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Instructor-Student Conferencing as Pedagogy: Measuring ISC Pedagogy's Impact on Student Writing and Self-Efficacy

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INSTRUCTOR-STUDENT CONFERENCING AS PEDAGOGY: MEASURING ISC PEDAGOGY'S IMPACT ON STUDENT WRITING AND SELF-EFFICACY

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Title: Instructor-Student Conferencing as Pedagogy: Measuring ISC Pedagogy's Impact on Student Writing and Self-Efficacy

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This study set out to create and clearly define a pedagogical approach to teaching Composition I that centered around frequent instructor-student writing conferences and measure its impact on writerly self-efficacy and writing ability. Instructor-student conferences have been a threshold concept in academia, but due to a lack of replicable, aggregable, and data-driven research, it has been unable to move into the realm of knowledge. To facilitate this transition, I combined recent, relevant research from disciplines including education, linguistics, psychology and sociology, and composed a new pedagogical approach: ISC Pedagogy. ISC Pedagogy has five foundational principles: create a community of safety, build writerly self-efficacy, use frequent conferencing as response, provide opportunities for reflection, and model revision.

To generate replicable, aggregable, and data-driven research, I used a mixed methods approach and gathered both qualitative and quantitative data. To measure writerly self-efficacy, I replicated Schmidt and Alexander's (2012) study. To measure impact on writing, I extended Kelly-Riley and Elliot's (2014) study. I then used original quantitative and qualitative research to isolate the specific affect of instructor-student conferences in an attempt to better understand its impact. I did this by asking students to use a Likert scale to rate the impact instructor-student conferences had on their writing

confidence and ability and then, on a separate occasion, freewrite on what they found valuable in instructor-student conferences, what conferences actually *do* for them.

The results of the study showed that students who completed a Composition I course taught using ISC Pedagogy during the Fall 2017 semester, experienced a statistically significant improvement in their overall writerly self-efficacy ($p = .001$), and overall writing ability ($p = .001$) on five measures: context/purpose, content argumentation, composing, sources/evidence, and syntax. Students found tremendous value in the instructor-student conferencing component of ISC pedagogy with 98.5% of the students stating it had a positive affect on both their confidence in their writing and their writing ability. The top three benefits of these conferences, according to students, were the strategies for improvement they received, the increased confidence in their writing ability, and the personalized feedback they received. This study moves the Composition field closer to clearly understanding the impact instructor-student writing conferences – and specifically ISC Pedagogy – has on student writing and writerly self-efficacy. It's implications extend to training of GAs, new instructors, and instructors in different fields of study (such as Literature or Linguistics), opportunities to contribute to student retention policies and practices, encourage and enhance writing in both WAC/WID contexts, and expose additional opportunities for research.

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INTRODUCTION

Figure 1. Word cloud created from student course evaluations 2012-2015.

> When teachers and learners recognize writing as complex enough to require study, and recognize that the study of writing suggests they should approach, learn, and teach writing differently, they are then invited to behave differently and to change their conceptions of what writing is and their practices around writing that extends from those conceptions (Adler-Kassner & Wardle, 2015, p. 16).

Rose, the Hallelujah Chorus, and Conferences

As we sat on the posh sofa in our on-campus coffee shop after finishing our fifth and final writing conference for the semester, Rose[1], a freshman from Puerto Rico, threw her arms around me and with a face glowing with delight exclaimed:

> I can't wait to take you for Comp II next semester! I have learned so much from your class – not just writing, but I understand God's love and mercy better. Through writing about the different topics you've given us, I've learned so much. I never knew writing

[1] Not her real name. All student names in this dissertation have been changed to protect participant privacy.

about something was a way to learn, but it is! …I want to keep writing and see what else I can learn! (Rose, December 2013)

Whether it was a well-timed Christmas song or the delirium of an exhausted mind I can't say, but I swear I heard the Hallelujah Chorus swelling in my ears. I smiled warmly and wished her a Merry Christmas while internally rejoicing: "Yes! She gets it! Writing for the win!" And just like that, the exhaustion I had felt drawing near me as I finished my 30th student conference that day, 112th of the week, receded. During my 70-minute commute home in the winter darkness that evening, I could feel satisfaction refresh my somnolent soul just like the cool breeze coming in from my sunroof (it was winter in Florida after all).

My experience teaching First Year Composition (FYC) courses for the past five years at a small, Christian, Liberal Arts College in Central Florida hasn't been that different from the previous eight years I had spent teaching at private colleges in New Hampshire or a tier one research university in Tampa. Well, maybe some things were different, such as the pick-up lines overheard in the cafeteria ("I love the way you pray over your food, your face looks like an angel"), but the instructional context is similar – swelling class sizes, frequent 5/5 loads, increasing dependence on adjunct instructors, and the seemingly impossible mandate to plug the holes from previous writing instruction in 15 weeks amongst a exceedingly diverse group of freshman students.

Pulled in so many directions and understanding students need individual help, composition instructors may refer students to the campus writing center because the thought of adding individual student conferences to their packed schedule can be overwhelming (Flynn & King, 1993; Lerner, 2005). However, when students, despite reaching out for help, get their papers back bleeding with red ink or marked with seemingly indiscernible hieroglyphics, the

causerie carnage confirms that the student, indeed, "can't write" – just like his/her high school teacher so resolutely declared in the past (Bauer, 2011; Straub, 1997). For populations already feeling marginalized (including those who are underprepared, ethnic minorities, and linguistically disadvantaged), this reinforces their feelings that they don't belong in the academy anyway, their voice doesn't matter, and they have no right to occupy a seat in the classroom (Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982; Cheon-woo, Farruggia, & Moss, 2017; Hesse & Yancey, 2014; McCarthy, 1987). As student self-efficacy plummets, along with retention rates, university administration calls on first-year programs (including FYC) to do more to keep students on campus. All these factures culminate to place tremendous pressure on FYC faculty, which may increase their risk for burnout (McJunkin, 2005; Minter, 2009; Reevy & Deason, 2014). This exhausting cycle can be broken when instructors reconnect with what drew them to teaching in the first place – the students.

Traditionally, instructors spend a great deal of time providing individualized feedback on writing through marginalia comments written in isolation. The effectiveness of these comments is highly dependent on how (and if) they are read by the student (Bean, 2011; Sommers, 2013; Stellmack, Keenan, Sandidge, Sippl, & Konheim-Kalkstein, 2012; Straub, 1997). By replacing this grading time with a 15-minute, individual instructor-student writing conference, instructors can re-connect with students, provide more meaningful feedback, and check for understanding. Instructor-student conferences are powerful enough to move from an occasional tool to use when time permits, to a pedagogical approach to teaching. Instructor-Student Conferencing Pedagogy (ISC Pedagogy), is comprised of five key principles: creating a sense of community, increasing student self-efficacy, conducting frequent instructor-student conferences, incorporating meaningful reflection, and providing opportunities for revision. This pedagogy, which can

seamlessly work alongside various curricular approaches, ties together foundational beliefs in the value of individual instruction with more recent, cross-curricular research in education, linguistics, psychology, and sociology (more of this in Chapter 2). It focuses on developing relationships with students, dialoguing on individual student writing, and providing feedback in an atmosphere of inclusion rather than exclusion which can then help solidify the student's sense of belonging and ultimately have a positive effect on retention rates.

Naming What We Know: Instructor-Student Writing Conferences

Instructor-student conferences have been a core pedagogical practice for teaching writing for more than 100 years (Lerner, 2005) and continue to be widely-accepted as one of the most effective ways for instructors to provide feedback, build student rapport, and help students improve their writing (Black, 1998; Boynton, 2003; Mayes, 2015; Murray, 1979). Perhaps because of its longevity, there seems to be a collective sense of wisdom that conferences are a "good practice", but strong research, research that is replicable, aggregable and data-supported (RAD research), is lacking. Haswell describes this RAD approach to research as being "explicitly enough systematized in sampling, execution, and analysis to be replicated; exactly enough circumscribed to be extended; and factually enough supported to be verified" (2005, p. 201). RAD research helps identify relevance and the ability to replicate a study is key. As Driscoll and Purdue argue, it "…allows researchers to re-create the circumstances under which study results are understood and expressed in relation to the research question. This allows us to know if findings are context-dependent or can move across contexts and be of more general use" (2014, p. 124). In short, it tells us what we know.

In Adler-Kassner and Wardle's book, *Naming What We Know: Threshold Concepts of Writing Studies*, they examine 37 core principles of knowledge regarding writing studies in an

effort to provide a basis for writing studies professionals to describe what we know. They identify four characteristics common among their threshold concepts:

1. Learning about them is generally transformative,
2. Once learned it is often irreversible, and the learner is unlikely to forget,
3. They are integrative in that they help learners make connections,
4. They involve forms of troublesome knowledge, knowledge that may be counterintuitive (2015, p. 2)

While instructor-student writing conferences were not included in this compilation, they do meet these guidelines in that once instructors learn about them they frequently incorporate them into their own practice (#1) – or, if they are unable to do so they still believe the conferences have value (#2) (Boynton, 2003; Simmons, 1984), they are a highly efficient way to help instructors make connections with their students and help students make connections with their writing (#3) (Harris, 1986; Moore & O'Neill, 2002; Taylor, 1985), and while conferences have a stigma of being costly in terms of instructor time, they can actually save time typically spent commenting on student papers (#4) (Boynton, 2003; Straub, 1996). With these considerations in mind, I examine instructor-student conferences as a threshold concept of writing studies and then describe a RAD research study to help the field begin to identify what we actually know.

The History

Instructor-student writing conferences, as a method, have a long history of usefulness in the composition classroom. The 1890s brought one of the first prominent calls for conferencing as the best way to teach writing. The focus was on "frequent practice, individual feedback, and community spirit" (Lerner, 2005, p. 189). During this time, however, conferences were reserved for the "best and the brightest" and not to be "wasted" on those "undeserving" (2005, p. 197). As

enrollment climbed in the early 1900s and composition began to be a required course or sequence of courses in colleges across the country, conferences increasingly began to be used to help students from a variety of educational and sociocultural backgrounds. In 1942, the College Section of the National Council of Teachers of English, published a study on the English course requirements at 292 American colleges. They found that 231 institutions (80 percent) required composition instruction and conferences were a required component for 52 percent of those programs (Grey, Hughes, Lorch, & Parks, 1942). A slightly more recent study of conference usage was in 1988 and consisted of 100 composition instructors at eleven diverse colleges and universities across the United States. Raw numbers of responses to individual questions weren't provided, but the discussion claimed that while 100 percent of respondents conferenced with students at least once per semester/quarter, how they defined "conference" varied tremendously from a casual conversation or "teachable moment" in the hall to a formally scheduled office appointment. In addition, what they conferenced about – i.e. grade discrepancies vs. discussing a written essay – also varied and all were "counted" as an instructor-student conference (Barker, 1988).

While both of these studies are interesting from a historical perspective, current implications are difficult to extrapolate. Even the National Census of Writing's 2013 survey neglected to include any questions regarding instructor-student conferencing ("Home | National Census of Writing," 2017). I reached out to Brandon Fralix to discuss the possibility of adding it to the 2017 consensus. In a personal email he stated that "[s]tudent conferencing is very useful and important (I do it constantly in my FYC courses), and it would interesting to know how often it is used" (Fralix, 2017). However, he wasn't sure they could add it to the survey due to length

concerns. Today, as in the past, many instructors claim to conference, but how they conference, and its effect, is in need of further study.

Threshold Concepts

Few articles are available regarding instructor-student conferencing prior to 1960, but the 70s and 80s brought a tremendous increase with an average of 2-3 articles published in academic journals each year. Most of these articles were observational in scope yet provided the foundation for this concept. Instructor-student conferencing legend, Donald M. Murray, romanticized the writing conference when he famously wrote:

> I learn so many things. What it feels like to have a baby, how to ski across a frozen lake, what right I have to private shoreline…I expected to learn of other worlds from my students but I didn't expect an experienced (old) professional writer to learn about the writing process from my students. But I do. (1979, p. 18)

His conviction that the writing conference powerfully benefited both student and instructor was evident in his writings. But while other instructors might agree with him, his pace, the sheer volume of conferences he conducted, may feel unobtainable.

> There must be something wrong with a fifty-four-year-old man who is looking forward to his thirty-fifth conference of the day…I average seventy-five conferences a week, thirty weeks a year…I've probably held far more than 30,000 writing conferences and I'm still fascinated by this strange, exposed kind of teaching, one on one. (1979, pp. 13–14)

The idea of conducting 35 conferences a day, 75 conferences a week, in addition to today's chronically overloaded calendar – *and be grateful for it* - may make even the most dedicated composition instructor seek alternative, albeit less effective, methods of instruction. Sometimes if the bar is too high, it's easier to just avoid it all together.

Carnicelli, one of Murray's colleagues at the University of New Hampshire, conducted a survey of 92 sections of freshman English taught during in the 1977-1978 academic year. During that time, 1,800 students attended a weekly or bi-weekly conference and "not one of them found classes as useful as conferences" (1980, p. 101). Unfortunately, little detail was provided concerning the methods of the study, the data collection instrument, or even the statistical relevance, so its validity could not be reliably determined.

Additional studies published during this timeframe were primarily exploratory or descriptive in nature and contributed to building conferencing as a concept more than a copra of replicable and relevant research. Notable work stated that conferences:

- produced greater gains in writing than classroom instruction (Fisher & Murray, 1973; Simmons, 1984),
- stimulated independent learning (Garrison, 1974),
- built relationships between students and instructors (Harris, 1986; M. Smith & Bretcko, 1974),
- contributed to increased retention rates (Sutton, 1975),
- improved attitude toward remedial composition work (Tomlinson, 1975),
- reduced time spent grading papers (Knapp, 1976),
- helped students earn higher course grades (Kates, 1977),
- improved students' ability to discover and develop ideas (Jacobs & Karliner, 1977),
- demystified the grading process (Fassler, 1978),
- gave instructors the opportunity to "see minds at work" (Rose, 1982), and

- provided recommendations on how to conduct the writing conference (Harris, 1986; Simmons, 1984; Taylor, 1985).

This representative but not exhaustive list helps explain the popularity of instructor-student conferencing. However, without sufficient evaluative research to sustain it – more RAD research– its actual usage and effectiveness remains primarily speculative in nature.

What We Know

During the last half of the 20th century, research in the field of composition studies was primarily exploratory or descriptive in nature. This began to shift in the early 2000s as issues of empirical relevance, rigor, and replication received greater attention in leading disciplinary journals. In 2005, the Conference on English Education Leadership and Policy Summit called for "rigorous qualitative research [that] involves systematic, explicitly detailed data-analysis strategies and balanced interpretations marked by careful consideration of alternative possibilities and of any contradictory information" (DiPardo et al., 2006, p. 302). At the same time, Haswell called on the NCTE/CCCC publications to publish more "hard" research, RAD research (2005). While instructor-student writing conferences could have benefited from such research efforts – both qualitative and quantitative in nature – by this time they had become part of an "ideal" classroom practice and the discipline had moved on to researching other issues, including the use of peer tutors at on-campus writing centers. This research provides interesting insight on how to help students improve their writing; however, the inherently different role of the instructor conducting a writing conference with his/her own student compared to a peer conducting a conference with someone seeking help with his/her writing, limits any generalization of the data.

Recent rigorous research specific to instructor-student conferencing has focused primarily on linguistics – how students and instructors dialogue, mediate differences, and learn during a conference (Strauss & Xiang, 2006), students' use of epistemic downgrades and or-prefaced self-repairs when questioning (Park, 2012, 2015), and power – negotiating power during conferences (Mayes, 2015) and navigating student resistance and resentment for their perceived lack of power (Consalvo & Maloch, 2015). However, even these reputable studies are perched upon a shaky foundation as RAD research regarding *how* to conduct writing conferences or a quantifiable measurement of their actual effectiveness is needed. Laurel Black, in *Between Talk and Teaching: Reconsidering the Writing Conference* captured her frustration over this lack of research when she stated:

> We have to examine what it is we want from conferencing and we have to explore the possibility that it often doesn't accomplish those things—it just doesn't work. So far, conferencing practice seems to have escaped the net of "accountability" that has caught up the rest of the academic world, and we continue with a practice that is cherished but unexamined (1998, p. 167).

Neal Lerner continued Black's concern by stating, "what we need is more critical understanding of how conferences position writers and teachers," and how to make them work in today's context of "a 5/5 load at a community college or as a 'freeway flyer' at three different institutions" (2005, p. 204). The purpose of my research is to begin to address this gap in the scholarship by defining a specific method for conducting instructor-student writing conferences, proposing a pedagogical practice in which frequent conferencing is at the core of the classroom, and rigorously measuring and analyzing its effect on student writing and self-efficacy by replicating and extending previously published and vetted research instruments and methods. I

disclose that, like Black, I do cherish the instructor-student writing conference, but I temper this with a fervent desire to examine its actual effectiveness in a replicable, aggregable and data-driven manner.

Conferencing's Impact on Student Self-Efficacy

The issue of retention (the percentage of students returning each fall) has become one of the most widely studied areas in higher education (Powell, 2009; Ruecker, Shepherd, Estrem, & Brunk-Chavez, 2017; Schreiner, Louis, & Nelson, 2012; Tinto, 2006). The direct impact retention has on the financial health of the university has identified it a priority for university administrators. According to the National Center for Education Research, the retention rate among first-time, full-time, degree-seeking students who enrolled at a 4-year institution in 2014 was 81 percent. Retention rates were higher at institutions that were more selective in their admissions, while institutions that were the least selective (such as the open admission institution at which this research was conducted) was significantly lower at 62 percent ("Undergraduate Retention and Graduation Rates," 2017). In fact, the 2016 retention rate at the research institution was 64 percent. To help put this retention statistic in perspective, each percentage point retention increases, equates to approximately $1 million for the university (Hackett, 2018).

While retention may appear to be primarily a concern for administrators, not faculty, Powell argues that retention should be a priority for faculty - especially those regularly teaching first-year students. He insists that because much of the retention efforts are focused on first year students, that composition faculty in particular need to pay attention to the retention scholarship and include practices in their classrooms that help students graduate (Powell, 2009). Because students' academic performance has been directly connected to their mindset and beliefs concerning their *ability* to be academically successful (Cheon-woo et al., 2017; A. L. Duckworth,

Peterson, Matthews, & Kelly, 2007; Zimmerman & Kitsantas, 2014), student self-efficacy – their personal belief that they are capable of organizing and executing the behavior necessary to successfully attain a designated goal (Bandura, 1986; Schmidt & Alexander, 2012; Schunk, 1991) – is crucial.

There is a significant amount of research that identifies and evaluates high impact practices that lead to increased student persistence and retention. One practice that is repeatedly showing up in the research is the importance of interaction between faculty and students (Kinzie, Gonyea, Shoup, & Kuh, 2008; Laird, Chen, & Kuh, 2008; Schreiner et al., 2012; Tinto, 2006). Students, particularly those from traditionally marginalized populations, who feel like outsiders and have low self-efficacy are at greater risk of leaving the university rather than persevering. They *believe* they don't belong and can't succeed (Ruecker et al., 2017). One of the defining traits of ISC Pedagogy (described in detail in Chapter 2), is the interaction between faculty and students. When faculty members frequently engage with each student, letting them know that they are known and belong, and perhaps most importantly, interacting with them during their time of struggle, helping them see a way through it, and motivating them to keep trying, it makes a profound impact on the student. In *Dynamics of the Writing Conference*, Paula Oye states:

> [T]he writing conference provides the informal atmosphere, personal attention, and opportunity to form working relationships based on trust, which these students need in order to develop a confidence reflected both in their writing and in their classroom participation. They need this confidence to cope with the uncertainty, the increased effort, and the need for self-regulation that characterize the higher-level thinking skills that they must utilize in college-level writing courses (1993, pp. 111–112).

When students feel safe to engage in the frequently uncomfortable act of learning and develop relationships with caring experts who are willing to help, their self-efficacy increases. Their feelings of fear or anxiety, which can impede meaningful learning, diminish. This is why it is so powerful when instructors focus on student successes and mindfully evoke feelings of hope and confidence rather than failure (Bean, 2011). The strength of instructor-student conferencing lies in the instructor's ability to willingly connect with and encourage their students. Conferences play an integral role in increasing a student's self-efficacy as they gain confidence in their ability to succeed in their new learning community (this will be explored further in Chapter 2).

Measuring the Impact of ISC Pedagogy

The purpose of my research is to build upon the threshold concept of instructor-student conferencing, combine more recent research in the fields of composition, education, linguistics, psychology, and sociology to establish a pedagogical approach: ISC Pedagogy (described in Chapter 2). Then I will conduct replicable, aggregable, and data-driven research to quantitatively and qualitatively measure the impact ISC Pedagogy has on the writing and writerly self-efficacy of First Year Composition I students at a Small Liberal Arts College (SLAC) in Central Florida. I ask:

1. Does ISC Pedagogy increase students' writerly self-efficacy within one semester?
2. Does ISC Pedagogy improve student performance on five writing traits within one semester?

A mixed methods approach will be utilized to answer these questions with controls to increase validity and reliability including the use of two independent raters to reduce instructor bias.

This study will take place at an open-enrollment SLAC in Central Florida. The university's Registrar will enroll first-year students into Composition I sections according to their established practices. The researcher will teach four sections that meet three times each week. Two sections will be held in the morning and two in the afternoon. All students will be taught using ISC Pedagogy and will have the option of having their work included in the study. As part of this pedagogical approach, students will have four weeks of classroom instruction replaced with four 15-minute instructor-student conferences. Both quantitative and qualitative data will be collected and analyzed. Specific details of this process are the focus of Chapter 3.

Organization of Dissertation

In this chapter, I identified instructor-student conferences as a threshold concept and argued for the need for replicable, aggregable, and data-driven research to better understand what we know about its effectiveness. I explained the role instructor-student conferences play in developing student self-efficacy and outlined the way in which I intend to conduct my study. In Chapter 2, I examine the theoretical foundation of instructor-student conferences, review the rhetorical praxis of conducting conferences in today's context, and provide my personal philosophy for conferencing as well as share my students' perspectives on how conferencing has affected their writing. From this point, I then define ISC Pedagogy and describe each of the five pedagogical principles. In Chapter 3, I describe the methodology and rationale used to design the study. I provide detail on the data collection instruments, participants, and context of the study. Chapter 4 reviews the results of the research on student self-efficacy and student writing, and Chapter 5 concludes by offering the meaning and implications of the study and making recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

> Extraordinarily successful teachers of writing have one thing in common: they spend little time in isolation, reading and marking papers, and a great deal of time responding and discussing student writings with the writers themselves (Kirby & Liner, 1981, p. 201).

Instructor-Student Conferences as Pedagogy

For the past four years, I've made instructor-student writing conferences the core of my pedagogical approach to teaching FYC courses. During this time I rejected the stereotype that writing instructors must remain chained to their desk and write countless comments on endless papers, always wondering if students actually even read them. Instead, I operated under the theory that writing is a social and rhetorical activity (Roozen, 2015) and as such, working one-on-one with student writers was key. As I interacted with this theory, I conducted more than 1,200 conferences, studied 70 years worth of conference-based articles from academic publications, interacted with leading researchers in our field during conventions, reviewed research from colleagues in related fields including education, linguistics, psychology, and sociology, experimented with new techniques, made mistakes, listened to my students, solicited their feedback on conferencing and classroom instruction, and throughout it all, stayed curious. I found that the more I kept instructor-student conferences at the core of my classroom, the deeper the sense of community students experienced. The more time I spent talking with my students rather then lecturing, the greater their self-efficacy increased – and their writing appeared to improve, too. I compiled all this into a pedagogical approach I termed ISC Pedagogy.

