention of “narrative” and “comparative” texts in the introduction paragraph of the “Outline of Course Content,” in practice, students are assigned thesis-driven papers, an essay that is organized around an explicitly stated thesis, which reflects the focus of ENGL 111 and ENGL 112 and, presumably, reflects a more standard academic writing assignment than a piece of narrative writing. So, in other words, while ENGL 050/060 papers may include a narrative element, instructors are not asking students to write stories or solely descriptive essays. At the same time, the influence of “a creativity discourse” (Ivanic 2004) is evidenced in the inclusion of “reader response” as a post-reading strategy.

It is not as easy to discern, from an examination of the course outline, whether ENGL 050/060 is informed by a social practices or sociopolitical discourses (Ivanic 2004) or the similar academic socialization or academic literacies approach theorized by Lea and Street (1998 and 2004). Since those approaches to literacy learning include an acknowledgment of disciplinary discourses, the social and political contexts of literacy, and the complexity involved in navigating these different disciplines and contexts, it is hard to glean from a list of goals and strategies whether this complexity is acknowledged and addressed in the course regardless of who teaches it. As one instructor in the course, my view of literacy as social and contextual informs my instructional choices. I explicitly talk about the ways in which the reading and writing we are doing is specific to the context of an English course and the ways the strategies may or may not apply in different contexts. However, this may not be true of all the instructors of the course.

In this chapter and the next, I focus on the role that different approaches to and beliefs about reading and writing (both from instructors and students) (Ivanic, 2004) play in students experiences in ENGL 050/060. In addition, I describe participants subsequent experiences navigating what both Gee (2008) and Lea and Street (1998, 2006) explain is a complex transition from reading and writing in the context of an English composition course (like ENGL 050/060) to reading and writing in a discipline specific college-level course. Throughout their interviews, students discussed a number of skills, strategies, and beliefs about reading and writing, and the teaching of reading and writing. They described skills and strategies directly taught in ENGL 050/060, such as annotation and summarization, which they used in their college-level courses across disciplines. They also mentioned several challenges they experienced as they navigated the transition from

one disciplinary context to another which reveal a gap between what they had been taught and what they later needed. This chapter focuses on points of alignment, including experiences students had and skills and strategies they learned in ENGL 050/060 that they found useful in the reading and writing they did in their college-level courses. There is evidence that students learned specific strategies in ENGL 050/060 and then applied that strategy in their college-level courses. There is also evidence of what I call alignment when participants used skills in ENGL 050/060 that they were not directly taught but were similar to the skills required to meet the literacy demands in their college-level courses. In other words, this chapter includes examples of strategies, such as annotation, taught in their ENGL 050/060 class that they then were able to use their college-level course. It also includes examples of strategies, like looking up references in a text, that may not have been taught in all sections of ENGL 050/060, but were important literacy strategies they developed and used in both ENGL 050/060 and in college-level courses. The chapter starts out with a description of how participants viewed the effectiveness of the course overall. The rest of the chapter focuses on the specific ways in which participants found the course helpful. First, findings related to reading are presented, followed by the findings related to writing. The chapter concludes with a focus on the affective benefits of ENGL 050/060 participants described.

Overview: English 050/060 as Preparation for College-Level Courses

In general, all seven participants felt that their developmental literacy course was helpful in preparing them for college level work both in English and other disciplines. Some participants felt the course was particularly valuable. Other participants commented that the course met its objectives as they understood them. For example,

students described it as “immeasurably” helpful, reported it “fit its purpose” and was “spot on” in meeting its objectives. Participants commented on its benefits with regard to improving their reading comprehension and writing skills, and also reported that it had mental and emotional benefits. Several students indicated that the course increased their comfort with and reduced their stress about reading and writing. Only one participant, Sophia, was somewhat contradictory in that while she said the class “did help a lot,” she also saw the work in ENGL 060 as very different from the work that she did in other courses. However, she affirmed its affective benefits.

Points of Alignment Between ENGL 050/060 and College Level Courses: Reading

Students are placed in ENGL 050/060 because their placement scores indicate they need remediation in either or both reading and writing. As evident in the course outline, the learning outcomes in ENGL 050/060 include reading comprehension and effective text analysis and the course content includes various pre-reading, during-reading, and post-reading strategies. In addition, ENGL 050/060 uses high-interest fiction and non-fiction readings, to get students engaged in the texts and used to a college reading load. At the same time, students in ENGL 050/060 are reading college-level texts and are given college-level reading assignments. In line with research-based recommendations for high-quality developmental literacy instruction, students are provided support and “just in-time remediation” as they engage in college-level reading and writing (Callahan & Chumney, 2009; Edgecombe & Bickerstaff 2018; Hern & Snell, 2013; Perin & Holschuh, 2019). While not all participants reported that they struggled with reading comprehension, most did. And all participants, even those that considered themselves strong readers, identified reading comprehension strategies or habits they

learned in ENGL 050/060 that were useful or aligned with their college-level courses in other disciplines.

Several participants felt that ENGL 050/060 prepared them for the amount of reading and the level of reading they would need to do in their college-level courses. In addition, all participants named specific strategies that they found helpful in improving their reading comprehension both in ENGL 050/060 and their college-level courses. In the following sections I will provide an overview of the ways the participants described themselves as readers, an account of the reading struggles many participants experienced, and a description of reading comprehension strategies learned in ENGL 050/060 that participants found helpful in their college-level courses across disciplines.

Participants' Reading Experience

Participants described themselves as readers in a variety of ways. Most of the participants had mixed experiences when it came to whether they enjoyed reading or felt like they were good at it. Only Oscar was clear that he is good at reading and didn't express any other complicated feelings or concerns about reading. Two participants, Mike and Sophia, expressed that they didn't enjoy reading. For Sophia, this was a contrast from her experiences as a young teen when she said she would "literally be glued to a book." While Sophia expressed that she didn't "enjoy" reading, she also said that when she focused, she did well in English. She said English was one of her strongest subjects in high school. Similarly, Mike was very clear in his response: "I don't like to read. I don't like to read at all." Yet, immediately following this he added he did like to read "instructional or sometimes philosophy [texts]." He was clear that while he didn't like mysteries or science fiction, he did like biographies. Based on his response, while he

said he doesn't like to read, it seems more accurate to say that he doesn't like to read fiction.

Other participants explained that while they liked to read, that had not always been the case. Melissa and Chloe explained that they struggled with reading and did not like reading when they were younger, and both cited experiences that implicated experiences in school in their feelings. Melissa attributed her dislike of reading to being "forced" to read in school. Chloe reported that she only read what she needed to do in order to pass, and often skimmed her required reading in middle school and early high school. She explained she "never had the urge to read," and would only read "girly books and about their problems and stuff," but "never read anything that would make me more knowledgeable." She described that in high school, her initial reaction to assigned reading was "No, I'm not going to read those. I'm just going to get through my answers trying to use contexts and stuff." She admitted that this approach did not work well, and that by her sophomore year she had resigned herself to "read the books to actually pass the class." While she never describes herself as fully committed and engaged in her reading assignments in high school, she did say that the decision to start reading in high school helped make reading in college easier. Both Chloe and Melissa started to like reading more once they left high school. Chloe specified that she enjoyed reading when she was interested, and Melissa theorized that she enjoyed reading more now because "people stopped telling her to read."

Both Aiden and Nadia identified as weak readers. Aiden expressed that while he liked to read in order to "gain knowledge," he didn't read often. He considered himself a "sub-par" reader. Nadia explained that English was not her first language and that she

was “not a good reader.” Yet, she felt she had become a better reader by completing the reading for her college courses. That most of the participants had mixed feelings about reading and didn’t necessarily consider themselves strong or avid readers is typical of the population of students in ENGL 060. After teaching the course for 10 years, I can attest that many students do not read by choice. In fact, it is not uncommon for them to report that a book we read in the class, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie, is the first book they ever finished. Our developmental literacy courses are intended to be a transition space between high school or a gap in schooling and college-level literacy work. It is understood that many students who place into the course might not have robust reading practices or think of themselves as strong readers.

Participants’ Reading Struggles

Five of the participants reported they had reading comprehension problems throughout their K-12 schooling, some experienced this as early as third grade. The other two participants were both returning adult students who believed they needed ENGL 060 because of their gap in schooling and lack of current experience with academic reading, and more crucially with academic writing. All five of the participants who struggled with reading described retention difficulties as their most frustrating reading struggle. For example, Sophia commented, “I’m not reading not knowing the words, I just forget what happened.” Chloe said the information goes “in one ear, out the other” and explained, “retaining the information is so hard for me.” In addition, Nadia described her struggle with reading at a “college level” throughout her interview. By this, she meant that she had trouble understanding the higher-level, more complex texts assigned to her in college.

Despite their struggles, these students were all successful in their 050 or 060 course and most of them continued to experience success in college-level classes. The following sections will illustrate many ways in which these participants demonstrated an understanding of their reading comprehension difficulties and strength in addition to the ways in which they employed hard work, a repertoire of reading comprehension strategies, and metacognitive thinking to help them succeed despite the challenges of reading college-level texts and transitioning from one disciplinary Discourse to another (Gee, 2008; Lea & Street 1998, 2006). In addition, this section will highlight the ways in which all participants, even those who identified as strong readers, felt their 050/060 courses provided them with experiences and strategies that prepared them for or aligned with the reading demands in their college-level courses.

Comprehension Strategies

In terms of reading comprehension, participants identified many of the strategies that were taught in their ENGL 050/060 course as being helpful in the reading that they had to do in college-level courses. Two of the six outcomes listed in both course outlines mention reading: “demonstrate reading comprehension” and “analyze texts for discussion and writing.” As a result, both courses focus on providing students with strategies and habits to improve their reading comprehension and text analysis skills. Most of these strategies were specifically cited by students, even if they did not always name or describe them exactly as listed on the course outline.

The following section will include descriptions of the strategies and skills participants felt were included in both their ENGL 050/060 course and their college-level courses. Isolating these strategies may seem at odds with the social and contested nature

of literacy (Lea & Street, 1998, 2006). It is true that just because students learn strategies in one context, it does not mean they will be able to unproblematically apply them in a different context. Yet, effective strategies are part of a comprehensive approach to literacy instruction. The complexity of this process, the conditions that need to be in place for transfer, and other factors involved in participants' literacy developmental will all be explored. In this section, the focus will be on identifying what strategies participants named and why they felt they were helpful. While all strategies listed in the ENGL 050/060 course outline were described by at least some students, some strategies or skills are not singled out, but are included within the categories I created. For example, one strategy listed in the course outline is "Identifying the main idea of a written or visual text." I do not use "Identifying the main idea" as a subsection, in part because this is a skill that is best taught in the context of meaningful text analysis, not as a discrete skill (Perin & Holschuh, 2019). And that is how participants discuss it - finding a "main idea" is cited when they talk about annotation or summarization and describe the need to identify the main idea of sentences, paragraphs, and texts. I begin with the subsection "Analysis of Difficult Texts" that describes the most general strategy participants discussed – an understanding of the need to methodically analyze difficulty. This subsection is followed by other subsections that detail strategies that are both a part of analyzing difficult texts and a discrete strategy: annotation, summarization, re-reading, and looking up vocabulary and references. Each subsection begins with a description of the ways in which the strategy may have been addressed in ENGL 050/060 and then how participants felt the strategy applied to the reading they did in their college-level courses.

Analysis of Difficult Texts

A key component of high-quality developmental literacy education is providing students the opportunity to engage with college-level texts and materials (Armstrong & Stahl, 2017; Barragan & Cormier, 2013; Bickerstaff & Raufman, 2017; Callahan & Chumney, 2009; Edgecombe & Bickerstaff, 2018; Hern & Snell, 2013; Perin & Holschuh, 2019; Scrivener et al., 2018). While students in ENGL 050/060 are sometimes assigned one high-interest novel that includes college-level themes at a lower reading level, the majority of readings assigned are college-level texts that are often challenging for students to understand. In addition to citing specific strategies for engaging in text-analysis, participants also talked more generally about how ENGL 050/060 helped them understand the importance of carefully analyzing difficult texts by breaking them down into smaller sections and methodically constructing meaning.

In my ENGL 050/060 classes, we do a lot of textual analysis by focusing on smaller sections of a text to break down what is being said, sometimes sentence by sentence, sometimes word for word. The general education and course learning outcome for ENGL 050/060, “analyze texts for discussion and writing”, requires this type of strategic analysis. In my classes, I “think-aloud” to model my process of analyzing a difficult text (Kucan & Beck, 1997; Sommers, 2005), stopping to check my comprehension after reading a few sentences, a single sentence, or even a phrase or word. Then I ask students to practice text analysis, in various activities throughout the semester, on sections of their assigned texts.

Nadia and Melissa described how understanding how to carefully analyze texts helped them with college-level reading. This is consistent with Nelms & Dively's (2007) finding, based on focus group discussions with disciplinary faculty, that students seemed to transfer "a facility for analyzing texts" from first year composition courses to writing-intensive disciplinary courses. Nadia stated that reading poetry was a helpful springboard for understanding how to approach the analysis of difficult texts. When asked why reading a poem was helpful in preparing her for her college-level reading, she explained:

Because it was more on a college-level. Like *The True Diary of an Indian* [*The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*] was a very easy read for me. It was very easy to grasp, but the poem was very hard. It was something you had to really think about and break down. Where just like the essays now that we have to read [in ENGL 111], you have to really break down and understand and think beyond what they're actually saying.

In this quote, Nadia explained that the novel that she read in ENGL 060 was not particularly challenging to understand. Yet, a poem that was introduced in the same class provided a short, but difficult, text that helped her learn how to approach and analyze college-level readings by breaking down the reading and looking for underlying meaning. She described that her ENGL 060 instructor modeled how to approach the poem and "broke it down for us." This modeling is an example of how the instructor scaffolded learning for her students (Armstrong & Newmann, 2011; Barragan & Cormier, 2013; Gruenbaum, 2012; Rosenshine & Meister, 1992). Nadia was able to see the ways in which this approach to making meaning of a difficult text could be applied to longer pieces that she was reading in her college-level English class. When she makes this connection, Nadia is demonstrating characteristics of what Carillo (2016) would call a "mindful reader" (p.11). This idea is drawn, in part, from Langer's (2000) definition: "Mindfulness is a flexible state of mind in which we are actively engaged in the present,

noticing new things and sensitive to context” (p.220). In other words, when we are engaged in mindfulness in learning, we can be aware of and respond to the conditions of a new context. Carillo (2016) uses the “term *mindful* to underscore the metacognitive basis of this frame wherein students become knowledgeable, deliberate, and reflective about how they read and the demands that context place on their reading” (p.11). By this definition, Nadia was a “mindful reader” when she was able to recognize that the approach she used to analyze and understand a poem could be applied in other contexts and to other text types. When students are “mindful” of the ways in which they read and understand, they can more clearly see potential connections to other contexts that facilitate transfer (Carillo, 2016).

Melissa also described how she applied the approaches to textual analysis she learned in ENGL 060 to analyze difficult questions in her psychology course. For instance, she showed me the following scenario from her psychology course, “Every time someone flushes a toilet in the apartment building, the shower becomes very hot and causes the person to jump back. Over time, the person begins to jump back automatically after hearing the flush, before the water temperature changes.” The assignment required her to label this as operant or classical conditioning and then, if it was operant, the instructions said to “identify which type of consequence was responsible for the behavior change (i.e. positive/negative reinforcement; positive/negative punishment).” If it was classical, “identify the UCS, UCR, CS, and CR [Unconditioned stimulus, unconditioned response, conditioned stimulus, conditioned response].” She described the ways in which reading the question was challenging:

It was just a really challenging concept and there was...you had to connect ...There's a lot – a lot going on in a short sentence and it was just basically like an unconditioned response, and unconditioned stimulus, unconditioned response, a conditioned stimulus, and a conditioned response. I did understand it, but it took time... So, as you keep reading, you have to really interpret every word.... You have to analyze every sentence at a time.

In this description, Melissa described the way she analyzed the scenario at a sentence, and even word, level while identifying the concepts from the class. She points out that she needed time to do this type of careful analysis. She labeled, or annotated, the psychology principles she recognized as she analyzed the text. She did this so that she could easily access that information when she wrote her response. This type of annotation, which will be described in the next subsection, is one of the many reading comprehension strategies students can use to help them with textual analysis. Yet, before they can apply these strategies, they first need to recognize, as Melissa and Nadia do, the importance of a deliberate approach to breaking down and analyzing difficult texts.

Annotation

“Annotation” and “highlighting or underlining text” are listed as “during-reading” strategies in the course content section of the ENGL 050/060 course outline. I define “annotation” as a broad term to include any combination of writing notes in the margins (or even on a separate piece of paper), underlining, and highlighting. In my sections of ENGL 060, I emphasize annotation as a reading strategy and habit that is critical for academic reading, particularly when students will need to write about what they read. Students are encouraged to experiment with different approaches to annotation and develop a system for doing it that works well for them. I model my own annotation strategies, and when we discuss readings, I have students share their annotations and add new annotations to their texts based on the discussion and their peers’ annotations. My

purpose for doing this is similar to Porter- O'Donnell's (2004) when she explains why she shares models of annotations with students and encourages them to share their annotations with each other: "They can also see that there is no one right way to annotate but that there are patterns and categories that seem to be used by readers as they work to make sense of their reading" (p.85). Understanding the need for this flexibility is important so that students can adapt this practice as they switch between disciplines. Three of the seven participants did not have me as an instructor for ENGL 050/060 (Chloe, Aiden, and Nadia), but reported learning to annotate in ENGL 050/060. In fact, Nadia said that her ENGL 060 instructor was a "big stickler for annotating and highlighting." Only Chloe said that while she was encouraged to highlight and annotate in ENGL 050, she didn't start doing it until the following semester.

Annotation was the comprehension strategy participants cited most frequently as useful in their college-level courses. Most participants annotated by writing in the margins of a text, but some also used highlighting, took notes, or used some combination of approaches. Two participants, Mike and Melissa, specifically named annotation as the most valuable strategy they had learned in ENGL 050/060. While all seven participants described annotation as useful in their college-level courses, five of the participants explicitly credited ENGL 050/060 with showing them the value of annotation. While Melissa had been told in high school that it was helpful to write notes in the margins, she did not do it until she took ENGL 060 during her first semester of college. She said, "If I hadn't been exposed to that kind of annotation, I probably wouldn't have underlined and made keynotes about the little portions that we need to write about or annotate." Here, Melissa is referring to the annotations she makes on her psychology readings. This

description is consistent with Lockhart & Soliday's (2016) study of college students' experiences transferring from "lower-division composition" to other courses. Their participants reported that annotation "helped them better understand and engage what they read and helped to prepare them for later writing or reading tasks" (Lockhart & Soliday, 2016, p.28).

Participants used annotation to identify and label important information as they read, and two participants, Oscar and Chloe, cited annotation as a helpful tool to identify key quotes to use later for writing assignments. However, participants also often used annotation as a way to read actively and improve comprehension. For example, Melissa saw several different applications for annotating in her psychology class, some were quite resourceful. Melissa saw annotation as a way to "analyze information and take small specific notes on a big chunk of information." In this way, annotation is more than just a way to record thoughts and feelings while reading. It is a way to label information to aid in analysis and comprehension (Carillo, 2017; Lockhart & Soliday, 2016; Porter-O'Donnell, 2004). As described in the previous subsection, a common task for psychology students is to apply psychological concepts and vocabulary to a scenario. Without being prompted by her professor, she used annotation to label the parts of a scenario and break it down so that she could more easily understand what it meant and how to go about answering the question. Melissa described how she approached the psychology task in an organized fashion:

If I were to have just read the sentence after not having the class for a few months or a month actually, then I probably would have been very flustered in my head. But then using skills that I've learned in the past to organize everything and make some sort of writing -- like, guide. I was very, it was very easy for me to say, oh -- well, this goes in this category, in there, and it all makes sense.

In this explanation, Melissa described how she uses a type of annotation to organize the information in the question during her analysis of the text. After this description I asked a follow up question, “And so where did you learn those skills would you say?” In her responses, she made a connection between her annotation of the question and the pre-writing we did in ENGL 060. Then, she explained how she found a new application for these strategies by combining them with specific disciplinary knowledge and approaches. For example, she was taught a “square” type graphic organizer in psychology to help work out the type of reinforcement or punishment that was being applied in operant conditioning. So, she combined her annotation and other text analysis strategies learned in ENGL 060 with this discipline specific graphic organizer to understand the text, organize the information, and plan her response.

Melissa’s reflection on this process shows that she, like Nadia, was “mindful” (Carillo, 2016) of her decision to use a strategy/process from one context (English) and apply it to a different context (psychology). In this psychology example, the “pre-writing” she refers to is generated by the process of text analysis and annotation. The annotations became a type of pre-writing in that they allowed her to use what she figured out during her textual analysis of the psychology problem in her response. She used the term “pre-writing” because she saw this as similar to how she might use pre-writing in ENGL 060 after analyzing the text in preparation for writing an essay. This also shows the way reading and writing processes blend together, and how Melissa was able to use text analysis strategies with annotation to analyze different texts, in different contexts, for different purposes. From an academic literacies perspective (Lea & Street, 1998, 2006), it is clear that what Melissa did reflects the complexity of this process. She needed to

recognize the utility of text analysis and annotation in this new context and to simultaneously adapt her approach to account for the differences in the disciplinary demands and requirements of the task.

Summarization

Two participants included summarizing as part of their annotation process to improve their reading comprehension. In the ENGL 050/060 outline summarization is included in the “Course Content” as a “during-reading” skill and can be taught in a number of different ways. I teach students how to write summaries of both full texts and sections of text. When combined with annotation, summarization can be used to help engage with the text, improve understanding, and provide a record of that understanding in the text that can be used later for writing and other tasks (Carillo, 2017; Lockhart & Soliday, 2016; Porter -O’Donnell, 2004). This was an approach that two students described as a reading comprehension strategy that transferred well to their college-level courses.

Mike and Aiden described how they summarized to help them comprehend the reading in their college-level classes. Mike talked about summarizing: “I just rewrite it so I can understand it.” Mike explains that he used this approach in ENGL 060 and other classes. He did not specify that he learned the skill in ENGL 060, but as his instructor, I know it is something I taught. Similarly, when asked to describe how he approached reading research sources for an art history paper he was in the middle of writing, Aiden explained that, “after each paragraph, I’ll write kind of like a sentence or two summarizing what it was.” This was something Aiden explained that he learned in ENGL 060, “For that class [ENGL 060] we were taught to basically read ... almost like

memorizing, keep track of how things could have happened. So you'd have to go back after reading a paragraph or two and kind of summarize it really quick.” Aiden describes how summary can be used with annotation as both a record of what was read, and a way to check comprehension (Carillo, 2017; Lockhart & Soliday, 2016; Porter -O'Donnell, 2004).

Rereading

Rereading is a strategy that is often used to support comprehension (Blau, 2003; Keller, 2013; Sommers, 2005). Six of the participants identified rereading as a strategy they used consistently. In my ENGL 050/060 classes, I emphasize that rereading can be helpful in a variety of situations such as when you realize you don't understand a section (or all) of the text, when you lose focus while reading, or when new information complicates your understanding of the text. It is a strategy I include when I “think-aloud” analyzing a difficult text (Kucan & Beck, 1997; Sommers, 2005). Students are encouraged to apply this strategy when completing reading tasks in class and while reading independently.

Some participants focused their descriptions of using this strategy on rereading specific sections of a text. For example, two participants focused specifically on how important it was to reread confusing sections of a text before moving on. When asked how he addressed challenges in ENGL 060, Aiden explained that he was taught to reread in order to understand readings at the word and sentence level: “Stuff like that helped. [You] understand you want to read a sentence and know what it means. You don't want to just skip over and think it's like nothing. You want to go back and read it and make sure you got it.” Mike made a similar point: “No, I have to understand it. If I don't

understand it, I can't move forward. Because what's the point? I missed the next step. That's like jumping into a book at the end." Mike was one of the participants who did not identify himself as struggling with reading comprehension, yet here he explained that he did not continue reading a text until he was sure he understood it. Sophia also described rereading a text a few times in ENGL 060 before beginning to write an essay on that text, and cited rereading at the end of her first interview as part of the reading comprehension processes that helped prepare her to be successful in college level courses. In her history course, like Mike and Aiden, she reread sections of text that she didn't initially understand because of unfamiliar vocabulary.

Other participants reported that they apply rereading as a strategy applied to entire texts. Nadia described how she was taught in ENGL 060 to read a text in its entirety and then to reread it in order to highlight important information. Then, in her psychology course, she did the opposite, and highlighted the first time and then focused on the highlighted sections when she reread to prepare for a test. Similarly, Chloe explained that she rereads when she doesn't understand a text. For her college-level English class (ENGL 111), she said that she reads the articles "at least two to three times to actually understand what I'm reading." She explained that this was something that she did in ENGL 050 and found useful in addressing the more challenging readings in ENGL 111. Melissa and Sophia also discussed rereading assignments in ENGL 060 more than once. Sophia explains, "I reread the assignment a whole three or four times if I have to." In these cases, participants use rereading to help them comprehend texts or absorb content.

While the participants implemented rereading in different ways, their practices illustrate a key understanding about reading and reading comprehension. Reading something once, particularly in an academic context, is often not enough (Blau, 2003; Keller, 2013; Sommers, 2005). Even good readers reread. However, I see students resist this practice - sometimes, certainly, because of time constraints. But I also wonder if sometimes the resistance comes from some students not really believing that rereading is a strategy that good readers employ; it is not just for those who struggle with comprehension. Perhaps when students have struggled with reading all their lives, as many developmental literacy students have, it is hard to believe that all readers, even college professors, struggle to understand texts at times (Newkirk, 2012). That these participants seem to embrace the fact that reading includes rereading is a meaningful step in their preparation for college reading. Equally important is the flexibility by which these participants apply this strategy. Participants customized this strategy, just like they did with annotation, to make it work for them, and when necessary, some also adapted it to work in a new context, their college level courses. Recognizing that a strategy is helpful and then having the awareness and flexibility to apply that strategy in different ways depending on the task, text, purpose, and context is known to be an important part of learning transfer (Carillo, 2016; Engle et al., 2012). That they demonstrated this capacity may explain the success of these students in their developmental literacy course, and the fact that most of them were able to sustain that success in their literacy work in credit-bearing courses across disciplines.

Looking Up Vocabulary and References

Sometimes re-reading is enough to help with comprehension, but in other cases participants recognized that they need to do more to fully comprehend. Looking up vocabulary and references is one example of what they did to further support their efforts. One common reading comprehension strategy taught in ENGL 050/060 is to look up unfamiliar words or references in a text. In my courses, this is another strategy I model when I “think-aloud” my approach to understanding a difficult passage in the reading (Kucan & Beck, 1997; Sommers, 2005). Then I explicitly ask students to practice this approach as they analyze texts during class activities. They are encouraged to add this to their repertoire of comprehension strategies. Six participants reported unfamiliar vocabulary and references as a challenge to reading comprehension in their college-level texts and described how they use outside sources, such as dictionaries and the internet, to help them.

