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‘KNOWLEDGE GROWTH’: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY OF ENGLISH
LITERATURE GRADUATES’ LEARNING EXPERIENCES FOR
TEACHING COMPOSITION

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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This multiple case study was designed to investigate the learning processes of postsecondary English literature graduates who teach composition to diverse student groups. Since the context of study in English literature graduate programs concentrates on literature and literary theory, the interest of this study examined how teachers learn to teach composition with little preparation or training. In order to provide varied sampling, three southeastern universities were chosen as investigative sites which provided a range of diverse teachers and students. By examining six English literature graduates with a variety of teaching and learning experiences, this study answered questions concerning how, what, and why knowledge was constructed for teaching composition. This study also uncovered the methods used to teach composition. The results showed that participants learned to teach composition while teaching “on-the-job” through self-directed venues, including reflective, collaborative and experiential means. The conclusion revealed that participants were underprepared and required support for assessing, managing, and teaching diverse student groups when they began teaching.

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The dissertation process has been described as “daunting,” “stressful,” “difficult,” “exhausting,” and “consuming.” And of course, most of us have heard that the acronym “PhD” stands for “Piled higher and deeper.” As doctoral students, we quickly find out the reality of this statement. Piles of research papers, transcriptions, notes, memos, forms, letters, and other documents clutter our offices until the day we graduate. These descriptions are the reason I am so indebted to the individuals who helped me throughout this “grueling” project.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Overview

Throughout colleges and universities, teachers are being hired from one area of study to teach another area of study (Carpini, 2004; Wilson, 1998). This most frequently happens in first year composition which is often referred to as a “service course” and perceived as a “service activity” (Roemer, Schultz & Durst, 1999, p. 377) where literature graduates are hired to teach first year composition courses. First year composition is generally a requirement for all entering first year students and is used to “service” the other departments of the institution, preparing students to investigate and compose research for future assignments throughout their educational years. Novice English literature teachers entering a first year composition classroom often know very little about teaching composition. However, the belief held by inexperienced composition instructors is that if one can write, then one can teach writing (Wilson, 1998). I believed that I was prepared to do that.

As a graduate student of English literature, I studied works of literature and literary theory. No classes were offered in pedagogy for teaching literature or teaching writing. When I began teaching, directly after finishing my graduate program, I was unprepared. Entering into a college classroom as a novice first year composition instructor, I entered my new classroom with a textbook, given to me by the department chair, a syllabus, constructed entirely on my own, and a roster, which consisted of names I had difficulty pronouncing. I found myself in an environment which threatened my identity as a teacher and as a professional. All the years I spent on constructing my professional identity as a future literature teacher seemed irrelevant. Throughout the years of teaching first year composition, I felt uncomfortable and I constantly wished that I had concentrated my past studies on some form of formal writing instruction.

Because of my lack of content and pedagogical knowledge, in this case, the representation of composition strategy and theory, I lacked the confidence needed to feel secure in the position that I was placed into by my department. I second-guessed myself every day, wondering if students could see through my disguise as an ‘experienced’ teacher. I constantly questioned my peers and colleagues for suggestions and guidance. I was tripping through the acts of teaching. Every semester was a new challenge and a new experience. I began asking myself, *are my past studies and my past experiences enough to warrant me as a knowledgeable, competent, professional composition instructor?*

Like me, few graduate students who teach courses in colleges and universities are given little opportunity to practice teaching before beginning to teach. Also, few pedagogy courses are offered in MA graduate programs. Therefore, knowledge of teaching is first gained by reflecting on past college classroom experiences. Johnson and Golombek (2002) contend that the reason for this is that what “teachers know about teaching is largely socially constructed out of the experiences and classrooms from which teachers have come” (p. 1). Therefore, when students closely observe their own teachers lecture and discuss subject matter, then they are likely to imagine and imitate those actions when we become teachers ourselves (Lortie, 1975). If this is true, then literature graduates are using the same methods of instruction as their previous teachers, even when they teach composition courses.

Since literature graduates are more familiar with teaching literature courses and literary theory, then it is likely that teaching composition is less familiar to them, given the fact that graduate courses in literature are not focused on teaching composition or composition theory. In fact, Corbett (1983) claims that literature graduates are trained to “talk about the poetics of a literary text than about the rhetoric of a piece of argumentative prose” (p. 179). Therefore,

teacher knowledge needed to teach composition may be lacking for these graduates, as it was for me when I began teaching.

When learning to teach, *how teachers learn* and *what teachers learn* influences their ways of teaching. In fact, Jenlink and Kinnucan-Welsch (2001) contend that “*how teachers learn* has become as important as *what teachers learn*” (p. 705). *How* and *what teachers learn* constitutes a compilation of their social and physical environments as well as their beliefs. Erikson (1982) explains that from the adolescent phase into adulthood, individuals seek out others who “promise to prove complementary” to their own identities (p. 70). Teachers interact with other teachers who are like them, generally with the same belief systems. These teachers learn different ways of teaching by questioning and collaborating with others in the institutions where they teach.

Teachers who are inexperienced not only seek out teaching knowledge, but they may also begin to question their teaching practice, particularly novices. Schwebel and Raph (1973) agree that, “Developing teachers, sensing that all is not well with the functioning of their class, will begin to question their orientation and procedures” (p. 288). Therefore, questions arise regarding what literature graduates learn when beginning to teach composition courses: *What do other literature teachers do to gain knowledge needed for teaching first year composition courses, including content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and student knowledge? How do they gain knowledge needed to teach composition, and why is further knowledge needed by literature teachers to teach composition?*

Even today, a number of teachers at the postsecondary level begin teaching without a strong knowledge base for teaching. Some teachers are hired while still completing their Master’s degree, while others are hired as soon as they have finished. Lecture positions are

sometimes filled with graduate students and part-time faculty rather than tenured teachers (Crowley, 1998). Also, some postsecondary teachers do not have the same preparatory advantages as teachers of primary or secondary education, where instruction and support is put into place by faculty of the education department. Therefore, constructing a knowledge base for teaching becomes a matter of learning informally on the job.

While personal knowledge and formal learning influences the practices of literature graduates, they also accumulate a variety of knowledge from practical venues. Teachers gain a great deal of teaching knowledge from experiences within classrooms and interactions with students, as well as from other peers and colleagues, as noted in Lortie's (1975) study. Therefore, the knowledge base for teachers is comprised of both formal and informal learning, knowledge constructed both *in* and *out* of the classroom. In the interest of research regarding teacher knowledge and teacher learning, researchers are still committed to finding out what teachers know and how they come to know what they know (Cochran-Smith & Demers, 2008).

Adopting teacher research, this study explores English literature graduates assigned to teach first year composition courses and investigates how these particular teachers construct knowledge in order to teach composition. A total of six participants from three different universities in the southeastern region of the United States were recruited for this study. Teachers from novice to expert were recruited in order to gauge a wide range of learning experiences. The educational background of these participants also reflected different experiences, as some of the participants were graduates of Master's programs while others were graduates of Doctoral programs. Two of the participants were born and taught in other countries. The reason for recruiting teachers with such diverse backgrounds was to investigate closely their methods of learning and teaching.

Research Questions

For this particular study, the research into teachers' 'knowledge growth' through informal learning included one main research question followed by several ancillary questions. The main research question asked: *What are the learning experiences of six post-secondary English literature graduates teaching first year composition classes?* While examining the experiences of these six teachers, other ancillary questions developed:

- 1) How do they come to know what is needed to teach first year composition courses?
- 2) How do they come to know how to teach the content in first year composition courses?
- 3) How and why do they seek knowledge to teach first year composition?

This study examined how teacher knowledge develops, including contextual, pedagogical, and student knowledge for English literature graduates while teaching composition at the postsecondary educational level. Six English literature graduates who were assigned to teach first year composition were recruited. The assumption is that teachers who are trained in literature lack specific knowledge, including practical knowledge, needed to teach composition, since most literature courses are concentrated on the interpretation of literary texts and literary theory. Smagorinsky and Whiting (1995) agree that when courses are heavily consumed by theoretical instruction, little will be learned of practical ideas.

Because formal learning is generally concentrated in one specific area of context for English literature graduates, informal learning is needed to "fill in the gaps" for further "knowledge growth" to teach first year composition courses. Most literature graduates are taught in similar ways. Knapp (2004) concurs that these are "the familiar techniques of lecture, small-group and whole group discussion, and the assigning of position papers" (p. 55). This sort of

teaching leaves little room for practical teaching.

There are institutions which routinely hire literature teachers to teach composition. While there are no recent studies available regarding the number of institutions in the country which do or do not hire literature teachers to teach composition, I conducted a small informal survey. Out of fourteen universities surveyed in the southeastern United States, seven were research institutions and seven were teaching institutions. The results revealed that the research institutions were not only more likely to hire composition trained teachers to teach writing courses, but many hired and trained their own graduate students by implementing required courses and/or workshops and provided support or mentors. On the other hand, the teaching institutions were more likely to hire graduates from both composition and literature to teach writing courses, offering very little support, instruction or mentors. Literature graduates who were hired to teach composition at teaching institutions were also given opportunities to teach an occasional literature course. However, at the research institutions, graduates trained in composition generally taught writing courses only.

Since teaching and research institutions prepare college teachers differently, investigating what literature graduates learn in order to teach composition became the focus of this study. Therefore, this study investigated six English literature graduates from three different institutions, two teaching institutions and one research institution, to identify *how*, *what* and *why* they seek and construct knowledge for first year writing courses as well as what sort of support is offered for these teachers. This is important because first year composition courses are required by every entering student, and it is important that colleges and universities provide these students with the most knowledgeable instructors.

Purpose and Rationale of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of postsecondary graduates trained in English literature pedagogy teaching first year composition classes which included diverse student populations. My own perspectives, drawn from my experiences as an English literature graduate teaching first year composition, heightened my interest to investigate other teachers like myself and the knowledge domains that are acquired by these teachers, including *how, what* and *why* teacher knowledge is acquired. This study examined how knowledge was acquired and transferred within the higher educational context for English literature teachers who perform as professionals in the workplace and as teachers in composition classrooms. Ball and Lampert (1999) state: “[P]erspectives drawn from inside the practice of teaching also expand our collective understandings not only of the practice but also of *what there is to investigate about practice*” (p. 380). By investigating the experiences of trained literature graduates teaching composition, this study revealed strategies of learning for underprepared teachers.

There are several important factors and reasons to study teachers and the ways that they learn to teach, including how teachers approach learning and how knowledge is constructed. The most prominent argument given by teacher researchers is to have continuing insight into the knowledge domains of teachers (Carter, 1990). Goodson (1992) further argues for the study of teachers’ lives by focusing on the stories and narratives of working teachers which help to “widen and deepen understandings” (p. 7). Understanding what teachers learn and how they learn help to identify the construction of teacher knowledge of postsecondary teachers through personal and practical experiences.

The need to study teachers in higher education exists for the same reasons as the need to study teachers in primary and secondary schools: to investigate teachers’ continual development

of knowledge and to record how they come to enhance their pedagogical practice in order to promote student learning. Since many postsecondary graduates lack teacher knowledge needed to instruct students effectively during their first few years of teaching, the need to investigate what knowledge is missing may persuade postsecondary institutions to evaluate their graduate curriculum and support practices.

Over the past decades, research on teaching has been vigorous and extensive in primary and secondary education regarding teacher learning, specifically examining areas of informal learning. However, a focus on teacher learning now extends into the postsecondary institutions, including such topics as professional development (Erklenz-Watts, Westbay & Lynd-Balta, 2006), reflective learning (Boyd & Boyd, 2005; Yagelski, 1999), collaborative planning (Alvine, Judson, Schein & Yoshida, 2007), discussion groups (Shaw, belcastro & Thiessen, 2002) and active learning (Anson, 2002; McNiff, 1993), demonstrating that learning is continual throughout teachers' careers, and that the strategies of learning occur through a variety of venues. Stenberg and Lee (2002) agree that teacher learning is an "intellectual and ongoing process" (p. 327), even after graduate students secure faculty positions at universities where continuous learning is routine through experiential, social, and cognitive processes.

Administrators at colleges and universities often encourage full-time, tenure-track English literature faculty to attend seminars, conferences, and workshops, as well as to publish articles and books contributing educational knowledge to the academic elite community, but this is generally required in the literary specialization area for which the professor is hired. Part-time English literature faculty, however, are generally not encouraged or supported by the administration to fulfill such obligations. Therefore, whatever new knowledge needed for teaching composition is the sole responsibility of the English literature teacher. The investigation

into these learning processes of teachers is that ongoing learning is necessary, as Stenberg and Lee (2002) have already concurred, and that teachers placed in unfamiliar situations will eventually begin to evaluate their own ways of teaching and confer with others in similar situations throughout their own sociocultural environments.

Most research conducted by postsecondary English composition teachers/researchers examine the theoretical and pedagogical approaches to teaching writing (Broskoske, 2007; Downs & Wardle, 2007; Sommers, 2006; Thomas, 2000). However, little is discussed about the reasons why new knowledge is sought and what specific knowledge is needed to teach college composition. Few English composition teachers/researchers discuss the experiences that lead to their knowledge seeking. In order to expand the research into university teachers' knowledge constructions, this study investigates further into the learning experiences that English literature graduates undergo when assigned to teach composition courses.

Research involving teacher learning and teacher knowledge in higher education still needs to be investigated, due to the fact that learning to teach is a continuous process. In fact, most literature graduates in higher education are required to teach first year composition courses, even if those teachers have no theoretical or pedagogical knowledge of teaching composition (Crowley, 1998, p. 6), so investigating the learning processes of these teachers contributes to the field of teacher research.

Understanding Teachers' Knowledge Construction

The term *teacher knowledge* (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993) begins with teachers' personal and practical knowledge which is brought to the classroom. Schoonmaker's (2002) understanding of teachers' personal knowledge is constructed from past lived experiences, including socially imbedded beliefs drawn from their environments. Teachers' practical

knowledge is derived from the actions and/or interactions of the classroom environment, including the “practical dilemmas teachers encounter in carrying out purposeful action” (Munby, Russell & Martin, 2001, p. 880). Practical knowledge gained by teachers “makes the assumption that teachers hold a complex, practically-oriented set of understandings which they use actively to shape and direct their work of teaching” (Elbaz, 1983, p. 3). This “set of understandings” includes teachers’ knowledge of students’ social and economic backgrounds, students’ learning abilities, the classrooms, and the institutions where they are situated, as well as knowledge of subject matter and learning theories for the courses they teach (Elbaz, 1983). This means that effective teachers have accumulated knowledge gained from personal and practical experiences by interacting with students, colleagues, and other individuals within the community.

There are types of knowledge that researchers suggest are important for the complete construction of teacher knowledge. Teachers’ knowledge base consists of a plethora of knowledge terms, investigated over the years by experts (Fenstermacher, 1994), including such terms as *content/subject matter knowledge*, *pedagogical content knowledge*, *curricular knowledge*, (Shulman, 1986), and *personal practical knowledge* (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988). These concepts are explained further in Chapter Two.

Problem Statement

Extensive educational research has shown that effective teaching derives from a strong knowledge base for teaching, not just knowledge of subject matter (Porter & Brophy, 1988). Teachers should be able to recognize their students’ learning abilities and to acknowledge these abilities to comprise instructional strategies to fit their students’ needs. To do this, teachers’ pedagogy should demonstrate their competency of content and subject matter by applying effective strategies to teach such content. Primary and secondary teachers trained in education

departments are provided the opportunities to learn such strategies through preservice, inservice, and practice teaching programs, and are provided mentors. However, most postsecondary teachers begin their careers with a strong background in a specific content or subject matter area with little to no knowledge of students or pedagogical skills. There are a limited number of ‘good teachers’ who enter the postsecondary levels of education who have had the opportunities for professional training of pedagogical skills (MacKenzie, Eraut & Jones, 1976). Even though MacKenzie, Eraut, and Jones’ (1976) research is dated, it is still valid given the fact that pedagogical training still needs to be investigated today. Because of the lack of pedagogical training, Bransford, Darling-Hammond, and LePage (2005) argue that in order for ‘good teachers’ to develop the effective skills needed to teach, continuous construction of knowledge and skill should be generated throughout the career of the teacher.

Since postsecondary teachers require graduate education, most administrators believe that when graduates are hired to teach, then “any reasonably educated person could do the job without needing to acquire significant additional expertise” (Eraut, 1998, p. 62). However, this is not always the case. Most teachers continue learning throughout their careers. Few teachers, if any, are ‘experts’ when they begin teaching. Since little is documented concerning how postsecondary English literature graduates construct knowledge for courses which they may be assigned to teach in content areas for which they have attained little formal instruction in content or pedagogy, then this study will contribute to the research throughout postsecondary institutions. Most published articles or texts regarding teaching composition either describe classroom procedures or teaching methods and results (Moore & O’Neil, 2002; Roen, Pantoja, Yena, Miller & Waggoner, 2002), but at the present, there is no information that can be found regarding what postsecondary English literature graduates do to learn to teach composition.

Michael Eraut's (1994; 1998; 2004; 2005; 2006; 2007) research proves that professional development and informal learning continues in the workplace. This type of learning is based on experiences which occur within the day-to-day routines of professionals. Studies of this nature have also begun to increase in the educational context (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2003; Hoekstra, Beijaard, Brekelmans & Korthagen, 2007; Lohman, 2000; Williams, 2003), but at the moment literature on informal learning in the workplace for teachers in the postsecondary educational context is minimal. Investigating the experiences of postsecondary English literature graduates in the educational context as they learn "on-the-job" brings new insights into how, what, and why teachers are striving to learn what is needed to teach composition.

I believe that there are several ways which postsecondary teachers learn to teach. First, pedagogical knowledge that postsecondary teachers obtain before they begin teaching is generally learned through particular pedagogy courses or personal observations of instructors. Second, postsecondary teachers rely on their own reflections from experiences within their own classrooms. Third, postsecondary teachers rely on feedback from other colleagues who teach writing, and fourth, postsecondary teachers search for outside reference sources, including outside readings, conferences, workshops or special training seminars. Through teacher research, all of these methods have been exemplified by teachers in primary and secondary schools and, therefore, I assume that teachers in postsecondary institutions utilize the same methods.

Research Approach

This regional study reveals how teachers' knowledge evolves throughout their teaching careers, including *how*, *what* and *why* knowledge is accumulated. As graduate students leave the comfort of their educational environments and enter the professional environments as teachers, unexpected situations occur which create a need for learning. *How*, *what* and *why* a teacher seeks

knowledge is based upon the type of situations which occur. Since formal instruction has been completed, then informal learning within the professional environment is often utilized.

Teachers continuously interact with other individuals, whether those individuals are the students in their classrooms, peers outside the institutional environment, or other colleagues within the department. Because of this interaction, continuous learning is never-ending. The current inquiry assisted in uncovering how, what, and why the participants sought out knowledge needed to teach first year composition while incorporating specific strands of learning research, including sociocultural, reflective, experiential, work-based, and self-regulated learning. These strands of informal learning were chosen because of the complexities teachers experience as they learn while teaching.

This study investigated six postsecondary teachers' knowledge for teaching and used different methods to obtain information from participants, including classroom teaching observations, document collections, and in particular, interviews and blog responses, which provided teacher narratives as meaning-making for teachers' construction of teacher knowledge. Multiple methods of investigation were implemented in order to investigate college teachers' "thinking, beliefs and knowledge" (Dinham, 2002, p. 333).

Data collection included responses to prompt questions posted on a community blog site. Teachers were questioned about their teaching experiences and knowledge construction. Interviews, observations, and documents also contributed to this study. By choosing participants with a variety of teaching experiences, this study revealed how teachers develop knowledge differently while situated in real institutions throughout different stages of their careers, thereby allowing the study to exhibit how and why knowledge growth developed within an actual working environment for each individual.

Moving beyond the knowledge that teachers accumulate during formal learning, this study examined informal learning acquired within the workplace, often called work-based or workplace learning, either collaboratively and/or independently through reflective, experiential, or social venues.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant for several reasons. First, study in this area contributes to teacher research. This study uncovers the learning of postsecondary teachers assigned to teach courses with little to no pedagogical training. As long as there are institutions hiring teachers directly out of graduate school to teach courses with little pedagogical background, then the study of teacher learning should continue so as to contribute to the literature of what and how learning is obtained through different venues. Second, this study contributes to the literature of professional development. Since learning is generally left in the sole hands of these teachers, the actions taken to develop and construct knowledge needed for teaching are significant to add to the literature of professional development. It is important to understand what initiatives postsecondary teachers take to continue their development so as to understand their teaching practices and to provide insights into the construction of “fragmented pedagogical knowledge” (Hativa, Barak & Simhi, 2001, p. 700). The ultimate goal of this study is to provide information needed to promote better teaching and learning, for teachers and students.

Overview of the Dissertation

This dissertation includes six chapters: Chapter 1: Introduction, Chapter 2: Literature Review, Chapter 3: Methods, Chapter 4: Participants’ Case Studies, Chapter 5: Learning Experiences and Emerging Themes, Chapter 6: Conclusion and Implications for Further

Research and Practice. In Chapter One, I describe my personal experience as an English literature graduate entering the workplace as a first year composition teacher. The introduction addresses the background of the problem and the specific research questions which developed. Also, I introduce the purpose and significance of this study with a brief contextual framework. In Chapter Two, I present an overview of the literature that supports this study. In Chapter Three, I discuss the methodology used to conduct this study. Chapter Four is dedicated to the participants' experiences of knowledge growth through their own stories constructed from multiple data. Chapter Five reveals the findings of the study, including which themes emerge, what issues occur, and how learning is progressing within the field. Chapter Six includes the final conclusion and implications for further research and practice.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

“For decades composition teachers have hidden behind the wailing-wall created by literature faculties which have complained about the burdens and frustrations of teaching composition. Their complaints are understandable. They have been trained to teach the best writing of the centuries and then are assigned, without any special training, to teach beginning students who do not even want to write.”

- Donald Murray (1985), *A Writer Teaches Writing*

Decades since Murray first identified the “frustrations” of English literature graduates and instructors teaching composition, these teachers are still being assigned to teach first year composition courses in postsecondary institutions. Even though English composition graduates now reside in English departments throughout colleges and universities across the United States, English literature graduates are still often assigned to teach first year composition courses because of the lack of composition instructors to teach entering freshman enrollments. First year composition classrooms in both teaching and research institutions are often taught by full time English literature teachers and part time English graduates with little theoretical background for teaching writing.

For the purpose of understanding this study, it is first important to review the history and practice of teaching composition. Composition has been a requirement in colleges since the seventeenth century in the United States (Crowley, 1998). Harvard added the teaching of writing to its curriculum to prepare the increasing number of enrolled students for academic writing (Brereton, 2009; North, 1987). Since that time, required college composition courses have increased, and debates have occurred regarding the approaches to teaching first year composition.

William Morton Payne (1895) investigated English courses taught in colleges and

universities around the United States several years after college composition was added to the curriculum of some English departments. He found that when English composition courses were implemented, different approaches were taken throughout universities. For example, Harvard University's approach to teaching composition included assigning themes on a daily basis from five hundred to one thousand words. After completing these assignments, students were to meet with professors individually during office hours to discuss each written work. Around the same time at Columbia College, Payne (1895) saw that students were also encouraged to write frequently, choosing topics which interested them and were required to meet with professors for one-on-one consultations regarding their work. These courses were focused on the action of writing and communication as opposed to being focused on textbook studies.

While many of these strategies continue today, theoretical debates regarding the approaches to teaching English composition over the years have multiplied. Many of the more modern schools of thought in composition theory and pedagogy argue against the current traditionalist method of composition pedagogy which held strong throughout the years from World War II to the Vietnam War, implementing focus upon use of proper grammar, adherence to formal and stylistic conventions of writing, and use of textbooks designed by "existing authority" (Burnham, 2001). The more current approaches are concentrated upon the actual processes of writing, including freewriting, drafting, writing, and rewriting, rather than concentrating fully on the final product (Elbow, 1998; Emig, 1997; Murray, 1985). The process movement also inspired teachers to change their pedagogies, from teacher-centered environments, involving mundane lectures regarding grammar and format, to learner-centered environments involving collaboration and expressive writing (Bruffee, 1997; Macrorie, 2009). Today, composition theory and pedagogy includes the post-process movement of the late 1990s

where composition focuses less upon looking at writing as simply a process, but directed more towards a “heuristic power,” acknowledging writing as “a human activity which reaches into all other areas of human endeavor – expansive in a way that casts doubt on conventional boundaries between individual and society, language and action, the cognitive and the social” (Atkinson, 2009, p. 1537). Pedagogical theories of composition teaching will continue to evolve with the ever-increasing studies in cognition and learning, diverse student populations and technological advancements (Flower & Hayes, 1997; Kroll, 1990; Leki, 1992; Severino, Guerra & Butler, 1997; Sidler, Morris & Smith, 2008; Silva & Matsuda, 2001; Takayoshi & Huot, 2003).

In order to investigate teacher knowledge acquired by literature graduates in postsecondary institutions, this chapter reviews four areas of literature relevant to support this study: 1) learning theories ; 2) teacher knowledge; 3) teacher learning; and 4) teaching methodologies. The background of the literature for these areas provides information of past studies to help uncover the importance of studying research for teaching composition as well as the patterns teachers develop to construct knowledge for teaching composition.

Theoretical Frameworks for the Study of Teaching Composition

Teacher research and teacher learning has begun to increase in postsecondary institutions (Menges & Austin, 2001). However, before this research began, areas of teacher research and teacher learning primarily focused on K-12 teachers. Even though colleges and universities house as many if not more teachers in their institutions than primary and secondary institutions, little has been researched regarding the learning processes of postsecondary teachers. This study explores those gaps in research by investigating what and how postsecondary teaches have learned and are learning since they began teaching.

Often, beginning college and university teachers know little of teaching. Novice teachers

are frequently hired directly from a Master's or Doctoral program with little teacher knowledge, whereas K-12 teachers are prepared by education programs supplying them with introductions to student, content, and pedagogical knowledge. Novice teachers at postsecondary institutions may lack teacher knowledge and are left to find other means of learning in order to fill the gaps. Most of this knowledge is learned informally and learned while teaching.

Through the framework of a qualitative case study (Stake, 1994), this study focuses on the lived experiences of teacher learning in postsecondary institutions using several learning theories. In order to find out what and how learning is occurring, I investigate individual learning experiences both formal and informal by constructing a multiple case study. Using six participants, this study looks into the learning processes occurring primarily in the workplace (Eraut, 1994), called work-based learning (Raelin, 2008).

This study looks at the ways postsecondary teachers are learning through multiple venues, including social collaboration, reflection and experience. Therefore, theories including social, reflective and experiential learning frame the inner workings of this study. Also, since teachers are often left to their own devices to learn while working, theories of self-regulated (Zimmerman, 1998) and self-directed learning (Hays, 2009) are included.

Because of the lack of formal training in teacher knowledge, postsecondary teachers are finding alternative ways to learn through informal means. By focusing on English literature graduates hired to teach composition, this study investigates the routes postsecondary teachers have taken in order to gain knowledge needed to teach courses for which they have not been trained.

Teacher Learning

According to Feiman-Nemser (2008), research on teacher learning consists of what has been learned from past educational preparation and professional development as well as from the

continuous daily activity in the classroom and interactions with colleagues. Lortie's (1975) research reveals that classroom experiences as well as interactions among peers and colleagues contribute to teacher learning (p. 79).

While there are opportunities, little research has been conducted into how college instructors learn to teach courses and, in particular, how English literature graduates are learning to teach first year composition courses. In fact, Carter (1990) argues that until recently teacher learning has focused more upon "what teachers need to know and how they can be trained" rather than what they do know and how knowledge is constructed (p. 291).

When it comes to exploring how postsecondary instructors learn to teach, MacKenzie, Eraut, and Jones (1976) found that few college teachers attained "professional training" of pedagogical skills. For the most part, these skills were learned by observing college professors' behaviors in the classroom. They conclude:

...if a member of a university faculty teaches well it is usually because he was fortunate enough to be well taught himself (one of the most important sources of teaching behavior is the model older teachers provide for young ones, since imitation is not only a form of flattery but also of learning). (p.41)

Lortie (1975) confirms that teachers are influenced and "shaped" by the teachers who teach them, stretching over years of education (p. x). However, this type of learning does not complete postsecondary teachers' education nor does it guarantee that they will be effective in the classroom.

Learning from Formal Instruction

Teachers have a base or platform of knowledge construction, oftentimes implicit, consisting of personal and practical knowledge before entering the teaching profession. For most English literature graduates and composition graduates, the subject matter and theoretical studies within these disciplines differ greatly.

English literature graduates. Generally, English literature students are grounded in genres of literature and theories of literature. In an informal search of seven major universities in the southeastern region, I found that the universities which provide Master's programs in English require courses in literary theory and focus the majority of their elective courses on eras of literature, from Old English to the Modern era.

Literature graduates are taught by several teaching approaches. Knapp (2004) notes that while some professors prefer postmodern methods of teaching, allowing students to lead discussions of the works of literature and request short written reports based upon topics chosen by the individual student, others are more "theory-driven," leading discussions and assigning longer "position papers" (p.55). This sort of teaching is based heavily on theory and less on pedagogy. Even Smagorinsky and Whiting (1995) assert that students of literature are generally assessed through "writing research reports, developing 'projects' that incorporate reports on articles from scholarly journals, writing papers on theoretical issues, and taking exams that involve essay questions" and believe that this approach to assessing literature graduates is "a potential problem" because they learn little of practical knowledge for teaching (p.18). However, what literature graduates also learn from these assignments are the practice of research, the structure of writing, and critical thinking skills which are critical components when teaching a composition course.

Pedagogy courses in graduate schools are limited for English literature graduates. While surveying seven other Master's programs in the southeastern region, this researcher found that no university required courses in teaching literature or literature pedagogy, thereby supporting the idea that teachers learn more about teaching after leaving graduate school.

English composition graduates. English composition graduate studies focus on theoretical perspectives of teaching composition. Students of composition learn the patterns of rhetoric and the components of language. Students study the importance of culture and linguistics. They also study theoretical essays on the processes of writing and the importance of

focusing on the individual needs of the writer, along with the political structure of the classroom. Courses are often offered in linguistics, which teach graduate students to identify, acknowledge, and appreciate the identity of each individual. Courses are also offered in writing pedagogy and assessment.

Learning from Informal Venues

Where formal learning generally takes place for students in the classroom, informal learning takes place throughout the existing career of all professionals, including teachers, who enter the workplace. Hofman and Dijkstra (2010) contend that teachers will continue to learn throughout their careers because it is at the “core of teachers’ professional development” and, therefore, learning is continuous as long as teachers are active in a professional environment (p. 1031). Teacher development consists not only of what has been learned from past preparation and development but also from the continuous daily actions in the classroom and interactions with colleagues (Feiman-Nemser, 2008). After completing a graduate degree, informal learning continues within the work environment whether learning is independent or social.

Informal learning occurs when individuals begin making connections and meaning from lived experiences. McKeachie (1980) states, “Human beings are learning organisms – seeking, organizing, coding, storing, and retrieving information all their lives; building on cognitive structures to continue learning throughout life; continually seeking meaning” (p. 85). Norman (1980) adds that learners are active, inquisitive, and go to extremes to comprehend understanding by “constructing frameworks, constructing explanations, [and] constructing huge edifices to account for what they have experienced” (p.42).

Livingstone (2001) contends that learning is simply “the gaining of understanding, knowledge, or skill at anytime and anywhere through individual and group processes,” and that

informal learning includes “both informal training and non-taught learning activities” which assists individuals with interacting or working within their environment (p. 22). Eraut (2004) argues that informal learning provides a “contrast to formal learning or training” and “recognizes the social significance of learning from other people but implies greater scope for individual agency than socialization” (p. 247). Therefore, informal learning provides a means of constructing and enhancing professional development, either through the acts of collaborating with others or through the solitary acts of research and/or reflection.

Learning through Sociocultural/Socio-Cognitive Experiences

Experience is one of the major factors which motivates teachers to teach as they do. Experiential learning occurs through any life experiences where “active engagement” is involved by the “whole” self, consisting of a combination of reflections, emotions, and physical acts (Beard & Wilson, 2006, p. 2). Teachers are involved physically, mentally and emotionally throughout the daily routines of teaching. There is no experience that arises which does not encompass some sort of response or learning situation. Kolb (1984) explains:

Experiential learning theory...offers the foundation for an approach to education and learning as a lifelong process that is soundly based in intellectual traditions of social psychology, philosophy, and cognitive psychology. The experiential learning model pursues a framework for examining and strengthening the critical linkages among education, work, and personal development. (p.3)

Since teaching is considered an ‘active engagement,’ and teaching provides continuous learning, experiential learning theory is important when investigating literature graduates/teachers’ actions and reactions to teaching composition. In this study, experiential learning theory assists in investigating how and why literature graduates/teachers teach the ways that they do by providing

insights into occurrences in the workplace. Bransford, Darling-Hammond, and LePage (2005) concur that “teachers continually construct new knowledge and skills in practice throughout their careers rather than acquiring a finite set of knowledge and skills in their totality before entering the classroom” (p. 3).

In order for experiential learning to occur, Kolb (1984) believes four actions must take place: *concrete experience*, *reflective observation*, *abstract conceptualization*, and *active experimentation* (p. 42). Teachers often engage in this type of learning.

John Dewey (1938), one of the foremost contributors in social cognitive psychology and pragmatism, argues that there is an “organic connection between education and personal experience” (p. 12). This position is based upon the idea that education and experience influence one another, positively or negatively. Teachers’ experiences are carried over from their days as students in the classroom to their days as teachers in the classroom. These experiences are an ever-existing factor upon knowledge learned. There is constant interaction within any environment in which an individual is placed. Dewey (1938) notes, “The conception of *situation* and of *interaction* are inseparable from each other. An experience is always what it is because of a transaction taking place between the individual and what, at the time, constitutes his environment” (p. 41). Just as Dewey argues that experiences, including interaction with others, is inevitable, so too can we imply that these “inseparable” occurrences form learning experiences within our social environments. Day-to-day experiences, either in the classroom or out, constantly occur and reoccur for teachers, which in turn create reflective thinking and experiential learning within the surrounding educational environments. Continuous learning occurs for teachers through these experiences.

Yet even with experiences, how does one know or recognize that s/he is learning from an

experience? During the 1980s, Shulman's (1987) investigation into how and what teachers learn began with the examination of knowledge construction through experiences. Shulman (1988), an expert in the field of teacher education, explains what is required to learn from an experience:

An individual or group engages in a particular action for the sake of achieving a desired end... When the desired end is achieved, people learn to use the action again under similar circumstances. When the end is not achieved, or a less desirable condition arises, people learn to avoid that action or class of actions. (p. 322)

This type of experiential learning occurs frequently for teachers. There are moments, semester after semester, which generate learning experiences through teaching a particular lesson plan or engaging with students in the classroom. Through the act of teaching, instructors increase their knowledge of subject-matter or content, their curricular materials, and they discover which pedagogies are successful and which are not successful, slowly developing pedagogical content knowledge (Howey & Grossman, 1989; Shulman, 1987).

Learning within a sociocultural environment. Experience is only one part of the focus for what becomes known and learned for teachers throughout their careers. Experience for a teacher entails momentary thoughts and reflections, dialogues with other colleagues, and most importantly, mediation, none of which could occur without socialization. McDiarmid and Clevenger-Bright (2008), experts in the field of teacher education, explain that to develop teacher learning and teacher knowledge throughout time “requires attention to the social contexts in which teachers find themselves” (p. 136). Teachers learn what they know from the sociocultural environments where they are placed, interacting with other colleagues and students in the classrooms. Teachers of first year composition often interact with one another, often by sharing offices and hallways, thereby exchanging stories and conversations about their teaching

methods and their students' reactions.

Sociocultural environments often provide ample opportunities to interact and communicate with colleagues, providing learning opportunities. Vygotsky (1986) explains the importance of mediation among like minds: "The rational, intentional conveyance of experience and thought to others requires a mediating system, the prototype of which is human speech born of the need of communication during work" (p. 7). Wertsch (1991) also adds that "human communicative practices give rise to mental functioning of the individual" (p. 13). If in fact Wertsch is correct in his argument, then the social interactions which teachers seek and/or perform within their schools act as informal instruction, albeit conscious or unconscious, further developing teacher knowledge.

Since teachers of first year composition are placed so quickly into classrooms, participation throughout the surrounding environment does play a large part of the learning experience. Beard and Wilson (2006) note that experiential learning takes place when "a *person* interacts with the *external environment* through the senses" (p. 4). In other words, an individual must be involved within the environment where s/he is placed, must be communicative within the senses, and must be internally stimulated in order to learn experientially. Teachers learn within the environments where they are "situated." Lave and Wenger (1991) explain that "situated learning" entails "the relationship between learning and the social situations in which it occurs" (p. 14). Lave and Wenger (1991) articulate that the idea of learning "is a process that takes place in a participation framework" (p. 15). Teachers find that participating, interacting, and sharing knowledge with others in the 'community' or educational environment helps to form whatever mastery knowledge is needed in the teaching environment.

Acquiring knowledge for teaching does come from formal education. But, as noted

previously, teaching is also learned informally through *social experience*, taking place in and out of classrooms. Levine (1992) emphasizes that “knowledge comes from within and through interaction” (p.1368). Therefore, not only do teachers bring with them knowledge from past educational experiences, but teachers continue to learn from their day-to-day interactions with others in the educational environments.

Learning by socio-cognitive processes. Piaget (1970, 2008) studied children, explaining how the cognitive processes of children develop. He researched “both the formation and the meaning of knowledge” in young children (Piaget, 1970, p. 13). Later, Piaget (2008) continued his studies to include individuals from adolescence to adulthood. Piaget’s studies help us to understand the construction of human knowledge itself. Piaget and Inhelder (1969) contend that “intelligence proceeds from action as a whole, in that it transforms objects and reality, and that knowledge, whose formation can be traced in the child, is essentially an active and operatory assimilation” (p. 28). Kolb (1984) further argues that Piaget’s theories assist with the explanations of how intelligence and knowledge develop for individuals through actions, interactions, and experiences. Wadsworth (2004) explains that for cognitive development to continue, an individual must *act* in the environment, thereby stimulating the learning process and the development of new knowledge.

Teachers socially interact with present colleagues and become “interrogative devices,” searching continuously for pertinent knowledge, thereby constructing much needed knowledge for their educational environments. In a study by McCann, Johannessen, and Rica (2005), they found that knowledge acquired socially is generally sought because teachers establish justification for certain teaching practices or to assist with answers to questions regarding what needs to be changed . Also, social interaction with colleagues provides opportunity for

professional development. Cohen (2010) argues that “teachers’ conversations with colleagues functions as a key professional practice through which significances for professional identity, as well as norms for practice, are accomplished” (p. 474). Therefore, social interaction constructs new knowledge and old knowledge and shapes teachers’ thinking and behavioral patterns.

Social cognitive psychologists Barone, Maddux, and Snyder (1997) state that “Humans do not just adapt to an environment; we are trained in adaptive habits by our social environment, and we generate new adaptations that change that environment” (p. 11). When entering a new social environment, individuals’ behaviors are determined from previous experiences. Teachers know entering into a new work environment that in order to “fit in” and in order to establish themselves as “credible,” “reliable,” and “responsible,” they may need to socially adjust and adapt to their new environment. Individuals continue to expand their personal experiences as their environments change. And for teachers, each new teaching position becomes a learning experience: therefore, teachers continue to act or react based upon their past experiences.