Defining a compositional pedagogy can be problematic at its very essence, as many different definitions of pedagogy exist. One common and important element in its definition is its epistemological assumptions – how it sees writing and language in relation to the world. With

this in mind, I'm using Tate, Taggar, Schick and Hessler's definition from their authoritative text, *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies*, in which they state:

> Composition pedagogy is a body of knowledge consisting of theories and research on teaching, learning, literacy, writing, and rhetoric, and the related practices that emerge. It is the deliberate integration of theory, research, personal philosophy, and rhetorical praxis into composition instruction at all levels from the daily lesson plan to the writing program and the communities it serves. (2014, p. 3)

In this chapter, using this definition as a guide, I build upon the conferencing research from Chapter 1 and examine the socio-linguistic foundation of ISC Pedagogy. I then describe ISC Pedagogy and its five key components, explaining how they interact to improve student writing and self-efficacy. From this point, I review the rhetorical praxis of implementing ISC Pedagogy in today's context and conclude by sharing student perspectives on how ISC Pedagogy has affected their writing.

ISC Pedagogy: Theoretical Foundation

Learning has traditionally employed a cognitive approach as its epistemological foundation. Cognitive methodology is based on the idea that writing is a solitary act in which reflection and contemplation work together to generate thought or knowledge and language is used primarily "to express ideas generated in the mind and to communicate them to other individual minds in the 'social context'" (Bruffee, 1986, pp. 776–777, 784). In the classroom, this is represented through Paulo Freire's renowned "banking concept of education" in which instructors, "those who consider themselves knowledgeable," deposit knowledge directly into the empty receptacle of the student, "those whom they consider to know nothing" (1996, p. 53). In the writing conference, this is evidenced when the instructor takes over the conference and

rewrites or "corrects" the student's text while the student watches mute and ignorant, an active portrayal of the ideology of oppression. Freire strongly argues against this saying, "Education must begin with the solution of the teacher-student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers *and* students" (p. 53). This reconciliation can occur in the writing conference when instructor and student sit down together and the student retains power over his/her own writing while the instructor listens to the student to learn what he/she is trying to communicate, and provides suggestions and guidance but lets the student ultimately remain in control of his/her text.

ISC Pedagogy is based on a more relational nature of learning – developing relationships and learning together in a social constructionist approach where learning is fundamentally a social construct. The social constructionist views language as more than just a mechanism to transport one person's thought to another. The social constructionist's viewpoint is one in which language is at the center of understanding and is necessary to actually construct knowledge (Bruffee, 1986). Lev Vygotsky elaborated on this socio-linguistic learning process when he proposed that children use language to learn to think analytically. To gain greater understanding, children will "talk through" their tasks with another person and then after a period of meaningful reflection, arrive at a deeper understanding (Vygotsky & Cole, 1981). Language, social interaction, and reflection are all integral components in this process and are benefited through conferencing with an expert. Laurel Black describes it this way:

> My knowledge of "X" had not been discovered deep within, but had been constructed by reconsidering personal beliefs in a new concept provided by my meaningful contact with a teacher. That "thing" that was my knowledge was constantly being socially constructed. (1998, p. 18)

Instructor-student conferences play an essential role in learning by servicing as a place for this conversation to occur.

The connection here to conferencing becomes even more evident when we look at the language used between instructor and student. Most instructors would not claim that the language of conferencing is "natural" for either the instructor or the student; they both bring their own linguistic background to the conference where the paper is being discussed. For the student, the language that originated from the community to which he/she belongs (one's primary Discourse) is then used to join another community (secondary Discourse) or further establish one within their current community (Bruffee, 1986; Gee, 2012). In Gee's sociolinguistic theory, movement to a secondary Discourse, such as what occurs when students attend college, is accomplished through acquisition, not learning. One can't enter a new Discourse by simply studying it. Rather, there is an enculturation or apprenticeship process by which social practices are learned through "scaffolded and supported interaction" with a member or members of the desired secondary Discourse community (2012, pp. 167–168).

The act of writing then, is less about using a specific set of skills and more about developing a sense of identity to position oneself as worthy of the desired Discourse membership. Writing can be a powerful means of forging a bridge, making a connection with someone in the desired Discourse, and enabling us to more closely align our identity with the interests and values important to that community as we begin to make the "rhetorical and generic moves privileged by those communities" (Roozen, 2015, p. 51). This becomes a crucial step for the first-year college student. If the instructor fails to treat conferences as a relational activity and instead treats them as a necessary step to "correct" student "errors," then he/she creates a barrier

into this community – one in which the traditionally marginalized student may not have the necessary knowledge and experience to successfully navigate.

In sum, writing is not simply stringing words together in isolation, but it is a method through which one's membership into a Discourse is judged. During the writing conference, the instructor, serving as a mentor, can help the student learn the rhetorical moves necessary to become a member of the secondary Discourse of the academy. Each draft becomes an "observable manifestation of cognitive behavior" and belonging as students struggle to find their place. Conferences become a place where "[P]roblems and problem sources are expressed through language; they are discussed and reassessed, and, through dialogue, are often resolved" (Strauss & Xiang, 2006, p. 359). Oftentimes, there is so much more riding on an essay than a grade; a student's sense of belonging is inextricably linked as well.

ISC Pedagogy: Five Key Principles

ISC Pedagogy is one in which individual student-instructor writing conferences are the focal point around which all other course components revolve. As there is no standard industry definition for an instructor-student writing conference, I'll provide my own. For my purposes, an instructor-student writing conferences is one in which the instructor and student come together as collaborators to read and discuss a specific piece of writing written by the student. To be successful, the student needs to remain in control of their writing while the instructor serves as a collaborator. ISC Pedagogy has at its core, this definition and approach to conferencing. Whether the content of the course adapts a more critical, feminist, process, Writing About Writing, or other approach, it does so around and within the five ISC pedagogical principles of safety, self-efficacy, conference as response, reflection, and revision. This process is detailed in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2. Key principles of ISC Pedagogy with conferencing at its center.

ISC Pedagogy infuses the threshold concept of instructor-student conferences with more recent and relevant research from composition, linguistics, education, psychology, and sociology to create a comprehensive approach to help students experience measurable increases in writerly self-efficacy and writing improvement in one semester. As instructor-student conferences profoundly impact each of its five principles, it is at the center of this approach. Each principle is briefly summarized below, providing an overview of ISC Pedagogy and then unpacked individually in the sections that follow.

Instructor-student conferences play an important role in the establishment and maintenance of feelings of safety and community in the classroom. Learning can be an uncomfortable process as students are exposed to new ideas or ways of thinking about issues. Therefore, it is imperative that the classroom is a safe place where students can freely express their ideas and feelings without fear of excessive ridicule or retribution (Boostrom, 1998; Fox & Fleischer, 2004; Turner & Braine, 2015). Having opportunities to speak with the instructor one-

on-one outside of class gives students the opportunity to ask questions that they might not ask in the classroom.

Instructor-student conferences are absolutely vital to increasing student's writerly self-efficacy. Many students, especially at open enrollment institutions, have been told or made to feel they "can't write" and over time, students begin to believe it. Students can move towards overcoming this when provided with opportunities to accumulate evidence that they do possess the ability to succeed (Williams & Takaku, 2011). This is powerfully reinforced when they witness their instructor read their work and respond to it in a meaningful and positive manner. Receiving feedback by discussing their writing together is so empowering. Rather than reading marginalia comments that students find so confusing and discouraging that they frequently don't even read them (Johnson-Shull & Rysdam, 2012; Sommers, 1982; Straub, 1997), conferences provide the opportunity for students to actively vocalize their individual writing process (often for the first time), ask questions, and receive immediate feedback.

Once the conference is over it's important to allow time for students to reflect upon and describe their internal processes, evaluate their challenges and recognize their triumphs (Allan & Driscoll, 2014). Conferences can touch upon any number of issues important to that particular student. Students need time to reflect upon and write about their experience for significant learning to develop. This solidifies the learning experience and helps prepare them to make more meaningful revision.

Revision can arguably be seen as the most important outcome of an instructor-student conference – and one that is potentially the most problematic. If a conference has centered around editing – or "fixing" a paper – then anything less than a perfect score may be met with cries of, "But why didn't you tell me I needed a comma there when we met? You didn't say

anything, so I thought it was OK." The way in which conferences are conducted can help students understand that revision is an ongoing process that involves critically assessing writing from multiple perspectives and not just editing for "correctness." As these five components revolve around and through instructor-student conferences, students have the opportunity to quickly, and dramatically, improve their writing.

ISC Pedagogy Principle #1: Community of Safety

The first principle in ISC Pedagogy focuses on creating a place where students feel safe to engage in the learning process. A safe classroom space is one in which students are able to openly express their individuality, even if it differs dramatically from the norms set by the instructor, the university, or other students (Holley & Steiner, 2005). A review of the literature from multiple disciplines agree that the creation of safety or a safe space in the classroom where students can freely express their ideas and feelings, particularly around challenging areas such as diversity, cultural competence, and oppression, is required for authentic learning to take place (Hyde & Ruth, 2002; Shaffer, 2013; Turner & Braine, 2015). To become culturally competent and think critically, students need to acquire information and confront their biases. This can only happen, however, if students feel safe enough to express their true opinions and listen to others.

When instructors encourage people to admit and openly share unpopular views – to give them a chance to discuss them and increase their self-awareness – the act of hearing those views could be painful to other students or even the instructor. It is the role and responsibility of the instructor to refrain from prohibiting conflict, but rather, seek to manage it. In essence, to create an environment where everyone is willing to try to be comfortable with the uncomfortable. This is important because contrary to its romantic stereotype, writing is neither natural or easy (Dryer, 2015), strategies that may work in one context may be ineffective in another, and one never

"completes" the process of learning how to write (Downs, 2015). All of these factors and more converge to make writing a frustrating experience for many students. The benefits of creating a safe space for students to confront and work through these issues can have a significantly positive impact on their learning experience. In fact, Holley and Steiner found that when students were in what they perceived to be a safe classroom, 97% stated it changed *what* they learned; 84% reported it changed *how much* they learned, and 85% replied that they felt *more challenged* in terms of personal growth (2005, p. 55). This makes sense. If students feel "unsafe" in a classroom, they may feel isolated, alienated, unable or unwilling to participate in class. They may feel undervalued – or worse, invisible – that they can talk but no one is listening, no one cares, and nothing will change for their efforts. In this type of an environment students may be more focused on surviving than thriving and less willing to engage in the difficult process of writing. However, if students feel supported they may be more willing to try – provided they believe they can succeed – which bring us to the second principle.

ISC Pedagogy Principle #2: Self-Efficacy

Three decades of research have clearly established self-efficacy as a valid and highly effective predicator of student motivation and learning (Bandura, 1977; Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000; Zimmerman, 2000; Høigaard, Kovač, Øverby, & Haugen, 2015). Self-efficacy is the personal belief that one is capable of organizing and executing the behavior necessary to successfully attain a designated goal (Bandura, 1986; Schmidt & Alexander, 2012). It is vital to success in college because it determines how much effort students will expend and how long they will persist in the face of obstacles and adverse experiences (Bandura, 1977). Students with higher levels of self-efficacy will participate more, work harder, persist longer, and have fewer adverse emotional reactions when they encounter difficulties (Zimmerman, 2000). Because it is

not a fixed trait, self-efficacy can be enhanced through a variety of methods including reflection on prior achievements (principle #4), comparisons of personal achievement along with those of others, and verbal persuasions or encouragement received from other people, particularly those whose judgments are valued and respected (principle #3) (Pajares & Johnson, 1994).

In the FYC classroom, helping students increase their level of self-efficacy is essential because students with high self-efficacy work hard, complete challenging tasks, and tend to have better writing skills than students with lower levels of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1993; Pajares, 1996; Pajares & Johnson, 1994). This can be especially problematic for both traditionally marginalized populations and struggling writers because they see confusion and frustration not as challenges they need to overcome but as a "deficit in their capacity to learn" (C. H. Smith, 2010, p. 671). In addition, students struggling with self-efficacy may be less willing or less able to perform the critical thinking necessary to explore the complex topics associated with college-level learning. All this can add up to make task completion seem more intimidating, so much so that students may not even attempt it. This may help explain why students who struggle with writing, particularly those with low self-efficacy, don't turn in their work. If students believe they can't successfully complete the assignment, they may just avoid it altogether and not attempt it (Blake, MacArthur, Mrkich, Philippakos, & Sancak-Marusa, 2016).

ISC Pedagogy creates an environment rich with opportunities in which students can increase their self-efficacy as they begin to gather evidence that they can, in fact, write. The most powerful way this occurs is through the instructor-student conference as students have the opportunity to discuss or defend their work with their instructor face-to-face. During the conference they work together to make meaning from the writing and identify and directly challenge inaccurate self-judgments such as "I can't write" (Schmidt & Alexander, 2012). The

instructor can provide encouragement to help the student gain the confidence needed to manage the uncertainty, increased effort, and self-regulation skills necessary to successfully navigate the perceived challenge (Flynn & King, 1993). *How* the feedback is given is vital in this process, which brings us to principle #3, conference as response.

ISC Pedagogy Principle #3: Conference as Response

Responding to student papers is the subject of a tremendous amount of discussion. Cries of frustration surrounding countless sacrificial hours spent providing meticulous feedback that students never read can be heard echoing in hallways across campus, at national conventions, and within the pages of our academic journals and industry news outlets. Instructors are exquisitely aware of how important it is to provide the "right" amount of feedback with the "right" tone and the "right" mix of criticism and encouragement, even though what is "right" varies by student. This is further complicated by the uncertainty of what students actually *do* with the feedback they receive – do they understand and incorporate it? Do they even *read* it? When papers are graded in isolation, it starts a chain of disconnection that can go on indefinitely – until a conversation occurs to catapult both parties from activities of exclusion to inclusion. It is the desire for inclusion, for connection, that draws many instructors to writing conferences (Lerner, 2005).

The goal of the instructor-student writing conference is to "provide inexperienced writers with the opportunity to discuss difficulties and to learn more effective strategies" (Taylor, 1985, p. 24), to "encourage the student to consider what has been accomplished and to consider what will be attempted next" (Murray, 1985, p. 161), which will help them ultimately become "self-sufficient, able to function on their own" (Harris, 1986, p. 28). These goals are more effectively accomplished when built upon a foundation of safety and self-efficacy promoting activities.

Because instructions to "See Me" in relation to a paper is rarely, if ever, positive, students frequently feel some initial trepidation at the thought of meeting one-on-one with an instructor. Student anxiety can be reduced by understanding *how* and *why* we conference. Conducting conferences outside of the instructor's office in a more neutral location such as an on-campus coffee shop may help reduce the power differential between student and instructor (Boynton, 2003). If FERPA privacy issues are a concern, conferences can be conducted in traditional conference room or in an office designed to encourage conversation such as the one in Figure 3 below. The main objective is to not have a desk dividing the instructor and student, but rather have them sitting next to each other – literally on the same side.

Figure 3. Conversation-based office design.

Additional strategies include letting the student lead the conference by identifying areas in which they would like help (Walker & Elias, 1987) and having the student read their work aloud to the instructor (Moore & O'Neill, 2002) – with pen in hand – so both instructor and student mark the paper. These steps also help the instructor transition to a role of collaborator, which is a more effective way to encourage genuine, two-way conversation and provide feedback.

When commenting on student writing, Muriel Harris cautions that it's important for the instructor to remember his/her role. "It is not his responsibility to correct a paper line by line, to

rewrite it until it is his own writing. It is the student's responsibility to improve the paper and the teacher's responsibility to recommend a few suggestions which may help the student improve" (1986, p. 30). Initially this can be difficult for the instructor, especially if they are working with underprepared students who may be able to identify errors in isolation (such as on a multiple-choice test), but not in their own writing (Bartholomae, 1980). Instructors may feel like they are withholding needed assistance from their students if they don't annotate every error, but that might originate from a faulty understanding of the purpose of the conference. The writing conference is not a "fix all" session where every "error" is swiftly identified and eliminated. Rather, it's an opportunity to dig deeper into the writing, talk with the student about not only what they are trying to say, but how they are trying to say it. It's the recursive nature of conversation that provides the most value – for both the student and the instructor. Focusing on the minutia of grammar correction essay after essay is tedious work indeed. It is in this mindset that instructors may find they don't treat the student's draft with the same sensitivity as they would when commenting on a colleague's writing (Bean, 2011, p. 317). We are more considerate as we sit next to another writer and talk about their writing, listening to their goal of the piece and working together to make it stronger. Yes, there is a need to identify error, but it's not the primary focus. Sommers offers this perspective: "the purpose of responding is to promote students' authority and authorship by giving them feedback about their strengths and limitations as writers" (2013, p. 4). By creating a "scale of concerns" for assignments or students, it will help prioritize feedback so it meets the instructional goals as well as the needs of both the student and the instructor (2013, pp. 17–18).

ISC Pedagogy Principle #4: Reflection

After students discuss their writing through conferencing with their instructor and witness its effect on the reader, students need to spend time carefully reflecting upon the entire writing process. Where did they struggle? Where did they excel? Reflection can be a "powerful process that allows students to review and evaluate their writing and research processes, demonstrate their metacognitive awareness, and build connections to prior, current, and future learning contexts" (Allan & Driscoll, 2014, p. 39). In other words, reflection is a process in which students assess themselves as writers. Whereas comparing drafts may show *what* a student has changed within their text, reflection can explain *why* something was changed (p. 44). This is accomplished through assignments that encourage students to critically review the processes they used, determine how successful they were in producing the desired result, and then specifically state what they learned and how they can apply this knowledge to future assignments. This last step is critical as it helps students exercise their higher-level thinking skills by helping them assign meaning to their writing experience (Denton, 2011) and better understand learning goals, strategies to reach them, and how to measure if they have been accomplished (Yancey, 1998).

Reflection is a logical concept, but it isn't always natural. As such, it's an important pedagogical principle that needs to be mindfully included in classroom instruction to help students elevate it from yet more "busywork" to a task requiring careful contemplation. When students are asked to complete the same reflection prompt after each essay it can be tempting for them to approach it with a "copy and paste" attitude. This may be reduced when combined with active classroom interaction (Dewey, 1997) and meaningful conversations between the student and the instructor (Pavlovich, 2007), which again is where the conference shows its power.

ISC Pedagogy Principle #5: Revision

There is a common misconception that "real" writers just sit at their computer each morning, roll up their sleeves, and freely, unceasingly, unerringly, type their masterpiece (Lamott, 1995). This, like most stereotypes, is simply not true. "Real" writers (whatever that even means) understand that revision is central to good writing and "[t]o create the best possible writing, writers work iteratively, composing in a number of versions, with time between each for reflection, reader feedback, and/or collaborator development" (Downs, 2015, p. 66). This process goes directly against the "one and done" concept that so many first-year students associate with writing. There is a stigma they associate with revision, as if it were a punishment for poor writing. Students need to see revision for what it is – a sequence of changes made to an existing text at any point during the writing process (Butler & Britt, 2011; Flower, Hayes, Carey, Schriver, & Stratman, 1986; Sommers, 1980). Revision involves critically evaluating a text through a recursive process of reading, analyzing, detecting problems, and applying strategies in an effort to address and resolve problems (Flower et al., 1986).

Revision can be taught in the classroom in combination with the peer review process as well as modeled in the writing conference. Teaching students how to revise their work can make a significant impact on both the amount and type of revision students perform on their drafts (Butler & Britt, 2011; Mack, 2013). During the peer review process, when students are instructed on how to provide meaningful feedback (Cho & MacArthur, 2010) and are guided by clear rubrics (Cho & MacArthur, 2011), the peer review process can greatly enhance student revision efforts (Zhang, Schunn, & Baikadi, 2017).

During the writing conference, instructors can model revision by helping the student to manage the text as a whole unit by focusing on things such as accuracy, coherence, adding detail

or support, avoiding repetition, and achieving general improvement (Myhill & Jones, 2007). This opportunity to model the kind of global revisions more experienced writers make as they substantially revise larger sections of text can be very different from the simple, sentence-level changes students typically make (Sommers, 1980). When instructors discuss big-picture revision with their students, it does more than just improve student revision and ultimately student writing, it feeds the "desire for intimacy" (Lerner, 2005) by forging a connection between two writers writing. Looking up from the paper and discussing the intention of the writer and how they are supporting their argument is engaging, challenging work. It can be tiring, yes, but it's also invigorating and the student walks away with ideas on how they can improve their piece. When instructors slip into a "catch all the mistakes" mode it becomes exhausting, mind-numbing work for the instructor and the student walks away with the idea that their paper is now "fixed" and if it receives anything less than a perfect score it's the "teacher's fault" for "missing" the mistake. It's clearly better for both instructor and student to focus on deep, meaningful revision during the writing conference.

ISC Pedagogy: Rhetorical Praxis for Today

The rhetorical praxis of ISC Pedagogy involves centering the entire course around frequent instructor-student conferences. While these conferences are still considered to be an extremely effective method of writing instruction (see Chapter 1), how to incorporate them in today's context remains a source of contention. The reasons instructors provide for not conferencing have varied only slightly over the past 40 years and primarily revolve around having too many students and not enough time (Barker, 1988; Garrison, 1974; Lerner, 2005). Yet, it was during times of rapid increases in enrollment, when academic preparation varied widely among students such as seen during the 1890s, 1930s, 1950s, and 1970s, that instructor-

student conferences experienced a resurgence (Lerner, 2005). During these periods, instructors would accommodate the influx of students by occasionally replacing classroom instruction with conferences, or adding a conferencing marathon around their teaching schedule in which they returned exhausted and feeling behind in their other responsibilities. These methods generally came at great personal cost to the instructor, with little understanding of their effectiveness, and yet they *still* continued. Why? Writing instructors believe conferencing with their students has value. The instructor-student writing conference, Black so elegantly explains, "allows teachers and students to enter each other's worlds, it affords teachers the opportunity to provide individualized help to students, and it extends collaboration beyond the classroom, beyond the peer-writing group" (Black, 1998, p. 10). But as beneficial as we *think* this threshold concept has been over the past 100 years, it is time for the field to actually *know* if instructor-student writing conferences actually work in today's modern context.

To see how ISC Pedagogy works, we'll examine it in today's context of too little time and too many students. At the open-enrollment institution where I teach, we frequently have mandatory overload which means I regularly teach a 5/5 load of FYC courses with 24 students typically enrolled in each section. I conference with my students four times each semester, holding one 15-minute conference for each of the four essays they write totaling approximately 480 conferences each semester. In order to accommodate this volume along with scheduling restrictions of my own and my students (many have athletic or employment obligations), I replace one week of classroom instruction each time I conduct individual conferences. This translates into ¼ of traditional classroom instruction being intentionally replaced with instructor-student conferences.

While historically conferences may have been considered more valuable than classroom instruction (Carnicelli, 1980; Emig, 1960; Fisher & Murray, 1973), other instructors and administrators from today may question this practice. There seems to be an illusion that the classroom is a sacred space, the primary space, where learning occurs. Yet it's well documented that learning is not tied to the classroom; it is not restricted to an environment of orderly rows and desks (Deed et al., 2014; Ganss & Baker, 2014; Helyer & Corkill, 2015). Neither is it restricted to the marginalia comments written on stacks upon stacks of papers (Bauer, 2011; Boynton, 2003; Straub, 1997). Instructors know this; yet, when we speak of replacing classroom instruction with individual student conferences, it can provoke some internal anxiety or condemnation from others. Some institutions have seemingly arbitrary restrictions on the minimum number of classroom meetings that must be conducted within the four walls of the classroom.

However, there is tremendous freedom that comes when instructors unchain themselves from their paper-strewn desks, when they regularly, intentionally, re-energize learning by reducing some classroom instruction and adding individual conferences. "…[F]or anything close to acquisition to occur, classrooms must constitute active apprenticeships in 'academic' social practices, and, in most cases, must connect with these social practices as they are also carried on outside the 'composition' or 'language' class, elsewhere in the university and the world" (Gee, 2012, p. 177). In order to experience this freedom, we must have research to support it. We need to conduct more replicable, aggregable, and data-supported research, similar to this study, which can help us better determine the value of instructor-student conferences in today's context.