Oscar did not mention vocabulary difficulties, or difficulties with reading at all, but focused on the way he builds background knowledge by looking up references in the text. For example, he says:

I'll read it and then I'll get to something like that and just stop. And then like I said, okay, maybe this will have a paragraph on the twitter revolt, but instead I'll go read the whole, (the background) news articles, everything on it- the background. So, I basically am versed in it, and then I read this little part and then that makes 100 percent more sense usually once you have the background.

Oscar explained that this approach helps him remember what he reads because he does not have trouble comprehending or remembering what he reads unless he is not familiar with a reference. While Oscar didn't explicitly credit ENGL 060 with teaching him this

strategy in our interview, he was a student in my class, so he was taught and encouraged to use it. Either way, he saw the need to look up references in a text as a reading strategy that was useful in both ENGL 060 and his college-level courses.

Several participants reported that looking up unfamiliar vocabulary, a strategy they were taught in ENGL 050/060, was helpful in their college-level courses. Chloe spoke specifically of her difficulty understanding some of her history texts because of “all the words.” Mike and Aiden, discuss the practice of looking up unfamiliar words while they read. Four participants explicitly linked this practice taught in ENGL 050/060 to their use of it in their college-level courses. For example, Sophia explained :

As I said, I remember in our class [ENGL 060], we said that if you don’t know a word, just circle it. Either if you can’t write on the books, use a sticky note or do something to put the definition in it so I would do that very often with the textbook or the book review that I had to do.

In this case, Sophia describes the fact that she intentionally used a practice from ENGL 060 in a new context, her history class, in order to address the demands of learning the specialized vocabulary that is a part of a disciplinary Discourse (Gee, 2008).

Nadia’s ENGL 060 instructor encouraged her class to “familiarize” themselves with the words in the reading that they didn’t know. While the instructor didn’t teach her any specific process for doing this, Nadia took that advice and got into the habit of looking up the definitions of unfamiliar words. She explained that she wanted to start increasing her vocabulary before ENGL 060, but had not done so (for example, she got a Word-a-Day app but she barely used it). She considered her ENGL 060 instructor’s suggestion to look up unfamiliar words in the course readings as an opportunity to develop her vocabulary. She carried the practice over into the readings in her psychology

course. In addition to looking up definitions, Nadia expanded on the practice by creating flash cards for those words. She explains in her first interview how she used this strategy in ENGL 060:

English is not my first language. So, I really had to read things over and over again, and words that I didn't know I would have to look them up. I'd have note cards and I would literally, like everyday, with the words that I didn't know, I'd, in the morning, read them out loud and use them in my essays.

Later, when she was asked about how she makes sure she understands the reading in her psychology class, she describes a similar process, “I have a lot of flashcards... I go through the flashcards every night before I go to bed, so it's kind of in my brain and then, throughout the day I just go through the flashcards and whatever. I don't know, I kind of redo over and over again.” In Nadia’s case, making the flashcards, rehearsing them, and intentionally using them in her English essays, was a process that she developed based on a core strategy for reading comprehension, looking up unfamiliar vocabulary, that she learned and began using in ENGL 060. Here again, is an example of a student customizing and modifying a reading comprehension strategy in order to navigate the transition between Discourses (Gee, 2008; Lea & Street, 1998, 2006). This illustrates the creativity and hard work that many of these participants display. Like Sophia, Nadia saw a strategy as transferrable from one context to another.

Points of Alignment Between ENGL 050/060 and College Level Courses: Writing

For many participants, their experiences in ENGL 050/060 helped them understand college-level writing expectations and develop the strategies needed to write academic papers. The course outlines for ENGL 050 and 060 include four learning outcomes that focus on writing: “Demonstrate the requirements for good essay

organization”; “Use evidence to support claims”; “Use the writing process for essay development”; and “Demonstrate better control of the grammatical and mechanical structures used in academic writing.” The pre-writing, during-writing, and post-writing strategies listed in the outline include common process-oriented writing strategies such as “brainstorming,” “drafting unified and cohesive paragraphs,” and “revising for paragraph unity and cohesion.” Students in ENGL 060 are taught different approaches to these process-oriented strategies and encouraged to reflect on what approaches work best for them. In addition, students are taught what academic argument is, how to write a thesis statement, the need to provide evidence, and organizational strategies.

Overall, participants felt that their developmental literacy course prepared them for the writing they were assigned in their college-level courses. Both Mike and Oscar felt that ENGL 060 had succeeded in providing them with the foundation they were lacking, or had forgotten, and now needed for college-level writing. While he took Ethics the same semester that he took ENGL 060, he felt that ENGL 060 helped him know how to complete his final Ethics paper successfully. He said, “Oh, 100 percent. I wouldn't have been able to do that without it. It would have been horrible.” When asked to be more specific, he elaborated, “It probably would have... been just a jumbled mess of ideas than an actual organized thought.”

While there were points of tension between their developmental literacy work and college level work that will be discussed in chapter 5, this idea that, overall, developmental literacy courses prepared them for the demands of college level writing was also expressed by Melissa, Chloe, Sophia, and Nadia. Nadia and Melissa both stated that it was helpful that ENGL 060 provided repeated practice in writing essays. When

Nadia was asked whether the work she did in ENGL 060 was useful in her courses outside of English, she responded, “For my other courses, Yeah. Especially the writing part.” When asked if she would have been as prepared as she was for the reading and writing in her history class if she had not taken ENGL 050, Chloe replied, “Good question. Probably not. I'm not sure... but if I didn't take that course, I probably wouldn't have written this good of an essay, I would say. I probably would've gotten a D or an F on it if I didn't take that course.” In fact, Chloe reported earning a B in the course. In other words, even when participants weren't sure how ENGL 050/060 specifically helped prepare them for college level work, there was often an acknowledgement that they would not have performed as well without it.

In the following sections, I will provide an overview of the ways the participants described themselves as writers, an account of the writing struggles many participants experienced, and a description of what strategies and concepts participants learned in ENGL 050/060 they found helpful in their college-level courses.

Participants' Writing Experience

Similar to their descriptions of themselves as readers, participants described themselves as writers in diverse ways. While some participants identified as stronger writers than readers, several participants felt that they needed ENGL 050/060 mainly to provide them with an understanding of college-level academic writing. Melissa, who explained that she was in “lower” writing/reading classes until high school when she moved to what she described as “regular” classes, specified that she was “never above average” as a writer. She explained that at times if she put in a lot of effort, she could write well. However, she felt that the nine months between high school and enrolling in

college contributed to her being “really rusty” at writing. Her first experience writing since high school was in ENGL 060. She said, “[Since high school,] I forgot a lot of the details of what I had to do, but I think I did pretty well [writing in ENGL 060].” Nadia talked about how she used to hate English, but that because of the number of essays that she did in ENGL 060 and the fact that she was able to see her “progression”, she ended up loving to write essays. She emphasized that since enrolling in college, she had “definitely become a better writer.”

Several other participants identified as good writers, or as stronger writers than readers. For example, Chloe felt that she was “somewhat stronger” as a writer than she was as a reader. She reported that because she “has a lot to say,” she sometimes goes off topic. She explained that she hadn’t learned much about writing in high school, but that her experience in college had been more helpful. Chloe felt this had a lot to do with the ways her ENGL 050 teacher helped her make her writing better. Overall, Sophia identified as both a good reader and writer. Again, she said that English was one of her best subjects, and that while it wasn’t her “favorite,” she also didn’t hate it. Before college, however, she stressed out about writing assignments; ENGL 060 had helped her reduce that stress.

Participants differed in the amount of recent experience they had writing academic essays and that impacted the way some described themselves as writers. Again, Melissa’s short break from school left her feeling “rusty” at writing. Nadia had been out of school for at least 10 years. Yet, she didn’t focus on that lapse of time when she described her writing experience. In contrast, Oscar and Mike, both returning adult students in their thirties who classified themselves as strong readers, emphasized how

long it had been since they had written an essay. In his second interview, Mike tells a story about a defining moment in middle school that illustrates his earlier struggles with writing:

I remember in maybe sixth grade I had to write an essay, a ten-page essay, and I was long before the computers and typewriters, well not typewriters, but we had to write it [by hand]. So, it was so difficult for me. I'm just writing big words so that two words take up a whole line. And someone ratted me out because they wrote so tiny and he was mad because (laughs) I didn't have to write as much, 'cause he saw my handwriting. And he told the teacher and she made me write it over and when I finished, it was like a page. So, I stretched one page into 10 and I balled it up and threw it away and I never did a writing assignment again.

This negative experience with a challenging writing assignment as a child impacted Mike's willingness to engage in writing assignments from then on. It provides insight into his extraordinary claim in his first interview that he had never written an essay in school. He says, "Before I came to college, I never wrote anything in my life. Even in high school I didn't have to write, or I would cut class and skip out on assignments." So, the way he looked at it, he needed ENGL 060 to teach him how to write from scratch. When asked if there was anything he wished he had learned in ENGL 060 that would have helped him be more prepared for his college level courses, he replied, "No, because like I said it before, I'm coming in like an empty canvas really. So, everything is all new to me. I've never written before I'd taken the class, ever, and I don't read much." This metaphor of an empty canvas relates to Oscar's experience as well. While he didn't say that he never wrote a paper, he did highlight the impact of being out of school for many years: "I mean, after 15, 16 years from high school, you don't remember this stuff." Oscar said several times that before ENGL 060, he lacked the recent experience with writing that he needed to be successful writing at the college level.

Specific Writing Struggles

While there was not as much consensus about writing challenges as there was about reading, writing challenges emerged. For example, Sophia said her biggest challenge was getting started. Mike and Chloe cited a difficulty with elaborating. As Mike put it: “So it’s like, I gotta make five pages of this and I can do it in 2.” Mike also talked about his difficulty closing out a topic because “he’s a ping pong type of guy” in that he likes to just go back and forth on an issue indefinitely. Participants most frequently identified struggles related to staying on topic and grammar and mechanics. Staying on topic was a challenge Chloe, Aiden, Nadia, and Oscar cited. As Aiden described, he had a tendency to “branch off a little bit.” Both Nadia and Oscar talked about a tendency to “ramble off” or go “off on a tangent.” Four of the participants described challenges related to technical aspects of writing, specifically grammar, punctuation, and transitions. Nadia specifically named “independent and dependent” clauses as a persistent challenge. Sophia said she struggled with sentence structure. When asked to elaborate on what she meant by that, she explained that her sentences sometimes “don’t make sense” or “are just rambled.” In spite of expressing fewer difficulties with writing, compared to what they said about reading, participants talked more extensively and in more detail about the ways in which their developmental literacy courses prepared them for the writing demands in their college courses.

The following section will detail the ways participants demonstrated an understanding of the writing concepts, strategies, and processes that they learned in ENGL 050/060 and used in their college level courses. Some of what students described was not a process-oriented strategy as much as a component of academic writing, such as

writing a thesis statement, that they learned about in ENGL 050/060 and found useful in understanding and completing writing assignments in college-level classes across disciplines. Because of this, I have organized the useful writing strategies and concepts participants described into two categories: process-oriented strategies and components of writing.

Writing Process Strategies

ENGL050/060 are described in the course-outline as guided by a “process-oriented approach.” This means that ENGL 050/060 reflects what Ivanic (2004) calls a “process discourse of writing.” Ivanic (2004) describes the belief about learning to write that underpins a process discourse: “Learning to write includes learning both the mental processes and the practical processes involved in composing a text” (p.225).

Participants named a number of writing processes that they learned and practiced in ENGL 050/060 and applied to the writing they did in their college-level courses. The importance of a process-oriented approach is echoed in other research (Pacello, 2019; Perun, 2015). Aligned with Ivanic’s (2004) assertion, participants described both learning the mental processes--how to think about writing and the process of writing--and practical processes or strategies--what to do. The process strategies students named are described in the following subsections. Each subsection begins with a description of how the strategy may have been taught in ENGL 050/060 and then includes what participants say was important and useful about the strategy. The process strategies students described are organized in sequential order based on the steps of the writing process, even though it is important to keep in mind that the writing process is recursive and the order of processes is flexible (Hayes & Flower, 1981).

Understanding the Writing Task

One crucial pre-writing strategy is understanding the writing task. Students in ENGL 050/060 will always, in accordance with department policy, be provided with written assignment instructions. As part of a “process-oriented” approach, it is important to make sure students understand the assignment, particularly considering that reading comprehension is often a challenge. In my ENGL 060 course, therefore, I allow ample time for students to make sure they understand their essay assignments. First, we go over the assignment together, and I answer any questions they have. Then, similar to approaches described by Perun (2015), I have students do some other pre-writing task, such as free-writing or brainstorming, that encourages them to start thinking about how they might approach the assignment. While they are doing that, I move around the room to speak individually to each student about the assignment. My goals are to make sure they can articulate what the assignment is asking them to do, to give them an opportunity to ask me any questions they might have, and to get a sense of whether they have an idea of what they need to do next to get started on the assignment.

Three participants identified the importance of understanding the writing task as a first step. For example, they talked explicitly about the need to carefully read writing assignments in order to understand the prompt, question, or task. For all three participants, re-reading was key to this process. After re-reading an assignment multiple times, Melissa and Aiden both ask the teacher about it if they still had questions. When discussing his art history paper assignment, Aiden explained that he will “read over it obviously several times to get a better understanding of the essay assignment prompt, but then if I still don’t understand that, I’ll go back and ask them and make sure.” Melissa

described a similar process in psychology where she and other classmates “re-read what was being asked of us, and went deeper into trying to figure out what we were supposed to do.” This process also included confirming with the teacher that their interpretation of the assignment was correct. Sophia described re-reading ENGL 060 assignments 3-4 times. While she did not explicitly mention re-reading assignments in history, she did express that understanding the assignment was a challenge in her history courses. This challenge will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

Pre-writing/Planning

Once students understand the assignment, they need to figure out how they are going to approach the writing task. A “process-oriented approach,” includes strategies for pre-writing and planning an organizational approach (Pacello, 2019; Perun, 2015). Some of those strategies are listed in the ENGL 050/060 “Course Content,” including “free-writing,” “brainstorming,” “question forming,” “listing,” “clustering,” and “organizing,” In ENGL 050/060 courses, students are likely encouraged to experiment with these strategies to find what works well for them since literacy practices that work in one context may not work or may need to be adjusted for another (Gee, 2008; Lea & Street, 1998, 2006). In my classes, I often have students pre-write in response to an assignment prompt, so that they can get some initial thoughts down on paper. We also do individual and group brainstorming activities that might include listing and clustering ideas. In certain assignments, students work on creating questions in response to the prompt that will help them narrow down their focus. Additionally, I provide graphic organizers and outlines that students are encouraged, but not required, to use. It is important to me that students have the flexibility to use strategies and tools that work for them, rather than to

require them to do a particular pre-writing or planning strategy that becomes another assignment, rather than a useful tool.

Five participants explained that the process of planning writing in ENGL 060 was helpful in the writing they did in other courses. Melissa explained how this process was something that was taught and integrated into her writing approach in ENGL 060:

I feel like I never really used to...I will get what I need to write about and just start writing. But in the class that you taught [ENGL 060], we had to think about what we were going to write before we wrote it, and that was the really key part. That definitely helped prepare me a lot better for any writings I had to do.

Melissa acknowledges that her K-12 teachers had consistently suggested pre-writing/planning, but she didn't start doing that until ENGL 060 and that "she definitely had not used pre-writing or taken it seriously until the class [ENGL 060]." Once she started trying to pre-write and plan in ENGL 060, she figured out that it was a strategy that worked well for her.

In the "Analyzing Difficult Texts" sub-section of this chapter, I described how Melissa analyzed and annotated a short text in psychology in order to increase her understanding. In addition to this process being an example of text analysis and annotation, Melissa also classified the process as similar to the pre-writing she did in ENGL 060. She explained, "It's kinda like a prewrite because you kind of have to write down unconditioned stimulus, unconditioned response, conditioned stimulus, conditioned response so that you kind of get...I'm more of a visual learner." This was a type of pre-writing she did even before she planned what she was going to write that helped her understand and break down the question. When asked where she learned these skills, she responded that she learned the "prewriting stuff" in English (ENGL 060) and that it was

helpful to apply that process when reading for and planning a written response to scenarios presented in her psychology tests. She was aware that she might have been one of the few students using these skills in psychology class: “I don’t think there were many kids that really took the time aside to do some sort of like little structured prewrite before...like I did that before the test even started.” Again, this shows the complexity involved in applying literacy practices in new contexts (Gee, 2008; Lea & Street, 1998, 2006) and that Melissa was quite “mindful” (Carillo, 2016; Langer, 2000) of the connections between the writing process she learned and practiced in ENGL 060 and where it could apply in psychology. It is important to note that neither her ENGL 060 instructor (me) nor her psychology instructor pointed out these connections, but Melissa was able to see them herself and as a result was able to develop a successful approach to analyzing and writing about psychological scenarios.

Similarly, when asked to summarize what from ENGL 060 she found helpful in college level courses, Sophia responded, “Planning. Planning, obviously. Mostly the charts that you would give us, the planning charts...I feel like once I do that, it kind of just – the thoughts are just very much transferred from one piece of paper to the other and it’s just so much clearer than when I just try to start from nothing.” What she is describing are graphic organizers, in the form of charts, that I provided to students as an optional way to gather and organize evidence in the form of “textual quotes.” While Sophia did say that the focus on planning helped her in her college level courses, in that she is aware of the importance of planning and does take time to plan, she also said that she hasn’t tried to use a similar chart/graphic organizer in her history courses, even though she found them so helpful in English. She explained that she doesn’t “know how

to relate it [the organizers] to history.” For Sophia, learning the importance of planning in ENGL 060 was valuable, but not something that she felt she had mastered yet.

I used to just go straight to writing, and that’s probably where most of my mistakes come from. And it’s probably the adjustment that I’m still trying to work, although it did so much for me in the previous course [ENGL 060]. I’m just really bad at planning. I learned more how to plan, but I’m still not quite there yet, so that’s kind of what I’m really trying to be a long-term goal on how to plan better.

This “adjustment” Sophia refers to and her claim that she doesn’t know how “to relate” the organizers to the writing she did in history illustrates the challenge of transferring a strategy from one disciplinary Discourse to another (Gee, 2008). Chloe and Aiden also said that they used graphic organizers in their ENGL 060 for planning. Aiden explained that he used them to see “where it is going to map out,” but did not do extensive planning. Chloe said that “organizing her thoughts” was the “biggest thing in my opinion.” She found the graphic organizers/outlines “really helpful...because we can actually plan out our essay now and actually have the format.” In Chloe and Aiden’s college-level courses, Women’s History and Art History respectively, they both received an outline they used to write papers for their college-level courses. Chloe explained that the “outline” she received in history was in the form of a list of steps that the instructor wanted students to go through during the process of writing the paper. In Aiden’s case, his art history instructor required students to submit a detailed outline of their “Museum Paper Assignment” for feedback from the instructor. In both cases, while the planning document format was different in their college-level courses, both participants recognized they were expected to think about and plan the organization of the paper ahead of time as they had in ENGL 050/060.

For all of these students, the process of planning or pre-writing before they drafted a paper that they had learned in ENGL 060 was replicated in some way in their college-level courses, even if the form it took was different. What seemed common across these participants' experiences was that they had learned to value and implement planning or pre-writing. The importance of this process is not discipline specific and can take whatever form is appropriate to the specific discipline and writing task. In addition, students can use strategies introduced by other instructors that they didn't learn in ENGL 060 but that accomplish the same purpose.

Using Instructor Feedback

In some cases, participants received feedback after completing an outline or rough draft for a paper in their college-level class. As the process of receiving and incorporating feedback is central to any developmental or college-level English composition course, college-level courses in other disciplines that included it were more aligned with what students had experienced in developmental courses. In ENGL 050/060, students are required to submit at least one initial "rough" draft for feedback from the instructor before they submit their "final" draft. In some cases, the drafting process might be broken down into more than those two steps – requiring a few paragraphs at first, for example, and then a full draft, and then a revised and edited draft. Feedback is often provided with comments and/or a rubric. Additionally, some instructors make time to conference with students in person. In my classes, for example, I make time during class to allow students to work independently while I move around to individual students and answer questions about the paper or my feedback, and provide additional feedback or

clarification. I also encourage, and sometimes require, students to meet with me during office hours to review feedback on their papers.

Some participants received very detailed feedback on their writing in their college level courses as well. For example, Aiden received extensive feedback on the detailed outline he was required to submit for his art-history paper. The outline was submitted as a Google doc and the instructor made line by line edits and added notes and explanations about elements of the paper that were missing. Aiden said that he “appreciated” both that the instructor provided feedback and how much she provided. In Chloe’s History of Women in the US course, she also received feedback on her journals and her mid-term paper. The feedback she received told her that she needed to provide more evidence and make sure that the evidence clearly matched up with the point she was trying to make. Chloe described how she applied the professor’s feedback to her revised paper: “I read it, looked through [to] see what quotes would fit well, and I think one out of the three quotes that I used did not fit well. So, she wanted me to change it, and I did, and I got a better grade.” When Chloe showed me her mid-term paper with the feedback from the professor, she also had her own notes on the draft, such as “clear and concise language” that she also incorporated into her revision. While not all participants received feedback on their writing during the drafting process, those that did appreciated that feedback and used it to make revisions on their writing.

Revising

Even when participants did not get feedback, they reported that they had learned to revise their writing in ENGL 060 and continued to use this strategy to improve their work for other classes. Revision is arguably the most important part of the writing

process, and in ENGL 050/060, students are required to revise and are taught how to incorporate instructor feedback, peer feedback, and their own evaluations into their revisions. The process is complex, and students must incorporate a number of other reading and writing skills to revise effectively including reading comprehension, identifying main ideas, considering audience and purpose, integrating quotes, editing for clarity, and grammar. In my courses, in addition to responding to instructor and peer feedback, students are required to complete reflections on their drafts that ask them to identify specific areas of revision in their paper. Students are also encouraged to read their essays out loud, and we do activities that target specific revision strategies, such as word choice and using everyday language, to allow for experimentation as part of the revision process.

Several participants explained how revision, even without any feedback from a peer or instructor, was helpful in their college-level courses. For example, Mike described the project he and a partner did for his Interactive Multimedia I class where he created a website for a sneaker they designed. The home screen of the website described and advertised the sneaker and the user could choose different color combinations to customize the sneaker. When he was asked how the work he did in ENGL 060 prepared him to do a project like this, he responded the “writing part.” Among other things, he talked about deciding what text to include on the home page. Part of this process included revision. He explained that at first he wanted to make a joke in the text: “I wanted to be sarcastic and say you could even get a date with this shoe because it helped spark a conversation. But I’m like, you know what, nah, let me just keep it sporty or whatever.” Later, he described the process of deciding to remove this part of the description:

So, I said, even to get a date that, that takes away from the shoe. So, we basically, we're talking about performance. So, I was able to omit that [line about dating] out of there and that's part of what we learned in English [060]. Just stick, stick to you know, the facts and stick to the main topic.

Mike used revision in order to more accurately fit his purpose for writing and stay on topic.

When Melissa was asked how ENGL 060 prepared her for writing assignments like answering short essay/open ended questions in her Intro to Psychology class, she reported that she used the revision process even in the context of a test. She explained, "Definitely going back and revising everything is really important." Similarly, when Oscar discussed the paper he did for his ethics class, he also described the way ENGL 060 helped him develop a process of revision: "I'll spend most of my time going back and moving it [the content of the paper] around and actually, okay, all of this belongs here, all this belongs down here. Why is this up here?" Finally, in Sophia's second interview, after she had finished her American History course, she reflected on how ENGL 060 helped her learn the importance and process of revision:

I mean I didn't learn how to do a response paper in that course, the English course [ENGL 060], but the fact of like revise your work, double check, proof read, do a rough check and all that things. I kind of worked with that to make sure that I was able to hand [in] the best that I could at least for the remaining of the essays, not the first one, but the last ones.

Here, Sophia is clear that she did not think ENGL 060 prepared her for the specific genre of writing she was asked to do in her history course. However, she could see that the revision process was applicable nonetheless. She struggled with the first response paper in the class, which she attributes, at least in part, to the fact that she didn't use the revision process. As she explains, "I thought I could get away from it." Yet, when she

decided to apply the revision process she learned in ENGL 060 to the specific writing task in history, she was more successful.

Product: Writing Components

Participants did not only focus on process-oriented strategies when they described what elements of their ENGL 050/060 learning was helpful in their college level courses. They also reported using what could be described as the components of academic writing that they worked on in their ENGL 050/060 writing and used in their college-level writing. These included the components of an essay such as the thesis statement, introduction, and evidence. They also talked about structure and organization, in relation to what components go where. As I will discuss in more detail later in chapters 5 and 6, students leaving English courses with the idea that academic writing includes universal elements could be problematic when they complete writing assignments in different disciplines; however, in this section of the chapter, I will describe the ways in which participants felt understanding the elements and structure of academic writing was useful in their college-level disciplinary literacy work.

Structure/Organization

The first General Education Learning Outcome for ENGL 050/060 is that students will “demonstrate the requirements for good essay organization.” As such, students are taught the purpose and content as well as how to write “components” of an academic essay: introductions, body paragraphs, conclusions, thesis statements, and topic sentences. Organization is addressed at a paragraph level and at the level of the entire essay. Most instructors provide graphic organizers and outlines to help students organize

their writing, although some of us scaffold this support and provide a “gradual release of responsibility” (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983) to students as the semester progresses. For example, students may get a detailed outline for the earlier essays, and then determine their own approach to organization for later essays. Students start ENGL 050/060 writing brief papers of about 1-2 pages and build towards 3-5 page papers that are similar to what is required at the beginning of English 111. As a result, many of us do teach a version of the five-paragraph essay in our courses. In my classes, however, I try to emphasize that the five-paragraph format has its limitations. I talk about and design my graphic organizer and outlines terms of areas of support, that may include sub-topics and multiple paragraphs, rather than paragraphs. In addition, I try to emphasize that three is not always the magic number points or body paragraphs, and that most essays don’t fit neatly into a five-paragraph structure. Since, ENGL 050 has students with the lowest placement scores and often includes students who have difficulty writing more than a few sentences at first, there may be more of an emphasis on the 4-5 paragraph essay.

All seven participants reported that ENGL 050/060 helped them understand the “structure” or “format” of an academic essay. By “structure” it seems that participants meant how to organize the components of an academic essay. In response to a question about how her history response paper was similar or different from the work she had done in ENGL 060, Sophia responded, “I mean I feel like through structure-wise, like how to [structure a] sentence, how to write well, I mean it’s not perfect as you will see once you read it.” Even though Sophia is careful to say that she hasn’t mastered writing yet, she does focus on the way her ability to structure her writing, even to the level of the sentence, is a skill that is aligned with the writing she was asked to do in history.

Similarly, Nadia said that the main takeaway she got from ENGL 060 was “learning how to format an essay.” As Melissa (one of my ENGL 060 students) explained, “You showed us a really good way of how to set up each essay... You really clarified what needs to go where in an essay.”