Learning through reflection. Not only do researchers agree that a great portion of teacher learning occurs through experiences and social interactions, but reflections contribute an important role in learning as well. At some point during interactions with other individuals or by personal or practical experiences reflection occurs. Donald Schon (1987), a well-known philosopher on reflective practice, introduces a particular term which contributes to this study: *reflection-on-action*. When spontaneous unexpected situations occur in the composition classroom, a teacher may dismiss the occurrence and continue with the lesson as planned. Later as the teacher takes time to reflect on the occurrence, this act of reflection is referred to as *reflection-on-action*.

Learning through self-regulated and self-directed processes. Zimmerman’s (1998)

description of self-regulated learning processes occur throughout a “multidimensional process involving personal (cognitive and emotional), behavioral, and contextual components,” and “learners must behaviorally apply cognitive strategies to a task within a contextually relevant setting” (p. 2). Zimmerman (1998) also describes a particular cyclical pattern for learning, including *forethought* (goal setting/strategic planning), *performance control* (self-instruction), and *self-reflection* (reflection and adaptivity) (p. 4). Teachers often exemplify these cyclical patterns, oftentimes creating goals and strategies for teaching before the courses begin (by constructing a syllabus), enacting teaching approaches, and reflecting upon those approaches and reactions from students. Whereas self-regulated learning is generally identified in literature with student-learning (Hofer, Yu & Pintrich, 1998; Schunk, 1998), this study assumes that teachers are continuous learners who seek to learn through the same modes and patterns of self-regulated learning. In addition to Zimmerman’s (1998) cyclical pattern of self-regulated learning, self-directed learning (Hays, 2009) is initiated as well which uncovers the methods by which teachers learn through the courses of actions they take.

Self-directed learning is applied when the cyclical process described by Zimmerman (1998) is not sufficient. Hays (2009) implies that self-directed learning uncovers the methods by which individuals learn, either 1) by taking caution and studying practical methods and theories before taking action or 2) by taking immediate action and reflecting on practice later, thereby learning through trial and error. In fact, Van Eekelen, Boshuizen, and Vermunt (2005) argue that teacher learning is perceived “towards a self-directed, active, and knowledge-creating process” (p. 448), thereby implying that both self-direction and self-regulation occur in order to construct teacher learning. Loyens, Magda, and Rikers (2008) concur that self-directed learning encompasses self-regulated learning. This study argues that literature teachers assigned to teach

composition are placed into situations which require self-directed and self-regulated learning.

Learning at the workplace. As discussed in Chapter One, work-based (Raelin, 2008) or workplace (Eraut, 1994; 1998; 2004; 2005; 2006; 2007) learning is learning which occurs “on the job,” encompassing learning activities or goals set by the individual worker in order to become more proficient. For this study, the word “workplace” will be used to exemplify the learning which occurs on the job.

Knowledge which is derived at the workplace is referred to as *workplace knowledge* (Fenwick , 2001). In order for workplace knowledge to develop, then “cognition and change in a system - whether individual or social, mental or embodied" must occur (p. 4). Also, Fenwick (2001) argues, “ Reflection during and after the doing is considered an important mental process required to transform experience into knowledge, which can then be represented and generalized to new contexts" (p. 6). Oftentimes, these processes occur for teachers. Each new semester, when teachers are faced with creating new courses or interacting with new students, experiences occur for reflection and learning to take place and for workplace knowledge to develop. Kolb (1984) continues by noting that “the workplace as a learning environment... can enhance and supplement formal education”(p. 4). Teachers also develop workplace knowledge from other colleagues at the institution.

Knowledge Needed for Teaching College Composition

Specific types of teacher knowledge are needed for diverse subjects, students and curricula. For teacher researchers Verloop, Van Driel, and Meijer (2001), teacher knowledge is described as “all professional-related insights that are potentially relevant to the teacher’s activities” (p. 443). Teacher educators/researchers have spent their careers investigating what knowledge is needed for effective teaching. This information which has been studied throughout

teacher education research contributes to the understanding of what college/university literature graduates need to teach first year composition.

Teacher Knowledge

Teacher knowledge consists of specific knowledge needed for effective teaching. Teacher educators/researchers describe the different factors of teacher knowledge needed, including the knowledge of 1) content of the subject matter, 2) pedagogical strategies for teaching the content, 3) students in the classroom, 4) curriculum, 5) educational contexts, relating to the social and cultural workings within the classroom and the institution, and finally, 6) educational goals and assessment processes (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2005; Porter & Brophy, 1988; Shulman, 1987; Wilson, Shulman & Richert, 1987). McDiarmid and Clevenger-Bright (2008) also add that teacher knowledge should include knowledge of “diverse learners (including those with special needs) and their cultures, technology, child and adolescent development, group processes and dynamics, [and] theories of learning” (p. 134). To understand what will be needed to teach students proficiently and effectively, teacher knowledge should encompass more than just the subject and the objectives of the course. Effective teaching also encompasses the environment of the classroom and the strategies needed to teach in the ever-changing classroom environment.

Teachers’ personal knowledge. Teachers bring their own personal knowledge of teaching through their own personal experiences, particularly their own experiences as former students and observers, to the classrooms they teach. Porter and Brophy (1988) note that these experiences contribute how teachers think and what they do (how they teach) in their classrooms. In fact, Schoonmaker (2002) argues that teachers’ own personal experiences are their most powerful and influential forms of knowledge constructed for teaching.

Teachers' practical knowledge. Freema Elbaz (1983), a teacher researcher, describes the term *practical knowledge* to include “wide-ranging knowledge which grows as experience increases” (p. 5). More recently, Munby, Russell and Martin’s (2001) study found that teachers’ practical knowledge is derived from the actions and/or interactions of the classroom environment, including the “practical dilemmas teachers encounter in carrying out purposeful action” (p. 880). Practical knowledge encompasses knowledge geared from the actual acts of teaching. Teachers learn through observing others, implementing methods, and reflecting back upon what methods have and have not worked. Since first year composition classrooms are often taught by inexperienced composition teachers, the practical knowledge of these teachers increases over time.

Teachers' knowledge of content and subject matter. Knowing subject matter means 1) understanding the facts, concepts and procedures needed to teach the content of the field, 2) understanding how to explain the content, and 3) understanding how to introduce new knowledge of the content (Grossman, Wilson & Shulman, 1989; Kauchak & Eggen, 1989). Grossman, Schoenfield, and Lee (2005) explain that this knowledge allows teachers to make informative curricular and pedagogical choices. Postsecondary teachers graduate with subject matter knowledge, but they may not know how to implement this knowledge effectively in the classroom. For example, literature graduates know literature for a specific era, but to implement that knowledge into the practice of teaching takes knowledge that is only gained through study, time, and experience. The same learning processes occur when literature graduates are assigned to teach composition courses.

Ball and McDiarmid (1990) researched the subject matter knowledge of English teachers and found that what they learned in college was different than what they were prepared to teach.

They found that English teachers' primary subject matter knowledge focused around the study of literature and literary interpretation. However, when they entered the teaching field, they also had to have knowledge of teaching grammar, spelling, and writing, and so they had to draw upon their own experiences of learning.

Knowing the subject matter versus being able to explain the subject matter and its context divides effective teachers from ineffective teachers. It takes more than knowledge of subject matter to be a teacher. Ball and McDiarmid (1990) argue in their study that a teacher must also be able to "assist students in their development of intellectual resources that enable them to participate in, not merely to know about, the major domains of human thought and inquiry" (p.438). Teachers need to acquire pedagogical content knowledge for effective classroom instruction.

Teachers' knowledge of pedagogy. Even though knowing subject matter or content is necessary when teaching a course, this knowledge cannot be solitary if a teacher is to be successful. Pedagogical content knowledge, or PCK (Bullough, 2001), relies upon "the manner in which teachers relate their subject matter knowledge (what they know about what they teach) to their pedagogical knowledge (what they know about teaching) and how subject matter knowledge is a part of the process of pedagogical reasoning" (Cochran, DeRuiter & King, 1993, p. 263). Shulman (1987) explains that PCK combines content and pedagogy to create "an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organized" for instruction (p. 8). Howey and Grossman's (1989) research adds that acquiring pedagogical content knowledge also involves knowing the meaning behind teaching a particular subject, knowing how to develop curricular materials for the subject, knowing how students assimilate knowledge, and knowing how to develop strategies for teaching particular topics.

If teachers have not developed pedagogical content knowledge, they might rely heavily on other instructive materials. When literature graduates begin teaching, they are generally provided with some representations of teaching materials, including textbooks, worksheets, rubrics, or other materials. McDiarmid, Ball, and Anderson (1989) note that “teachers develop a repertoire of subject matter representations from outside sources and from their own ingenuity” (p. 199). These aides are used to assist teachers in effective teaching strategies, thereby filling in any gaps of pedagogical content knowledge that may not exist. Grossman, Wilson, and Shulman (1989) found that teachers who do not have the appropriate knowledge to teach a particular subject often rely on textbooks.

Teachers’ knowledge of students. Today’s classrooms include a diverse student body. These diversities are portrayed by students from different cultural and social backgrounds, learning abilities, and gender identities. Ducette, Sewell, and Shapiro (1996) define diversity as:

...encompassing the domain of human characteristics that affect an individual’s capacity to learn from, respond to, or interact in a school environment. These characteristics can be overt or covert, recognized by the individual or not recognized, and biologically or environmentally or socially determined. (p. 324)

This definition explains that every student has individual abilities, and all students will not create knowledge or learn in the same ways. A classroom of students with diverse characteristics is challenging for most teachers.

Currently student population are increasingly diverse, and universities and teachers in particular should be prepared to address their needs. As of 2009, the United States Census Bureau estimated that student populations registered at four-year universities across the United States included both speakers of English and non-English speakers. Speakers of English included

approximately 8,025,000 Caucasian students, 6,974,000 non-Hispanic students, 1,490,000 African American students, 593,000 Asian students, and 1,168,000 Hispanic students. Non-English speakers included students from different countries, equaling 1,682,600. The estimated number of students with learning or physical disabilities for the year 2007 – 2008 was 2,266,000 (U. S. Census, 2012). With so many diverse learners attending postsecondary institutions, teachers try to accommodate the needs of these learners, since most students generally pass through their composition classes.

Researchers agree that before teachers enter a classroom of diverse students, they need to develop knowledge of the students they are teaching: this includes knowing the students' educational background, investigating the students' learning styles and development, and acknowledging difference. McDiarmid and Clevenger-Bright (2008) urge the importance of knowing how to teach students with special needs, to use technology in the classroom, to understand child and adolescent development, to recognize theories of learning, and particularly, to know how to motivate students to learn.

Also, to instruct these diverse learners effectively, Banks, et. al. (2005) suggest that “teachers must be prepared to take into account the different experiences and academic needs” of students as they plan their teaching curriculum (p. 233). According to Feiman-Nemser and Remillard (1996), teachers who are successful will draw upon the knowledge of their students when deciding what topics to teach and how to teach those topics. The recognition of the overt diversities is clearly known, but the approach to teaching these diverse student groups is learned through time and experience.

The study of multicultural education has helped teachers become aware of student diversities. Nieto and Bode (2008) proclaim that multicultural education not only emphasizes the

cultural, racial or ethnic backgrounds of students, but it also informs educators of issues regarding “social class, language use, gender, sexual orientation, religion, learning abilities, and other social and human differences” (p. 2). Multicultural education informs teachers of the knowledge needed to teach diverse student populations, and it also empowers teachers to create classrooms that 1) provide learner-centered classrooms, 2) acknowledge human rights and respect for cultural difference, 3) show student appreciation, 4) build upon students’ autobiographies, 5) develop critical analyses of power struggles, 6) teach social justice and equality, and 7) create a democratic classroom (Ducette, Sewell & Shapiro, 1996). When teachers take time to investigate their students’ backgrounds and how they learn, they can implement effective teaching strategies and provide a comfortable and progressive learning environments for their students.

Teachers’ knowledge of curriculum/goals. Stark (2000) defines curriculum as an “academic plan” (p. 413). To design a curriculum a teacher needs to know the goals and objectives for the course and institution and needs to be able to design a course which meets those objectives. Curriculum knowledge includes the ability to sequentially teach a course and develop strategies which assist students in obtaining the knowledge needed to complete the course objectives. Shulman (1987) argues that to do this, teachers should develop “tools of the trade” or materials for teaching (p. 8). Shawer (2010) states, “Course-design skills form a basic element of teacher curricular knowledge, being concerned with their ability to conduct needs assessment, write precise curriculum aims and objectives, and select and organize curriculum content in terms of determining scope, balance, continuity, sequence and integration” (p. 202). The challenge comes with knowing what material to include in the design of the curriculum.

Teachers’ knowledge of educational contexts. According to Grossman, Wilson, and Shulman (1989), knowledge of educational contexts consists of the classroom, the educational

policies of the program or department, the institution, the community, and the cultures within the community. When entering an English department at a university or college, a teacher may be instructed in the policies of the department as well as the objectives for the courses they will teach. However, knowledge of the institution and the community is often learned through research and experience.

Teachers' knowledge of assessment. For many teachers, assessment of student learning is challenging. It is also a necessary part of teaching and learning. Shepard et al. (2005) report that “to be affective, teachers must be skillful in using various assessment strategies and tools such as observation, student conferences, portfolios, performance tasks, prior knowledge assessments, rubrics, feedback, and student self-assessment” (p. 275). McCann, Johannessen, and Ricca (2005) contend that some beginning teachers find this task frustrating, constantly worrying over matters such as “being too lenient or too tough” (p. 51), particularly when a diverse student body occupies the classroom. Assessing students fairly is challenging for teachers, especially when such a diverse group of learners comprise classrooms, including English language learners, adult learners, basic learners, and students with learning disabilities.

By the time students enter college, they have already been assessed by placement exams which sole purpose is to place students into the appropriate writing courses, including basic English, first year composition, or honors English. Once students enter their composition courses, they are assessed for progression and/or grades. To assess a writer's progression, teachers may encourage multiple drafts and/or conferences, as well as require reflective writing. Some teachers may focus assessment more on the final product, thereby eliminating the process of multiple drafts and reflective writing.

In first-year composition courses, assessing student learning occurs most frequently in the

forms of essays and research papers, but alternative forms of assessment are also used, including group projects, demonstrations, and portfolios. Fischer and King (1995) argue that teachers should use a variety of alternative assessments 1) to gain more accurate data of student learning, 2) to observe the student's application of knowledge learned, 3) to be able to teach a variety of topics in a limited amount of time, 4) to discourage cheating, and 5) to discourage student bias often assumed by standard. And for others, such as Kathleen and James Strickland (1997), the belief is that assessment should be left in the hands of the individual student, to teach students to assess themselves, giving them more authority and responsibility for their own grades.

Williamson and Huot (2001) argue that when choosing methods of assessment, teachers should choose those which help them to "understand their students' needs as individuals and to plan for the fostering of literacy to the fullest possible extent in each" (p.205).

Teaching College Writing

English departments define the goals and objectives for all composition courses, either within a university handbook or in a course syllabus. However, a general description of what happens in a composition classroom is explained by Gilles (2002):

Composition deals explicitly with strategies for accessing, evaluating, interpreting, and using information as students work with sources of various kinds. It highlights problem-solving abilities as students define and address rhetorical situations. It teaches students that no two situations are exactly alike and that all situations require original thinking and problem solving. And composition requires that students consider deeply the perceptions, beliefs, biases, and material conditions of their readers and their sources. Effective pieces of writing, from simple reports to complex arguments, demand that writers pay attention to these crucial components of a liberal education. (p. 7)

As noted above, composition classrooms teach students to read, think, and write critically. The knowledge needed to analyze, reflect, and respond to other writers' works is easy for literature graduates because they did the same type of work in graduate school. The complication arises, however, when literature graduates lack the pedagogical and theoretical skills needed to teach students how to respond through writing.

As the number of composition classrooms increase, the need increases for trained teachers of composition. According to Crowley (1998), the increasing college populations during the 1950s and the 1960s brought into the classroom a new type of student, increasing the number of first year composition classrooms. By the 1970s, new methods of writing and more importantly, new methods of teaching writing were being explored (Shaughnessy, 1977; Tobin, 1994, 2001). Even today, first year composition classrooms are populated by an ever-increasing number of diverse learners, causing instructors to become more consciously aware of their student populations while developing challenging pedagogical strategies.

Teaching Students in the Writing Classroom

First year composition classrooms are bombarded with learners of all types: non-native English speakers/writers, adult learners, first year students, basic writers, and students with learning disabilities. Therefore, creating the same curriculum with the same objectives for all students becomes a challenge.

Teaching multicultural learners. With first year composition classrooms containing English language learners, theorists, teachers and researchers warn against the marginalization of students – leaving behind and pushing aside those students who need help the most. To prevent this from happening, teachers need to expand their knowledge base of students in their classrooms. Casanave (2007) explains that to be an effective teacher of non-native English

speakers in the writing classroom, a teacher must have a strong knowledge base, including “knowledge about the target language, including knowledge of the conventions of writing and rhetoric in the target language, and some knowledge about the languages, cultures and writing conventions pertinent to the students they are teaching” (p. 15). Kubota (2001) adds that “the attempts to demystify cultural differences are well-meaning efforts to understand, assess, and teach ESL/EFL students effectively by taking into account their cultural backgrounds” (p. 9). In other words, teachers of multicultural classrooms should be aware of the changing occurrences in other countries, be it social, political, economical, and especially educational. English literature teachers become knowledgeable of cultural awareness, understanding and *difference* through theoretical readings of literary criticism in their graduate studies, but they may not have had the opportunities to actually engage with multiracial/multicultural groups by the time they are hired to teach courses. Without actual engagement and knowledge into the backgrounds of multicultural individuals, teachers are likely to marginalize these students without even realizing that they are doing so.

Teaching diverse learners. When teaching composition to students with diverse learning abilities, Brueggemann, White, Dunn, Heifferon, and Cheu (2006) suggest that teachers develop strategies to engage students in composing without writing words on paper, but by implementing other “strategies that perhaps challenge all our traditional pedagogical practices” such as using visual methods or oral presentations (p. 527). This suggestion is what Zeff (2007) refers to in more detail as an inclusive universal design which includes three overall principles: 1) use multiple means of representation, giving learners a variety of ways to gather and understand the content of the course, 2) use multiple means of expression, including allowing students to use a variety of methods to demonstrate what they have learned and 3) use multiple means of

engagement, including allowing students to share their interests, creating challenging but acquirable opportunities, and keeping students engaged (p. 30). While Zeff (2007) places focus on using an inclusive universal design for teaching students with learning disabilities, this method can be applied to all groups of students.

Fortunately, most first year composition instructors have the opportunity to use multiple methods to ensure an inclusive, universal teaching strategy. Post-secondary institutions are noted for accessing computer programs such as WebCT, Blackboard, ANGEL and other networking programs for teachers to use as a means to assist with teaching and to keep contact with students out of the classroom through emails, discussion boards and chat rooms. Programs such as these provide opportunities for learning by allowing teachers to post readings, videos and assignments. Kist, Doyle, Hayes, Horwitz, and Kuzior (2010) assert that these programs which allow students access to upload and post works online, sharing information with the teacher and fellow students in the course, provide opportunities for collaboration, “student voice,” and “flexibility” (p. 68).

Teaching College Literature

While teaching composition focuses on the process of writing, literature teaching focuses primarily on interpreting and understanding text, often by methods of lecture and discussion, focusing entirely on the text and its meaning. Also, as stated earlier, literature graduates occasionally have to write a literary analysis or “position paper” (Knapp, 2004, p. 55). Since few courses are offered in pedagogy, particularly in the master’s program, oftentimes postsecondary literature teachers simply teach their students the way they were taught. Cohen (2011) agrees, stating that the syllabus for her literature course in graduate school

...included a list of required reading, a list of recommended reading, and a list of

assignments, plotted out for each of the upcoming classes, so complicated that I felt myself grow faint at the sight of it... The experience of that English class affected my own teaching. It conditioned in me the idea that I had to be comprehensive in what I gave students and what I expected of them. (n.p.)

When Cohen (2011) finished her course study and began teaching, she thought that the appropriate way to teach was by imitating her past professors. However, as her experience in teaching literature grew over the years, she realized that what initially worked for her in the beginning of her teaching career does not necessarily work for her, or for her students, today. Cohen (2011) now places more value on the quality of the work, assigning fewer readings and assignments.

Even today, pedagogical practices for teachers of literature are concentrated on the teaching of texts for literacy and critical thinking, including texts which comprise either reading lists of canonical literature, contemporary literature, multicultural texts or subject-specific literature (Eck, 2008; Horwedel, 2007). When teaching these specific texts, lectures and discussions orchestrated by teachers often dominate the classroom environment to enhance the close reading of texts. Research by Scholes (2002) focuses on the investigation of teaching literature as “teaching reading,” in order to teach college students how to read, acknowledge and develop critical thinking skills.

However, more recently, other approaches have become popular. According to Wiggins (2011), some teachers recognize the needs for initiating learner-centered environments in the literature classroom, claiming that it is better to give students opportunities to lead discussion. Other teachers recognize that some students are still not being represented within the readings of some literature courses. Even though most sophomore literature courses require readings from

“World” Literature textbooks, there is an increasing awareness to the problem of not recognizing all students’ representativeness in the classroom. Rogers and Soter (1997) recognize the need for “providing more inclusive communities” for students who occupy literature classrooms and argue that teachers “resist texts and readings...because of their cultural memberships and various identity positions” (p. 3). To alleviate this problem, teachers should implement readings which are more suitable to their classroom environments.

As far as pedagogical training for literature teachers, two professors, Farris and Favret (2004) at Indiana University in Bloomington recognized that providing teacher training for future literature teachers is imperative, and thereby devised a semester long seminar to do just that. Their study identified the need to include teacher preparation for graduating students of literature and culture. This research indicated that even though literary and cultural theory is learned by the graduates of Indiana University, pedagogical knowledge is practical in order to provide literature graduates with the tools needed to recognize and to teach diverse groups.

Summary

In summary, the literature of this chapter has emphasized that teachers learn through multiple venues of cognitive, metacognitive, socio-cognitive, and sociocultural means, through personal and practical experience, social interaction with others, and reflection on past coursework and practice. The literature review has also highlighted what knowledge is needed to be a successful teacher through the literature of teacher education and teacher researchers. Finally, it enlightens the current study by reviewing pedagogical and theoretical approaches to teaching college writing. This study will provide further literature for examining how, what, and why postsecondary English literature graduates learn to teach first year composition courses to diverse student groups.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

“Research in composition studies has only recently begun to explore the ways in which graduate students are prepared to teach.”

- Sally Ebest (2005), *Changing the Way We Teach: Writing and Resistance in the Training of Teaching Assistants*

The above statement reflects the need to investigate graduate students' studies in composition as well as their methods of teaching composition. Ebest's (2005) study examined graduate coursework in composition courses as well as pedagogical approaches applied by teaching assistants of composition. Since Ebest (2005) found it necessary to examine what composition graduates learn and how they teach, then it is fair to say that the same inquiries may be investigated for literature graduates. The reason for this is that literature graduates may be underprepared to teach composition courses, due to their lack of pedagogical and subject matter knowledge. Even today, English literature graduates who have become teachers, both novice and expert, are often assigned to teach composition courses when postsecondary institutions run short of faculty to teach the ever-increasing number of English composition “service” courses. Therefore, questions regarding how literature graduates develop contextual and pedagogical knowledge to teach composition spurred the inquiry for this study.

In this inquiry, several research questions were used to structure the investigation. The main research question involved finding out what the learning experiences were for English literature graduates while they were teaching first year composition classes composed of a diverse student body. By investigating the answer to this main research, several ancillary questions were asked: 1) How and why do English literature graduates seek out knowledge to teach first year composition? 2) How do English literature graduates come to know the

pedagogical and theoretical knowledge needed to teach composition? 3) How and why do English literature graduates come to know how to teach the content needed in first year composition courses? These questions enlightened *how* and *what* trained English literature graduates do to construct knowledge needed to teach writing, as well as to investigate the reasons *why* teachers seek the knowledge they need to teach. This investigation followed Maxwell's (2005) qualitative research design for formulating data collection methods.

The primary focus of this research was to investigate how teaching knowledge as constructed for English literature graduates who were assigned to teach first year composition. By following six teachers with a range of experience from novice to expert for one semester, this research study revealed strategies regarding *how*, *what* and *why* they learned and continue to learn throughout their development as writing teachers. In this chapter, the research plan is presented, explaining the theoretical approach and the constructivist paradigm which frames the research. Next, the participant selection as well as selection of locality was discussed. Also a brief description of each participant of this study was provided. Then, an explanation of each of the data sources and the collection procedures for this study were explained. Finally, the data analysis procedures were described, including the evaluative criteria used to determine the "trustworthiness" of this research.

The Research Plan

A qualitative approach for this study was chosen in order to investigate phenomena from the viewpoints of the participants, by asking questions that began with *how* and *why* for deeper analysis and meaning. It also investigated what occurred within the participants' social environments, through means of interviews, observations, and stories. Using "thick description," brought about through the participants' interviews and online narratives warranted "history into

experience” and established “the significance of an experience, or the sequence of events, for the person or persons in question” (Denzin, 2001, p. 100). Since teacher learning and knowledge development was investigated by following six participating teachers at three different institutions, then conducting a qualitative multiple case study was the best approach for simultaneous data collection and analysis.

Throughout this study, data was collected through interviews, computer mediated communications (CMC), observations, and artifact analysis from six different participants. Theory was generated throughout the process of inquiry. Strauss and Corbin (1998) suggest that “theory may be *generated* initially from the data” (p. 273). More specifically, while data was being collected by a variety of methods, at the same time, it was also being examined for concepts, which were then placed into categories and coded. Theory was derived from the coded data. Throughout the processes of this qualitative study, including exchanges through computer mediated communication with the participants, observations, and interviews, theory developed from the data collected through noting and coding information, letting it emerge through the collection process rather than forcing data to emerge through a preconceived hypothesis.

A qualitative research methodology was used through a case study approach (Stake, 1994; Yin, 2003). As described by Stake (1994), “A case study is both the process of learning about the case and the product of our learning” (p. 237). The main reasons to use a multiple case study approach were “to explain the presumed causal links in real-life interventions that are too complex for the survey or experimental strategies” and to “illustrate certain topics” by using thick description (Yin, 2003, p. 15). Stake (1994) advocates the case study approach by explaining that:

We come to know what has happened partly in terms of what others reveal as their

experience. The case researcher emerges from one social experience, the observation, to choreograph another, the report. Knowledge is socially constructed...and thus case study researchers assist readers in the construction of knowledge. (p. 240)

Participants of this study were responsible for revealing their own individual “lived” experiences. Van Manen (1990) points out that “lived experience” is not such a simple act as boiling water in a saucepan; instead, lived experience holds “a determinate meaningful aspect” – something that makes the life experience unique which allows reflection (p. 38). For the participants, this “meaningful aspect” was the constant reflections attained through teaching experiences and interactions with others, including peers, colleagues, students and administrators throughout the educational environment. Therefore, the importance of this research relied upon the reconstruction of the “lived experiences” offered by the participant

Stake (1994) claims that when a researcher uses case study within a qualitative design, a constructivist paradigm (Hatch, 2002) is exhibited. Within a constructivist paradigm, the focus of interest relies upon what individuals perceive, or their “perspectives and constructions of reality” (Hatch, 2002, p. 15). The participants “perspectives” were uncovered as their construction of knowledge growth expanded. This study investigated the multiple realities which existed among individual English literature graduates/teachers’ perspectives and obtained the information needed to help explain how, what and why these teachers learned to teach from one content area of study, literature, to another, composition.

This study investigated individual perspectives of how six English literature graduates teaching first year composition classes ‘come to know’ what they know as composition teachers, where each teacher and her/his classroom becomes a “bounded system” (Creswell, 1998, p. 61). In this “bounded system,” the time, the place and the individuals involved in this case study

were chosen. By following, interviewing, conversing, and observing each of the participants separately, each participant's teaching and learning experiences became known.

Participant Selection

Participant Background

Six participants with educational backgrounds in literature were recruited. In the interest of this study, six participants (5 female and 1 male) from English departments within two teaching universities and one research university located in the southeastern region of the United States. I recruited teachers with a wide range of teaching experience, from novice to expert, who all obtained graduate degrees in literature. These teachers were responsible for teaching first year composition students how to think and write critically, in essay and research paper formats, and were also responsible for making sure that all institutional objectives were covered and students were assessed according to departmental directives.

The purpose for recruiting six participants with different years of teaching experience was to be able to investigate the different experiences at different stages of professional development. The assumption was that novice teachers were still in the process of seeking out knowledge and developing themselves as professionals, while expert teachers had more time to develop knowledge for teaching and to position themselves within the professional environment. Also, there was the assumption that novice teachers seek teaching knowledge via interaction with peers and colleagues, looking for 'approved methods' for teaching writing, while expert teachers, who were generally tenure or tenure-track, were more comfortable with their teaching approaches, thereby not looking for 'approved methods' and feeling more comfortable to develop their own. The multiple realities of the lived experiences contributed by these diverse individuals allowed for a variety of constructed knowledge paths obtained throughout the course

of these case studies.

Maxwell (2005) explains that there are four important goals for purposeful sampling, including 1) to achieve representativeness 2) to demonstrate “heterogeneity” 3) to choose cases that parallel beginning theories, and 4) to help ascertain comparisons (pp.89-90). For this study, the representativeness was demonstrated by investigating six participants instead of a smaller number, such as three, and by choosing the participants with similar backgrounds in formal instruction. To demonstrate the “heterogeneity” of this purposeful sampling, these participants were chosen based upon their teaching experiences to illustrate the variety of their experiences. It was the assumption of this study that as a teacher became more experienced, the more knowledge s/he would be able to share regarding past learning and teaching experiences. Next, participants with similar areas of study who were all assigned to teach first year composition courses were chosen to investigate the theory of this research. Finally, teachers with a variety of teaching experiences were chosen to acquire enough sampling to address the different and/or similar experiences which developed among the participants.

Locality

The southeastern region of the United States was chosen for the location of this study because of its student population groups. In this specific region, most of the students attending each university were from the surrounding region, either directly entering from local high schools or returning after years of absence. They were primarily of Southern White (Caucasian) or Southern Black (African American) extract, but also included other ethnic backgrounds, including students from Hispanic cultures and students visiting from countries around the world. The purposes for choosing this region also aligned with Maxwell’s (2005) reasoning for purposeful sampling, primarily to investigate the beginning theories of this research, including

investigating English literature graduates assigned to teach first year composition courses occupied by diverse student groups.

Data Collection

The importance of finding out the lived experiences of the participants in the study was greatly determined by the narratives the teachers chose to share. Thus, the narratives they constructed emerged from stories of what occurred throughout their lived experiences as teachers of first year composition classes (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). To capture the experiences of my participants, several specific strands of methodology were used: interviews, blog sites (for the purpose of computer mediated communication), classroom observations, documents, and written notes.

Interviews

Denzin and Lincoln (2003) argue that the interviews used by qualitative researchers are to “get closer” to the participant’s perspective and to capture an “individual’s point of view” (p. 10). Open-ended questions during the interview process provided the participants with opportunities to tell their own stories of their lived experiences. Also, in order to enhance the data, interviews provided a way to check for accuracy (Maxwell, 2005) of the data collected and to validate the data collected. Interviews provided additional information for this study before and after classroom observations, blog use, and artifact collection.

In this study, a minimum of two, one-on-one interviews (approximately one hour each) were executed: one at the beginning and one at the end of the semester. Each interview was recorded via audiotape. Additionally, notes were taken during the interview process. The use of audio ensured accuracy of transcriptions. Every interview was scheduled with the consent of the participants, making sure to provide a comfortable environment for the participants for each

interview.

The study began with an initial structured interview consisting of questions regarding background information, including personal experience, teaching experience, educational experience, and student interaction (Appendix E). The questions for this interview were open-ended, to gain as much information as possible from each participant. This initial interview was used to discuss the understanding of what each participant needed to do regarding this study and to answer and clarify any questions that the participant may have had. This interview was also used to explain the use and the importance of the blog site, how to log in, how to store information, and how to communicate with other participants and/or the researcher.

The final interview (Appendix H) for the semester was scheduled after classroom observations and after all blog entries had been collected and transcribed, in order to show and discuss with participants the transcripts from each classroom observation, as well as to discuss the blog entries for more clarity. At this point, any artifacts which had not been collected prior to this meeting were collected, including teachers' syllabi and other materials used for teaching. This interview was given after the semester was over. The point of this final interview was to investigate any other information that may have been overlooked by each participant.

Blog Site

A blog site was established to be used much like a journal, for participants to record their own lived experiences, as well as to provide prompt questions for participants' responses. A blog site was established to explicate individual teacher's educational and teaching experiences by requiring each participant to record their experiences by computer mediated communication (CMC). As explained by Mann and Stewart (2003), computer mediated communication "allows computer users to interact directly with each other, using text, via keyboards" (p. 81). By using

CMC for this study, the participants had opportunities to record their own stories as well as to communicate with others in the study, if the need arose, including other participants and the researcher, via asynchronous discussions. By the end of the study, there were a total of twenty blog prompt questions answered by all participants (Appendix G).

Purpose. This blog site was developed to provide access for all participants. The blog site was password protected at all times. No outside readers were able to read any recorded data written by the participants. This site allowed the participants to keep electronic journals, including participants' narratives, comments, and/or concerns and to provide communication among other participants, as well as to provide access to communicate with me. The purpose for choosing blogs instead of paper journals was to be able to share information publicly with others in this study. The use of blogs enabled monitoring the writing more closely, to make sure that participants were active throughout this project. The blog site provided insights into what each participant was writing regarding their past and present experiences. The participants provided a plethora of information regarding their experiences which contributed to this study while using this blog site. Another purpose for providing this blog site was to offer a place to record narratives conveniently for each participant, offering significant time to sit and to reflect upon their experiences in order to respond to each prompt. Also, when participants had difficulty remembering incidences, prompt questions were provided intermittently to help the participants' writing processes along.

Anonymity. This blog site was password protected only allowing each participant, as well as the researcher, access to the site. Since all participants were using pseudonyms, each participant's identity was secured, allowing complete anonymity. Pseudonyms also protected the participants from knowing each other's teaching status. Expert teachers and novice teachers had

equal status on this blog site, thereby helping to relieve any hesitation regarding topics or subjects that were posted on the site. Each participant was not to hint or make mention of their status within the university or location of university.

Convenience. Using a blog site allowed the participants to add whatever information they felt was useful for this study *whenever* and *wherever* the participant felt most comfortable. For this study, the blog site was located on Wordpress.com, which was easily accessible to any computer, and even some mobile phones, with internet access. Blog site instructions, including how to create code names, using the blog and saving information to the blog site, was printed out on paper and provided for each participant via mail or email. These instructions were available for the participants to review at any time during the study. These instructions were reviewed at the first interview session so that each participant was thoroughly knowledgeable before beginning to record data on the blog site. The blog site was checked once a week over the course of two semesters to check for any messages or journal entries.

Because blogs are an online source, the participants had the option to select time and place when logging experiences. Since all participants were recording their own individual experiences, it was important for them to have a secure site to write, both electronically and physically. Participants could respond from anywhere, at any time, as long as access to the internet was present. Therefore, a blog site made it convenient, and each participant's privacy was protected.

At the beginning of the semester, specific prompts were given in order to initiate responses from the participants and specifically to introduce them to the use of the site. Throughout the study, the participants were encouraged to log and record any past experiences or any present developments which may have occurred during this study. Each participant was to

blog as often as she/he could to collect as many lived experiences for the study to illuminate what had happened or may happen in their future teaching.

Observations

Maxwell (2005) suggests “While interviewing is often an efficient and valid way of understanding someone’s perspective, observation can enable you to draw inferences about this perspective that you couldn’t obtain by relying exclusively on interview data” (p. 94). Classroom observations were performed to strengthen the study to examine the lived experiences of the participants and to make connections among the exchange of dialogues (CMC, interviews) and document collection. More specifically, two classroom observations during the semester were recorded via audio and video recorder, as well as field notes.

During the semester, classroom observations took place at two different scheduled times, at the convenience of the instructors. Classroom observations allowed for comparisons to be made, comparing what happened in the classroom versus what teachers stated in interviews and what teachers posted to the blog site, including observing interactions among teachers and students and checking to see how teachers performed, interacted, and used documents in the classroom. Atkinson and Coffey (2003) claim that observations are ways to verify data by comparing what a person actually does to what a person says. More specifically, pedagogical methods which were used to teach composition were being observed. These observations helped to generate information regarding *what* teachers do within their classrooms as well as *how* they learn to do *what* they do in the classrooms.

Artifacts

Titles of textbooks, course syllabi, university program curricular handbooks, rubrics, and any handouts designed or used by the instructor for the composition courses were collected. The

purpose of collecting these materials was to gather insights into *how* literature teachers develop into composition teachers by examining the documents they used for teaching. Atkinson and Coffey (2004) explain that documents record “versions of reality” and “self-presentation” (p. 57). Therefore, by looking at documents prepared by the participants, the information revealed 1) how teachers represent themselves and 2) why and how they teach composition the way they do. Collecting these materials provided insights into what sorts of strategies were used to teach first year composition.

Documents, or text, are extensions of teachers’ spoken words. By examining the documents used by teachers which are designed to assist the construction of the course and classroom, the specific text chosen for these documents provided a representation of the teacher’s contextual and pedagogical knowledge. While some texts dictated what students needed to do, others were more facilitative. Prior (2004) suggests that documents are considered “receptacles” used as “instructions, obligations, contracts, wishes, reports, etc.” (p. 76). The initial assumption for this study was that less experienced teachers would strictly adhere to the university’s objectives and/or requirements for teaching first year composition, while more experienced teachers would create their own unique requirements for teaching first year composition. In other words, less experienced teachers’ classroom instruction would be more structured by the texts or guidelines of the university, while more experienced teachers’ classroom instruction would be primarily structured by the individual teachers, with less emphasis regarding strict university guidelines. Collecting documents helped to gather additional information regarding the structure of the participants’ curriculum.

Also, collecting documents was useful to examine whether students were regarded as a general whole or individually. In other words, by examining the documents participants used in

their classrooms, the documents revealed if teachers spent most of their time lecturing or spent their time working individually with students in the classroom. Also, there was an interest in understanding how teachers represented themselves towards their students. With diverse student groups attending universities today, there was a need to uncover how teachers represent themselves before such groups. Atkinson and Coffey (2003) suggest that documents are written for *implied readers* (p. 72). Therefore, in the interest of this study, documents were useful in determining *how* teachers represented themselves towards students from the surrounding regions, as well as students who were visiting from other countries. Copies of all participants' syllabi have been provided (Appendices I- T).

Researcher's Notes

During observations and interviews, field notes and memos were recorded. Memos were made to use in future interviews or for extensive questions to post on the blog site for further inquiry. Memos were used for data analysis as a way to reflect on the types of questions, comments, and concerns emerging from my interactions with my participants. Memos were used specifically in this qualitative study to help create theory by coding words, phrases, etc., in the margins of field notes (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Data Analysis

As stated earlier, this qualitative study relied upon using a multiple case study approach. Since theory emerged from the data collected, analysis began from the moment field notes were written and transcriptions were typed. First, the constant comparative method is discussed. This method is commonly used to generate theory in qualitative research and is particularly used in studies involving "multiple-site, participant observation studies" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Next, the application process of using the constant comparative method is discussed, including the

methods of collecting data, transcribing data and notes, as well as developing coding categories. Finally, the English composition process of developing credible qualitative research is discussed.