ISC Pedagogy: Student Perspectives

Recent research on student perspectives of instructor-student conferences is limited with many of the studies focusing on how to conduct the conference itself (Boynton, 2003; Edgington, 2004; Moore & O'Neill, 2002), navigate the power differential between instructor and student (Mayes, 2015; Park, 2015; Strauss & Xiang, 2006), and analyze student talk in relation to feelings of satisfaction after a conference (Walker & Elias, 1987). While my own students traditionally include favorable comments on instructor-student conferences in the qualitative section of my student evaluations, I wanted to obtain more quantifiable data. At the end of the Fall 2016 semester, I added two questions to my traditional end-of-the-semester course evaluation. Both questions pertained to the students' perception regarding the value instructor-student conferences had on student writing. This survey was then distributed to three sections of College Reading & Writing (a basic writing course) and one section of Composition I. Participation was voluntary and the survey was conducted online, in class. A total of 55 College Reading & Writing students completed the survey along with 17 Composition I students. The results are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Results From Fall 2016 Student Survey on Conferencing

Course	n	Significant Positive	Somewhat Positive	No Effect	Somewhat Negative	Significant Negative
Q 1. How did instructor-student conferences affect your confidence in your writing?						
College Reading & Writing	55	69% (38)	27% (15)	4% (2)	0	0
Composition I	17	94% (16)	6% (1)	0	0	0
Q 2. How did instructor-student conferences affect your writing ability?						
College Reading & Writing	55	74% (39)	25% (13)	2% (1)	0	0
Composition I	17	94% (16)	6% (1)	0	0	0

Table 1 shows that 100% of participating Composition I students identified instructor-student conferences as having a significant or somewhat significant impact on both their confidence and their perceived writing ability. Similarly, 96 percent of College Reading & Writing students identified instructor-student conferences as having a significant or somewhat significant impact on their confidence in their writing and 98 percent responded that it had a significant or somewhat significant impact on their writing ability. While this is a simple phenomenology-based study and caution must be taken when interpreting the results, it does suggest that there may be something relevant occurring and further research could help identify what it is and its impact on writing.

Summary

When the instructor and the student meet to discuss the student's writing, they both bring their own linguistic background to the table, and the student's writing is used to negotiate meaning as together, instructor and student observe and learn more about the other's Discourse community. Each time the student and instructor meet, their relationship evolves (sometimes positively, sometimes negatively). It is during these frequent meetings, when students hear encouraging comments on their writing, work through a particularly challenging passage, and witness the effect their writing had on another, that a conversation opens and they begin to create their place in this new academic community. Boynton elaborates on this point when she states, "[p]rior to coming to college, students have had little opportunity to be held accountable, in a one-on-one environment, for the decisions they make when they write…Thus conferences are often initially uncomfortable to those students used to putting something together, handing it in, and hoping for the best" (2003, pp. 391–392). Becoming accountable for their own learning is key to student long-term success.

In this chapter, I defined ISC Pedagogy and its foundation in sociolinguistic theory. I then described each of the five core principles: community of safety, self-efficacy, conference as response, reflection, and revision. I situated instructor-student conferences into today's context and concluded by sharing my students' perspectives on how instructor-student conferences have affected their writing. In Chapter 3, I will detail the methods used to study the impact ISC Pedagogy has on student writing and writerly self-efficacy.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

> A whole different approach to writing assessment…[is needed, one] designed with full attention from the start to open consultation, thoughtful consideration of the constructs embodied in the local context, awareness of the substantial literature on writing program assessment, accumulation of a wide range of evidence leading to student learning, full documentation of the validity of that evidence, attention to the consequences following from the program, and a richly documented report that leads to improvement as well as assessment of the writing program (White, Elliot, & Peckham, 2015, p. 161).

Overview of Methodology

In the previous two chapters, I defined instructor-student conferences and identified the theoretical, epistemological, and rhetorical foundation of ISC Pedagogy. This chapter documents the research design and data collection methods used to accumulate both quantitative and qualitative data that will then be reported on in Chapter 4 and analyzed in Chapter 5. I begin this chapter by examining the design and rationale foundational to this research project. I then provide detail pertaining to the context of the study and its participants, describe the data collection procedures and explain the methods used to analyze the data and determine reliability and validity. I then close after identifying and addressing ethical considerations and issues of trustworthiness.

Research Design and Hypothesis

The purpose of this research is to build upon the conceptual foundation of instructor-student conferencing and infuse it with current, relevant research to clearly define a pedagogical approach to conferencing that is effective in today's context. My review of the literature (detailed in Chapter 2) found that an overwhelmingly positive view of instructor-student conferences exists. Both instructors and students find value in the practice, yet there is little replicable, aggregable, data-driven research on its actual effectiveness. How can we, as a field of

scholars, participate in and revere a practice that we don't *quantifiably know* is effective? The aim of my study is to define ISC Pedagogy and use a mixed methods approach to study its impact on first-year, first-semester composition students at an open-enrollment SLAC located in Central Florida. Two questions were used to guide the research:

1. Does ISC Pedagogy increase students' writerly self-efficacy within one semester?
2. Does ISC Pedagogy improve student performance on five writing traits within one semester?

To answer these questions I collected and analyzed both quantitative and qualitative data. Table 2 provides an overview of the information collected to answer each question.

Table 2

Overview of the Information Collected

Research Question	Information Needed	Data Collected
Does ISC Pedagogy increase students' writerly self-efficacy within one semester?	• Pre-treatment measure of student writerly self-efficacy • Post-treatment measure of student writerly self-efficacy • Student response regarding its effect	• 104 responses to PSWSES survey distributed during week 2 • 74 responses to PSWSES survey distributed during week 15 • 74 responses to the 2 questions added to Post PSWSES survey
Does ISC Pedagogy improve student performance on five writing traits within one semester?	• Pre-treatment writing sample • Post-treatment writing sample • Student response regarding how instructor-student conferences affect writing	• 74 copies of the first essay • 74 copies of the last essay • 81 responses to writing prompt on how conferences impact writing

The data collected as described in Table 2, will enable me to measure the effectiveness of ISC Pedagogy. As a new pedagogical approach, I chose to replicate or extend established, vetted studies to increase my validity and reliability measures. While my results may not be widely generalizable from this study, they serve as the first step in defining and measuring the effectiveness of ISC Pedagogy at one institution. Assessment efforts need to start locally and

become an “expansive and inclusive effort, one based in the local campus environment yet designed for comparative reporting” (White et al., 2015, p. 7). By conducting and running a well-designed, small-scale study that focuses on providing replicable, aggregable, and data-driven results, there may be cause – and a clearly defined method – to replicate this study at other institutions. Small studies increase their significance when a cluster of them begin using consistent definitions and produce similar results (Anderson, Gonyea, Anson, & Paine, 2015). Such a cluster will be needed to gather evidence pertaining to the effectiveness of ISC Pedagogy. This study serves as the first step in this process.

I chose a mixed methods approach to leverage the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative research to more fully understand the impact ISC Pedagogy has on student writing and writerly self-efficacy. This study had a strong quantitative element because there is a substantial lack of quantitative research relating to instructor-student conferences. Quantitative methods can provide the most convincing data-based evidence of educational impact (Lerner, 1997) and can compliment case studies, ethnographies, and phenomenological narratives that already exist in the field (Schmidt & Alexander, 2012). I chose to supplement my quantitative approach with a qualitative component by asking students *how* ISC Pedagogy affects them, what does it *do* for them? Asking how or why something works is inherently contextual and is most effective when tied to multiple sources of data (Yin, 2009). By adding qualitative measures to experiments as a “manipulation check” and to “tap into participants' perspectives and meanings” we can improve generalizability and increase the confidence level of our conclusions (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, pp. 18–19). For these reasons, the mixed methods approach was the most logical way to organize my study and obtain the data necessary to answer my research questions.

Study #1: Writerly Self-Efficacy

The first study seeks to quantifiably measure the impact of ISC Pedagogy on self-efficacy. The hypothesis for this study can be stated as follows:

- Hypothesis 1: Students will report higher levels of writerly self-efficacy after 15 weeks of a Composition I course based on ISC Pedagogy.
- Null Hypothesis: Students will report no difference in levels of writerly self-efficacy after 15 weeks of a Composition I course based on ISC Pedagogy.

To measure this, I am replicating Schmidt and Alexander's (2012) Post-Secondary Writerly Self-Efficacy Scale (PSWSES) which assesses *writerly* factors influencing self-efficacy, as opposed to writing factors. The suffix –ly serves as an adjective meaning "-like" and focuses on the cognitive factors of writing, rather than on the behavioral manifestations. PSWSES is based on the work of Bandura which found that developing self-efficacy is influenced by four main sources: mastery experiences, vicarious learning, reduction in stress relations and negative emotions, and social persuasion (1997). This measurement asks students to assess themselves on 20 statements that focus on writerly traits including ability to read and respond like a writer, rhetorical awareness/writing to communicate/research integration, awareness of personal writing strengths and challenges, managing the personal writing process, and the ability to be affected by modeling (pg. 2).

Based on the "simple idea that one of the best and most efficient ways to gather data is to ask questions directly of people or organizations" (Remler, 2015, p. 212), the validity of this scale was shown when it was distributed in a survey format to 505 university students who participated in at least three writing center conferences during a 10-week period. An additional 39 students who were not clients of the writing center for 10 weeks served as the control group

and also completed the survey. The results from the study showed that the PSWSES tool was both reliable, with a Cronbach's Alpha score of .931 and the Guttman Split-Half coefficient of .927, and valid at a $p<.001$ level. The results of this study found statistically significant increases in writerly self-efficacy among students participating in writing conferences compared to the control group which did not. Based on these results pertaining to its effectiveness in measuring writerly self-efficacy beliefs within a writing conference context, the PSWSES is my choice to measure writerly self-efficacy beliefs in this study.

Study #2: Impact on Writing

The second study measured the impact ISC Pedagogy has on writing. The hypothesis for this study can be stated as follows:

- Hypothesis: There will be a difference in five writing traits after students complete 15 weeks of a Composition I course based on ISC Pedagogy.
- Null Hypothesis: There will be no difference in five writing traits after students complete 15 weeks of a Composition I course based on ISC Pedagogy.

To determine this I will measure five writing traits identified as desired learning outcomes for Composition I students: (1) context/purpose, (2) content/argumentation, (3) composing, (4) sources/evidence, and (5) syntax. As these outcomes are based on the WPA Outcomes statement, I will conduct an extension study of Kelly-Riley and Eliot's validation research for using the WPA Outcomes Statement to support instruction and define assessment at the local level (2014).

The WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition was created to identify writing knowledge, practices, and attitudes undergraduate students should develop in first-year composition programs in the U.S. (Council of Writing Program Administrators, 2014). Supported by a large body of research and recognizing the highly individualized context of first-

year composition programs, it intentionally defines only outcomes, or types of results, not standards or precise levels of achievement, enabling institutions to tailor it to best represent their individual context (Yancey, Harrington, Malencyzk, Peckham, & Rhodes, 2001). In Kelly-Riley and Elliot's descriptive, exploratory study, they used the WPA Outcomes Statement to support instruction and define assessment at three different institution types – a community college, a small, private liberal arts college, and a public university. They created a rubric using each of their 11 identified outcome statements and a traditional six-point scale to score the writing of two assignments, one early in the semester and one late in the semester (Kelly-Riley & Elliot, 2014). The papers were reviewed by raters with Pearson scores within the 0.7 range, understood as the threshold score for interrater reliability (Stemler, 2004; Williamson, Xi, & Breyer, 2012). The study determined validity based on Kane's argument-based approach to validation in which validation uses two kinds of argument: Cronbach's (1988) validity argument and an interpretation/use argument "that specifies what is being claimed in the interpretation and use and thereby provides a framework for the validity argument…[that] is clear, coherent, and complete, that its inferences are reasonable, and that its assumptions are plausible" (Kane, 2013, pp. 9–10). To determine validity therefore, Kelly-Riley and Elliot collected validity evidence from four sources: scoring (interrater reliability within the .7 range), generalization (correlation between early and late papers found significant ($p<.01$)), extrapolation (a statistically significant correlation was found between SAT score and holistic essay scores($p<.01$)), and implication (each measure of writing demonstrated statistically significant increases in mean scores ($p<.001$)), to establish a refreshed concept of validity to examine the usefulness of consensus statements in local settings (Kelly-Riley & Elliot, 2014, p. 97).

I was initially drawn to this study for several reasons, beginning with the rigor and transparency with which they reported their replicable, aggregable, and data-driven results. Both Kelly-Riley and Elliot have strong reputations in the field for conducting quality research, and rigor is of utmost importance to me in my work. I also liked the simple and direct way in which specific WPA Outcomes were selected so only those locally relevant to instruction were used to assess student writing. The institution at which I conducted the study had recently revised their FYC learning outcomes based on the WPA Outcomes Statement and was seeking a way to assess the effectiveness of these outcomes. As I explored the possibility of extending Kelly-Riley and Elliot's study in my context, I exchanged several emails and participated in a Skype call with both researchers. They were encouraging and supportive, explaining decisions made in the process and offering to share information and answer questions that may arise as I proceeded with collecting and analyzing the data. Extending their study will enable me to use the WPA Outcomes Statement to localize and assess the impact ISC Pedagogy has on student writing.

Research Sample

This study was conducted at Southeastern University, an open admissions, religiously-affiliated, SLAC in Central Florida during the Fall semester of the 2017-2018 academic year. According to the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, Southeastern University is classified as a medium-sized, private, non-profit university with 3,800 students and a very high undergraduate population ("The Carnegie classification of institutions of higher education," 2018). I selected this site because I work there, have access to the population, and while serving as FYC Coordinator, I recently realigned the outcomes of our FYC courses based on the WPA Outcomes Statement. Additionally, the Humanities Department within which I work, wants to understand the significance of frequent instructor-student conferences, and the

administration has been in full support of my studies and research goals. Finally, this site's open admissions practice provides me with access to students who may have struggled with writing in the past and, therefore, may have lower writerly self-efficacy, which is an important component of my research.

Research Participants

Research participants were comprised of first-year students admitted in the Fall 2017 academic year. Students were enrolled in one of the 20 Composition I sections according to the Registrar's established practices. The researcher taught four of these sections using ISC Pedagogy. Each student had the choice of having his/her work included in the study. Students who chose to participate were asked to provide demographic information to determine if the sample size reflected the first-year class as a whole. Table 3 on the next page presents the demographic data for both the Fall 2017 cohort and the study participants.

Table 3

Demographic Data for the 2017 First-Year Cohort and Study Participants

Demographic Measurement	Fall 2017 Cohort (n=616)	Study participants (n=82)
Ethnicity		
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.2% (1)	0
Asian	2% (11)	1% (1)
Black/African American	15% (94)	11% (9)
Hispanics of any race	21% (127)	24% (19)
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0.5% (3)	0
Non-resident Alien	2% (11)	0
Race & ethnicity unknown	2% (9)	3% (2)
White	58% (360)	61% (50)
Sex		
Female	61% (373)	52% (43)
Male	39% (243)	48% (39)
Standard Test Scores		
ACT (mean score)	21.03	20.66
SAT (mean score)	991.9	1011
Additional Demographics		
High School GPA (mean score)	3.62	3.66
Pell Grant Recipients	43% (262)	37% (30)

In Table 3 we can see that the demographic data between the 2017 first-year cohort and the study participants are markedly similar which aids in the generalizability of this study.

The Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher, in addition to planning, managing, and reporting the results of the research, focused on teaching the four sections of Composition I involved in the study. Upon receiving consent to participate from the students (the process is described below and sample consent forms are included in Appendix D and E) and reporting final grades for the semester, the researcher calculated and analyzed the data from the pre- and post-treatment PSWSES surveys. To determine participants for the writing portion of this study, the researcher used a random number generator to select the first and last essays from 36 students (for a total of 72 essays) to score using the WPA Outcomes-based rubric. While the researcher originally intended to not

participate in the scoring of the essays, both scorers had family and/or medical issues arise the week before the scoring session that necessitated the researcher's involvement to ease the scoring burden. This is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

Data Collection Procedures

As stated previously, this study took place over 15 weeks at a small, liberal arts college in Central Florida. The researcher then taught four sections of Composition I with 24 students enrolled in each section for a potential sample population of 96. Due to a shortage of Composition I sections, courses were filled beyond the 24 course cap and initial participants ballooned to 104 students. By the end of the semester, through illness and enrollment changes, enrollment dropped to 84 students.

Classes met for 50 minutes, three times each week for 15 weeks. Two sections met in the morning (10 am and 11 am) and two met in the afternoon (1 pm and 2 pm). All four sections had the same schedule, assignments, and grading scales. The Intended Learning Outcomes for the course, based on the WPA Outcomes statement, were clearly identified in the syllabus and used to guide instruction and grading scales throughout the semester. While students were expected to complete the coursework as part of their grade, they had the option of having their work included in the study. The data collection methods with their corresponding timeframes are detailed in Figure 4 below.

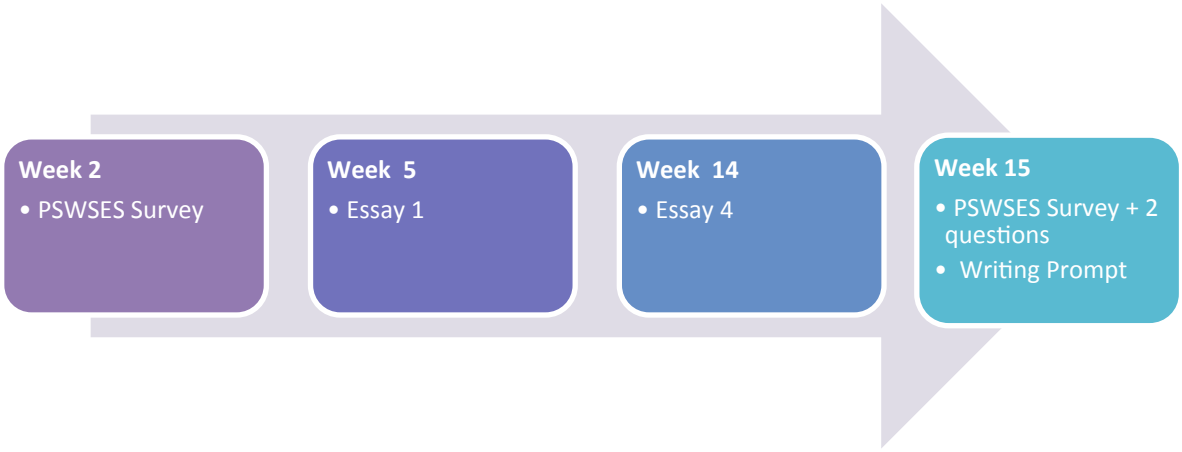

Figure 4. Data collection methods and timelines.

This model was used to obtain 104 student responses to the PSWSES writerly self-efficacy instrument from week 2, and 74 student responses in week 15.

Study #1: Writerly Self-Efficacy

Students completed the PSWSES writerly self-efficacy instrument in class via an online survey during weeks 2 and 15. Technology (a laptop, tablet, or smart phone) is required in some Composition I courses at the research institution and is a required component in the researcher's established instructional methods. Access to the instrument was not problematic; however, as a back-up, the instructor brought her own laptop and tablet for students to use on days when the survey was conducted to mitigate any unforeseen circumstances. No student elected to use them.

As stated previously, the PSWSES was comprised of 20 statements designed to measure writerly self-efficacy. Students were asked to use a seven-point Likert scale to reflect how strongly they agree or disagree with each statement. Of the 20 statements, the last statement pertained specifically to writing centers so it was removed from this study. The remaining 19 statements used in this study are listed in Table 4 below.

Table 4

#	Item
1	I can identify incomplete, or fragment, sentences.
2	I can invest a great deal of effort and time in writing a paper when I know the paper will earn a grade.
3	I can articulate my strengths and challenges as a writer.
4	I can find and incorporate appropriate evidence to support important points in my papers.
5	I can be recognized by others as a strong writer.
6	When I read a rough draft, I can identify gaps when they are present in the paper.
7	I can maintain a sense of who my audience is as I am writing a paper.
8	I can write a paper without feeling physical discomfort (e.g., headaches, stomachaches, backaches, insomnia, muscle tension, nausea, and/or crying).
9	When I read drafts written by classmates, I can provide them with valuable feedback.
10	When I have a pressing deadline for a paper, I can manage my time efficiently.
11	I can attribute my success on writing projects to my writing abilities more than to luck or external forces.
12	When a student who is similar to me receives praise and/or a good grade on a paper, I know I can write a paper worthy of praise and/or a good grade.
13	Once I have completed a draft, I can eliminate both small and large sections that are no longer necessary.
14	I can write a paper without experiencing overwhelming feelings of fear or distress.
15	When writing papers for different courses (for example, Biology, English, and Philosophy classes), I can adjust my writing to meet the expectations of each discipline.
16	I can map out the structure and main sections of an essay before writing the first draft.
17	I can find ways to concentrate when I am writing, even when there are many distractions around me.
18	I can find and correct my grammatical errors.
19	I can invest a great deal of effort and time in writing a paper when I know the paper will not be graded.

Summary of Statements Included in the PSWSES Survey

In addition to the questions listed in Table 4, two questions were added to the PSWSES survey distributed during Week 15. They were designed to help isolate and identify students' perceptions of the impact instructor-student conferences had on their confidence in their writing and their writing ability. The questions are shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Two Questions Added to the PSWSES Survey Distributed in Week 15

#	Item
1	In your opinion, how did instructor-student conferences affect your confidence in your writing?
2	In your opinion, how did instructor-student conferences affect your writing ability?

Students responded to the questions in Table 5 using a five-point Likert scale (significant positive affect, somewhat positive affect, no affect, somewhat negative affect, or significant negative affect).

Study #2: Impact on Writing

Four essays were assigned between weeks 5 and 14. Essays grew in complexity over the course of the semester and, with the exception of the second essay, a poetic autoethnography, essays were assigned using a recursive two-week cycle. During the first week, students received classroom instruction including the initial essay assignment on Monday, additional instruction and a writing workshop on Wednesday, and participated in a peer review on Friday. During the second week, all classroom instruction was replaced by one 15-minute instructor-student writing conference. After their conference, students completed a reflection assignment and then submitted the final draft of their essay on day 7 of week 2. This process is depicted in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Two week essay assignment cycle.

The process shown in Figure 5 was repeated for each essay. Over the course of the semester, this resulted in exchanging a total of four weeks of classroom instruction with four 15-minute instructor-student conferences.

Data collected from scoring the first and the last essay was used to determine ISC Pedagogy's impact on writing. Both essays asked students to analyze and respond to a different rhetorical situation – one required a critical analysis of a Wikipedia entry and one required a rhetorical analysis of a writing construct. While the last essay was more complex in scope, both essays required the critical reading and citation of at least one scholarly journal article, achieve at least 1,000 words in length, and demonstrate a knowledge of conventions. A copy of the requirements for each essay is found in Appendix A (Critical Analysis) and B (Rhetorical Analysis).

The last method used to collect data was a writing prompt assigned during week 15. On the last day of class, students were asked to explain what instructor-student conferences *do* for them. Students were given time in class to complete this task and 81 students submitted their responses electronically into an assignment drop-box.

After final grades were submitted, each student who agreed to participate in the study received a number and then had all identifying information removed from their first and last essay. Each essay was assigned a non-identifying code of random numbers and/or letters. A random number generator was used to determine which student was to be included in the study and the corresponding essays were printed for scoring.