Melissa elaborated later in the interview that when she got to college level English (ENGL 111) many of her peers (who did not take ENGL 050/060) were not as prepared as she was for the expectations in that class, particularly when it came to “structure.” She explains, “When I go into my English Composition class, I notice that there’s a lot of people right out of high school, and they never really had that extra class to revise everything that happened prior to college.” The use of the word “revise” is interesting here and suggests that she went through a process of taking on new practices and getting rid of old practices that she no longer found helpful or useful. In other words, she suggests she learned something about the Discourse of college composition in her developmental literacy course that helped her feel more prepared for the transition to English Composition I than her classmates who had not had that experience. As she described this experience with her English Composition I classmates, she focused on their struggles organizing the components of academic writing within a piece of writing. She explains that her classmates would ask her “Where does this go?” and she was able to help them organize where to put their thesis statement and address other issues related to organization.

This assertion that developmental literacy classes provided the practical knowledge of what to include in an academic essay and where to put those components was echoed by several other participants. Mike explained, “So everything I’ve learned has

helped me as far as narrowing things down... having my three topics. Conclusion, thesis - it's all new to me.” Here Mike names components of academic writing that are both associated with certain content in an academic essay, but also where to put that content, how to organize it.

Like Mike, Oscar had been out of school for some time and cited “structure” as one of the things he learned in ENGL 060 that was useful overall in his college-level courses. He elaborated, “The structure, it was like before I took [ENG60], it was like, wait- thesis statement? How do I do that? Topic sentences? I mean after 15, 16 years [since] high school, you don't remember this stuff.” Here it is evident that part of the “structure” that was being introduced (or re-introduced) in ENGL 060 included some the components of academic writing. Oscar also explained that without ENGL 060, his Ethics paper probably “would have been a jumbled mess.” In order to elaborate on what he had learned in ENGL 060 that helped him write an Ethics paper that presumably was not a “jumbled mess,” Oscar reflected on his diagnostic essay (an essay students wrote in response to a prompt during the first week of class) from ENGL 060:

And if you remember our test essay in class at the beginning, [mine] probably had no structure to it. It probably had good points. It was probably paragraphs, [they] were probably organized, but it probably didn't have a thesis statement. It probably wasn't structured correctly.

Here it is clear that he considered his writing “organized” at the paragraph level before he took ENGL 060, but still not “structured correctly.” To explain what he means by that, he specified that the essay was missing certain components, such as a thesis statement. So, while the paragraphs may have been organized, as a whole the essay organization wasn't “correct.”

For some students, the structure that they used was formulaic. Mike's citing of "three topics, conclusion, thesis" hinted at a five-paragraph essay formula. Similarly, when asked what she learned in ENGL 050 that she was able to use in her history papers, Chloe replied, "The format of it, like what topic I wanted to use first, which one was the least important, the middle, and then the most important." Chloe found the five-paragraph essay the most useful approach for organizing information. She went on to say that she found the five-paragraph format useful in her college-level courses as well. For example, for her history term paper:

We did have to do five-paragraph essays there too [in ENGL 050], so I just kept to the format. That's what I keep to because I know it's a lot easier...Yeah with your thesis, you're giving the statement like, oh, I'm going to talk about this. I'm going to talk about that in my three-body paragraphs and then it just gets really confusing if you just keep going with other paragraphs.

While this approach was useful for both Chloe and Mike, at the end of this quote, Chloe described her difficulty writing beyond the five-paragraph limit. This illustrates the limited utility of the five-paragraph essay format when students are required to write longer and more complex papers in other contexts (Bernstein & Lowry, 2017).

A more flexible approach to organization that includes, but is not limited to, the five-paragraph essay is organizing around a broader point that breaks into sub-points. Several participants described this as a concept they found helpful in their college-level writing. Aiden referred to this as organization "like an umbrella." Similarly, when asked what steps or process she used to complete her psychology assignment, Melissa replied:

I start off very broad. Okay, this is what she's asking. Now let's narrow it down to this is the topic. Now let's narrow it down to what is really the point of it and then just narrowing it down, making it smaller and smaller until I get to the point and then still trying to figure out how another psychologist would want to read that.

Here she describes the process of starting with the broad topic and then narrowing her focus down so that she makes sure she hits the main point of the response. While this describes a general process, it also results in a particular structure. This is similar to a common paper structure taught for use in English assignments.

In her second interview, I asked Melissa if she still felt, as she had expressed in her first interview, that the skill she learned in ENGL 060 of starting broad and narrowing down had been useful in her college-level psychology course. She confirmed that she did still feel that way and added she also applied the skill in her Biology class: “Um, just in like most scenarios, especially in biology...like seeing very broad things and slowly going down to the core is something really important that I've learned.” Melissa is not describing how she organizes her writing in Biology here, but rather how she organizes biology concepts in her head. Here we see that the application of this skill can extend beyond an organizational approach for writing and can enhance overall understanding. It is an example of the way this more generalized understanding of organization makes it easier for her to transfer that skill to a new context (Perkins & Solomon, 1989). Melissa explicitly stated that she had learned this approach in ENGL 060 as a writing skill, but understood its applicability to Psychology and Biology. She concluded, “It’s a good life skill to see the broad picture and then narrow it down to smaller aspects.”

This idea that understanding the way academic writing is structured is broadly useful, is echoed by Mike. As he described:

Well [doing this is] not necessarily just [good] in college courses, but just in life. You know, just having that understanding of the structure. So it's a good foundation of building, even building a conversation. It's a foundational cornerstone building block so that you can get your point across, you can explain it, then you can close it instead of leaving things open ended, which I do a lot.

Aiden also uses the word “foundation” when he described how the writing he did in ENGL 060 was similar to the writing he did in his art history class. He said, “I would say similar because you have to have a strong foundation to build upon and add detail, example, detail example.” While not all participants used the term “foundation,” it was clear that they all felt, to some degree, that ENGL 050/060 provided them with necessary foundational knowledge about the elements of academic writing and how to arrange and structure those elements in an effective and useful way.

Academic Argument

ENGL 050/060 and college-level composition courses both focus on thesis-driven writing. While other forms of writing may be used in both courses, the graded essays all require students to make an academic argument. As such, students in ENGL 050/060 are taught both what an academic argument is, conceptually, and how to develop an argument from a question or topic. In addition, students are taught to write thesis statements that state their overall argument and may forecast their supporting evidence. While some students start ENGL 050/060 with some understanding of what an argument and/or thesis statement is, many students are not familiar with either.

Writing that requires an academic-style argument was one element of academic writing that seemed to align with many of the writing expectations in disciplines other than English. This aligns with Nelms & Dively’s (2007) finding that “an understanding between thesis and support” transferred from composition courses to disciplinary courses. In addition, it supports Callahan & Chumney’s (2009) assertion that to be successful in college-level courses, students need to be able to write academic arguments. In fact, all seven participants reported that being able to make an academic argument was applicable

in their college level courses in disciplines other than English. However, while some participants had a conceptual understanding of how “argument” is applicable across contexts, others simply recognized that some of their courses, across disciplines, expected them to include a “thesis” in their writing.

This distinction between the requirement to make an academic argument and the more specific requirement to include a thesis statement is important because, based on the writing assignments I collected from faculty, the requirement to include a specific thesis statement is discipline specific. Of the 22 assignments I collected from faculty in disciplines other than English, only five explicitly required a thesis statement. Two of those assignments were in philosophy courses, two were in history courses, and one was in a film course. However, in an additional 13 courses, representing 11 different disciplines, students were required to do a variety of tasks that could be classified as making an academic argument: explain a point of view, evaluate evidence, articulate why an issue or problem was important, analyze strengths and weaknesses of an approach or explanation, take a position, or explain why they agree or disagree with a conclusion or position. In other words, argumentation was more common across disciplinary Discourses than the use of a thesis statement. So, while students may not be required to explicitly include a thesis statement in their writing across disciplines, it is likely that they will be required to engage in argumentation.

Some participants were able to recognize when they were required to use argumentation, but for others it was more of a challenge. Participants’ responses suggest that the more conceptual the understanding of argument, the more options for applications the students saw. In other words, when students see academic argumentation

as more than simply a component of an essay - the thesis statement - it is seen as a broader set of skills and knowledge through which to communicate and analyze information that can be used in many contexts and for many purposes.

Several participants described academic writing in terms of argumentation. For example, both Oscar and Aiden described the writing they did in ENGL 060, which was applicable in their college courses, as fact-based opinion. Mike, on the other hand, expressed a more sophisticated understanding of the way argument is used across contexts. He saw connections between the use of argument in ENGL 060, film, and music both inside and outside the classroom. He also made connections between identifying or making an argument in a piece of writing and other contexts where one might make an argument in a different way, such as film. When I asked Mike if he wrote in his film class (which was not the class he focused on for the study, but a class that came up in his discussion of the first classes he took in college), he responded:

No. Only your answers [for the test]. But it's funny how...same thing with reading. Because you're dealing with writing and the camera, the camera's like the pen. And they all tie in as far as even the music, the music that I was learning in music appreciation tied into the film class, the writing tied in. ...What's the point [the director is] trying to make?

Here Mike is recognizing the value of understanding the concept of argument across contexts, not only in terms of creating an argument through a piece of writing or film, but also in recognizing and identifying an argument through analytical reading and viewing. In this way, Mike demonstrated that he understood the broader purpose and value of

argument, beyond it being the requirement of a professor to include in a paper. When Mike later said that he wished he had taken ENGL 060 before his film class, he acknowledged not only that he learned this idea in ENGL 060 (and it was reinforced when he took ENGL 111), but that the understanding of argument he gained in ENGL 060 would have been useful in that course, despite the lack of any writing requirement. In Mike's second interview, he expanded on this idea by explaining his new ability to recognize a thesis in contexts outside of school:

And now I know how to write, I guess on a high school level, and now I've just finished English I, I have a better understanding of writing. And even when I listen to the radio, when I listen to people talk, I can hear the education and writing, the way they bring back, you know, their, their thesis, bring it back to a full circle. So, I can hear that and see it. So, I have a better understanding of writing.

This shows that he understands the concept of argumentation, including how and why argumentation is used, which allows him to transfer that understanding across contexts.

Some participants may not have had such an understanding of argument, but recognized that the ability to write thesis statements gained in ENGL 050/060 was applicable in their college-level course. In response to questions about what aspects of ENGL 060 they found useful in other courses, Oscar, Melissa, Chloe, and Nadia all cited knowing how to write thesis statements. Melissa describe that she learned about thesis statements and where to include them in a paper in ENGL 060, and this was useful in ENGL 111. Other participants explained that this understanding was also useful in college-level courses in other disciplines. Nadia used a thesis to respond to the open-ended questions she completed in psychology class. While she was not required to include a thesis, she found it helpful to have one. She explained that she used the same

strategy that she used to write in-class essays in English, starting with the thesis first, to help her with her timed responses in psychology. Perkins & Solomon (1989) argue that when students understand the “general principles” that underlie a concept or skill, they are more likely to be able to transfer that knowledge. Nadia’s conceptual understanding of the purpose of a thesis meant she was able to see connections that may not have been obvious and apply her understanding successfully in a different context.

In other cases, participants were required to include a thesis statement in their college-level papers. For example, Oscar was able to apply what he learned about argument and thesis statements in ENGL 060 to the paper he wrote in Ethics later that same semester. He was also required to include a thesis statement in his computer literacy paper the following semester, even though the main objective of the paper was to evaluate the students’ understanding of the computer/word processing skills taught in class. Similarly, Chloe was required include a thesis in her history paper. She said that while history was different from English in that there wasn’t as much practice writing and she didn’t receive feedback on drafts, her history professor did go over “how to write a good thesis and how it's a ladder. Like you have your intro, you have the body paragraphs, and then you have your conclusion.” Chloe explained that the practice and confidence she gained writing thesis statements in ENGL 050 prepared her for writing thesis statements in her history class.

When Chloe described how she applied what she learned about thesis statements in ENGL 050 to her history class, she explained that she understood the thesis as part of a five-paragraph essay. So, for her a thesis followed a formula – making an argument with three supporting points, within a five-paragraph essay. This is evident in her final history

paper thesis statement: “Women have been discriminated because of how they look, how they work, and participating in movements for their rights.” This paper was a five-page, five-paragraph essay with three long paragraphs that did generally focus on the three points she outlines in her thesis. When she says that it would get “confusing if you just keep going with other paragraphs,” she highlights a limitation to her understanding of argumentation and thesis statements that could be problematic when she tries to write longer papers. While Chloe was able to successfully transfer her ability to write a thesis statement from ENGL 050 to her history course, her understanding of thesis statement is quite specific and may not set her up to successfully transfer that learning into other contexts in which a thesis statement or argument doesn’t fall neatly into a five-paragraph format (Bernstein & Lowry, 2017).

Other participants recognized that argumentation was used across disciplines but were not always able to identify when an argument, or a thesis, was required for an assignment. When Aiden was asked what from ENGL 060 was helpful for other classes, he spoke about his art history paper because he understood that it was important to present his opinion “and make the strongest argument out of it.” Despite this acknowledgement that his art history paper not only required an argument but also multiple other references, in the second interview when I asked (to clarify one of his responses) whether he thought the paper was asking for an argument, he responded that it was maybe more “research.” However, the rubric included in the assignment stated: “The first paragraph **introduces and identifies** the selected work of art and **presents a thesis** that is thoughtful, focused, argumentative, and directly engages the chosen topic.” When we read this together, Aiden then remembered that it was asking for an argument. In fact,

his final paper does have a thesis statement: “This relief was used for ‘visual propaganda’ which would showcase the viewers the power the King would have.” As Aiden had completed the assignment a few weeks before the interview, it is possible that he didn’t remember the specifics of the paper or recognize that he had included a thesis statement. It is also possible that the confusion was because, while Aiden did see the application of argument from ENGL 060 to his art history class, he didn’t have a completely solid sense of the concept of argumentation or a clear understanding of what a thesis statement is.

Similarly, in Sophia’s first interview, she described her struggle to complete a response to a documentary film they had viewed in her history class. This struggle seemed to be due in part to unclear assignment instructions for what her history professor called a “response” paper, a term she was unfamiliar with. She didn’t recognize at first that these papers, like the papers in ENGL 060, required her to make an argument. When I asked in her interview if thinking about her history “response” assignment as an argument might be helpful, she replied, “You know, I never thought of it that way, but now that you’ve mentioned it, actually it is a very smart way.” When we met again for the second interview after the class had ended, she explained that she had done well with the last couple of response papers. When I asked what had made the difference, she responded, “Because instead of saying an opinion, I kind of like put into more like an argument way.” This distinction she makes between an “opinion” and an “argument” is based on her struggle to understand her history professor’s requirements, and the disciplinary convention in history to avoid the use of “I.” This will be discussed in detail in chapter 5. But ultimately, Sophia found the skill of making an argument in her writing helpful in her history class, and she recognized that certain assignments we did in ENGL

060 were aligned with the work that she did in her history class. However, her difficulty understanding her history response paper assignment and its terminology interfered with her ability to recognize that alignment.

So, while all participants cited thesis statements or argumentation as elements from ENGL 050/060 that aligned in some way with their college level courses, they differed in their level of understanding of these skills. Because of the way that academic argument was impacted by social context and varied across disciplinary Discourses (Gee, 2008; Lea & Street, 1998, 2006; Ivanic, 2004), it was often hard for students to recognize the similar thread through the variation. Students with a more sophisticated understanding of what an argument was were able to identify the way an argument might shift in content, form, and emphasis and yet still be an academic argument. At one end of the spectrum of understanding, participants didn't always clearly see the alignment between the arguments they made in ENGL 050/060 and those they needed to make in other disciplines without some prompting. At the other end of the continuum, some participants (e.g., Mike) constructed a more encompassing and nuanced conception of argumentation, and found applications and connections in contexts including and beyond the college-level classroom. This variance has important implications for practice that will be discussed in chapter 6.

Supporting Evidence

Including quotes or other evidence in support of an argument was another element of academic writing that many participants saw as aligned with their writing in college-level courses. This makes sense, as supporting evidence is key to making an argument in an academic essay, and it was an understanding of the relationship between

the two that Nelms and Dively (2007) found transferred from the first year composition course to disciplinary writing-intensive courses. In English, from developmental to credit bearing courses, using supporting evidence is always a criterion on any grading rubric or list of paper requirements. While identifying and evaluating evidence is a skill, the inclusion of evidence (often in the form of quotes) is also definitely a “component” of the writing product.

In ENGL 050/060, students are taught to identify textual quotes they can use as supporting evidence as part of their preparation for writing a thesis-driven essay. In my course, many of the graphic organizers I provide for students to use in the planning phase of their writing asks them to select quotes that relate to the essay topic or question. Often, they are asked to explain the quotes they chose and how they help to answer the essay question. In many cases, I encourage students to collect and analyze them as evidence before they determine the argument that they want to make in the paper. In other words, I suggest they let the evidence drive their argument. In addition to selecting quotes, students are taught to write what Graff (2018) calls the “quote sandwich,” a process for introducing and explaining quotes. We do several different in-class activities breaking down this process as it has multiple components including reading comprehension, punctuation, and citation. Finally, students are taught where in a body paragraph and the essay as a whole, evidence can be included. I often teach students to construct their paragraphs around their quotes or other evidence.

Six of the participants talked about the need to use evidence in the writing that they did in their college-level courses, both in English and across disciplines. Participants also reported that evidence, more generally, was required as support in the

papers they had to write in history, ethics, art history, and even computer literacy. In the 22 assignments I collected, six assignments required quotations from a text as support; another 13 required evidence, but not necessarily quotes. Like academic argument, the more general concept of evidence was more common across disciplinary Discourses than the specific requirement to include text as evidence. For example, one assignment included the requirement to “summarize important findings from your sources” and another evaluated students’ “use of the literature” in the assignment rubric. In disciplines such as sociology, environmental science, and political science, students were advised in assignment instructions to paraphrase or summarize sources rather than quote. Despite the fact that the use of textual quotes is not required, and in some cases not encouraged, in all disciplines, all participants acknowledged that learning how to select quotes, introduce and explain them, and how connect evidence to their argument in ENGL 50/60 aligned with the expectations of providing evidence in other courses.

Several participants focused on the way ENGL 050/060 helped them develop a process for selecting quotes. Chloe stated that she learned to pick out her quotes ahead of time: “So like me looking through the book and actually picking out quotes, like that’s what I do now in my English class. I’ll read the text and I’ll put parenthesis around what I would actually use in in-class [essay writing] or just a regular essay.” This process of identifying quotes ahead of time – something that links the reading process with the writing process – is something that Oscar also explicitly cited when he talked about highlighting (as annotation). He said, “I only highlight things I intend to use as quotes.” Similarly, Melissa described that being required to find specific examples from a text in ENGL 060 (in the example she gave the text was a documentary we watched in ENGL

060) to use as evidence in her writing was helpful in preparing her for college-level work. While she said this was helpful in general, she specifically described how it helped her in ENGL 111. This may be because the other course that she talked about, Psychology, didn't require her to write papers; she was required only to write short responses to questions.

Several other participants explained that learning how to integrate evidence, particularly textual quotes, was helpful in their disciplinary college-level courses. Sophia and Aiden reported that the papers they wrote in ENGL 060 were similar to their papers in history and art history, respectively, because of the requirement to support the paper's argument with evidence. For example, Sophia explained that she had to use evidence from a documentary she had watched in class in her history response paper. She recalled: "If I had argued that the words that the author used weren't helpful, I had to go back and pull out words from the video that showed the professor what it was. Like, these were the words that confuse me because of this and that and that." Similarly, Oscar described the need to include evidence in his papers in order to demonstrate an understanding of disciplinary content. He described how he was required to include textual quotes in his final ethics paper:

You see, like the principles of morality and all these, and there's going to be quotes from our actual ethics books. So we had it. We had to actually pull like from famous philosophers we covered basically was - Aristotle. Mills and Kant I think were the three big ones I use.

This is similar to what he was required to do in his ENGL 060 papers. In addition, he described some of the other evidence he included in his ethics paper to support his argument that alcoholics should be allowed to receive liver transplants: "I have the numbers in there - it's something like 70 or 80 percent of people that need livers is due to

alcohol...And actually then I think 90 percent of people that [are] alcoholics, that do get a liver, don't go back to drinking.” Oscar, like Sophia and Aiden, understood that including quotes and/or other forms of evidence to support an argument is part of academic writing.

Several students explained that the “quote sandwich” (Graff, 2018) approach was helpful in their college level courses, in part because it helps them provide an explanation for their quotes. This is a concept that is widely used in English instruction and is taught in our ENGL 111 courses. However, many instructors, myself included, also teach the concept in ENGL 050/060. Sophia explained that what she learned about explaining quotes using a “quote sandwich” (Graff, 2018) was helpful in ENGL 111. She said, “You had to kind of prepare yourself for it, write the quote and then kind of explain what it means. That was very helpful because I actually knew how to do that [when I needed it in other classes].” It was clear that Sophia felt that she gained this knowledge from ENGL 060 as she further explained, “I didn’t have to really -- I mean we weren’t really taught how to do that [in ENGL 111], so I guess it was expected for me to know that. That was part of something that I should’ve known already going into that course.” While teaching that skill is part of the ENGL 111 curriculum, from Sophia’s perspective, it was something that she needed to know going into the course (and it is possible that her instructor didn’t explicitly teach the skill).

Although everyone seemed to understand the importance of using quotes to support an argument, several participants reported that selecting the best evidence and determining exactly how to use it was a challenge. As Melissa described, “I remember [in ENGL 060], it was kind of hard to figure out exactly [what to include for evidence] and how [it] connected to everything. [Learning how to do this] definitely prepared me

better for English now.” Chloe also indicated that she struggles to identify appropriate quotes even though she knows how to use them. For example, she explained that in her history paper, she had a quote that did not “fit well” and when she changed it during a revision of the paper, she felt that helped her earn a higher grade. Chloe talked about this struggle to pick the quotes that “fit well” a few times in her interviews. For example, she reported “Basically my main problem, it's not comprehending the quote, it's comparing the quote to what I'm talking about in the essay.” From her perspective, the issue was not comprehension, but considering reading comprehension was an ongoing problem for Chloe, it is likely that comprehension did play a role. From my years of experience with students in ENGL 050/060, often the reason that a quote doesn't connect or “fit” with the purpose or argument in the essay is because the quote isn't saying what the student says it does. Other researchers have suggested that students' difficulty effectively using sources and quotes may be due to a difficulty reading and understanding those sources (Howard et al., 2010; Keller, 2013). This highlights the way reading and writing skills are inextricably linked, and that difficulties with writing are often linked to difficulties with reading.

Finally, participants talked about how the need to cite sources in their college-level courses was connected to the work they did in 050/060. While we do not include a research paper or spend a lot of instructional time on Works Cited pages in ENGL 050/060, students do learn the purpose of citing a source and the basics of in-text citations. In other words, while Works Cited pages are not usually required, students are required to introduce the text and author in the introduction of the paper, and to cite the author and page number for direct quotes. Four participants described how learning how

to cite their quotations in ENGL 050/060 was helpful in their disciplinary courses where they were required to cite their sources in the papers and project they completed. For most of the assignments they described, a particular citation style was not required. What was helpful was understanding the purpose of the citations, and the need to include them, rather than any particular style.

Overall, participants found learning how to provide evidence as support for an academic argument in ENGL 050/060 was aligned with expectations in their college-level courses. In addition, selecting and using evidence and quotes is also a reading process. The participants' responses illustrate the complexity of this task and the ways varying levels of reading comprehension, in addition to varying degrees of conceptual and technical understanding of the process of selecting and using evidence impacts their execution.

Affective Benefits from ENGL 050/060 on Reading and Writing in College-Level Courses

A number of participants described the ways in which ENGL 050/060 made them more comfortable and confident as readers and writers as they moved forward in their college courses. This increased confidence and motivation as a result of high-quality developmental education is reported in other research (Bickerstaff et al., 2017; Hern & Snell, 2013; Paulson & Holschuh, 2018). For example, Sophia said the following when asked if there was anything she wanted to add about her experience in ENGL 060: "I do feel like it helped me a lot though because I feel more confident about actually writing a paper." This was a desired outcome of the course for Sophia. She said that the reason she decided to take the course rather than to take the placement exam again to try and place

into college-level English was so that she could be sure she understood what “was expected in college from [her].” Melissa also reported that she felt like she was prepared and understood what was expected from her in ENGL 111 as a result of taking ENGL 060.

Some participants also described the impact that their developmental literacy instructor had on their motivation and confidence. As Sophia explained, “I feel like in order to learn, you have to kind of like your professor, and if you don’t, you don’t put in the same effort.” In addition, Chloe talked a lot about how her professor helped her understand the amount of work she would have to do to succeed in college. At the same time, her professor inspired her to put in that effort and believe in herself. She explained:

I went into the class kind of not caring about it, kind of caring about it, but then once she started talking and I got to know the teacher, she basically just told everybody that they could do it and become a really good writer and all of that stuff, so I just tried really, really hard. I'd work on it at home. I'd work on it in class, and it just brought me to where I am today.

The power of this combination – professors having high expectations for students while communicating their belief that they can meet those expectations – is documented in other research (Cox, 2009). More specifically, Chloe spoke about how her ENGL 050 instructor “made me more comfortable with my thesis statements. She made me think about it more.” Chloe explained the way her instructor scaffolded her support by initially helping her write thesis statements and then gradually releasing her support until Chloe was able to write thesis statements on her own. This is an approach supported by the literature (Perin & Holschuh, 2019; Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). She described how the

instructor's support and positive feedback increased her confidence: "I'd be like 'Is this a positive thesis statement in your eyes?' and she'd be like, 'Yeah, it's perfect.' So like she kind of boosted my confidence with thesis statements." Both Sophia and Chloe explicitly stated that their increased confidence in their writing was useful in their respective history courses.

Several participants described significant transformations related to their experiences with reading and writing after taking ENGL 050/060. For example, Melissa explained that she found that in ENGL 111 she was more prepared than her peers who placed into ENGL 111 right out of high school because of all that she had learned in ENGL 060. This had an impact on how she saw herself as a student. She explained this transformation: "It's interesting to think in high school, I was always the one that needed help. In college, I'm the one people go to." Chloe described the way she transformed as a student. She explained that she was initially shy and thought she was lazy, but that she was inspired by the personal connection her professor made with her and her classmates. She described the impact her experience in ENGL 050 had on her as a student: "It's all about learning for me now." She elaborated by explaining that she now comprehends better, reads articles on her phone, and "reads more about the world and what is going on." This is in contrast to her description of herself before the course as someone who wasn't interested in reading to gain knowledge. Similarly, Nadia described a transformation in her view of English: "I hate English, to be honest with you...But at the end of it [ENGL 060] I loved English. I loved doing the essays." When I asked her why she thought that was, she responded, "I think I found my voice." With each assignment, she became a little more comfortable, and was able to find her voice a bit more in each

essay, even those she hated. In the end, she transformed the way she thought about English and writing. These shifts also highlight the role of power in literacy learning as these students describe increased ownership and agency of their own learning and literacy practices (Lea & Street, 1998, 2006; Ivanic, 2005). In addition, these findings also align with Schnee's (2014) findings that many developmental students become able not only to appreciate the ways in which developmental English helped them develop their skills, but express "enthusiasm" and "joy" about their engagement with academics (p.255).