Constant Comparative Method

The constant comparative method was used in this study to begin the open coding process. This method provided a process of generating theory which required a continuous look at the collection of data attained from multiple sources. This method compared experiences in one case against experiences in another, including the theoretical “properties” and “dimensions” which developed from the categories throughout the study (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 97). The purpose of comparing a participant’s experiences among other participants’ experiences in other cases was to discover what theoretical “properties” and “dimensions” emerged from categories which were coded from the transcription of the collected data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 97). As Bogdan and Biklen (2003) describe, the constant comparative method is not a method that is followed as a sequence of steps, but is a combination of steps which continually zig-zag from one point of interest to another, checking and re-checking for concepts and theories. While comparing experiences among cases, similarities and differences surfaced which allowed categories to develop. While examining all the categories pulled from the participants’ experiences of the different cases, questions arose resulting in the emergence of theoretical “properties” and “dimensions” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, pp. 96-97).

Collecting Data

As discussed earlier in the Data Collection section of this chapter, multiple methods were used to collect data for this study. Face-to-face interviews took place at the beginning of the data collection process. At that point, individual meetings were held with each participant, and they were asked a particular set of open-ended questions.

Other forms of data collection followed, including more face-to-face interviews, as well as collecting journal entries provided by a blog website, and classroom observations. At each point of collection, notes were written and memos were added to assist in the emergence of concepts (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Transcribing Data and Notes

The transcription of recorded data, including audio and visual, took place after each collection process. The importance of transcribing data, as each data collection process was concluded, was to formulate categories and concepts as they emerge from data.

Coding Categories

The following paragraphs explain the type of coding assimilated in this study in order to find the results of the data. Since this study was a qualitative multiple-case study, it was important to use open, axial and selective coding to reveal the final results.

Open coding. As stated previously, one of the most important analytic tools of qualitative research is making comparisons. Looking at the data closely provides answers to questions, as well as uncovers regularities and patterns of information needed to formulate categories. While using comparative analysis, Strauss and Corbin (1998) suggest that there are specific actions that must be performed while completing the open coding process: conceptualizing, classifying, and categorizing.

Conceptualizing the data. Since concepts were “labeled phenomenon” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 103), the action taken was to review all data to find recurring events, phrases, words, or descriptions provided by each participant. For this particular study, patterns of events were examined. For example, this study investigated *what and how English literature graduates learn to teach first year composition* as well as *why they seek out knowledge needed to teach*

composition .

Classifying the data. After asking questions to find out what phenomena occurred for each participant, the next step was to look for similar answers or concepts that could be classified. The answers that participants provided established sets of concepts which interpreted the ways in which they were to be classified (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The events described were then sorted in various ways, depending on the responses of the participants. Strauss and Corbin (1998) explain that “classified objects, events, acts and actions/interactions have attributes and that how one defines and interprets those attributes (or the meanings given to them) determines the various ways in which concepts are classified” (pp. 104-105). Since there were various classified concepts, the next step was to find categories for those concepts.

Categorizing the data. Categorizing includes grouping events, phrases, words, actions, etc., together. Strauss and Corbin (1998) explain that at this point in the research, “Data are broken down into discrete incidents, ideas, events, and acts and are then given a name that represents or stands for these” (p. 105). While participants described their experiences, noting reoccurring factors (events, phrases, words, actions, etc.) used to describe these experiences was necessary, which created categories for these phenomena. For example, the participants had similar learning experiences. Since these examples were similar, they were placed into categories.

Coding data. The final step was to gather all data and code specific findings. Bogdan and Biklen (2003) suggest that while examining the data, it is important to look for “topics and patterns” which can then be “physically separated from other data” to be placed into categories (p. 161). Once categories were formed, subcategories were formed which led to the next coding process: axial coding.

Axial coding. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998) axial coding is the act of developing subcategories which relate to the existent categories derived from open coding. During this process, the data was refigured in a variety of new and different ways. The purpose of this process was to find and make connections among subcategories with categories developed from open-coding. After the data collection was completed and all data was coded, the data collected was sorted from transcriptions and field notes which uncovered subcategories. At this point, theory began building.

Selective coding. Selective coding is the final process by which “integrating and refining categories” takes place to find the central category which enlightens theory development (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 143) At this point, data became theory; all the experiences by my participants had been recorded, transcribed, and reduced to specific conceptual terms, placed into categories, then merged into a central category, thereby developing rational statements and presenting them as theory.

After all data had been collected and coded from all participants, and categories and subcategories had been developed, all participant data was examined, compared and contrasted. Recurring themes began building.

Credibility

Glaser and Strauss (1967) discuss several ways for researchers to convey the credibility of their research. First, it is important for readers to understand the theoretical framework. Second, it is necessary to describe the data as vividly as possible so that others can envision the realities that exist within the study. Therefore, by using qualitative inquiry comprised from multiple case studies, this research not only provided a theoretical framework, but included narratives, demonstrating the lived experiences described by the participants in their own words.

To recap what has been stated earlier, this qualitative multiple case study was based upon using a constant comparative method which located specific concepts needed to analyze data. The coding of these concepts assisted with the creation of categories, ultimately leading to the central category of the research. From this central category is where the theoretical framework emerged.

Since this study included six participants and lasted over a period of two semesters, the data collected was extensive. Through interviews, electronic journal entries, and field notes, there were a multitude of concepts to code throughout the study. Continuous comparisons of this data provided an ample amount of coded material which revealed similarities and differences among the individuals being studied. This saturation of material assisted in the credibility of this research.

Not only did the coded data reveal insights into the theoretical framing of this research, but the actual responses and the descriptions of the lived experiences provided by the participants also assisted in the credibility of this study. Throughout the study, the settings, as well as each participant, are described to situate the setting of this study. Narratives were used when appropriate, to allow the readers to ‘hear the voice’ of each participant as she/he described their lived experiences.

CHAPTER FOUR

INSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION AND TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES

Since the participants of this study work within three different postsecondary institutions, the discussions are divided into institutional sections in order to contextualize each participant's working and learning situations. First, each institution's Mission Statements provided by the English departments is presented. These statements describe the specific goals and objectives that the courses provide which students are to attain while attending first year composition courses. Each instructor is responsible for providing the tools and instruction needed in order to ensure that students attain these goals. Second, the different first year writing programs and the English department cultures are described, as well as the objectives of the department contained in the syllabi. Third, under each institution, the participants' narratives are provided which illuminate their learning experiences and teaching approaches for first year composition courses. Pseudonyms are provided to protect the names of each institution and each participant.

This chapter has been specifically outlined in order to examine the learning and teaching experiences through participants' narratives and other data which is provided. These areas of concentration include 1) the personal and educational background of each of participant, 2) the teaching experiences of each participant 3) the curriculum of first year composition as devised by each participant, 4) the description of first year composition as presented by the participants' syllabi 5) the approaches used to teach first year composition, 6) the participants' knowledge of the students who comprise their classrooms, 7) the participants' expectations of their students, 8) the participants' methods and experiences teaching literature 9) the support which is generated by their institutions 10) the participants' professional development experiences, and finally 11) the continuous learning processes of the participants. These categories are examined in order to illuminate the answers to the research questions as well as to draw out issues and concerns for

further study and implications. For example, providing information regarding each participant's language and travel experiences help to illuminate what knowledge they have of second-language learning and cultural difference. Uncovering what teaching experience(s) they have attained from different institutions help to illuminate what sorts of pedagogy they have learned from each institution and how they have adjusted pedagogies for each institution.

Suburban University¹

This teaching institution is located in the rural area of central Tennessee. The student population is approximately 26,000, which includes students from the surrounding rural and urban areas as well as students from other countries. The diverse student body includes (in descending order) Caucasian, African American, Asian American, Hispanic American, and International.

The English Department within the institution houses undergraduate and graduate programs, including focuses around American and British literature, popular culture and film, the English language, rhetoric and composition, and linguistics. The graduate programs include a Master of Arts in English (a non-specialized program) and a Doctoral degree in English (offering a generalist program) allowing for specialization in a number of areas, including American Literature; Anglophone Literature; British Literature; Children's and Young Adult Literature; Folklore; Linguistics; Literary Theory; Popular Culture and Film; and Rhetoric, Composition, and Pedagogy. The English department's website explains the mission statement:

The Department's mission is to exercise and strengthen students' critical thinking skills and their writing skills, committed to preparing students to participate in the intellectual, cultural, and professional issues they will face once they graduate. From the wording of this statement, it

¹ Pseudonyms are used in place of all universities and participants' names in this study.

is assumed that students are not only taught critical thinking and writing skills but are also introduced to issues and topics covering cultural and professional issues to prepare them for the real world experience.

The first year composition courses, English 1010 and English 1020, are detailed in the institution's "Course Justification and Outline" located under the *General Studies Course Proposal Document*. This document is a suggestion set forth by the department which reveals the structure and assessment of first year composition courses, according to the institution's website (Figure 1.1).

Eliza

Personal/educational experiences. Eliza (pseudonym), a Caucasian female in her early fifties, has been teaching for approximately thirty-three years. She holds the position of full professor at the institution where she teaches. At the moment, she teaches mostly adolescent and children's literature courses, but she also teaches a first year writing course every year. She has taught at the college level in four different regions of the United States. Eliza has some work experience in another country as a nanny and a tutor and has a familiarity with foreign languages. She has studied and speaks Spanish occasionally. She studied German in high school and in college, and she studied some French for her Doctorate. Because of her personal experiences learning and speaking other languages, along with being immersed into other cultures, Eliza became aware of the difficulties of speaking and interacting with other language speakers. She earned her Master's degree in English at a mid-sized university in Oregon and her Doctoral degree in American Literature at a mid-sized university in Wisconsin.

B. COURSE STRUCTURE

1. Outline of Course Topics. The outline should reflect a concise and sequential listing of the content and concepts to be addressed in the course.

These topics function recursively and cumulatively. As students gain a broader base of knowledge, topics will be reviewed at a more sophisticated level.

- a. Characteristics that define genres.
- b. Literary terms and techniques.
- c. Strategies of reading and critical analysis.
- d. Ways in which texts express a particular author's or culture's values (cultural and historical contexts).
- e. Methods of appropriate comparison and contrast.
- f. Writing effectively about literature

2. Student Activities. List the range of potential activities required of students (whether graded or not). Activities might include such things as readings, research or creative papers, class presentations, data collection, creative products, interviews, field experiences, etc.

- a. Class discussion
- b. On-line discussion or other web-enhanced activities
- c. Selected readings
- d. Analytical papers
- e. Class presentations
- f. Informal writing
- g. Quizzes and exams
- h. Creative projects
- i. collaborative projects
- j. portfolios

3. Evaluation Procedures. Describe the range of evaluation procedures (i.e. grading system) for student activities. All evaluation procedures in General Studies courses should be explicitly related to achievement of the contributions of the course to TBR General Education goals and outcomes.

a. Approximately 70% of the final grade for each student will be based on writing assignments. These assignments will require students to synthesize their learning (often representing multiple learning outcomes) to produce an interpretation of the literature being analyzed.

b. Approximately 30% of the final grade will be based on class discussion, any web-enhanced activities, and group projects that the instructor might integrate into a course. Again, each activity likely involves more than one learning outcome.

c. Individual instructors will delineate on their syllabi the exact percentages of individual assignments.

Figure 1 – Curriculum guidelines as originally printed in the General Studies Course Proposal Document for English 1010 and 1020 for Suburban University

Teaching background/experiences in composition. Eliza began teaching college writing her first semester as a graduate student on a teaching assistantship in 1978 at a mid-sized university in Oregon. She taught two sections of the first of two required courses in composition

every quarter during her graduate studies. She stated, “At the time, the university seemed to simply hand me the textbook and set me free” (interview with Eliza, 8/15/11). She admitted at the time that it “was probably good for me, since that was pretty much all they did to help me understand what I was doing. It wasn’t like they looked over my grading. It wasn’t like they were in my classroom all that regularly. I was flying by the seat of my pants for those two years” (Interview with Eliza, 8/15/11).² Eliza continued to explain:

I knew nothing about teaching writing. I didn’t have much experience being a student in a writing class: I tested out of the first required class, decided to take the second required class, though my instructor told me not to come to class and, instead, to show up in his office with my paper. (Blog post by Eliza, 3/15/11)

She decided that she needed more experience in a writing classroom, so she decided to take advanced composition. She stated, “I did take an advanced composition class [as an undergraduate] that was run as a workshop, but I didn’t even consider emulating the workshop environment of that class in my first level composition class” (Interview with Eliza, 3/3/11).

Evidence from Eliza’s statement shows that she had personal experience of a “workshop environment” in a composition classroom, but she did not understand the reasoning behind the use of this model. Eliza needed instruction and explanation from her composition instructor in order to understand the reasoning behind structuring a “workshop environment.” If she had understood the reasoning and theory behind using this model for teaching, then she would have been able to make informed choices about using this methodology in her earlier composition classes.

During Eliza’s time as a graduate student and a teaching assistant (TA) in her MA

² All dates noted are written as month/day/year.

program, she was observed by a supervisor while teaching her first level composition courses. Eliza described this experience as “nerve-wracking” explaining that her supervisor “seemed to us to be a grammar Nazi and who advocated a bottom-up approach to writing” and seemed to emphasize that “good sentences” and “good paragraphs” equaled “good essays” (Blog post by Eliza, 3/15/11) divulged that her frustration was partly based upon the fact that she “knew nothing about grammar or how to explain to someone why her sentence was a problem” (Interview with Eliza, 8/15/11). While her relationship with her supervisor was uneasy, she explained that the reason for this was because “the teaching assistants preferred a quasi-adversarial relationship with [the] supervisor” because they “were just on the cusp of another revolution in composition theory and teaching in 1978” (Blog post by Eliza, 3/15/11). She also disclosed that because she taught so many quarters, she “reinvented [her] composition class six times” in order to reinvent herself “as a teacher, trying out different teaching personas as well as different ways of teaching”(Blog post by Eliza, 3/15/11).

Eliza illuminated other helpful experiences as well while teaching as a TA. She admitted that even though she “didn’t have the chance to observe other teachers” while in graduate school and that she was “pretty much on [her] own,” she did have “good office mates who could talk to [her] about [her] teaching” (Blog post by Eliza, 6/17/11). In fact, some of her office mates were “graduate students who were reading comp theory in the mid-seventies,” and they often made suggestions regarding approaches to teaching composition (Interview with Eliza, 8/15/11). This advice helped her in structuring and reinventing her composition classes into the ways that she wanted to teach them, combining the current traditionalist approaches revered by her supervisor and incorporating more current, process-oriented approaches suggested by her peers. Because of her lack of knowledge in composition theory and teaching, she was eager to seek advice from

different individuals in order to learn to teach writing.

After Eliza finished her MA program, she went on to pursue a doctoral program at a mid-sized university in Wisconsin, where she also earned another teaching assistantship. At this mid-sized university, she taught both composition and literature every semester except for “one year of dissertation fellowship” (Interview with Eliza, 3/3/11). She admitted that teaching there was not as frustrating or traumatic because her “repetitive experience [in Oregon]” provided her with the confidence she needed to “feel comfortable in a classroom” (Interview with Eliza, 3/3/11). She had developed practical experience to reflect back on while preparing to teach.

Eliza’s teaching approaches were quite different while attending the mid-sized university in Wisconsin than the mid-sized university in Oregon. She explained the reason why her approaches to teaching composition courses were different in the following blog response:

Early in my graduate career (1980) I was exposed to a pure workshop model and encouraged to use it in my composition class. Students were expected to write (without much direction) and to bring their writing to class for feedback from their peers (almost a pure Peer Elbow model of writing without teachers). I don’t remember offering any mini-lessons on writing conventions, how to develop ideas, or anything like that. While my students were cooperative, they had no idea what to tell each other about their papers. After one semester I started modifying that workshop model, and then eventually reverted back to a more teacher-directed pedagogy. Part of my trial-and-error process was that I was trying something I knew nothing about (hadn’t read Peter Elbow and so didn’t know that this model was not really designed for schools). It took me several more years to figure out how to blend the Elbow model with more support and scaffolding. (Blog post by Eliza, 4/25/11)

Not only was she continuing to develop her skills as a composition teacher, but she was also given the opportunity to teach literature courses at this time.

She continued to develop her approaches for teaching even after her graduate work. She was hired as an adjunct at a mid-sized college in New Hampshire where she taught both literature and composition and was later hired as an adjunct at a midsized university in Tennessee (where she currently teaches) both literature and composition. She finally obtained a tenure-track position and is now a full professor. Even though her area of concentration is centered in children's and adolescent literature, she continues to teach first year composition at least once a year.

Today Eliza's approaches to teaching composition have drastically changed. First, she no longer relies on a textbook to teach her courses. She still, however, requires students to buy *Hodge's Harbrace Handbook* because "it's supposed to be their handbook for both semesters" (Interview with Eliza, 3/3/11), and it is required by the English department. She acknowledged that her "composition class is always evolving" (Interview with Eliza, 3/3/11). For example, in this semester, she uses outside readings including a variety of articles ranging from topics about sculpture made from farm products to birds and animal calls. She likes to find different articles each semester to present to her classes, in order to present examples of different styles of writing. Also, she provides a limited amount of time on lectures, stating "direct instruction is limited to about ten or fifteen minutes at any one time" (Interview with Eliza, 3/3/11). She continued, stating that "my students don't sit very long listening to me [because] they better be doing something pretty fast" (Interview with Eliza, 3/3/11). She gives her students "a lot of mini lessons" (Interview with Eliza, 3/3/11) to do in class as part of their preparation for writing papers. She also includes many in-class opportunities for peer review. She stated that "peer

review is modeled for them. They have to reflect on their peer review, [and then] they turn in a report” (Interview with Eliza, 3/3/11). She makes sure that there is “lots of reading, lots of planning” and opportunities to “talk to each other” about their work (Interview with Eliza, 3/3/11).

Teaching first year composition (English 1010/1020). It has been approximately ten years since Eliza has taught an English 1010 course (the first section of first year composition) (Blog post by Eliza, 4/21/11). Her syllabus for this course was therefore outdated, but it was reviewed to compare how her teaching approaches for her first year composition course were different than her English 1020 course. Her syllabus for 1010 was based on teaching the process of writing and the rhetorical modes of writing instead of focusing her course on research writing as in her 1020 course (Appendices I,J).

Developing curriculum for first year composition. While Eliza’s teaching of composition continues at a mid-sized university in Tennessee, she revealed that the curriculum development for her university is leading toward the workshop model that she experienced earlier in her teaching career. She stated:

Teachers are expected to focus on the writing process and to develop the course along a workshop model that focuses on writing rather than on specific content. Different kinds of writing are required, but individual assignments are not mandated or universal in the program. (Blog post by Eliza, 4/25/11)

Her prior teaching experiences provided her with an understanding of the expectations and prescriptive goals generated by the English Department. Eliza’s 1010/1020 English courses (the first and second sections of first year composition) conformed to this model, as noted in her syllabi (Appendices I, J).

Teaching approaches in first year composition. Eliza assigned books and other materials to be used within both sections of first year composition. A textbook, *The St. Martin's Guide to Writing*, was used throughout the first section of composition. She chose the textbook to help her teach the process of writing, discussed the sorts of writing which were expected of college students, and illustrated different types of essay samples. A handbook, *Hodge's Harbrace Handbook*, was required for both sections of first year composition students to be used as a reference source. For the second section of first year composition, she also assigned a non-fiction novel, *Tuesdays with Morrie*, by Mitch Albom. She also required her students to have a "desk dictionary" suggesting that they needed this for in-class use.

Eliza used prescriptive materials (i.e. textbook, handbook) in her classroom, and she also allowed time for peer review and writing workshops as noted in her interviews and her syllabi. She used peer review in her course so that her students had the opportunity to learn how to be readers and respondents of writing. In her syllabus she stated that she wanted her students to develop "more sophisticated ways of communicating with a reading audience." There was also significant class time designated for in-class writing workshops. She expected her students, as they wrote in class, to be able to "begin to act like professional writers who write on demand according to various kinds of tasks contracted to them and who revise their work so that they communicate more effectively" (Appendix I). Also, she offered significant chances in class for students to work together and to speak to her about their writing (Classroom observation of Eliza, 4/18/11), and her syllabus revealed that she only scheduled one student conference with each individual student throughout the semester, during mid-term.

Eliza stated in one of her responses that there were significant differences between teaching 1010 and 1020.

[English] 1010 is so much easier than 1020 because [teachers] don't have to cover as much material. In fact, I think that our 1010 is too easy. Many students continue their high school habits instead of gaining greater sophistication in their writing. Then, when they get to 1020 and [teachers] need to show them how to do research, how to read and analyze arguments, and how to produce arguments they, the students, have to make a huge leap in critical thinking as well as writing. (Blog post by Eliza, 4/25/11)

As reflected in her syllabus, students produce writing in 1010 with a general focus on expository writing, producing narrative, descriptive, responsive, explanatory and analytical writing. There was very little critical thinking or argumentative writing produced in this course.

Assessing students in first year composition. Eliza assessed her first year composition students' performance through portfolio production and class participation. The majority of each student's grade was based upon the final portfolio, for a compilation of seventy-five percent. The other twenty-five percent of the student's grade was based upon participation in the class (Appendix I). She graded each portfolio "holistically," stating that she examined "the portfolio as a whole rather than grade each individual paper" in accordance with "the standards of the English Department" (Appendix I). The students were also required to turn in, along with the portfolio, a reflective letter which explained the "improvement as a writer," and the student had to give a reason for choosing the four papers within the portfolio. Also, the in-class participation grade included "the completion of any intermediate steps in the process of writing a paper," thereby incorporating a grade for the processes of writing (Appendix I). There was no in-class writing of any kind scheduled for the final exam, but if students wanted to examine their final portfolio grade, they did so during the scheduled exam period.

Eliza's 1020 course was structured differently than 1010. This course focused on "three

skills essential to [students'] success in college" which were research, writing and rhetoric. This course included more approaches to teaching critical thinking and teaching persuasive tactics.

Eliza no longer uses a textbook for her 1020 course, only the same handbook required in 1010. Instead of using a textbook to teach, she relied on other materials, including essays and articles. She used the essays and articles to discuss style, persuasion and argument.

Her 1020 syllabus also revealed that she scheduled her class to meet at the library several times which allowed them to practice doing research (Appendix J). She claimed that over the years she had found that one visit instructed by the librarian was not enough because so much information was articulated to students in a short amount of time. Through several trial-and-error experiences, she finally concluded that three visits were sufficient.

...last year I scheduled 4 library instruction sections and required students to complete a related instructional module at the library's website before the class session. It turned out that 4 class meetings was too much and so this year I dropped back to three. (Blog post by Eliza, 4/25/11)

When Eliza scheduled days for students to do research during class time, she provided her students with opportunities to do collaborative learning, working with other students and the librarian.

The first half of English 1020 was designed primarily for finding and implementing research. The second half of the semester was focused on critical thinking and persuading through writing. Four writing projects were assigned for this portion of the semester. What was also significantly different in this course than in 1010 was the fact that she now relies more upon the use of email communication with her students than she did ten years ago. In fact she disclosed that she emailed reminders to each student throughout the semester regarding

assignments.

While the word “workshop” was not printed on the syllabus as many times for this course as on the syllabus for English 1010, she did mention in the second paragraph of the syllabus that “This class will be run as a workshop.” Eliza scheduled days for “writing” in class for each project. Also since Eliza no longer uses a textbook, she emailed copies of each assignment to her students, as noted on her syllabus (Appendix I) which included distinct details of what was required for each project. On the syllabus, she also encouraged students to find and/or contact her regarding questions they had for any assignment or class materials used for any assignment.

Over the years Eliza learned that students retained more interest in projects which they valued. Therefore, she instructed her students to pick their own topics when assigning writing projects. In an interview, she explained:

The one major change I have made to my practice in terms of student needs is to allow the students to determine the topic they will write on for the entire semester. I’ve seen students learn some pretty complicated rhetoric because they cared about the topic they were writing about. Moreover, I’ve watched students forced to write about subjects I thought were interesting and, not surprisingly, their papers had no voice and were totally formulaic. (Blog post by Eliza, 4/27/11)

Eliza’s statement disclosed that she drastically changed her pedagogy from her first teaching experiences as a TA in graduate school. She now puts more faith in her students’ decisions and implements less directive approaches in her pedagogy.

In this course, since there was more writing and research to be done, there were more assignments required for this class than in 1010. She divided her assessment this way: Research Assignment – 20%, Four Papers – 40%, Portfolio – 30%, and Homework Assignments – 10%

(Appendix J). Again, most of the assessment grade was focused on writing assignments, per the standards of the English Department. Also, Eliza offered the same opportunity for students to present a final portfolio, including the student's best three papers. They were given the opportunity to revise all three papers to resubmit within their portfolio. She did expect deeper readings and more significant revisions within each paper. She also required a reflective essay noting that it should also be extensive and "polished." Specific instructions for this assignment were typed out and emailed as attachments to all students. She explained to the students how grading occurred:

I will be grading both pieces of writing as part of the portfolio grade. In other words, I am not only grading the improvement to the revised paper, but I am also grading your awareness of yourself as a writer and your deliberate use of writing strategies. (Artifact, Portfolio Assignment, 2011)

She allowed time in class for the students to work on their revisions, and the final projects were turned in during the time scheduled for the final exam (Appendix I). However, no final exam was given. Again, Eliza's assessment procedures revealed that she allowed her students more freedom to make decisions and to choose which works were to be revised and assessed as part of their final grade.

Teacher's expectations of students as writers in first year composition. Eliza had specific expectations and goals for her students as they exited her 1020 course, as exhibited on her syllabus. She expected her students to feel confident finding and distinguishing "credible information" when doing research. She also expected her students to be able to distinguish an audience for writing and to "adapt accordingly" within their own writing. Students were to be aware of and recognize rhetorical devices. She also wanted her students to be able "to organize

thoughts and information and convey meaning clearly,” as well as “to understand the role of evidence to support a position.” Most of all, Eliza hoped that her students exited her class as “confident” writers (Blog post by Eliza, 4/21/11).

Teaching literature. When asked about her approaches to teaching literature courses, Eliza responded through email communication referring to her syllabus as an example of how her class was structured and what she taught in that course. She stated that her syllabi for her literature courses and her writing courses were similar.

In both my lit class and my writing class I try to emphasize that I am more interested in what students can DO rather than what they KNOW. That is particularly easy for me because I mostly teach Adolescent Literature. That course doesn’t really require that students familiarize themselves with a particular historical period or learn a significant amount of extra-textual information... Even my assignments are similar. In my lit class, I’m less interested in students producing a specific interpretation than in their ability to produce a well-supported analytical or persuasive paper. (Email response from Eliza, 3/10/12)

Even in her literature courses, she expected her students to be able to think and write critically. Therefore, even though her job in her literature courses was not to teach students how to write critically, she did expect them to do so.

Eliza also explained that her role as a workshop leader had assisted with the structure of her courses, in order to produce what she terms “authentic learning” from her students. While presenting workshops to local middle school instructional coaches, she remarked that she focused on “four characteristics of authentic learning: student choice, student responsibility, student expression, and community” (Email response from Eliza, 3/10/12). She tried to

implement these same “elements” in every course. She stated, “If my students are not writing, talking (to the whole class and to each other), and thinking during a class session, then I don’t consider that a successful class” (Email response from Eliza, 3/10/12). Eliza attempted to include all of her students in the learning process. By switching her role from director to facilitator, Eliza provided students with the opportunity to contribute to their own learning by implementing learner-centered approaches within a collaborative environment, rather than focusing all the attention on what she had to offer to the class, thereby creating an “authentic learning” environment (Interview with Eliza, 8/15/11).

Eliza acknowledged that she felt more comfortable in a literature classroom than she did in a composition classroom, even though she had taught both for decades and had accumulated years of experience. She explained her reasons for this in the following blog response:

I do have to admit feeling a little more anxiety about teaching writing because there is no content to fall back on. I often wonder if I have enough planned for class and if the talking and thinking I am asking my students to do will be productive for them. Since my students all write on different topics, we don’t have a common subject that we are working on together other than considering our writing choices/decisions. But when I employ the activities that I know help them (writing, talking together, and thinking) and give them enough time to do those activities authentically, the class is usually rich and helpful. (Email response from Eliza, 3/10/12)

Because Eliza relied on the students to pick their own topics for their writing assignments, she placed the responsibility of students’ learning in their own hands, thereby, again, providing a learner-centered environment. However, by allowing all students to do this, there was always the possibility that some students would not be as prepared as others, given that some students were

unprepared to structure and to research their own topics, thereby revealing complications for Eliza's teaching preparation.

Eliza also divulged that there were two major differences between teaching composition and teaching literature. Within her composition courses, she used "mini-lessons and [incorporated] independent work time for the current project in the writing class" (Email response from Eliza, 3/10/12). The time used in class for individual work gave Eliza time to confer in the classroom with individual students about their work. On the other hand, in her literature courses, students worked in groups, which "doesn't take up the same percentage of class time and, of course, doesn't allow for conferring." She explained that "the role of independent time and the opportunity to confer with individual students" was what set apart her composition and literature classes (Email response from Eliza, 3/10/12).

Student knowledge. Although Eliza did not spend much time getting to know her students, she did find out about her student's backgrounds in other ways. She began every semester with "getting-to-know-you activities" which included active participation from each student (Blog post by Eliza, 5/24/11). She asked them "typical questions" regarding their name, hometown, major, favorite foods, pets, etc. She stated in a blog response: "What I am hoping is that students will bond – those that like lasagna and those that have Labrador Retrievers or Cockapoos or grew up on farms" (Blog post by Eliza, 5/24/11). By creating this opportunity, she anticipated that she and her students would get to know one another better and form a type of community in the classroom.

She also revealed that getting to know students intimately was not on her agenda, but by reading each student's writing, she discovered intimate details about her students on occasion (Blog post by Eliza, 5/24/11). She held two student conferences per semester with each student

to discuss writing projects. She acknowledged that she did not feel that it was important to spend a great amount of time with her students outside of the classroom, in order to keep the roles of student and teacher separate. She ignored “Facebook” invites and never socialized with her students outside the classroom (Blog post by Eliza, 5/24/11).

Eliza described the student diversity makeup as the “normal cross section” of diverse students from surrounding areas (Interview with Eliza, 3/3/11). Most of her classrooms were comprised of students from the surrounding rural and urban areas of Tennessee, including first time students and returning students, with a small percentage of African-Americans, non-native speakers and a larger percent of Caucasian Americans. What she recognized most was the “diverse socio-economic backgrounds” which effected “poor preparation” for some college students (Interview with Eliza, 3/3/11).

University support. Eliza’s institution offered opportunities for instruction and assistance every semester. However, she acknowledged that she believed “departments can do more” but “the politics of departments must be taken into account” (Blog post by Eliza, 4/22/11). She explained that in her earlier years of teaching, “there was significant resistance” to hiring composition specialists (Blog response of Eliza, 4/22/11). Since that time, changes occurred which made it easier for first year composition instructors to find assistance. Eliza explained that “comp specialists have navigated these waters astutely and have gotten departmental administrators on board so that some professional development is offered every semester” (Blog post by Eliza, 4/22/11). However, she explained that requiring people to come to the sessions was problematic, due to conflicting schedules.

Professional development. Eliza’s professional development had created opportunities for her to learn different approaches to teaching. She had served as Director of Lower Division

English for approximately five years whereas she organized “workshops and professional development for lower division teachers, that almost always focused on classroom pedagogy issues” (Interview with Eliza, 3/3/11). She also served as a Co-director of a Writing Project site, partially funded by the National Writing Project, to assist “K-12 teachers organize and present at professional development workshops” (Interview with Eliza, 3/3/11). She valued her learning experiences through this program because her involvement with other teachers had inspired her learning. She disclosed that she continually changes and develops her pedagogical approaches to teaching (Interview with Eliza, 3/3/11).

Continuous learning. Eliza continues to learn from her own teaching and from others. She acknowledged that her “teaching changes a little bit every semester,” but she was not sure whether the changes occurred because of “a response to [her] experiences with particular students or from [sic] reading or just reflecting on what ‘should’ be better” (Blog post by Eliza, 3/30/11). Also, because she had taught for so many years, “under 3 or 4 generations of writing pedagogy, [she has] tried to continue what worked [sic] from each of those iterations and adapt strategies or ideas to create a coherent classroom experience for [her] students and a coherent pedagogical philosophy about writing for [her]” (Blog post by Eliza, 3/30/11). Eliza reflected upon her methodology and asked students for input about her teaching and specific assignments. She used these inquiries to help change her pedagogy. Eliza also molded her pedagogy to fit the needs of the students in her classroom. She said:

I go into every semester thinking that I’ll be refining and tweaking my practice in response to the specific group of students in the classroom with me. I feel pretty confident that my practice works for me, and that it is based on a pedagogical foundation that is sound. Part of that foundation is to be reflective, to as accurately as

possible assess what worked and what didn't. But what worked isn't written in stone:

I always need to be responsive to the students who happen to be in the class that semester. So while I may have had a strategy work well with one group of students, it may not be successful with another group of students, and I have to figure that out.

(Blog post by Eliza, 7/15/11)

Eliza was confident enough in her teaching to change what worked for her students in the classroom. Eliza recognized students with different learning abilities, and she constructed her pedagogy to fit her students' needs.

Eliza placed value in conversations with colleagues about pedagogies, students and theories. She stated, "I firmly believe that we do learn most readily by interacting with peers" (Blog post by Eliza, 4/21/11). In fact, she learned through the involvement of the National Writing Project that the "core philosophy" was "teachers teaching teachers" (Interview with Eliza, 3/3/11). She relied on conversations with teachers rather than using internet or book sources. She wanted to "talk through the issue or problem with someone familiar with my students" (Blog post by Eliza, 4/21/11). She also believed that it was important "to discuss [sic] research with a colleague before [she puts] it into practice" (Blog post by Eliza, 4/21/11). She recognized that all of this was important when "making that knowledge [her] own" (Blog post by Eliza, 4/21/11). Discussions became one of her major forms of learning.

Interpretive analysis. Even though Eliza had more years teaching composition than the other participants in this regional study, the number of years teaching composition was not the sole reason that she developed into the teacher that she is today. She also had the opportunity to teach first year composition in other regions of the United States and to continue her professional development by co-directing a National Writing Project which provided continuous discussions

of writing pedagogy. She also changed her pedagogy several times over the years instead of developing and implementing one method for teaching every year because she believed in keeping her teaching interesting for herself and for her students.

Eliza's life-long learning experiences and beliefs influenced her pedagogical skills. Over the years, she learned to teach composition through teaching experiences, conversing with colleagues, reading texts about teaching composition, and reflecting on her own practice. Because of her interest in continuous learning, she developed more modern practices, including student-centered and process pedagogies to teach writing.

Urban University

This research institution is located in the northern region of the state of Alabama. The student population is approximately 7,700 students, which includes students from the surrounding rural and urban areas as well as students from other countries. The diverse student body includes (in descending order) Caucasian, African American, Asian American, Indo-American, Hispanic American, Native American, and International students. The English Department within the institution houses undergraduate and graduate programs. The Master's of Arts in English requires at least eighteen credit hours of literature and other requirements including technical writing, composition studies for teachers and writing pedagogy. There are no doctoral programs in English.

This institution's English Department website gives a full description of its First Year Composition courses:

There are two courses in the composition sequence. EH 100/101 are courses in which students read from a variety of genres of texts and then describe, respond, and argue about those genres and topics. Both the texts being read and the essays being written offer

students practice in exploring and understanding the complex ways that arguments can be effectively constructed in their writing. EH 102 is the second course in the sequence.

Your readings in this class will extend into the research sections as well as readings about a topic that your instructor has chosen. The general class topic will offer you a springboard to engage in your own research on a more narrow version of the course readings. The texts read and essays written in this class will offer you practice in conducting research--from asking a research questions to reporting your results.

More specifics regarding the goals and objectives of the courses are left to the discretion of the teacher who includes these in his/her syllabi.

Kelly

Personal/educational experiences. Kelly (pseudonym) is in her early thirties, has lived in the United States all her life but has done some traveling through Europe, visiting Amsterdam, England, Germany and France, and has had the opportunity to visit the West Indies. She has taken some Spanish in high school and college but has not had the opportunity to use her language skills fluently. Kelly did not have the privilege of living in other countries or using other languages she had studied and was unfamiliar with the difficulties language learners encounter because of their displacement. However, her travel experience made her aware of different cultures and economic situations.

She has been teaching English composition for approximately seven years, at three different colleges.

She received a Master's in English degree from the same research institution where she now teaches. The concentration of her Master's in English degree was in literature courses. She explained how they were taught.

They were taught very much like how I started teaching. You read a piece of literature and then you talk about it and then you write a paper on it. I loved my master's courses because we sat around and talked about everything we read...and there was a paper at some point that had to be written... That's it. (Interview with Kelly, 8/14/11).

Kelly's graduate courses centered on reading literature and literary theory, interpreting literature, and writing papers.

However, at this particular research institution she had the opportunity to take one writing pedagogy course which was required in order to work in the writing center as a tutor. She stated, "I think it was a very, very important course. Probably my only saving grace when it did come down for me to actually teach writing because if I hadn't had that course it would have been much more difficult to know what I should be doing" (Interview with Kelly, 3/17/11). She remembered that through these experiences, she learned more about teaching writing, including learning how to incorporate peer review into the classroom and constructing a syllabus. She also took a linguistics course while completing her Master's degree instead of taking a foreign language. She acknowledged that this course provided "a really different understanding of language" (Interview with Kelly, 3/17/11). Even though her program did not offer any courses regarding teaching English language learners or teaching diverse learners, she did have the opportunity to learn about them through actual work experience as a GTA (graduate teaching assistant) in the writing center and through the monthly workshops held by the writing center (Interview with Kelly, 3/17/11). Here, she developed skills while working as a tutor, learning invaluable lessons while holding one-on-one conferences with students with diverse learning abilities.

Later, years after her work experience as a GTA in the writing center and as an instructor of writing, she held a temporary position as Director of the Writing Center at the research institution where she is now teaching. This experience led her to pursue her doctorate because in order to obtain a permanent position as a writing center director, she would need to have a doctoral degree.

In 2007, Kelly began a doctoral program in rhetoric and composition. In this program, she had another opportunity to take a writing pedagogy course. She distinctly remembered, “The first semester, everybody has to take the course on teaching composition” (Interview with Kelly, 3/17/11). One assignment in this course which she valued the most was the opportunity to observe teachers in their classrooms. She stated that she had “to choose two different teachers and then write about what we [graduate students] observed” (Interview with Kelly, 3/17/11). She illuminated more details about this experience in a blog post, stating:

Each teacher had a unique style, and I spoke to both of them before and after the observation to get a sense of how they thought about their own teaching...Both observations taught me something about what does and does not work in the classroom, and I have used what I learned to ‘check myself’ as a teacher. (Blog post by Kelly, 7/5/11)

Through this experience, she noticed two specific aspects of teaching: First, she needed “to be alert and attentive to students,” and, second, that she did not need “to be so permissive that [students] feel no need to be engaged with the course” (Blog post by Kelly, 7/5/11). This experience greatly influenced her teaching approaches today. She stated, “I’m always self-critical” (Interview with Kelly, 8/14/11). Every semester she checked to see if her teaching approaches were working for her students. She stated, “I poll my students at some point during

the semester [to see] what's working, what's not working. I do my own evaluation aside from what the school requires" (Interview with Kelly, 8/14/11). She continuously relied on herself to 'check' to see if her methods and approaches were effective, and she also relied on her students' responses.