One universal rubric (found in Appendix C) was used to score each essay. The rubric, based on the WPA Outcomes Statements and the Intended Learning Outcomes for Composition I courses, clearly identified desired characteristics for each of the five writing traits. These traits were: context and purpose for writing, content/argumentation, composing, sources and evidence, and control of syntax and mechanics. Each essay was read by raters after going through an inter-reader reliability process (Stemler, 2004; Williamson et al., 2012). Essay scores that were the exact same or adjacent were recorded. Scores that differed by two or more points were read by a third rater and an average of the three scores was used. To establish interrater agreement and interrater reliability, 30% (n = 22) of the papers were read twice (Barrett, 2001; Kelly-Riley & Elliot, 2014; Stemler, 2004). All essays (n = 94) were rated during one session conducted 15 weeks after the end of the Fall 2017 semester. As expert raters have been found to be more reliable and consistent in their scoring (Barrett, 2001; Schoonen, Vergeer, & Eiting, 1997), essays were scored using three expert raters. Each of the three raters worked at the same university in which the study was conducted for at least five years, held the rank of Associate

Professor or Professor, consistently taught courses in the FYC program, and had either earned a terminal degree (two earned a PhD) or was in the process of earning a terminal degree (the researcher). While it was originally planned that the researcher would not participate in the rating process, both raters experienced personal or family medical issues in the week preceding the rating session that necessitated the researcher participate to help ease the rating burden. To minimize the impact of researcher bias, the researcher focused on rating the 22 essays that were identified as requiring a second reading, thereby enabling her scores to be used in conjunction with the scores from another rater.

Data Analysis

Study #1: Writerly Self-Efficacy

The data collected from the 19 questions contained in the PSWSES instrument administered during week 2 was initially analyzed independently of the data collected during week 15. I ran descriptive statistics, reviewing the mean, median, and mode to determine the central tendency and the standard deviation, range and shape (skewness and kurtosis) to determine whether the data was normally distributed. I used boxplots and frequency charts to visually represent the data as well. I then compared the means to determine difference. Once normal distribution of the data was identified, two statistical tests were run to determine change over time within one group using repeated measures. For normally distributed data, Paired Samples *t* Tests were used to determine any statistically significant differences in the scores to support or reject the claim. For data that was not normally distributed, a non-parametric test of difference, the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test, was used to determine statistical difference. For the two questions added to the PSWSES survey during Week 15, a simple tabulation of the data was

all that was needed as this was meant to obtain information, not determine similarity or difference.

Study #2: Impact on Writing

For both the first and last essays, scores were calculated for each of the five variables scored using the universal rubric. Similar to the process used for the first study, I initially ran descriptive statistics on the scores to note central tendency and determine whether the data was normally distributed. Again, I used boxplots and frequency charts to visually represent the data. To determine change over time within one group using repeated measures, I used Paired Samples *t* Tests to determine statistical significance for data that was normally distributed. For data that was not normally distributed, I ran a non-parametric test, the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test, to determine statistical difference.

For the response to the writing prompt given during week 15, I went through an open coding process (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016) where I initially read through the responses and highlighted text of interest. I then read through them again and began to code them using labels that reflected the language used by the participants. I created a data summary table that I used to create categories from the responses and determine frequency measures for each code.

Ethical Considerations

In accordance to the guidelines established by the Institutional Review Boards at Indiana University of Pennsylvania and Southeastern University, the privacy of all participants was of primary concern. While the study was conducted in a classroom setting, students had the option of choosing whether they would participate in each of the two studies.

For the first study, the PSWSES was administered online as part of general classroom instruction and participation. Each student created a unique identifier consisting of the first four

letters of their last name and last four numbers of their phone number. Because self-efficacy is intentionally built into the instructional method, each student was able to compare their results from week 2 with their results from week 15. This enabled them to determine their own personal growth during the semester. While students were expected to participate as part of general classroom participation for that day, each student had the opportunity to decide if his/her data would be included in the study. Regardless of their participation, the researcher provided students with the results of their surveys at the end of week 15. The student consent from for this study can be found in Appendix D.

For the second study, the process of obtaining consent involved the use of the department's Administrative Assistant. After the researcher explained the study, distributed the consent form, and answered any questions, she left the room. Students were given the option of having their work included, signed the form, and then returned it to the Administrative Assistant. She collected the forms for each class in an envelope, sealed them, and gave them to the department chair to be kept in a locked filing cabinet until final grades were submitted. Students agreeing to participate are assured confidentiality by having all identifiable information removed and replaced with a random series of numbers and letters.

Issues of Trustworthiness

This study was designed to determine the impact ISC Pedagogy has on the writing and writerly self-efficacy of first-year students at an open-enrollment SLAC in Central Florida. I have made every attempt to conduct a rigorous, mixed methods study based on a multi-disciplinary literature review. The data discussed in this chapter was systemically collected and analyzed in an attempt to answer this study's underlying research questions. All data will be kept securely off site for at least three years, in compliance with the IRB policy at IUP.

Limitations

This study took place during the Fall of 2017 in Central Florida. During the time of the study, Hurricane Irma hit Central Florida, causing an evacuation of the campus and a disruption in two weeks of academic work. While some of the work was able to be accomplished online, it did cause modifications to some coursework and reduced in-class instruction time. It also increased the workload on students as they struggled to "make up" the work in all their classes.

The most substantial limitation of this study, however, comes from it being conducted during one semester, for one FYC course (Composition I) and at one institution thus eliminating the ability to generalize the data to any other context. However, the scope of this project is not to create a largely generalizable study but to measure the impact ISC Pedagogy has on student writing and self-efficacy in a replicable, aggregable, data-driven manner. The next step, should the data support it, would be to conduct a larger, perhaps regional study, and encourage ongoing replication or extension studies.

Chapter Summary

This chapter described the context of the research study including the location and participants. I described the research design, data collection procedures and the methods I implemented to analyze the data. The results of the study are discussed in Chapter 4 and analyzed in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 4

STUDY RESULTS

> Writing conferences do soooo much for me. They let me know if I'm on the right track. They make me feel more open about writing. They bring peace and stability to my mind as a freshman coming from a more dependent atmosphere in high school to college where people are saying, "you are on your own." College was a MAJOR adjustment for me and I was very nervous about being alone, but these conferences gave me that feeling that I'm not alone. And to take it even further, they helped me (Jack, Fall 2017).

Overview of the Study

This study set out to clearly define a pedagogical approach focused on instructor-student conferencing and measure it's impact on First Year Composition students' writerly self-efficacy and writing ability. I intentionally focused on these two measures because student self-efficacy has been tied to both student success (Blake et al., 2016; Høigaard et al., 2015; Nilson, 2013; Zimmerman & Kitsantas, 2014) and retention (Cheon-woo et al., 2017; Powell, 2009; Ruecker et al., 2017) and writing improvement can be found at the core of FYC programs (Kelly-Riley & Elliot, 2014; White et al., 2015).

To better understand how ISC Pedagogy impacted writerly self-efficacy and writing ability, I utilized a mixed methods approach and collected both quantitative and qualitative data. In my first study designed to quantify writerly self-efficacy, I distributed the PSWSES instrument during weeks 2 and 15 and compared the difference between its 19 measures. To identify students' perceptions of the impact instructor-student conferences have on writing confidence and ability, two additional questions were added to the PSWSES survey distributed during week 15. In my second study, designed to quantify writing ability, students' first and last essays were rated using a universal rubric on five key measures. To this, a qualitative component was added in which, on the last day of class, students were asked to explain what instructor-

student conferences *do* for them. This qualitative question provides additional data that couldn't be collected via more quantitative measures. These two studies will be discussed independently below and then woven together in the conclusion to clearly state what we now know about ISC Pedagogy.

Study #1: Writerly Self-Efficacy

The first study measured writerly self-efficacy in response to my initial research question: Does ISC Pedagogy increase students' writerly self-efficacy within one semester? The hypothesis for this study is as follows:

- Hypothesis: Students will report higher levels of writerly self-efficacy after 15 weeks of a Composition I course based on ISC Pedagogy.
- Null Hypothesis: Students will report no difference in levels of writerly self-efficacy after 15 weeks of a Composition I course based on ISC Pedagogy.

To measure writerly self-efficacy, students completed the PSWSES instrument online via a Qualtrics survey during week 2 to establish a pre-treatment score, and again during week 15 to establish a post-treatment score. There were 104 responses for the pre-treatment and 74 for the post-treatment. As a comparison of the scores was needed to determine change, only the participants that had scores for both measures were included in this study ($n = 74$).

Participant responses were recorded using a seven-point Likert scale with a score of 1 indicating a greater sense of self-efficacy, and 7 indicating a lower sense of self-efficacy. As this measure varies from the standard Likert scale where a score of 1 is considered low and 7 is considered high, the scores were reverse coded to the standard. All data is reported using 1 to represent a lower level of self-efficacy and 7 to represent a higher level of self-efficacy.

Schmidt and Alexander's study reported a Cronbach's Alpha score of .931 for the PSWSES scale which showed high internal consistency and reliability across items. To determine the validity of its use in my context, I ran a Cronbach's Alpha test and the resulting score of .923 also indicates a good internal consistency and reliability of the data.

I initially reviewed the data through a standard Qualtrics report, then exported it into an Xcel database where scores were paired by participant and reviewed for errors. Next the file was imported into IBM SPSS for statistical analysis. Following the methods described in Chapter 3, descriptive statistics and frequency reports were used to better understand the data and boxplots and histograms were used to visually represent its distribution. For normally distributed data, a Paired Samples *t* test was conducted; for not normally distributed data, a nonparametric Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test was conducted. Utilizing this process, we will first examine ISC Pedagogy's impact on each of the 19 specific writerly self-efficacy traits and then measure the change in the summative mean scores for each participant to determine it's overall affect. Finally, to understand student perceptions regarding the conferencing component of ISC Pedagogy, we will review their responses to 2 questions added to the post-treatment survey. These measures will be woven together in a conclusion that helps us better understand the impact ISC Pedagogy has on writerly self-efficacy.

ISC Pedagogy's Impact on Individual Writerly Self-Efficacy Traits

To measure the impact participants experienced through ISC Pedagogy, I compared pre- and post-treatment scores for each of the 19 PSWSES measures. Figure 6 on the following page, shows the frequency distribution for these means.

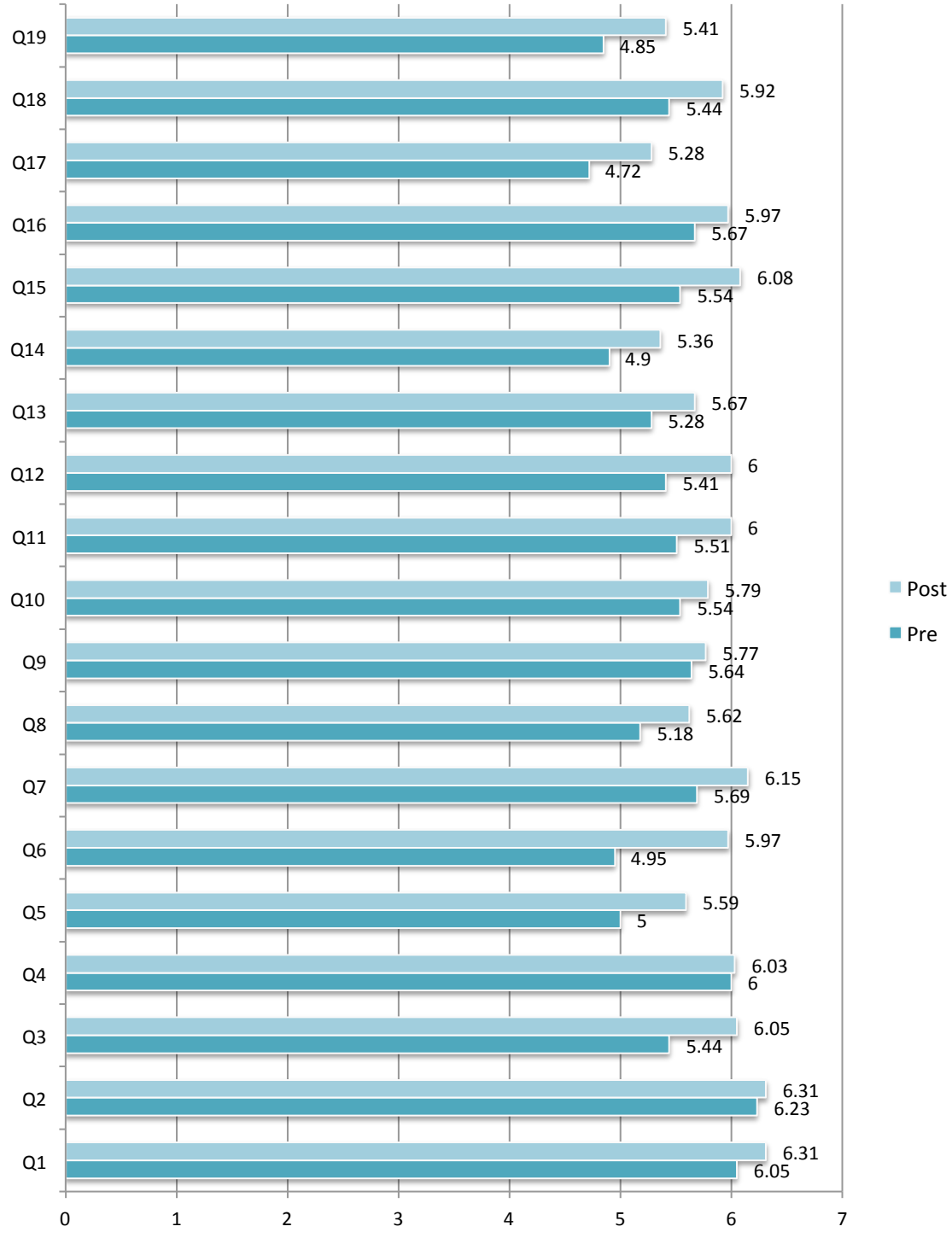

Figure 6. Frequency of means for pre and post PSWSES scores.

Figure 6 shows an increase in mean scores for each of the 19 measures. The mean increase was 0.99 with range of .03 to 1.02. To more clearly see the levels in which scores for each question increased, they were grouped into categories as displayed in Figure 7.

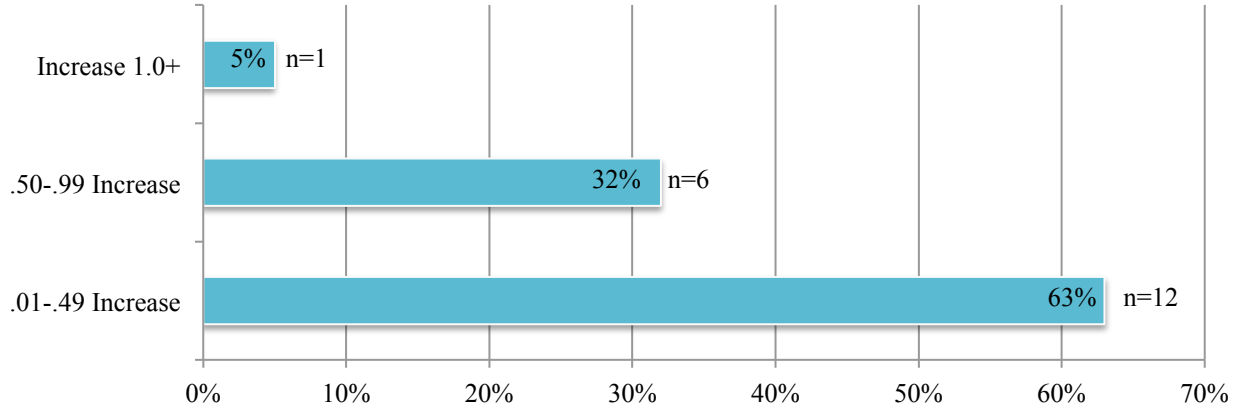

Figure 7. Percentage change in PSWSES pre and post scores.

Figure 7 shows that 63% (n = 12) of the measures increased by less than half a point on a seven-point scale, 32% (n = 6) of the measures increased between .50-.99, and 5% (n = 1) of the measures increased by more than 1 point. To determine if the change in scores was significant, a Paired Samples t test was needed. After reviewing the descriptive statistics to determine whether the data was normally distributed, only question 8 was found to have not normally distributed data. The remaining questions had approximately normal distributions. Table 6 presents descriptive statistics of the data along with the results of this t test.

Table 6

Results From the Paired Samples t Test for Normally Distributed Data

Measure	Pre Treatment			Post Treatment			95% confidence interval		*t*	Sig. (2-tailed)
	M	SD	Range	M	SD	Range	Lower bound	Upper bound		
Q 1. I can identify incomplete, or fragment, sentences.										
	6.05	1.03	3,7	6.31	.66	5,7	-.54	.03	-1.82	.077
Q 2. I can invest a great deal of effort and time in writing a paper when I know the paper will earn a grade.										
	6.23	1.09	2,7	6.31	.66	5,7	-.42	.27	-.45	.653
Q 3. I can articulate my strengths and challenges as a writer.										
	5.44	.85	3,7	6.05	.94	3,7	-.96	-.27	-3.60	.001*
Q 4. I can find and incorporate appropriate evidence to support important points in my papers.										
	6.0	.76	4,7	6.03	.81	4,7	-.35	.29	-.16	.872
Q 5. I can be recognized by others as a strong writer.										
	5.0	1.21	1,7	5.59	1.07	3,7	-.1.0	-.18	-2.9	.006*
Q 6. When I read a rough draft, I can identify gaps when they are present in the paper.										
	4.95	1.32	2,7	5.97	.81	5,7	-1.47	-.58	-4.69	.000*
Q 7. I can maintain a sense of who my audience is as I am writing a paper.										
	5.69	.98	3,7	6.15	.81	4,7	-.83	-.10	-2.57	.014**
Q 9. When I read drafts written by classmates, I can provide them with valuable feedback.										
	5.64	1.16	3,7	5.77	.96	4,7	-.48	.22	-.74	.463
Q 10. When I have a pressing deadline for a paper, I can manage my time efficiently.										
	5.54	1.21	2,7	5.79	.98	3,7	-.67	.16	-1.26	.216
Q 11. I can attribute my success on writing projects to my writing abilities more than to luck or external forces.										
	5.51	1.12	3,7	6.0	1.0	3.7	-.84	-.14	-2.84	.007*
Q 12. When a student who is similar to me receives praise and/or a good grade on a paper, I know I can write a paper worthy of praise and/or a good grade.										
	5.41	.97	4,7	6.0	.97	3,7	-.97	-.21	-3.11	.004*

Q 13. Once I have completed a draft, I can eliminate both small and large sections that are no longer necessary.										
	5.28	1.10	3,7	5.67	.92	2,7	-.77	-.001	-2.03	.049**
Q 14. I can write a paper without experiencing overwhelming feelings of fear or distress.										
	4.9	1.54	1,7	5.36	1.37	2,7	-.97	.05	-1.84	.074
Q 15. When writing papers for different courses (for example, Biology, English, and Philosophy classes), I can adjust my writing to meet the expectations of each discipline.										
	5.54	1.05	3,7	6.08	.87	4,7	-.92	-.16	-2.88	.006*
Q 16. I can map out the structure and main sections of an essay before writing the first draft.										
	5.67	1.08	2,7	5.97	1.06	3,7	-.78	.16	-1.32	.194
Q 17. I can find ways to concentrate when I am writing, even when there are many distractions around me.										
	4.72	1.52	1,7	5.28	1.52	1,7	-1.13	.001	-2.02	.05
Q 18. I can find and correct my grammatical errors.										
	5.44	1.23	2,7	5.92	.98	3,7	-.88	-.08	-2.47	.018**
Q 19. I can invest a great deal of effort and time in writing a paper when I know the paper will not be graded.										
	4.85	1.69	1,7	5.41	1.37	1,7	-.1.07	-.06	-2.27	.029**

* $p < .01$ ** $p < .05$

Reviewing the significance scores and 95% confidence levels for the measures in Table 6, we can see that 6 scores (questions 3, 5, 6, 11, 12, and 15) are significant at the $p \leq 0.01$ level, and an additional 4 scores (questions 7, 13, 18, and 19) are significant at the $p \leq 0.05$ level. Accordingly, we can assume that this course, taught using ISC pedagogy, had a significant impact on these 10 measures.

Questions 1 and 17 appear to be approaching significance, however, when we look at the 95% confidence level we can see that the upper and lower bounds contain both positive and negative values. This means the null finding of zero lies within the confidence interval for these measures, so there is no statistically significant difference between means for these scores (Morgan, 2013, p. 176). Finally, question 8 was found to have not normally distributed data so

significance was determined using the nonparametric Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test. As shown in Table 7, we can use the *z* score (similar to the *t* value in the Paired Sample t test) and the 2-tailed significance score to determine that question 8 is approaching significance, but as $p > .05$, it is not statistically significant.

Table 7

Results From the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test for Not Normally Distributed Data

Measure	Pre Treatment			Post Treatment			95% confidence interval		*Z*	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
	M	SD	Range	M	SD	Range	Lower bound	Upper bound		
Q 8. I can write a paper without feeling physical discomfort (e.g., headaches, stomachaches, backaches, insomnia, muscle tension, nausea, and/or crying).										
	4.94	1.64	1,7	5.43	1.34	1,7	-.87	.30	-1.78	.07

By looking at the content of questions achieving significance, it appears that the greatest impact was on the students' perception of themselves as writers. Students stated they could articulate their strengths and weaknesses as a writer (#3), be recognized by others as a strong writer (#5), attribute their writing success to their abilities more than luck (#11), and that they are worthy of praise and/or a good grade (#12). Perceived gains in their writing itself were also shown to be significant as students stated they could identify gaps in their writing (#6), maintain a sense of audience when writing (#7), eliminate both small and large sections of a draft that aren't necessary (#13), adjust their writing to meet expectations of different disciplines (#15), and find and correct grammatical errors (#18). While the data suggests that students are beginning to experience greater confidence in their own writing, they may be struggling to maintain their confidence when commenting on a classmate's writing (#9) or handling more complex tasks such as finding and incorporating appropriate evidence to support their points (#4). The highly

individualized nature of the writing conference may contribute to students' almost exclusive focus on their own writing. As Charlie explained:

> I feel like I am able to have a balance of organizing and outlining essays, but also be able to free flow write without a stop-and-go process of editing. Everything feels so much smoother and relaxed within my writing process, this has helped me not only in this class but every other class I have had to write papers in this semester. (Charlie, Fall 2017)

Charlie's concluding remark regarding her ability to transfer what she's learned to other classes shows that while student's initial benefit may be to their own writing, it could benefit all of their writing – even that done for other classes. The study of knowledge transfer– which is important in both the composition field and the university in which this study took place – is outside the scope of this study, but is an interesting finding that came up repeatedly. ISC Pedagogy appears to have affected the way some students approached assignments in other classes: "My writing ability has improved and I feel more relaxed when I hear that I have to write an essay regardless of the class or topic" (Sam, Fall 2017); as well as improved ability within them: "This course helped me realize that I am actually good at writing, and I improved in all my classes with writing in them" (Dean, Fall 2017). The possibility of future studies revolving around ISC Pedagogy and transfer is explored further in Chapter 5.

ISC Pedagogy's Overall Impact on Writerly Self-Efficacy

To determine the impact ISC Pedagogy had on participants' overall writerly self-efficacy, I compared the means of the total scores both pre- and post-treatment as shown in Table 8 on the following page.

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics and Results From Paired Samples t Test for Pre and Post PSWSES Scores

Measure	Pre-Treatment			Post-Treatment			95% confidence interval		*t*	Sig. (2-tailed)
	M	SD	Range	M	SD	Range	Lower bound	Upper bound		
Total Scores	5.42	.71	3.68, 6.95	5.86	.68	4.47, 7.0	-.69	-.18	-3.47	.001

We can see in Table 8 that the mean scores increased by 0.44 (5.42 pre, 5.86 post), which shows a general improvement in writerly self-efficacy among participants. To determine if this change is significant, a Paired Sample *t* test was run. It showed the mean increase of .44 is statistically significant at the $p = 0.001$ level. The 95% confidence interval further supports this finding, suggesting that the null finding of zero difference lies outside of the confidence interval. Based on these results, we can state that there is a significant difference in the writerly self-efficacy pre-treatment scores (M = 5.42, STD = 0.71) and the post-treatment scores (M = 5.86, STD = 0.68); $t = -3.47$, $p = 0.001$. Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected and it is assumed that students taking this course taught using ISC Pedagogy increased their writerly self-efficacy within one semester.