Conclusion

The participants in this study identified a number of reading and writing strategies that they learned in ENGL 050/060 and found useful in their college-level courses across disciplines. In general, much of what participants learned in their developmental literacy courses had utility in their college-level courses when certain conditions were met. For example, the developmental literacy courses used college-level materials and assignments. As result, most participants in this study realized the need and use for reading and writing strategies to meet the reading and writing challenges they encountered in their developmental literacy class and subsequently, their college-level courses; they understood that comprehension of most college-level texts requires analysis and is often difficult and slow. This realization is tied to an understanding that being a "good" reader and writer is not about what Thomas Newkirk (2012) calls the "myth of talent," but about using reading and writing strategies to overcome the inherent difficulties in both processes. It is about understanding that in many ways that addressing those difficulties are the process. As Salvatori and Donahue (2004) explain about reading: "Readers who engage, rather than avoid, a text's difficulties can deepen their

understanding of what they read and how they read” (p.3). The participants in this study often described the way their developmental literacy instructors scaffolded their instruction in ways that allowed them to do just that. The strategies they named were those they found most useful in this process and in meeting the literacy demands and requirements of their college-level courses across disciplines.

The specific reading and writing strategies that participants named also had some characteristics in common and are well-aligned with best practices (Armstrong & Newmann, 2011; Bickerstaff & Raufman, 2017; Jaggars & Bickerstaff, 2018; Perin & Holschuh, 2019; Scrivener et al., 2018). They could all be considered process-oriented, a label usually used for writing strategies, but which can also be applied to the reading strategies participants named. They were also general enough to be applied regardless of the specific text participants read or the particular writing assignment assigned. Most of these strategies are commonly taught and assigned reading and writing strategies and are among the hundreds of reading and writing strategies developmental literary instructors could decide to teach (Paulson & Holschuh, 2018). Given the wide variety of options on which to focus, instructors have to make choices, and the results of this study suggest that students may particularly benefit from explicit, scaffolded instruction about how to analyze challenging texts, and from learning the following reading comprehension strategies: annotation, summarization, rereading, and looking up vocabulary and references. In addition, this study suggests that students benefited from instruction on the following process-oriented writing strategies: Understanding the writing task, pre-writing and planning, using instructor feedback, and revising. Finally, general concepts relating to academic writing were useful for students in their college-level courses:

structure/organization; academic argument, and supporting evidence. Again, there are many choices instructors can make about the exact way they teach and model these strategies and concepts.

This study supports the idea that in order for students to build the flexibility they need to apply strategies and concepts across contexts, they need a variety of options and choices in the specific ways they employ them – for instance in the specific way they decide to plan their writing or annotate their text. Students will encounter many different types of literacy tasks as they move through other classes, and this underscores the need to think metacognitively about what concepts and strategies are right for the task and the Discourse of that assignment. Even when participants were successful in doing this, they illustrated the complexity of transferring literacy practices from one context to another (Gee, 2008; Lea & Street, 1998, 2006). They displayed a type of “mindfulness” (Carillo, 2016) about the reading and writing they were being asked to do, and how it was similar or different than what they did in their developmental literacy courses. This “mindfulness” helped them to select, and in some cases adapt, strategies they learned in ENGL 050/060 for use in their college-level course. It allowed some participants to see the way concepts like argumentation and providing supporting evidence could be applied in a new context – even when the task and/or the terminology used was different. It is this metacognitive awareness, not just the characteristics of the strategies themselves, that facilitated the transfer of learning, and may have been a key factor in these participants’ overall success. However, this was not something any of them reported being taught explicitly. It seemed that some participants developed this type of metacognitive awareness on their own and some did not. This suggests that developmental literacy

courses could help more students develop this awareness by explicitly teaching metacognitive thinking and mindfulness.

Finally, some participants in this study also reported social and emotional benefits to their participation in their developmental literacy courses. They described increased confidence in their ability to complete college-level reading and writing, and in some cases, more motivation. In addition, several participants described significant transformations in their relationship to reading, writing, and learning. They were more engaged, enjoyed reading and writing more, and thought of themselves as capable. This was sometimes attributed to a positive relationship with a developmental literacy instructor who believed in their abilities and provided them support and encouragement to meet the challenges of college level work. The experiences of these participants highlight the importance of considering non-academic needs in all courses, but particularly in developmental courses where students are often new to college and unsure about their ability to succeed.

Chapter 5: Points of Contrast Between ENGL 050/060 and College-Level Courses

Introduction

Participants found many ways in which ENGL 050/060 was aligned with and prepared them for the literacy expectations in their college level courses. At the same time, participants also reported important differences between the two courses and some challenges related to both meeting the disciplinary literacy expectations in their college-level courses and transitioning between an English course, like ENGL 050/060, to a discipline-specific college-level course. Participants experiences varied, and what one participant found challenging, another might not have. Along the same lines, when participants described the differences they noticed between the reading and writing requirements in their ENLG 050/060 courses and their subsequence college-level courses across disciplines, they did not always report similar experiences or judgments in terms of difficulty or level of tension. In some cases, these differences represented a lack of alignment between the literacy work they did in ENGL 050/060 and their college-level courses and their courses in other disciplines. In other cases, the differences were related to variations in disciplinary expectations. While variation is expected across courses and disciplines, this chapter focuses on specific differences that participants described between ENGL 050/060 and other courses, and the challenges that sometimes were associated with the transition from one to the other. This chapter starts off describing meaningful contrasts between the reading in ENGL 050/060 and the reading in their college-level course across disciplines. These contrasts were related to the purposes for reading and the reading requirements in the course. In addition, discipline specific reading challenges are also described. This is followed by a section on writing contrasts

between ENGL 050/060 and college-level courses. Contrasts in the purposes for writing and the types of writing are described. Then, discipline-specific writing-challenges that participants experienced are explained. Next, participants' challenges related to understanding and responding to instructor expectations and the variations between them are explored. Finally, this chapter ends with a detailed story of one participant's struggle to understand and complete an assignment in her history class. Her story illustrates some of the common challenges participants experienced navigating disciplinary college-level writing and transferring their learning in ENGL 050/060 to new contexts.

Contrasts in Reading between ENGL 050/060 and College-Level Courses

The reading load in the college-level course participants took varied. While some participants noted that their college-level courses included very little reading, six participants reported that they included a heavy and/or challenging reading load. The difference seemed to depend partly on the course, and partly on specific participants' reading strengths and challenges. For example, Oscar and Mike both took computer science classes, Computer Literacy and Interactive Multimedia respectively, that did not require a lot of reading to pass. Oscar and Mike both labeled those courses as "technical" courses and said that reading was only necessary if students didn't have the necessary "experience" or "background knowledge." Melissa asserted that "Ninety percent of psychology [reading] was easier than English." Mike described the Interactive Multimedia class as more of an "artsy" class in which minimal reading was assigned.

Yet, most of the participants talked about college- courses with heavy reading loads, sometimes more than what was required in ENGL 050/060. In contrast to his experience with Interactive Multimedia, Mike said his Computer Concepts and

Programming courses required a lot of reading that was more “instructional” than “technical.” Similarly, Nadia noted that psychology required students to read a chapter each week which amounted to roughly 30-40 pages of reading a week. Aiden described his art history course as “a lot of work” that consisted of reading a textbook and slideshow presentations in order to memorize relevant facts about the art pieces, including what “prompted” the piece and interpretations of the piece. Both Sophia and Chloe said that their history courses, American History and History of Women in the US respectively, had a lot a reading. However, Sophia also later suggested that the reading load was not particularly challenging for her. She explained that she found the reading in history easy to comprehend, but harder to retain.

Chloe talked more about the challenge of completing the reading. She said several times that she didn’t always read all of the text because it was too much for her to get through because it was very time consuming. For example, she said, “I try and just skim and see what questions go with what. If I can't, then I'll actually read the full text, but it's not in my nature to read all of this. It's just a lot and it gets really, really time-consuming too.” When I asked her how she would compare the reading in her history course to the reading she had to do in ENGL 050, she said it was a lot more. The following sections will describe some of the contrasts participants reported between the reading they did in ENGL 050/060 and the reading they did in their disciplinary college-level courses. Also included is data from faculty on the type of reading and assignments they assign in their courses. Specific discipline related reading challenges are all explained.

Purposes for Reading

Participants described different purposes for reading in their ENGL 050/060 course than in their college-level disciplinary courses. At the core of this difference is the fact that the content of a course like ENGL 050/060 is not tied to the content in the readings, as those can vary across sections, but to the process of reading. Reading and writing is the content of ENGL 050/060. The goal of reading in ENGL 050/060 is for students to, as the course outcomes state, “use a variety of reading comprehension strategies” and “read, analyze and discuss texts as a basis for original thinking and writing.” The objective of a course like ENGL 050/060 is for students to become better readers, and, in part because they have become better readers, to become better writers. The text’s content is not central to the course learning goals. While student interest in the content of the text is an important consideration, texts are chosen not because they include information we need students to leave the class understanding. Instead, texts are mainly selected because of textual characteristics such a level of difficulty, the rhetorical strategies they use, and how the ideas connect to other texts in the course.

In contrast, texts in college-level courses in disciplines other than English, are used to deliver the content. The topic of the text is, in most cases, the entire point of assigning it. Participants did not report any explicit instruction in reading in their college-level courses outside of English. Of the 42 faculty in disciplines other than English that responded to my survey about the reading and writing expectations in their classroom, 38 (90.48%) assigned reading (textbook, articles/essays, or other books) but only 11 (26.19%) said they did any reading instruction in their courses. These faculty members represented a number of disciplines, including education, political science, philosophy,

film and communication, history, ESL, world languages (Spanish/Italian), mathematics and statistics, biology/environmental science, and computer literacy. Some of the faculty described instructional approaches aimed to address reading comprehension issues, like the history faculty member who reported incorporating the principles of Reading Apprenticeship into her class. As described on the Reading Apprenticeship website:

Teachers using the Reading Apprenticeship framework regularly model disciplinary-specific literacy skills, help students build high-level comprehension strategies, engage students in building knowledge by making connections to background knowledge they already have, and provide ample guided, collaborative, and individual practice as an integral part of teaching their subject area curriculum. (Reading Apprenticeship, 2020)

This history instructor also listed talk-to-the-text and think-aloud approaches in her course. A philosophy faculty member described her method: “I actively work towards helping students learn how to parse out the important information from the convoluted filler language.” Others did not specify their approach. One political science faculty member expressed uncertainty about what was meant by “reading instruction”: “I’m not sure what that would be, but in my American Government course, we read numbers from the Federalist Papers together.” While the specifics varied, these 11 faculty members did claim to address reading in their classroom, but 31 (73.81%) of faculty did not do any kind of reading instruction. This suggests students are expected to enter the course able to comprehend disciplinary texts to access and learn content.

Even in courses where discipline-specific reading instruction is included, the instructors’ primary goal is for students to understand content, not to develop reading skills, and it is important that students understand that. Reading texts may be one important way to deliver content, but it is certainly not the only, or even necessarily the

primary way. The course outcomes of the college-level courses participants took include verbs like “understand,” and “analyze” in reference to information but make no reference to reading text. Only the history courses have outcomes like “evaluate a variety of historical sources” that make it seem difficult to accomplish without reading some written text. This reality results in students recognizing that professors often assign reading in, say a psychology class, for a different reason than an English professor does. As a result, successful students in a course like psychology, also understand it is important to read for a different purpose than they do in an English course like ENGL 050/060. Research on expert readers suggests that even when similar approaches and strategies are used in different disciplines, they are often implemented in different ways, in part because their purposes for reading are different (Shanahan et al., 2011).

Several participants recognized that the reading in their disciplinary courses, unlike the reading in ENGL 050/060, focused on providing information. For example, Aiden saw ENGL 060 as reading stories about life experience but that reading in art history was for the purpose of studying artifacts and learning content. He described that the main purpose of reading in art history is to understand the accepted ideas and interpretation of the art pieces they studied and then memorize those ideas. Melissa, Chloe, Oscar, and Nadia also all described the reading they did in their college-level courses outside of English as different than the reading they did in ENGL 060 because it provided course-specific content. Chloe said she didn’t consider her history textbook to even be a “book” (which she defined as being about people and including dialogue) but rather just something that holds the content she needed to know. Similarly, Oscar also observed that the text itself is sometimes very different. He explained with regard to his

Computer Literacy course that, “It's more of a manual than an actual story or essay or anything like that,” and that the reading he was assigned “wasn’t scholarly in any sense.” Nadia also observed that the reading in psychology was “very different” than the reading in ENGL 060. She saw the reading in English “at like an intellectual level that... I just wasn't there yet.” In contrast, she described the psychology reading as “straightforward” and about “research, statistical research studies.” Melissa explained that in psychology the reading task was more about getting information, and there were multiple ways (texts, PowerPoint, other resources) that could be used to access the information. In contrast, in English (including ENGL 060), the text was the content, so the only options for assistance in understanding what was in that text were to apply reading comprehension strategies and discuss the text with peers and professors.

To Read or Not to Read?

That participants recognized the purpose of their college-level reading in disciplines other than English as different than that of that reading they did in ENGL 050/060 had an impact on how they approached reading assignments in their college-level classes. In some cases, this, and what other types of texts and “reading” were available, had an impact on how useful they thought the textbook was. In ENGL 050/060 students read two trade books, sometimes two novels, and other times a novel and a memoir, and a selection of articles and essays. In some courses, texts might also include multimedia texts, like a TED talk. I use a few TED talks in my courses, and while students listen and watch the TED talk in class, and have access to it afterwards, they also annotate the transcript during and after they listen to the talk, just as they would an article

or essay. Similarly, while students are encouraged to use audiobooks if they find them helpful, they are still expected to buy the book and annotate the text while they listen.

Although participants sometimes commented that the reading in their disciplinary college-level courses was interesting, they read mostly to learn course content for a test or other assessment of disciplinary knowledge or competence. As a result, assigned readings in the textbook were often not the resource participants reported using most frequently. Despite the fact that most participants said a lot of reading was assigned in their college-level courses, many claimed that reading, or even purchasing, the textbook was not necessary to pass. This is consistent with other research (Armstrong et al., 2015; Del Principe & Ihara, 2016; Del Principe & Ihara, 2017). Mike spoke highly of the text he used in Interactive Multimedia, and said he would always recommend that students buy that book: “Even if you don't read it at the time, books are so valuable...[they are] worth more than money.” Yet, he also claimed that it wasn't necessary to read the book for the class. In the course syllabus, the reading is not listed as optional, but the grade for the course was determined by two projects, labs, a midterm, a final, and attendance. In the course schedule, readings are listed and the professor includes the following: “‘Lecture’ refers to the portion of the class where we focus on the readings. There may be reading quizzes before, during or after the Lecture portion.” So, while the syllabus communicates that students are expected to do the reading, Mike didn't perceive the reading assignments, other than the first one that he says was needed to do the first project, as necessary. He reported that the class provided students with a lot of “freedom” to decide whether they wanted to do the reading. According to Mike, most of the students did not.

Mike also said he thought his Computer Concepts book was valuable. Even though he didn't read it during the semester, he said he planned to read it at a later date. He and Aiden both said that the texts were worth buying as resources. However, while Mike seemed to value of book and information, he admitted, as was also the case in Interactive Multimedia, that he didn't read most of the assigned readings because of a lack of time and his perception that it wasn't necessary to read to pass. It is important to note that Mike did not pass his Computer Concepts and Programming courses, something he attributed to the time he dedicated to his ENGL 111 course. He did, however, pass Interactive Multimedia, a course that did not have as much assigned reading. So, it is possible that completing the assigned reading was more important to passing the course than he thought. But, according to Mike, many students in his computer concepts course didn't buy the book and used online resources like YouTube and W3Schools, a site that teaches computer coding, to learn the course content.

Other participants were decidedly negative about the utility of their class textbook. Oscar's view of his computer literacy book was: "Should have just left it as a tree." He clarified that although the "information was useful," the way it was presented, in a "cold, mechanical way," was not. He reported that while he read about 20% of the material, most students in the class didn't read it at all. Again, his comments highlight that the point of the textbook in his computer literacy class was to communicate information, but that students did not seem to see the textbook as the most effective or important way to do that. Melissa made a similar judgement of her psychology textbook and explained her decision to stop reading the assigned textbook chapters in her psychology course, "On the syllabus it says, for tonight's homework, it says like read

chapter whatever we're doing. I don't know of anyone that does that. I did do that at the beginning, and I found it to be a waste of my time. It will be easier just to go over the PowerPoints she goes over.” Melissa was a very conscientious student, but like most students, she only had so much time. When she realized that she didn’t need to use the textbook, and in fact, she might be better off just using the PowerPoint slides, she made the understandable choice not to. Her point that “I don’t know of anyone that does that” suggests that many students in her class were reading the PowerPoint lecture slides instead. Similarly, Aiden, also was clear that the lecture slides in art history usually provided “what you need to know, what could be on the test.” This aligns with what Armstrong, et al. (2015) found in their study of community college students experiences in general education or career technical education courses, found “[I]n some courses, the instructor’s notes and PowerPoints are so rich that assigned texts are deemed unnecessary by students” (p.9).

For these participants, and for Oscar and Mike, because the purpose of the reading assignments in their courses was to gain content knowledge, they often found that there were more effective and efficient ways to access it than reading the textbook. The result of this, unsurprisingly, is that these participants, and reportedly their classmates, came to similar conclusions, and often didn’t read the textbook assignments for their courses. As Del Principe and Ihara (2017) explain, responses such as not reading the text when it is not necessary are “practical and reasonable reactions to the particular classroom contexts.” In their study, they found that students were adept at figuring out exactly what and how they needed to read in order to be successful in the class. However, they also make the point that students learned and “developed attitudes and approaches to

reading that served them practically – in terms of time management and efficiency – but might not serve them intellectually as burgeoning critical readers” (p.203). In other words, while it is understandable that students often make the choice not to do the assigned reading in their college-level courses if it was not necessary to pass, the fact that this is common may have an overall negative impact on students reading development in college. This suggests that it could be helpful for instructors to consider the importance of the reading they assign in their courses. If instructors assign feel that the assigned reading is important, but students can get by in the course without completing it, instructors might consider revising their course to demonstrate and communicate that importance to students more clearly.

In contrast to the other participants, Nadia and Sophia both reported that reading the textbook was necessary in their courses. Unlike Melissa’s experience, Nadia found that it was necessary to read the textbook in her psychology class because they discussed the assigned reading in class and the exam often included information from the text that was not discussed in class. While both classes used the same textbook, they were taught by different instructors, and the exams were different. In addition, Nadia’s professor’s approach or use of PowerPoint might have been different than Melissa’s professor, or Nadia might have found the textbook more useful than Melissa. Finally, Sophia also said that it was necessary to do the reading in her American History course. In fact, she said that she tried, unsuccessfully, to succeed without completing the reading assignments at the beginning of the semester:

I started reading the beginning of the [semester]-- I started good. When the semester actually started, I was actually reading, and then we never did anything

with the readings, so I was just like, okay, what's the point? Then the exam came, and that's when we actually did very poorly. Although he gave us a study guide, but as I said, I didn't really put much effort into it, which is not good and I am not really proud of that. He got so upset that he actually forces us to read by giving us a quiz at the beginning of every class.

Sophia's experiences illustrates again that when students realize that they will not need to have done the reading in class, they are likely to stop reading. The difference between Sophia's and Melissa's experiences is that when Sophia stopped reading, she did poorly on the exam. While she attributed her poor performance, in part, to her lack of effort, she suggested that not reading also played a part. While the professor provided PowerPoint slides in his lecture, Sophia explained that they were presented a week after the reading was due. So, when the professor changed his approach, by giving quizzes, Sophia said that she started reading because the quiz "kind of forces me." There is no PowerPoint to fall back on for those quizzes, since the professor didn't deliver them yet. And, at least for Sophia, the lecture and PowerPoint alone was not enough for her to pass the course. When I asked Sophia in her second interview if she would do anything differently in history if she were to take the course over, she said that she would have read more consistently from the beginning of the course.

Overall, the participants' experiences illustrate there was an impact on how participants read, or didn't read, based on how the instructor used the reading assignments. In their content level courses, if participants felt like they could get the content and pass the tests, and in some cases do so more efficiently, without reading the assigned texts, then they did not read them. When reading the textbook was necessary to pass the class, they did the reading. Furthermore, "reading" in college courses does not necessarily mean reading textbooks or articles. It may mean reading PowerPoint lecture

slides, notes, information on the web, and other sources, either instead of or in addition to textbook reading.

Discipline Specific Reading Challenges

In addition to the contrast between the purpose and type of reading they did in their disciplinary college-level courses and the reading they did in ENGL 050/060, some students also reported some difficulties with the reading they were assigned in ENGL 050/060. Although only one participant categorized the reading in their college-level courses as harder than the reading they did in their college-level courses, there were a few specific disciplinary reading requirements that created challenges for several participants. This section will describe these difficulties.

Processing Time

The increased time that some participants spent reading in college-level course was not always due simply to the amount of reading required; it was also due to the time it took to process the information. Chole talked about only reading some of her history class reading assignments due to the time it takes her to read for understanding. She explained that she just “focus[ed] on the main sections.” By this she meant what she would need to use for evidence/quotes for her writing assignments. She explained that she limited what she would read because “I’m not the fastest reader. Plus, I read to actually understand it, so I take my time reading.” Melissa, who reported that she did more reading in ENGL 060 than in psychology, also talked in detail about needing time to understand the reading she had to do in psychology. She contrasted complexity of reading in ENGL 060 to the complexity of the reading in psychology:

I feel like maybe in ICRC [ENGL 060] actually, it's kind of like flipped. I thought maybe like ICRC has longer, less complex like information... you can read a paragraph and then make side notes about it quickly. Whereas with little sentences like this [in her psychology assignment] and this and this, you have to take like a least, like five minutes just to think about what it is asking of you.

Here, Melissa suggests that the while the texts in ENGL 060 are longer, they not as complex, and can be read more quickly. On the other hand, even though her psychology reading (in this case reading a problem) might not be as long, it can take a long time to analyze and understand. As an example, she described a situation where they read a problem online in class and try to be the first person to figure it out:

So I knew like if I had, like, if it was like a test situation where had plenty of time I would be fine. Like I know I could understand and process the information and apply what I learned to get the answer. But since it was a timed challenge, I really sometimes just didn't even try for some of the questions because I was like, I know the answer but I'm going to need time to figure it out. So...that was like a weakness of mine. Definitely.

Here Melissa makes a distinction between what she is able to understand in psychology when she is allowed time to process the information versus when she is under time pressure. She also talked about the fact that she sometimes gave up in timed conditions because she knew she wouldn't be able to understand the reading quickly enough to compete with her classmates. As she described it later about another task in psychology: "I did understand it, but it took time." When I asked her what she had learned or learned more about in ENGL 060 to help her be prepared and more successful with the reading and writing in her psychology course, she responded:

Maybe how to use like critical thinking more - how to just be like really fast at processing the information. I don't know, I feel like that might just be really important for me just because where I'm going to work. I'm going to have to be really fast on my feet for stuff like that. So maybe being able to read information really like faster and then interpret and annotate what they're saying. Like just quicker.

Melissa expressed concern about her difficulty processing her psychology reading quickly because she feels that skill will be important in her future nursing career. While ENGL 050/060 focuses on reading comprehension and critical thinking, the course doesn't emphasize reading speed. The only time ENGL 050/060 students are under time-pressure is during the final in-class essay exam in response to a reading. And even then, the reading is very short so that it can be read quickly. Any time-pressure students feel is usually related to the writing.

Difficult Vocabulary

Disciplinary texts often include difficult and unfamiliar words for disciplinary novices. When I asked Chloe whether the reading she did in ENGL 050 was easier or harder than the reading she had to do in history, she responded: "I can say like some of the history reading, it was harder because they would use old slang and different words." This represents a discipline-specific challenge, one that might apply to any discipline, such as philosophy or literature, in which older text are studied. At the same time, Chloe simply described a vocabulary issue in that the words were unfamiliar, in part because specialized vocabulary is part of each discipline's Discourse of reading and writing, and students needed to go through a process of determining their meaning before they could fully understand the text. Several other participants, as explained in chapter 4, described how they applied the strategy of looking up vocabulary that they learned in ENGL 050/060 in their college level course. Yet, despite explaining that she had difficulty in history with "all the words," she did not describe looking up the words as a strategy she used. She explained that they would ask the professor what the words meant, and the professor would tell them "Oh, this is a different word for ____." Chloe did report that

she learned vocabulary strategies in ENGL 050, yet she did not apply them in this context. This suggest that it would be helpful for disciplinary instructors to reinforce these vocabulary strategies in their courses.

Memorization

Several participants noted that they found the requirement to memorize what they read in their disciplinary college-level courses challenging. In art history, Aiden felt confident about understanding the meaning behind the art pieces he read about, but he found the requirement to memorize the dates and time periods connected to each piece he read about difficult. Similarly, Nadia found it difficult to understand detailed scientific information about the human body in her psychology reading, and like Aiden, she was particularly challenged by the requirement to memorize it. Developmental literacy classes, including ENGL 050/060, do not generally require memorization of the reading, rather they usually require students to refer to the reading as they write.

Difficult Text Features: Reading Primary Documents

In her women's history class Chloe experienced a very particular challenge reading the primary documents that are central to studying history. While, overall, she found the visuals provided in her history readings often helped her to gain understanding when she skimmed the reading, she found reading the primary historical documents and sources challenging because she said they were blurry and hard to read. Chloe explained, "It was blurry though, so I couldn't really see the names and it was all in cursive and I'm not used to writing in cursive so I did not understand it at all and everybody basically didn't do it because they were scared to do it, honestly." When I asked why people were scared to complete the assignment, she continued to focus on the fact that the documents

were blurry and it was difficult to read the cursive writing in order to find the information that the professor was asking for. This is an example of a very discipline-specific challenge in history, the need to read and get information from pictures and documents that may be difficult to read, not because of text complexity, but because of the age, condition, or other text features such as cursive writing which many young people these days have no experience with. These difficulties have nothing to do with reading and writing or skills that we would likely include in an ENGL 050/060 course as they are so discipline specific and some, like blurry text can't be remedied by students, yet they present a real reading challenge for students, even students with no reading comprehension issues. This illustrates the limitations of a course like developmental literacy to fully prepare students to meet the literacy demands specific to other disciplines (Gee, 2008; Lea & Street, 1998, 2006). If Chloe is correct, this reading task was difficult for many students in her class, not just for her, and it is possible that dealing with these challenges is second-nature to disciplinary experts, and may be invisible to faculty.