Teaching background/experiences in composition. After Kelly finished her Master's degree in English, she began working at a small local college teaching first year composition part time at her "undergrad alma mater" in the fall of 2003. She remembered her first day of teaching as "being struck with how different it was to be in the classroom than it was to be reading about being in the classroom" (Interview with Kelly, 8/14/11). She continued by comparing this feeling with an anecdote. She stated, "It's like parenting. You can read all the parenting books you want but no one can really prepare you to be a parent. It's not until that kid is in your hands and you're going through the day-to-day life with them as they grow that you figure it out" (Interview with Kelly, 8/14/11). She also remembered feeling "nervous" and "maybe even a little over confident in the sense that I thought I knew what to do, but then discovered as I went that there were things that I hadn't anticipated" (Interview with Kelly, 8/14/11). For example, her earliest, most momentous teaching experience was not specifically how she taught the class but more about how she responded to her students. She replied, "I think the thing that caught me off guard more than anything was just the dynamic of dealing with students, not even so much the teaching aspect, just [sic] 'My dog ate my homework' kind of stuff and the issues that come with 'I don't have my assignment today,' because you have in mind what you want to do with a particular assignment on a particular day" (Interview with Kelly, 8/14/11). She found out quickly from her earlier teaching experiences that what she planned for her class in her mind did not always occur in the way that she expected. The biggest challenge for her was adjusting to unexpected

occurrences.

Kelly also remembered that the different writing styles of students in her course surprised her. She had expected all her students to be good writers, and when she came across a student whose paper was “non-sensible,” she became confused and challenged. She recognized from this incident how “unprepared” she was. She stated that “no matter how many classes I had taken, I really did not know how to help him. It was beyond my ability at that time” (Interview with Kelly, 8/14/11).

She also reflected back upon her earlier days of teaching and admitted that most of her teaching was based upon instructing and lecturing. She stated:

There were many, many days when I was teaching in the early days and just hearing myself talk and talk and talk and seeing the students kind of look at me with these glazed eyes and knowing that I was just wasting my breath. And so I'd ask a question, and you could hear crickets. [Laughing] I could hear a pin drop and nobody has a clue what to say or doesn't feel like answering or whatever. It was horrible and very frustrating.

(Interview with Kelly, 8/14/11)

Kelly learned that she had to change her approach to teaching. She began implementing discussion questions and anything “to get them to talk.” She even admitted, “I feel very sorry for those students who took my course in the very semester that I taught because I didn't have a clue what I was doing, but it was such a great learning experience” (Interview with Kelly, 3/17/11).

Kelly, like many beginning teachers, was placed into a situation where she knew very little and had to adapt and learn quickly on the job in order to “survive.” From her narrative, Kelly revealed that her teaching approaches were not effective in the beginning, so she changed her methodology in order to keep her students engaged.

Even with the questions and concerns that Kelly faced her first year of teaching, she commented that she never went to anyone for help. She explained that she “didn’t feel comfortable going to anybody for help” (Interview with Kelly, 8/14/11). Therefore, she tried “to draw on resources that [she] had from [her] classes, [her] coursework, [and] books that maybe [she] had used in a class” (Interview with Kelly, 8/14/11).

Even when it came to developing her first syllabus, she claimed that instead of seeking out assistance from another colleague, she used her husband’s (a teacher of computer science) syllabus as a guide. She stated, “I only was able to look at it for the nuts and bolts, not the content or the assignments or anything like that” (interview with Kelly, 8/14/11). She set up the “content” and the “assignments” of her syllabus by following the textbook prescribed by the English department. She stated, “I relied heavily on the textbook for everything” (Interview with Kelly, 8/14/11). Because of Kelly’s uncomfortable feeling toward her colleagues, she used other sources to help her construct the curriculum for her course.

Approximately a year later, in 2004, she began teaching at the institution where she is now. Since then, she has taught Basic Writing, English 101 (section one of first year composition) and English 102 (section two of first year composition) and business writing courses. This environment, as well as the faculty, was also familiar to her since she had received her Master’s degree from this institution.

Kelly was hired at this institution to teach full time as an instructor and not part time as an adjunct. She remembered expecting more support from this institution because it was not provided in the ways that she had hoped. She explained, “I was really struck by the way our department is not one of ‘mentorship.’ It was every man for himself. There was not an atmosphere at all for new teachers” (Interview with Kelly, 8/14/11). She was completely

surprised by the fact that there was no orientation in place for new hires. She remembered that the department chair simply handed her a schedule of her classes, asked which textbook she wanted to use, and gave her a few syllabi to use in order to assist with the construction of her course curriculum. She also claimed that because of this incident, she felt as if “[she was] not supposed to ask questions, like [she was] just supposed to know. And so [she] didn’t run and ask questions right away” (Interview with Kelly, 8/14/11). She added, “Most of the time I was just trying to figure things out on my own” (Interview with Kelly, 8/14/11).

However, as the years passed, Kelly became much more comfortable asking others for assistance at this institution than the previous institution where she taught. She stated, “I would go and grab people in the hallway,” asking questions regarding how to respond to students’ writing (Interview with Kelly, 8/14/11). She also claimed that there was one person in particular whose opinion and guidance she favored over any other as well as felt comfortable going to for help. This person was the Director of the Writing Center, and at the time, “the sole rhet/comp person in [the English] department” (Interview with Kelly, 8/14/11). When Kelly first began working at this institution full time, she described the English department as “very literature” oriented which made it difficult to find others to talk to about composition theory and instruction (Interview with Kelly, 8/14/11).

Kelly still found herself often figuring out how to handle issues on her own. She was never involved in any support groups during the first couple of years she began teaching. She divulged how alone she felt, until one instance occurred at a staff meeting for first year composition instructors.

I was in a staff meeting and before the meeting actually began, everybody was talking casually and somebody started complaining about some issue they were having, and

others kind of chimed in and I was like, ‘Really? So I’m not the only one!’ I was so happy to find out that this was not a problem I was having alone. I really thought I was the only one that was having these issues. But that was a couple of years into it and at that point I had kind of figured all that stuff out, so it was sort of too little, too late. I was sorry that I hadn’t been aware of that before. There really should’ve been that opportunity to have those kinds of conversations, especially for the new people coming in like me, just to talk about them even. It’s invaluable. (Interview with Kelly, 8/14/11)

Until this moment in time, she felt as if she was “alone” and singled-out. After finding out that she was not the only person with these experiences, this realization provided a sort of comfort for her.

Also, at her former teaching institution where she first began teaching, she stated that she “didn’t have any mandates hanging over me” (Interview with Kelly, 8/14/11). Because of this, she had no guidelines to follow and was uncertain as to what and how she was supposed to teach. However, this institution required a semi-structured syllabus which was more prescriptive, requiring the goals and the objectives of the classroom. She stated that “there was a particular year when [the university was] under accreditation” and specific information, using specific language, had to be stated in the course syllabi. She explained, “I had to have assignments written in such a way the assignment told the student how it was fulfilling an objective” (Interview with Kelly, 8/14/11).

When Kelly began a doctoral program in rhetoric and composition, she had more learning opportunities teaching writing, both in and out of the classroom. Not only was she a student, but she also taught several first year writing courses. She revealed that teaching at this university was ‘very different’ in some ways than teaching at other institutions. For example, when it came to

providing support for each new teacher assigned to teach first year composition, the university provided a “checks and balances” system (Interview with Kelly, 8/14/11). Graduate students were required to take “certain classes” and fulfill a “mandatory observation” before they were allowed to teach. She also mentioned that “there was much more mentoring, guiding and directing of young teachers by the older ones – regularly scheduled meetings, workshops and lots of opportunities for sharing experiences and working through problems as a ‘team’” (Interview with Kelly, 8/14/11). She found this teaching environment “refreshing” and “helpful” (Interview with Kelly, 8/14/11).

Also, when it came to choosing a textbook to use while teaching first year composition, she stated her experience was different. At other institutions she had one or two books to choose from. Here, she revealed that she could “do whatever [she] wanted, basically, as long as [she] had them write a certain number of papers” (interview with Kelly, 8/14/11). Therefore, she chose one book for constructing and developing essays and two books for incorporating “unconventional” approaches to subject matter. She pulled different assignments and readings from each book and “posted them on the website for [students] to read and incorporate” into the assignments. She acknowledged that all of this was a lot of work but that she “learned a lot from that semester” (Interview with Kelly, 8/14/11).

Kelly said that she had more freedom to teach, and she used the opportunity to try new techniques. One technique she used quite often in her classroom was class discussion. She discussed topics students had chosen, in order for students to become more “invested” in their assignments. However, even from this experience, toward the end of the semester she felt as if she spent too much time on discussion and not enough time on the process of writing. She stated, “I needed to spend more time not just talking about ideas but actually instructing them on the

way to organize and develop, and so forth and so on, which I thought would just blow out of our great conversations and discussions in class.” She realized later that her approach had been an important learning experience. She needed to change her approach in order to find a balance “somewhere in between the two”: discussion and writing (Interview with Kelly, 8/14/11).

Today, since she has returned to the previous institution where she had been teaching before beginning her doctoral program, she realized that she had taken those teaching experiences “to heart.” She mentioned that she had approached teaching writing from “both extremes,” including focusing one classroom on the processes of writing and focusing another class on discussion of topics and subject matter. Since then, she “tried to pull back to the middle where it was a little bit of both” (Interview with Kelly, 8/14/11).

Teaching first year composition (English 101/ 102). Kelly’s syllabus for her English 101 course (Appendix K) described her course objectives and what she expected her students to learn: critical thinking and oral and written communication skills. She required her students to purchase two texts, and a third was uploaded onto a computer program called ANGEL³ for the students to read. Her classroom activities focused much more on writing and writing projects than on reading. Readings were expected to be completed outside of class as homework assignments. She used the word “discuss” frequently throughout her syllabus, indicating that she allowed ample opportunities for class discussion of the readings, but she also allowed equal time for writing and reviewing drafts in her class schedule.

She also required a minimum of three one-on-one conferences with her students. She encouraged her students to use the writing center by offering to deduct the lowest homework or quiz grade after three visits.

³ ANGEL Learning Management Services is an online computer program used by colleges and universities in order to manage course documents, attendance, grades, assignments, etc.

For this course, Kelly's students were not required to write five-paragraph expository essays based solely upon narratives, definition, comparative/contrast or description. She stated that she had not structured a course like that since the "fall of '03." Instead she structured her English 101 course around summary, critique and synthesis, preparing students to write a research paper towards the end of the semester. She stated that the five-paragraph essay is "too prescriptive," and she explained that any writing assignment that she requires "builds on the thing before" (Interview with Kelly, 8/14/11). Her goal in the course was preparing students to construct multiple drafts through writing, building upon one topic, increasing information with each assignment, taking a constructivist approach. The reason for designing her course this way was because at this particular research institution, English 102 (second portion of first year composition) was focused around teaching literary analysis. In English 101, she designed the course so that students learned to develop their own topics, which concentrated on "assertion or argument" for each written essay and the research paper.

Developing curriculum in first year composition. Kelly's curriculum has come a long way since her first days of teaching. Currently, her first year composition course is structured around the department's prescriptive requirements (objectives, goals, use of texts) as well as her own unique teaching approaches which she has spent years tweaking and developing. She has been highly influenced from her former studies, teaching experiences and working in the writing center. All of this is evident from her discussions and her syllabus.

Teaching approaches in first year composition. Kelly's approaches to teaching first year composition were process oriented. Even though she required reading outside of the classroom, inside the classroom she focused on group work, drafting, peer review and workshops (Appendices K, L).

Kelly used conferences to discuss each student's writing. She wanted her students to understand her expectations, and through conferences she believed she could clarify any misunderstandings. She explained that she felt that it was imperative that teachers find opportunities to speak with students about their writing. She believed that teachers needed to understand what students were trying to say in their papers, and students needed the opportunity to discuss teacher's feedback. She also claimed, "I am a much more effective teacher when I'm able to work one on one with my students" (Interview with Kelly, 8/14/11). However, she found difficulty in scheduling conferences when classrooms reach their maximum capacity.

As another part of her teaching strategy, Kelly made use of technology. She required her students to be able to use a computer efficiently, using Word and knowing how to access their student email account and how to research the internet. She uploaded every writing and reading assignment up onto ANGEL for the whole class to review. She also posted one particular analysis assignment where students were to use Google Images to find an image and write a "discussion of the significance of that image." She called this assignment a "Visual Analysis" (Artifact, Homework Assignment, 2011).

She found that when her lectures became long, she placed her students into pairs or groups to talk to one another. Over the years through her teaching experiences, as well as her experiences as a student, she recognized that students were capable of developing their own topics and constructing their own paths for learning, thereby creating a more learner-centered approach to teaching (Interview with Kelly, 8/14/11).

Assessing students in first year composition. Over the years, Kelly learned different techniques for assessing her students' assignments. She admitted that she still finds assessing her students' works challenging due to the number of papers and time involved in the process. In a

blog response, she revealed her feelings about assessment. She stated that grading was her “least favorite thing to do” often spending hours struggling “to assign an actual value” to each paper. She confirmed that over the years, “grading has led to many trial and errors.” Earlier in her career, she commented on “everything,” but she learned that this was taking up valuable time. Therefore she decided to incorporate a technique she learned from her experiences working in the writing center. She now focuses on 3 comments for each paper, including “one global, one local and one grammatical.” She even incorporated the use a rubric for grading students’ papers. She believed that using a rubric helped students to understand “how well (or not) he or she accomplished [a] particular requirement” (Blog post by Kelly, 6/27/11).

Kelly provided different values for students’ assessment. The students earned 30% of their grade from class participation, which included “in-class assignments, quizzes, drafts, attendance, etc.” For class work and non-essay assignments she explained, “I usually assign a point value that goes into the 20-30% segment of their overall class grade.” The students earned 10% of their grade from every essay assignment (3) and 40% of their grade from the research paper. Because the university required “better than 75% of the course to come from writing assignments,” she chose to “assign multiple ungraded drafts and low stakes graded assignments which [were] 1-3 pg summaries and critiques that [allowed] them to do sort of ‘warm up’ writing assignments that [were] directly related to their essay assignments, but without the added ‘grade’ pressure” (Blog post by Kelly, 6/27/11).

Kelly learned how to assess writing in this manner from her studies and work experience over her years of teaching. She revealed a particular moment in her doctoral program, where one professor “passed out student papers” and asked the students to “approach them not as a teacher to a student but as a scholar to another scholar” (Interview with Kelly, 3/17/11). This moment

taught her that students must be considered as writers, and as such, teachers must recognize the importance of teaching writing as a process.

Teacher's expectations of students as writers in first year composition. Kelly expected her students to be better writers when they completed the course. More specifically, she knew that all students never achieved the same goals, but she hoped that students had a better understanding of the tasks of writing. For example, she hoped that her 'A' students learned to think more critically of their own writing, exploring "deeper into a particular topic." For other students who were "barely getting by," she hoped these students learned "to understand the way [writing] works." Also, if she got students to do "multiple drafts" instead of writing an assignment the night before it [was] due, then she [felt] that the students [had] "accomplished a lot." Kelly concluded that she had "expectations for individuals, not groups" (Interview with Kelly, 8/14/11).

Teaching literature. As stated previously, Kelly had an opportunity to teach a literature course at one time, but she was not available to do so. However, she taught some literature in her English 102 course, but her basis for doing so was to teach students to write a literary analysis.

She stated that in order to teach this course, she reflected back on her literature courses in graduate school. She stated:

I think about it when I'm teaching the second semester English class here because it's all about literary analysis. I don't see any specific connection to composition so much. I only drew on that knowledge when I was teaching the literature analysis research class and that's just because that's how they do it here. (Interview with Kelly, 8/14/11)

She enjoyed teaching this course more than English 102. She even stated, "I go into it with a

little more anticipation and excitement.” She described teaching this course as a feeling of relief as she remarked, “Ahhh. This I can do” (Interview with Kelly, 8/14/11).

Kelly gained knowledge for teaching literature from observing her professors while in graduate school. She stated previously that her literature classes were taught through reading, discussion and writing. Therefore, Kelly replicated this format when she taught literature in her English 102 course. This is probably why Kelly felt more relief when she was assigned English 102 courses, because literature was much more familiar to her.

Kelly chose the readings before the semester began. Doing so, she felt that the readings would “be interesting to discuss” and “facilitate good discussion.” While choosing, she kept students’ “interests in mind” (Interview with Kelly, 8/14/11). Kelly also claimed that she liked to do different methods of teaching. She explained that she included a combination of class discussion, small group discussion, and writing activities. (Interview with Kelly, 3/17/11). She incorporated writing tasks which forced her students “to think about and articulate their perspective” (Interview with Kelly, 3/17/11). She felt that designating writing tasks prepared students for class discussion. She stated, “If they've had a chance to think about some things and write them down, it is easier for them to discuss them in class and in their essays” (Interview with Kelly, 8/14/11).

Student knowledge. Kelly increased her awareness of student knowledge with every experience. While working in writing centers and teaching different levels of writing, she came to understand that students had different needs and different abilities. She became familiar with teaching a wide variety of students, including non-native students.

Her first awareness of cultural difference came to her while she was a graduate assistant working in the writing center. Later, as she began teaching, she became aware of her students

different learning abilities and even more aware of her own teaching abilities. She recounted a moment when she realized that even though she knew the grammar rules of English, explaining them to other students who were not familiar with the rules, particularly to non-native students, was much more difficult. For example, she stated that the articles *a*, *an* and *the* were the most difficult to explain. She stated that “explaining to them [English language learners] when to use one over another, that challenged me in ways that I have not been challenged.” She continued by adding, “Because as a native speaker, you just know which one. How do you explain that?” (Interview with Kelly, 8/14/11). With instances such as these, she quickly became aware of language barriers and students’ needs.

Later, when she began teaching writing courses, she explained that she also acquired the opportunity to know her students in other ways. She assigned personal narratives and provided opportunities for class discussions and group work. By incorporating these methods, she learned about her students, and they learned about one another. She also had the opportunity to get to know them through teacher/student conferences. She explained there was a “twofold purpose” for this; she wanted to get to know the students and their writing styles and to allow students the opportunity to ask questions (Interview with Kelly, 8/14/11).

Kelly realized through the years that “every class is different, every group of people are different, and they’re gonna perceive things differently” (Interview with Kelly, 8/14/11). Therefore, she recognized that her approaches to teaching will always be in flux.

University support. In Kelly’s earlier years of teaching, she did not receive any support from the first two institutions where she taught. There were no group meetings for new hires or workshops of any kind. She was responsible for seeking out support on her own, which she did through family, colleagues and former professors. However, while Kelly was teaching at the

institution where she began her doctoral study, the English department provided support, more specifically, experienced teachers as mentors, who often engaged in conversations with her about her teaching. She was also involved in discussion groups and workshops.

I asked Kelly if it would be beneficial for literature graduates, newly hired adjuncts teaching composition, to obtain more support and learning opportunities from universities, such as workshops and mentors, to which she replied, “Yes, yes, yes, in capital letters” (Interview with Kelly, 8/14/11). Even though she graduated with an English degree concentrated specifically in American literature, she wished that she had the support she needed earlier in her career. She even agreed that every literature teacher who teaches composition should have some training in writing pedagogy. She stated:

I think that you can be the biggest literature scholar in the world and not have a clue how to teach a freshman to write. I mean, it’s just like language. It’s just like what I said about our language. When you’re a native speaker of English, you just know when to use the articles, *a*, *an* and *the*. Does that mean I know how to teach someone who has never spoken English before how to use those? No. I need to learn how to teach that, even if it’s inherent to me, even if I have it mastered myself. (Interview with Kelly, 8/14/11)

Professional development. As a part-time teacher and a part-time student, Kelly’s professional development is on-going. She had the opportunity to speak at several conferences, including one literature conference and one writing conference. She attends conferences as often as she can. She is also in the process of completing her dissertation in English Rhetoric and Composition (Interview with Kelly, 3/17/11).

Continuous learning. Kelly strived to learn to teach composition by implementing new approaches every semester. She continuously thought about her teaching. She stated, “When I

am teaching in any semester, I'm always thinking about my teaching even when I leave the classroom" (Interview with Kelly, 8/14/11). She divulged that she spent more time thinking and preparing to teach composition than teaching. She replied that the "actual time that it takes to teach is much shorter than the time it takes to prepare to teach." She revealed that teaching composition has been "a work in progress" (Interview with Kelly, 8/14/11).

She divulged that reflection occurred at the end of every semester. She explained that she reflected upon her teaching "at the end of every semester." She claimed that this was the best time "to assess" what she needed to do in order to prepare for "the following semester" (Interview with Kelly, 8/14/11). Kelly revealed that reflection was a useful tool when preparing for a new semester. Kelly admitted that she read articles, investigated research on the internet, and used university databases to search for any other information she felt she needed for teaching (Interview with Kelly, 8/14/11).

Interpretive analysis. Kelly found her first year teaching composition challenging. She believed that asking other colleagues for assistance during her first year was not feasible. She felt as if her colleagues already expected her to know how to teach, and therefore, she felt uncomfortable asking for assistance. Unfortunately, when support systems are not put into place, situations like this can occur. However, after her first year, as she became more familiar with her colleagues and her placement within the institution, she became more comfortable asking questions.

Over the years she became more confident and sought out mentors, specifically teachers who were knowledgeable of composition practice and theory, because she had little training in teaching composition.

Also, Kelly's work in writing centers became influential. These experiences were the

reason she chose a doctoral program in rhetoric and composition. This program, along with her interest in writing centers, helped form her teaching practice which included student-centered and collaborative classroom environments.

Jessica

Personal/educational experiences. Jessica (pseudonym) is a full-time instructor at Urban University. She is in her early thirties and has never lived outside the southern region of the United States. She was educated in the south, earning her Master's of Arts degree at the same institution where she teaches now, as well as a certificate in business/technical writing. She teaches first year composition as well as technical and business writing courses. She has never taught a literature course, but she has taught literature in the second portion of first year composition which covers writing a literary analysis. She has taught at both the junior college and university levels. She has been teaching writing courses for approximately nine years. At the moment she holds the position of full-time instructor.

She traveled to other countries, including England, Ireland and the Bahamas for vacation. She studied a foreign language, French, but never had the opportunity to use it frequently. Because of her inexperience using a second language, her knowledge of language acquisition is minimal. While traveling to other countries, Jessica had the opportunity to observe other cultures briefly, but she never stayed in a country long enough to experience displacement.

Jessica received her Master's Degree in English with a concentration in American literature. She stated that most of the literature classes were basically the same. She stated that she did not remember "having a lot of variation in the way the class was taught" or "variation in assignments" (Interview with Jessica, 8/12/11). She revealed that the basic literature course was "pretty much the same all the way through" reading texts and discussing them in class. She also

stated that there was some writing in the literature courses. Most of the time she wrote “one or two big papers” concerning literary analyses. She remembered most of the pedagogy was the same in her graduate literature courses: “lecture, discussion, a little bit of lecture, more discussion and a lot of reading” (Interview with Jessica, 8/12/11). Jessica took a required linguistics course. She stated it was taught like an English grammar course. She described the course as “lots of diagramming sentences which I thought I’d stop doing in high school.” She explained that it was only taught that way “because of the person who was teaching it.” She explained that the reason it was taught that way was because “it was taught by our former Chair, and she had since retired, but [the English Department] still hadn’t hired a linguistics person, and so had the chair come back” (Interview with Jessica, 3/8/11). Because Jessica was not exposed to the study of linguistics, she did not have the understanding of language and language development as many other subjects.

Jessica also took one course in writing pedagogy, but she explained that it was not that helpful. She stated, “It would have been nice to have had a class in addition to the Writing Pedagogy course I took as a graduate student to talk about the PRACTICAL [her emphasis] aspects of teaching writing, not just the pedagogical/theoretical aspects” (Blog post by Jessica, 8/4/11).

Teaching background/experiences in composition. Jessica has been teaching at her current institution for approximately eight years. This is also the research institution where she earned her Master’s degree in English. Also, she taught part-time at a local junior college for a short amount of time. She taught English 101 (first portion of first year composition) and English 102 (second portion of English composition), business writing, and technical writing courses. She is currently an adjunct instructor.

Jessica recounted her first teaching experience in a blog prompt question.

My first day of teaching was August 21, 2002... I was three months out from graduating with my M.A. and had not had the chance to do a TA... I remember expressing concerns about not knowing how to teach a class or grade or create assignments and being told by my now-co-workers (formerly grad school professors) that I had been in college for seven years so, you know, that was, well, something. Yeah, sure. I sat in a desk for seven years as a STUDENT, doing the readings I was assigned and writing papers. Nothing in my education to that point, save for a 600-level pedagogy theory class, had prepared me for the PRACTICAL aspects of running a classroom. I worried that I wouldn't be taken seriously; I was 25 years old and still mistaken for a student more often than I was for the person in charge. Somehow, though, I got through it and, through much trial and error, started to feel more and more qualified to be the one in charge. (Blog post by Jessica, 6/22/11)

Since that time, she has not taken any other pedagogy courses, but she has thought about taking other courses. She stated in an interview that she wished she had time to take more rhetoric and composition courses.

Beyond her writing pedagogy course in graduate school, everything that Jessica learned about teaching composition occurred through experiences, reflections and discussions. She claimed that she often discussed her own teaching approaches with other colleagues, and she often talked to her students about coursework to get their input. She explained that learning to teach composition occurred for her in several ways, including re-reading books from her former classes, talking with "other people who teach freshman composition," and talking to students to get feedback regarding the assignments and their effectiveness. She recognized that her students

were “valuable resources” (Interview with Jessica, 8/12/11).

She also revealed that her first experience developing a syllabus was challenging, even though she followed a sample model provided by the English Department. She explained that she “found it difficult to find anyone who would go through it step-by-step” after she had constructed her syllabus. Because of this, Jessica’s syllabus, to this day, is extensive. She stated that her syllabi “cover everything.” She commented, “I went from just giving the calendar of readings and assignments” and including “some policy” to “thoroughly listing policies, assignments, and the class calendar, including due dates, readings and more.” She commented this helped her and her students as well, “because they know up front what is expected of them” (Blog post by Jessica, 6/22/11).

Jessica never observed other teachers teaching first year composition courses. She replied that she wished her institution provided opportunities like this for “newer people.” She believed that observing other teachers would have been beneficial for her when she began teaching. She stated that she “didn’t take the initiative to ask and it was never offered” (Interview with Jessica, 8/12/11).

Jessica was not assigned a mentor to help her through her first semester or her first year of teaching. She explained that the only “mentor” that she actually encountered included “whoever was nice enough to hang out and let you talk to them about [teaching].” She also commented that the TAs were assigned mentors, and she believed it would have been beneficial if mentors were assigned to novice adjuncts as well (Interview with Jessica, 8/12/11).

Most of Jessica’s teaching relied on trial and error in-class experiences as well as reflection (Interview with Jessica, 8/12/11). She mentioned that her most challenging in-class trial-and-error experience was, and still is, getting students to use and understand peer review as

a tool for learning to write. She explained, “Over the years, I have evolved from students filling out sheets in the same groups every time to different groups each time to changing up the questions on the sheets to going to the Writing Center to , lastly, doing peer review online” (Blog post by Jessica, 8/4/11). She believed peer review was a very important process for learning to write, but because she was not familiar with teaching reflection in the composition classroom (Yancey, 1998), she was unaware how to implement and explain this learning process to her students effectively.

She continued by stating that trial-and-error experience was her main tool for learning to teach composition. She emphasized that there was “never really one way to do things.” She revealed that she tried implementing new materials and new strategies for teaching every semester. She stated in an interview that she implemented “trial and error to find what works,” but she also recognized that “what works now doesn’t mean it’s always [going to] work” (Interview with Jessica, 8/12/11).

Teaching first year composition (English 101/102). Jessica’s English 101 course focused around the teaching of critical thinking and structured writing. She stated that she assigned her students “a summary, a critique, and then the last four [papers were] a mixture of analytical argument” (Interview with Jessica, 3/8/11). She required two textbooks for this course - a reader and a rhetoric (Appendix M). She often chose and assigned readings for the summary and critique assignments, but she allowed students to pick the readings for their analytical and argumentative writing assignments, and she allowed them to choose their own topics for their writing assignments. She stated that in order to teach composition, she often relied on reading samples from other colleagues as well as reflecting upon her past experiences in her former undergraduate English 103 course (Interview 3/8/11).

Jessica's English 102 course was structured around literary analysis (Appendix N). She introduced and discussed more literature in this course, in order to construct and produce critical literary analyses. The only difference in the approach to teaching writing in this course than in English 101 was that the class did not spend as much time discussing methods of writing. Instead, the class was structured around "the material that [students needed] in order to write the essays," which included essays, short stories, poetry and plays (Interview with Jessica, 3/8/11).

Developing curriculum in first year composition. Jessica followed a prescriptive curriculum (objectives and goals) provided by the English department at her institution and the state's accreditation. In the first section of first year composition, English 101, six essays were required. In the second section of first year composition, English 102, five essays and a research paper were required. There were also textbooks which teachers were required to use in teaching first year composition courses. However, over the years she added her own objectives, goals and outcomes for her students (Interview with Jessica, 3/8/11).

During the first couple of years, Jessica claimed that she followed the guidelines and recommendations by her department as far as structuring her English 101/102 courses. However, in an interview she commented, "I've gotten a little bit more loose with it as I've gotten further into it. I always hated teaching certain essays and certain genres. By the third or fourth time of teaching the class, I thought, 'I have better ideas than this'" (Interview with Jessica, 8/12/11). She began to realize that she could invent other ways to teach her courses. After eight years of teaching, Jessica revealed that she felt more confident to construct her course the way that she wanted to, without feeling the pressure of the department or the university.

Teaching approaches in first year composition. Jessica believed several approaches were imperative when teaching writing. First, as discussed earlier, she believed using peer

review in her courses. Second, she believed extensive amounts of comments and feedback were needed on her students' essays. Third, she believed that students produced better writing when essays were written outside of the classroom. Fourth, she believed that group work was "beneficial" to create a collaborative classroom environment. Finally, she provided extensive handouts on all assignments (Interview with Jessica, 8/12/11).

As discussed earlier, Jessica taught students how to critique other students' writing and required students to use peer review throughout the course. She taught her students how to critique writing before actually asking them to do so. She set time aside early in the semester to teach this to her students, by bringing in samples of other students' writing, and demonstrating how to respond (Interview with Jessica, 3/8/11). She supplied her students with a handout which explained "How You Do Peer Review" (Artifact, Classroom Handout, 2011). She also revealed that it was important to explain specifically what she was looking for or students would not give "good results" (Interview with Jessica, 8/12/11).

Over the years she learned to provide plenty of time for students to respond to student papers because she learned that every student learns at a different pace. She instructed her students to respond online because, "doing peer review in the class was making it more difficult [for students] to respond as clearly as I'd hoped because [students] were limited on time [and]also, there seems to be an intimidation factor whenever you have students face-to-face doing peer review" (Interview with Jessica, 8/12/11). She claimed she had better results with online peer review responses than in-class peer review responses.

Jessica also felt that it was vitally important that students received specific "thorough" comments and feedback from her regarding their writing assignments. She explained:

Just telling a student that the thesis is not strong enough does not cut it; [teachers] need to

explain why it isn't strong and what effect that has on the success of the piece as a whole. Most of my students appreciate and respond to the feedback and will talk to me about it if they are not sure about it. I find it to be the most effective strategy I can employ, especially since our classes are always evolving. (Interview with Jessica, 3/8/11)

Throughout the years, she found several ways to provide these comments. She used to type out the comments on a piece of paper, along with a grade, and attached this to the student's essay. Later, she began emailing comments to her students (Interview with Jessica, 3/8/11). She also disclosed that she used TurnItIn. She required students to upload their papers on this site, which allowed time for students to access papers and made it easier to provide comments. She also relied on rubrics more, to give the students an idea of what was expected for each assignment. She explained that the use of a rubric was "a little more upfront about the feedback" so that she did not "have to be as expansive in [her] comments" since students were able to look at the rubric for clarification (Interview with Jessica, 3/8/11).

Jessica did not restrict students to in-class writing assignments. Jessica believed that students would produce better writing outside of the classroom because they would not be constrained by time and could choose their writing environments. These beliefs were influenced by her brother's personal experiences, who had difficulty concentrating and writing in classrooms under time constraints (Interview with Jessica, 3/8/11).

Jessica implemented group work in order to sustain a collaborative classroom environment. She assigned certain in-class projects with discussions for this type work. She wanted "to prepare [students] for working with other people because it's something that they're going to be doing on the job as well as in school" (Interview with Jessica, 8/12/11). She also tried to convince her students that writing was so much more than just sitting down at a keyboard

and typing words, and it was more than a “solitary task” (Interview with Jessica, 8/12/11).

Through Jessica’s past experiences, she found that handouts were needed for students’ assignments. She stated, “When we do writing related stuff, I give handouts...they get a handout for everything and then they’re posted on ANGEL, so that students who are absent can access them and also for students who misplace their handouts” (Interview with Jessica, 3/8/11). She provided the handouts for students to refer to later when they were working on their assignments outside of class. She wanted to make sure that there were no misinterpretations of the assignment from any student in the classroom. She tried to give as much explicit information as possible. She explained, “I don’t think students really realize how much is involved until they get an essay assignment explained to them in great detail on the handout” (Interview with Jessica, 3/8/11).

Jessica included face-to-face conferences in her course, but because of time restrictions, she scheduled one conference with all of her students in her English 102 course. This was timed before the research paper was due, in order to discuss the paper and any issues that arose as students were preparing the high stakes assignment. She stated that she had never been notified by the English department that she had “to hold X number of conferences” with any of her students. She stated, “My holding conferences is completely on my own, at my discretion, and I do the one right before the research paper because I need [students] to meet with me face-to-face about this.” She did make this meeting a requirement, because she stated, “I get the impression that if I leave [students] to their own devices, they won’t [schedule a conference to discuss the paper]” (Interview with Jessica, 3/8/11). Jessica never required conferences to discuss any other written assignments nor incorporated them into her curriculum.

Assessing students in first year composition. Jessica never followed one particular assessment method. She spent time adjusting and readjusting her assessment methods each

semester, and sometimes, for each assignment. She created her own rubrics. She explained, “I kind of figured out what mattered to me and what I thought having been an academic writer was important for [students]... so I deemphasized grammar and style... [and] my goal is to be content focused” (Interview with Jessica, 8/12/11). Jessica made a point to concentrate on the higher order concerns of students’ writing rather than the lower order concerns.

Jessica constructed the course so that she taught her students how to assess their own writing and writing of others. For the final exam in her 102 course, she divided the final exam into three distinct projects. The first portion of the grade was worth 50 points and based on “self-assessment” whereas she required her students to write a one-page informal essay regarding a “genuine self-reflection and serious attention to your [student’s] progress as a writer.” For the second portion of the exam, worth 100 points, students chose a quote from a list and wrote a two page essay and discussed “its significance.” For the third portion of the final exam, worth 50 points, students were given a student essay, three pages in length, which they had to critique, responding to “issues and successes” in great detail and length (Artifact, Classroom Handout, 2011). Jessica expected her students to be able to critique writing thoroughly before exiting her classroom.

Teacher’s expectations of students as writers in first year composition. Jessica explained her expectations for the students who exited her 100 level courses.

I want them to be able to 1) understand the assignment given to them and break it down into a series of manageable tasks, 2) understand how they personally need to approach the assignment given their own writing processes and preferences, and 3) understand where they might need help with the assignment. I want them to be comfortable with themselves as writers, with the language of the assignments they might encounter, and

with asking for help . (Blog post by Jessica, 8/4/11)

Teaching literature. Jessica never taught a literature course. She only taught literature in her English 102 course, to teach students to write a literary analysis. She relied on some knowledge retained from her past studies of literature and writing about literature, but she also investigated and used other sources and articles which she found useful, such as articles from different writers. She used very little literary theory when discussing the literature in class (Interview with Jessica, 8/12/11).

When Jessica presented literature in the classroom, there were several approaches she used in order to get her students involved in the learning. She often asked her students to get into groups and assigned particular sections of the literary work. Then she asked students to present their findings to the rest of the class. At other times, she assigned readings for homework and held group discussions in class (Interview with Jessica 8/12/11).

Student knowledge. Jessica explained that knowing her students was important to her, but she never felt like there was enough time to do so within a semester. She explained, “I wish [I] could spend more time on getting to know [students] individually because writing is such an individual task, and it’s very important to me to get to know them individually” (Interview with Jessica, 8/12/11). She divulged that when she taught a four/four load, she had very little time to get to know students as well as she would have liked (Interview with Jessica, 8/12/11). She also explained, “Over the course of the semester I’ll try to meet with them when I can, talk to them one-on-one before or in class.” Also, if she noticed a student struggling with a writing assignment, she encouraged the student to meet with her (Interview with Jessica, 3/8/11).

University support. Jessica disclosed that more support was needed for graduates of literature who teach composition, particularly for new instructors and adjuncts. She stated,

“Many of the adjuncts have traditional literature-based undergraduate and graduate degrees. We all learn on the job.” She also divulged that it would be helpful if the department or university offered “day-long seminars where professors talk about their methodologies as well as what else is available to the instructors.” She concluded by stating, “While I don’t think we’ll ever escape the trial-and-error aspect of teaching, more training would help minimize the upheaval that can cause” (Blog post by Jessica, 8/4/11).

Jessica also stated that the Director of Freshman Composition sets up time before each fall semester to speak with all the teachers who teach first year composition. However, Jessica did not consider this a learning experience. She stated:

We have a comp orientation in August where every one of the composition instructors is invited to talk to or kind of sit in on this conference which is like a couple of hours and the reference librarians come in and talk about what they do , the Director of Freshman Comp talks about syllabi and any changes that we need to make and things like that. We have someone from the Judicial Review Board talk about plagiarism. And [sic] we just basically – that two hours or so is a chance for all the composition instructors to make sure that they know everything that’s available to them before they start teaching that semester. So [we] talk about practical things like parking and [things] like that. But I mean it was more intended to be so that all the composition instructors....[are]on the same page. (Interview with Jessica, 3/8/11)

From her explanation of the first year composition orientation meeting, Jessica’s opportunity for learning and sharing ideas about teaching writing was limited at her university. With only one meeting per year, little time was afforded for learning opportunities from others who taught composition.

Professional development. While Jessica did not frequently attend conferences or was involved with service learning projects or faculty committees, she did feel like the only way to become more effective as a teacher was to continuously investigate and practice new approaches to teaching.

Continuous learning. Jessica felt that it was her responsibility as a teacher to improve her teaching approaches and methods every semester, for the benefit of herself and her students. She stated that she felt “inadequate” and at a “disadvantage” at times because she had a literature degree and not a composition degree (Interview with Jessica, 8/12/11). She felt as if she needed to learn more about composition teaching and theory. She acknowledged that she felt like she could “do [her] job better.” She continued by divulging that what she knew was only “the tip of the iceberg” (Interview with Jessica, 8/12/11).

Interpretive analysis. Jessica’s personal experiences and beliefs influenced her teaching the most. Even though she discussed her pedagogy on occasion with others, she designed her pedagogy on what she believed were the best approaches. She often reflected on her personal experiences as a student and past teaching experiences in the classroom and adjusted her pedagogy accordingly.