Student Perceptions Regarding the Affect of Instructor-Student Conferences

While the results of ISC Pedagogy's impact on students' writerly self-efficacy is promising, I wanted to better understand the impact of the instructor-student conference component specifically. As this pedagogical approach revolves around instructor-student conferences, I wanted to isolate its impact by directly asking students to rate the impact conferences had on their (1) confidence in their writing and (2) their writing ability. This was accomplished by adding two questions to the post PSWSES survey. To help avoid participant confusion, I kept the rating scale of these questions non-standard to be congruent with the

PSWSES scale where low scores were significantly positive and high scores were significantly negative. I then reverse coded the data to the standard were low scores (1) meant significantly negative and high scores (5) meant significantly positive. Table 9 displays the descriptive statistics for these scores.

Table 9

Descriptive Statistics for Instructor-Student Conferencing Questions

	N	Mean	Std.	Range	Skewness	Kurtosis
Q1. Writing Confidence	68	4.84	.41	3,5	2.53	6.12
Q2. Writing Ability	68	4.71	.55	2,5	2.29	7.40

The mean scores displayed in Table 9 for writing confidence (4.84) and writing ability (4.71) are quite high on a five-point Likert scale. The standard deviation measures show that scores are clustered tightly together and not normally distributed. Measures of Skewness and Kurtosis confirm this finding. We can see just how closely the scores surround the mean by looking at the frequency of score distribution displayed in Figure 8.

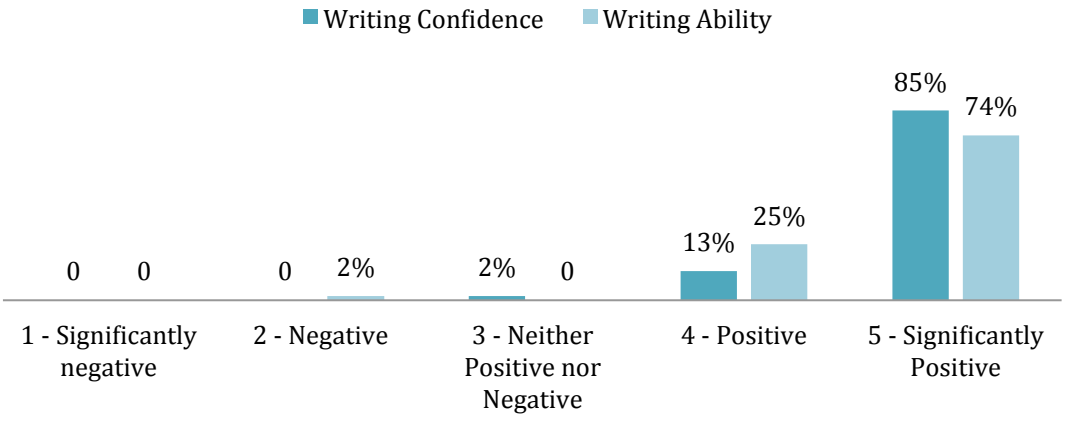

Figure 8. Frequency of score distributions for instructor-student conferencing questions.

Figure 8 clearly shows that students identify instructor-student writing conferences as having an overwhelmingly positive impact on both their confidence in their writing and writing ability. In fact, 98% (n = 67) of the respondents report instructor-student conferences as having a positive impact on both their writing and their writerly self-efficacy. Only 2% (n = 1) reported that instructor-student conferences had no impact on their writing confidence and 2% (n = 1) reported that conferences had a negative impact on their writing ability. While any programmatic element would consider it a tremendous success to have such an overwhelming majority of participants attribute instructor-student conferences as having such a significant impact on both student confidence in their writing and writing ability, due to the smaller scale of this study and lack of a control group, we need to remain cautiously optimistic and not dismiss the 2% that had a different experience. Let's briefly examine these two students.

Rory stated in his PSWSES post response that instructor-student conferences had neither a positive nor negative impact on his writing confidence. Indeed, comparing his pre/post PSWSES score, he did report the biggest drop in means among all participants: -1.16. However, in his qualitative response to what instructor-student conferences *do* (results of these responses can be found in the following section), he stated:

> This course has made my confidence in writing go down, because I have gotten C's on most of my essays; i thought i was a B writer at least. I should have looked at [m]y essays after they were graded than i would have realized i wasn't doing so my writing ability would have been better improved if i was more aware of the grades i was getting (Rory, Fall 2017).

In addition to mentioning a lack of attention being given to grades (which can be a common issue for first-year students), Rory did have positive things to say about conferences in general:

> The writing conferences make it easier to see what direction you need to head in to finish your paper, and shows the type of things we need to improve on. For me i had to improve on structure i feel i have improved on the organization of my papers because of the conferences (Rory, Fall 2017).

So while Rory reported that instructor student conferences didn't have an impact on his writing confidence in his PSWSES scores, in his written commentary it appears he may have found some overall value in them.

Amy reported that instructor student conferences had a negative impact on her confidence in her writing. Similar to Rory, she also experienced a decrease in her writerly self-efficacy scores with a mean decrease of -1.0. However, when reviewing her qualitative comments, she expresses a differing sentiment:

> The writing conferences helped me know what i was doing right, if i was on the right track with the essay, to see if i do [k]now what i am doing within the essay. The conferences really helped me improve my writing ability to write different essays i would not have written before and made me think critically about how to write the essay properly (Amy, Fall 2017).

Whether the seeming disparity between scores and comments for both of these students may be due to misunderstanding the non-standard scoring (1 for significant positive, 5 for significant negative) or that fact that they were trying to be "nice" in their qualitative comments, we can't know for sure with the available data; additional interviews with each student by a neutral/third party would be needed to better understand their intent.

ISC Pedagogy's Impact on Writerly Self-Efficacy

In sum, we can say that students participating in this study who experienced ISC Pedagogy in their Composition I course during the Fall 2017 semester, reported a statistically significant improvement in their overall writerly self-efficacy ($p = .001$). In addition, 10 of the 19 individual measures of writerly self-efficacy showed a significant increase ($p \leq 0.05$). Students reportedly found tremendous value in the instructor-student conferencing component of ISC pedagogy with 98% of the students stating it had a positive affect on both their confidence in their writing and their writing ability.

Study #2: Impact on Writing

The second study was designed to answer the question: Does ISC Pedagogy improve student performance on five writing traits within one semester? The five writing traits measured were: (1) context and purpose for writing, (2) content/argumentation, (3) composing, (4) sources and evidence, and (5) control of syntax and mechanics. The hypothesis for this study was stated as follows:

- Hypothesis: There will be a difference in five writing traits after students complete 15 weeks of a Composition I course based on ISC Pedagogy.
- Null Hypothesis: There will be no difference in five writing traits after students complete 15 weeks of a Composition I course based on ISC Pedagogy.

To determine the answer, I extended Kelly-Riley and Eliot's 2014 study that validated using the WPA Outcomes Statement to support instruction and assessment of student writing in a local setting. In accordance with their study methods, I collected student writing samples taken before substantial instruction occurred, (the first essay) and after substantial instruction occurred (the last essay); each was scored using the same rubric for the five traits previously stated.

To examine the impact ISC Pedagogy had on student writing, we will focus on three key processes: the randomization process used to select participant essays, the interrater reliability process used to measure consensus and consistency of scores and the scoring rubric, and the scoring process itself with the resulting scores.

The Randomization Process

There were 74 student participants who submitted both their first and last essay. Due to time, financial, and personal limitations, it wasn't possible to score both essays for each participant. As an extension of Kelly-Riley and Eliot's study (2014), 48% of the sample population (n = 36) was randomly selected for participation. To ensure each participant had an equally random chance of being selected, potential participants assigned a number and then a random number generator (random.org) was used to generate a list of 36 random numbers. Potential participants with each corresponding number were included in the study. Each of the 36 randomly selected participants had their first essay of the semester (n = 36) and their last essay of the semester (n = 36), scored by three raters, for a total number of 72 essays.

The Interrater Reliability Process

At the outset of the rating session, raters participated in a calibration process in which they reviewed requirements for both essays along with the rating rubric. As the rubric was a slight modification of one newly created to assess FYC courses at the university, all three raters had varying levels of familiarity with it. The rubric identified five traits and utilized a traditional five-point scale to score them, with the score of 1 indicating a low score and the score of 5 indicating a high score. To further increase interrater reliability, each item on the rubric contained a detailed description with an example if relevant (Barrett, 2001; Dryer, 2013). The rubric can be found in Appendix C.

Raters used the rubric to individually score a sample essay. Afterward, each rater discussed their scores. Scores that differed by more than one point were deliberated until either a consensus or modified consensus was achieved (Stemler, 2004). This process was repeated for a total of three essays at which point consensus was achieved on four measures (content/argumentation, composing, sources/evidence, and syntax) and modified consensus was achieved on one (context/purpose). Independent scoring then began with each rater progressing at their own pace, taking short breaks as desired to help relieve fatigue.

Interrater reliability was determined by examining measures of consensus and consistency (Kelly-Riley & Elliot, 2014; Stemler, 2004). Stemler argues that, although they can be challenging to compute and interpret, both measures are important to establish interrater reliability. Table 10 presents consensus estimates based on the proximity of rater scores for each item on the rubric and consistency estimates based on the Pearson product moment correlation for n = 22 essays.

Table 10

Consensus and Consistency Estimates for Interrater Reliability of Essays

	Consensus Estimates			Consistency Estimates	
Measure	Exact agreement	Adjacent agreement	Scores differ by 2	Pearson	Sig.
Context/Purpose	16 (73%)	4 (18%)	2 (9%)	.71	$p < .01$
Content/Argumentation	12 (55%)	9 (40%)	1 (4%)	.83	$p < .01$
Composing	14 (64%)	8 (36%)	0	.80	$p < .01$
Sources/Evidence	12 (55%)	8 (36%)	2 (9%)	.73	$p < .01$
Syntax	13 (60%)	9 (40%)	0	.79	$p < .01$

As shown in Table 10, ratings were distributed within three categories: exact agreement (raters agreed on the same score), adjacent (rater scores were adjacent by one), and scores that differed by two (rater scores were two points beyond exact agreement). None of the scores differed by more than two points. Consistency was determined using the Pearson product moment correlation. Scores ranged from .71 ($p < .01$) to .83 ($p < .01$), which are similar to the Kelly-Riley & Elliot study that reported scores of .72 ($p < .01$) to .89 ($p < .01$). All five of the measures fell within the .7 threshold established for interrater reliability (Kelly-Riley & Elliot, 2014; Stemler, 2004; Williamson et al., 2012). In addition, while Kelly-Riley & Elliot validated their rubric using Kane's (2013) argument-based approach to validation, I chose to supplement their findings by running the traditional Cronbach's alpha test to assess whether the data from my five selected variables form a reliable scale. The alpha for the five-item competence scale was .91, which indicates the rubric has good internal consistency and reliability.

The Essay Scoring Process and Resulting Scores

Essays received a score for each of the five measures based on a five-point Likert scale with a range of 1-5. Following the methods established in the Kelly-Riley and Elliot study (2014), 30% ($n = 22$) of the essays were scored twice and thus had a range of 2-10 per measure. Scores on essays that were not read twice were doubled (again, keeping consistent with the Kelly-Riley and Elliot study) so the range of scores for each measure would be uniform. Figure 9 shows the frequencies of mean scores for both essays.

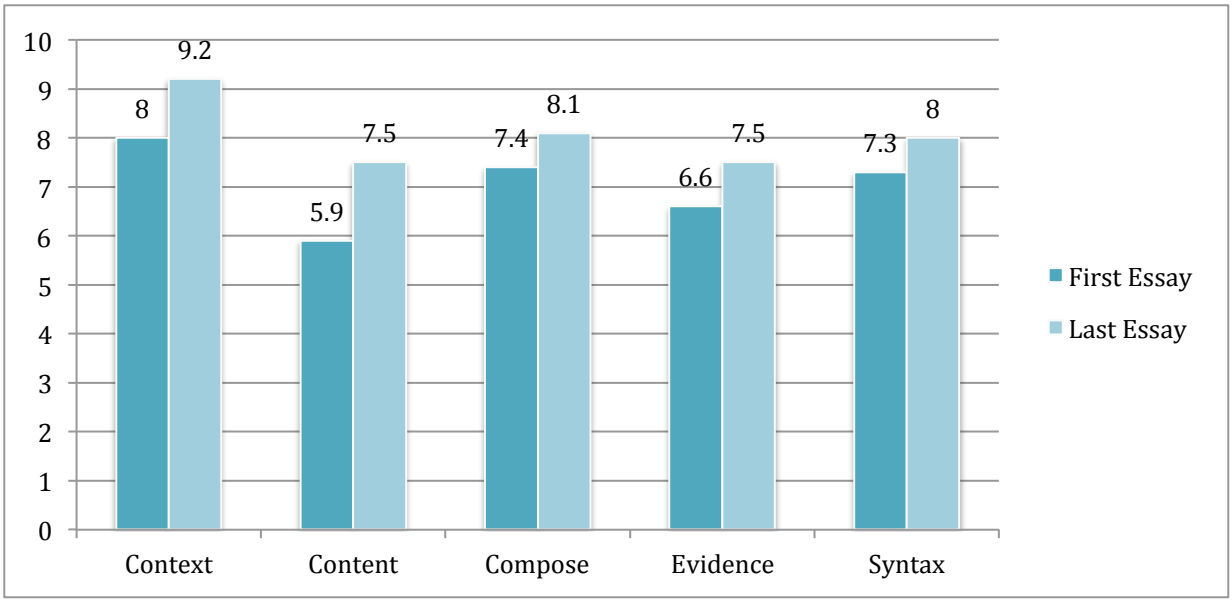

Figure 9. Frequency distribution of scores for essays.

Figure 9 clearly shows that mean scores increased in all five measures from the first to the last essay. The mean increase was .90 with a range of .70 to 1.6. To illustrate the rate of change, Figure 10 shows the percent of change grouped by scores.

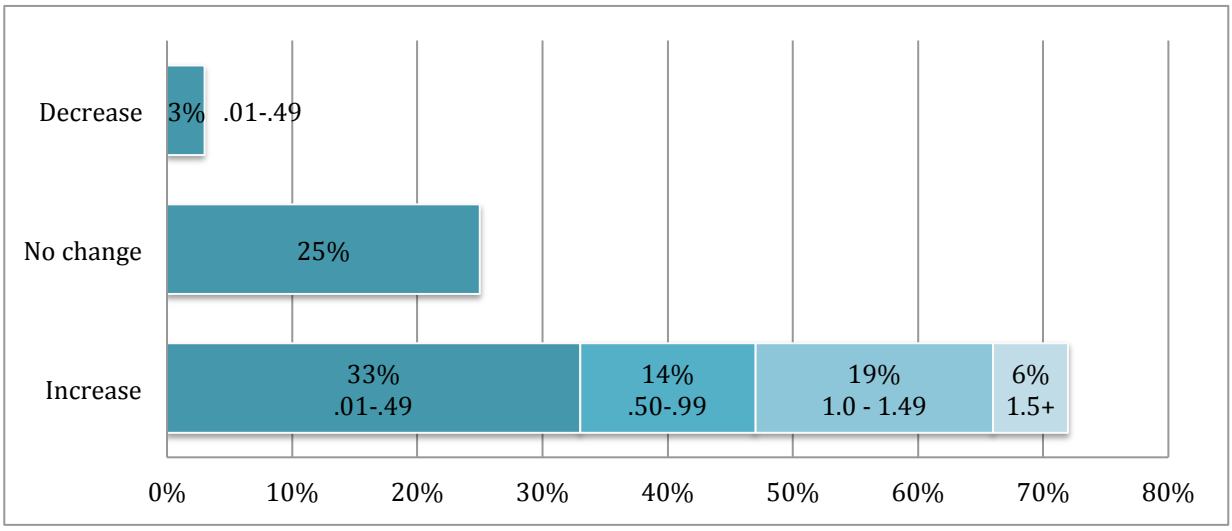

Figure 10. Percentage of student change in writing based on five identified measures.

We can see in Figure 10 that 72% (n = 26) of the students showed an increase in their writing scores, with 25% (n = 9) experiencing an impressive increase of at least 1 point on a five-point Likert scale. This improvement in writing ability was noticeable to many students as well.

> I think my writing ability has definitely expanded and grown since I entered this class as I've actually feel like I've learned new and valuable concepts that I can carry with me though the rest of my time in college. I feel like the assignments have challenged me enough to the point where I feel I could handle a lot more than I did before (River, Fall 2018).

Students credit instructor-student conferences as playing an important role in their improvement.

> I believe the writing conferences help us a lot, because it is a particular time that we have with the instructor. In my perspective, I think I can improve more on conferences than in class, because I feel more comfortable to ask questions and it is a great way to find where I am making mistakes. Many times, when I was reading my essays in conferences, I realized that something was wrong in the sentence, or in the paragraph. So, during the conferences, I am developing my writing abilities and my reading abilities Again, as an international student, I believe that this is the best way to have a relationship with the student where the student and the professor can develop their abilities (Neville, Fall 2017).

While most of the students (72%) experienced an increase in their writing scores, not everyone exhibited an improvement. In fact, 25% (n = 9) of participants showed no change in their overall mean writing score – although their scores on specific writing measurements may have changed over the course of the semester. One student (3%) experienced a decrease in his writing score. It's important to note, however, that this student intentionally extended little effort on this final

essay because he "already had a good grade in the class" and "was really freaking out" about his anatomy final, which corresponded with the date the essay was due (Ron, 2017). It is possible that, should Ron's essay more accurately reflect his writing ability, he might have received a different result. This issue, one of time management and priority of limited resources (time/effort) is an important one, but it's impact on student writing is outside the scope of the current study.

To determine if the increases shown in Figures 9 and 10 represent statistically significant changes, we can look at the descriptive statistics for each of the five measures and the overall means for the first and last essays; all of which is found in Table 11 below.

Table 11

Descriptive Statistics and Paired Sample Comparisons of Essay Scores

Measure	First Essay			Last Essay			95% confidence interval		*t*	Sig. (2-tailed)
	M	SD	Range	M	SD	Range	Lower bound	Upper bound		
Context	8.06	1.71	4,10	9.22	1.23	6,10	-1.76	-.58	-4.00	.000*
Content	5.92	2.06	2,10	7.47	2.17	4,10	-2.22	-.89	-4.72	.000*
Compose	7.42	1.89	2,10	8.14	1.64	4,10	-1.34	-.10	-2.37	.024**
Evidence	6.58	1.80	4,10	7.47	2.20	2,10	-1.57	-.20	-2.63	.012**
Syntax	7.33	1.72	4,10	8.03	1.80	4,10	-1.23	-.16	-2.63	.013**
Mean of All Essays	3.53	.77	1.6,5	4.03	.71	2.4,2.6	-.68	-.32	-5.52	.000*

* $p < .01$
** $p < .05$

In Table 11 we can see that each measure's mean increase ranged from 0.70 to 1.55, with an overall increase of 0.50 among the first and last essays. A Paired Samples *t* test showed that both context and content experienced a statistically significant increase at the $p < .01$ level, and the remaining three measures: compose, evidence, and syntax, experienced a statistically significant

increase at the $p < .05$ level. Perhaps most importantly, the difference in overall scores from the first and last essays was significant at the $p < .001$ level.

Based on these results, we can state that there is a significant difference in the first essay scores (M = 3.53, STD = 0.77) and the last essay scores (M = 4.03, STD = 0.71); t (35) = -5.52, p = 0.001. Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected and it is assumed students experienced an increase in writing ability among five measures within a 15 week Composition I course taught using ISC Pedagogy.

Before we conclude this measure, let's take one more look at Amy and Rory. Rory, who reported the biggest drop in writerly self-efficacy (M = -1.16) and stated that he thought instructor-student conferences had neither a positive nor negative impact on his writing confidence, experienced a mean increase of 1.8 (M = 3 on first essay, M = 4.8 on last essay), which represents a 36% increase in his writing ability based on the five measures scored. Amy, on the other hand, also experienced a drop in writerly self-efficacy (M = -1) and stated that instructor-student conferences had a negative impact on her writing ability, yet also stated she found value in them during her qualitative response, experienced no change in her writing ability (M = 4 on both essays). So despite the students' perception of instructor-student conferencing, neither experienced a negative impact their writing ability – which is important to note as we look at implementing ISC Pedagogy in Chapter 5.

So What do Instructor-Student Conferences *DO*?

Instructor-student writing conferences are at the core of ISC Pedagogy. They are the center around which everything else revolves. As such, it's important to better understand what they actually *do* for students; so, I asked them. On the last day of class I gave my students a writing prompt and asked them to respond to the following question: What do instructor-student

conferences do for you? Students freewrote their responses and submitted them electronically. A total of 80 students responded to the prompt. Responses were coded and after repeated readings, three main themes emerged: sense of community and safety, self-efficacy, and writing ability. The construct, code, and response statement within each theme is provided in Table 12.

Table 12

Codes and Constructs of Statements

Construct	Response statement
	Community & Safety
Personalized feedback	"They allow me to get *personal feedback* on my writing…"
Ask questions	"I feel more free to express actual concerns and *questions*…"
	Self-efficacy
Build confidence	"Conferences helped to boost my *confidence* in writing…"
Reduce anxiety	"…it also eased by *anxiety* by knowing…"
	Writing ability
Strategies for improvement	"I learned new writing *strategies* and *ways to revise* my essays…"
Increase understanding or reduce confusion	"…helped me *understand* what did and didn't work in my paper."
Receive guidance or "right track"	"*Guide* me towards making the paper even better" or "...helped me know I was on the *right track*…"

Each of these codes is described in greater detail below.

Code 1. Personalized feedback. *Personalized feedback* is distinguished by comments that relate to the personalization or individualization of feedback provided during the conference. The emphasis is on the personalization of instruction, which is an important distinction between this code and *strategies for improvement*, which is described below. An example of personalized feedback is: "Instructor-student writing conferences helped me so much because I was able to get

one-on-one help from my instructor when I needed it the most and I know it had a huge effect on my essays and writing in general" (Bobby, Fall 2017).

Code 2. Ask questions. *Ask questions* under the Community & Safety construct refers to the students' willingness to ask questions and feeling safe to do so. For many students, this meant asking them outside of the classroom. An example from this category is: "Instructor-student conferences gave me a chance to ask any questions I had about my paper without fear of another student's opinion" (John, Fall 2017).

Code 3. Build confidence. *Build confidence* is characterized by statements revolving around building or increasing confidence or belief in their writing ability. Examples include: "Conferences were very important to me because they gave me hope that my ideas could actually work and you helped them along rather than shooting them down" (Ginny, Fall 2017).

Code 4. Reduce anxiety. Statements categorized as *Reduce anxiety* specifically reference a reduction or decrease in feelings of anxiety or stress. An example from this category is: "Instructor-student conferences help ease any stress I have towards an essay. I am able to take my best shot at writing without being afraid of getting a bad grade" (Charlie, Fall 2017).

Code 5. Strategies for improvement. *Strategies for improvement* encapsulates comments that include references to specific strategies or ways students can improve their writing. The emphasis of these comments is on *strategies*, rather than personalization, which is what differentiates this code from *personalized feedback*. An example from this category is: "I really enjoyed the writing conferences because it helped me to notice errors in my writing that I definitely would not have noticed myself. It challenged me to review my work rather than just turning my first rough draft in" (Clara, Fall 2017).

Code 6. Increase understanding or reduce confusion. *Increase understanding or reduce confusion* is a category that includes comments focused on increasing comprehension or alleviating confusion. Whereas *Ask questions* is contained within the context of safety – feeling comfortable asking questions – *Increase understanding or reduce confusion* focuses on the process of increasing understanding without regard to feelings of vulnerability. An example from this category is: "Student to teacher conferences really help me to iron out any confusions or questions I have about my essay" (Prim, Fall 2017).

Code 7. Receive guidance or "right track". Receive guidance or "right track" refers to expressions of assistance or guidance that aren't tied to specific ways to improve (Strategies for improvement) or building their confidence (Build confidence). Its focus is more on reassuring than building. An example from this category is: "The writing conference helped me to know what I was doing right, if I was on the right track with the essay, to see if I do know what I am doing within the essay" (Gale, Fall 2017).