Contrasts in Writing in ENGL 050/060 and in College-Level Courses

Overall, participants in this study felt that ENGL 050/060 helped prepare them for the writing demands in their disciplinary college-level courses. Although not all the participants struggled with reading comprehension, all of them did feel that they needed and benefited from the instruction in academic writing they got. At the same time, participants also reported that the writing they had to do in their disciplinary college-level courses was often quite different than the writing they did in ENGL 050/060, in both form and purpose. For instance, in addition to some be assigned to write some academic essays, participants were also assigned other assignments that included writing such as

video projects, multimedia projects, reflections, and were required to write short answers on tests. Even when they were assigned to write academic essays, they had to address disciplinary-specific expectations that were different from those in ENGL 050/060. Participants recognized that writing assignments were discipline specific, and this impacted the type of assignment, how much guidance and feedback they received, what was expected of them, and how the writing was assessed. As a result, even though participants felt the writing instruction and experiences 050/060 had been helpful overall, they also reported the need to negotiate new and often unfamiliar writing expectations in their college-level courses. Some participants found this negotiation more challenging than others. Acknowledging the complexity of the negotiation process students go through to meet the literacy demands in new contexts is a central feature in Lea and Street's (1998, 2006) academic literacies approach.

The following sections will describe some of the contrasts participants reported between the writing they did in ENGL 050/060 and the writing they did in their disciplinary college-level courses. In addition, data from a faculty survey also shows the variety of writing assignments across disciplines. The contrasts include different purposes for writing in the college-level disciplinary courses and differences in the types of writing students were asked to do. Finally, some examples of discipline-specific writing expectations some participants found challenging will be discussed.

Purposes for Writing

Participants recognized that, as was the case with reading, they wrote for different purposes in their college-level disciplinary courses than they did in ENGL 050/060.

Similar to their experiences with reading in their college level courses, the difference was in part because the goal of writing in these disciplinary courses was primarily to demonstrate an understanding of the content. In ENGL 050/060 the purpose was to develop college-level writing practices. In some disciplines, this difference was more obvious.

Some participants described writing assignments that used writing to assess another disciplinary skill. For example, Oscar was assigned an essay in his Computer Literacy. The topic was social media and the students had to express their opinion on the topic. Yet, the purpose of the paper was to assess students' skills using a word processing program. Oscar explained that aspects of writing that had been the focus of ENGL 050/060 including argument, organization, or staying on topic would not impact his grade in this class. He thought that only grammar and spelling might have counted. He said, "I think the main focus was using the program correctly for header, page number, footnotes, and works cited." Mike described the writing he had to do in Interactive Multimedia as "artsy" and "more like freewriting" in order to "express yourself." He explained that the final exam was a reflection on the final project and, as the syllabus stated, "The process, the decisions you made, the difficulties you encountered" to produce it. In this case, the purpose of writing was to discuss the process they had gone through in creating their multimedia project. While Mike thought that the professor expected students to use their "English skills," he also said that points were not taken off for grammar, spelling, or any other components of writing.

Other participants described the way the writing in their disciplinary courses was more confusing than the writing they did in ENGL 050/060 because they were novices in

the discipline. The writing in Melissa's psychology class was mostly short answers on tests and she described the writing as "broad" and "more confusing" than the writing she did in ENGL 060, which she saw as "just straightforward." She explained that when it came to the writing she had to do for ENGL 060, "I know exactly what I need to be putting in this section, and this section, and this section." In contrast, she was less confident in her understanding of what was expected in her psychology answers. She understood that the purpose of the writing was to demonstrate her understanding of the content, and her perception was that even though there were multiple ways to approach the question, "there was still that one correct answer." Part of the challenge was related to the need to understand the disciplinary expectations required to answer the question. According to her professor, different psychologists may have ideas about what is a "correct answer." In other words, Melissa, was learning that disciplinary knowledge is often fluid and contested, and there is not always consensus. Not surprisingly, this created anxiety because, at the same time, she believed that her task was to determine what answer her professor was looking for and communicate that information. In addition, Melissa recognized that she was more of a novice in psychology than she was in English, "[F]or English, I've been doing it my whole life, so I have this idea of this is what should be done. For Psychology, I just started, and just answering some of the questions is just harder because the topic is just not familiar." This shows the additional challenge of demonstrating the understanding of the topic. Melissa understood that because the purpose of the writing was to demonstrate her understanding of an unfamiliar topic rather than her writing proficiency. She was noting her status as a novice in the Discourse of psychology and explaining the challenge that presents (Gee, 2008). Therefore, her lack of

previous experience with the content of the course made the writing in psychology harder than it was in ENGL 060.

Similarly, Sophia had trouble seeing connections between the writing she did in her history course and the writing she did in ENGL 060 because she saw the topic as different. She suggested that “writing well,” which she described as “sentence structuring,” was required in both cases, and when asked, she agreed there were similarities in certain components of the writing required in both class, such as the need to include evidence and organize. Yet, she also repeatedly stated that she had a hard time relating the writing in ENGL 060 to the writing in her history course because it was a different “topic.” She said, “It's the same point of writing well, sentence structuring, and all that, but the topic is completely different, so I don't feel like they're related somehow.” Again, she emphasized this point, that she had difficulty seeing the connection between the writing she did in ENGL 060 and the writing in history because of the emphasis on content, many times in both interviews. Research suggests that when students do are not able to recognize existing connections between learning in different contexts, it is difficult for the transfer of learning to occur (Beaufort, 2007; Carillo, 2017; Nelms & Dively, 2007; Perkins & Solomon, 1988, 1992).

Participants reported that part of the challenge of writing when the goal was to demonstrate an understanding of specific content, was the need to make sure that they hit certain points in their writing. While the goal of writing is always communicating an idea, participants cited the need to incorporate very specific ideas or concepts that professors looked for in their answers. Melissa explained that in her written answers to psychology test questions “there are keywords that you have to say.” Nadia echoed this

claim when she described her psychology test: “They want a vocabulary word and I try to pick which one goes best with the situation.” This is different than writing in composition courses, like ENGL 060, where the topic or question is often open ended and the goal is to make and support a clear point, but the specifics of how to do this are left up to the student. In fact, often in a composition course, it is not necessary or important that the professor agree with what students write, so long as they represent the information they use accurately (the quotes actually say what the students say they say) and support their positions. In a piece of writing where the purpose is to evaluate whether students understand specific facts or are able to identify and describe important disciplinary concepts, the writing will be created and evaluated accordingly (Ivanic, 2004). Aiden’s description of his art history paper illustrates this. It had to focus on a specific work of art, and he had to make sure that he included what the rubric described as the “formal qualities of art works” in his paper. In fact, on the rubric for this paper, the criterion with the highest value (15/100 points), was the requirement to include those qualities. While the rubric included criteria that would be typical of an English composition paper rubric, like including an introduction, a thesis, and proper citation, disciplinary knowledge was infused throughout most of the criteria. For example, the rubric required an “interpretative argument about the meaning and significance of the work of art. (Context)- historical, religious, economic, geographical connections and influences.” Here we see that students were required to make an argument through specific lenses and in ways that were particular to the discipline.

Oscar also described the disciplinary requirements of his Ethics paper. He not only had to support his thesis with evidence but ensure that his position was “ethically

sound.” This required him to include another layer of evidence in the paper in which he cited key philosophers and applied their ideas to his argument. Oscar explained that this extra layer was challenging to include: “You know, which I like to think most of mine [opinions] are [ethically sound]. But to try to apply that to my paper and prove it is difficult.” In this case, the Ethics paper was in many ways similar to the writing that Oscar had done in ENGL 060. He was required to make an argument and support it, but the need to then prove that the paper was not only logically sound, but ethically sound, was an extra requirement, and arguably the most important task in a course about Ethics. While not all participants stated the need to demonstrate disciplinary knowledge through their writing as something they found challenging, it was still significant because it illustrates discipline-specific literacy demands that they would not be able to learn in ENGL 050/060.

Types of Writing: What Does “Writing” Look Like?

The writing assignments in ENGL 050/060 are primarily designed to prepare students for success in ENGL 111. Given that ENGL 111, as described in the course outline, requires that 80% of the grade be based on “thesis-driven, text-based essays,” similar essays are assigned in ENGL 050/060. Essay assignments in ENGL 050/060 usually focus around 1-2 texts, and increase in complexity as the semester progresses. In addition to several other writing skills and strategies, students in ENGL 050/060 are taught about academic arguments and how to develop a thesis statement. Students in ENGL 050/060 also do other writing as part of the course, such as summaries, freewrites, response papers, and short answers. However, the overall focus is on learning to write an

argumentative essay in response to a text; the writer must use evidence, including quotes, from that text as support.

In contrast, participants encountered a broad range of writing assignments in their college-level courses in disciplines other than English. Thesis-driven papers, similar to those assigned in ENGL 050/060, were assigned in three of the courses they took during or after ENGL 050/060: Women's History, Art History, and Ethics. As previously discussed, Oscar's Computer Literacy course did assign an argumentative paper, but it was graded on the use of word processing tools, not on the writing. Sophia's U.S. history class assignments included two documentary response papers and a book review, but neither required a thesis. Participants were also assigned video projects, a website project, journals, reflections, PowerPoint presentations, and group presentations. Some of the finished projects included writing, but in some cases the writing was in the form of notes or a script to prepare for a project. In some courses, like psychology, students only wrote short answer responses on tests.

The range of writing tasks participants reported in their college-level classes outside of English was also reflected in responses to the faculty survey I distributed. According to the survey, response papers and research papers were the most common types of writing that faculty outside of English assigned. Of the 42 faculty members that responded to the survey, 25 faculty members, or 59.52% of respondents, reported assigning "response papers," 21 (50 %) reported assigning research papers, 16 (38.10%) reported assigning "reports," 6 (14.29%) reported assigning "argumentative essays," and 5 (11.90%) said they didn't assign any writing. Yet, 17 faculty members described other

writing assignments in the “other” or comment section of the survey. These assignments included oral/PowerPoint presentations, videos, summaries, reflection papers, notes or scripts for speeches, case studies, self-reflections, service learning descriptions and presentations, and lab reports. Some faculty described projects that included several steps and several different types of writing. For example, a statistic class required a semester long project that involved students in creating, administering, and analyzing the results of a survey and then presenting the results in a written report and a PowerPoint presentation. Several of the assignments also included very discipline-specific writing tasks, such as a patient care plan, narrative nurse’s notes, a diet-analysis, lesson plans, and observational reports.

In total, I collected writing assignments from faculty from 25 separate courses (one statistic course didn’t include any writing), representing 16 disciplines. These assignments provided some insight into disciplinary writing conventions that have implications for students who are required to write across disciplines. For example, as was discussed in chapter 4, participants in this study said that understanding academic argument was helpful in their college level courses; however, not all the participants had a strong understanding of the varied forms an academic argument could take. Only six of the 25 writing assignments I collected from disciplinary faculty, which included assignments from courses participants took, required that students include a thesis statement. Those assignments were from two history courses, two philosophy courses, an art history course, and one film course. In addition, a participant also reported his Ethics paper required a thesis statement. Yet, in 15 additional courses, representing 13 difference disciplines, the writing assignment asked students do something that could be

classified as making an argument. For example, in the assignment instructions for the “Final Report” in an Environmental Science class, students are instructed to explain “why and in what context the study matters.” Students are also required to explain the “significance of the results.” These are both examples of a type of argumentation. In the instructions of a sociology research paper, students are also required to explain why their topic is important. In the conclusion, they are asked to argue for the main take-aways based on their research and suggest next steps for society. A business administration assignment asks students to “back up claims,” and an introduction to public health assignment asks students to synthesize information to suggest “implications for practice, interventions, and education.”

None of these assignments use the term “thesis” or even “argument,” but all of them ask students to engage in a type of argumentation. Yet, because assignments are framed in different ways and different terminology is sometimes used, students may not always see connections between assignments in different disciplines that do exist – such as the requirement to make an argument. Research has shown that sometimes faculty don’t even recognize these connections (Nelms & Dively, 2007). I said in chapter 4, this shows that the concept of academic argument is helpful for students to understand, but it also illustrates the difficulty students might have (something that will be illustrated later in this chapter by Sophia’s story) recognizing when they are being asked to make an argument. When that connection isn’t made, it is more difficult to pull from and apply what they learned about academic argument in ENGL 050/060 to an argumentative assignment in another discipline (Beaufort, 2007; Carillo, 2017; Nelms & Dively, 2007; Perkins & Solomon, 1988, 1992).

Similarly, while participants did find the skill of choosing, integrating, and explaining textual quotes in their writing helpful in their college-level courses, providing supporting evidence more generally is a more common requirement. Again, while six of the 25 assignments (representing 4 disciplines) collected did suggest or require that students use textual quotes as evidence, another 12, representing 10 different disciplines, required evidence, but not necessarily textual quotes. Furthermore, there are certain disciplines that discourage students from using textual quotes. For example, in the sociology assignment I received, the research paper instructions read: “Summarize the main findings from each source in your own words. No quotes are required. A small quote is fine, but you will need to explain how the information from the quote connects to your research question.” A book review assignment for a political science class explains, “Try also to keep quotations to a minimum, although most reviews usually include some brief quotes from the book that’s being assessed.” Finally, the environmental science “final report” instructions are clear: “Do NOT copy facts verbatim from other studies. You should avoid quoting other authors, attempting to paraphrase whenever possible.” These instructions are in direct contrast to typical ENGL 050/060 assignments that are in responses to texts and require textual quotations. There are certain disciplines, such as philosophy, that align more closely with English when it comes to the use of quotations. But, it is important to note that teaching students how to use and integrate quotes, while helpful in certain contexts, is not necessarily preparing students to effectively use evidence in the writing they will do in other disciplines.

More broadly, these findings illustrate that what “counts” as writing varies across disciplines and courses (Blaauw-Hara, 2014; Ivanic, 2004). In some courses, academic

writing may be an important disciplinary activity, but in others, an academic paper may not be the appropriate or preferred way for students to demonstrate mastery of the course content. And even if an “academic paper” is assigned, disciplinary writing conventions will vary across disciplines. The findings of this study support the argument that there is no such thing as a typical academic writing assignment (Blaauw-Hara, 2014; Downs & Wardle, 2007; Elbow, 1991; Lea & Street, 1998; Wardle, 2009). Students need to be aware of the need to recognize and adjust to these disciplinary differences as they navigate from one course to another. This suggests that that there is some reason to be concerned that some participants in this study expressed that they had learned “the right way to write” in ENGL 050/060 or that they had, as Mike explained, “Learned how to write in a matter of weeks.” While it is a positive that they felt what they learned was helpful, those expressions also suggest a belief in a universal academic discourse that ignores the reality that writing expectations are contextual and can vary greatly by discipline (Blaauw-Hara, 2014; Downs & Wardle, 2007; Elbow, 1991; Lea & Street, 1998; Wardle, 2009).

Discipline-Specific Writing Challenges

Previous sections addressed the broader contrasts that participants reported between the writing they did in ENGL 050/060 and the writing in their college-level disciplinary courses. The next section addresses more specific tensions between ENGL 060 and college level courses that participants found challenging. Most of the challenges were related to process-oriented approaches and strategies that were helpful in ENGL 050/060 but were sometimes difficult to apply in college-level disciplinary courses or were not included in those courses. In addition, most participants reported that they did

not receive enough instruction or experience with research writing, and particularly citation, in ENGL 050/060 to prepare them for some of their college-level disciplinary courses.

Lack of Process-Oriented Strategies and Instructional Approaches in College-Level Courses

As already stated, ENGL 050/060 uses “process-oriented” approach to teaching writing. As Ivanic (2004) explains, a process discourse of writing includes the explicit teaching of “both the mental processes and the practical processes involved in composing a text” (p.225). As a result, when participants took ENGL 050/060, they were taught to use a number of process-oriented writing strategies listed in the course outline such as brainstorming, organizing, using graphic organizers, outlining, peer review, and revising. In addition to peer-review, students in ENGL 050/060 receive feedback from their instructor on at least one draft of their essay that they can use to revise and edit before the final submission. As explained in chapter 4, participants found that process-oriented strategies were helpful in their college-level courses across disciplines. This may be because, as previously discussed, the types of writing and specific writing requirements vary across discipline, but process-oriented strategies can be applied despite these differences. Nevertheless, several participants found applying those process strategies in their disciplinary courses challenging. In addition, while some participants reported that process-oriented writing approaches, like receiving feedback, were used in their disciplinary college-level courses, others found those approaches missing. Nelms and Dively (2007) found that even when the disciplinary faculty in their study recognized the value of including process-oriented approaches in their courses, not one of them did so, citing time constraints and the pressure to cover content as obstacles.

Several participants described that the process-oriented supports they had received in ENGL 050/060, such as clear instructions, examples, outlines/graphic organizers, and feedback, were helpful for the writing they did in ENGL 050/060, but there was not always alignment between these practices in ENGL 050/060 and their college-level courses. Melissa noted many times that writing in English was more “straightforward” than writing in Psychology. In several places, she explained that key to that difference was that an English paper was easier to plan for because there was an “outline” for each assignment that made it clear what was expected in the assignment. In history, as will be described in detail at the end of this chapter, Sophia struggled to understand what the instructor was looking for based on the verbal and written explanation she received. In contrast, she explained that in ENGL 060 clear assignment instructions, additional explanation, and examples/models were helpful.

Furthermore, participants reported that learning the importance of and using strategies for planning and organizing in ENGL 050/060 was helpful in the writing they had to do in their college-level courses; however, several participants also said that they hadn’t yet figured out how to fully apply the planning and organizational strategies they used in ENGL 050/060 to their college-level courses. While Melissa was able to successfully apply some planning and pre-writing skills to the writing she did in psychology, there were also times when she struggled. About writing in ENGL 060 she explained, “But there's still that outline. I was like, okay, write about this and this.” In contrast, she found writing in psychology more challenging, in large part, because there were not clear guidelines on how to plan and organize the writing. As described in chapter 4, Sophia also found using the graphic organizers provided in ENGL 060 very

helpful, but she had not tried to use a similar strategy in her history class. Her history professor did not provide graphic organizers and because she saw the writing she did in history as much different than the writing she did in ENGL 060, she didn't know how to relate the two assignments or fully apply the planning process she used in ENGL 060. This shows that while Sophia successfully used a strategy in one context (ENGL 060), she was unable to adapt that strategy so that she could apply it as necessary in a different context(writing in a history course). This experience exemplified Blaauw-Hara's (2014) point that "In practice, students often have difficulty applying skills and knowledge they learn in their writing classes to other contexts" (p.354).

Another writing task where students seemed unable to transfer what they learned was when they wrote for tests in their disciplinary courses. Testing conditions made it difficult for some participants to apply process-oriented strategies. This was not due only to their own ability to adapt strategies from one context to another but also to be able to see how strategies designed for one type of writing task could apply to others. Nadia illustrated this when she described her process for writing her psychology test answers: "I really just go for it. I don't really think about it that much. I just get the answer and just write." In contrast, Melissa was able to figure out a way to apply annotation and planning strategies to her psychology test questions. This shows that while participants received a lot of support in ENGL 050/060 in learning and applying process-oriented strategies in that particular context, participants had to figure out on their own how to adjust the strategy for use in a new contexts. This finding is supported in the literature (Carillo, 2016, 2017; Perkins & Solomon, 1992; Simpson & Nist, 2000; Simpson et al., 2004). Not all participants were able to do that. Overall, learning the value of and

strategies for planning and organizing in ENGL 050/060 was helpful for most participants, but there were challenges for participants in applying those strategies in new contexts.

Another process-oriented approach several participants reported was missing in their college-level disciplinary courses was receiving feedback on drafts. Most did not report receiving any during the drafting phase of their writing. Only Aiden and Chloe were required to submit rough drafts of their writing projects in art history and history, respectively. More common was that participants received some feedback, in addition to the grade, on their final product. Some participants, like Sophia, could use feedback on their final draft towards a subsequent similar, but separate, writing assignment. Sophia thought that not getting feedback on her rough draft was part of what made the writing in her history class challenging. Sophia said her rough drafts were “not really great” so the feedback would have been helpful. She had absorbed the message from ENGL 060 that she should write multiple drafts, but when it wasn’t required to do so by the instructor, she wasn’t really good about drafting and revising on her own. She recognized that, as a result, her writing suffered.

While Oscar was successful in the writing he did in his Ethics class, he described in detail how the writing expectations and process were different there than they were in ENGL 060:

Well in intro to reading [ENGL 060], you're given a subject. You're kind of given the idea of how to write it, what they're expected of you and you're able to put it in a draft, get some feedback, get it back. In these other classes, it's like, here, you should already know this. Turn it in, and better be good. Like that one [Ethics paper] I gave you from last semester. She straight up, and she was a good professor, she wasn't being mean or anything, but she says like, nope, this is it.

This is your paper. It's got to be this long. This is a college term paper. That's it. Turn it in, and it better be perfect.

In this description, Oscar explained that in ENGL 060 students were provided with some writing guidelines and expectations, and that there was a revision process that included instructor feedback. In contrast, his impression was that the Ethics instructor didn't think she had a role in her students' writing process; instead there seemed to be an expectation that students would turn in college level writing without any help. Oscar got an A on the Ethics paper without any feedback, but when he was asked if he appreciated the feedback he got in his ENGL 060 and ENGL 111 classes, he said "Oh, absolutely. Because, I mean if you're saying, they're trying to learn how to do this, the only way you're going to learn is through positive feedback." Although he said he would have taken feedback if his ethics instructor provided it, he also said that he didn't expect it in that class because "It's not her job to teach us how to write." From Oscar's perspective writing as a process is only under the purview of the English department professors. While some faculty may also hold this belief – English composition classes are where students learn how to write for all their other classes – research, including the experiences of the participants in this study, illustrate that it is not that simple (Blaauw-Hara, 2014; Downs & Wardle, 2007; Elbow, 1991; Lea & Street, 1998; Wardle, 2009). While developmental literacy classes (and college level composition courses, for that matter) can get the ball rolling, teaching literacy skills is not a one and done process. Students will only continue to improve, adjust, and adapt their reading and writing skills and strategies if literacy development continues to be a focus, even for content area instructors.

In addition to making sure that instructions and expectations are clear, as participants reported they were in ENGL 050/060, providing feedback is another

opportunity to clarify expectations. However, without a required drafting process, that opportunity is eliminated. The absence of a required drafting/feedback/revision process is related to the purpose and view of writing in disciplinary courses (Ivanic, 2004). Because writing is not the focus of disciplinary courses, if writing assignments are included, it is often assessed in terms of its demonstration of relevant content learning rather than (or in addition to) writing ability. And even if those products are graded on certain writing skills and abilities, which suggests that writing is valued in the course, expectations related to the process of writing may not be included in the course design, materials, or assessment criteria. Providing feedback on rough drafts and other process related activities take time, and if writing doesn't tie directly to the objectives of the course, instructors may not feel they can include them (Nelms & Dively, 2007). There may be an expectation that students will engage in the process-oriented activities on their own, and some students may, but the participants in this study suggested that it was challenging to do so. It is common to focus on writing as a way to demonstrate content in non-English courses; however, considering the contextual nature of writing and the fact that there are often specific disciplinary writing expectations that students may not know (Shanahan and Shanahan 2008, 2012), it is important to view writing, regardless of the discipline, as a process for which students will need scaffolding in order to be successful.

Need for More Research and Citation Experience

The requirement to cite sources in college-level courses was aligned with the requirement in ENGL 050/060 to provide in-text citations, but several participants also said that learning more about how to cite sources in ENGL 050/060 would have been helpful. Most participants mentioned that their writing assignments, including video or

multimedia projects, required a works cited page. Some of the assignments required extensive research. For example, Sophia talked in one interview about a psychology essay she was assigned that required 9-10 sources. ENGL 050/060 does not have documentation or citation as a learning outcome in the course. While students are taught the basics about how to use in-text citations with direct quotes, usually instruction does not go beyond that. In some assignments, I give students the option to find outside texts for the assignment, but there is no research assignment in the course, and generally students are not explicitly taught how to evaluate sources or create a works cited page. Research, evaluation of sources, and documentation is introduced in ENGL 111 and expanded upon in ENGL 112.

Although some participants, like Mike, did feel that they had gotten enough of a general idea about citing and using sources that was helpful in their college-level courses, others felt like they hadn't learned enough to fully prepare them for the research and citation requirements in their college-level courses. Several participants noted that they needed a better understanding of citation before they learned it in ENGL 111. Many courses have placement into ENGL 111 as a prerequisite, but because ENGL 111 may not fully address information literacy and citation until the research paper assignment which comes later in the semester, many participants said they had writing assignments in other courses that required citation before they learned it in ENGL 111. In addition, some courses or disciplines do not have an English pre-requisite, so students may be taking some college-level courses a semester or two before they take ENGL 111. For instance, Oscar took his Ethics philosophy course the same semester that he took ENGL 060. He stated that because he had only touched on MLA citations in ENGL 060, he didn't think

he cited properly in his Ethics paper. He also reported that it was in ENGL 111 when he had first been required to write a “full scholarly paper” and while he wasn’t sure if it would be “appropriate” to cover that in ENGL 060, he said it would have been helpful to have learned it then.

In addition, a couple participants found it challenging to switch different citation styles from course to course. Both Aiden and Chloe mentioned that using footnotes, as they were required to do in their art history and history courses, was challenging because they had never done them before. In addition, Chloe said that she would have liked to have learned APA in ENGL 050, as she had to use it in her education class, and she found it very challenging. Of the 25 writing assignments I collected from disciplinary faculty, 16 included an explicit requirement to include citations of some sort. Seven of those assignments required one particular format (MLA, APA, or Chicago), and the other nine either provided choices of styles or did not specify a style. Overall, most participants were required to do some research and use various citation styles to cite both traditional and non-traditional sources (visual and multimedia) in their college-level disciplinary courses. However, ENGL 050/060 had not provided most of them with the experience they needed to feel confident and prepared for these tasks. The likelihood that students will have to switch citation styles from one course to another suggests that learning one particular style might not be the best use of instructional time. Students would be better served understanding when and why we cite and how to identify the source information needed to create a citation or use a citation generator.

Instructor Expectations and Variation

A few participants explained that it was challenging to navigate the different discipline- specific expectations and teaching styles of their college-level course instructors. In some ways, this was a matter of a larger perception among participants that college is about figuring out what each individual professor wants. For example, Melissa talked about how the psychology lectures were difficult for her at first but got easier when she got to know her professor's "teaching style." In addition, she talked about the difficulty of answering questions that she perceived as having "one correct answer" that the professor was looking for even though she saw a number of different ways to approach the question. Melissa explained, "When we were writing about it, it was just so hard to fit exactly what she wanted the answer to be... There are just so many different angles you can hit, but there's still that one correct answer." This response illustrates Melissa working to understand the disciplinary expectations in psychology, while also accounting for professor preference. She elaborated:

So it was just hard to pinpoint exactly what her answer is in Psychology. She even said to the class, she said, "Even if I were to take a test, Psychology is just so open to the own [individual] psychologist that it's hard to, when you give your exact answer, it's hard to have it be exactly what someone else wants to hear.

Here Melissa describes what she saw as a level of arbitrariness in what was expected in her psychology class, that it depends on "what someone else wants to hear." Yet, at the same time this touches on a reality of the field of psychology, and most other fields, in that different psychologists will have different theories and ideas and that there is not always consensus in the field about what is "correct." Melissa was navigating both of these realities and expectations at the same time, but her professor was the psychologist

she needed to understand in order to figure out what the answer should be. Chloe also saw her professor's requirements as arbitrary much of the time. She said:

For me, it honestly depends on the teacher and how the teacher works. Basically when they're doing the syllabus, I'm like going over this whole packet, I...try to see what they like before like actually writing for them.