Even though she felt as if her teaching was effective, she was still insecure about content knowledge for teaching composition. Therefore, even with eight years of teaching, she still relied heavily on textbooks to teach writing. Also, because of her lack of pedagogical content knowledge for teaching composition, she had not yet developed the knowledge or confidence to teach writing without using a textbook.

One aspect of Jessica’s teaching which was quite different than the other participants was her extreme use of descriptive handouts and syllabi. She constructed these artifacts to cover

everything that was discussed in class. However, what Jessica did not realize is that this tool was especially helpful for language learners. While discussions and lectures are generally helpful for students' understanding of coursework, handouts are helpful for language learners to review what is needed and/or assigned in the course. Because of language barriers, language learners are often in need of written requirements and assignments.

Geoffrey

Personal/educational experiences. Geoffrey (pseudonym) is the third participant from Urban University. He is in his early sixties and was born in Germany and has lived in different areas of Europe – Holland, Poland, France and Italy. He speaks fluent German and English but has also studied Latin and Greek. He has had the opportunity to teach in Austria and Germany. With such an extensive history in learning, speaking and teaching languages, Geoffrey's knowledge of language learners and cultures surpasses that of the other participants in this study. He has studied in Europe and the United States. He finished his Master's of Arts degree in English, with a concentration only in literature and his Education Specialist degree at the same institution where he is teaching now. He finished his doctorate in 1985 (Interview with Geoffrey, 3/17/11).

He has taught in primary, secondary and postsecondary institutions (junior college and university levels). He has been teaching for approximately 45 years. He has taught German, Latin, English literature, composition, business courses and theater. He holds an adjunct position at this research institution (Interview with Geoffrey, 3/17/11).

Teaching background/experiences in composition. Geoffrey began teaching in high school, then taught in middle school, and then college. He taught composition at the college level for about 24 years at three different institutions. He also taught composition off and on at four

different high schools, for 38 years, including one German school where he taught German composition (Email response from Geoffrey, 6/9/11).

Geoffrey recounted what happened on his very first day of teaching an English classroom. On his first day of teaching, he was supposed to have a supervising teacher, but she was sick and did not show for her class. Therefore, he was left alone to teach her courses. He remembered that the class was supposed to read Hemingway's "The Old Man at the Bridge," and since Geoffrey was unfamiliar with the story, he simply read the story aloud, interpreting meaning whenever he could (Interview with Geoffrey, 8/15/11). Like many beginning teachers, Geoffrey was placed into a 'sink or swim' situation, thrown in with very little direction on his first day of teaching.

Geoffrey valued his experience as a practice teacher. Even though his first day of teaching was a memorable experience, he spent the rest of the entire semester with his mentor. He valued the time he spent with her stating, "I learned quite a bit from my cooperating teacher" (Interview with Geoffrey, 8/15/11). In fact, he confessed that he learned more from practice teaching than from his college and preparatory courses. He replied, "My most valuable 'course' was the semester of student teaching. The cooperating teacher I had was fabulous, and I must say that I learned 90% of what I brought to my first teaching assignment from her" (Blog post by Geoffrey, 6/19/11). Geoffrey was the only participant in this study who had the opportunity to work closely with an active mentor. Geoffrey began teaching composition in high school, for the "ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth" grades (Interview with Geoffrey, 3/17/11). As he remembered one of his earliest memories teaching composition, he stated, "During the composition I used literature as a vehicle to teach composition. I only gave essay tests" (Interview with Geoffrey, 3/17/11). At this time, he began making teaching materials to help

teach students how to write essays. He created the “bubble sheet” which is a worksheet used to structure an essay. On the worksheet, students had to write out in “complete thoughts” a thesis statement, main ideas, supporting points, and “once [students had] this all filled out, with nice, fine, tiny script, about ninety percent of the essays [were] finished” (Interview with Geoffrey, 3/17/11). Instead of having students write rough drafts of whole essays, Geoffrey used these instead. He took them when students had completed them, corrected them, and made suggestions to students. He then proceeded to return them to the students in the next class and told students that they had “fifteen – twenty minutes to write” the essay in class (Interview with Geoffrey, 3/17/11).

He continued to explain that “every student in my high school class from freshman to senior were required to write the formal five paragraph essay in thirty minutes from start to finish. I gave them a topic, they organized it, wrote it, and handed it in” (Interview with Geoffrey, 3/17/11). However, students were only required to do this at the end of the semester. The entire semester of instruction led up to this moment.

Geoffrey explained in further detail the reasons for developing his own materials and handouts for his students in his composition courses:

The first textbook I got in composition was just a grammar book. And [I was] supposed to teach composition out of it, and I thought ‘That’s not gonna work.’ It had these little exercises. And research has shown that exercises don’t do anything. So right away I started creating things, and then the next year I would teach the same course and use the same things and then add to them. (Interview with Geoffrey, 8/15/11)

He used these same handouts and worksheets in his college composition courses.

Geoffrey taught college composition and literature at three different post-secondary

institutions, including junior college and college levels. When he first began teaching composition in college, he explained that he felt comfortable because he had been teaching for so many years in high school. He continued by stating, “Learning to write is learning to write whether you teach it to an elementary school kid, middle school kid, high school kid, or college kid. What you’re teaching them is the same, just your methods have to be a little bit more, shall we say, on a higher level” (Interview with Geoffrey, 8/15/11). Geoffrey’s statement divulged that he did not challenge college students but had the same expectations of them as he does high school students. Even though he remarked that his teaching was on “a higher level,” the constructive processes of writing he described, including beginning with paragraphs and using hand outs and other materials in order to teach a five paragraph essay structure, was only a review of what students had already been taught in high schools (Interview with Geoffrey, 8/15/11).

When he discussed how he developed his syllabus for teaching college composition, he divulged, similar to his explanation above, that his high school syllabus only needed “tweaking” in order to teach college composition. He stated in an interview, “I quickly learned that teaching composition is teaching composition. I asked some colleagues for their samples ...[and] ...learned that my syllabus was as good as or better than those of my colleagues” (Blog post by Geoffrey, 6/21/11). Geoffrey explained, “Every professor at our university is required to file his/her syllabus, so, as I later learned, I was able to have access to everyone’s syllabus for ideas. Our Director of Freshman Composition even posted her syllabus on [the] web site and encouraged all teachers to use it as they saw fit” (Blog post by Geoffrey, 6/21/11). Geoffrey was the only participant at this university that acknowledged that this service was available.

While Geoffrey acknowledged that this university implemented tactics in order to help

new first year composition instructors with designing their curriculum, he also said that his need for this assistance was unnecessary due to his former experiences teaching writing in primary and secondary schools. Geoffrey believed that there was nothing else that he needed to learn to do before teaching college composition because he had learned everything he needed to know from instructing students in primary and secondary schools. Geoffrey used the same teaching strategies and approaches in college composition courses as he did when he taught high school. However, he held higher expectations for college students.

Teaching first year composition (English 101/102). In a blog response, Geoffrey disclosed the requirements for English 101. The university where he taught required students to write 6 essays per semester, for a total of 22 pages. The students in his classroom began by writing paragraphs for the first couple of weeks, and then they were immersed into writing complete five paragraph essays in MLA (Modern Language Association) format (Blog post by Geoffrey, 3/21/11).

Geoffrey explained the types of essays he assigned. He assigned the traditional rhetorical modes, “including descriptive, example, comparison/contrast, cause/effect, definition, and argumentative/persuasive.” He said, “I base my selections of essay types on what I consider to be the most common types of essays that students might encounter in college, as well as in their professional careers” (Blog post by Geoffrey, 3/21/11). He believed that structuring his English 101 course in this manner prepared students for the next section of first year composition, English 102, which was designed to teach literary analyses. For English 101, Geoffrey required two texts for this course: one text was a handbook and one text was a reader, supplying essays to incite critical thinking. He stated, “I use a textbook that we use as a vehicle, and then of course students need a handbook.” He continued, stating that the text “has got articles” that “provokes

thought” and “it has in it examples of the kinds of essays that I have students write, whether it’s descriptive, a narrative, or if it’s a cause-effect, definition, argumentative” as well as articles for “vehicles of argumentation” (Interview with Geoffrey, 3/17/11).

He also clarified that he did not teach directly from the textbook, but instead, he used his own materials which he created over the years, to teach students to develop and write essays. He referred to these worksheets as “bubble sheets.” He also developed handouts specifically for implementing and instructing students to use peer review and handouts to help students recognize grammar errors, as explained further in the next section.

Developing curriculum in first year composition. Geoffrey’s curriculum for his first year composition courses was structured differently than his other two colleagues. First, his rhetorical approaches were somewhat different, and second, he assessed his students’ writing with a final portfolio project. He structured his courses around the objectives of the institution and included these, as described in the catalog, in his syllabus, located on the first page (Appendix O). The students are expected to be able to read and to respond critically, to write essays, and to use documentation. The course objectives presented by the institution are written as follows:

This course is designed to acquaint students with strategies of college-level critical reading and writing:

- 1) Students will practice reading to understand and evaluate sources, and also to infer relationships among sources.
- 2) As a component of this objective, students will practice using and documenting sources.
- 3) In addition, students will explore various structures and strategies for essay writing while developing a better understanding of the revision

process.

The objectives of the courses are already prescribed and pre-set for each student by the institution, as exemplified particularly by the phrases “students will.”

Teaching approaches in first year composition. Geoffrey’s approach to teaching composition developed through a number of venues. He commented in a blog response, “I usually approach teaching a topic/skill in the manner that I had wished teachers had used with me. Sometimes I remember a certain technique that a respected teacher had used, and I adopt it for the occasion. Through trial and error, I have fine-tuned my methods” (Blog post by Geoffrey, 6/21/11). He further explained:

When I teach freshman composition, I always begin with the assumption that [students] do not know anything about writing except for the English language and basic grammar [sic]. I then present a systematic approach to formal writing, using graphic organizers, illustrations of filled-out graphic organizers, and sample essays. (Blog post by Geoffrey, 6/21/11)

In the above statement, Geoffrey made the generalization that all students understand “the English language and basic grammar” but in another interview he conveyed that he understood the struggles of some of his students, especially his English language learners (Interview with Geoffrey, 8/15/11). In fact, he acknowledged in an interview that when he observed an English language learner having trouble with a writing assignment, he spent extra time with that particular student. Geoffrey’s own struggles with learning the English language enhanced his empathy for English language learners more than native students (Interview with Geoffrey, 8/15/11).

Geoffrey provided more details about his “graphic organizers” and “models” in an

interview:

...graphic organizers [sic] allow students to map out their essays, with the paragraph and culminating in the final essay. The most helpful for students is what I call the “Bubble Sheet,” wherein students write the theses or statements of purpose, delineate the three or more points of discussion per essay, state the main ideas, followed by examples, illustrations, and the like. At the end, the students write the brief conclusions. In this way the students have the entire essays in front of them and feel they can control them. (Blog post by Geoffrey, 3/20/11)

He believed that the “graphic organizes” provided a simple structure which helped even the most reluctant writer. Later, he described his use of “models,” or sample essays:

I present to students a sample essay on transparencies and go over the essay in detail. Once they have seen each part of the essay and how everything fits together, we do a class essay. We pick the topic (one of three that I propose—to save time), discuss the pros and cons of the issue by using the board/overhead for brainstorming, decide on a thesis, break down the points of contention, suggest the supporting evidence, and assemble the essay in class. (Blog post by Geoffrey, 3/20/11)

Geoffrey believed that “once students have gone through this procedure, they feel more confident that they can write their own” (Blog post by Geoffrey, 3/20/11).

Because of his beliefs and his past teaching experiences, Geoffrey’s approach to teaching writing was very structured. He took a much more directive approach to teaching writing than the other participants in the study by using structured worksheets, handouts and lectures he created from years of teaching English in high schools.

Geoffrey even developed worksheets for students to use when performing in-class peer

reviews. He explained that students “peer edit all writings” using a “specific form” which he created. Geoffrey created this form because when students were left on their own to comment on other students’ papers, the “students’ comments were quite useless because they did not want to criticize their peers.” Because of his students’ reluctance, he felt the need “to help create anonymity,” so he “assigned a secret number to each student, which he/she posts onto the peer editing forms” (Blog post by Geoffrey, 3/21/11). Students were required to do peer review as part of their final assessment grade.

Geoffrey’s use of technology within the classroom was limited. However, he did require students to be familiar with several Word programs, as well as to be able to access the internet, their campus email address and TurnItIn for uploading documents. In the classroom, he used an overhead projector when he needed to instruct students to do an assignment. He explained:

For most of my lecturing [sic] I use the overhead projector for two reasons. First, I have accumulated 45 years’ worth of transparencies of numerous sorts that I use in my lectures. Here I have essay samples, filled-in graphic organizer samples, pictures and cartoons relevant to specific lessons, and a diversity of other materials...Second, I use the overhead as a blackboard by writing on the glass with an overhead pen. ...I am a former director of a public school media department and have tried to keep abreast of the latest educational technology. While much is quite helpful, and some has even become essential, there is a vast amount of media fluff that serves little to no purpose in educating people. (Blog post by Geoffrey, 3/21/11)

Geoffrey used limited media, including videos or films, to instruct his courses. His use of computers was limited to the occasional email. He relied mostly on the documents he created for his English classrooms.

Assessing students in first year composition. Geoffrey's most valuable learning experience occurred during training to grade AP (Advanced Placement) exams where he learned about assessing writing. He was given the opportunity years ago to sit in on a committee and grade AP exams. He remembered that training was provided. The lecturer informed the participants of the evaluation process. Geoffrey stated, "At the end [of the lecture] we 'evaluated' several actual essays from years past to see how close we came to the official evaluations these papers had received." He also claimed, "This was one of the best experiences I had regarding the evaluation of essays" (Blog post by Geoffrey, 4/21/11).

Geoffrey stated that he graded students' essays "holistically" (Interview with Geoffrey, 3/17/11). However, he still spends hours grading and correcting essays. He explained, "I used to think [teachers] would spend five to six minutes with a paper and that was it." He now realized this was not the case. After 45 years of teaching, he admitted spending approximately "thirty-five" to "forty-five" minutes per paper. He explained that it was not the grading that takes so long, but it was the correcting. Geoffrey believed that for students to understand and to "know what's wrong with the paper," he gave thorough corrections (Interview with Geoffrey, 8/15/11). Also, when Geoffrey returned students' papers to them, he attached a rubric to each paper so that the students could see each reason for each correction.

When Geoffrey assessed an essay, he insisted, "There are really three main areas of concern in formal writing: composition usage and grammar, development of thoughts and ideas, and organization of thoughts and ideas into a cohesive whole." He continued by stating "So, in grading papers, I put about equal emphasis on each part – more on the thoughts and ideas and presentation in the first few essays, and then clamping down on the grammar and usage in the later essays" (Email response from Geoffrey, 6/9/11). From this statement, he divulged that the

higher order concerns take priority in the beginning of the semester, but towards the end of the semester, he puts more emphasis on the lower order concerns, revealing that he sticks to the traditional modes where grammar and mechanical correctness are still highly important aspects of the teaching of composition (Connor, 1997; Shaughnessy, 1977).

Towards the end of the semester, Geoffrey assigned “a self-assessment, whereby each student [selected] one element from the last essay that [was] better than in the previous essay. Students [wrote] an entire essay, giving detailed assessments of their essays, with examples and discussions” (Artifact, Classroom Handout, 2011).

Geoffrey structured the assessment of his students by assigning 80% of the students’ total grade to the final construction of the portfolio and 20% to classroom participation (in-class writing assignments, peer editing sessions, attendance and active participation, and two conferences). Geoffrey assigned a portfolio project which assessed students’ completion of course objectives, as noted in his course syllabus (Appendix P). To assess these objectives, Geoffrey required the following materials to be compiled in the portfolio: six graded essays, original drafts, revisions, corrections, commentary, and cover letter.

Teacher’s expectations of students as writers in first year composition. When asked what his own expectations were for his students in his classroom, he responded to a blog prompt by listing the course objectives which were located on his syllabus (Appendix P). By providing this response, Geoffrey appeared to be simply imitating what the institution expected students to know when they exited his course. However, in a later interview, Geoffrey disclosed that his own goals were “to teach them how to think.” Therefore, his classes invoked discussions, but he required his students to be able to put their thoughts on paper “clearly” and “succinctly” (Interview with Geoffrey, 8/15/11).

Teaching literature. Geoffrey still has a strong passion for literature. He taught literature much longer than composition. He responded that he taught literature every year since 1966. He taught World Literature survey courses, British Literature, American Literature, Roman Literature, German Literature, Shakespeare, Chaucer, and “numerous novels from all over the world from authors such as Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Goethe, Kafka, Conrad, Steinbeck, H. Lee, Camus, Mahfouz, Carolly, Erickson, Gogol, D. Howarth, Brecht, and [others]” (Interview with Geoffrey, 3/17/11).

Geoffrey described several tactics which he used to teach literature. First, Geoffrey always included a historical introduction to the literary work. He did this through “lecture with many transparencies, photos and illustrations.” He stated, “When teaching literature, the teacher needs to realize that he is teaching true history.” Second, he chose specific topics to cover, because, as he stated, “one cannot cover everything. It is therefore essential for the teacher to decide what specific topics he/she will address for each specific piece of literature.” Third, Geoffrey found a way for his students to interact with one another by requiring them to pick a literary selection from a list, research it, and then discuss it in a group. He stated, “I divide the class into groups—one group per topic—and then students do individual as well as group research. In class each day, students received a certain amount of time (30-40 minutes or whatever is needed) to work together and share ideas and research.” Later, Geoffrey required these groups to present their findings by way of “oral presentations, using, perhaps Power Point” and leading the class in discussion. Finally, Geoffrey discovered it useful and enlightening to introduce his students to literary theory. He remarked that “by my dividing the study into the specific elements, students are forced to delve into the specific details, such as structure, character analysis, literary devices, theme(s), etc. While it is true that some selections require

some strong guidance, students usually rise to the task” (Email response from Geoffrey, 5/31/12). Geoffrey’s statement clearly divulged that he challenged his literature students more than his composition students. Even though his literature courses were structured, he allowed more freedom for his students to collaborate on projects. His students were given more opportunities for group work and were required to lead class discussions by constructing class presentations. He did not incorporate the same methodology in his composition classrooms.

Student knowledge. Geoffrey felt that it was important to know why students were attending college and what they were studying. He stated, “It is always important to know the student representation at all times” because “I must make the material relevant as much as possible, though I cannot always achieve this. ”

With all of Geoffrey’s teaching experience, he knew what to expect from his students’ writing abilities and how to teach the diverse learners who comprised his classroom. He said, “Getting to know students is quite important.” He did this through holding one individual conference with each student each semester. He explained, “This helps me understand their weaknesses regarding composition, and it allows me to find specific methods that can help them attain success” (Blog Post by Geoffrey, 4/21/11).

As stated earlier, since Geoffrey is a non-native speaker himself and has studied foreign languages, he was quite comfortable helping language learners. He explained:

When I teach a student from a foreign country, I am, of course, quite sensitive to his/her situation. When students have not mastered the English language, they cannot possibly write profound thoughts/ideas in English, though they can in their native tongues. If it is a language I know, I sometimes have the student write the essay in his/her native tongue and then help the student to translate it into English. (Blog post by Geoffrey, 6/21/11)

Geoffrey's personal and practical experiences as a non-native speaker placed him in a unique position to help English language learners in their writing. His experiences as a second-language learner (and teacher) were quite different than the other participants in this study. While the other participants had experiences studying other languages and using other languages on occasion while traveling, as a non-native speaker Geoffrey had to adapt to the English language. For this reason, his personal knowledge of second-language acquisition was greater than the other participants, and therefore his empathy was greater.

University support. Geoffrey stated that there was support where he teaches. He explained that there was a group within the English department, led by the Director of Freshman Composition, called the "composition group" which met for a couple of hours in August before the fall term began. Geoffrey explained in further detail: "We'll get together and then we'll...we work out syllabi and ideas and kick those around...It's like a big department meeting but it's more than just a meeting" (Interview with Geoffrey, 3/17/11). While the other participants from this university described this meeting as unhelpful, Geoffrey described it as an opportunity to discuss ideas about teaching composition.

Geoffrey also mentioned that the Director of Freshman Composition created a website, where professors, instructors and adjuncts from the English department shared instruction materials and ideas for teaching composition. Whereas Geoffrey was familiar with this site, the other participants from this university, who had been teaching for only a few years, had not mentioned this site. The other participants may not have known that the site exists, or they may have known about the site but found that it was not useful.

Professional development. Throughout his entire career as a teacher, Geoffrey contributed to his own professional development as an educator. While teaching high school, he

assisted in the development of courses, “four to five.” He also revealed that he “served on committees to set forth writing course goals and procedures to make sure that students were all getting similar instructions in the basics of writing” (Interview with Geoffrey, 3/17/11).

Geoffrey presented multiple workshops. He explained, “Back in the ‘70s, I conducted a series of workshops in media – use of media in the classroom and using the media as a vehicle for composition.” More recently, he conducted a workshop at the research institution where he currently teaches, entitled “How to Teach German Composition.” He also “conducted a number of other workshops, sometimes within our department [English]” (Interview with Geoffrey, 3/17/11).

Continuous learning. Geoffrey attended as many conferences as his wallet would allow. He replied:

The last one [conference] I went to was the one in New Orleans, the four Cs [Conference of College Composition and Communication], which was very excellent...It cost me a thousand bucks. How often can you do that? [Laughing] I mean, I got a hundred dollar stipend, and that paid for my cup of coffee. (Interview with Geoffrey, 3/17/11)

Therefore, because conferences are so expensive, Geoffrey did not have the funds to attend as many as he would like.

It was surprising, that with all his years teaching, he has not published in an academic journal or other publication (Interview with Geoffrey, 3/17/11).

Interpretive analysis. Even though Geoffrey had taught composition almost as long as Eliza, his pedagogy had not changed since his first few years of teaching. One reason for this may be because of his years teaching in secondary schools. Influences brought forth from

teaching at secondary schools were apparent in his pedagogy. He constructed worksheets for teaching writing and used those throughout his teaching career, from high school to college. His pedagogy was concentrated on constructive learning/teaching and teacher-centered methods. He believed more heavily in directing students' learning than the other participants in this study. Also, since he was an adjunct, he did not feel that continuous professional development was necessary. He was not pressured to publish or go to conferences by the university as full-time faculty generally are. This may be another reason why his pedagogy changed only slightly over the years.

The one specific difference which set Geoffrey apart from the other participants was his empathy for language learners. Because of his heritage and past language experiences, Geoffrey spent additional hours in conferences with language learners in order to help them with writing. He was able to explain the construction of writing to language learners much more effectively than the other participants; a skill he developed over years of learning and teaching writing.

Southern Rural University

This teaching institution is located in the state of Alabama. There are approximately 7,100 students enrolled at this institution. The student population consists predominantly of students who are from the southeastern region, but students who are also visiting from other countries also attend this institution.

The Common Goals and Policies for the First Year Composition Sequence for this particular teaching institution are located in a reference handbook, which has been specifically created and mandated for the first year composition courses.

The Written Composition requirement of the General Education Curricula is designed for students to develop skill in prewriting, writing, and rewriting expository and persuasive essays of various lengths for a variety of audiences and

rhetorical situations; in thinking critically; in analyzing texts of various types; and in conducting research to seek out and acquire knowledge.

This institution also designates specific writing requirements for both sections of first year Composition, including six essays in the first section and five essays and a research paper in the second section. There are also specific Learning Outcomes which every first year composition teacher must address in his/her classroom as provided in the student handbook. Students must be able to do the following upon the completion of the course:

1. develop and phrase controlling ideas
2. support ideas with adequate and appropriate evidence and thoughtful analysis;
3. apply a reasonable method of organization;
4. demonstrate a sensitivity for words in the language;
5. employ a variety of sentence structures;
6. locate primary and secondary sources using existing and new technologies;
analyze and evaluate sources; and synthesize sources without committing plagiarism;
7. and use the grammar and mechanics of Standard American English.

The English Department also instructs teachers to consider the following grammatical errors to be evaluated seriously:

1. Comma splices
2. Fused sentences and run-on sentences
3. Sentence fragments
4. Lack of subject-verb agreement (verb errors)
5. Incorrect use of pronouns
6. Excessive spelling errors including misuse of the apostrophe

7. Inconsistent tense usage
8. Use of nonstandard verb forms
9. Use of nonstandard constructions
10. Inappropriate diction

This university provides specific directives for the teachers of first year composition courses which are required to be executed.

Lila

Personal/educational experiences. Lila (pseudonym) is the first participant from Southern Rural University. She is in her early fifties and holds the title of Assistant Professor of English. She was born and lived in Canada for most of her life. While living in Quebec, she became bilingual, speaking English and French . She also lived one year in Boston and one year in Africa. Her experiences living in different parts of the world gave her the opportunity to immerse herself in different cultures and languages.

After finishing her certificate in teaching, Lila began her professional teaching career teaching French and English. While teaching high school, she went back to school part time to finish her Master's degree in English. She later finished her Doctorate degree in English literature.

Lila's entire teaching occurred in Canada, until she received a job at the institution where she now teaches. She has taught in the United States since 2006. She has approximately twenty six years of teaching experience(Interview with Lila, 12/10/10).

Teaching background/experiences in composition. Lila recollected difficult learning experiences from her earlier days of teaching. She learned very little useful teaching skills while doing her Master's, because "the mandatory curriculum [was] so vague and abstract," and she

found herself looking to others for guidance. She explained, “My learning curve as a teacher was much steeper in my earliest years of high school teaching, and I really had to go out and find people to learn from.” She later revealed that she was not part of any induction program or preservice program during her studies or when she first began teaching. She stated, “[I was] tossed into the deep end” where not all teachers were eager to help her. She explained, “I remember my first year teaching high school English asking my department head if he would let me come and observe him teach one day, and he looked at me like I had two heads and asked why on earth I would want to do that.” Finding mentors at the beginning of her teaching career “wasn’t easy,” she said (Interview with Lila, 12/10/10).

Since she had little assistance or mentoring her first year, Lila stated, “I was modeling my approach on that of my favorite high school English teacher” (Blog post by Lila, 8/7/11). Lila relied upon her reflections of a teacher whom she observed while she was a student in high school.

Several years after she began teaching, Lila found a teacher to observe. She claimed, “I did meet a teacher at another high school who was actively involved in research, and he welcomed me into his classroom to observe.” She had opportunity to co-teach a gifted writing program with professional authors which allowed her other opportunities to observe and learn. She stated, “I really enjoyed co-teaching with these people: an opportunity for constant back-and-forth observation, discussion, [and] reflection” (Blog post by Lila, 8/7/11). Later, while Lila worked on her doctorate, she met other teachers like herself with similar issues and concerns. She explained:

... I was suddenly surrounded by really gifted teachers and finding people I could talk over ideas with and learn from, suddenly became really easy in a way that it had never

been in the high school staff room...[the graduate students] were just really smart and engaged and reflective teachers and it was a great atmosphere, just sharing ideas.

(Interview with Lila, 12/10/10)

As Lila began interacting and discussing with other graduate students, she was finally able to discuss teaching ideas on a regular basis. Throughout her years teaching secondary schools, she found it difficult to find anyone to speak to about teaching. In graduate school she learned that discussions with other individuals were good “tools” for learning.

Lila reflected upon her experiences teaching first-year English at several colleges in Canada. In a blog response, she revealed that each college required a different approach to teaching composition. She stated, “Of the four Canadian universities I taught first-year English at, only one had a composition course that was required for all students. I taught that course twice.” Later, she explained, “At another Canadian university I taught a remedial comp and grammar course one summer.” She continued to add that another Canadian university required “writing instruction with reading and study of literature” requiring focus on literary analysis. Lila had several different practical experiences where each university required a different curriculum. She was exposed to teaching grammar, remedial composition and literary analysis. Since each college required a different approach to teaching college English, Lila was forced to reinvent her teaching each time (Interview with Lila, 12/10/10). Even today, Lila changed her teaching strategies every semester when teaching composition. She stated that she was “never satisfied” and she was “always learning.” She explained, “Every lesson is an experiment, and how the students respond to it is data that I’m collecting from that experiment, and hopefully I can learn from that” (Interview with Lila, 8/19/11).

Teaching first year composition (English 111/English 112). As a full-time literature

teacher, Lila is required to teach at least one section of first year composition per year at her university. Lila's curriculum guidelines for English 111 and 112 followed the department's requirements, although she allowed for some accommodations. For example, if students wrote a timed essay in class, Lila gave her students the opportunity to bring in outlines or brainstorm ideas on the day of the timed essay. She also taught students "how to write an exam essay." She stated, "I have adapted the writing process into steps that work very well under time-limited conditions," and added that she believed this preparation was important because at one time or another students would encounter essay questions on exams in other courses, and she wanted to prepare them for this (Interview with Lila, 12/10/10).

Since Lila did not list her class or homework assignments on her syllabus, she provided handouts to her students when necessary. She provided handouts for every essay assigned in or out of class and for in-class group work, including writing workshops.

She placed a rubric on ANGEL for the students to review throughout the semester as they worked through the writing process of each essay assignment. She also placed a calendar on ANGEL for students to remain on track for scheduled assignments.

Developing curriculum in first year composition. The English department, housed in the postsecondary teaching institution where Lila now teaches, mandated a specific number of essays for both sections of first year composition which must be written and assessed. The department also mandated a handbook to be used in both sections of first year composition. This department also mandated that a specific number of essays must be written in class (four), whereas the rest of the essays may be written outside of class and brought to class when completed. For the final exam, students were required to write an in-class, timed essay.

Teaching approaches in first year composition. In English 111/112, Lila required

textbooks, including *A Writer's Reference*, *Dialogues: An Argument Rhetoric and Reader*, and *Successful College Writing*, for students to use in her first year composition courses (Appendices Q, R). Students followed the traditional rhetorical modes as modeled by *Successful College Writing* in English 111. However, Lila generally allowed students to pick their own topics when writing essays, even though she supplied topics and ideas. She also demonstrated “brainstorming strategies” for her students in order to “teach them different ways to find topics” (Interview with Lila, 8/19/11).

Lila believed that it was important for students to see different examples of written text as “writing models” which helped illustrate approaches to and mechanics for writing (Interview with Lila, 12/10/10). Therefore, she often provided an essay or article written by a professional writer and required students to locate the thesis or use of anecdotes in the opening paragraph. She tried “encouraging them [students] to think about anecdotes as ways of introducing a topic as a hook at the beginning of an essay” (Interview with Lila, 8/19/11). She oftentimes repeated this lesson for them, but she claimed that once students learned to do this, then they were pleased with the final product because they learned a new technique for writing.

Lila's approaches to teaching composition also included group work, discussions and in-class writings. She felt that it was very important for students “to get to know each other” (Interview with Lila, 8/19/11). She placed them in small groups or in pairs to discuss readings or to do in-class peer review. She made sure to structure these lessons so that students stayed on track and were productive. She explained, “For every essay that they write for me, we have a writing workshop and they have a whole class and they work in pairs, and there's a handout that they follow and it's very similar for each one but it references both the effective e rubric and the specific requirements for that essay” (Interview with Lila, 12/10/10). Lila assigned specific steps

for students to follow in order to complete every essay assignment. Lila stated her reasons for her methodology for teaching composition:

...my reasons are writing is a process, writing is discovery. You can't be a good writer unless you're a good thinker...you can't just be thinking about ideas, you have to be thinking about language, because language is your tool. And the other guiding principle that is really important to me as a teacher is that we bring our whole selves to the writing experience, the writing activity, and that's why when I teach the writing process, I always talk about the feelings that you're likely to have at different stages of the process...

Understanding the anxieties, the insecurities, the 'a-ha' moments, the kinds of things that can happen to us during that process is really important to explain [to students].

(Interview with Lila, 8/19/11).

Assessing students in first year composition. Lila's plan of assessment in English 111 (first section of first year composition) and in English 112 (second section of first year composition) was focused on essays (Appendices Q, R). Only ten percent of the course assessment was based on homework and participation.

Over the years, Lila "adapted/developed" her own rubric for assessment. She explained that she often tried "to tie [her] lectures and activities to the rubric when [she could]," and she also tied the "peer review guidelines to the rubric" (Blog post by Lila, 8/7/11). She did this in order to familiarize her students with what she was specifically expecting them to do in their essays. She also claimed that the use of the rubric provided "clear criteria by which to assess a paper," and it helped her to "feel confident" about assigning grade which were "fair and defensible" (Blog post by Lila, 8/7/11).

Lila's grading rubric focused 90% on the product and 10% on the process. However, she

made a note at the bottom of her rubric that if no draft work, including prewriting, drafts, revisions or edits was submitted along with the completed essay, then the student would not receive a grade for the essay (Artifact, Classroom Handout, 2011). Therefore, process became a major factor of the writing assignment.

Lila made a reference to her grading process, implying that she graded her students essays in “pencil” or “red ink,” along with using her rubric in order to give feedback (Interview with Lila, 12/10/10).

Lila mentioned later that if she found serious grammatical errors, particularly if a student kept making the same mistakes over and over, she would explain ways to fix those issues in “one-on-one conferences” (Interview with Lila, 12/10/10). The current university “has a list of what they consider major errors and that [teachers] are supposed to penalize far more than others,” revealing that even the English department within the university values traditional forms of assessment (Connors, 1997). Even though Lila was familiar with process theorists (Peter Elbow, Janet Emig, Donald Murray), when assessing students papers, she placed more emphasis on the final product than giving value for the writing process (Appendices Q,R).

Lila also commented that she empathized with her English language learners because she had experiences learning how to speak and to write other languages. However, when it came to assessing her students, she stated, “What I’ve learned can help me on a human level, but it doesn’t change how I grade” (Interview with Lila, 12/10/10). She also revealed:

...language learners have more trouble with verb tenses and those are considered serious errors and it will affect their grade but only fifteen percent of the grade on the paper comes from mechanics: spelling, punctuation, [and] grammar. And I do have to grade. I feel it’s my job to grade every paper’s mechanics the same way. (Interview with Lila,

12/10/10)

During one interview Lila said she has read some composition theory, but it is clear that she has read little theory regarding second language writers (Casanave, 2007; Ferris, 1999; Harklau, Siegal & Losey, 1999; Silva & Matsuda, 2001) because she holds high expectations for language learners just as native writers, even though a language barrier exists.

For her first year composition courses, Lila made all of her student essays “high stakes” assignments, particularly the “research essay” in her English 112 course (Appendix R). However, she dropped one of the lowest essay scores, but she did not reveal her purpose for this.

Teacher’s expectations of students as writers in first year composition. There were several lessons which Lila expected her students to learn by the time they exited her classroom. First, she wants her students to feel comfortable writing more than five paragraphs in an essay (breaking a habit learned in high schools). Second, she wanted them to learn the importance of brainstorming and writing down ideas. Third, she expected them to learn how to spell and not to rely upon mechanical devices to correct spelling. Fourth, she expected her students to invest themselves in their writing by making each writing project personal. Finally, she expected her students to learn, and to take the time, to proofread and revise their papers, producing multiple drafts (Blog post by Lila, 6/12/11).

Lila’s expectations as an English teacher in high school highly influenced her methodology for teaching first year composition. She combined literature, grammar and writing in order to teach first year composition.

Teaching literature. Lila was hired at her institution to teach medieval literature. When I asked her how she approached teaching her literature courses, I wanted to know if this approach was similar or different to her approach to teaching composition. She chose to focus her response

on her sophomore World Literature courses. The following was her response:

I get really upset whenever I hear someone treating the teaching of writing and the teaching of literature as two completely different professions. My experience as a reader, thinker, and writer--both creative and scholarly--and my experience as a teacher tells me that they are two aspects of the same profession. If we are teaching writing well, we are teaching students to be better readers of their own work and of others' work. We are also teaching them to recognize, understand, demonstrate knowledge of the conventions of various genres of writing. This same careful reading and knowledge of craft and genre should be central to a literature course as well. (Email response from Lila, 6/1/11)

Even in her literature classes, she required writings, generally literary analyses of some sort, either as paragraph responses in her unit tests or as a separate paper. Therefore, even in her literature courses she required careful readings and written analyses. She further explained:

In every course I teach, I am a writing teacher. A lot of my students resist my approach because they want me to just teach content and context: help them understand the characters, help them understand the plot, help them understand the time period...to think about literature, how to ask appropriate questions about literature, how to write about literature: that's what they need me for. (Email response from Lila, 3/1/12)

Lila believed that writing should not cease with first year composition courses, but that writing should be incorporated in all English courses.

Student knowledge. Lila got to know her students on a more personal level outside of the classroom. In a blog response, Lila revealed that she was “Facebook friends with some students” (Blog post by Lila, 6/12/11). She believed that this was a good way to get to know her students. She also stated that because her institution required every teacher of composition to

meet with his/her students at least once during the semester, then she required her students to come to one conference. However, she encouraged students to come more often (Interview with Lila, 12/10/10).

Lila explained that she acquired knowledge of her students primarily through their writing. She stated, “I learn a lot about my students from their assignments: who is your role model, and why? Things like that” (Blog post by Lila, 6/12/11). She acknowledged that since writing was personal, students revealed portions of themselves. She stated, “In writing, much more than in some other subjects, the whole person is engaged: memories, neuroses, distractions, hopes, fears, dreams, anxieties, hobbies, etc., etc.” (Blog post by Lila, 6/12/11). Through students’ discussions and writings, Lila became aware of the diverse student body which encompassed her first year composition classrooms. She recognized “a wide range of attitudes towards language, towards reading, [and] towards writing” as well as “a huge range of majors” (Interview with Lila, 8/19/11). She also recognized diversity in terms of gender, age, race, background, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, “everything.” Lila worked hard structuring her assignments and her courses in a way that students would be able to “find an opportunity to explore [their] experiences and [their] values, things that are important to [them]” (Interview with Lila, 8/19/11).

University support. Lila commented that there should be more university or departmental support for training or instructing literature teachers to teach composition. She believed that instructors who were trained to teach literature were able to teach composition, but she also believed that more support would be helpful. She stated:

[The university where she works] does not have a budget to hire enough full-time experienced instructors of composition, so [the university] fills those classes with people

who have to learn on the job, and I was one of those people once. And these people do a good job and every time they teach a class they do an even better job. But I think they can get there faster and less painfully if there was more support. (Interview with Lila, 8/19/11)

At this particular university, there was no support system as in the previous universities discussed. There were no “beginning of the semester” meetings for first year composition instructors; there was no web site designed particularly for first year composition teachers, and there was no First Year Composition Director to turn to for assistance.

Professional development. At the time of this study, Lila was at the last stages of getting a book published. In a blog response, she wrote:

Working on my own writing has also kept me honest in terms of what a struggle writing can sometimes be, and this honesty makes me a much more helpful (and compassionate) instructor. I’m still learning how to write, because I’m still writing. This active engagement with the craft is essential to my success in the classroom and to my ongoing motivation to improve. This looking inward changes the way I look at my students, and it is what keeps me reaching out to others for knowledge, insight, and advice. (Blog post by Lila, 8/7/11)

Because Lila was still actively writing, she claimed that her composing processes kept her grounded and aware of other writers’ struggles, particularly her students.