Qualitative analysis. By looking at the frequency in which each of these codes were used, we can get a better understanding of what students find beneficial in instructor-student conferences. Because students frequently included multiple benefits in their comments, the percentages and numbers provided in Figure 11 represent the frequency in which each code was mentioned by students and consequently, the percentages add up to more than 100.

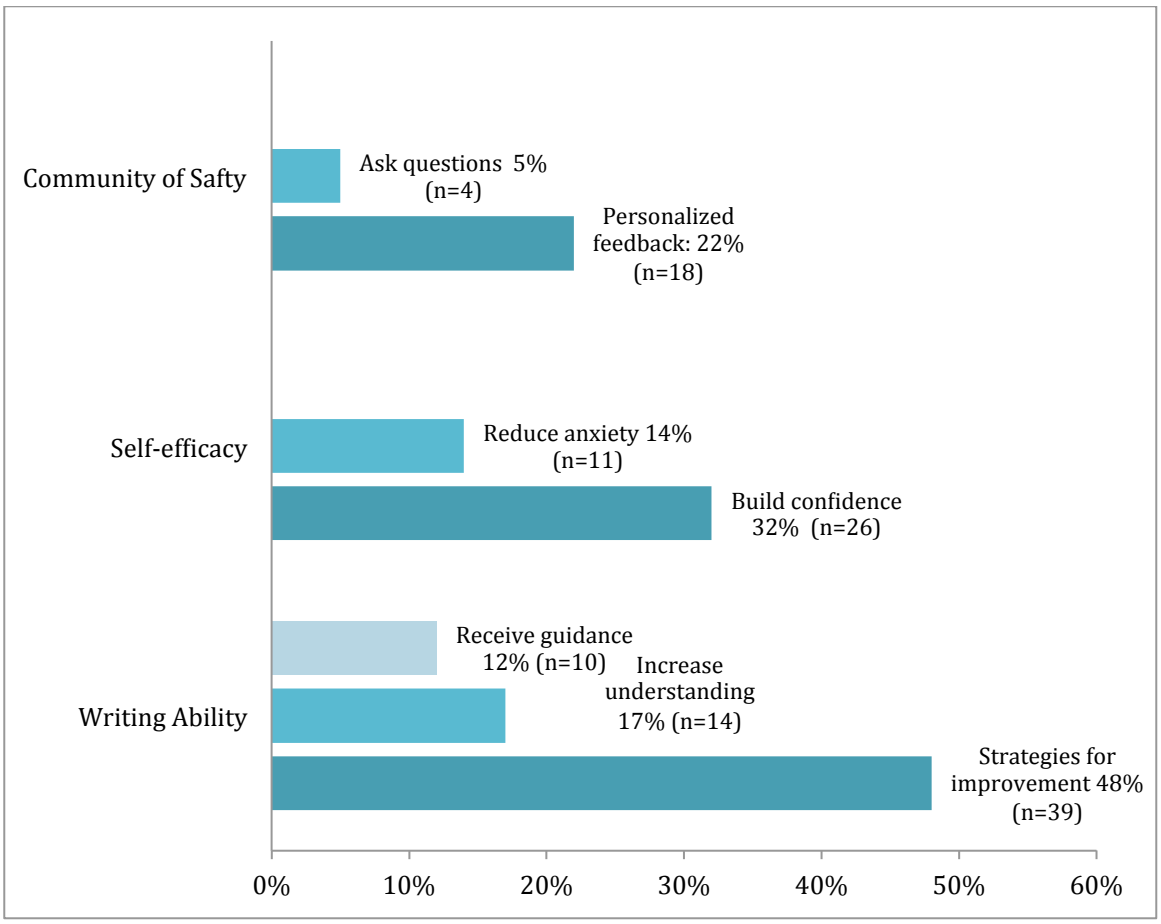

Figure 11. Frequencies and percentages for each code.

By viewing the data in Figure 11, we can see that students rank *Strategies for improvement,* 48%, (*n* = 39), *Building confidence,* 32%, (*n* = 26), and *Personalized feedback,* 22%, (n = 18) as the three most important benefits of instructor-student conferences. These are often the three benefits commonly cited in the literature as well. Hermione, a student participating in the study, ties these three concepts into her own conferencing experiences. She explains:

> The writing conferences always helped me …feel confident about handing in my final essay. Also it gave me a chance to heave a relationship with my teacher in which I feel had a huge reason as to why my writing improved. This is because Professor Brown was able to give my writing its own attention and the feed back was directed to me. I was then able to take what I was told and apply it to my final pieces of writing. In class students do

> not get this one on one opportunity to meet with there teacher on this level and it was truly something special (Hermione, Fall 2017).

Cass's comments on instructor-student conferences show that *Increase understanding or reduce confusion* (17%, *n* = 14) and *Receive guidance or "right track"* (12%, *n* = 10) were what he valued most about conferences. He commented:

> The conferences definitely help me because they help me get a better understanding of my writing and if I am going in the right direction. This is extremely beneficial (Cass, Fall 2017).

Minerva's comments regarding instructor-student conferences reflect the categories *Ask questions* (5%, *n* = 4) and *Reduce anxiety* (14%, *n* = 11). She stated:

> It helps me gain a personal relationship with my professor and helps me feel less stressed…the meetings help with any questions that I have that Im uncomfortable with sharing in class. The writing conferences are something I feel as though I've lacked in all my years of writing, so Im really happy to have them now (Minerva, Fall 2017).

What is interesting is the underlying sense of appreciation for these conferences. All three students closed with a value comment: "In class students do not get this one on one opportunity to meet with there teacher on this level and it was truly something special," "This is extremely beneficial," and "I feel as though I've lacked in all my years of writing, so Im really happy to have them now." Students, at least in this context, were able to recognize the value of instructor-student conferences, its impact on their writing confidence and ability, and were grateful to have had the opportunity to participate in them. This may help explain why instructors conference frequently, and why *I* conference frequently. I find myself far more exhausted after grading essays for three hours than conferencing for six. I don't *feel* appreciated when making marginal

comments. In fact, I find myself getting resentful as I wonder if my students will even read them. But when I provide feedback directly to the student, when we sit back and talk about a place in their paper where they struggled, work together to resolve it, and when, at the conclusion, almost every single student smiles and says, "thank you" or exclaims, "I feel so much better now, thanks for doing this," that I don't feel tired. I feel valued and respected.

Conclusion

The results of this study are promising. Students who completed Composition I taught using ISC Pedagogy during the Fall 2017 semester, experienced a statistically significant improvement in their overall writerly self-efficacy (p = .001), and overall writing ability (p = .001) on five measures: content, context, compose, evidence, and syntax. Students reportedly found tremendous value in the instructor-student conferencing component of ISC pedagogy with 98% of the students stating it had a positive affect on both their confidence in their writing and their writing ability. The top three benefits of these conferences, according to students, are the strategies for improvement they received, their increased confidence in their writing ability, and the personalized feedback they received.

In the final chapter of this dissertation we'll discuss the findings along with its limitations, and implications ISC Pedagogy may have on the field as a pedagogical practice, within the WPA environment, and opportunities for future research.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS

> It's worth replacing four weeks of class with conferences. I got to relate and know you so much better through the one-on-one time and we may not all admit it, but getting to know your professors, especially as intimidated freshman, is really important. Next to obviously helping us with our essays, this idea of getting to know you was absolutely a close second. It allowed us to be real with you, and be open rather than scared. This was a huge part of our success in this class (Harry, Fall 2017).

Introduction

This study set out to create and clearly define a pedagogical approach to teaching Composition I that centered around frequent instructor-student writing conferences and then measure its impact on writerly self-efficacy and writing ability. In Chapter 1, I argued that instructor-student conferences have been a threshold concept in academia, but due to a lack of replicable, aggregable, and data-driven research, it has been unable to move into the realm of knowledge. I then explained the role instructor-student conferences play in developing student self-efficacy, which is directly tied to retention, an issue of great significance among university administration and FYC programs.

In Chapter 2, I took this threshold concept, added recent research from relevant disciplines including education, linguistics, psychology and sociology, and composed a new pedagogical approach: ISC Pedagogy. I defined instructor-student conferences within this approach and established its five foundational principles: community of safety, self-efficacy, conference as response, reflection, and revision.

In Chapter 3, I described the methodology including the rationale for using established and vetted studies to measure the effectiveness of this new pedagogical approach. To measure writerly self-efficacy I replicated Schmidt and Alexander's (2012) study, to measure impact on

writing I extended Kelly-Riley and Elliot's (2014) study. I then used original quantitative and qualitative research to isolate the specific affect of instructor-student conferences in an attempt to better understand its impact. I did this by asking students to use a Likert scale to rate the impact instructor-student conferences have on their writing confidence and ability and then on a separate occasion, freewrite on what they find valuable in instructor-student conferences, what conferences actually *do* for them.

In Chapter 4, I shared the resulting data with which I was able to demonstrate the promising impact that a course taught using ISC Pedagogy had on both writerly self-efficacy and five measures of writing (content, context, compose, evidence, and syntax). Students confirmed the integral nature of instructor-student conferences to this pedagogical approach with 98% stating these conferences had a positive affect on both their confidence in their writing and their writing ability. The top three benefits students reported receiving from conferences were strategies for improvement, increased confidence in their writing ability, and the personalized feedback they received.

In this final chapter, I will activate each of the five principle components of ISC Pedagogy as I move them from theory to practice within today's context and clearly state the limitations. Then, in the second part, I discuss the implications of my research on three key contexts: the composition field, Writing Program Administrators, and future research.

Part I: Analyzing ISC Pedagogy

As I begin to deconstruct the results of this study and analyze the experience of both instructor and student, I will do so through the lens of ISC Pedagogy itself. By directly linking results with each pedagogical principle and providing implementation strategies, we can more deeply understand ISC Pedagogy and its replicable nature.

Figure 12. ISC Pedagogy's five key principles – revisited.

Principle #1: Community of Safety

The single largest contributor to student success – to students who thrive – is a sense of community (Schreiner et al., 2012). In order for students to feel like they belong, that they are part of a community, they need personal interaction with its members – both instructors and fellow classmates. Results from my study showed that 27% (n = 22) of students identified instructor-student conferences as contributing to building a sense of community. This may be because conferences provide an opportunity for the student and instructor to get to know *each other*; not just the instructor getting to know the student, but the student getting to know the instructor too. Ginny's comment speaks straight to this point:

> The writing conferences were more personal and made me value my writing even more since I knew my teacher cared about me as an individual student not just another paper submission (Ginny, Fall 2017).

Comments similar to Ginny's were found peppered throughout the qualitative findings, echoes of which were housed within comments coded as *personalized feedback* and *receive guidance or "right track"* which together, encapsulates comments from 34% of the participants.

Strategies for developing community. There are many ways we can build a sense of community and safety within the classroom. I have found that focusing on three components have made the biggest impact in my classroom: creating a safe place, breaking bread, and serving each other.

To create a safe place, at the beginning of each semester I have my students read my annotated copy of Holley and Steiner's 2005 article, "Safe space: Student perspectives on classroom environment." After reading the article (which lends itself to a discussion of how and what we annotate), students complete an assignment (found in Appendix F), inspired by the *Ways of Reading* text (Bartholomae, Petrosky, & Waite, 2014) that asks them to write for an hour (this focus on time rather than word count is discussed in the second principle: self-efficacy). During the next class meeting we discuss the article, share experiences where we've felt safe and unsafe in a classroom, discuss whether it's even possible to feel safe in a classroom, and then create a community contract in which we all work together to clearly establish expectations and guidelines for the instructor, peers, and self. Students sign this document and it's then posted in our online classroom management system.

Breaking bread together is another important component to building community within the classroom. When we meet friends or want to get to know people better, we tend to do so over food. Whether we invite friends to dinner or meet someone for coffee, food is part of friendship. I bring in food for my students at least once each month. I'm always amazed at how much my students appreciate this. Whether I bake bread or cookies or pick up whatever is Buy One Get

One free (BOGO) at my local grocery store, they really don't care. I bring in candy around Halloween and Valentine's Day, muffins during the middle of the semester crunch, brownies on student birthdays, whatever my time and budget permits. I try to always include a fresh fruit option for those with food allergies or other dietary restrictions. My personal favorite treat to bring in are cupcakes. I bake a bunch of cupcakes (BOGO!), then bring in frosting, sprinkles and plastic knives and let my students decorate them themselves. It's both time and budget friendly and my students love it.

The last component to building community is service. Instructors work hard and make personal sacrifices for their students, which is often why we feel close to them, care about them, and, conversely, can be frustrated by them too. When we work together, we grow closer. In the classroom I do this through section specific community contacts and selfies. At the beginning of the semester I ask for three students to serve as community contacts, these are the people that students contact whenever they miss class and want to know what they missed. This, like many inventions, was born out of necessity. I got tired (and frustrated) by students emailing me to know if they "missed anything important" when their alarm didn't go off and they overslept for their noon class. I don't have enough time (or patience) to re-teach courses so instead, when someone misses class they reach out to their community contact and receive a brief (two to three sentences) review of what we discussed and upcoming deadlines. Community contacts get extra credit which makes them happy and I don't have to re-teach classes, so I'm happy too. It's a true win-win.

The second way we serve each other is by supporting each other in any extra-curricular activity. If a member of the class is an athlete or musician or participates in any extra-curricular organization, they earn extra credit for participating **and** every class member that attends that

event can also receive extra credit. I also offer extra credit to students who get together outside of class to work on assignments or peer review papers – it's amazing what students will do for a little bit of extra credit. To receive credit I ask them to simply send me a selfie of themselves at the event/meeting. We start each class by having students share what they are doing that week so everyone can plan accordingly. At the end of the semester I take all the selfies and create a short iMovie (well, OK, my 16 year-old actually creates the movie) and we watch it together on the last day of class (while we decorate cupcakes). It's a great way to end the semester. I do cap the extra credit to 25 points and with a course total of 800 points, it can help but not dramatically skew the grade.

Through creating a safe place, breaking bread together, and service, we strive to create a place where students can actively engage in learning. As Luna put it:

> Through this class I have been able to view writing as a place to share, grow, and learn from others, I used to look at writing as complex, and felt nervous about my assignments. But I feel like I have improved my writing, and have take in more advanced skills then I knew prior to taking this class. I am able to communicate to my readers, and convey what I am trying to say in my writing (Luna, Fall 2017).

Principle #2: Self-Efficacy

Self-Efficacy, discussed extensively in Chapters 1 and 2, has become an increasingly important issue on my campus, and across many universities across the country, due to its impact on retention and graduation rates (Cheon-woo et al., 2017; Morales, 2014; Ruecker et al., 2017; Schreiner et al., 2012). While it is a psycho-social variable which can be unstable, it plays an important role within the FYC classroom in helping students increase their level of self-efficacy. As this study was conducted at an open-admission institution, it's common to witness low levels

of self-efficacy, especially writerly self-efficacy, among students. Students have been told they "can't write" by so many teachers, for so long, that they consider it to be a fact, a deficit they will just have to "live with." But, self-efficacy isn't a fixed trait (Bandura, 2006; A. Duckworth, 2016; Nilson, 2013; Zimmerman, 2000). It can be strengthened and developed, and instructor-student conferences may play a key roll in this. In fact, 98% (n = 67) of students experienced an increase in their overall writerly self-efficacy scores and attributed instructor-student conferences as helping them do it.

Strategies for increasing writerly self-efficacy. Writerly self-efficacy can be enhanced through a variety of methods that are easily customizable. This study included acknowledging and sharing writing struggles, adding self-efficacy building elements into assignments, and directly addressing writing misconceptions through frequent instructor-student conferencing.

At the beginning of the semester I read an excerpt from Anne Lamott's "Shitty First Drafts" (1995), aloud to my students. It serves as a starting point from which we get "real" with each other regarding writing. I share my own writing process –my *real* writing process where, before I even open Microsoft® Word, I engage in a complex and recursive series of social media checks and trips to the fridge – which helps students begin to see that even writing experts struggle to start writing. Throughout the semester I share my own struggles with writing, the stress it can cause, and funny stories about procrastination or embarrassing typos. Students appreciate – and perhaps even *need* – to see how everyone struggles to write so they don't take their struggles as evidence that they "can't write." Katniss said:

> In this course, my confidence has boosted because of the way the professor explains the struggles that come with writing. It helps to know that many people have struggles and not just me (Katniss, Fall 2017).

Modeling the "real" writing process not only helps students begin to relate to their instructors, it also helps students understand that their instructors *can relate to them* and their struggles. This can increase the chance that students will ask for help when they are struggling, or at least understand that their struggles are a normal part of the writing process.

Mindfully adding self-efficacy building elements into writing assignments can also help students increase their writerly self-efficacy. Reading Assignments (such as RA 2 found in Appendix F) focused more on effort by containing a time requirement instead of word requirement. In these assignments, students are asked to interact with the assigned text and freewrite for an hour. Spelling and grammar don't count. MLA style and a sophisticated organizational structure don't count. Students just need to spend an hour writing a response or answering questions I provide. The goal is not for the student to be "right" or "wrong", but to see how they interact with a text and provide them with multiple opportunities to experience success. These may, over time, become the evidence students need to increase their writerly self-efficacy.

The third method I used to intentionally increase students' writerly self-efficacy was to directly confront misconceptions during our writing conference. At the start of each conference, after initial pleasantries, I asked, "So, how is your essay coming along?" Responses normally went one of two ways, either (1) "I don't know, we'll see what you think" or (2) "I don't really like it, I'm not good at writing." Both responses directly reflect poor writerly self-efficacy. In the first response the student appears to be hoping they "did it right" but not able or willing to make a claim. In the second response the student claims a lack of skill or talent prevents them from writing a "good" paper. In either case, I mindfully point out the passages that work well, laugh when they attempt humor, or gasp when they share something unexpected. I'm providing them with evidence that they really can write. As they witness the impact their writing has on

someone, that what they intended to have happen actually happened, the affect it has on them is noticeable and swift. Previously stiff shoulders soften and relax, smiles replace anxious expressions and they seem to exhale into their writing.

> This English class gave me much more confidence in my writing abilities. I am very quick to start off writing my essays confidently knowing that I'm capable of accomplishing any given writing assignment. This class has furthered my abilities and confidence in my writing through teaching me how to write different types of essays and through the bi-weekly writing conferences (Ginny, Fall 2017).

Principle #3: Conference as Response

There are many different ways to conduct an instructor-student writing conference. There is no scripted approach that will work for every instructor or every student. There are, however, guiding principles that can help instructors develop an approach that represents their style of teaching while building writerly self-efficacy and writing improvement for the student. The approach to conferencing that I recommend is a fusion of Taylor's "A Counseling Approach to Writing Conferences" (1985), Boynton's "See Me: Conference Strategies for Developing Writers" (2003), and Sommers' "Responding to Student Writers" (2013). It focuses on building a relationship with the student, increasing their self-efficacy, and providing personalized, meaningful feedback. It also must be realistic and respect the personal and professional needs of the instructor. Strategies for accomplishing each of these are provided below and detailed in Appendix G.

Building relationships through conferencing. The idea of sitting down, one-on-one with your instructor to read your writing can be an anxiety-inducing event for students; for those with low levels of writerly self-efficacy, this can be terrifying. They already "know" they can't

write, now their instructor is going to know it too, then everyone will know that they don't really belong in college anyway, they will be exposed as an imposter and kicked to the curb. Such spiraling thoughts can swirl around in a student's head and wreak havoc. However, when they are directly confronted and shown to be false, it has a profound affect on the student. I witness this every single semester.

Understanding the stress students feel prior to their first conference, we can see why it's important to begin establishing a safe space and building a sense of community right away. Classroom instruction is a great time to introduce instructor-student writing conferences, explain their benefits and set expectations. I provide a handout (found in Appendix H) that helps students prepare for their conference, know what to expect during it, and what to do afterward. I stress that this is a collaborative effort, not a "fix it" session. I explain that past students have found these conferences to be overwhelmingly helpful and actually enjoyable. I then, observing the looks of doubt on their faces, ask them to trust me.

Knowing that the first conference draws upon the safety previously established in the classroom, I make a conscious effort to create an atmosphere of acceptance and shift from the role of authority figure to collaborator. Because the standard office arrangement that places people on opposing sides of a large desk communicates the imbalance of power (Roderick, 2016), I conduct conferences in a more neutral location: our on campus coffee shop. Here, the student and I sit side-by-side, reinforcing the message of collaboration. We engage in small talk as students set their bags down and produce their paper. I read their body language and if they appear nervous I try to spend a few more minutes relating with them before we begin reviewing the paper. Throughout the conference I keep my larger goal in mind – to get to know them as a

person, increase their writerly self-efficacy, and give them options they can use to improve their writing – and make sure they know they aren't alone, that I'm here to help them along the way.

Increasing self-efficacy through conferencing. Helping students increase their writerly self-efficacy centers around undoing the negative messages they've heard (or interpreted) regarding their "bad" writing, providing evidence of their "good" writing, and helping them find their voice so they can begin to claim their place in their new Discourse community of college. Helping them retain – or claim – ownership of their paper is an important part of this process.

At the beginning of each instructor-student conference, after the initial small talk is concluded and the student is ready to begin, I give control of our time together to the student by asking: "So, how's your paper going? Where can I help you the most today?" I never read the paper in advance – if I did, then I would have an agenda of what I wanted to say and it would quickly become *my* conference. These conferences are instructor ***and*** student – I take that "and" very seriously. Students run these conferences, they prioritize what they want to accomplish. As we talk about the paper together, I ask them to help me know how to best help them by telling me where to start. Sometimes they don't know, and that's fine, so we start at the beginning. Sometimes they go directly to a point in the paper where they're "stuck." Sometimes they review their paper so fast, pointing out things they like or didn't like, that I find myself struggling to keep up. How *awesome* is that! Some students – not all - know their paper so well, they know exactly where the trouble spots lie and we dive right in together. Even if the student isn't sure how I can help, if they can't seem to quite remember what they wrote, ("sorry Professor Brown," they say sheepishly, "it was kinda late then I wrote this"), we *both* pick up a pen and the student starts to read aloud. Having students read their own essays further establishes their ownership

and keeps students more engaged in the process. The simple act of having each of us hold a pen encourages students to notice and record their own comments, rather then just mine.

Providing meaningful feedback through conferencing. When I conference with students, I mindfully provide feedback in a manner that builds self-efficacy. I use research from writing center scholars such as Rafoth (2005, 2015), Boquet (2002), Harris (1995, 2001), and Thonus (2003, 2004) as a guide for how I work with students. I point out what students do well, try to refrain from "correcting" and instead ask them to how- and what-based questions when we come to a passage that is unclear. I found how and what questions are easier for my students to answer as they request descriptive answers, whereas why-based questions require analysis that many of my students aren't able to answer in a meaningful way. In addition, I center my comments around I statements: "I can't see the connection between this point and that one," and avoid you statements: "Where is your thesis statement?"

When commenting on the writing, I use an approach based heavily on Sommers' (2013) work on providing feedback. I offer an honest assessment of where they stumble and where they succeed in an encouraging tone. I don't mark every misplaced comma, but rather look for patterns and focus my comments on things of greater significance. I model an orderly approach to revision – before we worry about grammar, we make sure our argument is well supported and our organization is logical. If we reach an especially garbled section we stop reading and start talking, working together to find possible alternatives, making sure the decision of where to take the writing is always up to the student. As so frequently stated in writing center studies, it's not about writing a "perfect" paper, it's about helping the writer develop skills they'll need to write in future situations. Harry's comment shows the importance of this process:

> This course affected my confidence heavily in my writing. The conferences were a huge part of this because instead of criticizing my piece like my teachers did in high school, you showed that you really cared and you guided my ideas along instead of replacing them (Harry, Fall 2017).