Chloe was talking about teachers in general (including English teachers), but when she was asked how she found the process of writing her history paper compared to ENGL 050, she had a similar response: "Honestly, every teacher is different." Then she described how she makes sure to ask her professors questions about what they want and expect in order to figure out what they are looking for. For Chloe, it was not about understanding the objectives of the course and a specific assignment, but about figuring out enough specific expectations, including page length, formality of the writing, headers and other formatting preference, to get the grade she needed in the course. Most of what she described are surface preferences of her instructors, and when she talked about revising for a higher grade, she talked about "fixing" those surface features to raise her grade. Rebecca Cox (2009), described this approach to college coursework, in which students are not focused on authentic learning, but rather are going through the motions to get an acceptable grade, as the "Get it Over Strategy." Similarly, in Sophia's second interview, she explained how she overcame earlier challenges in the course "because I understood what [the teacher] actually wanted." Like Melissa and Chloe, she saw the challenge of figuring out what the professor wanted as key to her success, and a process of trial and error.

These examples show the way individual professor and disciplinary expectations created a challenge for students who were entering a new course and/or a new discipline.

While instructors most likely have rationales for their choices, participants often did not seem to be aware of those rationales, and sometimes assumed the choices were arbitrary. In alignment with previous findings by Cox (2009) and Bergmann and Zepernick (2007), participants in this study often saw those challenges more about needing to figure out the preferences of individual professors than the challenge of entering and understanding a new disciplinary Discourse.

Challenges with A Disciplinary Writing Assignment: Sophia's Story

While participants did describe challenges navigating assignments in their college-level courses, most of those descriptions were brief. Sophia, however, did explain at length, and over the course of both interviews, the difficulty she had understanding the expectations of a writing assignment that she had to do in history and how she eventually was able to overcome that difficulty. I include her story in some detail here because it illustrates the challenges many students have understanding the different literacy expectations across instructors and disciplines. Furthermore, her story illustrates a few different ways in which students might experience tensions as they navigate from one writing context to another: the challenge of understanding the assignment and the instructor's expectations, varying terminology, different types of argument and summary, and the role of feedback.

When I met with Sophia for our first interview, she had just received feedback from her American History instructor on her "documentary response paper." She was frustrated because she felt like she did what the professor had asked, but then received some negative feedback from the instructor:

So we had to write a whole response of what we thought. But he said, "I don't want you to write a summary. I want you to write more of what you thought." I was really lost between that because I feel like I put too much into what I thought that he didn't like it at the end either. So it's like he didn't want a summary. He wanted it more like what we thought or opinion, but then that didn't work either. So, I was lost. I'm like, I don't know what he really wanted.

In this description, Sophia described how she first struggled between writing a summary versus an opinion. When she determined she should give her opinion and then thought she did that, her instructor still critiqued her work. She thought the problem was the "opinion," and she wasn't sure what to do next. This illustrates some of what participants described earlier in the chapter about the challenge of figuring out what the instructor wants.

She also found the instructions for the paper were confusing and did not help her clarify the instructor's expectations. The instructions were listed in the syllabus, and neither the word "summary" nor "opinion" was used. They stated, "You will want to write about the objective of the film, what it was trying to convey to the watcher and if it was successful in conveying that information." So, the instructions are for students to describe the objective of the film, and then evaluate whether it had met that objective. Yet, the instructor's verbal instruction not to include summary seemed to be what Sophia latched on to. In addition, the paper was also asking for a type of opinion in that she needed to determine, and support with evidence, whether she thought the objectives of the film had been met. But based on the way she approached the paper and the feedback she received, she thought she had given an "opinion," and that had been wrong. The instructions also said to "include any relevant comparisons of this to the readings as well as any current ideas." Sophia described her difficulty with the instructions:

I mean he's giving us -- to me I thought it was pretty...yes, it's a reaction paper but to me, I feel like it was pretty vague because our book wasn't - we weren't on that reading yet - so I couldn't really relate it. Then the two to four pages, okay, it could be five, six pages, but I still don't have an exact [idea] of what you really want.

In this description, Sophia explained that the assignment was not clear and she didn't understand how to "include relevant comparisons of the reading" because she thought she hadn't yet done reading that was relevant to the documentary. Again, she was struggling to figure out exactly what the instructor expected.

The terminology was another part of the confusion that was compounded by the fact that the instructor did not, from Sophia's report, explain or clarify the instructions or the terminology used. The assignment was called a "document response paper" and required two to four pages of a "reaction" to the documentary they watched in class. In addition, the assignment used the terms "response," and "reaction," to describe the type of paper, but since Sophia didn't understand what those terms meant for what kind of writing she should do, the instructions weren't helpful to her. This finding aligns with other research that suggests that variation and inconsistency using composition terminology negatively impacts the transfer of learning (Nelms & Dively, 2007). This confusion about terminology is also clear in the way she described how this paper was different than her English assignments:

I think it was the way it was worded, and the way it's worded, that's pretty much confused me. Because in the English course, the way you would word things and say it and you would give an example and you would explain, that helped a lot. The fact that just like I -- which I get it. I'm going to have a lot of professors that are just going to tell you, "I expect that and that and that. Good luck." So I feel like that part is lacking in my classes now.

Here, in addition to the confusing wording, she specifically talked about the substantial difference between the detailed scaffolding and guidance she received in her English assignments and what she received in her college-level courses. She talked about the unclear “wording,” and contrasted that with the fact that she was often provided with examples and extra explanation in ENGL 060. It is true that English composition writing assignments do tend to include a lot of detail, both on the content and the format that is expected. This makes sense, because in composition, high quality writing is the goal and the only focus of assessment. In addition, Sophia was in my ENGL 060 class, and I would sometimes provide models and examples of student writing to point out approaches to organization, or other writing “moves,” such as connecting evidence back to the argument. In addition, since composition is process-oriented, students also received feedback on their essay drafts and met with me to ask questions about that feedback.

Unlike English composition, in other courses writing is a way for students to engage with and express an understanding of the content. Yet, as previously discussed, while writing (and reading) development are not the focus in disciplinary courses, there are still disciplinary literacy expectations that must be met. As Street (2009) suggest, these are part of the “hidden features” of academic writing that “often remain implicit” (Street, 2009, p.2). For example, a “response” paper is a common assignment in college courses. In my survey of RVCC faculty, 26 respondents (60.47%) said they assigned responses papers. I assign response papers in my composition courses. But my responses papers, which are usually informal and designed as open-ended responses to readings, are different than the documentary response paper Sophia was assigned in history. So, the expectations for a “response paper” are discipline or instructor-specific. And while

Sophia was given some written explanation of what her instructor thought a “documentary response” paper in history should contain, there were also “implicit” expectations that may be clear to an expert in the field, or an experienced history student, or a confident writer, but may be unclear to a novice. For example, students were expected to understand the objectives of the documentarian, and to critically evaluate the effectiveness and reliability of the sources used. When students are unclear exactly how to do this, it can result in confusion and frustration such as what Sophia was experiencing.

At the same time, Sophia also didn’t see some of the connections between what she was being asked to do in her history paper and what she had done in her ENLG 060 courses. Sophia believed her history “reaction paper” was different than anything else she had written in college, including in English:

You know, honestly, it was totally different for me. I don’t think I’ve had to write a reaction paper in college, so this was just pretty much my first reaction paper that I had to write where it’s -- as he said, he’s not expecting this summary. He wants my reaction of what went on in the video. So I can’t really relate one to the other because I haven’t done that in English.

Here her description shows that she believed a “reaction paper” to be something “totally different” than anything she had ever written before in college. She didn’t see her experience writing papers in ENGL 060 as related in anyway, and recognizing connections between task is crucial to the transfer of learning (Beaufort, 2007; Carillo, 2017; Nelms & Dively, 2007; Perkins & Solomon, 1988, 1992). Yet, when I looked at the professor’s feedback on her paper, much of what he focused on had direct parallels to the work we do in ENGL 060. When Sophia first described this assignment and her confusion, she focused on the fact that even though she wrote “opinion” rather than

“summary,” as she believed he had requested, her paper still wasn’t “good.” That left her feeling unsure about how to do better. Yet, her professor’s response on her paper didn’t mention anything about not wanting to hear her “opinion.” He did however write about a lack of support for her position. He wrote a number of comments in the margins to this effect, such as “Explain” or “Why is this a problem?” Next to a paragraph where Sophia claimed that the documentary “focused very little time explaining some of the facts mentioned,” he wrote “Prove it! You needed to take better notes because you overlooked huge swaths of the film.” His summary comments also focused on content (needing to “take better notes”), mechanics (“Proofread!”), and “cohesion.” His last summary comment focused again on support: “Finally, you needed to better back up your points. You had some [word here was illegible, possibly valid?] ideas but you didn’t back them up.” So, the issue did not seem to be that the professor didn’t want Sophia’s opinion, as she believed, but that she didn’t provide sufficient evidence or support for that opinion. This requirement to support opinions with evidence, is aligned with the essay requirements in ENGL 060, so the assignments are aligned in terms of that literacy expectation. Yet, Sophia was not able to see this.

Part of Sophia’s confusion also seemed to be connected to her difficulty interpreting written feedback. I read the comments on her paper as an English instructor, so they were likely more familiar to me, and therefore easier to understand, than they would be to Sophia. Her lack of understanding of the assignment and her focus on not providing a “summary” also seemed to block her from fully understanding his feedback. She did not see what it meant at face value. She did not see that it focused on the need for more support rather than him taking issue with her “opinion.” She also did not see the

connection between what he wanted in the paper and the writing she had done previously in ENGL 060. In his focus on support, it seemed to me that the professor was looking for an academic argument in the paper, just as I required in ENGL 060. When I explained this to Sophia and asked if maybe it would be help to think of the paper as an argument, she thought that maybe that would be a good way to think about it (and she wrote it down). In addition, she acknowledged that she had not sought out the professor's help or guidance as much as she could have. She said about asking for clarification from the professor, "I feel like that's where I lack because I just heard what I thought he expected, but I never really went - I want to know if that's what you want and that's what you mean. And It's a lack of communication in my part, so I completely get it." When Sophia left that first interview, since she knew that she had to do more documentary response papers, she planned to ask the professor for more clarification on what he expected for the documentary responses, including whether he was looking for an argument.

When Sophia returned for her second interview, she reported that she had done better on her subsequent "document response" papers. She got clarification on the role of "opinion." She explained, "He doesn't care about your opinion... He just wants to know, as an overall reader's opinion or overall viewer's opinion. And at first, I didn't know how to do that because I wanted to give my perspective." Here Sophia talked about the difference between "opinion" and an "overall reader's/viewer's perspective." When I asked her what the difference was between the two, she responded:

Not use, "I, I, I" like it could use, "As the readers" or, "We readers think." It's like more an overall view, not just a very personal -- and he didn't want me to do personal, he didn't want me to personalize anything. He wanted my opinion but he didn't want me to personalize anything. He wanted me to use it as a reader perspective.

This shows that there is still a lot of confusion with the terminology. At first she says that the professor didn't want her "opinion," but then in this response, she understands that he does want her "opinion," just not a very personalized opinion. What this boiled down to, it seems, was that the instructor didn't want her to use "I." This illustrates disciplinary literacy expectations, as writing in history is usually done in the third person, which would explain the professor's focus on avoiding personal pronouns. Still, this requirement wasn't clear in the assignment instructions. While the instructor explicitly states to "not ever, ever use the words 'I' and 'me'" in his instructions for another assignment, a book review, this is not addressed at all in the "document response" paper assignment instructions. In contrast, in ENGL 050/060, students are allowed to use "I" in their writing; this is often after years of being told in high school to never use "I." It is not surprising that this causes confusion. The truth is, there is no universal rule about using "I" in academic writing – it depends on a number of factors, including the discipline, the type of writing, and the purpose and audience for the writing. This illustrates why teaching writing as if there is a universal "academic discourse" that can be taught and transferred across contexts is problematic (Gee, 2008; Downs and Wardle, 2007; Elbow, 1991; Wardle, 2009).

In addition, it illustrates a subtle, and understandably confusing, difference between different types of writing that require an argument but vary in how personal that argument should be. Still, the concept of making an "argument" was ultimately helpful to Sophia. While she initially said that the response paper was completely different than her ENGL 060 papers, in this second interview she acknowledged that the shift to "argument" helped and that she now saw connections to the papers she wrote in ENGL

060, specifically to a paper where they had to make an argument about why a specific song could be considered a “protest” song. She explained, “We kind of have to argue why it was a protest song so it’s kind of the same deal. I had to argue why it wasn’t effective for me the way the author or the way the documentary was done. So I felt like that was very similar.” Here she used the word “argue” instead of opinion. One reason this term might be more helpful is that “argument” may suggest the need for support more than “opinion” does. Ultimately, her history professor’s main critique of her paper was that it lacked evidence and support for her argument. The instructions did ask for students’ opinion, for example, of “if it [the documentary] was successful in conveying that information [what it was trying to convey]” and that students “Be specific in their examples.” Yet, he never used the word “argument.” Perhaps if he did, she may have seen the connection to the work we did in ENGL 060 earlier. Sophia’s experience is consistent with claims by other participants that understanding what an academic argument is and how to make one was helpful for a variety of writing tasks and contexts.

Sophia also explained that she needed clarification about the use of summary in the paper in order to be more successful with her history papers. She described what finally worked for her in writing the “documentary response” papers:

Well, pretty much what he said to me was start with the small summary. And I even Googled. I was like, I don’t know what to do. I’m not sure what to do. So, I’ll Google how to write a response paper and it told me: write a small summary and then argue anything that you feel like the author lacks in order for you to better understand. So, I went that route too and actually started improving it.

Sophia did talk to the professor and found resources online that further described a “response paper.” While the injunction to avoid summary had caused her confusion

earlier, some summary was needed. These nuanced distinctions (like summarize -but not too much!) are both understandably difficult but important for students to understand.

Conclusion

Overall, the findings in this chapter highlight that literacy practices are complex and contextual (Gee, 2008; Ivanic, 2004; Lea & Street 1998, 2006) and that this truly complicates the potential of developmental literacy courses being able to prepare students for all eventualities of college reading and writing. For example, participants sometimes struggled with understanding instructor expectations in their college-level courses across disciplines. Participants signaled, at times, their understanding that their challenges, particularly in writing, were because they were disciplinary novices in their college-level courses. Yet, at other times, participants viewed the challenge more as an issue of figuring out what each individual professor wants. Participants were not always given and/or did not always understand the rationale behind their instructors' pedagogical decisions, and sometimes assumed their choices were arbitrary. This assumption sometimes resulted in participants engaging in a process of trial and error to try to figure out what the instructor was looking for.

Even though participants reported that many reading comprehension strategies they learned in their developmental literacy course were helpful in their college-level reading, they did not always complete the assigned reading in their college-level courses. While it is true that some developmental literacy students also do not complete the reading, those students do not usually do well in the class. The participants in this study were highly motivated and did read in their developmental literacy courses. But, when they got to many of their college-level classes, there wasn't always a clear reason to do

the reading. Put simply, when reading was not required, participants did not read. They read when they felt that was the best or only way to access the information they needed to pass the course. Only one participant talked about reading as something he wanted to do for the sake of learning, but that desire was often outweighed by practical obstacles, such as time. Most of the time, participants read when it was necessary to pass tests, or if they were going to be quizzed on the information. Few participants talked about the reading as necessary to class activities or any other activity besides a quiz or exam. This relates to the issue of instructor rationales, because participants in this study did not always seem to know why reading was assigned, and sometimes characterized the reading as a waste of their time.

While most participants were aware that that their college-level courses had disciplinary specific literacy demands and requirements, developmental literacy courses could have better prepared students to recognize and deal with these shifts. For instance, the form and requirements of the writing assignments in college-level courses varied and were often quite discipline specific. When participants were in courses that were more aligned with English course expectations, such as philosophy, the specific competencies participants learned to complete developmental literacy papers had more utility. But, more commonly, assignments in other disciplines were discipline specific and were only connected to the writing done in developmental literacy courses in more general terms. As a result, learning about general concepts, such as argumentation or supporting evidence, was more broadly useful to participants than their more specific elements – a thesis statement, or textual quotes. In addition, the thesis-driven essays that we assign in developmental literacy courses and other English courses were not the norm. There were

a variety of different academic papers assigned including multimedia projects, presentations, and speeches that have some type of writing component required. This is a consideration for understanding the complexity of what students are being asked to do as they “write” across disciplines. In addition, it also suggests that students might be better served by developmental literacy courses that embrace a broader view of what counts as writing.

Their developmental literacy courses did not always make clear to students that there are some general literacy concepts and forms that are common across disciplines, but that they would be required to negotiate complex and sometimes nuanced disciplinary differences as they engage in the literacy work of the different courses they take (Gee, 2008; Lea and Street, 1998, 2006). Some participants navigated this process more easily, because they seemed to have the metacognitive ability to recognize disciplinary differences and adapt in response to changing literacy demands. For the students who didn’t do this on their own, their developmental literacy courses did not help them develop the metacognitive awareness they needed to see connections between the work, particularly the writing, they were being asked to do in their college-level courses and what they had done in their developmental literacy courses. This sometimes led to challenges and missed opportunities to apply strategies and concepts learned in their developmental literacy course to their college-level reading and writing.

College-level courses also needed to do more to help participants navigate the complexity of switching between different disciplinary discourses. Even if developmental literacy courses prepared students to expect disciplinary differences and to have the metacognitive awareness to navigate changing demands, a developmental literacy

instructor would not have the disciplinary expertise (or the time) to provide detailed instruction on literacy expectations across disciplines. In some cases, the challenges participants reported were related to very specific and unique disciplinary requirements. Teaching these to students should be the responsibility of college-level instructors. In addition, some participants found the writing assignments in their college-level courses confusing and vague as they were usually writing in that discipline for the first time. Complicating things further, the same terminology was often used across disciplines, but didn't always mean the same thing in each discipline. In all these cases, they needed their disciplinary instructors' expertise to help them understand these requirements, their role in the discipline, and the ways they were expected to address them. Yet, this is a missed opportunity in many college-level courses.

While most of what participants experienced as challenging in the process of transitioning from one disciplinary Discourse to another needed intervention from both developmental literacy and college-level disciplinary courses, some experiences really highlighted the need for a more coordinated approach. For instance, some participants had difficulty applying process-oriented writing strategies in their college-level courses, even though they had worked for them in their developmental literacy courses. This was connected to disciplinary differences that sometimes obscured the similarities between developmental literacy assignments and those in disciplinary college-level courses. It was also because many disciplinary courses did not use a "Process Approach" (Ivanic, 2004) to writing, either because they didn't view writing from that lens or they assumed students would engage on their own with the process aspects of the writing tasks they assigned. Either way, this created challenges for some participants in this study. While

they understood the value of the process-oriented approaches, they had trouble applying them to the writing they did in their disciplinary courses when the structure and guidance to do so was not provided by their college-level instructor. Participants expressed that they would have benefited from a more process-oriented approach to writing in their college-level courses. At the same time, this also illustrates that their developmental literacy instructors did not make sure that participants left their courses with the ability to independently adapt or adjust the process-oriented approaches they used in their developmental literacy courses for use in their disciplinary college-level courses.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Implications

The challenge as I see it is to be clear-eyed and vigilant about the performance of our second-chance institutions but to use methods of investigation that capture a fuller story of the institutions and the people in them. As well, we need to find, study, and broadcast the many examples of successful work being done daily in these places and build our analysis and our solutions on illustrations of the possible (Rose, 2012, p.16).

This study was inspired by my experience as a community college developmental literacy instructor. As I read and heard about how developmental education was failing, I thought of the many students that I've seen make extraordinary progress in developmental literacy courses. Of course, the negative picture the research painted was part of the story too. Many students do not make the progress we hope, but what about the success stories? What about what is working well in developmental literacy classrooms? In the community college where I work, our developmental literacy courses are informed by much of the research and suggested reforms. We don't use "remedial pedagogy" (Grubb, 2013) – we teach integrated reading and writing courses using college-level materials. In addition, students in our courses have opportunities to accelerate their progress by skipping over courses in the sequence and avoid getting stuck in the developmental pipeline Adams et al. (2009) warns about. I wondered what our students would say about the experiences they had in their courses. But, there was also something else that drove my inquiry. In conversations with my colleagues in both English and other disciplines, I realized that we do not know a lot about the reading and writing students are being asked to do outside of our classrooms. I have watched many developmental literacy students progress through our composition sequence, but I did not know if what they learned in their developmental literacy courses prepared them for the

required reading and writing tasks in their course work in other disciplines. This study was designed to provide feedback from our successful students about their experiences in developmental literacy courses and what happened when they left those courses to read and write in college-level disciplinary courses. This is important because the purpose of developmental literacy courses is to prepare students to read and write effectively in other academic and real-world contexts. To do that, this study addressed the following research question: From the perspective of students who placed well below the college-level cutoff on literacy entrance exams and who successfully completed their developmental literacy course, how do the literacy demands and expectations in their developmental literacy courses align with the literacy demands and expectations in college-level courses other than English? The following secondary questions were also addressed:

1. What literacy challenges do they describe and what strengths do students feel they bring to their courses?
2. How do students' perceptions regarding literacy expectations align with the stated objectives and descriptions of courses and assignments as they are expressed in course documents?

This study addressed these questions with a collective case study that focused on multiple individuals (Cresswell, 2003; Merriam, 2007). Participants in this study were students at FRCC who received an A in their developmental literacy course (ENGL 050 or 060) and took a college-level course in a discipline other than English the subsequent semester. I interviewed participants about their experiences meeting the literacy demands of their college-level courses. In addition, I collected course syllabi and assignments from disciplinary faculty and surveyed disciplinary faculty about the reading and writing they

assign in their courses. A systematic process of inductive and deductive coding that was informed by my theoretic framework (Gee, 2008; Ivanic, 2004; Lea & Street, 1998, 2006) was used to determine patterns across cases about the experiences of successful developmental literacy students as they navigated the literacy demands of their college level courses across disciplines. The findings of this study are broadly organized around these two categories: Points of Alignment (What Helped) and Points of Contrast (Challenges). This following section summarizes those findings.

Summary of Findings

This study aimed to better understand the experiences of successful developmental literacy students as they navigated the literacy demands of their subsequent college-level courses. Participants reported that ENGL 050/060 did indeed help prepare them for the reading and writing that they did in their college-level courses in other disciplines, but they also reported important points of contrast and challenge. Overall, the experiences of participants in this study illustrate the complexity of literacy learning and of navigating the literacy demands across different disciplinary Discourses (Gee, 2008; Lea & Street, 1998, 2006); in addition, they highlight the complexity of developmental courses meeting the challenge of preparing students to be successful in college-level courses. The data collected provides important information about the influence of certain instructional approaches, the similarities and differences across disciplinary discourses, the role of instructors, and the importance of students' affective needs.

Points of Alignment

The results of this study support research that suggests that effective developmental literacy courses should be integrated reading and writing courses, use college-level materials, and teach students a variety of process-oriented reading and writing strategies (Armstrong & Stahl, 2017; Barragan & Cormier, 2013; Bickerstaff & Raufman, 2017; Callahan & Chumney, 2009; Edgecombe & Bickerstaff, 2018; Hern & Snell, 2013; Perin & Holschuh, 2019; Scrivener et al., 2018).

Participants in this study took an active role in their own learning and part of what they described gaining from participation in ENGL 050/060 was an understanding that struggle and difficulty is a part of reading and writing at the college level. Each participant expressed the ways in which they learned to navigate college-level reading and writing by using and experimenting with the approaches and strategies they were taught in ENGL 050/060. The reading and writing strategies participants said they learned in ENGL 050/060 that were useful in their college-level courses across disciplines share similar characteristics. First, it is important to note that while many of the skills and strategies participants named as useful can be taught at all levels, participants in this study learned them in ENGL 050/ 060 using college-level materials. This learning was often scaffolded by their instructor to provide the necessary support at first so that students could move towards independence. Research suggests that using college-level materials is a key component of developmental literacy instruction that successfully retains students, prepares them for college-level courses, and facilitates the transfer of their learning across contexts (Bahr, 2012; Grubb, 2013).

In addition, because ENGL 050/060 courses include what Ivanic (2004) would call the “process discourse of writing,” most of the reading and writing strategies participants named as useful were those that could be defined as process-oriented and could be used by students in flexible ways in a variety of contexts. Several participants were creative in the way they adapted and applied strategies they learned in their developmental literacy courses in their college-level disciplinary courses. These findings align with other research on the value of process-oriented writing approaches for developmental literacy students (Pacello, 2019; Perun, 2015). In addition, the strategies that focused on understanding components of writing, such as academic argument or supporting evidence, were generally used across disciplines. In other words, strategies that participants found most helpful were not specific to their English class or the type of writing one might expect to do there.

Several participants in this study also said that, in addition to delivering useful reading and writing strategies and concepts, ENGL 050/060 provided them with affective benefits, such as increased confidence and motivation. They reported that after taking ENGL 050/060, they understood what was expected of them as college-level writers and were more confident in their ability to write a college-level paper. This increased confidence was connected, for some participants, to increased motivation and effort in ENGL 050/060 that carried over into subsequent college-level courses. Several participants described a significant transformation in their attitude towards reading, writing, and learning as a result of taking ENGL 050/060. Participants went from hating English to loving writing essays and from being unmotivated and disengaged to becoming dedicated learners. One participant described her transformation from a student

who “needed help” to the student in her college-level English class that helped others. As she explained: “In college, I’m the one people go to.”

These academic transformations were inspired by their success in ENGL 050/060 and an increasing trust in their own ability to read and write at a college level. This increase in motivation and confidence as a result of a carefully designed developmental literacy course has been highlighted in other research (Bickerstaff et al., 2017; Hern & Snell, 2013; Paulson & Holschuh, 2018). Regarding her study of two community college composition classes, Cox (2009) writes, “the most significant outcome was pride at completing a difficult course and a newfound confidence about their ability to succeed” (p.132).

Some participants also described the impact that their developmental literacy instructor had on their motivation and confidence. One participant believed that liking the instructor was an important prerequisite to learning. This observation connects to Lancaster and Lundberg’s (2019) finding that faculty relationships with students were an important factor in student learning. Another participant described the way her instructor both helped her understand the amount of work she would have to do to succeed in college and inspired her to put in the effort needed to do it and believe in herself. The power of this combination -instructors having high expectations for students while communicating to students their belief that they can meet those expectations – is documented in other research (Cox, 2009). Furthermore, researchers have found that students learn better when they feel “seen” and supported by their instructors (Hern & Snell, 2013).

Points of Contrast

All but one participant in this study were successful in their college-level disciplinary courses and felt that their developmental literacy courses had contributed to this success. At the same time, participants also experienced challenges related to making the transition from writing and reading in developmental literacy courses to writing and reading in their disciplinary college-level courses that illustrate the complexity of this process.