Continuous learning. One major concern of Lila’s career was teacher effectiveness. She recollected one particular concern, stating, “I don’t think [teachers] can really effectively teach a student how to write an essay when it has been ten years since [they] have written one because [they] forget” (Interview with Lila, 12/10/10). Because of this concern, Lila made it a point to

continue writing as a professional, in hopes that as her skills developed as a writer, her teaching would continue to develop as well.

Lila acknowledged it was particularly important as a teacher to keep open communication with her colleagues. She stated, “So much of my growth as a teacher, and my continuing ability to survive in this high-stress job has come and still does from conversations with colleagues” (Interview with Lila, 12/10/10). She also noted that it was vital in the teaching profession to be able to share ideas and brainstorm with colleagues. She also stated in a blog response that she would rather “talk to a colleague than turn to a book” for information regarding teaching. In a blog response, she wrote:

I can get a specific (and institutionally contextualized) answer to a specific question. I can feel listened to. I can bounce ideas and perceptions off of another person as I work towards understanding. I can hear somebody else’s story (usually highly relevant, because they work in the same place I do) about a similar experience, which makes me feel like I’m not alone as well as giving me something to think about and learn from... Sometimes I need both to talk and to listen to someone else talk as the two of us work together towards discovering insights and strategies that make sense in a particular situation. (Blog post by Lila, 6/12/11)

Since Lila taught at this particular university for five years, she felt comfortable seeking out other colleagues for advice. In her earlier years of teaching, this was not the case. At no time did she reveal that she sought out others for advice at other colleges where she taught, except for the graduate students from her doctoral program.

Also, Lila set aside time after every semester to reflect and “to make a few rough notes....stuff to think about” and “things to change” for the next semester (Interview with Lila,

8/19/11).

Interpretive analysis. Lila was another former high school teacher. However, her years and experiences as a writer influenced her pedagogy strongly over the years. As a writer and teacher, she was able to reflect on her own writing as she taught writing, thereby actively reflecting on the processes of writing and directing her students to do the same. While she brought directive pedagogies into her classroom, her content was generally always focused on the processes of writing.

One specific difference regarding her pedagogy was her disassociation from language learners. (She had been a language learner herself years ago in Canada.) Even though she recognized the difference in abilities language learners bring with them into the classroom, she believed that it was her job to hold them accountable for the same work as her native students. She acknowledged that she would help and offer extra conferences for language learners if they needed them, but she did not take additional actions to instruct them. She expected them, at the college level, to be capable to do the same work as native learners.

Amy Jo

Personal/educational experiences. Amy Jo (pseudonym) is the second participant from Southern Rural University. She is in her mid twenties and has lived in the south all her life. She has traveled throughout the United States, France, and Mexico for vacation. She minored in French, but speaks very little. She also took Spanish in high school but does not speak the language. Because she had no experience living in other countries and speaking other languages fluently, her knowledge of language learners and language acquisition is minimal.

She has only been teaching for three years, and she teaches as an adjunct at two postsecondary institutions. She teaches at both the 2-year and 4-year college levels. She teaches

first year English courses and Basic Writing courses at a local junior college, and she teaches first year composition and sophomore (World) literature at the same college where she studied her Bachelor's and Master's programs.

She earned her Bachelor's degree in English, but the only writing course she took during her undergraduate years was Advanced Composition. When she began her undergraduate degree, she exempted her first year composition courses and went straight into Honor's literature. Therefore, she had very little knowledge of what a first year composition course was like.

She earned a Master's degree in English with a concentration in British literature from the Restoration era to the present. While in her Master's program, she took one course, Instruction of Composition, generally taken by students pursuing secondary education degrees, which was constructed around teaching high school English.

Teaching background/experiences in composition. Amy Jo stated that she first began teaching immediately after she finished her Master's degree. She acknowledged the excitement she felt on her first day of teaching. In a blog response, she wrote:

I've always loved having a captive audience, so I wasn't particularly nervous on my first day of teaching. I had just finished my degree, and I was excited – and maybe a little bit cocky – to teach college classes at 23.... when many of my friends my age were still in college themselves. I never really felt that I wouldn't be able to teach my students what they needed to know, but when I found out that I'd be teaching [sic] First-Year Composition, I knew that I'd be doing just as much, if not more, studying than my students. Having just finished a degree specializing in British Lit: Restoration to the Present, I could talk my face off about Shelley and Shaw, but had no idea what even happened in a composition class. So, on my first day I was excited to stand before a

group of students and demand that they buy books and turn their cell phones off, but I was most certainly nervous about what would happen when I actually had to begin teaching them how to write... a skill that to me always came – dare I say? – naturally.

(Blog post by Amy Jo, 1/7/11)

From her response, Amy Jo was surprised that she was not solely assigned literature courses. She was not prepared to teach students how to write, and she knew that she would encounter struggles teaching composition.

She also remembered struggling to decide how to structure her courses and what to teach. Her first teaching experience was at a local junior college. Luckily, she had other instructors to rely on for help. In a blog response she wrote the following:

I feared making my first set of syllabi, but it actually turned out to be rather painless.

When I first found out I was to teach first year comp courses, the department chair gave me a neat little stack of the books I needed, overhead sheets, handouts, a grade book, and the standard syllabus for the course (including how many essays the students were required to write, which chapters of the book to emphasize, etc.). After looking over some other instructors' syllabi, I felt confident in the syllabus I put together. (Blog post by Amy Jo, 1/17/11)

Also, because she had just jumped from the role of a student to the role of a teacher, she knew that she would have to present herself as a confident teacher. The only way she knew how to teach was to imitate her own teachers. She revealed, "I began teaching immediately after graduating with my Master's and started teaching my classes in a similar manner to the way I'd recently been taught." She continued to add, "I didn't directly observe any other instructors, but I did, of course, ask questions about how to teach composition courses" (Blog post by Amy Jo,

6/20/11). Whereas Amy Jo did not have any personal experiences or practical experiences in composition classrooms, she felt it was necessary to ask what other instructors knew about teaching composition and how other instructors taught composition.

Beginning to teach immediately after finishing a literature degree, Amy Jo knew that she was going to need more than just a syllabus and a few handouts, so she relied on other ways to learn to teach writing: reading books, doing online research and talking to other writing teachers.

Before she began her first day of teaching writing, she began reading books. She remembered reading Mina Shaughnessy's, *Errors and Expectations* and *The St. Martin's Guide to Teaching Writing*. However, she divulged, "They seemed overwhelming to me at the time" because her earlier courses and instruction had focused more on works of literature, involving novels, plays, poetry, drama and literary theory (Blog post by Amy Jo, 2/7/11). Reading written works from composition theorists, teachers and researchers was not as comfortable to her. Today, she finds herself referring back to them on occasion when she seeks out knowledge.

She also used online research to get ideas for teaching writing. She read through the databases or she used an engine search via internet. She stated, "There are a ton of websites [sic] that are about 'How to Teach Writing.'" She revealed that this was a great way to view what other teachers did in their classes (Interview with Amy Jo, 1/20/11).

However, over the years she found that the most helpful advice came from talking to other teachers of writing. She stated, "A lot of it [learning to teach composition] is talking to other teachers and seeing what they've done that's been successful. My cousin is a writing teacher as well in Tennessee, and we talk all the time about things that we've done that worked and didn't work" (Interview with Amy Jo, 1/20/11). She later said that the reasons for talking to her fellow colleagues about her teaching was because she liked "to hear from [her] fellow

instructors about teaching methods” which worked for them, even if their methodology did not agree with her own. She also revealed that interacting and talking to colleagues about teaching made her “feel less alone” (Blog post by Amy Jo, 6/22/11). It was not that she felt lonely, but that she needed to hear that there were students in her fellow colleagues’ classes who acted in similar ways or responded in similar ways, as students in her own classes. In other words she was looking for “confirmation” that she was “doing it right” (Interview with Amy Jo, 8/17/11). She even relied on her office mates for learning. (interview with Amy Jo, 1/20/11). At times if she was curious about how a particular lesson was working in her classes, she asked her students for their input (Blog post by Amy Jo, 6/22/11).

Teaching first year composition (English 111/112). As noted by her syllabi (Appendices S, T) Amy Jo followed the guidelines provided by the English department of the teaching institution. She implemented the goals and objectives of the courses, required the mandated texts, and assessed the specific number of essays, all required by the institution.

Amy Jo used ANGEL frequently to post assignments, grades and notifications. She even created discussion boards for class readings. Therefore, it was a requirement in her courses for her students to be familiar with this program.

Developing curriculum in first year composition. Amy Jo’s learning outcomes, or objectives, for the first year composition courses were prescribed by the institution. The students were expected to complete and know several course objectives by the end of each semester, as printed in the student reference handbook. It was mandatory that students produced six essays for the first section of first year composition and five essays and one research paper for the second section of first year composition. Three of these essays (for each section) were required by the institution to be written in class. There was also a handbook which was required for students to

purchase and use for both sections of first year composition.

Teaching approaches in first year composition. In English 111, Amy Jo assigned a total of six essays (as per the university's requirements). Her particular rhetorical mode choices included teaching narrative, comparison/contrast, descriptive, definition, and cause/effect essays (Blog post by Amy Jo, 6/20/11).

Amy Jo's methodology for teaching her composition courses included journal writing, drafting, writing, and revising essays, discussion boards, and peer review. She stated in a blog response that even though students had the choice to write three of their essays outside of class, she required students to work on "all of their essays in class....particularly their drafts" (Blog post by Amy Jo, 6/20/11). Students revised essays in class and out of class. When it came to peer review, she stated, "I use a handout with questions specific to the pattern of development" (Blog post by Amy Jo, 6/20/11). Because of the different stages and processes of writing which were required in her course, the structure of her composition courses closely resembled the process movement for teaching composition.

Amy Jo felt quite comfortable using technology in her classroom to teach first year composition. In fact, she relied heavily on this, instead of a textbook, as a tool to teach first year composition. She explained this in greater detail in a blog post:

I use as much technology in my classes as I can...I frequently show YouTube videos and films to students. And, I have them submit their essays in electronic drop boxes; I grade them and send them back electronically..... I also post handouts and links to helpful websites....and I open up discussion boards. I really don't know what I'd do without technology in the classroom. (Blog post by Amy Jo, 4/6/11)

Amy Jo believed that by using technology, such as showing videos in class, the students became

more engaged than reading a sample essay or giving a classroom lecture. For example, in one interview she described using video to instruct the class on constructing a narrative. She explained:

I love the television show ‘How I Met Your Mother’ and it’s wonderful for showing a narrative because there’s the introduction usually in the beginning, and then the story starts, and then you kind of, usually sums up the episode, directing the thesis statement, directing the point of the story. And I found that even with students who, even when you read an example, it’s not enough - a lot of times just to read an example of an essay. But watching it makes it more fun and more engaged in the storyline that way. (Interview with Amy Jo, 1/2011)

Amy Jo expected that using videos in her classroom helped all her students to connect and to understand how writing was constructed. However, she did not realize that this sort of visual and audio presentation may not be useful for non-native speakers. While she considered non-native speakers when she constructed assignments for peer-review, she did not recognize the struggles of the language barriers when presenting videos, which made me believe that she was not familiar with second language acquisition and learning theory (Saville-Troike, 2006).

She also revealed that through developing discussion boards, students who felt uncomfortable contributing to discussion in class would contribute to discussions online. She learned that this worked better particularly for the English language learners in her course, who did not feel comfortable speaking in class. She explained:

I know that a lot of students, even English speaking students don’t want to speak in class, but especially students who aren’t comfortable with their English definitely aren’t going to want to speak in class, so I do the discussion boards online, and I found that to

be a really useful way for all of the students to get their participation in... (Interview with Amy Jo, 1/20/11)

In this response, Amy Jo clearly recognized that non-native speakers felt uncomfortable speaking in a class with native speakers, but she did not reveal that she understood that non-native speakers needed more time for translating reading and writing assignments.

Amy Jo also incorporated at least two conferences (in both sections of first year composition) during the semester with her students. She stated that she met with the English 111 students around midterm and then again before the end of the semester. For her English 112 course, she met with each individual student while they were in the process of writing their research paper and then afterward to discuss the grade of the research paper (Interview with Amy Jo, 1/20/11) .

Amy Jo implemented peer review sessions into her course. She required this for every essay (except the final exam). She remarked, “I found that not only does [providing peer review sessions] help them improve their papers, [sic] when they swap papers and talk about them, but it makes them be less afraid of writing” (Interview with Amy Jo, 1/20/11). By implementing peer review sessions in the classroom and establishing peer groups in her class, Amy Jo believed this formed a sense of community. However, Amy Jo did not reveal how non-native speakers reacted in the classroom to this assignment. She only acknowledged how her native speakers reacted.

Assessing students in first year composition. Because it was a requirement of the institution for 75% of the assessment in first year composition courses to be based upon the actual writings (essays and research paper), Amy Jo followed these requirements. Five essays were worth 50% of the students total grade, while 25% was given to the final exam essay and/or research paper (Appendices S, T). She occasionally included grammar quizzes, and students

received a grade for turning in a journal at the end of the semester.

Assessing her students was a learning process for Amy Jo. She remembered one particular learning experience being somewhat “nerve-wracking.” She and other first year composition instructors, part-time and full-time faculty, spent a whole day assessing essays. She explained that each person received “the same three essays” and a rubric and had to assign a grade of “one, two, three or four.” After everyone had graded the essays, each person was to inform the others what grade it was given and why. She found this activity to be an important learning experience (Interview with Amy Jo, 8/17/11).

Ever since the beginning of her teaching career, Amy Jo gradually learned to assess her students. Even though she enjoyed reading students’ essays, she found it challenging to assess them. In a blog response, she wrote:

I love looking for grammatical errors. And, I’m growing to love correcting and commenting on the ‘big picture’ concerns of structure and ideas in their writing. I feel like it still takes me a longer-than-average time to grade. The time could range from 15 minutes to an hour per essay... when I began grading, I didn’t clearly break down the grade components for the students. I do that now, and it’s made a world of difference, both in how much more confident I feel in the grades I give and in how effectively the students revise... As a student, I most benefited from the grades that were clear and explained to me ways to improve...I write a lot – often several paragraphs – to my students explaining their grade and how to improve. (Blog post by Amy Jo, 6/22/11)

As she reflected back upon her personal experiences as a graduate student and remembered when her teachers applied a grade to a paper without any feedback, good or bad, it “irritated” her. For

this reason, she believed it was important to give extensive feedback to her students. Also, from her response, it was clear that she did not understand the significance between ‘high order’ concerns and ‘low order’ concerns earlier in her teaching career, but she slowly learned that there was more to grading an essay than simply looking for grammatical errors (Interview with Amy Jo, 1/20/11).

Teacher’s expectations of students as writers in first year composition. Amy Jo divulged that there were certain goals and objectives that she followed regarding the institutions’ expectations of her students’ accomplishments. However, she explained that she would rather her students feel more confident as writers than simply checking off a list of objectives. She further explained her reasoning by stating that she wanted her students to have “the confidence that they can write essays of which they are proud.” She also stated, “I have as my goal to teach my students to feel secure about their writing in the other classes they take, as well as into their careers” (Blog post by Amy Jo, 4/6/11).

Teaching literature. Amy Jo was given the opportunity to teach literature as well as composition. At the four-year institution, she taught Literature of the Western World. At the local junior college, she taught two novels. She discussed more specifically her approaches to teaching literature at the four year institution. She stated when she taught literature, she enjoyed in-class discussions, giving everyone the opportunity to discuss “what they felt about it.” She also claimed that she chose this method because that was similar to the way she “was taught in grad school” (Interview with Amy Jo, 8/17/11). She particularly liked to discuss some literary theory in her sophomore literature class. She stated that she relied on this when she taught literature. She explained that she liked using “the reader response theory” because she wanted hear her students’ opinions. She also enjoyed teaching her class how to think about other

“standpoints” including “feminist” and others, while she was teaching literature, realizing that there were different perspectives to every piece of literature, not just one (Interview with Amy Jo, 8/17/11).

Student knowledge. Over the years, Amy Jo had to adapt to the diverse learning abilities of her students in order to teach them. She claimed that the most surprising learning experience teaching composition was finding out “how different all of the students are” and how she had “to adapt to how different they are.” She stated that when she first began teaching she “expected everybody to love English and to be good in English” because she surrounded herself around people who loved English when she was a student (Interview with Amy Jo, 8/17/11). As noted, not only the different learning abilities of her students surprised her but her students attitudes surprised her even more.

In order to be able to teach her students effectively and to be able to adapt to each student’s needs, she tried several ways to get to know her students better. In a response to a blog prompt, Amy Jo replied that she believed getting to know her students was very “important.” She stated, “I find it easier to understand and to grade the essays if I know the writers.” She implemented “informal introduction discussion” on the first day of class where she asked students to share personal traits about themselves. She also acknowledged it was useful to ask students to add her “as a friend on Facebook.” She believed that many of her students were “more comfortable communicating through Facebook messages than [sic] through email” (Blog post by Amy Jo, 4/6/11). From Amy’s response, it was evident that she took an interest in her students, but what was missing from this statement was her acknowledgement and investigation of students’ past experiences with writing and their educational history.

University support. Amy Jo disclosed that the English department chairs at both

institutions were extremely helpful when she first began teaching. Both of them handed her teaching materials, which were beneficial. However, she did respond in a blog post that a training workshop of some sort would have been helpful. She replied, “I would’ve loved something like that before I first started teaching, and I know I would still benefit from a formal session with other composition teachers to discuss the things we do that are successful” (Blog post by Amy Jo, 4/6/11). As a novice teacher, Amy Jo sought out confirmation from other colleagues regarding methods of teaching composition and knowledge of instructing students.

Professional development. Amy Jo has not had the opportunity to think about any further professional development besides learning to teach her courses. She has not written or published any articles and has not attended any conferences. As an adjunct working two part-time jobs teaching at two different institutions (six courses total), she admitted that there was little time for anything else (Interview with Amy Jo, 1/20/11).

Continuous learning. Amy Jo’s continuous learning stemmed from several different sources. In a blog response, she wrote:

I’ve only taught for three years, and I’ve learned a lot, but I anticipate much more learning to come...[W]ith my first batch of students, I learned a lot of the composition terminology and structures for the patterns of development right along with them. (Almost all the papers I’d written during my five years of college were literary analyses.) I’ve also learned how to grade better and how to modify teaching methods and assignments for different students, individually and in classes as a whole. My biggest influence in how to improve my teaching really is my students. I unabashedly ask my students how I could improve my courses. And, I turn to my fellow instructors for advice and ideas. (Blog post by Amy Jo, 6/22/11)

Amy Jo's response disclosed that she relied on her colleagues for information regarding teaching writing. What was not evident was how much research was carried out on her own, including finding access to journals or books which focus on composition teaching.

Interpretive analysis. Out of all the participants, Amy Jo had the least experience teaching composition. Her stories revealed that she learned primarily from discussions with colleagues and students, experiences in the classroom, and texts of composition theory and teaching. As an extremely confident individual, she had no problem approaching other individuals with questions about teaching. However, she acknowledged that she still had more to learn about teaching composition.

She acknowledged that the most surprising aspect of teaching composition was student diversity. She found it challenging that some students enjoy writing, some do not; some students write well, some do not; and some students participate, and some do not. She believed that in order to be able to teach these diverse learners, then she needed to get to know them better. She was much more personable with her students than the other participants.

Summary

The previous narratives reveal these six participants construct knowledge through a variety of venues: from reflecting upon personal and practical experiences, teaching within the workplace, and instigating self-directed and self-regulated learning. As Connelly and Clandinin (2000) suggest, these teachers, through their own personal narratives, have revealed their own professional knowledge landscapes, reflecting upon the "professional contexts in which teachers' live" (p. 318). Through these professional knowledge landscapes we find that these participants have created knowledge for teaching composition within the contexts of their situated environments and through socially mediated constructions. The next chapter will reveal further

findings of this study, including how, what and why literature graduates/teachers construct knowledge for teaching first year composition courses.

CHAPTER FIVE

LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND EMERGING THEMES

The results of the data analysis are presented in this chapter and are related to the three specific research questions: 1) How do postsecondary English literature teachers come to know what it is that they need to accomplish in the first year composition courses? 2) How do postsecondary English literature teachers come to know how to teach the content needed in first year composition courses? 3) How and why do postsecondary English literature teachers seek out knowledge in order to teach first year composition?

This chapter reports on the findings of the study and recounts the research literature regarding teacher learning. How and what teachers learn to teach is based upon the experiences within specific environments, as noted by Johnson and Golombek (2002). Also, what knowledge teachers retain is socially constructed within these educational environments as suggested by McDiarmid and Clevenger-Bright (2008). By using the constant comparative method, I was able to examine the participants' theoretical frameworks for learning to teach composition.

When the participants began to teach first year composition, they were generally given specific goals and objectives to attain, mandated by the English department within each postsecondary institution. These goals and/or objectives are referred to within the course syllabus and are recorded in faculty and/or student handbooks, as well as posted on English department websites. They include teaching students in first year composition to develop critical thinking, reading, and writing skills, in the formats of essay and research writing. While the English departments generally informed each teacher of the goals and objectives, at no time did the department inform teachers how to accomplish the task. Therefore, structuring and formulating the curriculum of the course in order for students to reach these goals was the responsibility of the individual teacher. For rhetoric and composition graduates this task may

seem elementary, but for the majority of the literature graduates in this study, this task was staggering.

Participants' Formal Learning Experiences

One cannot assume that all postsecondary teachers of first year composition have received the same educational training before beginning to teach. Every graduate institution has different instructional or course requirements. The participants in this study were attending different graduate schools and experiencing different areas of study due to program requirements, selection of courses, and selection of professors. Therefore, what graduate students learn at each institution becomes influential, given the fact that students choose the optimal courses which are available to them. In other words, teaching institutions are more likely to offer more courses in one particular area of study while research institutions are more likely to offer a wider range of courses. This study revealed that literature graduates' personal experiences from graduate school played a role in influencing the types of teaching approaches used in their classrooms.

All the participants held graduate degrees in English with a concentration of literary studies. Two participants, Lila and Geoffrey, earned education degrees before completing their doctoral degrees in literature. Two teachers, Eliza and Kelly, had the opportunity to serve as teaching assistants while completing their graduate degrees: Eliza taught first year writing, while Kelly worked as a tutor in a writing center. The other two participants, Jessica and Amy Jo, began teaching first year composition directly after completing their Master's degrees.

While participants experienced different educational backgrounds, they felt as if none of their graduate courses thoroughly prepared them when they began teaching writing (Erklenz-Watts, Westbay & Lynd-Balta, 2006). Their graduate courses centered on the study of literature.

However, four of the participants revealed that they were required to take one writing pedagogy course while finishing their graduate degrees. Even though most participants had the opportunity to take at least one writing pedagogy course, they revealed that it was concentrated more on theoretical issues than practical issues and was “vague” and not useful. Smagorinsky and Whiting (1995) concur that when courses are heavily loaded by theory, little will be learned of practical issues. Only Kelly revealed that the writing pedagogy course she had taken was her “saving grace” when she began teaching writing.

Five participants admitted that more preparation and/or training was needed before beginning to effectively teach students how to write. Kelly even acknowledged that she felt “sorry” for her students because, as she stated, “I didn’t have a clue what I was doing.” The findings of this study concur with other studies in teacher research which acknowledge that what graduates learn in college does not necessarily prepare them for the subject matter they often teach, nor are they prepared for the pedagogical approaches needed to teach (Howey & Grossman, 1989; Ball & McDiarmid, 1990). Even Eliza who had obtained a teaching assistantship during her years as a graduate student felt she was not prepared or trained to teach first year composition. In fact, she remembers being handed a textbook for the course and “flying by the seat of my pants.” Like Eliza, the literature graduates in this study felt unprepared and found other venues of learning while “on the job” to fulfill the missing contextual components needed to successfully teach first year composition, described as “workplace learning” (Avalos, 2011; Eraut, 2004).

Participants’ Informal Learning Experiences

All the participants of this study concur that the majority of their learning to teach first year composition came from experiences outside of their graduate classrooms and within their

work environments. In other words, most of their learning came from the experiences acquired while teaching. This type of “situated learning” (Lave & Wenger, 1991) is referred to throughout literature as “work-based” or “workplace” learning (Eraut 2004; Eraut 2007; Raelin, 2008) which occurs purposefully and individually; it is self-regulated learning (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1998; Van Eekelen, Boshuizen & Vermunt, 2005) and/or self-directed learning (Knowles, 1975; Loyens, Magda & Rikers, 2008). These participants’ learning experiences while teaching composition concur with Lortie’s (1975) earlier study, which reveals teachers rely upon “trial and error” experiences, reflections on those experiences, and discussions with other teachers, within the educational environments where they are situated.

Before their first day of teaching first year composition, the participants all shared the same experience: they received directives from the English department within their institutions. The English department provided specific directives which the participants followed, including choosing textbooks, mandating objectives and goals for the course, requiring a set number of written assignments, and placing specific assessment values on written works. From that point on, the participants were responsible for building a curriculum which met these prescriptive directives. This study reveals how and what the participants learned (and continue to learn) through reflections, experiences, and discussions in order to construct effective teaching pedagogies and curricula in order to fulfill these directive and prescriptive requirements.

Participants’ Development of Teacher Knowledge

As discussed earlier in Chapter Two, in order to be an effective teacher, one must develop teacher knowledge. Teacher knowledge consists of an accumulation of 1) content knowledge, 2) pedagogical strategies, 3) student knowledge, including the social, economic and cultural significance, 4) curriculum, 5) educational goals and assessment, and finally the 6)

educational contexts. This knowledge was not inherent when the participants began their teaching careers. It was not learned in graduate school. It was not learned within the first year of teaching. It was learned over a significant amount of time through different venues. This study examines the participants' cognitive, social and experiential paths to developing teacher knowledge in order to teach first year composition effectively.

Reflective Learning (Cognitive and Metacognitive)

Russell, Munby, Spafford, and Johnston (1998) concur that by exploring teachers' stories of learning, "we better understand the role of the reflective process in learning the professional knowledge of teaching" (p. 88). This study revealed that reflection was an important aspect for learning to teach. Teachers generally reflect upon past experiences, both personal and practical, when beginning to teach. Most personal experiences which teachers reflected upon were those which occurred while they were students, participating in the classroom and observing their teachers, which influenced their approaches to teaching. The participants in the study said that they often reflected upon pedagogical practices or interactions with students after the incidents occurred and that most of their learning occurred in the classroom through practical experiences.

The personal experiences are generally those which participants had as graduate students in composition classrooms, reflecting upon what types of writing they constructed in those classrooms, types of activities they conducted in those classrooms, as well as methods of instruction teachers performed in the those classrooms. Most importantly, personal experiences influenced their teaching approaches. Jessica often reflected back upon her former honor's writing course which she had taken as an undergrad and implemented several teaching approaches from her former teacher. Geoffrey reflected on "a certain technique that a respected

teacher had used,” and he adopted it for his course. Lila admitted that when she first began teaching, she modeled her teaching approaches “on that of my favorite high school English teacher.” Even Amy Jo disclosed that she began teaching her courses by reflecting upon the pedagogical approaches she observed, and therefore began teaching her courses “in a similar manner.” Also, Amy Jo did not require her students to complete their essays and research papers in class because she remembered her brother’s traumatic experiences when forced to write papers in classrooms. When teachers begin teaching, Schoonmaker (2002) concurs that personal experience is the most influential upon their approaches to teaching.

Practical experiences are just as, if not more, influential when it comes to changing and adapting new approaches to teaching. All of the participants reflected on practical experiences as they learned to teach composition. Experiences derived from our sociocultural environments add to knowledge growth (Kolb, 1984; Lave & Wenger, 1991). Two of these participants experienced most of their learning in secondary educational institutions, while the other participants began their teaching careers in the postsecondary institutions. They all acquired most of their “on-the-job training” to teach writing at these institutions, but their learning had specific differences.

Eliza first began teaching as a teaching assistant (TA) in college while she was finishing her graduate program. She claimed that she “reinvented my composition class six times.” She did this in order to try to find “different teaching personas as well as different ways of teaching.” Her interviews revealed that because she did not have a strong support system in the beginning or other teachers to observe, she was unfamiliar with what teaching approaches worked and how to implement them effectively. She relied on her reflections of her practical experiences to teach her. Eliza also noted that her teaching approaches continue to change every semester partly due

to “reflecting on what should be better,” beginning “every semester thinking.” She revises and tweaks her curriculum to fit the students’ needs. She also illuminated that part of the “foundation” for teaching “is to be reflective, to, as accurately as possible, assess what worked and what didn’t.” Eliza’s learning processes concur with what Beard and Wilson (2006) refer to as experiential learning, combining changes to her curriculum based upon emotional and physical responses through reflections.

Some participants wait until the end of the semester reflect upon what approaches or techniques worked or did not work in the classroom. Kelly takes time “at the end of every semester” to assess her approaches to teaching for the following semester. She disclosed in an interview that the best time for her to assess what needs to be done for the following semester occurs at the end of every semester. She stated that as she looked over her students’ final papers, “that would inform how I would try to approach the following semester.” Lila also disclosed that she finds time after every semester “to make a few rough notes” regarding “things to change” for the next semester. Kelly and Lila’s reflective processes concur with Schon’s (1987) theory of reflection-on-action, following the pattern of construction as explained by Yancey (1998) in that reflection follows a particular mold of “*looking forward* to goals” as well as “*casting backward* to see” what has occurred in hopes of producing more effective results for teaching.

Experiential Learning

Teachers’ practical experiences played a major part in the development of learning which occurred through the daily applications of teaching. Teachers’ practical knowledge is derived from the actions and/or interactions of the classroom environment, including the “practical dilemmas teachers encounter in carrying out purposeful action” (Munby, Russell & Martin, 2001, p. 880). “Trial-and-error” experiences are ways teachers learn to teach. This study revealed

that all of the participants learned to teach through practical experiences by way of trial and error, a kind of experiential learning accompanied by reflection.

Kelly's trial-and-error experiences occurred from her very first semester of teaching. She explained that most of her graduate literature courses were taught through lecture, discussion, and writing. Therefore, when she first began teaching, her methods were similar: read a piece of literature, talk about it, then write a paper on it. It was not until she saw her students' "glazed eyes" that she knew that she would need to include her students in the discussion and provide more classroom interactions in order to get them to learn. She even learned to assess her students through "many trial-and-error tactics" because she had no previous training or formal instruction in writing evaluation.

Jessica struggled through "much trial and error" teaching composition her first year, and it took several experiences to effectively implement the use of peer review in her curriculum. She also revealed that she does "trial and error to find what works" within her classroom. Since Jessica's writing pedagogy course in graduate school was taught by a grammarian, and she had no mentor or guide during her first year of teaching, then assimilating knowledge for teaching came primarily through experiential learning.

Lila confessed that "every lesson is an experiment, and how students respond to it is data." Lila views every classroom as an opportunity for learning new effective approaches to teaching.

Most of Eliza's graduate teaching was nothing more than trial and error. One specific incident very early in her teaching career that she remembered was trying to implement a "workshop model" into one of her classrooms, where students were to exchange papers and give feedback. She stated, "While my students were cooperative, they had no idea what to tell each

other about their papers.” Eliza found out from this experience that students needed to be “directed,” and “Part of my trial-and-error process was that I was trying something I knew nothing about...It took me several more years to figure out how to blend the [Peter] Elbow model with more support and scaffolding.” While Eliza tried to be more of a facilitator in her earlier teaching, which was influenced by readings of “process-oriented” writers (Murray, 1985; Elbow, 1998) and discussions with composition graduates, she soon found that she needed to be more directive by instigating more authority over her classroom.

Geoffrey taught college level composition for approximately twenty-four years. One of his most memorable trial-and-error experiences occurred when he began implementing peer review into his coursework. He gave out a sheet to each student with specific questions to be answered regarding a student’s essay. Because students felt uncomfortable commenting on their peers’ works, he quickly found that he did not get the responses which he had anticipated. He decided to use another method in order to get students to respond. The next time, he assigned numbers to each student and told the students to place the numbers on their papers for identification instead of their names. For the next peer review session, the responses were more explicit because of the writer’s anonymity.

Amy Jo has only been teaching for three years, but she revealed changes from her first semesters of teaching. One memorable experience was learning that certain students, particularly English language learners, were not “comfortable” speaking in class. Therefore, she designed online discussion boards so that students could discuss the readings and acquire points for participation. She also acknowledged that assessing students was difficult because, as a student, she did not receive specific feedback on her written works. She explained that her teachers would return her papers with a only a grade and no explanation for the grade that was given. In the

beginning of her teaching career, she assessed her students' papers as her teachers assessed her; she provided a grade with no feedback. It was only after her students complained that she learned that her approach was not effective or helpful. She had to learn to give specific feedback to her students.

The participants' "trial-and-error" teaching experiences contributed to the construction of pedagogical knowledge (Shulman, 1987, 1988). When each participant began implementing methods for teaching and realized that students were not responding as expected or that something was lacking in their pedagogy, they focused on making changes to their pedagogy. These failed experiments caused participants to question their approach, thereby compelling them to change pedagogies (Schwebel & Raph, 1973). The participants' narratives conclude that their learning processes were experiential, consisting of "concrete" experiences which caused them to "reflect" and "conceptualize" what should be changed, thereby generating new "experiments" in the classroom (Kolb, 1984, p. 42).

Socio-Cognitive Learning

Every participant in this study agreed that the most beneficial learning source when learning to teach is conversing with other teachers of writing. When first starting out, the participants often found themselves seeking out advice from other writing teachers. When Eliza began teaching first year composition as a graduate student, she discussed ideas with her "office mates," other graduate students reading composition theory who suggested teaching approaches. Kelly remembers that the most influential colleague to whom she would turn to was also a former teacher, and the "sole rhet/comp person" in the English department. Amy Jo found that learning to teach first year composition was highly influenced by talking to other teachers of writing. As she stated in one interview, "A lot of it [learning to teach composition] is talking to

other teachers and seeing what they've done that's been successful." Proefriedt (1994) concurs that teacher knowledge is highly influenced and constructed via "informal friendship structures" whereas teachers allocate their experiences to one another, thereby receiving mutual support (p.24).

McCormack and Kennelly (2011) argue that "reflective conversations seem to have disappeared" (p. 515), thereby suggesting that teachers are not reflecting or discussing teaching experiences with others in order to construct meaning and knowledge for teaching. However, this study revealed that reflective conversations are indeed occurring, though not necessarily through discussion groups but by individual conversations with "trusted friends" and/or colleagues (Shaw, belcastro & Thiessen, 2002, p. 29). No matter how many years of teaching the participants have acquired, every participant in this study told of discussions with colleagues and peers that are important for the teaching profession (Cohen, 2010). Eliza believes that teachers "learn most readily by interacting with peers," and further acknowledges that before she looks for particular research on a subject, she will "most likely discuss that research with a colleague" before putting it into practice. Russell, Munby, Spafford, and Johnston (1998) concur that "The presence of an interested, non-evaluative colleague appears to stimulate many teachers to reframe their interpretations of classroom events and to become more aware of how they learn from their experiences of teaching" (p. 88).

Not only do conversations with colleagues assist with the construction of "understanding" and "learning," but as Vygotsky (1986) claims, there is a "need of communication during work" (p. 7). Amy Jo explained that she still confers with colleagues so that it makes her "feel less alone." Lila acknowledges that she would rather turn to a colleague than a book for answers because colleagues are situated within the same environment and are

having “similar” experiences. Therefore when she listens to other colleagues who are experiencing similar situations, she feels like she is “not alone” and generates a mediation of like minds, generating a sociocultural learning environment.

Participants’ Teacher Knowledge for First Year Composition

The participants all began their teaching careers with little to no knowledge of how to teach composition. Kelly said that beginning to teach composition for the first time was like “parenting.” Reading books may give a new parent an idea of what to expect, but no one can ever be prepared for what actually happens. It is similar when beginning to teach. A teacher can read as many books on teaching as possible, but once that teacher enters the classroom, it is the real life “day-to-day” experiences that matter. New teachers have several obstacles to overcome once they are assigned their first class. First, they need to learn the content and subject matter of the course. Next, they need to learn to make a syllabus and to devise and follow a curriculum. Finally, they need to learn about their students in order to teach and to assess them effectively.

Developing Curricular Knowledge for First Year Composition

Building an effective curriculum for teaching a specific subject takes time, but for teachers of first year composition, most of the curriculum is predetermined. Teachers are sometimes given sample syllabi, or they borrow sample syllabi to use as a template. These generally contain a directed set of goals, objectives and a choice of textbooks for the course. The goals and objectives require students to be able to read, think and write critically in the forms of essays and research papers. Teachers then structure the course curriculum in order for students to attain these goals. This study revealed how graduate/teachers of literature come to know what it is that they need to teach first year composition as well as how they develop and structure the course in order to attain the final results. The study also revealed what literature

graduates/teachers do not know when beginning to teach.

The participants each discussed ways they learned to develop curriculum for their first year composition courses. In this study, building a curriculum in order to instruct students effectively encompassed a number of trial-and-error experiences, conferences with colleagues and students, and hours of researching, thinking and reflection.

To investigate how to put together a curriculum, Eliza, who has been teaching for over twenty years, used trial and error, accompanied by reflection, to try to figure out what worked best. For her, it took “repetitive experience” to learn what she needed to do to structure the first year composition class in order to accomplish the final outcomes. Over the years she has learned that she no longer needs to rely on a textbook to teach the course. She structured her course after a “workshop model,” scheduling more time for students to work together in the classroom and less time on lecturing. Her curriculum is structured as the postsecondary institution directs, but her approaches to attain those directives have developed over time, and she disclosed that her “composition class is always evolving.” She focuses more on the “writing process” than on specific content.

Kelly has taught first year composition for approximately seven years. When she began developing her curriculum, she did not feel comfortable going to anyone for help. Therefore, she relied on “resources” from former classes including her coursework and samples of texts distributed by booksellers. Later, when Kelly taught at another institution, she relied on a colleague who specialized in rhetoric and composition, seeking out assignments or a syllabus, in order to construct a format for her class.

Kelly’s curriculum development is heavily influenced from her experience working in writing centers. Writing centers are known for their non-threatening environments, where

authority is limited to the students or clients, rather than the tutors or writing assistants (Healy, 1995). Tutors engage in one-on-one conferences with students, creating opportunities for inexperienced writers to discuss their writing with more experienced writers (Gillespie, Hughes & Kail, 2007). Kelly's experiences working in writing centers generated situated learning in a "teacher-learning environment" (Lerner, 2007), thereby greatly influencing her methods of teaching composition, by developing a dialogic, collaborative, process-oriented classroom which in turn creates a social construction of knowledge for students by way of language (Bruffee, 1986).

To develop her curriculum, Jessica, who has been teaching at the same institution as Kelly for eight years, relied on a number of sources. Jessica began teaching first year composition three months after finishing her graduate program. She specifically remembered "expressing concerns about not knowing how to teach a class or grade or create assignments." Her English department provided samples of syllabi, but she stated that she "found it difficult to find anyone who would go through it step-by-step with me." She eventually found other first year composition teachers to whom she could talk to who were teaching first year composition. She also began reading anything about "how to run a classroom." She talked to the students to get "an idea from them" about what was working in the classroom. Over the years, Jessica has learned to implement process approaches to teaching, allowing her students to attain some authority in the classroom by choosing the readings in her course as well as to picking their own topics for their writing assignments (Murray, 1997). She also uses group work and peer review in order to establish a collaborative environment in her classrooms. She feels that it is important for the students in her class to get to know one another in order to work together, so she assigns as many group activities as possible.