Conferences firmly rooted in reality. The primary reason instructors give for not conferencing are variations of too many students and too little time (Lerner, 2005). No matter how effective ISC Pedagogy may be for students, if it doesn't work within the context of today's time-deprived instructor, it simply doesn't work. I argue that by replacing one week of classroom instruction with one 15-minute instructor-student conference for each essay students write – the format I used in this study – it will positively impact student writerly-self efficacy and writing ability without over-burdening the instructor.

Due to the demands of student athletes, working students, and my own personal and professional obligations, the only way I can make conferences work is by conducting them during regularly scheduled instruction time. Each semester I assign four essays in Composition I. For each essay, I replace one week of classroom instruction with an individual conference. This means that an entire month's worth of instruction is replaced by individual conferences. At the end of each semester I ask my students the same question: is it worth it? During the Fall 2017 semester, when this study took place, 99% of the students (80 out of 81), said yes.

> It's worth it to replace class time with one on one time. This is a rare opportunity in which I loved participating in because no other professor does this. I felt as if it built a foundation to our personal relationship and helped me feel as if I were actually being helped. I had your full attention and advice to help me personally. I liked being able to sit down and just ask questions and talk about my work (Molly, 2017).

The results of my study confirm Molly's comments: it *is* worth it to replace one week of classroom instruction with individual instructor-student conferences for each essay.

In regards to the length of each conference, there is no consensus in the literature. There isn't even a consensus on whether the paper should be read in advance. My initial decision to have 15-minute conferences and not read papers beforehand was initially based on logistics. To meet with 96 students (four Comp I sections – my contracted load – although during the Fall 2017 semester, I taught an additional two sections of a remedial writing course) during one week, I needed to average 19 students per day. Reading all 96 essays in advance was never even an option for me. I regularly teach five or six FYC courses each semester and there is never time for pre-reading. I needed to keep a pace of four students per hour for five hours with one 15-minute break, thus conferences are 15 minutes long. Over the past five years I've been conferencing in this way, and this study showed that these frequent, 15-minute conferences were, in fact, effective.

> Even though conferences were only 15 minutes, it helped me every single time. I had a lot of anxiety before going, and after I felt calm every time. I left with a vision for my paper and I knew how to work towards it (John, Fall 2017).

One additional step I took to manage my time constraints while conferencing was to intentionally reduce the time I spent grading final drafts. The first semester I tried this I explained to my students that they would receive the majority of my feedback during our individual conferences, in time to make any changes they chose to make prior to turning it in for a grade. I explained that conferences were their time to ask questions and work on their revision skills. The final draft of the paper would contain computerized grammatical markings, maybe a few short comments from me, and then utilize a rubric to provide more direct grade-based

feedback. Naturally, if any student wanted to meet with me to discuss their grade in more detail I was happy to accommodate them. I found this change did reduce the time I spent grading and didn't appear to have any negative impact on grades or student expectations. I believe this is because feedback is more effective when given face-to-face, rather then written as a comment in the margins. Fergus stated:

> The instructor in this course has taught me to find errors in my writing such as organizational errors, format errors, and errors that I would have never caught if it wasn't for her. And it affected my writing ability overall as she boosted my confidence in myself and my writing and for that I am thankful (Fergus, Fall 2017).

Principle #4: Reflection

Reflection, as discussed in Chapter 2, is not a new concept in education. Socrates used dialogue to promote reflection. He proposed that "the work of the philosopher's mind is to focus its attention toward questioning, interviewing, and cross-examining the whole nature of things seen and unseen in order to explore various phenomena" (Denton, 2011, p. 841). The questioning process inherent in reflection plays an important role, it encourages students to pause and review the process they used to complete an assignment, reflect on the measure of success they achieved, and consciously decide how they can use what they learned for their next writing assignment. This isn't accomplished through a single assignment, but rather a variety of assignments mindfully incorporated throughout the semester.

Strategies for incorporating reflection. I incorporated reflection through multiple in-class response pieces, and a longer, more reflective assignment after each instructor-student conference. I did, however, struggle to keep these more formal reflections from becoming a routine assignment that was just "something they did" after our writing conference.

At the beginning of each semester, I traditionally ask students to think about what they want to learn in this class, what they are concerned/anxious about, and to list two or three goals they have for themselves – including how they will know if they achieved these goals. They write them in class and submit them to our online classroom site. I then have students revisit these goals in the middle of the semester and reflect on where they are in accomplishing these goals. At the end of the semester, they reflect on them again and write about what they learned, how they currently feel about the issues that caused them concern/anxiety, if they achieved their goals, and what they can carry with them into future writing classes. However, during the Fall 2017 semester, when this research took place, Hurricane Irma interrupted my instruction time when she hit central Florida in September, causing us to evacuate campus and miss two weeks of traditional instruction during which time this assignment was inadvertently dropped. In the past, however, this has been a very insightful experience for students and myself as I use their initial comments to help guide instruction and make adjustments during our mid-semester check-in and final reflection. We also have a mid-semester and late-semester grade check where students calculate their current grade and reflect on how they feel about their grade and what they intend to change or continue to do for the remainder of the semester. These short reflection pieces may help increase students' self-efficacy as they witness their increasing competence while simultaneously recognizing areas of weakness. (Harford, 2008).

In addition to these short, in-class response pieces, I also utilize a more formal reflection assignment for each essay. Part of the instructional time allocated for the first essay is spent discussing the concept of reflection and it's benefits. We then model the elements to include to make the process more meaningful rather than mundane. I share Allan and Driscoll's (2014) questions for reflection (found in Table 13 below) and have students work in groups to respond

to the first four questions using a writing assignment they had completed earlier in the week. As additional incentive, I offer extra credit to the group whose responses best fit the criteria we had previously identified as important.

Table 13

Questions From Reflection Assignment

Question	Item
Q1.	Please describe your writing process for this assignment. This may include prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and collaboration.
Q2.	Please describe your research process for this assignment. This may include locating, evaluating, and integrating sources.
Q3	What are the strengths of your writing in this assignment?
Q4	What parts of your writing in this assignment did you struggle with?
Q5	What did you think about the writing conference with your instructor?
Q6	Regarding your writing conference with the instructor, what, if anything, was helpful?
Q7	Regarding your writing conference with the instructor, what, if anything was not helpful?
Q8	What did you learn from this writing assignment that might help you with future writing assignments?

For each of the four essays assigned during the Fall 2017 semester, students were asked to write a 600-word response to the questions found in Table 13 (the full assignment is found in Appendix I), by 11 pm on the day of their conference. By tying this reflection assignment closely to instructor-student conferences, it was my intent that students could take what they learned through the reflection process and use it to help guide their final attempt at revision. An area I found I needed to improve upon, however, is in providing a rapid response to these reflections and ting them in more tightly to classroom instruction. I fell behind on grading student reflections and noticed more "copy & paste" type of submissions, rather than careful reflection. Instructor feedback is an essential factor of reflection because it helps students identify salient

areas to focus on and promotes an opportunity for individualized and meaningful correspondence between students and their teachers (Denton, 2011; Pavlovich, 2007; Yancey, 1998). By providing more targeted comments more quickly, I can enhance the effectiveness of this method. I can also use the information the students provide to help me deliver more individualized instruction through the use of small-group instruction or discussion on specific areas of concern.

Principle #5: Revision

The final principle of ISC Pedagogy is that of revision. To my students, revision is synonymous with editing. When they begin to understand the difference, they are often resistant to making the types of significant changes inherent to revision because they've "already met the word count," or have "already spent so much time on this essay." Or, as Sommers' explains, "Because students do not see revision as an activity in which they modify and develop perspectives and ideas, they feel that if they know what they want to say, then there is little reason for making revisions" (Sommers, 1980, p. 382).

Because my students struggle to see the value of revision, I've found that classroom instruction and modeling revision is a good first step, incorporating it as part of the peer review process strengthens it, but it is really during the instructor-student conferences that students begin to realize how revision can dramatically improve their writing.

Strategies for incorporating revision. I initially introduce my students to the distinction between editing and revision through classroom discussion. Many of my students have had their papers graded for "correctness" so they think that as long as everything is punctuated correctly, then they are "done". They don't even considering revision to their content, organization or argument. I have my students read Sommers' "Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers" (1980) for homework and during the next class meeting students

break into groups and work together to identify revision strategies that sound "reasonable" and "meaningful". I then provide them with Butler & Britt's (2011) revision primer (found in Appendix J) and ask them to use both resources to revise their current essay.

The next step in this process is to look at revision through the peer review process. After student's read Straub's "Responding–Really Responding–to Other Students' Writing" (1999), we work together as a class to identify ways to provide meaningful feedback on each other's essays. During the next class session, students bring a printed copy of their essay and participate in a peer review process. For the peer review, each student spends 20 minutes reading another student's essay and providing feedback by incorporating elements from Straub's article, classroom discussion, and a rubric. After the 20 minutes are up, everyone exchanges papers and repeats the process so that each essay is read and reviewed by two students. Students are then asked to use those comments to revise their essay prior to their instructor-student conference.

I tend to have mixed results from following this process. Some students will incorporate some of the comments they received but won't make significant changes. Some students will just bring in the copy with the peer comments on it – not even bothering to incorporate the feedback they already received. In order for my students to really understand revision and see it's benefits, we need to do it together during our conferences. While I repeatedly tell students that "one and done" doesn't apply to writing, they are still hesitant to take any action that takes them away from the golden word count requirement. To many of my students, meeting the word count requirement means they are done, regardless of the content. It can be a struggle for them to extend the effort involved in meaningful revision. However, when we read the paper together and discover large sections that are unclear or an organizational structure that is hard to follow, and then after utilizing some revision techniques from our readings, re-read it and see how much

better their writing becomes, they are more willing to do the necessary work. Some students, however, still look at me like I'm crazy when I suggest eliminating an entire paragraph that doesn't support their main point. They exclaim, "But how will I make the word count if I take that out?" And while we may talk about other ideas they can add or support they can give, in the end, it's their paper and they need to take ownership of their ideas. If I mandate revision it falls flat – "Why am I revising this? It's fine." But if I *show* them how to revise, they have a better chance of seeing it as a legitimate part of the writing process and having it become a part of *their* writing process. This is working too – 48% (n = 39) of students listed strategies for improvement as one of the benefits of instruction-student conferences.

ISC Pedagogy and its Limitations

This study has shown that ISC Pedagogy is a promising option to help students improve their writerly self-efficacy and overall writing ability in a Composition I course. The five principles detailed throughout this study are designed to benefit students without unnecessarily burdening the instructor. Students in this study experienced a statistically significant improvement in both their writing and their writerly self-efficacy – and this was while the instructor was teaching 18-hours of FYC courses. While overload isn't recommended, obviously, it is often the reality for FYC faculty. Therefore, having a pedagogical approach that produces measurable results and is realistic for the instructor to implement is equally important.

Before we move on to the implications of ISC Pedagogy, it's important to note again the limitations of this study. Before any generalizable claims can be made, this study needs to be replicated at other institutions, perhaps with different courses as well. In addition, while this study chose to focus on self-efficacy, this psyco-social variable can be unsteady over time.

Studies looking at ISC Pedagogy's impact on writerly identity (Leung & Hicks, 2014) or emotions (D. Driscoll & Powell, 2016) may offer a more reliable long-term measurement.

Part II: Implications of ISC Pedagogy

ISC Pedagogy is an approach to teaching that incorporates the best practices of multiple fields of study. Its effectiveness and adaptability can help it positively impact the Composition field, Writing Program Administrators, and provide opportunities for additional research.

ISC Pedagogy's Impact on the Field of Composition

The goal of this study was to clearly define a pedagogical approach for using frequent instructor-student writing conferences – ISC Pedagogy – to teach Composition I and conduct a mixed methods study that generated replicable, aggregable, data-driven results so we can begin to quantify its affect on student writerly self-efficacy and writing ability. Instructor-student writing conferences have been a preferred method of teaching writing for so long they have taken on an almost lore-like quality. They are still being used, but how they are being conducted, their frequency of use, and to what effect remains largely unknown. How and if conferencing is being taught to new instructors and GAs is also unknown. This study took a step into the known by defining underlying principles of ISC Pedagogy, providing methods for incorporating them into the classroom, and quantifiably demonstrating its ability to provide statistically significant increases in each of its targeted measures. Beginning with the results from one private SLAC in Central Florida, the next step in the traditional method and scholarship of teaching and learning, is to conduct additional research to make it more generalizable. I intentionally designed this study in such as way as to make it replicable for other institutions that may want to implement this pedagogical approach and quantify their results for comparison purposes.

For the Composition field, this research supports instructors who find value in conferencing with their students but may struggle to conduct them on a regular basis with today's frequent 5/5 load. By transparently sharing the compromises I made as I implemented this pedagogical approach (keeping conferences to 15 minutes, replacing classroom instruction with conferences, and providing minimal feedback on final drafts), and sharing the results of student writing and self-efficacy scores at the end of the semester, it provides evidence that implementing ISC Pedagogy using the same guidelines at other institutions might also be effective – and it offers a clear way to collect and measure the data to determine its success in other contexts. The availability of quantifiable data could provide instructors with needed evidence to respond to concerns that may initially arise from administration or fellow faculty members.

The descriptions of how to implement ISC Pedagogy, and specifically, how to conference, could be beneficial to GAs and new instructors. Because of the enormous variation in GA and instructor training – both within the field of Composition but also in fields that commonly teach Composition such as Literature and Linguistics – having a clearly defined and measurable approach to conferencing could benefit GAs and new instructors. Due to ISC Pedagogy's ability to work in conjunction with any curricular focus (critical, Writing about Writing, feminism, etc), GAs and new instructors can incorporate ISC Pedagogical principles thus enabling them to quickly embrace conferencing and its identified best practices.

Linking ISC Pedagogy to self-efficacy was a strategic decision because of its direct ties to retention rates (Cheon-woo et al., 2017; Morales, 2014; Ruecker et al., 2017; Schreiner et al., 2012). Higher education's increased concern over student retention and graduation rates has become so wide-spread that it would be difficult to find even a single institution that isn't

working on a series of strategic plans and programs to help students stay enrolled and graduate in a timely manner (Ruecker et al., 2017). Far from just an administrative concern, FYC programs should also be concerned with retention as their smaller class sizes can lead to more active learning opportunities and direct involvement between faculty and students both in and outside of the classroom, all of which combine to have a positive impact on student retention rates (Ruecker et al., 2017; Tinto, 1998, 2006).

In 2015, the researcher conducted a pilot study in which 30 underprepared writers were identified and placed in a one credit hour writing studio that incorporated greater scaffolding for writing assignments and self-efficacy enhancing components (similar to the ones described in this study). It was paired with a required freshman experience course with a significant writing requirement. The researcher tracked the students for three years and then checked their retention rates and GPAs to determine their progress. She found that the retention rate for the entire 2015 cohort was 49.3%, compared to 49.6% for students identified as being underprepared and received the traditional three credit hour remedial writing course. However, for the underprepared students participating in the pilot, the retention rate was 66.7% - a dramatic 17.4% increase. To determine academic success, GPAs were compared. The underprepared students participating in the traditional three credit hour remedial writing course had a GPA of 2.98, for students participating in the pilot it was 3.11, and for the entire 2015 cohort it was 3.12. This shows that students participating in the pilot were doing as well as those who never even needed remediation. As a result of this pilot, the remedial writing program changed into to a one-credit studio course paired with Composition I.

ISC Pedagogy's Impact on Writing Program Administrators

The results of this study suggest that ISC Pedagogy is a valid approach to teaching Composition I, but its implications could extend across the curriculum into other fields of study. While serving as Chair of the WAC committee (there is no WPA position at the institution in which the research took place), the biggest impediment that faculty members in other departments stated for not assigning more writing projects was the amount of time to took to "fix all those student errors!" They seem to get so focused on error that they are missing a primary purpose of writing in college – developing critical thinking skills and using writing to communicate complex ideas. For faculty members teaching writing intensive courses in other departments who are struggling to keep up with the writing burden synonymous with large class sizes, ISC Pedagogy might provide needed relief. In addition to providing greater instruction on how to conference and provide self-efficacy enhancing feedback, ISC Pedagogy's focus on frequent *verbal* feedback through a method that provides a forum to individually discuss key concepts and learning objectives, all while strengthening relationships with students and avoiding excessive amounts of time grading papers, could benefit writing across the university.

ISC Pedagogy's Impact on Future Research

There are several exciting research opportunities that can be conducting regarding ISC Pedagogy. The first and most obvious one is the need for this project to be replicated within a wide variety of contexts to further establish generalizability and validity of its use. While the results of this study are encouraging, it would be impossible to generalize it to large state universities or even other SLACs in different locations. However, the results of this study are strong enough to warrant additional research.

Extending this study at the institution in which the study took place could help identify ISC Pedagogy's impact over time on retention rates and writing ability. Perhaps using a combination of retention data and writing sample scores each year would be sufficient to track change over time. It could also be interesting to track if the gains in writerly self-efficacy were maintained over time. This could be a simple study involving retaking the PSWSES once a year and recording the results. In addition, having other departments incorporate ISC Pedagogy as described above and measuring the results would also be interesting and beneficial to study.

One of the exciting possibilities for additional study that arose while reviewing the data is the impact ISC Pedagogy may have on transfer. A recent study by Driscoll and Powell (2016) explored the impact emotions have on writing development and writing transfer. They found that students need a safe space where they can learn to navigate the uncomfortable feelings that may accompany writing such as frustration and stress. When instructors provide feedback that include actionable strategies for revision while balancing constructive criticism and praise, they build relationships with the students – which plays a substantial role in both short-term success and the long-term transfer for skills. The research on the role emotions play in writing transfer is still in its infancy, but with self-efficacy and personalized instruction woven into the core of ISC Pedagogy, there could be some interesting opportunities to support this burgeoning field of research.

Two additional studies worth mentioning, both of which will take place during the 2018-2019 academic year at the institution in which this study took place, is to (1) use ISC Pedagogy in conjunction with a different curriculum and additional instructors, and, (2) to use ISC Pedagogy to teach Composition II. For the study that took place during the Fall 2017 semester, ISC Pedagogy was taught by one instructor, the researcher, in conjunction with a *Writing About*

Writing curricular focus. In the Fall 2018, it will be taught by three instructors, two of which will use the *Writing About Writing* curricular approach while the third instructor will infuse it with critical pedagogy. In the Spring of 2019, the researcher will use ISC Pedagogy to teach four sections of Composition II courses. Both studies will continue to utilize the same methods to measure the impact it has on both writerly self-efficacy and writing improvement.

Conclusion

This study sought to begin transitioning instructor-student writing conferences from a threshold concept to a more measureable form of knowledge by clearly defining them and establishing a pedagogical approach – ISC Pedagogy – and measuring it's impact on student writerly self-efficacy and writing ability. I found that students who participated in the Composition I course taught using ISC Pedagogy experienced a statistically significant improvement in their overall writerly self-efficacy (p = .001), and overall writing ability (p = .001) on five measures: content, context, compose, evidence, and syntax. In addition, students found tremendous value in the instructor-student conferencing component of ISC pedagogy with 98.5% of the students stating it had a positive affect on *both* their confidence in their writing and their writing ability. Based on these results, additional research should be conducted to determine its generalizability and potential use for teaching additional writing subjects.

> [My] progression has been unbelievable, I found myself as a writer in this course, and it's only the beginning (Minerva, Fall 2017).

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Appendix A

Essay #1 Critical Analysis of a Wikipedia Entry

Assignment: Analyze and evaluate a *Wikipedia* entry to determine what role this source can play in academic writing.

Learning Objective: As a result of completing this assignment you will be able to successfully complete the following skills (which you are expected to use throughout the rest of your academic career):,

- Practice critical reading of college-level, nonfiction sources,
- Write an essay with meaningful context and effective organization,
- Develop a writing process that includes writing, revising, editing, and proof-reading
- Use correct syntax, grammar, punctuation, and spelling

Rhetorical Situation: For a variety of reasons most students have been told to avoid using *Wikipedia* for academic purposes, yet in 2016, more than 604 million unique devices accessed *Wikipedia* each day[2]. Clearly, it is a popular source for information on a wide variety of subjects. Your rhetorical purpose in this paper will be to analyze and evaluate a Wikipedia entry of your choice to shed light on the role Wikipedia can play in academic research and writing at the college level.

Focus: While you will include some content on the subject of your chosen *Wikipedia* entry, keep in mind that it is not your primary focus. Also avoid making your scholarly sources your focus, but rather, use your sources to further your own analysis and purpose. Ultimately, your focus should be on *Wikipedia's* potential role in academic research and writing at the college level.

Organization: You have two main tasks to accomplish in this project: analysis and evaluation, which offers you a variety of organizational options. For example, you may decide to analyze your entry before you evaluate it or analyze and evaluate together as you go. Along the same lines, you might decide to organize paragraphs according to elements you have chosen to analyze or the evaluative criteria you developed. You might even organize according to the concerns raised about the use of *Wikipedia* in academic research and writing. Whatever organizing pattern you choose, make sure that it is logical, that it supports your rhetorical purpose, and that you guide readers through it with adequate signposting (e.g. transitions, signal phrase, etc.). You may even opt to use subheadings. Regardless of structure, you will need a thesis that offers your main finding about your chosen *Wikipedia* entry's potential for use in academic

[2] WMF labs: https://tools.wmflabs.org/siteviews/?platform=all-sites&source=unique-devices&start=2016-01&end=2016-12&sites=en.wikipedia.org

work; you may also include a more general recommendation for *Wikipedia's* academic use or keep this sort of reflection solely for your own conclusion, which should address the broader implications of your finding and of *Wikipedia's* role in undergraduate research and writing

Sources: The *Wikipedia* article page, the sources it links to, *Wikipedia* usage statistics page, and one scholarly source on the same subject.

Tasks: To successfully complete this assignment you should:

1. Select a *Wikipedia* entry that you find interesting and that you think you can analyze insightfully.
2. Develop criteria for evaluating your chosen entry and brainstorm which resources you'll need to help you analyze and evaluate its potential role in academic writing. While this will differ for each entry, at a minimum you should plan on including:
    a. the *Wikipedia* entry itself (with it's "talk" and "view history" pages),
    b. sources the *Wikipedia* entry cites and links to,
    c. the *Wikipedia* statistics page (to add depth to your analysis), and
    d. at least one scholarly source on the same subject as your entry.
3. Aim to balance all your source material with your own analysis and evaluation.
4. Conduct multiple revisions of your paper including an initial draft (due 9/15), a revision after the peer review, additional revisions after our discussions, and final draft (due 9/24).
5. Submit your paper by the deadline via MyFire

Criteria for Success: This essay should be 1,000-1,200 words in length. Do not go over or under this amount. It should be in MLA Style with proper in-text source citations and a Works Cited page. The rubric posted on MyFire will be used to score your paper

Appendix B

Essay #4 Rhetorical Analysis of a Writing Construct

Assignment: Rhetorically analyze (using Grant-Davie and Haas and Flower to guide you) a writing construct and support it by using 2-3 articles we've read in class. Develop an argument pertaining to it's accuracy or relevance and whether it should be retained, amended or rejected.

Learning Objective: As a result of completing this assignment you will be able to successfully complete the following skills (which you are expected to use throughout the rest of your academic career):,

- Practice critical reading of college-level, nonfiction sources,
- Write an essay with meaningful context and effective organization,
- Develop a writing process that includes writing, revising, editing, and proof-reading
- Use correct syntax, grammar, punctuation, and spelling

Rhetorical Situation: Our final essay is about writing constructs, which are mental frameworks people build so they can make sense of the world around them. Typically, these constructs are common to the point that they seem inevitable rather than made up. However, Downs and Wardle assert that many of our conceptions about writing are actually misconceptions that don't hold up under close scrutiny.

For this assignment, your task is to examine and rhetorically analyze a writing construct and deliver an argument about its accuracy or relevance. There are many constructs to choose from ranging from considerations of what constitutes error to what is considered to be "good writing". Some may choose to examine specific modes of essays you were taught in other school situations (the five paragraph essay or the idea of starting a paper with a 'catchy' introduction that grabs the reader's attention). There are, of course, many other constructs that you might examine, such as the rule that no contractions are allowed in formal writing. Whichever construct you choose, use 2-3 articles we've read this semester to support your argument.