While participants often cited the positive impact professors had on their academic, social, and emotional development, they also reported that figuring out each individual professor's expectations was sometimes challenging. The idea that "every professor is different" and that succeeding in college is like a game where the key to success is figuring out what each professor wants was expressed by several participants. As novices in the various disciplines they were studying, these participants often described a professor's choices and requirements more in terms of individual "preferences" and "styles" than a reflection of disciplinary norms, values, and thoughtful pedagogical decisions. While figuring out the different requirements of each class and professor is certainly part of the process of learning how to be a college student, these variations aren't necessarily based on the whims of each individual professor (although they can be). Much of the time, these differences represent important features of a specific disciplinary Discourse. Some participants in this study were not adequately prepared in their developmental literacy courses for the fact that requirements and "rules" vary according to discipline, not only according to individuals.

In addition, the writing tasks assigned in developmental literacy courses did not always prepare participants in this study for the type and variety of writing assignments they encountered in their college-level courses. The thesis-driven academic papers assigned in ENGL 050/060 and other composition courses were certainly assigned outside of English, but they were not the most common type of college-level writing assignment. Sometimes the writing tasks in other courses were not traditional academic writing (for example, a multimedia project); in other cases, such as in biology and environmental studies, the writing was academic, but did not require common “English paper” requirements like a thesis statement. Specific writing elements, like a thesis statement or textual quotes, were helpful in courses whose assignments were more aligned with English; however, because most college-level assignments were disciplinary specific, broader concepts, such as argument and evidence, were more useful.

Along the same lines, there might not even be agreement across disciplines about what counts as writing. If the definition of “writing” is limited to text on paper organized into paragraphs that are easily recognized as a “paper” or an “essay,” then some disciplines do not assign writing. However, if the definition of “writing” extends beyond academic papers written in traditional prose form as scholars like Selfe and Selfe (2008) argue it should and includes multimedia presentations, scripts, and oral presentations, then there is a lot of writing, in varied forms, assigned across disciplines. This variety, indicating a broad definition of “writing,” was also reflected in the faculty survey. Participants in this study sometimes mentioned that they learned the “right” way to write in their developmental literacy course. Considering the variety of forms, genres, and requirements of writing in different disciplinary Discourses, it is problematic if students

go to other courses expecting college academic writing to always resemble the assignments in developmental literacy courses.

The complexity of navigating the transition from one Discourse to another often required more than what could be covered in a developmental literacy class. Many of the literacy requirements in disciplinary courses required disciplinary expertise that only college-level instructors in that field would have. For example, even when participants wrote papers in college-level disciplinary courses that were very similar to those they wrote in developmental literacy, these assignments had another layer that required them to demonstrate an understanding of disciplinary content, such as to describe elements of an art piece or to weave in philosophical principles. In addition, participants reported that their college-level assignments were sometimes vague, and specific disciplinary requirements were not always expressed or fully explained. A related issue was one of terminology. Terms like “response,” “reaction,” “opinion,” and “summary” that are often used in academia were applied differently in different disciplines and by different instructors (Nelms & Dively, 2007). Participants in this study often need more of a rationale or explanation from their college-level instructor of the disciplinary norms that guided the requirements and expectations of their college-level literacy assignments.

Some of the struggles participants experienced with college-level assignments indicated a need for more support in both developmental literacy courses and disciplinary college-level courses. For example, participants noted that many of the process-oriented writing approaches that they found helpful in ENGL 060 were not used in their college-level courses. While some courses did include detailed guidelines and outlines for their writing projects, several participants noted that outlines and graphic organizers were not

provided in their college level courses outside of English. While some students were able to develop some of their own planning processes, others had a difficult time figuring out how they might use graphic organizers or outlines when they were not provided by their instructor. Other process-oriented approaches that were often missing in college-level courses were teacher feedback on written/rough drafts and revisions. As a result, and because it wasn't required, some participants explained that they didn't revise their writing. Several participants mentioned feedback, and the subsequent opportunity to revise, as a valuable learning process in ENGL 050/060 and something they wished was included in their college-level courses in disciplines other than English. At the same time, even if their college-level instructor did not embrace a process approach to writing, that didn't mean participants couldn't apply process approaches to their writing. Some participants did that. However, other participants struggled. This may have been, in part, because in their developmental literacy course many of these tools and processes were provided and built in, but they were not taught how to develop tools or approaches like the ones their instructor provided to use independently in new contexts.

When it came to reading, participants reported that their developmental literacy course helped prepare them for the reading in their disciplinary college-level courses. At the same time, they didn't always read their college-level assignments. Participants in this study read what was assigned in ENGL 050/060 because it was required to complete the work and do well. The central objective of the course is to improve students' reading and writing skills. The reading and writing is the content (Del Principe & Ihara, 2016; Wardle & Downs, 2017). In college-level disciplinary courses, reading is one of many possible vehicles for accessing course content. Not surprisingly, the importance of reading to the

disciplinary goals of the course impacted the emphasis that professors put on reading assignments, which influenced how likely students were to complete the reading. In some classes, history for example, participants found that completing the assigned reading was essential to passing the course. In other classes, reading was judged by participants as a waste of time. Often, there were other options, such as detailed PowerPoint presentations that allowed students to “read” the necessary content of the course without using the textbook. Put simply, when there was no clear benefit to reading the text, participants in this study did not read. This finding aligns with research on student reading practices in the community college (Armstrong et al., 2015; Del Principe & Ihara, 2016; Del Principe & Ihara, 2017).

Finally, there are no course outcomes in ENGL 050/060 related to information literacy and research. While we do teach students to include an in-text citation in MLA format after the quotes they include in their writing, generally there is little, if any, instruction on more advanced citation skills or how to create a Works Cited page. Most of the writing projects and papers that participants completed in their college-level courses across disciplines required citation and references. Even when the writing project was a presentation, students had to cite multimedia sources such as images and music. A particular style was not always required. This was also reflected in the writing assignments I collected from disciplinary faculty. More detailed instruction on MLA format is provided in ENGL 111, particularly at the end of the semester, but for many participants, this was too late to help them with their writing projects they did in courses they took concurrently with ENGL 111. Several participants said it would have been beneficial if they had received more citation instruction in ENGL 050/060.

Discussion

The results of this study suggest that there are reasons to be hopeful about the promise of developmental education helping students reach their academic goal. The approach that developmental literacy courses take at FRCC is making a positive impact on students' ability to succeed in college-level courses. There are many ways in which they can and do seem to use what they learn in developmental literacy courses. Yet, they also encounter tasks and expectations that they are not prepared for. This is because there needs to be more understanding of the interplay between each course and disciplines' role in supporting students' literacy development and the limitations to what any one course can provide. No single course can build the bridge students need to connect their learning across disciplines, but there are things that can be done to help students build those bridges themselves. In addition, when faculty understand what lies on the other side of the river for students, more can be done to help them meet the literacy demands throughout the academy and in life.

It is important to frame students' learning around disciplinary Discourses. Students can be given a foundation of useful literacy competencies, but disciplinary Discourses matter. If we truly want to help students, we do not need to choose between teaching generalized literacy strategies and approaches or on teaching disciplinary literacy competencies; we have to focus on both. This study's findings suggest that because of the impact of differences across disciplines, understanding the broader concepts in developmental literacy courses, like academic argument, may be more helpful to students than a narrow focus – such as the need for a thesis statement. At the same time, developmental literacy courses cannot do it all; a systematic approach is

needed. Students need the guidance of disciplinary experts and need discipline specific literacy strategies and skills. Since reading and writing are two of the fundamental ways we take in and communicate information, when students are being introduced to a disciplinary Discourse, instruction on the ways reading and writing function within that Discourse needs to be prioritized in disciplinary classrooms.

At the same time, developmental literacy also needs to expand and to acknowledge in meaningful ways that reading, and especially writing, look different in other disciplines. In the 21st century, when digital literacies dominate, the diversity in the way people read and write is greater than ever. Yet in many ways, the developmental literacy courses in this study, modeled after English composition courses, are limited by a potentially narrow and outdated view of how literacy works in other disciplines and in the world today. Disciplinary literacy courses need to broaden their definition of writing and reading in their courses and assignments.

Faculty can do more to empower students by teaching them how to independently apply what they have learned in developmental literacy classes in other contexts, academic and otherwise. While this study endorses the idea that all faculty should help students navigate the transition between disciplinary Discourses, the more independent students can be, the better. Instructional approaches in developmental literacy courses need to be two-pronged: they need to provide enough support to students so that they experience success and stay engaged, but they also have to provide students with strategies and approaches that they can apply on their own when they leave the developmental literacy classroom. In addition, if students learn how to increase their capacity to use metacognitive strategies, they can trust their ability to analyze a literacy

task to determine what prior knowledge or approach they may be able to apply or adapt for that situation.

This study demonstrates that literacy instruction, and all teaching, is about more than just delivering content. The participants in this study engaged in their own literacy development (in some cases, for the first time in their educational life), and according to participants, faculty played an important role in this. Faculty relationships with students, and the way they engaged with and reached out to students, made a difference. This indicates that when students are supported social and emotionally, prerequisites for learning are met. Conversely, when students are fearful or uncomfortable, they are less likely to learn. Faculty need to communicate their belief in students' sincere desire to learn and in their ability to do so. This combination of believing in students and providing them with strategies and opportunities is crucial.

Faculty can also help students by modeling metacognitive thinking and through transparent communication. It is important that faculty are reflective practitioners that make careful, intentional choices and communicate openly with students. To do this, they need to communicate with their colleagues. Knowledge and learning do not function in a vacuum. In acknowledging their role as part of a larger system and by taking the time to better understand the literacy goals and values in their colleagues' classrooms, faculty can share and learn from each in ways that will benefit their students.

Implications for Practice

Students are at the heart of this study, and the findings support the idea that students themselves are a crucial factor when it comes to success in developmental

literacy courses and in subsequent college-level courses. The participants in this study earned an A in their developmental literacy and all but one participant (who failed only one course – something he attributed to a lack of time) were successful in their college-level disciplinary courses. Talking to them made it clear that much of that success was due to their own hard work and creativity. At the same time, the findings of this study, related both to participants' strengths and challenges, do suggest important implications for community college developmental literacy faculty and faculty teaching college-level courses across disciplines. The following section describes those implications.

Scaffold Instruction in Developmental Literacy Courses

Instructors can design their learning to support students to embrace and engage with difficult tasks by carefully scaffolding instruction (Armstrong & Newmann, 2011; Barragan & Cormier, 2013; Gruenbaum, 2012). This can help create an experience that Barragan and Cormier (2013) call “productive struggle,” during which students are engaged in challenging learning activities with the support and tools they need to experience meaningful progress. This can be done by breaking up large tasks into smaller tasks and providing students with the tools and supports needed to tackle college-level work. Furthermore, rather than front-loading all instruction, instructors can provide this support when students need it to complete a task, an approach Hern and Snell (2013) call “just-in-time remediation” (p.14). For example, participants described teacher-provided supports such as graphic organizers and outlines helpful in their writing. These supports can be provided just when students need them to figure out how they will organize a paper they are in the process of writing. Instructors can also model processes, such as

analyzing a text, to help students understand what a particular strategy or approach might look like (Armstrong & Newman, 2011; Scrivener et al., 2018).

At the same time, it is just as important that instructors gradually remove support as students become more adept at a particular process or strategy (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983; Perin & Holschuh, 2019). This “gradual release” of support allow students to feel successful as they complete challenging tasks and guides students towards independence (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983; Perin & Holschuh, 2019). If developmental literacy instructors do not provide the support students need when they are not yet ready for college-level work, students will not be successful, which is demoralizing and frustrating. However, if we do not also work towards taking away support, then students can get dependent on them, and may not be able to independently navigate reading and writing challenges. For instance, participants in this study found the outlines and graphic organizers provided to them by their ENGL 060 professor helpful, but they didn’t always know how to apply these approaches in a course that did not provide teacher-created organizers or outlines. This suggests that it could have been helpful if these participants were taught strategies for crafting their own outlines and graphic organizers in response to a writing assignment. Instructors could scaffold this process (Armstrong & Newman, 2011; Bickerstaff et al., 2017; Gruenbaum, 2012) by starting with their own organizers and outlines and sharing other approaches and tools students could use for planning and organizing writing. Then, instructors could help students explore these options and develop their own approach for subsequent assignments.

Prioritize Process-Oriented, Generalized Reading and Writing Strategies

In terms of strategy instruction, developmental literacy instructors have a lot of strategies to choose from when deciding what to include in their courses. In addition, different students will find different strategies helpful, so as others have argued, there is no definitive list of reading and writing strategies that all students should be taught (Blaauw-Hara et al., 2020; Paulson & Holschuh, 2019). But considering that choices need to be made, the findings of this study provide insight into what strategies and approaches should be prioritized for inclusion in a strong developmental course. The strategies participants in this study named can be described as process-oriented and generalizable. While students in ENGL 050/060 were taught strategies that were more product-focused - for instance, approaches to writing during class in response to a prompt - they didn't identify this as useful outside of English courses. This study supports other research that suggests teaching developmental students strategies for text analysis will be helpful in their college-level courses (Nelms & Dively, 2007). Specifically, instructors should consider teaching generalized reading comprehension strategies such as annotation, summarization, re-reading, and looking up vocabulary and references. In addition, participants cited process-oriented strategies from understanding the writing task, through planning, feedback, and revision as being helpful in their development as writers and in the writing they did in disciplinary college-level courses. Finally, students also reported that learning particular components of academic writing was helpful in the writing that they did in their college-level courses. Those components were general components of academic writing like academic argument, structure and organization, and using quotes and other evidence. These findings are in line with Nelms and Dively's finding (2007)

that although the transfer of learning from composition courses to disciplinary courses was difficult, “an understanding of the relationship between thesis and support” was one of the concepts that did transfer (p.23).

Include Information Literacy and Citation Principles in Developmental Literacy

Finally, developmental literacy instruction should include more information literacy and general citation principles. Learning specific citation styles is not synonymous with understanding the concepts underlying citation. What is more important than learning one particular style is understanding why and when sources should be cited. Requirements for citation styles vary across disciplines. Therefore, specific citation styles and disciplinary expectations should be taught in disciplinary courses. In addition to the underlying principles of citation, it may be more advantageous to teach students how to properly use a citation generator than it is to teach them a particular style, the details of which they will likely forget even if they use the same style across disciplines. There is some basic knowledge students need to know to use a citation generator properly: where to find the relevant information like the author, title, date of publication. In my experience, citation generators often produce garbled and confusing citations because students do not know how to identify and input the proper information. They do not know the difference between the title of an article and the title of a journal, or the difference between a journal article and a book. Teaching students in developmental and college-level English courses how to find the relevant information about a source (title, author, and volume) is a better use of instructional time than teaching the nitty gritty details of any particular citation style.

Do More in All Courses to Help Students Make Connections Across Disciplines

The findings of this study suggest that some students are able to see connections between prior, current, and future learning without prompting. They made creative and insightful connections between ideas and learning across contexts. Yet, some did not. And some did not see some of the more obvious connections between the literacy tasks they did in their developmental literacy courses and those in their college level courses. This is not a criticism of these students, but rather an indication that faculty in developmental literacy and college-level courses can do more to facilitate students making those connections and adjustments as they negotiate the transition from developmental literacy courses to college-level courses across disciplines.

Give Students Flexibility: Teach A Variety of Strategies and Choice in How to Use Them

Students' ability to effectively use the strategies they have learned and to apply them across disciplines requires a repertoire of strategies. Students in developmental literacy courses need to be provided with a variety of different reading and writing strategies and the flexibility to apply that strategy in a way that works for them. To use annotation as an example – rather than teach students a specific approach (underline important ideas, put vocabulary words in boxes, etc.), students should be encouraged to practice and play with different approaches until they find what works for them. They can also be encouraged to share those strategies with their classmates, which allows students to see that no one approach works for everyone all the time and there are almost always choices. This can help students grow and develop as lifelong learners who have the skills to make key decisions about their learning.

Increase Students' Metacognitive Awareness

Students also need to think metacognitively about what strategies and approaches work, why they work, and when they work. Some participants seemed to be “mindful” (Carillo, 2016; Langer, 2000) of shifts in reading and writing expectations when they transitioned from one discipline to another. Others experienced what Hassel and Giordano (2009) describe, in the context of writing, as a failure to develop “rhetorical adaptability,” which they define as the “the ability to make appropriate choices for (and determine the contours, shape, and demands of) new writing assignments when the purpose, audience, and subsequently, structural and stylistic conventions had changed” (p.28). Rather than leaving it to chance (some students will make the connection and some will not), “mindfulness” (Carillo, 2016) should be cultivated in the developmental literacy classroom by emphasizing metacognitive processes (Beaufort, 2007; El-Hindi, 1997; Paulson & Holschuh, 2018; Jaggers & Bickerstaff, 2018; Pacello, 2019; Perkins & Solomon, 1988, 1992; Simpson & Nist, 2000; Simpson et al., 2004). Students can compare assignments and tasks across disciplines and analyze the similarities and differences of those literacy demands. They can look at characteristics like vocabulary, audience, purpose, and disciplinary conventions. They can then reflect, both in writing and orally, on how disciplinary shifts informed the decisions they made (or would make) to determine the strategies and approaches they used, abandoned, or adapted for the task. Instructors can explicitly talk about the need for students to build this awareness to help them effectively transfer learning as they navigate different disciplinary Discourses.

Teach Students about Disciplinary Discourses

This study highlights that while developmental literacy courses can do a lot to prepare students for the reading and writing they will be doing across disciplines, students need all faculty to be involved in this process. Data suggest the idea that each discipline has a particular Discourse of reading and writing (Gee, 2008; Ivanic, 2004) that should be made explicit to students. It is important for students to know that while many reading and writing strategies they learn in a developmental literacy class will be helpful in other courses, how they need to write or read in an English class will differ from how they will be expected to write or read in psychology or history (Downs & Wardle, 2007; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2018; Wardle, 2009).

Developmental literacy instructors also need to help students understand the limitations of the generalized reading and writing strategies and approaches. This can be demonstrated through comparisons of different texts that represent different disciplinary discourses and discussion of how the writing assignments they receive in developmental literacy courses may differ from those they might receive in other disciplines. Instructors can show students that reading a novel is a different process than reading a primary source in a historical document. Students also need to know that there is no such thing as a “typical” academic paper; the conventions and expectations for an academic paper in English are different than those in sociology or biology. In addition, students should be told explicitly and reminded often that their developmental literacy course will not, and cannot, fully prepare them for all the different types of reading and writing they will be asked to do in the academy.

At the college-level, instructors should both help students build on the prior literacy learning and introduce them to the literacy expectations in their discipline's Discourse. There are effective instructional approaches that can be used in developmental literacy courses and college-level disciplinary courses. Disciplinary instructors can reinforce and apply some of the generalized and process-oriented reading and writing strategies students may have already been taught and be using. Specifically, this study suggests that students could benefit from more faculty embracing a process-oriented approach to writing that English faculty know works. In many ways, providing students with a process-approach to writing is even more important in 100-200 level disciplinary courses when students are often writing inside that disciplinary discourse for the first time. This is when they could use more feedback and practice learning the requirements and expectations of the disciplines, and a more process-oriented approach – to both reading and writing – is one way to provide this. At the same time, adopting a process approach to writing won't be enough. College-level disciplinary instructors also need to teach students the specific ways they are expected to read and write in their disciplines. Students need disciplinary experts to teach and model discipline specific practices.

Teach for Transfer

Faculty in all courses can also help students make the connections they need by employing instructional approaches that are designed to facilitate transfer. For example, “expansive framing” (Engle et al. 2012) is an approach that emphasizes that to improve transfer, faculty must consider the current learning context as it relates to students' related previous learning experiences and their potential future learning experiences. Instructors can “frame” the learning in a more expansive way by referring to potential

future contexts where the learning may be applicable in addition to connecting back to related prior learning contexts. In addition to teaching students what is needed to accomplish the current literacy task, instructors can “frame” the learning in generalizable ways. According to Carillo (2016), generalization is crucial to transfer: “Transfer has the potential to occur when students recognize and generalize something in one (perhaps a previous) course to allow for application in another course. Those acts of recognition and generalization are crucial, or transfer cannot occur” (p.10).

For example, consider the task of teaching students in a developmental literacy class how to include supporting evidence in their writing. To frame the learning expansively, developmental literacy instructors can connect back to previous experiences in which students are likely to have had to support an opinion. Maybe that would be in the context of writing, but maybe not. Again, generalizing the strategy and framing it expansively, allows for the most connections (Carillo, 2016; Engle et al., 2012). So, maybe students can connect to a debate they did in class or to experiments they did in science; they could also connect to something in real life, like making a case to their parents or partners for something - anything where they had to support their position or their conclusion with evidence. In addition, the learning can be framed in terms of potential future contexts where this strategy may be applied. Students can be taught that this general idea, providing support in their writing, will likely show up in future assignments in other disciplinary contexts. Yet, they need to understand that the specifics may be different. In sociology, for instance, students may be discouraged from including frequent direct quotes and encouraged to synthesize research findings. Then, the strategy

can be taught in terms of the current context – maybe that is using textual evidence in an argumentative essay about a novel

Articulate Assignment Rationales and Communicate Them to Students

Metacognitive awareness is not just important for students; it is important for instructors, who are experts in their field, to reflect on the thinking behind their pedagogical choices so that they can communicate those expectations to students. This aligns with the call by Winkelmes et al. (2016) for more transparency in college course and assignment design. Specifically, developmental literacy instructors need to consider the importance of disciplinary Discourses and the limitations of a generalizable “academic discourse” when they design their writing assignments. The papers and projects that students will be assigned in other courses may take a much different form than those common in English courses. Developmental literacy instructors should carefully contemplate the purpose of each of their assignments; if the purpose of the assignment is to provide transferable writing or reading competencies, then they should emphasize process-oriented elements and/or generalizable concepts that are likely to transfer. If requirements for an assignment need to be more discipline specific – such as the need to include textual quotes when responding to a written text – then instructors need to be transparent about the fact that the requirement is specific to certain disciplines and/or purposes for writing. Most assignments in developmental literacy courses will do both, but it is important for instructors to be aware of, and communicate to students, the literacy competencies each assignment is designed to teach and where they may, or may not, encounter those competencies in other academic and real-world contexts.

Increased metacognitive awareness can also help instructors be explicit about the rationale behind their assignments. Some challenges and concerns college-level disciplinary courses that participants in this study identified might be remediated, in part, by a combination of metacognitive thinking and communication on the part of the college-level instructor. It is important to remember that students in introductory college-level disciplinary courses are novices in that discipline's Discourse. In this study, participants were sometimes confused by the assignments they were given in their disciplinary courses. Part of this confusion came from issues with terminology that is used across disciplines in different ways. In addition, participants struggle because of a lack of clear communication to students about the rationale behind assignments, activities, and requirements in the course. As disciplinary experts it can be difficult for instructors to predict what students, novices in the field, might find confusing and unclear about what they are being asked to do. Instructors should be encouraged to reflect on the framework behind their assignments and the terminology they use in order to better explain what they mean, what they are looking for, and what the expectations are.

Instructors should also create opportunities for students to ask questions about assignments and requirements in a judgment-free zone. Assignment instructions, no matter how well-written or designed, are often not enough. This means more than just asking, "Does anyone have any questions?" Often, that question gets little or no response. Instructors should assume students do not understand their rationales and may need clarification on directions or requirements. Students can be given time to write down the questions they have about an assignment. Time in class can be given for whole or small group discussion about questions. Instructors can also create time to check in individually

with students when they are working independently. Additionally, there are many ways to use technology to poll or survey students anonymously that can be helpful to find out where students have questions or there is confusion.

The importance of instructors thinking metacognitively about what they assign and providing a detailed rationale and explanation also applies to reading. Participants in this study did not always read the assigned texts – it depended on whether it was deemed “necessary.” This usually meant that it was necessary in order to pass tests and get a good grade. While it is important for students to read across the curriculum, the findings of this study suggest instructors should reflect on the purpose of reading in their discipline and their courses to help them make careful decisions about the amount and type of reading they assign. They can consider the discourse of reading in the discipline and the specific literacy practices that are valued (Ivanic, 2004; Lea & Street, 1998, 2006). If reading is important and necessary to the course, instructors should communicate that to students through their words and the way they use and assign reading. Obviously, one way to do that is to make sure that doing the reading is linked to a grade. But, while that may force students to read, it does not necessarily help students understand how to use and learn from the reading in that discipline. A better approach would be to make the reading “count” by including authentic reading experiences that reflect and communicate the value of reading within the discipline.

Support Developmental Literacy Students’ Social and Emotional Needs

Participants described social and emotional benefits to participation in a developmental literacy class, including transformations in how they saw themselves as students and their attitudes about literacy and learning. These findings are in line with

Schnee (2014) who found that some developmental literacy students not only appreciated what they learned in the developmental literacy courses, but “discovered the joy of intellectual engagement” (Schnee, 2013, p.255). These findings suggest the importance of instructors considering the affective needs of their students. Responding to students’ social and emotional needs is at the heart of what makes learning from a teacher, rather than from a book or computer, especially desirable. The literature on effective developmental education programs shows that strong faculty-student relationships have a positive impact on learning (Lancaster & Lundberg, 2019), and addressing students’ social and emotional needs is crucial to students’ success (Bickerstaff et al., 2017; Hern & Snell, 2013; Paulson & Holschuh, 2018). Central to these concerns is the high level of fear students have, particularly of writing instruction (Cox, 2009; Hern & Snell, 2013; VanOra, 2012).

Creating an environment where students feel safe and supported is about more than providing “warm fuzzies.” Cox (2009) found that students often used avoidance strategies, like not coming to class or turning in work, to manage their fear of failure. In my experience, these behaviors are common among students in developmental literacy courses. In fact, it is rare for a student who completes the work of the course to not pass the course. Most students who fail 050/060 at FRCC do not hand in assignments, and/or they stop coming to class. It is important to consider that fear may play an important role in these behaviors. Some participants in this study expressed fears and a lack of confidence in their reading and writing abilities. They credited the experience they gained in ENGL 050/060 and the combination of their instructor’s high expectations and belief in their ability to meet those expectations with their increased confidence. While Cox

(2009) focused on college-level community college composition classes, her conclusions about the impact of instructor expectations are germane here: “Teacher confidence in students’ abilities is crucial; research studies suggest that such optimism may be the most fundamental of the factors affecting an instructor’s success with less advantaged students” (p.115). Instructors of developmental literacy need to consider how they can provide a learning environment where they consistently work to reduce fear and anxiety and communicate their belief in students’ ability to succeed.

Part of this approach is resisting the tendency to attribute student behaviors that are likely a response to fear and anxiety or a result of situational barriers outside of the classroom to a lack of care or willingness to work hard (Cox, 2009; VanOra, 2012). In addition, instructors can consider ways they can frame learning and create policies around late work, grading, and attendance that encourage growth and progress (Hern & Snell, 2013). Research by Carol Dweck (2017) is relevant here as she argues that helping students develop a “growth mindset,” or an understanding that learning and achievement are the result of hard work over time, rather than simply innate ability (a belief she calls “fixed mindset,”) can be powerful. Many of the participants in this study, particularly those who made noticeable transformations in how they viewed themselves and their literacy learning, demonstrated characteristics of Dweck’s (2017) “growth mindset.” They didn’t give up, they asked for help, and experimented with strategies and approaches until they found something that worked well for them.