Geoffrey began teaching English in secondary schools, for the “ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth grades.” Since Geoffrey was the only participant who was assigned a mentor, much of his learning was constructed during his practice teaching. He stated that the “cooperating teacher” had taught him about “90%” of what he needed in order to teach his first class. Because of his literature background, Geoffrey admitted that he would “use literature as a vehicle to teach composition.” He still uses this method today through a required reader, but he has also developed other teaching materials which are accompanied by directive methods of instruction. He continues to use these same teaching materials in his first year composition courses. Geoffrey exhibits a pedagogy based on constructivist theory (Sullivan, 2009), wherein he continues to use his methods of teaching in college as in high school, the only difference is the materials have been slightly re-constructed in order to adhere to collegial standards.

Geoffrey’s first year composition courses today are more “directive” than “facilitative” (Berghmans, Druine, Dochy & Struyven, 2012; Dwyer, 2005; McKeachie, Yi-Guang, Moffet & Daugherty, 1978). He states his justification for his teaching approaches: “I usually approach teaching a topic/skill in the manner that I had wished teachers had used with me...When I teach freshman composition, I always begin with the assumption that they do not know anything about writing except for the English language.” Geoffrey assumes that students who enter his classroom are familiar with formal standard English, although he does spend time reviewing grammar structures in order for students to construct “clear, concise, organized, developed thoughts.” He uses what he calls “a systematic approach to formal writing, using graphic organizers, illustrations of graphic organizers, and sample essays.” He often gives lectures from an overhead projector and assigns worksheets. Geoffrey’s “formulaic” methods resemble that of current-traditionalists (Crowley, 1985). The use of his “bubble sheet” illustrates a “building

block” approach to writing essays. After days of instructing his class to develop topic sentences, he moves forward to the “bubble sheets” where the students begin constructing the thesis and topic sentences, and slowly add sentences to “fill in” the rest of the essay. Geoffrey’s focus is on structuring writing, making sure sentences are complete and precise, rather than allowing students to experiment and develop their writing through other forms, including multiple drafts (Murray, 1997).

Lila also began teaching English in secondary schools. Unlike Geoffrey, Lila was not part of preservice program before she began teaching. She states that her “learning curve was much steeper” in her first few years of teaching high school. She had to “go out and find people to learn from.” Therefore, at the beginning of her teaching career, most of her knowledge of the curriculum developed from whatever textbook was assigned to the course (Welch, 2009). Lila also began co-teaching and observing other teachers later on in her career. By the time she reached college level composition courses, she had established a set curriculum in Canada. When she reached the United States, she implemented her past experiences and teaching approaches from her years of teaching English in the secondary school systems into her first year composition curriculum. Her approaches to teaching include group work, discussions, and in-class writing. She believes strongly in writing workshops in order for students to stay on track and to be productive. She strongly believes that “writing is a process” and that “writing is discovery.” Even though Lila incorporates many of the process-oriented methods into her course, she also relies on current-traditional rhetoric, which is revealed by the composition textbook she uses for her courses (Crowley, 1997).

Like Eliza, Lila also includes literary texts as resources for teaching writing. She strongly believes that reading leads to great writing and one cannot exist without the other. She does not

view the “teaching of writing and the teaching of literature as two completely different professions.” Therefore, in order to produce better writers, Lila feels she must also produce better readers “of their own work and of others’ work.” During a classroom observation, while giving a lecture and demonstration on audience, she discussed the importance of knowing the audience before beginning to write. Beach and Liebman-Kleine (1986) refer to this as a “model of the adoption process,” where a “schemata” exists among “audience attributes, intended effects” and “ rhetorical strategies” (p. 65). In this lesson, she instructed her students to keep this “schemata” in mind as they began writing their essays, thereby placing the reader in the forethought of the writer. By implementing rhetoric and readings into her composition course, she believes students will be able to recognize this “schemata” and will produce better writing.

Amy Jo follows the objectives set forth by her institution, but because she is still a novice to the teaching profession and still experimenting, she implements new approaches to teaching writing every semester. As stated earlier, she heavily relies on technology to use as a tool for teaching writing because she believes that it keeps the students “engaged” and interested. Her curriculum focuses on keeping her students engaged through discussion boards and peer review. She also prefers her students to “work on all of their essays in class....particularly their drafts.” However, she provides a “drop box” on ANGEL so that students can upload their final essays electronically. She grades the essays and sends them back, with comments, to students electronically.

Developing Content and Subject Matter Knowledge in First Year Composition

When I first began this study, I did not realize that the ambiguity of the definition of the word “content” would be challenging. For some composition researchers, the meaning of “content” within a composition course focuses simply upon the texts which are written in class,

i.e., “student texts” (Bishop, 1993). For others, the content of the composition classroom includes all those materials used to teach the composition classroom: the textbook, student or professional essays, and other literary materials, as revealed by several participants of this study. In fact, several of the participants said that they would not know how to teach a composition course without materials or supplemental texts. The participants did not reveal any clear meaning of “content” other than the materials used to teach composition, including textbooks, worksheets, handouts, literary works and videos, and none of them categorized students’ texts as content.

The subject matter of composition, as described by the participants, was learned through multiple venues, the first, most influential being textbooks. Since most of the participants knew very little about what teaching first year composition entailed, the assigned textbook for the course was their first “tool” for learning. As literature graduates, the participants knew how to write essays and literary analyses, but teaching writing to others was difficult. Most composition textbooks supplied that missing knowledge, the general content knowledge needed to teach composition. Need to know how to explain audience and purpose? Need to describe the different genres and rhetorical strategies to students in the classroom? Need to explain to students how to construct ideas for writing? The answers to all these questions can generally be found in textbooks. Textbooks suggest all sorts of practical approaches to writing as well as suggest what content is needed for teaching composition. Over time, the participants have used 1) rhetorics, which focus on “language, style, invention, discourse, grammar and genres of writing,” 2) readers, which provide “cultural materials” for reading, and 3) composition textbooks, which are generally “rooted in rhetorical traditions” focusing on composition as a subject (Carr, Carr & Schultz, 2005, pp. 112-113). The participants also require handbooks when teaching research,

because they contain the required formats needed for research papers.

Four of the participants, Eliza, Kelly, Jessica, and Amy Jo claimed that they knew nothing about teaching writing when they first began teaching first year composition. They were handed textbooks and set out to teach composition. They acquired pedagogical content knowledge primarily from the textbook. Because none of these participants had comprehensive training in composition teaching, the content and pedagogical knowledge needed to teach composition came primarily from the textbooks used in their composition courses. Welch (2009) argues that “textbooks are instructional material more [sic] for the writing teacher than for the writing student” (p. 761). In fact, the participants’ narratives revealed that during their first years of teaching composition, the institutions did little to prepare them. Eliza claimed that the university handed her the textbook and “set me free.” Eliza’s earliest years teaching composition as a graduate student relied on information from the textbook and advice from composition graduate students. Kelly stated that the English department gave her a schedule, presented her with textbook and syllabi options, and left her with the feeling that she was “not supposed to ask questions.” She felt as if the department expected her to learn everything on her own. As far as constructing her curriculum and her syllabus, she stated, “I relied heavily on the textbook for everything.” Amy Jo revealed that when she first began teaching first year composition, she would be “doing just as much, if not more, studying than my students.” Therefore, she relied predominantly on the content the textbook provided and found outside readings which complemented the textbook in order to teach composition. Even Jessica admitted that her learning relied upon “reading things from different handbooks.” Jessica’s statement acknowledges that she was searching different textbooks for ideas and methods to teach composition because she had no idea where to begin or what to incorporate into her classroom.

She did not rely on one specific textbook to incorporate into her classroom in her earlier year of teaching, nor does she rely on one specific textbook today.

Today, Kelly and Jessica still rely on textbooks. Both Kelly and Jessica, who teach at the same university, focus on critical writing and research for the first section of their first year composition course rather than traditional rhetorical modes. Kelly chooses to use a reader, a handbook and a template guide for synthesizing research into a paper (Appendix K), while Jessica chooses to use a rhetoric, which concentrates on the instruction of summary, synthesis, analysis and critique, as well as a handbook and a reader (Appendix M). For the second section of first year composition, Kelly uses an anthology of literature and a handbook (Appendix L) while Jessica chooses to use a reader and a handbook (Appendix N). Even though Kelly has had much more training in composition and rhetoric, both participants incorporate and rely on numerous readings within their courses for discussion and writing largely due to the fact that the institution where they teach requires some argumentative writing in the first section of composition and all literary analysis in the second section. Their approaches to teaching composition are heavily influenced by their department.

Eliza used to rely on a composition/rhetoric text, which focused on traditional rhetorical modes, a handbook and a novel for the first section of first year composition (Appendix I). However, she has not taught this course in over ten years. She has been assigned the second section of first year composition for many years. For this course, focused primarily on research writing, she relies only on a handbook and outside readings, generally non-fiction, changing it from semester to semester (Appendix J). She uses these readings as “models” but does not rely on them for the focus of her teaching. Most of her focus is teaching her students to do research and incorporating information into their papers. She has no desire to use textbooks for this course

any longer. She has finally learned to incorporate in-class workshops into her writing pedagogy throughout her extensive years of teaching to provide a collaborative writing environment where she can facilitate and help her students when they need her.

Amy Jo no longer uses any composition/rhetoric textbooks or readers for her classroom, even though she has only been teaching for approximately three years. In the beginning of her teaching career, she relied heavily on textbooks because Amy Jo had not experienced a composition classroom. As an undergraduate and a graduate, she never took composition courses. In her first year of teaching, she relied on textbooks her department had given her. Today her teaching materials and methods have changed more than any other participant. She chooses not to use a textbook today, but she still uses a handbook as required by the institution where she teaches. She relies heavily on technology for teaching writing. She uses videos and films to facilitate class discussion and topics for writing, instead of relying on readers. She also uses technology to design discussion boards for peer review, and she requires students to upload papers into electronic drop boxes so that she can grade and send the papers back electronically. Since Amy Jo is much younger than all the other participants, she feels more comfortable with technology and chooses to use this over using textbooks in her course. She also believes that students respond better and become more engaged when technology is used.

Lila and Geoffrey both began teaching writing in secondary schools. Both of them began teaching with textbooks, and both of them still rely heavily on textbooks today. Lila uses the textbooks where she teaches, including a composition/rhetoric and handbook for the first section of composition and a rhetoric/reader and handbook for the second section of composition (Appendices Q, R). Geoffrey chooses to use a composition textbook, a reader and a handbook for the first section of composition, and a reader and a handbook for the second section of

composition (Appendices O, P). Both Lila and Geoffrey continue to rely on the traditional rhetorical modes of writing in the first section of composition, referred to as EN 111 and EN 102 respectively, and they both teach literary analysis in the second sections of composition, EN 112 and EN 102 respectively. Lila and Geoffrey's use of textbooks is influenced by the department within their institution. For Lila, since she has only been teaching at her institution for approximately five years, and she is a full-time professor, she feels that she is bound to teach from whatever book the department requires. Geoffrey is an adjunct and still requires his students to buy textbooks, but he primarily uses readers for discussion and writing topics and handouts, which he has created, for teaching writing. Geoffrey believes that his handouts are necessary tools to teach students how to write for college courses.

Over time, contextual knowledge began to increase for participants with practice, research and conversations with colleagues. However, at no point did any participant acknowledge that the student texts alone could comprise all the content needed in order to teach first year composition (Bishop, 1993).

Developing Pedagogical Knowledge for First Year Composition

Identifying content knowledge is specifically important when beginning to teach any course, but to be able to construct appropriate pedagogical approaches for teaching the content is even more important in order to be an effective teacher. Cochran, DeRuiter, and King (1993) concur that relating pedagogical practices to subject matter "is part of the process of pedagogical reasoning" (263). As noted in this study, this process takes time to develop through a variety of venues.

Suggestions for pedagogical approaches to teaching composition may be present in some textbooks, but this study revealed that participants generally learned how to teach first year

composition from practical and personal experiences, discussions with colleagues, peers, students, and additional reading materials. Avalos (2011) concurs that teachers' "professional learning is a complex process, which requires cognitive and emotional involvement of teachers individually and collectively" (p. 10). Whereas the textbooks and handbooks had been their prescribed tools in the beginning of their teaching careers, over the years, all of the participants through different learning processes developed their own niche for teaching writing through changing theories of learning and practice as noted in the following paragraphs.

Eliza divulged that even though she was a TA, she did not have the opportunity to follow a mentor and observe how first year composition classrooms were taught when she first began teaching. Her pedagogical approaches to teaching occurred through discussions, practice, reflection and incessant experimentation. She began learning pedagogy through "reinventing" her approaches to teaching while in graduate school, relying heavily on experiential learning. Eliza's pedagogy developed through consistent discussions with her "office mates" who encouraged her to try new approaches to teaching writing. Even after learning the "workshop model" from her graduate studies, it still took her several attempts to incorporate this into her classroom effectively. In fact, when she first began teaching first year composition, she stated that she "didn't even consider emulating the workshop environment of that class in my first level composition class." Today, she builds her curriculum around readings, discussions and group work, whereas students in her class are "writing, talking, and thinking about their topics" for their writing projects, providing a collaborative (Bruffee, 1997) and social constructionist (McAndrew, 1993) environment for her students. Eliza clearly implements process-oriented approaches to her teaching, allowing students to choose their own topics for their papers (Murray, 1997) and allowing students to work together in groups and collaborate on writing

projects.

Eliza said that even after twenty-something years of teaching both composition and literature courses, and even though she developed suitable pedagogical approaches to teaching both, she still feels much more comfortable teaching literature. She feels anxious when she teaches composition because she has “no content to fall back on.” She stated that since she allows her students to choose their own topics for writing papers, she feels that it is difficult to teach her class because there is not “a common subject” present, as when teaching literature. However, as argued by Bishop (1993), the subject is writing. Because of Eliza’s literature background, she implies that the “content” in her composition courses are the literary texts she weaves into the course. Hairston (1986) argues that “Because most teachers are trained only in literature, and thus are uncomfortable when they find themselves talking about the craft of writing instead of a body of familiar material, they frequently complain that writing courses have ‘no content,’ and they use the essays [non-fiction writing] to provide the content” (p. 180). In actuality, however, when Eliza incorporates “writing, talking together, and thinking,” she is focusing on the “content” of the course. Hairston (1986) also argues that “A writing course has its own content, and that is the students’ and teachers’ writing and the writing process itself” (p. 188). Bishop (1993) argues that “student texts are valuable texts,” and is the “content” for the course (p. vii). Therefore, when Eliza incorporates peer review, writing and revision workshops, she is providing content for her course.

Kelly, who began teaching approximately seven years ago, has slowly developed her pedagogical approaches to teaching writing through personal and practical experiences as well as discussion with colleagues. When she first began teaching with her Master’s degree, she relied heavily on her personal experiences as a student as well as the teaching materials she was given.

In fact, she taught her first course very similarly to the way that she was taught as a student: she spent the majority of her class time lecturing, which exhibited that her teaching approaches reflected her personal experiences. Hammerness, et al. (2005) recognize that new teachers' personal experiences as students forms "preconceptions about teaching and learning" (p. 359).

However, over time, Kelly's approaches to teaching composition have changed significantly because of her personal and practical experiences. Kelly has taken a different route in learning to teach composition than the other participants in this study. Not only did she have an opportunity to work as a teaching assistant in a writing center as a writing tutor while finishing her Master's degree, but during that time she was studying some composition and writing center theory. From these experiences, Kelly's theories of teaching began to change from a traditional paradigm (Hairston, 2009) to those which include "social constructionist" and "participationist" learning environments (McAndrew, 1993, pp. 35-36), whereas her students have become more involved in sharing and meaning-making. She also had the opportunity to take a writing pedagogy course taught by the director of the writing center. Even though she was not mentored or did not have the opportunity to teach first year courses as a teaching assistant, she formed a close bond with the director of the writing center and learned a lot from her, particularly in the areas of conferencing with students and using peer response in the classroom (Bruffee, 2001; Harris, 2001; Murphy; 2001).

Later, Kelly enrolled in a rhetoric and composition doctoral program and added more personal and practical experiences to teaching writing. In this program, she finally had the opportunity to observe several composition teachers. She stated: "Both observations taught me something about what does and does not work in a classroom, and I have used what I learned to 'check myself' as a teacher." From this statement, Kelly reveals that metacognitive functioning

is one factor of her learning process. In fact, Kelly often takes a “poll” of her students in order to find “what’s working, what’s not working” pedagogically, and as such she is also constructing knowledge socially. She spends a lot more time talking *with* her students about topics than talking *to* her students. Her pedagogical approach to teaching has shifted. In the beginning of her teaching career, she viewed her students as empty “receptacles” in need of knowledge, depositing knowledge, or “banking” knowledge (Freire, 1970), into the minds of her students (Gadotti, 1994). Today, she understands that each student has knowledge to share and provides a social constructivist classroom setting. She now relies on what her students know and helps them to scaffold existing knowledge to create new knowledge.

Even though Kelly still chooses the readings for her students, she allows students to choose the topics for their writing assignments, thereby demonstrating that even though she provides the final grade for the course, she believes students should have some authority and “responsibility.” Kelly also implements extended writing approaches in her classroom, devising ways for students to learn to synthesize and extend shorter papers to longer papers, thereby creating constructivist learning (Sullivan, 2009). She also places greater importance upon one-on-one conferences with her students than most of the other participants in this study because of her time spent as a writing consultant in writing centers. Kelly shifted her pedagogy from a traditional paradigm to a different paradigm which included the process approach (Hairston, 2009).

Jessica’s pedagogical approaches to teaching writing stem from her personal and practical experiences as well as conversations with other colleagues. She began teaching composition directly after finishing her Master’s degree. Even though she received her Master’s from the same institution as Kelly, her courses and instructors were different. Her required

linguistics course was actually a course in English grammar including “diagramming sentences,” and her writing pedagogy course was not “practical” or helpful. She also did not have the opportunity to work in writing centers or observe other teachers. She explained that her pedagogical learning occurred through practical experiences, or “through much trial and error.” In fact, through many of her narratives, the words “trial and error” are frequently used. She admitted that she wished she had time to take “more rhetoric and composition courses” in order to understand the terminology and to investigate different pedagogical approaches to teaching writing. Even though she implemented a number of process pedagogies into her classroom, she did not recognize the theory behind her teaching because of her unfamiliarity of composition theory.

Like Kelly, Jessica also devised her coursework in first year composition using a process of extended writing approaches, thereby applying constructivist learning (Sullivan, 2009) for her students. She assigned “a summary, critique” and a series of short papers which developed into a longer analytical argument which provides students with the ability to cognitively formulate and construct writing while building one writing project upon another. She even assigned one small research paper towards the end of the semester. She also used several process-oriented approaches in her course whereby students chose their own topics for their research papers and chose their own readings for the course (Murray, 1997), thereby allowing instances where students were granted authority. Since these teaching approaches were never taught to her, she learned them from personal and practical experiences and through conversations with other colleagues.

The majority of Geoffrey’s learning to teach began in the secondary school institutions where he “taught high school composition for thirty-eight years.” Also, during this time, he

began to structure his pedagogy which is still implemented today. He began to make worksheets for his students to use in class. He also relied on an overhead projector to teach composition. He required his students to fill out a worksheet which helped to frame a five-paragraph essay, and then he required students to write the five-paragraph essay in a specific amount of time.

Geoffrey's methods revealed that he initiated "constructive learning," implying that he took into account "students' prior conceptions in designing instruction" which stemmed from his experiences teaching high school students (Bransford, Derry, Berliner, Hammerness & Beckett, 2005). He still uses the same pedagogical approaches for teaching first year composition that he developed while teaching high school composition, except he allows his students to write full essays "at home using word processors, following MLA style." Also, when Geoffrey began teaching college composition, he compared his syllabi to other teachers' syllabi and stated that his "syllabus was as good as or better than those of my colleagues." Because of his extensive experience teaching composition in secondary schools, Geoffrey felt quite confident when he began teaching college composition.

Geoffrey's approaches to writing were quite different than his other two colleagues – Kelly and Jessica. Whereas Kelly and Jessica required their ENG 101 students to write essays which focused on "summary, critique and research," Geoffrey required his students to write essays based upon the rhetorical traditions printed in many textbooks, including descriptive, narrative, cause-effect, definition, and argumentative essays. He relied on the readings from the text to provoke discussions and topics for papers. Even though the focus of his teaching was more current-traditional than his colleagues, he did initiate certain "process" methods into his teaching, including group work, discussion, peer review, and a final self-assessment at the end of the semester. He required his students "to write an entire essay, giving detailed assessments of

their essays, with examples and discussions” to be included within a final portfolio. Geoffrey continues with his traditional paradigms for teaching writing. However, there is some influence upon his pedagogical approaches to teaching, as noted by the implementation of certain “process” methods. Even though Geoffrey still holds on to his current-traditional methods of teaching, it is argued by Crowley (1997) that this often occurs because current-traditional rhetoric is still a large part of composition textbooks sold today. Crowley (1997) also adds that because current-traditional rhetoric is still continuing in composition teaching, “process strategies fit quite comfortably within its framework” (p. 64). Even though Geoffrey stopped using a textbook years ago, his teaching practices still reflect current traditional rhetoric.

Lila’s pedagogical approaches to teaching writing were influenced by her past experiences teaching English in secondary schools. Since she did not have the opportunity to work with a mentor while finishing her education degree, most of her learning development came from practical experiences. Her most influential experience occurred when she was given the opportunity to “co-teach” with other professional writers. This opportunity gave Lila the chance “for constant back-and-forth observation, discussion, [and] reflection.”

As a graduate student, Lila received more opportunities to talk to other graduate students about their teaching strategies stating that she was “suddenly surrounded by really gifted teachers” with whom she could share ideas. She recalled that she had more opportunities to talk to other pedagogues while she was finishing graduate school than she did the whole time she worked in secondary schools. Even today she relies on conversations with other colleagues, stating, “So much of my growth as a teacher...has come and still does from conversations with colleagues,” as confirmed by Cohen (2010).

At the institution where Lila teaches first year composition, there are specific directives

placed on how the course curriculum is structured, including how many essays students are required to write, which chapters in the texts must be reviewed during the semester and which grammatical errors are to be assessed. For example, this particular institution required a specific number of essays to be written in class; therefore, Lila had to prepare her students to write timed in-class essays. Also, specific chapters in the composition textbook had to be emphasized during the course of the semester. This particular institution also placed emphasis on grammar errors. There were certain “major errors” which teachers were supposed to penalize more than others when grading students’ papers. Therefore, the assumption is that Lila’s pedagogical approaches to teaching writing were limited, causing her approaches to be more directive than facilitative based upon the restrictions set forth by the institution, following the patterns of current traditional pedagogy (Crowley, 1997). Based on observations, Lila relied on lectures in her classroom in order to direct students in writing projects. At times she implemented a few “process” approaches, including allowing her students to investigate their own topics for writing projects and providing time for peer review and collaborative work, yet overall the students were engaged in more current-traditional modes of learning. Lila’s methods combined current-traditional modes with process-oriented modes of teaching, but her practices were heavily influenced by her institution, as noted by her syllabi (Appendices Q, R).

Amy Jo, who has only been teaching for three years, is still learning, as evident of her blog response, when she stated that she anticipated “much more learning to come.” Amy Jo, who also worked at the same institution as Lila, began teaching first year composition months after completing her Master’s degree in literature. In the beginning, her pedagogy was more within the structure of current-traditional methods than process oriented, due to the requirements of the institution as well as her own reflections of “the way I’d recently been taught.” She quickly

began changing her methods of teaching and stopped using a textbook for her courses. When she did investigate new pedagogical approaches, she did so through seeking advice from other teachers of first year composition and searching through computer websites.

Developing Student Knowledge in First Year Composition

All the participants in this study believed that it was highly important to have some knowledge of the students in their classrooms. They also agreed that students needed to know one another in order to work together, forming a community in the classroom (McAndrew, 1993). Also, all of the participants agreed that much of the knowledge regarding their students came from the students' writing assignments. However, the participants in this study revealed different reasons for the extent of their knowledge about students.

First, there were issues of experience and time which played significant roles in the development of student knowledge. Some of the less experienced participants, Jessica and Kelly, said that they never had enough time during the semester to get to know their students because time was limited. They also felt as if they had little time to teach what was necessary in order to fulfill the curricular needs of the course, and for this reason one-on-one conferences with students were limited. However, through students' writing assignments and through social media, some of the participants were able to learn more about their students. Two of the more experienced participants in this study, Geoffrey and Eliza, who had been teaching at the same institutions for longer periods of time, recognized the cultural and economic backgrounds of their students through students' writing assignments and conferences. Based upon years of teaching experience, they were also more familiar with the prior educational backgrounds of these students.

Next, beliefs and attitudes often played an important role in the participants' knowledge

of their students as exemplified by their personal and practical teaching experiences . Some of the more experienced participants agreed that there should be distinct barriers, both social and professional, between the role of student and the role of teacher. In other words, the knowledge of the student was strictly focused upon the assignments or written works for the course. There was no interest in knowing the students' personal lives. However, other participants in this study who had less experience teaching first year composition, often interacted with their students on social media sites. These teachers became more knowledgeable of the personal experiences and beliefs of their students.

Eliza, who had been teaching at the same institution for over twenty years, developed knowledge of her students partly from her familiarity with the region and the institutional environment while serving on committees and being involved with the National Writing Project and partly from the students themselves. Through years of experience teaching students from nearby, she recognized most of her students backgrounds as “first generation college students,” “part-time or full-time workers,” “middle-class,” “non-traditional (i.e., in their late 20s or older),” and “transfer” students. She also responded to a blog prompt by adding that she developed knowledge of her students through reading their papers and discussing them in conferences. However, Eliza strongly believed that socializing with students was not needed in order to teach them. She did not initiate any other type of communication except to discuss the students' present work.

Geoffrey considered it important to get to know all of his students in order to be able to teach them what they needed to succeed in his classroom. He held conferences with each student in order to “understand their weaknesses regarding composition, and it allows me to find specific methods that can help them attain success.” In this study, Geoffrey empathized and

acknowledged the learning difficulties of English language learners. Being an English language learner himself, he empathized with the obstacles with which ELLs struggle when learning to write. He found it exhilarating when he had the opportunities to meet individually with ELLs and discuss writing strategies. He explained that he is “quite sensitive” to ELLs’ situations. Geoffrey’s experience knowing and teaching foreign languages assisted his understanding of learning diversities.

Kelly also revealed that it was important for her “to get to know the students” because she felt that she could better assess their writing if she could “identify the type of writer they are.” While working in writing centers, she quickly learned of the individual needs of the writers she encountered. From this experience, she believed that if she knew “something about them” then she was able to give better feedback. She learned through working in writing centers and through years of teaching experience that “every group of people is different, and they’re gonna perceive things differently.” Therefore, she allowed ample opportunities for her students to work in groups, which allowed her to go from group to group and work with students in class, opening discussions, clarifying explanations, and answering questions, adjusting her status in the classroom as a facilitator rather than a director (McAndrew, 1993).

Jessica acknowledged that knowing her students was important, but she felt as if there was never enough time during one semester to do so. She found the constraints of teaching a heavy course load, often a “three/three or four/four load,” limited her conferences with students. She also mentioned that she felt guilty when scheduling conferences because of the time constraints placed on her students as well. Many of Jessica’s students had jobs and families, so she did not like scheduling conferences outside of class time. She only scheduled one conference during the semester with each individual student in order to discuss the research paper

assignment. Therefore, she occasionally talked to students before class began or immediately after if she discovered that a student needed assistance. If she noticed a student was struggling, she would “try to encourage them to come by and talk to me and ask them about their background,” but otherwise she did not make additional conferences mandatory.

Lila discovered her students’ interests and backgrounds through a variety of ways. She learned about her students through Facebook, through individual conferences, and from their writing projects. She wrote in a blog response: “I learn a lot about my students from their assignments.” She also acknowledged that writing is a personal endeavor. She divulged, “In writing, much more than in some other subjects, the whole person is engaged: memories, neuroses, distractions, hopes, fears, dreams, anxieties, hobbies, etc.” While reading her students’ works, Lila discovered portions of knowledge about her students. Also, through her discussion with her students, she recognized “a wide range of [students’] attitudes towards language, towards reading, [and] towards writing.”

While Lila also recognized and empathized with ELLs language barriers, she had a different attitude towards ELLs than Geoffrey. Lila admitted that although she felt “empathy” for her language learners, it did not influence how she assessed her students. Her “one size fits all” method reveals that she has not been influenced by the political strategies of theorists and researchers of second language writers (Casanave, 2007; Ferris, 1999; Harklau, Siegel & Losey, 1999).

Amy Jo, the least experienced participant, felt that getting to know her students was important. Like Kelly, Amy Jo believed that a teacher must know her students in order to be able to evaluate them better. In a blog post she noted “it’s incredibly important” to know her students, so she found ways to engage them in conversations in the classroom as well as through

outside communication, thorough social networking sites. She also revealed that even though she tried to get to know her students, she still found it difficult to adjust her teaching to the individual needs of the students. She claimed that the most surprising learning experience for her had been “how different all of the students are” and how she had “to adapt to how different they are.” When Amy Jo first began teaching, she had expected her students to be on the same learning levels and to have the same beliefs about writing as she had.

Developing Assessment Knowledge in First Year Composition

Student assessment is one of the most controversial aspects of teaching. The participants in this study had several concerns while learning to assess students, such as assigning values, grading composition papers, and making comments. Even the most experienced participants felt that they often spent too much time commenting on students’ papers.

Eliza was not quite sure how she learned to assess her students’ papers, but she believed that it was through getting feedback from other graduate students who were also teaching composition. She responded that in the beginning, she “just put a letter grade on it.” She stated, “I know I didn’t use a rubric because I wasn’t even introduced to them until I moved to Tennessee in 1989.” Over the years, she learned to grade “holistically,” partly due to the influential assessment of her department. The English department where she now works requires students to be assessed by a final portfolio project at the end of every semester, thereby the portfolios are graded “as a whole rather than [grading] each individual paper” (Appendix I). Today, Eliza’s students choose which writings are to be included in the portfolio and are given the opportunity to revise what is necessary. Students also include a reflective letter examining what changes have occurred in their writing from the beginning of the semester, allowing them opportunity to examine their own work to see how they have developed as writers (Bishop, 1997;

Huot, 2002; Glenn & Goldthwaite, 2008).

Kelly felt that the most challenging aspect of grading was assigning a specific “value” for portions of students’ papers. She stated, “On the one hand I want to be honest about how well I believe the student performed, but on the other hand I want the grade to be instructive.” She also mentioned that learning to grade occurred through many trial-and-error experiences, including commenting on student papers. In the beginning of her teaching career, she “tried to comment on everything” but learned very quickly that was not going to work, so she fell back on what she had learned while working in the writing center and “chose three things to comment on for each paper.” She only used this method as “a guide” because she found herself commenting more than she intended to do. Recently, Kelly began using a rubric so that her students were aware of what they were being graded on. Kelly’s assessment of her students was different than the other participants. She gave equal credit to the students’ writings (50%) and class participation (50%) which included in-class assignments, quizzes, drafts, and attendance demonstrating that she gave her students more “responsibility” for their final grade in the course (Huot, 2002).

Jessica changed her assessment methods each semester by creating her own rubrics. Jessica had the privilege of examining other teachers’ rubrics, but she decided to make her own. She stated that the reasons for creating rubrics were to save time on grading and explain students’ errors. She stated that her rubric was designed to “be content focused” and to deemphasize “grammar and style” because that was what mattered to her. Jessica learned to preference “higher order concerns” over “lower order concerns” when assessing her students’ papers. She also required her students to self-assess (Smith & Yancey, 2000) their own writing for one essay, as stated in her syllabus (Appendix M). However, even with all the process pedagogy procedures she implemented into her classroom, she still held her students

“accountable” for their work, by placing a final, individual grade on each writing assignment (Huot, 2002), thereby exemplifying her director persona.

Jessica also revealed why and how she gave extensive comments to her students. She used to type out the comments and attach them to the students’ papers, along with the final grade. Then, she tried emailing comments and grades to the students. Now, she uses TurnItIn to give feedback. She explained that giving students “thorough” comments is a helpful tool for her students (White, 1996). She stated, “Most of my students appreciate and respond to the feedback.”

Two participants, Geoffrey and Amy Jo, said that they had different experiences when learning to grade essays. Geoffrey had the opportunity to participate with other faculty members and was taught to grade AP (Advanced Placement) exams. Amy Jo had a similar experience. However, she was participating with other faculty members who were preparing to get ready for accreditation. Faculty members were brought in to “grade” essays based on a set number (1,2,3 or 4). Each faculty member was asked what grade she/he gave a particular paper, and they all discussed why it was given that specific number. Both participants learned how other colleagues assessed writing assignments and discussed how this was a helpful learning experience.

When he first began grading papers, Geoffrey used what he called a “common sense” approach. He explained, “I determined what I thought the final paper at a particular grade/age level should look like and decided how successful the student was in achieving that level. In my earlier years of teaching, I went by the expectations of the teachers I had had.” While Geoffrey was a novice, he graded his students’ papers holistically, what Elbow (1996) refers to as “the biggest enemy of thoughtful evaluation” (p. 126) because of the dangers of bias and assumptions which accompany the final grade. Today, Geoffrey depends on a rubric to assist with the

explanation of students' grades and to show students their strengths and weaknesses. His syllabus (Appendix O) revealed that he also used a portfolio system to evaluate his students' progress in his composition course.

Amy Jo mentioned that it was a struggle to assess her students' essays in the very beginning. When she first began grading papers, she did not break the students' grades down, so they had problems understanding them. Today she uses rubrics which specifically state the characteristics and traits for an essay with a specific grade. However, she still feels as if it takes "a longer-than-average time" to grade her students' essays. White (1996) concurs that teachers often spend a great amount of time grading and responding to students' papers, hoping that students will revise and present "better work" in the next paper (p. 13).

Lila began assessing her students' papers holistically "because that was how I'd been graded." She also commented, "When I got my first job teaching high school English, my colleagues gave a paper an overall grade and then deducted points for errors. I think I tried that for one semester, but hated it." Later, while teaching at different institutions, she had experience using rubrics. She commented, "I've been presented with rubrics, been forced to use particular rubrics, instructed to develop or revise rubrics, etc." These experiences led her to develop her own rubric for her first year composition courses. She replied, "The rubric I use now merges one I'd developed before I came to [this university] with criteria specified by the [sic] English department." All of her experiences learning to assess students were greatly influenced by other colleagues or institutions.

Lila's assessment practices today are dictated by the institution where she works, as noted on her syllabus (Appendices Q, R), revealing that her institution has influence upon her practice. The learning outcomes and the methods for the course are set by the English department and

stated on the first pages of the syllabi. The majority of the students' assessment (80-90%) centers on the writing requirements (essays/research paper) for the course, exemplifying current traditional practice, whereas "students are accountable rather than responsible" for their grades since grades are assigned for each separate writing project by the teacher of the course (Huot, 2002, p. 66).

All the participants of this study revealed that learning to assess students' papers occurred vastly through trial-and-error experiences, reflection, and conversations.

Participants' Beliefs for Teaching First Year Composition

While investigating the participants' teaching experiences, I found that all of the participants' approaches used to teach composition to diverse student groups were heavily influenced by their personal beliefs. Grossman and Shulman (1994) concur that "teachers rely on their own understandings and beliefs" while teaching. This study reinforced the idea that teachers' "understandings" and "beliefs" of teaching were comprised from personal and practical experiences.

Pedagogical Approaches for Teaching First Year Composition

Even though the participants were not directly asked about their pedagogical beliefs, there were implications in their narratives and in their syllabi which indicated that their overarching beliefs greatly influenced their pedagogical approaches.

Since all the participants were literature graduates, Eliza, Jessica, Kelly, Geoffrey and Lila strongly believed that the use of literature (non-fiction essays, poetry, short stories, novels) was needed in order to develop critical thinking skills and topics for writing and to supply "models" for exemplary work. Only Amy believed that literature was not necessary for a composition course, and she relied strictly on films, video and other sources of technology to

teach composition.

Most participants, including Eliza, Jessica, Kelly, Geoffrey and Lila, believed that in-class workshops were helpful when teaching composition. Most in-class workshops consisted of peer-review sessions while several others were group projects. While these five participants believed in incorporating collaborative work into their classrooms, Amy Jo structured her coursework so that students could do their work primarily from outside the classroom environment, as suggested from her use of technology. Even though Amy Jo required that her students begin their drafts in class, at no time did she mention that groups were formed in class so that students could collaborate and work together. Her students collaborated through electronic discussion boards.

Three participants believed that a constructivist approach to teaching writing was imperative. However, only two participants, Jessica and Kelly, believed that teaching traditional rhetorical modes of writing did not benefit their students. In order for students to develop critical thinking skills, spending more time constructing argumentative writing was more beneficial, they felt. Both Jessica and Kelly initiated constructivist modes for teaching writing, requiring students to begin writing paragraphs and turning them into longer papers. Geoffrey, on the other hand, thought that traditional rhetorical modes were useful to students. He also believed that a constructivist approach to teaching writing was more beneficial for his students. His pedagogical approach to teaching writing consisted of graphic organizers, where students began with constructing thesis and topic sentences and adding more sentences to develop paragraphs.

Pedagogical Approaches for Teaching Diverse Students in First Year Composition

While all of the participants recognized English language learners within their classrooms, four of the six participants devised their pedagogical approaches as “one-size-fits-

all.” Only two participants actually expressed establishing any accommodations for English language learners. Geoffrey acknowledged that extra one-on-one conferences were encouraged in order to help ELL’s with language barriers, while Amy Jo acknowledged that discussion boards were created in her classroom in order to provide ELL’s a place to respond to students’ writing without having to speak in class. The other participants encouraged these students to come to their office and believed that if students needed extra help, then they would seek out help when it was needed.

Other students, including basic learners and students with learning disabilities were not discussed in detail by the participants. Three participants claimed that if they noticed students struggling with their writing assignments, then they would encourage poor writers to visit the writing center on campus or would encourage the students to meet with them for extra help. If students needed special accommodations for writing due to a disability, participants claimed that according to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) students were sent to student services offices to register for assistance. If students were approved for assistance, then special arrangements were made for these students to write their assignments in a separate environment under supervised conditions.

Summary

This regional study found that literature graduates/teachers learned how to teach first year composition through both self-regulated (Zimmerman, 1998) and self-directed (Hays, 2009) modes through personal and practical experiences, reflections, and discussions with colleagues within the workplace. The approaches they took in order to learn to teach composition and the reasons they searched for these approaches occurred through individual action, whereas each participant delegated how, when and what they intended to learn inspired by their own personal

and practical experiences.

Teachers in this region also revealed mixed methods of learning. These were influenced by past experiences of the individuals and their learning environments. First, this study discovered that the English departments within the institutions, the beliefs of the individual teachers, and the knowledge from past and present experiences influenced what teachers learned. Next, the participants depended upon the reflection processes of experiences and discussions with peers and colleagues in the same fields. Vermunt and Endedijk (2011) concur that teachers' experiences "influence the learning outcomes that they attain, and these learning outcomes form input for new learning processes" (p. 295).

Table 1 represents specific findings within this study by illustrating the number of years each participant had taught first year composition, status of participant, processes of learning, current pedagogies, and assessment practices executed in first year composition.