Tasks: In order to complete a successful analysis of the writing construct you have chosen, I suggest the following tasks:

1. Begin by brainstorming a list of writing constructs (this will be done in class). Select one that you feel you can write about – that you have something to say regarding it.
2. Once you have your construct, do some prewriting. Briefly write about your experiences with this construct. Where did you first learn it? From whom? Was there a time when following this construct didn't work or seem "right"? Is the construct limiting in any way? Would you behave differently as a writer, or understand yourself differently as a writer, if you conceived of your construct in a different way? How

have the readings impacted your understanding of this construct this semester?

3. Review the readings from this semester (use MyFire to help you) and select 2-3 that offer relevant information pertaining to your topic. Re-read your notes and the RAs you completed on them and come up with a few quotes regarding your writing construct.
4. Decide what you will argue – do you support your chosen writing construct, or do you reject it? Whichever side you argue, be sure you have relevant research (in the form of our readings) to support your claims.
5. Use what you learned in Krantz's article, "Helping Students Use Textual Sources Persuasively" to strengthen your argument.
6. To thoroughly investigate or interrogate a writing rule (or a writing construct), the goal is to understand the following: the reason the rule is imposed/taught; when the rule must be followed (and when it might be broken or amended); what happens when the rule is ignored; whether or not your discipline has some special adaptation or handling of the rule; how the rule/construct impacts writing and the *meaning* of a text in general; how the rule impacts *your* writing.
7. Based on your findings, you will make *an informed recommendation* as to whether or not we should keep the rule/construct as it is, amend or revise it, or abolish it entirely based on the research you've uncovered.

Organization: Due to the rhetorical moves necessary to successfully complete this assignment, you may find it helpful to use headings and subheadings to organize your ideas. Also, be sure to follow MLA guidelines for citing your sources and include a Works Cited page.

Sources: 2-3 articles that we've read and discussed in class this semester, and readings from Grant-Davie, Haas and Flower, and/or Krantz.

Criteria for Success: A good construct essay will call your intended audience to reconsider the accuracy or relevance of a writing related construct. The goal, in essence is to have the reader come to a new understanding regarding the construct you explore. The best construct essays will demonstrate an understanding of rhetorical awareness (which means you are using a genre, reaching an audience, and making a point). Furthermore, the best pieces will actively consider and employ a style, tone, and approach that suits the rhetorical situation as well. This essay should be 1,000-1,200 words in length. Do not go over or under this amount. It should be in MLA Style with proper in-text source citations and a Works Cited page. The rubric listed in MyFire will be used to score your paper.

Appendix C

Universal Scoring Rubric Used to Score Essays

Item	5	4	3	2	1
Responds to various rhetorical situations					
Context and Purpose for Writing	Demonstrates adequate consideration of context, audience, and purpose and a clear focus on the assigned task(s) (e.g., the task aligns with audience, purpose, and context).	Demonstrates awareness of context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned task(s) (e.g., begins to show awareness of audience's perceptions and assumptions).	Attempts to show awareness of context, audience, purpose, and assigned task(s) with mixed success.	Demonstrates minimal attention to context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned task(s) (e.g., expectation of instructor or self as audience).	Very few or no signs of attention to context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned task(s).
Writes meaningful context and effective organization					
Content/ Argumen-tation	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to explore ideas within the context of the discipline and shape the whole work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop and explore ideas through most of the work. The response is somewhat sustained but may have a minor drift in focus	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop ideas but ideas not explored in depth or content is used with mixed results.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop simple ideas in some parts of the work. The response may be related to the claim but may provide little or no focus.	Content is inappropriate/irrelevant; difficult to identify ideas being developed.
Composing	The response has an evident organizational structure and a sense of completeness, though there may be minor flaws and some ideas may be loosely connected. The response is adequately sustained and generally focused.	Discernable structure which may be inconsistent or have evident flaws.	Structure wrong for assignment or structure apparent in only part of the paper.	May demonstrate little discernible organizational structure.	No structure apparent.
Practice critical reading of college-level, nonfiction writing					
Sources and Evidence	Demonstrates consistent location and use of credible, relevant sources to support ideas that are situated within the discipline and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates an attempt to locate and use credible and/or relevant sources to support ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing.	Successfully uses non-credible/inappropri ate sources or source use is perfunctory.	Demonstrates an attempt to use sources to support ideas in the writing. May choose inappropriate sources or have sources provided.	No attempt to use sources even if they are relevant and needed.
Uses correct syntax, grammar, punctuation, and spelling					
Control of Syntex and Mechanics	Uses straightforward language that generally conveys meaning to readers. The language has few errors.	Uses language that generally conveys meaning to readers with clarity, although writing may include some errors.	Writing often conveys meaning but errors are frequent.	Uses language that sometimes impedes meaning becomes distracting to the reader because of errors.	Meaning is often clouded by error.

Appendix D

Informed Consent Study #1, Writerly Self-Efficacy

You are invited to participate in this research study. The following information is provided in order to help you to make an informed decision whether or not to participate. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact the researcher noted below.

The purpose of this study is to capture how writing instruction affects a student's self-efficacy over the course of one semester. The information gained from this study may help us to better understand practices that can aid learning and serve to identify future research opportunities. Participation in this study will require no additional time, you would give permission for me to use the results of your self-efficacy survey from weeks 2 and 15 to be used in the study AFTER removing all identifiable information.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to decide not to participate in this study or exit the survey at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with the investigators or IUP. Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you choose to participate, all information will be held in strict confidence. If you would like further information about this project or if you have questions you may speak to me personally by emailing me (d.a.brown3@iup.edu) or calling me (727/465-6189).

Please select one of the boxes below, include your unique identifier, and sign.

□ Yes, I agree to participate in the study

□ No, I do not agree to participate in the study

Signature: _____

Unique Identifier: _____

Researcher:
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Project Director:
Dr. Dana Driscoll
Associate Professor
English Department
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This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (Phone: 724/357-7730).

Appendix E

Informed Consent Study #2, Impact on Writing

You are invited to participate in this research study. The following information is provided in order to help you to make an informed decision whether or not to participate. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact the researcher noted below.

The purpose of this study is to capture how writing instruction affects a student's writing over the course of one semester. Participation in this study will require your permission for me to use your essays and writing assignments completed as part of your coursework during the Fall 2017 semester. The grades you received on your work, all feedback, and all identifying information will be removed from your essays and assignments. The information gained from this study may help us to better understand practices that can aid learning and serve to identify future research opportunities. Participation in this study will require no additional work or take any additional time.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to decide not to participate in this study or exit the survey at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with the investigators or IUP. Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you choose to participate, all information will be held in strict confidence. If you would like further information about this project or if you have questions you may speak to me personally by emailing me (d.a.brown3@iup.edu) or calling me (727/465-6189).

Please select one of the boxes below, include your unique identifier, and sign.

□ Yes, I agree to participate in the study

□ No, I do not agree to participate in the study

Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

Researcher:
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This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (Phone: 724/357-7730).

Appendix F

Reading Assignment #2

This reading, *Safe Space: Students Perspectives on Classroom Environment*, is a PDF that is 17 pages long. Try to sit and read it all at one time, rather than for many short sittings. When you bring this PDF with you to class (either printed or electronically – your choice), we'll discuss how you went about reading it. Be prepared, that is, to point to passages or sections of the paper (if there are any) where you got bogged down or lost.

As you read, keep a pencil or pen in your hand or nearby; but go beyond merely underlining or taking notes. Go deeper, if you come across something that seems significant or puzzling or something that you'd like to bring up in class discussion, put a mark in the margin so you can find it later. If you don't have these marks, or some system you invent, you'll find that you'll have no way of getting back into the reading. There will be a reading in front of you with a bunch of pages, but no record of what you found to be worth a second look. If you choose to read this electronically, please follow this same process but use the mark-up tools in your PDF reader to make the comments noted above. If you are don't know how to use them, go find a tutorial on YouTube. If you can't get it to work, print out the PDF and make your notations by hand.

After you finish the reading, as soon as you can, go to MyFire and complete Reading Assignment 2. As soon as you finish the reading, sit down for one hour and write your response. Write the first things that come to your mind when you think back on what you have read. **I'm not interested in a summary because I've read the reading too.** Instead, tell me what stands out for you. Then tell me what things in your own life you can associate with what has stood out for you. These associations may be ideas of yours, feelings, experiences, memories of reading experiences of other courses, of comments people have made to you. You want to move away from recording what stands out for you as significant to a way of accounting for *why* these passages or sections are significant. It's very important that you write this two-fold response and that you write for an hour, **an hour of straight, uninterrupted writing**.

Don't be worried about how your words fall on the paper. Error, structure, organization and the like are not things that I am concerned with in this assignment. This is a time to think things through and try things out. **Write your thoughts as they come to you with a minimum of distractions, even if the words appear funny to you or are not connected or are not nearly how you want them to be.**

Read the article; write for an hour. Simple – but don't mistake simple for easy.

Bartholomae, D., Petrosky, T., & Waite, S. (2014). *Ways of reading: An anthology for writers* (Tenth edition). Boston: Bedford/St. Martins.

Appendix G

Conference Strategies & Agenda

ISC Pedagogy approaches instructor-student conferences as a fusion of Taylor's "A Counseling Approach to Writing Conferences" (1985), Boynton's "See Me: Conference Strategies for Developing Writers" (2003), and Sommers' "Responding to Student Writers" (2013). The goal is threefold:

1. Get to the know the student as a person,
2. Intentionally build student writerly self-efficacy by showcasing successful passages, and
3. Give students options they can use to improve their writing.

While there is no "one ring to rule them all" (Tolkien, 1937) approach to conferencing, and each conference will need to be personalized for both the instructor and the student, there is one golden rule not to be broken: This is the **STUDENT'S CONFERENCE**. Do not read the paper in advance; if you do, you will naturally have an agenda and it will become *your* conference. Let the student run their conference, it's empowering for them. Have the student set the agenda, read the paper aloud, and be physically handed a pen to encourage them to mark their own paper.

Pre-Conference

Prior to the first conference, explain in class what instructor-student conferences are (many students have never had one) and their purpose. Emphasize that they are not "fix it sessions" but rather a time to discuss their paper. Clearly state that they are in charge and should use the Pre-Writing Conference Handout to prepare. Review the handout in class and remind them to mark up their papers per the instructions prior to each conference throughout the semester.

Conference Scheduling

In order to meet with your students individually and accommodate everyone's schedules (yours and theirs), replace traditional classroom instruction for one week with 15-minute conferences. Websites such as youcanbookme.com is fantastic and free. You can enter your availability, duration of each conference (15 minutes), schedule breaks (important!), and set automated reminder emails. Students sign-up and make changes as needed while you view your schedule in real-time.

Conference Logistics and Set-up

To help reduce the power differential and communicate that this is a collaborative effort, try to hold conferences in a neutral location such as an on campus coffee shop. If privacy is a concern, reserve a conference room or conduct them in an office with a table and chairs. If none of these options are available, position two chairs on one side of a desk, you want to be side-by-side, not divided. You may also want to keep a stack of pens within reach, a desktop clock to help you both manage the allocated time, and a bowl of dark chocolate. Dark chocolate has been shown to reduce anxiety and increase feelings of happiness. You can have some too!

Conference Agenda

Exchange pleasantries as the student puts down his/her bag and gets out his/her paper. If the student appears nervous, spend an extra minute or two here before moving on. Smile. Be kind and reassuring.

- **Transition – *How is your paper coming?***
  The student's response will tell you how to proceed.
  - *I don't know; let's see what you think.*
    This speaks to ownership and insecurity; focus on building confidence.
  - *I really struggled*.
    This speaks to insecurity; watch for confusion.
  - *Pretty good!*
    Confidence is a good sign, but be alert for problem areas.
- **Begin – *Where can I help you the most today?***
  If the student hasn't already started managing the conference, this is a cue to start and helps you both understand where to focus your time together.
  - Hand the student a pen.
    If you just place it by them they may not pick it up, physically hand it to them.
  - Ask the student to read the paper aloud while you look on.
    You both work from the same document.
  - Start where the student wants to start.
    If the student is unsure, start at the beginning.
  - Ask the student to pause at the end of each paragraph.
    Discuss any issues and offer feedback here, try not to interrupt.
  - Provide appropriate reactions and constructive comments.
    Keep your comments positive and encouraging. Don't ignore error, but don't highlight every misplaced comma either. Remember, there is no such thing as a "perfect" paper. Focus on the content and respond with as much understanding and tact as if you were reading a piece your colleague wrote.
- **Model revision.**
  In order for many students to understand the purpose of revision, they have to see it within their own writing.
  - Pay special attention to higher order concerns – organization that is hard to follow, lack of evidence for their claims, blatant bias, weak arguments, etc.
  - Ask how and what questions: "How does this point relate to that one?" or "What evidence from our readings could support this point?"
  - Center comments around I statements: "I'm looking for the thesis statement, is it this one here?" not "Where is your thesis statement?"
- **Editing is of minor importance.**
  Focus on lower order concerns last – grammar/punctuation.
  - Only comment on grammar after you point out something well done. If the only comment you make is related to grammar that is the only thing the student will think is important.
  - Notice error patterns (such as a run-on sentence). If you find a pattern, mention it, tell them whether it does (or doesn't) cause confusion for the reader, and ask them if they'd like to discuss how to fix this type of error. If the error was due to lack of

time proofing, they might not want to waste time discussing it, if the error was due to lack of understanding, they may want to discuss it. Follow their lead.

- **If things get ugly: stop, re-establish safety, and proceed with caution**.
  Sometimes we get a student paper that is the quintessential train wreck. If we are home grading this paper in isolation a temper-tantrum may ensue (was this student *asleep* when I assigned this paper??). One of the benefits to conferencing is that when we are sitting next to the student who wrote the wreck, we respond with much greater kindness and compassion – which benefits both of us. The best process to follow when you run into an exceptionally challenging section (or paper) is to:
  - Stop
    I will physically push the paper away (calmly and gently move it about 2 inches), move my chair back, and exhale – in a calming, not annoyed way. The manner in which you do this is extremely important.
  - Re-establish safety
    My students know I conference all day during our conferencing weeks, so I play it up a bit and say something like, "Whoa, sorry, my eyes are killing me. Let's stop a second and just talk about this section. I think you might have struggled a bit here. Tell me what you're trying to say (or tell me what you want to reader to understand)." Do not provide an evaluative comment on what they've written. Instead, help the student feel safe to talk freely.
  - Proceed with caution
    Intently listen; try to help them vocalize their point – but don't provide them with one. As the student begins to describe their intended meaning, jot down the main point or points so you can revisit them together to elaborate on them. This is when you may be most tempted to take over the paper and just tell the student what to do next. Resist this temptation! Remember our goals:
    1. Get to know the student
       You are learning a lot about your student right now – and they are probably quite uncomfortable, so be compassionate; remember goal #2
    2. Intentionally build self-efficacy
       They need to see that they can do what you've asked so don't do it for them. Guide them and teach them the steps to take to move past whatever is blocking them
    3. Provide options for improvement
       Offer suggestions for how to proceed or points to make, but let your student make the actual decision.
- **Concluding the conference.**
  When you finish the paper or the allocated time is up, say something positive, then ask:
  - So, what is/are your next step/s?
  - Any last questions for me?

  Remind them to complete their reflection by 11 pm (see Post Conference below). Smile and thank them for coming out.

Post Conference

Ask students to write a 600-word reflection on their writing process for this particular essay by 11 pm on the day of their conference with you. I ask them to respond to these eight prompts based on Allan and Driscoll's (2014) work:

1. Please describe your writing process for this assignment. This may include prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and collaboration.
2. Please describe your research process for this assignment. This may include locating, evaluating, and integrating sources.
3. What are the strengths of your writing in this assignment?
4. What parts of your writing in this assignment did you struggle with?
5. What did you think about the writing conference with your instructor?
6. Regarding your writing conference with the instructor, what, if anything, was helpful?
7. Regarding your writing conference with the instructor, what, if anything was not helpful?
8. What did you learn from this writing assignment that might help you with future writing assignments?

The purpose of this assignment is to help guide student revision, increase writerly self-efficacy, and increase knowledge transfer between essays. Responses can also be used to guide classroom instruction on subsequent essays along with future conferences.

Conclusion

When instructor-student writing conferences are conducted within the ISC Pedagogy framework, and the guidelines listed here, they can become a powerful way to increase student writerly self-efficacy and overall writing ability.

Appendix H

Pre-Writing Conference Handout

Writing Conferences: Before, During and After

It's time for Instructor-Student Conferences. This is an opportunity for you to get one-on-one feedback on your writing from your professor. Rather than making notes on the paper *after* you turn it in and receive a grade for it, my students have found it far more helpful to receive feedback from the instructor *before* they turn in their paper, while they still have the opportunity to make revisions. The instructor-student writing conference is our opportunity to sit down together and discuss your writing. It is not a "fix my paper" session, rather it's our time to talk about your writing, what you are trying to accomplish with your paper, and the various ways you can accomplish this goal.

Before the Conference:

After you have signed up for your conference (links can be found on MyFire), you have a few tasks to complete prior to our meeting:

1. Revise your essay. Based on the feedback you received from the peer review (and ACE if you want a little extra help), update your essay so it represents your **best** work.
2. Take your now updated, BEST draft and mark it up. I know, this may sound sacrilegious, but I assure you, it's a good thing. Specifically, here's what I want you to mark:
    - In the right-hand margin of your page, note the main point of each paragraph.
    - Where did you struggle? Note where you struggled to get it "just right."
    - Where did you succeed? Note where you are quite pleased with your writing, what do you like?
    - At the end of the paper, write down what you would change if you had two more days to work on your paper.
3. Try to relax! While yes, I do want you to take this conference seriously, no, it's not a test. I'm not going to attack you **or** your writing. We're going to simply sit down for 15 minutes and review your paper together, one writer to another.

During the Conference:

- Bring your paper (printed) and something to write with (you'll be taking notes on your paper as we review it).
- Record (audio only please) our conference. We can use my phone or yours, but it's helpful to have something to refer back to when revising your paper.

After the Conference:

1. Within a few hours of our conference (the sooner the better), review your notes, and listen to your recording.
2. Complete the post conference reflection assignment in MyFire by 11 pm **the same day as your conference** (yes, I will be checking!) and can take an hour or so to complete.
3. Finally, revise your essay and submit the final draft via MyFire by 11 pm on Sunday.

Appendix I

Reflection Assignment

Thoughtfully reflect on your entire writing process for this essay and answer the questions listed below by 11 pm on the day of your conference. This assignment should total at least 600 words to receive full credit.

1. Please describe your writing process for this assignment. This may include prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and collaboration.

2. Please describe your research process for this assignment. This may include locating, evaluating, and integrating sources.

3. What are the strengths of your writing in this assignment?

4. What parts of your writing in this assignment did you struggle with?

5. What did you think about the writing conference with your instructor?

6. Regarding your writing conference with the instructor, what, if anything, was helpful?

7. Regarding your writing conference with the instructor, what, if anything was not helpful?

8. What did you learn from this writing assignment that might help you with future writing assignments?

Appendix J

Revision Primer

Revision Primer

Revision is often ignored as part of the writing process for many student writers mostly because we do not leave ourselves enough time to both write *and* revise well. However, research clearly shows that writers who spend more time in revision produce better papers. This short tutorial will show you how to revise effectively to make your writing process much easier and boost your skill level enormously.

Proofreading tips

Before we begin, here are some tips to help you:

- Remove distractions and allow yourself 10-15 minutes of pure concentration; turn off the TV or your phone and find a quiet place away from people who are talking
- Proofread out loud, articulating each word as it is actually written
- Proofread your sentences in reverse order
- Proofread hard copy pages; mistakes can be difficult to catch on-screen.
- Don't rely too heavily on spell cheers and grammar checkers.
- Ask a volunteer to proofread after you. A second reader may catch something you didn't.

Step 1: Review the parts of the paper.

Thesis. The thesis of the paper is the guiding plan of your paper, and it will probably change throughout the writing process—let it. Do not become so stuck with the thesis that you produce a weak argument simply because you feel that you have to stick with the original thesis. At minimum, the thesis contains the main topic of the paper and the stance that the paper will take. At best, it also contains the reasons that the paper will present to support that stance.

Example: Topic: Beagles as pets
Stance: positive
Reasons: physical features, pack dogs, friendly dispositions
Thesis: Beagles are good dogs for families because they are small and clean, they are pack dogs, and they have friendly dispositions.

If you break down the thesis process into steps, then the paper has somewhere to go both for you and for the reader so that neither of you get lost.

Paragraphs. A paragraph is a group of sentences that focus on one main point or example. Except for introduction and conclusion paragraphs, body paragraphs function to develop and support an essay's main point or thesis. You must be able to relate each paragraph back to the thesis. In the thesis, you have promised to present certain ideas; in the paragraphs, you do it.

Tips:

- Focus on a main point
- State the main point in a topic sentence
- Stay focused
- Provide examples or analogies to help the reader understand your point
- Write vivid descriptions

As you revise, ask yourself:

- Does it explain, support, or provide examples? If it does not, make a decision to delete it, replace it, move it, or add to it. As many people find writing so difficult and/or frustrating, they fervently avoid deleting a piece of writing that took so long to produce. However, when passages are left in that do not relate, the reader is taken in too many different directions, and the writing seems uncontrolled and chaotic.
- Is each paragraph united around a main point?
- Does each paragraph support and develop the thesis?
- Have you provided organizational cues for readers such as topic sentences and headings?
  have you presented ideas in a logical order?
- Are any paragraphs too long or too short for easy reading?

Introduction. Reread your introduction to see if it clearly states the essay's main idea. To help you revise, ask yourself these questions:

- Does the introduction let readers know what to expect as they read on?
- Does it make the significance of the subject clear so that readers will want to keep reading?
- Can readers tell where the introductions tops and the boys of the essay begins? Have you included material in the introduction that should appear in the body instead? Is your introduction too broad or unfocused?
  Does the thesis accurately state the main idea of the essay?

Step 2: Revise

Where do I start? Although everyone's writing process differs a bit, one of the easiest (and fastest) ways to move through the writing process is to develop the thesis statement, then write the first draft quickly and at a very simple level as though explaining the concepts to a child. This technique ensures that the ideas are presented clearly and relieves the pressure to sound smart. After writing the first draft, allow some significant time away from the paper, then outline it and get ready for revision.

Sentences

Look at each sentence and make sure that it has a purpose other than merely adding fluff to your writing. This fluff technique is obvious to readers/graders and puts them on alert. Here are some revision tips at the sentence-level:

- Check the number of words in each sentence within a paragraph. Try to vary your sentence length so that the reader does not become fatigued either from reading a series of long sentences or from reading strung-together short ones.
- Each sentence should be introducing, illustrating/explaining/giving examples, or transitioning to the next idea. If it is not, delete it, replace it, move it, or add to it.
- Try reading your work aloud and trust your ears to detect awkwardness, wordiness, or a jarring repetition.
- Watch for **fragments** – each sentence must include a subject and a verb, and it either stands alone or could stand alone.
- Watch for **run-on sentences** -

Step 3: Edit

Don't be shifty!

- Make sure your point of view – first person (I or we), second person (you), or third person (he, she, it, they, one) – is consistent throughout the paper
- Check for numbers, be sure to use a plural when there is more than one item. Also, "the" is used only when there is only one (*the* student, compared to *many* students)
- Check for tense – choose a tense (past or present) and stick with it throughout your paper. Read each sentence and determine if uses the same tense as the one before it.

Punctuation

Conventional punctuation is grammar based, but good writers use punctuation as a way to help sentences say what they mean with the kind of emphasis they intend. Use the chart below (and reading on *Teaching Punctuation*) to guide you.

Mark	Degree of Separation
Sentence final (.?!)	Maximum
Semicolon (;)	Medium
Colon (:)	Medium (anticipatory)
Dash (-)	Medium (emphatic)
Comma (,)	Minimum
Zero (none)	None