This “growth mindset” (Dweck, 2017) is something that can be cultivated in students, particularly developmental literacy students who may arrive at college with a “fixed mindset,” in some cases reinforced by years of struggle in school, that they aren’t

“good” readers and writers, and that this is a trait immutable to instruction. The benefits of helping developmental literacy students develop a “growth mindset” are supported by literature (Edgecombe & Bickerstaff, 2018; Hern & Snell, 2013). A first step in this process is for faculty to investigate their own mindset about learning and learner characteristics like intelligence and consider how that might impact the way they approach teaching and learning and think about their students (Fotuhi, 2020). For instance, if a faculty member has a “fixed mindset” about intelligence, they may unintentionally communicate that belief to their students in damaging ways. On the other hand, if they approach teaching and learning with a “growth mindset,” that can help them communicate their belief that their students, through hard work, the right strategies, and support from others, can learn and be successful in their course. Developmental literacy instructors (and all instructors) can share articles and videos that teach students about the benefits of developing a growth mindset. Assignments and activities can help students connect the ideas behind a fixed or growth mindset to their own experiences with learning. Hern and Snell (2013) argue that these types of activities can help students gain metacognitive awareness and understand ways to be proactive in facilitating their own learning and growth. In addition, they found these types of activities can reduce fear, increase motivation, and make students both more willing to try challenging tasks and to ask for help when needed (Hern and Snell, 2013).

Facilitate Faculty Communication and Coordination across Disciplines

The implications for practice related to teaching and learning reveal many valuable topics for faculty development that would strengthen developmental literacy education, college-level literacy instruction, and the alignment between developmental

literacy coursework and the literacy demands and requirements of college-level courses. Some of those topics include teaching metacognitive thinking and “mindfulness” (Carillo, 2016; Langer, 2000), scaffolding learning, process-oriented writing approaches in disciplinary courses, disciplinary discourses, facilitating transfer/“expansive framing” (Engle et al., 2012), metacognition for instructors, articulating and sharing course and assignment rationales/”Transparency in Learning” (Winkelmes et al.), and strategies for supporting students affective needs, including developing a “growth mindset” (Dweck, 2017).

However, more important than any single professional development topic is the need for more communication and coordination across community college faculty. Part of the reason I was inspired to do this study was because faculty in the English department did not know a lot about the type of reading and writing students were doing in other disciplines. However, there is no reason to do a formal study to be more informed about what our colleagues are teaching in their courses. The results of this study suggest that conversations about the reading and writing students are doing in our classes would go a long way to helping all faculty consider students’ previous and future learning and strengthen their work as teachers and scholars.

The value of Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) is familiar to most college faculty, but this study supports research that suggests that Reading Across the Curriculum (RAC) is also needed. (Kim & Anderson, 2011). This work can begin with communication across disciplines, including conversations about faculty’s shared experiences and concerns about their students’ reading and writing development. In addition, faculty can share their underlying assumptions about reading and writing

(Ivanic, 2004) and how those are informed by their disciplines. Then, a key part of this interdisciplinary work is for faculty to research and/or receive professional development on reading, writing, and effective instructional approaches for explicitly teaching reading and writing skills and strategies (Kim & Anderson, 2011). The goal is not to standardize guiding assumptions about reading and writing across disciplines and practice, but to learn from each other's disciplines, practices, and the existing research to increase awareness of what our students experience as they read and write in other courses. This awareness can help faculty frame learning expansively to facilitate transfer (Engle et al., 2012) and make informed decisions and changes in their instruction to help support students' reading and writing development across the curriculum.

In addition, professional development sessions that focus on sharing course syllabi, reading and writing assignments, and instructional approaches related to reading and writing can help faculty better understand the variety among specific literacy tasks across disciplines. It is easy to make assumptions that what we are asking students to do is common across disciplines, and that they are likely to have encountered the task before. However, the results of this study suggest that is often not the case. Faculty development workshops can give faculty the opportunity to swap assignments with someone from another discipline and read each other's assignments. Because faculty are "novices" in their colleagues' disciplines, they can provide feedback to their colleagues about how students might see their assignments. This type of information is often difficult for faculty, as experts, to identify in their own discipline. Faculty need more opportunities for this type of interdisciplinary work.

Recommendations for Further Research

The findings of this study have implications for teaching and learning in both developmental literacy and college-level courses across disciplines. However, this study focused on only seven students in a single suburban community college. The findings and limitations of this study illustrate the need for further research in a number of important areas.

Focus on Students Who are Not Successful

This study focused on the experience of “successful” developmental students, as measured by developmental literacy courses. However, research is also needed on the students who do not pass developmental literacy courses. In my experience, most of the students who fail developmental literacy do so because they stop attending class, and it is hard to know the reason for that without further investigation. It may have something to do with their educational experience, but sometimes the decision to stop coming to class gets made for them by situational barriers like transportation, job responsibilities, and illness. While it is challenging to contact students who have left school, even temporarily, it would be extremely valuable to hear from these students about what factors contributed to their decision to stop coming to class and/or drop the course. This information could have a significant impact, depending on the information gathered, on institutional reforms or on developmental literacy instructors’ ability to meet the needs of all students more effectively.

Increase Information about All Developmental Students

While the participants in this study did place well below the college-level cutoff, only one of the seven participants took the lowest level developmental literacy course at FRCC. Although I did not see the placement scores of the participants in this study, at least six of the participants scored high enough to be placed in the upper level developmental literacy course. Students who score at the lowest level are among the most vulnerable students in the community college. Further research with these students is necessary to understand the full range of experiences and needs in developmental literacy courses and to make sure that instruction is effective for all students.

It would also be helpful to know more about the experiences of students who did pass their developmental literacy course but did not get an A as participants in this study did. What happens when students move from ENGL 050 to ENGL 060 and are required to take more classes in the developmental sequence? What about students who receive a placement into English Composition I with workshop, where they receive both college-level credit and support? In addition, further research on all developmental students' experiences in college-level courses can provide further insight into the alignment, or lack of alignment, between developmental literacy courses and college-level courses.

Gather Faculty Perspectives

It is important to highlight student voices in research on developmental literacy and the community college. It is also important to get faculty perspectives. A natural extension of this study would be to interview both developmental and college level faculty about what they think contributes to students learning and the reading and writing strengths and weaknesses they observe in their students. In addition, it would be helpful to understand more from disciplinary faculty about what they see as the central literacy

tasks or goals of their disciplines. Information from a faculty lens can help provide a fuller picture of what is happening in developmental literacy and college-level courses. It would also be helpful to know more about what faculty see as their role in supporting literacy development and/or articulating with developmental literacy courses. This information can inform faculty development programming.

Prioritize Specific Instructional Approaches

This study identified specific reading and writing strategies that students learned in their developmental literacy courses which were helpful in their college-level courses across disciplines. They also identified affective benefits they received from their developmental literacy courses. These findings suggest that certain instructional approaches may be most beneficial in developmental literacy courses. While there is some research that focuses on one particular instructional approach and seeks to provide evidence of its benefits, further research about the impact of one approach, as compared to others, could provide a more complete picture. More research that provides specific evidence using instructional approaches in developmental literacy courses that focus on the transfer of learning, like “expansive framing” (Engle et al., 2012) and metacognitive approaches to teaching reading and writing would be beneficial to the field.

Center the Role of Race, Ethnicity, SES and other Relevant Factors

This study did not ask participants to identify their race, ethnicity, or SES status. Interview questions did not address this dimension of student identity and experiences, and participants rarely initiated conversation around these aspects of their identity. However, a disproportionate number of Black and low SES students are assigned to developmental classes overall, particularly to the lowest levels (Braithwaite &

Edgecombe, 2018). In terms of enrollment, these students are more likely to be part-time and experience interruptions in their enrollment. All these factors are correlated with lower completion rates (Braithwaite & Edgecombe, 2018). Furthermore, research has shown that developmental reforms that benefit some students can sometimes have an adverse impact on marginalized students (Braithwaite & Edgecombe, 2018). Further research on high-quality developmental literacy education that considers race, ethnicity, SES, and other relevant factors of student identity is crucial in order to develop solutions and recommendations that are both effective and equitable.

Increase Communication Between High School and College

This study focused on the alignment between the literacy demands and requirements of community college developmental literacy courses and those of college-level disciplinary courses. It would also be helpful to understand how the literacy demands and requirements of high school courses, both in English and in disciplinary courses, align with the literacy demands of community college courses. This articulation is important to apply a type of expansive framing to the issue of HS college articulation. It is important for college faculty to look back at students' high school learning to frame their college instruction. Similarly, high school instructors should be looking forward to frame their instruction around potential future college learning. Shared information and communication can help inform practice and policy in both high-schools and community college that can best support and serve students in making the transition from high school to college.

Ensure Developmental Faculty Training

This study illustrates the importance of the developmental literacy instructor's understanding of their students' pedagogical, social, and emotional needs. There is a substantial amount of scholarship that can inform the teaching of developmental literacy (Del Principe, 2004; Gleason, 2006; Rose, 2012); yet there is often no graduate level requirement for developmental writing teachers that would insure that they are familiar with this scholarship and its implications for best practices in developmental literacy instruction (Del Principe, 2004; Gleason, 2006; Paulson & Armstrong, 2010). While the instructors at FRCC that teach developmental literacy courses are required to have relevant training in developmental education and/or reading instruction, in other institutions, developmental literacy courses are often taught by inexperienced and/or part time instructors (Paulson & Armstrong, 2010). This study illustrates the fact that literacy students are a vulnerable population that may be returning to the classroom after a long break, may have struggled in K-12 with traditional school approaches, may have learning disabilities, and are often judged by instructors as "not ready for college" (Grubb, 2013); consequently, they are most in need of well-trained and effective instructors. Further research that evaluates the training of developmental literacy instructors and the impact of that training on student outcomes could provide important information to inform classroom practice and provide recommendations for what type of education and training should be both provided and required.

Final Thoughts

Developmental literacy education is often characterized as ineffective based on large-scale studies. Yet, these studies do not look at the impact of specific instructional

approaches in developmental literacy instruction and have limited usefulness for those on the ground teaching these courses. Those of us in the field experience the triumphs and transformations individual students experience in our developmental courses every semester. Many of these students are those that have not found success in other educational contexts. For most of these students, even the successful students that made up this study, reading and writing, and school in general, have not always been easy. Yet, they come to community college ready for a fresh start and hopeful for a promising future. The students in this study represent the best that community college has to offer.

Participants in this study identified specific reading and writing strategies that they learned in their developmental literacy courses and found helpful in their college-level courses. This is important information for both developmental literacy instructors and college-level instructors because it helps them set priorities among the many choices they have of where to focus their efforts. This study also illustrated the impressive amount of hard work and creativity that these students employed to be successful. While their experience provides valuable insight into what high-quality developmental literacy instruction looks like, it is undeniable that the students themselves deserve the credit for their own success and learning.

This study also highlighted the challenges inherent in what we are asking of students as they navigate the reading and writing requirements that change and shift across courses and disciplines. Again, the participants in this study deserve praise for their dedication and perseverance as they work to decipher the different, and sometimes contradictory, literacy demands and expectations they encounter in college. It is my hope

that this study can illuminate some of these challenges, particularly the ones that can be better addressed by both developmental literacy and disciplinary college-level instructors.

Finally, I believe the strength of the community college faculty is their dedication to teaching and their belief in the potential of all students. It is my hope that this study can provide a contribution to the field of developmental literacy and the community college teaching that supports this. I believe this study shows that with coordination, cooperation, and conversation, community college faculty can work together to better support our students in our classrooms, in their college journey, and in their lives.

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Questions

Semi Structured Interview Protocol

Principal Investigator: Jessica Darkenwald-DeCola

Study: Student Perceptions of Alignment Between Developmental Literacy and College-level Courses Across Disciplines

At the start of the interview, I will say the following:

Thank you for taking the time today to allow me to interview you. This interview is being conducted as part of the dissertation study I am doing for my doctoral work at Rutgers University. The purpose of this interview to gather a detailed account of your experience taking a college-level general education course after successfully completing ICRC I(II). I am interested in your perspectives on the reading and writing that you are doing in your general education classes this semester and how it is similar or different from the reading and writing that you did in ICRC I/II. I want to know what reading and writing tasks and assignments you feel prepared to do, and what you find challenging. Please feel free to answer the questions in any way that you feel comfortable and to elaborate or clarify your answers at any time. I am not looking for any specific answers, but rather am interested in your honest opinion and views.

So that I can go back and review the interview, I will be recording the interview using a digital audio-recorder. If at any time you wish for me to stop the recording, simply ask me to stop and I will. You do not have to answer any question that do not feel comfortable answering and you can ask me to stop the interview at any time and I will. I may also take notes in the session. In any notes that I take today and the written transcript of today's interview, I will use pseudonym to refer to you rather than your real name. Anything you say to me today will be confidential in that your name will not be attached in any future report or write-up of the data. No one but me will hear the original recording and as I mentioned, transcripts of the interview will use pseudonyms. Do you give me permission to tape the session? Do you have any questions?

Ok, great. Then we can begin.

Note: ICRC I and II refers to Introduction to College Reading and Composition I or II (ENGL 050 and ENLG 060 respectively). The students will be familiar with the terminology

1. Can you tell me about why you enrolled at Raritan Valley Community College?
 - a. What is your major right now?
 - b. Do you plan to transfer to another college? What do you hope to accomplish there?

- c. Do you know what your career goals are at this time? Can you explain what you think you might want to do when you finish college?
2. Can you tell me a bit about yourself as a reader and writer?
 - a. Do you read outside of school? If so, what do you like to read? How would you describe your strengths and weaknesses as a reader?
 - b. Do you write outside of school? If so, what do you like to write? How would you describe your strengths and weaknesses as a writer?
3. Can you tell me about your experience as a student in ICRC I/II last semester?
4. You received a placement into English Comp I from ICRC I/II. Why do you think you were successful in ICRC I/II?
 - a. What were the most difficult challenges/obstacles to success that you faced in ICRC I/II?
 - b. How did you deal with those challenges/obstacles?
5. Think about the work that you did in ICRC I/II last semester. I'm going to ask you to focus on some specific assignments that you completed for the course.
 - a. Can you tell me about a specific writing assignment that you found helpful in your developmental as a college-writer?
 - i. In what ways was this assignment helpful?
 - b. Can you tell me about a specific reading assignment that you found helpful? This might be a book or article that you read or an activity or assignment that focused on reading.
 - i. In what ways was this assignment helpful?
 - c. Can you tell me about a specific writing assignment that you found challenging or not helpful in your developmental as a college-writer?
 - i. In what ways was this assignment challenging or not helpful?
 - d. Can you tell me about a specific reading assignment that you found challenging or not helpful? This might be a book or article that you read or an activity or assignment that focused on reading.
 - i. In what ways was this assignment challenging or not helpful?
 - e. Can you summarize overall what in the course was useful or helpful to you?
 - f. Can you summarize overall what you found was not useful or helpful?
6. In what ways do you think your reading and writing improved after taking ICRC I/II?
 - a. What reading and writing skills do you still feel you need to improve?

7. What courses are you taking this semester?
8. Let's talk about _____ (general-ed college level course with literacy demands). How is it going so far?
9. What have you been asked to read so far in the course?
 - a. How are you doing with the reading? What do you feel are your strengths and weaknesses in regards to the reading you have to do for the course?
10. Can you explain how the reading you are doing in X (college-level) course is similar or different to the reading that you did in ICRC I/II?
11. Can you explain what you did, if anything, while you were reading last semester to make sure that you understood the reading? (If not, follow up with whether or not their teacher had asked them to do some type of annotating, summarizing, etc...)
 - a. Was that something that you were taught to do in ICRC or that you learned somewhere else?
12. How do you approach the reading in X (college-level) course? What do you do to make sure that you understand the reading?
 - i. Do you use any reading strategies or skills from ICRC I/II in the reading you are doing in X (college-level) course?
13. Can you explain how well you think your ICRC I/II course prepared you for the reading that you are doing in X (college-level) course?
14. What kinds of writing have you been asked to do in the course so far?
15. How are you doing with the writing? What do you feel are your strengths and weaknesses in regards to the writing you have to do for the course?
16. Can you explain how the writing you are doing in X (college-level) course is similar or different to the writing that you did in ICRC I/II?
17. Can you explain what you did, if anything, while you were writing last semester successfully complete the writing assignments? (If not, follow up with whether or not their teacher had asked them to use specific strategies for brainstorming, planning/outlining, drafting, revising, considering audience and purpose, etc..)
 - a. Was that something that you were taught to do in ICRC or that you learned somewhere else?
18. How do you approach the writing in X (college-level) course? What do you do to make sure that you successfully complete the writing assignments?
 - a. Can you explain what, if any, writing strategies or skills from ICRC I/II you use in the writing you are doing in X (college-level) course?

19. Can you explain how well you think your ICRC I/II course prepared you for the writing that you are doing in X (college-level) course?
20. Tell me about the reading or writing (or ideally combined) assignment that you brought with you.
 - a. Can you walk me through the way you approached the assignment?
 - b. What did you find challenging in this assignment? What strengths do you think you brought to the assignment?
 - c. Think about some of the issues we've talked about so far. In what ways, if any, is this assignment similar to the reading you did in ICRC I/ICRC II. In what ways is it different?
 - d. Explain what skills or concepts you learned in ICRC I/II that you used to complete this assignment.
 - e. Do you think ICRC I/II prepared you to deal successfully with this assignment?
21. Is there anything else that you might want to add that you didn't get to address in our conversation?

This concludes our first interview. Thank you so much for your time. I will be in touch with you to schedule a follow-up interview.

Second interview

This interview will take place with students right after they complete the college-level course. This interview might include some follow up questions that are not listed to clarify or ask for further explanation of answers given in the first interview. In addition, the following questions will be asked:

1. You have now finished X (college-level) course. How did it go overall?
2. Now that you have completed the course, let's talk about the strengths and challenges you experienced taking this course.
 - a. What do you think your strengths were in terms of the reading and writing that you did in this course? Please be as detailed as possible.
 - b. What did you find particularly challenging?

We are going to revisit some of the questions that we talked about during the first interview to see how you feel about those issues now that you have completed the course.

3. What types of readings did you do in the course?
 - a. How did you do with the reading? What do you feel were your strengths and weaknesses in regards to the reading you had to do for the course?
 - b. In the last interview, you expressed _____ (specific strengths or weaknesses that were discussed in the last interview). Can you explain if you still feel that is the case or if there is anything you would add or change after completing the entire course?
4. Can you explain how the reading you are doing in X (college-level) course is similar or different to the reading that you did in ICRC I/II?

- a. In our last interview, you expressed _____. Can you explain if you still feel that is the case or there is anything you would add or change now that you've completed the entire course?
5. During our last interview, you explained that you used _____ approach to help you understand the reading (or that they didn't use anything). Now that you have finished the course, how would you describe your approach to the readings in the course?
 - a. In other words, what did you do that helped you understand the reading in the course?
 - b. Did you try any approaches to understanding the reading that you did find not helpful?
 - c. Did you use any reading strategies or skills from ICRC I/II in the reading you are did in X (college-level) course?
6. Can you explain how well you think your ICRC I/II course prepared you for the reading that you did in X (college-level) course? In our last interview you expressed _____. Do you still feel that way, or is there anything you would add or change now that you've experienced the entire course?
7. What kinds of writing were you asked to do in X (college-level) course?
 - a. How did you do with the writing assignments? What do you feel were your strengths and weaknesses in regards to the writing you had to do for the course?
 - b. In the last interview, you expressed _____ (specific strengths or weaknesses that were discussed in the last interview). Can you explain if you still feel that is the case or if there is anything you would add or change in your response after experiencing the entire course?
8. Can you explain how the writing you did in X (college-level) course was similar or different to the writing that you did in ICRC I/II?
 - a. In our last interview, you expressed _____. Can you explain if you still feel that is the case or there is anything you would add or change now that you've completed the entire course?
9. During our last interview, you explained that you used _____ approach(es) to help you successfully complete the writing assignments in X (college-level) course (or that they didn't use anything).
 - a. Now that you have finished the course, did you still use those approaches? What else did you find helped you complete the writing assignments?
 - b. Did you try any approaches to the writing assignment that you found were not helpful?

- c. Did you use any writing approaches, strategies, or skills from ICRC I/II in the writing you did in X (college-level) course?
- 10. Can you explain how well you think your ICRC I/II course prepared you for the writing that you did in X (college-level) course? In our last interview you expressed _____. Do you still feel that way? Is there anything you would add or change now that you've experienced the entire course?
- 11. Did you find either the writing or the reading courses more difficult in X (college-level) course? Did you find one or the other easier to deal with? Please explain.
- 12. Tell me about the reading and/or writing assignment that you brought with you to demonstrate the challenges you experienced in X college-level course.
 - a. Why did you choose this assignment to show the challenges you experienced?
 - b. Can you walk me through the way you approached the assignment?
 - c. What did you find challenging in this assignment?
 - i. Can you show me a specific example in this assignment to illustrate this?
 - ii. What did you try and do to deal with the challenges in this assignment?
 - iii. Did any of those approaches come from what you learned in ICRC I/II
 - iv. Did those approaches work? Explain?
 - d. Think about some of the issues we've talked about so far. In what ways, if any, is this assignment similar to the reading you did in ICRC I/ICRC II. In what ways is it different?
 - e. What was the end result of this assignment? How well do you feel you approached this assignment? Is there anything that you would do differently if you did this assignment again?
 - f. Explain what skills or concepts you learned in ICRC I/II that you used to complete this assignment.
- 13. Tell me about the reading and/or writing assignment that you brought with you to demonstrate the strengths you experienced in X college-level course.
 - a. Why did you choose this assignment to show the reading/writing strengths you demonstrated in X (college-level) course?
 - b. Can you walk me through the way you approached the assignment?
 - c. Why do you think you were able to be so successful in this assignment?
 - i. Can you show me a specific example in this assignment to illustrate this?
 - ii. What approaches/strategies did you use to complete this assignment?

- iii. Did any of those approaches come from what you learned in ICRC I/II
 - iv. Did all those approaches work? Which ones worked better than others? Explain?
 - d. Think about some of the issues we've talked about so far. In what ways, if any, is this assignment similar to the reading you did in ICRC I/ICRC II. In what ways is it different?
 - e. What was the end result of this assignment? Is there anything that you would do differently if you did this assignment again?
 - f. Explain what skills or concepts you learned in ICRC I/II that you used to complete this assignment.
 - g. Do you think ICRC I/II prepared you to deal successfully with this assignment?
 - h. Do you think ICRC I/II prepared you to deal successfully with this assignment?
14. If you were to take this course over again... what would you do the same? What would you do differently?
- a. What reading/writing strategies/skills do you wish you had learned (or learned more fully) in ICRC I/II that you think would have helped you in this X (college-level) course?
15. Is there anything else that you might want to add that you didn't get to address in our conversation?

This concludes our last interview. Thank you so much for your time.

APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM

What is the study about? You are invited to participate in a research study that is being conducted by Jessica Darkenwald-DeCola who is a Ph.D. student in the Literacy Education Department of the Graduate School of Education at Rutgers University. The purpose of this research is to determine how community college students experience the alignment between their developmental literacy coursework and subsequent college-level coursework.

Why am I being asked to participate? You are being asked to participate in the study because you took Introduction to College Reading and Composition I or II in the Fall 2016 semester and received a placement into English Composition I in portfolio review. You are taking a college-level course in a discipline other than English this semester and can provide information about the ways in which the reading and writing you did in ICRC connects to, or doesn't connect to, the reading and writing you are doing in your college-level course this semester.

Who else will be involved in the study? How long will it take? Approximately 8-10 subjects will participate in the study, and each individual's participation will last approximately three months, the remainder of the Spring 2017 semester. During those three months you will be asked to spend about 2 ½ hours participating in two interviews and one focus group.

What will I be asked to do? The study procedures include the following: First, you will be asked to take part in an initial interview in April that will include questions about the reading and writing you did in Introduction to College Reading and Composition course and how it compares to the reading and writing you are doing now in your college-level course. Then, you will be invited to take part in a focus group discussion with other study participants where you will all discuss the ways in which Introduction to College Reading and Composition prepared you, or did not prepare you, for the work you are doing in your college level courses. After the semester is over in May, you will be interviewed for a second and final time. This interview will revisit similar questions included in the first interview, but will allow you to reflect on how you felt they were able to navigate the reading and writing assignments in your college level course throughout the entire semester. In the final interview, you will also be asked to share samples of the writing you completed in your college-level course. If you are willing to, you can also share the grade they received in their college-level course.

How will confidentiality be maintained and my privacy maintained? The researcher, Jessica Darkenwald-DeCola, will make every effort to keep all the information you provide confidential, as required by law. Confidential means that the research records will include some information about you and this information will be stored in such a manner that some linkage between your identity and the response in the research exists. Some of the information collected about you includes your name on this consent form and the information you provide about your college experiences in the interviews. Please note that we will keep this information confidential by limiting individual's access to the research data and keeping it in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's office. Any write-up of this study's results, your name and identifying information will be changed. Any notes or interview transcripts will not include your name and will be

stored on a password-protected file on a password-protected computer. If you chose to participate in the focus group with other subjects, then you be known to those subjects as well. Although all subjects that participate in the focus group will sign a confidentiality agreement, there is no way to guarantee that it will be honored by all subjects.

Who will see the data? How long will it be kept? The research team and the Institutional Review Board at Rutgers University are the only that will be allowed to see the data, except as may be required by law. All study data will be kept for five years.

What are the risks of participation? There are no foreseeable risks to participation in this study. You do not have to participate in the study and you can end your participation at any time. Your participation in the study will have no effect on your grades, transcript, or standing at Raritan Valley Community College.

What are the benefits of participation? There are no direct benefits from the study, although you may find reflecting on your experiences as a student interesting. You will receive a \$25 gift card for the college cafeteria and cafe for completing the entire study.

What happens if I choose not to participate or want to leave the study after it starts? Participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate, and you may withdraw at any time during the study procedures without any penalty to you. Your choice to participate or not to participate will have no effect on your grades, your transcript, or your standing at Raritan Valley Community College. In addition, you may choose not to answer any questions with which you are not comfortable.

If you have any questions about the study or study procedures, you may contact me, Jessica Darkenwald-DeCola, at Raritan Valley Community College, Somerset Hall S341, 118 Lamington Road, Branchburg, NJ 08876. Jessica.Darkenwald-DeCola@raritanval.edu; (908) 526-1200 ext.8724 or (908) 963-4291.

You may also contact my faculty advisor Alisa Belzer, Rutgers Graduate School of Education, 10 Seminary Place, New Brunswick, NJ 08901. Alisa.belzer@gse.rutgers.edu;(848) 932-0778.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, please contact an IRB Administrator at the Rutgers University, Arts and Sciences IRB:

Institutional Review Board
Rutgers University, the State University of New Jersey
Liberty Plaza / Suite 3200
335 George Street, 3rd Floor
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

Phone: 732-235-2866
Email: humansubjects@orsp.rutgers.edu

You will be given a copy of this consent form for your records.

Sign below if you agree to participate in this research study:

Subject (Print) _____

Subject Signature _____ Date _____

Principal Investigator Signature _____ Date _____

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