This regional study revealed that the most experienced teachers did not necessarily teach first year composition in the same manner. For example, Eliza, with 33 years teaching experience and Geoffrey with 24 years teaching experience, initiated different strategies for teaching. While Eliza was much more process/student-centered oriented in her pedagogy, Geoffrey was more current traditional/teacher centered. Neither the number of teaching years nor the professional statuses of the participants heavily influenced their pedagogies. Instead, participants' beliefs and sociocultural environments influenced the construction of their pedagogies as revealed within their narratives.

The "Processes of Learning to Teach FYC" column reveals the same processes of learning for participants in this region; however, the patterns of learning are not consistent. For example, the table reveals that while five of the participants began teaching first year

composition by reflecting on their coursework as students and/or reflecting on their teachers' pedagogies (cognitive), one participant began by asking other teachers how they taught and constructed a curriculum based on a combination of their suggestions and her own ideas (socio-cognitive). All of the participants acknowledged that trial and error (experiential) stirred the majority of their learning, while reflection occurred continuously, after a lesson was taught or after the semester was over (cognitive/metacognitive).

Also, underneath the "Current Pedagogy" column, all the participants exhibited similar pedagogies with slight differences. These differences resulted from the participants' sociocultural teaching and learning environments. For example, Eliza and Kelly had similar pedagogical structures because both of them had numerous opportunities to work and collaborate with other teachers of writing. Eliza took part in a National Writing Project and Kelly began her doctoral studies in rhetoric and composition. The rest of the participants did not have the same opportunities as Eliza and Kelly. Therefore, their pedagogies were heavily influenced by what they learned from texts, reflections, and conversations with similar teachers of writing within their institutions.

The "Student Assessment" column reflects the participants' institutional requirements as well as their personal beliefs of assessment. All institutions required a certain percentage of students' grades to focus on written assignments, including essays and research papers (50 – 75%). The rest of the grade was comprised by the individual teachers. Also, one institution dictated how written assignments were assessed. Eliza's institution required portfolios, while the other institutions were not as directive, leaving the other participants to choose their methods of assessing writing. This section also illuminated that the participants had different preferences and values for assessing students. For example, Kelly gave equal assessment percentages to written

assignments (50%) and student participation (50%), while Geoffrey gave distinct percentages to written assignments (80%) and student participation (20%). Personal choice and beliefs influenced assessment formats.

Overall, the table exhibits that participants had similar methods of learning, but different methods of teaching and assessing students. Categories of learning, teaching, and assessing were influenced by personal choices and beliefs, as well as sociocultural placement.

Emergent Themes

Learning What to Teach

At the beginning of every semester, all the participants were given directives by the English department, such as goals, objectives, and assessment tasks which they were to fulfill while teaching first year composition. They were also given textbooks or were given a choice of textbooks to choose from. Participants were then expected to plan a curriculum to address their institutions' directives.

However, in order to achieve these directives, the participants often sought out support and supplemental information in order to construct a curriculum to meet the goals of the course. Most of the participants sought out syllabi, handouts and other materials from more experienced instructors of first year composition to assist with the construction of the course in order to fulfill the predetermined directives set forth by the individual institutions. They collaborated with other colleagues by asking questions and seeking advice before, during, and after the semesters.

During their earlier semesters, four of the participants relied heavily on textbooks for information needed to construct and teach their courses. They gained information for teaching writing from the textbooks they used.

Table 1: Participant Information: Learning to Teach First Year Composition

| Participant | Years Teaching FYC | Status | Processes of Learning to Teach FYC* | Current Pedagogy | Student Assessment** |
|---|--------------------|---------------------|--|--|---|
| Eliza, PhD (Suburban University) | 33 | Professor | cognitive; experiential; socio-cognitive; metacognitive | process; student centered/teacher centered; collaborative; facilitative/ directive | portfolio; participation; homework/ assignments |
| Kelly, MA (Urban University) | 7 | adjunct faculty | cognitive; experiential; socio-cognitive; metacognitive | process/current traditional; student centered; constructivist; collaborative; facilitative/ directive | essays/research paper; participation |
| Jessica, MA (Urban University) | 9 | instructor | cognitive; experiential; socio-cognitive; metacognitive | current traditional/ process; constructivist; teacher/student centered; collaborative; directive/ facilitative | essays; assignments; midterm exam; participation |
| Geoffrey, ED (Urban University) | 24 | adjunct faculty | cognitive; experiential; metacognitive; socio-cognitive | current traditional; teacher centered; constructivist; directive | portfolio; participation |
| Lila, PhD (Southern Rural University) | 10 | associate professor | cognitive; experiential; socio-cognitive; metacognitive | current traditional/ process; teacher/student centered; directive/ facilitative | essays/research paper; quizzes; homework; participation |
| Amy Jo, MA (Southern Rural University) | 3 | adjunct faculty | socio-cognitive; cognitive; experiential; metacognitive | current traditional/ process; teacher centered; directive | essays/research paper; quizzes; homework |

* Learning processes from earliest to latest.

* * Assessment methods are listed from greatest to least percentage value. The exact values can be found in participants' syllabi, located in the Appendices.

Also, one particular institution devised a meeting of all first year composition instructors at the beginning of every year, often put together by the Director of First Year Composition. This meeting was to advise and to inform teachers of first year composition of what to expect in these courses. It also gave teachers opportunities to ask questions and address concerns.

Learning How to Teach

This question generates a more complex answer than the first. In fact, this question places focus on examining pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) of first year composition teachers. Therefore, in order to provide an answer, the research question must first be broken down into two sub-sections: defining content and describing pedagogical approaches for teaching first year composition. As discussed earlier, at no time did any participant within this study acknowledge that the “content” of the course was, in fact, students’ texts, as argued by Bishop (1993), but the “content” of the course was recognized as other materials or tools used in the classroom in order to assist with teaching writing. Therefore, the materials used for instruction were considered both pedagogical tools and content for the course.

While all of the participants in this study relied on different sorts of teaching materials to teach first year composition courses, the “content” materials were different based on several distinctions: years of teaching, personal experiences and preferences, and institutional requirements. Each one of these influenced the pedagogical methods within the classroom as well.

First, this study revealed that the most experienced teachers relied on specific textbooks and/or materials to teach composition. Several of the more experienced teachers of composition felt that professional essays were important tools for teaching composition, in order to illustrate examples of writing styles to students within the classrooms. The assumption is that by showing

students these professional texts, then they would be able to follow these examples of writing styles and implement the same styles within their own writing, or modeling. Another participant developed his own materials (worksheets) for teaching composition and relied heavily on them for teaching both sections of the first year composition course instead of using a textbook. And, as revealed by the other three less experienced teachers, textbooks, handbooks and outside readings were used as supplemental content within the composition courses.

Second, personal preferences for teaching composition were influenced by past personal and practical experiences. More experienced teachers of composition had been exposed to different classrooms, different methods, and different materials for teaching composition. Their years of experience provided resources for developing personal approaches to teaching composition, and over the years they chose and devised methods which worked for them. However, the less experienced teachers felt that they were still experimenting with different materials and approaches for teaching composition. For example, the participant with the least teaching experience, Amy Jo, felt more comfortable using modern technology in the classroom to keep students engaged, while more experienced teachers generally felt that some sort of writing tool or text was more sufficient.

Third, the institution had a great deal of influence upon what materials were used in the classroom and how students were to be assessed. It was the decision of each institution, particularly the English department, to decide what texts and materials were to be used to teach the first and second sections of first year composition. While some institutions required textbooks for teaching, others did not. Some institutions even required that the second section of first year composition be designed around teaching literary texts in order for students to write literary analyses. Also, some institutions required a particular mode of assessment, the portfolio,

while others did not.

All in all, this study found that when the participants began teaching first year composition courses, they generally relied heavily upon personal/practical experiences, as well as on textbooks which were assigned to the course in order to construct materials to teach the content, because little knowledge of content and pedagogical practices were known prior to teaching composition. In fact, one participant said that she often worried that she would not have sufficient “content” to teach her first year composition course semester after semester, while another participant admitted that she would not know how to teach composition without a textbook. Also, most of the participants had taken courses briefly in writing instruction but learned little. Many of the participants agreed that more instruction regarding composition teaching and composition theory would have been useful. Therefore, the participants’ learning experiences teaching composition became a slow process of on-the-job training. The teachers relied more upon trial-and-error experiences and classroom experimentation in order to develop the pedagogical content knowledge needed to teach first year composition.

Also, the informal learning patterns of the participants in this study were similar: they all relied upon experiential, reflective, and socio-cognitive methods of acquiring new knowledge to contribute to knowledge already gained. The participants all agreed that the majority of their learning to teach first year composition developed through trial-and-error experiences in the classroom, forcing them to reflect upon these experiences, and eventually discussing these experiences with others in order to establish credibility.

Seeking Knowledge to Teach

The primary reason for most of the participants to seek out knowledge for teaching first year composition was because they felt they were not fully prepared to teach first year

composition. In the absence of teacher knowledge, this study found that literature graduates/teachers sought out ways to gain knowledge for teaching composition in several ways, based on personal beliefs and choices.

The participants revealed that as surprising situations occurred, particularly those with regard to pedagogy and students, they would rely on two methods of investigation: research and discourse. When some of the participants began teaching, they relied on textbooks from former writing pedagogy courses to help them shape and form their courses, as well as assist with any answers to questions which occurred throughout the first year of teaching. They also chose to rely on discourse with peers, including other graduate students and/or family members who were experienced teachers, rather than discourse with more experienced teachers within their departments of their institutions. Some of the novices felt uncomfortable seeking out advice from other more experienced teachers because they felt as if they were expected to know how to teach first year composition effectively before they were hired to do so. However, as they gained experience in teaching, they felt more comfortable interacting and discussing pedagogy and concerns with more experienced teachers. This increased a dependence on peers and colleagues rather than published research. The reasons for the increased dependence upon other colleagues were that these colleagues were placed within the same situated environments and were familiar with the types of students who attend these institutions and were familiar with the educational contexts where these classes were situated.

Overall, this regional study found that first year composition teachers required more training in composition theory and teaching, including assessing students' papers and structuring the course to serve the needs of diverse learners. The participants stated that their biggest hurdles in the composition classroom consisted of explaining grammar rules, teaching and assessing

diverse learners and justifying grades. If not properly trained, teachers learn informally within the institutions where they work (Eraut, 2004, 2007; Lave & Wenger, 1991). What this study also showed is that these participants learned through practice and experience. They established theory via practice – jump in first, learn later. Since their prior coursework focused primarily on great works of literature and literary theory, they needed more information to teach writing, including composition pedagogy and theory. The participants of this study were forced to learn the majority of composition teaching and theory through experiences, discussions and reflections within the educational work environments where they taught.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

My own journey through learning and teaching composition as a trained literature graduate ignited my passion for this study. As a first year composition teacher stumbling my way through semester after semester, I was curious to find out if my learning approaches to teaching were similar to other graduates of literature programs. I found out through this study that some experiences were similar while others were not. I learned three important aspects from this study: one, some colleges and universities have a long way to go in order to effectively prepare postsecondary literature teachers for teaching composition; two, some colleges and universities need to place more support systems within their departments; and three, teachers are continuous learners and are always seeking new and inventive ways to teach. With my own personal curiosity out of the way, let us now examine other reasons which led to the participants' needs to seek out additional teaching knowledge.

This regional study addressed specific research questions regarding the knowledge construction of literature graduates' pedagogical practices in composition classrooms. Although this study is not generalizable, the participants' learning experiences were similar, illustrating that more preparation was needed before beginning to teach composition. In fact, the answers to the research questions helped to show that the "knowledge growth" for learning to teach composition extended throughout several years of teaching experiences. This study also revealed that most of these learning experiences occurred on the job and were primarily due to implementing trial-and-error experiences, socializing with other colleagues, and reflecting on practice. The participants of this regional study felt that they needed more instruction regarding methods and practical recommendations before teaching. Most of the participants also said that it

would have been helpful if they had received more support from their universities or if they were assigned mentors to help during their first year of teaching. Since the research questions have been answered in Chapter Five, I will now answer some ancillary questions, as suggested by Eraut (2004), which help explain the reasoning behind *what* participants were learning, *how* they were learning, and *why* they were seeking knowledge for teaching composition.

What Did the Participants of This Regional Study Learn about Teaching Composition?

Since this study explained the learning patterns for literature graduates/teachers' pedagogical approaches for teaching composition, other issues can now be addressed. For the four participants with no prior teaching experiences, they learned about methods and practices, assessment, student diversity, and classroom management through multiple venues. While working in colleges and universities, participants learned different tactics to teach composition, including implementing peer reviews, class discussions, and individual conferences. They learned that assessing students' papers was more than just counting off points for errors in grammar and spelling. Since questions of fairness arose due to diverse student groups in the classroom, the participants learned that a variety of diverse learners meant taking more time with individual students if needed or scheduling more time for in-class work. The participants also learned that not all students had the same attitudes about writing. Participants learned to be inventive in order to hold students' attention. They also learned to set timelines for assignments and hold students accountable for those timelines. But most importantly, participants learned to teach writing. They learned that the processes of writing were important in order for students to master the writing skills needed for future classes. They gave students time to brainstorm or outline before beginning drafts. They learned that it helped students to write multiple drafts before turning in the final project. They learned that outside assistance, such as writing centers,

was available and that using these services offered students opportunities to talk about their writing.

Overall, through the act of teaching, participants learned practices that theoretical courses did not cover.

How Did the Participants of This Region Construct Knowledge for Teaching Composition?

When the participants lacked knowledge in specific areas, they experimented, discussed and reflected on their own teaching. They learned that teaching was not entirely learned by reading textbooks or theory. All of the participants learned to teach through trial-and-error, collaboration, and reflection, “tripping” and stumbling through the semesters. They used each semester as an opportunity to learn. They initiated practices in the classroom to find out if certain approaches were affective. They stopped colleagues in the halls and asked them about practices or students. And they took time after each class meeting or each semester to reflect on which practices worked and which did not.

Why Did the Participants of This Region Seek Out Knowledge for Teaching Composition?

This study found that certain factors influenced participants’ learning because practical issues were not often addressed in their formal studies. Four of the participants had no formal training in teaching. They simply moved from the position of graduate student to classroom teacher. Issues regarding constructing curriculum, teaching, managing, and assessing students, and figuring out different ways to teach writing to diverse learners were not covered in their graduate studies. These participants were not prepared to be writing teachers, only scholars of literature. While they were taught to research, to think and to write critically as scholars, they were not taught practical methods nor did they expect the struggles of teaching.

During the first several years of their careers, assessing students’ papers, teaching diverse

learners and managing classrooms were particular areas where participants felt more support from others was needed, either from the departments within the institutions or from colleagues or mentors.

Areas of Needed Support

Colleges and universities still rely on literature graduates/teachers to fill the teaching quotas of first year composition courses. As noted in this study, these literature graduates learned little in their graduate courses in the areas of pedagogy or assessment of literature or composition. Because of this lack of training, more support systems put into place would have been helpful, easing the stress and insecurities during the participants' first years of teaching.

Throughout this study, the participants told of similar learning obstacles while teaching first year composition, including issues with assessing students, learning diversities, designing curriculum, and managing classrooms. These topics were overarching concerns and participants sought out support from others.

Student Assessment

Almost all of the participants agreed that assessing students was one of the biggest hurdles to overcome when beginning to teach. Most of them relied on guessing; they reflected on the teaching practices they had observed while they were students. A majority of the participants admitted that as they began assessing students' papers, the highest concerns of the papers were grammatical errors, while the lowest concerns of the papers were the content. Three of the participants even admitted that they applied a single grade to a paper without giving specific justifications. It took several attempts and several years for each participant to develop his/her own style of assessment, usually through collaboration with others within their field or department.

The issue of assessment also concerned the participants, particularly commenting on students' papers. Four of the six remarked on the amount of time it took to assess students' papers, thereby creating many hours of work. These participants were unfamiliar with other strategies for assessing writing and believed that commenting on every error was the only way to justify the students' grades and to let students know what needed to be corrected, rather than relieving some of that work by responding verbally, by way of conferences, and giving students a larger role in the assessment process (Golub, 2005; Huot, 2002; Raign, 1998). By incorporating more conferences and discussing papers, either one-on-one or in small groups, students and teachers have opportunities to air concerns about writing in a less formal setting, eliminating the authoritative "teacher has the last word" persona and developing collaborative relationships. Other strategies which can cut down on assessment time include portfolios that incorporate student learning through self-assessment and reflection (Elbow, 1996; Murphy & Grant, 1996; Yancey, 1998), student collaborative grading (Dolphin, 1997) and student self-evaluation (Strickland & Strickland, 1997). All of these processes of evaluation incorporate student authority, responsibility, and learning.

Only Eliza and Kelly acknowledged other reasons for assessing students without giving excessive comments. Eliza's institution requires that students turn in a portfolio, and assessment is done holistically. Through her work in writing centers, Kelly learned to concentrate on three major errors per paper instead of commenting on every error, with the belief that students will not look at every comment, just the final grade.

Student Diversity

All of the participants acknowledged that students learned in diverse ways. This was unexpected, placing novice teachers in uncomfortable situations. With postsecondary classrooms

consisting of a variety of students, including adult learners, returning students, first year students, students visiting from other countries, and students with different learning abilities, diverse teaching pedagogies and learning strategies were unfamiliar to beginning teachers. Because the participants were unaware of students' learning diversities when they began teaching, it took several years for the participants to devise any particular pedagogical approaches to teaching.

However, only two of the six participants within this study explained their reasons behind using particular learning or teaching strategies for diverse groups. Even though the other four participants implemented some learner-centered practices (McCombs, 1997; Weimer, 2002) within their composition courses, including allowing students to choose topics for writing and/or reading, incorporating in-class peer review or discussion boards, implementing portfolio assessment, and/or requiring a reflective letter at the end of the course, these learner-centered practices were not theoretically grounded within the participants' pedagogy. Learner-centered practices are often established in the classroom in order to include students in the "decision-making processes," to encourage students' "diverse perspectives," to acknowledge students' differences in learning "abilities, styles, developmental stages and needs," as well as treating students' as "co-creators in the teaching and learning process" (McCombs, 1997, p. 5), providing students with authority and responsibility of their own learning. Although all of the participants used some form of learner-centered practice, none of the participants revealed the theory behind the use of these practices.

In order for literature teachers to understand the effectiveness of some pedagogical practices such as learner-centered practices in composition classrooms, teachers of literature and composition can devise discussion groups, much like that of book clubs, where weekly readings of theory and practice for teaching are shared among group members. This practice will not only

strengthen the professional development of teachers but will also increase knowledge of student diversity and learning.

Curriculum Development

Even though all of the participants' institutions administered course goals and objectives for first year composition courses, the participants were responsible for constructing a "plan" to meet those requirements. Not knowing exactly how to do this, the participants relied on other colleagues to help them construct the curriculum for their courses, including borrowing syllabi or other materials. Oftentimes the participants relied on classroom textbooks and used these for teaching content and structuring coursework. Also, they all incorporated literature and/or other published texts in their courses in order to ignite classroom discussions and to construct topics for papers.

Classroom Management

While some of the participants felt confident that they could teach effectively when they first began teaching, that confidence soon wore down as classroom management issues surfaced. Some of the less experienced participants acknowledged that when situations with students in the classroom arose, i.e., showing up to class without homework or without reading an assignment, they often felt uncertain regarding what approaches to take in order to remedy the situation. Oftentimes, these teachers sought out other colleagues who had experienced the same situations in order to find a solution. However, for some beginning teachers this was difficult to do, given the fact that in a new environment, they found themselves surrounded by strangers. Because of the issues of trust, some beginning teachers relied more upon loved ones and friends for advice in the beginning of their teaching careers rather than colleagues.

Stronger support systems for all teachers can be established within postsecondary institutions in order to relieve some of the anxieties of teaching.

Suggestions for Support

Suggestions for English Departments

This study indicates that even though the field of composition has made great strides over the past few decades, English literature graduates/teachers are still the continuing strongholds of English departments across colleges and universities. Graduate schools of English offer a larger range of courses in the concentration of literature over composition studies. This is especially noticeable in Master's level coursework. However, if colleges and universities continue to hire literature graduates/teachers to teach composition, then more courses in composition teaching are needed. Ebest (2005) argues that an increase in composition pedagogy in graduate schools prepares teachers for effective teaching.

English departments within university settings need to establish additional training for literature graduates by either implementing more courses or writing instruction for graduate students or providing on-the-job training via workshops or support groups for those who are required to teach first year composition courses. Teachers' anxiety can be minimized if departments offered writing instruction courses, workshops, support groups or mentorships in order to provide additional information for teachers of these courses.

While many colleges and universities offer and require at least one course in writing instruction for English graduate students, expanding those courses can benefit teachers of first year composition in order to create time to cover more subject matter and pedagogical practice. English graduates can also benefit from their coursework if writing instruction courses were structured so that an equal amount of time is spent on theory and practice, in order for future

teachers of composition to understand the theory behind the practice, and vice versa. As noted in this study, very few participants remembered anything about their writing instruction course because it was not practical. None of the participants said that they received any sort of instruction on student assessment, teaching methods, or classroom management, and only two participants had the opportunity to observe other teachers. Adding more courses creates more opportunities to cover these areas. Classroom observations can also be incorporated into graduate courses as requirements.

Also, courses in learning, cognitive development, and second-language acquisition can be added as options. These courses are often not offered at the Master's level, so many graduate students do not have the opportunities to learn this information before beginning to teach.

Besides additional courses, regularly scheduled workshops offered by either the English department or the writing center, taught by composition experts, can inform literature graduates of composition pedagogies and assessment. Designing and scheduling a workshop several times during the fall and spring semesters would offer opportunities for discussions of theories and pedagogies. Novice teachers in particular would benefit greatly from these workshops, creating a "lifeline" to deter the "sink or swim" effect.

Several researchers have suggested that new and existing teachers benefit from support from others. Kemp and O'Keefe (2003) suggest several methods for teacher support, including establishing mentorships between a more experienced faculty member with a less experienced faculty member, as well as creating instruction sessions based on specific topics. Other researchers suggest forming support groups for teachers, allowing teachers to share experiences and advice (Jenlink & Kinnucan-Welsch, 2001; Shaw, belcastro & Thiessen, 2002). All of these suggestions require very little time and money, but they do ask for commitment from faculty

members. For these programs to be beneficial, teachers should be encouraged to continue their professional development.

Also, since literature and composition teachers are still housed in many English departments, and if English departments expect teachers to teach both literature and composition, then implementing programs or assigning administrators to oversee issues of support becomes vital for teacher development. For example, some colleges and universities across the nation have put into place First Year Writing Programs/Directors within English departments. The directors of these programs assist with the coordination and support of teachers of first year writing. English departments who have not initiated these programs can investigate First Year Writing Programs/Directors at other institutions to find out how these programs are beneficial.

Basically, communication and support need to be encouraged throughout English departments initiated by the department chairs. In order for teachers to be effective, English department heads need to acknowledge that the “sink-or-swim” method is not the best option and is affecting teachers and students alike. If English departments continue to hire inexperienced writing teachers, then the responsibility falls on the department to assist with support and training.

Suggestions for Colleges and Universities

Although this study is not generalizable, this regional study revealed more support from colleges and universities was needed. Since colleges and universities’ primary concerns are student retention and success, assessments can be enacted in order to safeguard effective teaching by part-time and full-time faculty members. Oftentimes, colleges and universities require course evaluations for first year composition which require students to answer questions anonymously regarding teacher and course effectiveness. Implementing evaluations for teachers,

concerning questions of knowledge, instruction, course analysis and support, can also benefit colleges and universities in order to find out similar answers. Therefore, they should devise similar surveys which teachers can answer anonymously to help decide what sort of assistance is needed for teacher preparation or support. The following questions are suggested:

- 1) How confident did you feel teaching this course?
- 2) Did you have the appropriate materials in order to teach this course?
- 3) Did you experience any uncertainty regarding teaching diverse learners?
- 4) Were you familiar with the subject matter?
- 5) Did you feel confident with the assessment method?
- 6) Was adequate support offered from your department or university?

By inquiring into teachers' perceptions, colleges and universities can determine if departments need to enact programs and/or workshops to heighten teacher knowledge and confidence.

Generally, after receiving a Master's degree, English graduates can teach undergraduate courses in literature and composition. Therefore, colleges and universities need to offer courses in pedagogy in both literature and composition courses at the Master's level, either through English or education departments. As noted in this study, the participants involved stated that practical instruction over theoretical instruction for teaching would have been extremely helpful before they began teaching. If universities prepare teachers for K-12 schools by requiring classroom observations, pre-service teaching, and pedagogical coursework within education programs, then it seems only logical to prepare future university professors in a similar manner.

Also, regular studies and inquiries can be conducted to see what other colleges and universities do to prepare their teachers.

Recommendations for Further Research

This regional study uncovered other areas of needed research in teacher development. Since this study was a qualitative study and limited to only three institutions and six participants in a specific region of the southeast United States, other studies can be developed, including 1) probing the backgrounds of other teachers in other regions who are hired to teach first year composition, 2) investigating what types of training first year composition teachers receive throughout the United States, and 3) exploring what sorts of support first year composition teachers are offered at other institutions throughout other regions.

Also, one of the striking factors that this regional study uncovered was the lack of teacher training for teaching writing to English language learners. Research is still needed in this area. Therefore, a study of literature graduates who teach multilingual writers can be investigated further in order to uncover what sort of training is being offered or required for teachers of multilingual learners. This study found that none of the participants were trained in ESL or TESOL, either for literature or composition. From the participants' narratives, there was no evidence of theoretical or pedagogical training for teaching ELLs. In fact, only one participant knew how to explain sentence structures and word placement to students of other languages, given the fact that he was a language learner and teacher. He was familiar with writing in other languages, and his experiences allowed him to help other language learners. This participant also recognized the importance of working one-on-one with language learners, devoting more time to them when he saw the need.

I suggest that with the rising number of ELLs in colleges and universities, a concern exists regarding the professionalism of teaching ELLs. In particular, studies of other composition teachers with no background or training in ESL can be investigated in order to reveal the types of pedagogies being used in their classrooms.

Other areas of research which are vital in the field of composition are learning and instruction. Master's programs in literature and composition can be researched further in order to investigate what sorts of courses are offered and taught in postsecondary institutions, particularly since graduates of these programs may begin teaching immediately following graduation. In my Master's program, the literature program was strictly based on reading, theorizing, and writing about literature. In 2007, I enrolled in a Doctoral program which offered courses in both composition and TESOL in order to have the adequate training I needed to teach composition to language learners. Today, more English Master's programs are beginning to offer more pedagogy courses, but I suggest an investigation into colleges and universities throughout the United States to see what other courses are being offered as well, particularly regarding language acquisition studies and multicultural writing and literacies. Research in this area helps to uncover what graduate students are learning and adds to the research provided by Ebest (2005). At this time, no comprehensive study has been completed which investigates the course requirements of Master's programs in English literature across the United States. A study into these programs can help assess teacher preparation.

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited in the fact that I knew two of the participants prior to this study. Although I do not feel that they refrained from speaking candidly when presented with a specific question, they may have held back some information. I did, however, attempt to overcome this situation by reminding all participants that anonymity would be preserved.

As mentioned earlier, this study only focused upon the narratives of six participants within three different universities in an isolated region of the United States. Data collected from

a larger number of more participants from a wider variety of regions is needed in order to investigate other learning patterns of literature graduates teaching composition.

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APPENDICES
Appendix A: Institutional Review Board
 HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW PROTOCOL

Project Title: “Knowledge Growth” of Teachers Trained in English Literature Teaching First Year Composition

Investigator: **Kathleen A. Richards** *Ph.D. Candidate* at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Composition & TESOL, (Cell) 256-366-0638
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A. PURPOSE, RESEARCH VARIABLES, AND POPULATION

Purpose of the Study and Background: The purpose of this dissertation study is to uncover how knowledge growth is constructed for literature teachers who are assigned to teach composition courses, particularly first year composition. Given the fact that universities all over the United States assign literature teachers to teach first year composition courses, the interest of this study is to find out how they learn to teach courses outside their formal educational contexts, as well as how they acquire and construct knowledge informally to teach the diverse group of students which occupy American college writing classrooms today.

In the 1980s Lee S. Shulman⁴ and his colleagues began researching teachers and the knowledge growth that comes from teaching. Their research indicated that past studies focused more on pedagogy, how teachers performed in the classrooms with their students, rather than on the knowledge of content and how teachers were developing knowledge to teach such content. The research design constructed by Shulman (1986) and his colleagues is the model design for this research study. Specifically, the main questions of this study include 1) What are the experiences of English literature teachers teaching first year composition classes? 2) How do English literature teachers come to know what it is that they need to cover in the first year composition courses? 3) How do English literature teachers come to know how to teach the content needed in first year composition courses? These questions will help to discover the construction of content, pedagogy, and curriculum knowledge involving literature teachers placed into composition classroom contexts.

⁴ Shulman, L.S. (1986). Those who understand: Knowledge growth in teaching. *Educational researcher*, 15(2), pp. 4-14.

The interest for this study relies primarily on my own experiences as a first year composition teacher. As a former graduate of English literature, I was placed into first year composition classrooms comprised of a variety of multilingual students. With no prior knowledge of the content needed to teach or prior pedagogical knowledge needed to teach composition, this course challenged my confidence as an English teacher. This study will help to explain how other teachers with a similar educational background as mine have constructed knowledge needed to teach composition classrooms.

Research Variables and Population/Characteristics of Subjects: This case study will take place at three universities, each with student populations consisting of 7,000 to 26,000, located in the southeastern region of the United States. This study will include participants from each of three separate teaching universities. **The sex and/or gender of these participants is insignificant for this study. All participants will be over 18 years of age.** A minimum number of six participants will be used in this study. I will invite anyone with a Master's or Doctoral degree in Literature who is assigned to teach first year composition courses with a diverse student population to participate in this case study. Those literature teachers who may have had any formal writing instruction, study of composition theory, study of second-language theory or second language writing at any educational institution are excluded from this study.

a. Age Range- No restrictions

b. Sex- No restrictions

c. Number- Six participants will be enlisted.

d. Inclusion Criteria- This study focuses on English literature graduates/teachers

who are assigned to teach first year composition.

e. Exclusion Criteria- English literature graduates/teachers who hold degrees in composition or TESOL are excluded from this study.

f. Vulnerable Subjects- No vulnerable subjects will be included in this study.

B. METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Method of Subject Selection: The method of subject selection will include a purposeful sampling of English literature teachers assigned to teach first year composition classrooms which include a diverse student population. At this time, the investigator has researched several universities via electronic methods, reading each university's background, including teacher population, student population, department information, faculty handbooks, and available courses, in one particular southeastern region of the United States, to find recruitment of prospective subjects. To find participants for this study, the intention of this investigator will be to

- 1) contact universities which have the subject population characteristics (i.e., English literature teachers teaching first year composition classrooms with a diverse student group) needed for this case study via mail correspondence to inquire of any possible participants who may be available for participation
- 2) follow up one week later with email communication to the department chair to

- confirm receipt of the letter, to ask if there are any participants who meet the requirements for this study, to ask if any participants may be available for this study, and to answer any questions pertaining to the study
- 3) make sure that after confirmation of interest and agreement regarding participation, investigator shall send out letters of invitation to individual participants recommended by department chairs
 - 4) send emails to prospective participants approximately one week later confirming deliverance of correspondence and to answer any questions pertaining to the study
 - 5) make sure each selected faculty member has received her/his Informed Consent forms.

Study Sites

This study will take place at three separate universities located in the southeastern region of the United States. The student population of these universities will range from 4,000 to 14,000. The Human Subjects Review Protocol will be approved by each university before beginning investigation.

Methods and Procedures Applied to Human Subjects: This case study will last throughout two semesters, beginning in the Fall Semester 2010 and continuing through the Spring Semester 2011. This study will include one-on-one interviews, observations, artifact collections, electronic communication and journals via blog site(s), and researcher's field notes.

First, using Rubin and Rubin's (2005)⁵ construction of interview procedures, a minimum of two one-on-one interviews (approximately one hour each) per semester will be required for each participant. Each interview will be recorded via written field notes and/or memos as well as audio tape. The use of audio is to ensure accuracy of transcriptions. Every interview will be scheduled with the consent of the participant, making sure to provide a comfortable environment for each interview. The first interview will be set to discuss this study and to answer any questions that the participant may have. Explaining the use and the importance of the blog site, how to log in, how to store information, how to communicate with other participants and/or the researcher, etc., will also be explained at this first interview. There will also be a few introductory questions asked to begin researching the educational and teaching backgrounds of each participant. The first interview will last approximately one hour. A final interview will occur after all observations and after all blog entries have been collected, in order to show and discuss with participants the transcribed notes from each classroom observation, as well as to discuss the blog entries for more clarity if needed. The final interview will occur towards the end of the Spring 2011 semester.

⁵ Rubin, H.J. & Rubin, I.S. (2005). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Second, using Maxwell's (2005)⁶ reasoning behind the use of observations, a minimum of three classroom observations will take place. Two observations will be required. The first classroom observation will take place sometime during the beginning of the semester, and the second classroom observation will be towards the end of the semester, before finals. **The classroom observations will be recorded by the researcher by using an audio recorder placed on the teacher's desk, as well as a video recorder placed at the back of the classroom, focused in on the teacher participant only**, to ensure accuracy when transcribing data material. **At no time will students be video recorded or identified.** Field notes will also be taken. At no time will the teachers' real names be revealed while transcribing data.

Third, the researcher will collect course syllabi from each participant, as well as any textbooks, rubrics or handbooks which may be used by the students and/or instructors. This information will help to define the methods and/or reasoning behind the pedagogy constructed for these classes.

Fourth, a blog site will be developed to provide access for all participants. **This blog site will be strictly for the teacher participants of this study and the investigator.** This site will allow the participants to keep electronic journals, including participants' narratives, comments, and/or concerns and to provide communication among other participants, as well as communication with the researcher. Using a blog site will allow the participants to add whatever information they feel will be useful for this study *whenever* and *wherever* the participant feels most comfortable. Prompt questions will be occasionally added by the investigator to be answered by each participant in order to draw out information needed for the study. This blog site will be password protected only allowing the researcher and each participant access to the site. Since all participants will be using pseudonyms and/or code names, each participant's identity will be secure, allowing complete anonymity, **for the purpose of confidentiality.** Blog site instructions, including how to create code names, using the blog and saving information to the blog site will be printed out on paper and mailed or emailed to each participant. The investigator will go over these instructions at the first interview session so that each participant will be thoroughly knowledgeable before beginning to record data on the blog site. The researcher will log on to the blog site(s) once a day to check for any messages or journal entries.

Some participants may feel slightly uncomfortable regarding the use of a 'community' blog for this study. If for any reason a participant feels uncomfortable sharing a blog site with other participants, or may feel uncomfortable posting her/his comments over the internet, then another form of journal entry will be discussed and used.

Fourth, the researcher will take field notes during observations and interviews. Any field notes and/or memos will be transcribed and shared with every participant for review and discussion at every interview.

⁶ Maxwell, J.A. (2005). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. Second edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE publications.

C. RISKS/BENEFITS

Potential Risks of this Study

There are no known foreseeable risks or discomforts associated with this case study. Participants will choose when and where interviews will be conducted. Classroom observations will only be scheduled with the permission of the participants. Confidentiality will be established by all participants with the use of code names and/or pseudonyms. All electronic information and communications are password protected including email and blog site interactions, allowing only the participants and investigator to log on to the appropriate sites. All information collected by the investigator will be safely stored under lock and key, either in a locked box and/or safe at investigator's home or office. Copies of all information will also be stored in a safe deposit box at investigator's banking institution.

Potential Benefits

The benefits of this case study for the participating members will be worthwhile. Through the process of the study, each participant will be able to reflect upon her/his own constructions of knowledge(s) of content and pedagogies, along with the paths which have led to these constructions. These reflections may provide new insights into future teaching pedagogy. Participants involved in a study within an educational context have the opportunity to formulate future individual studies for future publications, including journal articles and essays for book chapters.

Compensation: While there is no monetary compensation provided for the participants of this study, there are other compensations that will be valuable. This case study will open up doors for further possible publication opportunities. For example, the participants may be invited to join in the construction of a book or book chapters after the study is complete. University educators rely upon publications for future promotion possibilities within their own institutions. Therefore, participating in this case study may provide information needed to create future publications for each participant. At the completion of this study and its publication, each participant will receive a copy of the final dissertation, so that she/he will be able to review the final results.

Handling Discomfort or Injury: If for any reason a participant feels any discomfort or injury, she/he may contact the investigator or the Assistant Dean for Research at IUP – contact information is provided above. Any participant may withdraw from this case study at any time for any reason without consequence.

D. CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality: To reiterate what has been stated previously, **all participants' participation will be strictly confidential.** All meetings with participants will be individual, and meeting sites will be chosen by the participant being interviewed. Code names and/or pseudonyms will be used throughout the study, within the final written dissertation and via electronic communications, electronic mail, and on the available blog site provided. All electronic communication via email will be deleted from the investigator's computer once paper copies have been made. Any records and notes recorded by the investigator, including whatever copies are duplicated, will be stored under lock and key, so that only the investigator has access to all

information regarding the study. All technical data, electronic stored devices, interview tapes, etc., will be stripped and erased after paper copies have been made. All data from this study will be retained for at least three years in compliance with federal regulations. After that time, all information will be destroyed. Any resulting reports will be used for educational purposes only.

E. COPY OF CONSENT FORMS

ESSENTIALS OF INFORMED CONSENT FORM

You are invited to participate in this research study: **“Knowledge Growth”: Teachers Trained in English Literature Teaching First Year Composition**. The following information is provided in order to help you make an informed decision whether or not to participate.

As part of my dissertation research at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, I am gathering information from English literature teachers like you who are assigned to teach first year composition courses which contain a diverse student population. I am specifically interested in obtaining information about the experiences of how knowledge is constructed, switching from literature content/pedagogy to composition content/pedagogy, which is the basis of this study. The information offered by you will be abstracted through several processes. First, a personal interview will be conducted, lasting approximately one hour. Interview(s) will be audiotaped for transcription accuracy. Later, I will conduct two classroom observations per semester, including one at the beginning of each semester and one towards the end of each semester. Classroom observations will be audio/videotaped to ensure accurate transcriptions. **At no time will students be videotaped or identified in this study; the use of audio/videotape is strictly for the purpose of observing the teaching methods of each participant.** Afterward, an exchange of dialogues via electronic mail may be needed to include any prompt questions which may arise throughout the study. There will also be a blog website offered for your use, to randomly add ideas, thoughts, and/or situations that occur throughout the study. The blog will be password protected and will only be available for you and other participants who choose to contribute to this study. Exchange of dialogues on the secure blog site are encouraged but not required.

It is NOT my goal of this study to identify successful or unsuccessful strategies or behaviors. My only goal is to try to discover *how* composition teaching knowledge is constructed through your personal experiences as teachers, who have been trained in one content area and are assigned to teach another. It is also an important part of this study to investigate *how* knowledge is constructed regarding teaching a diverse population of students within the composition classroom.

For more information regarding this study, I have attached a copy of the approved proposal for this case study. If there are any other questions regarding this case study, **please do not hesitate to call or email me**. My contact information is provided.

Your participation is voluntary. You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with the investigator. Even if you choose to participate, you may still withdraw at any time by notifying the primary investigator or the Project Director, Dr. Nancy Hayward. Upon your request to withdraw, all

information pertaining to you will be destroyed. However, if you choose to participate, all information will be held in strict confidence. A code name and/or pseudonym will be assigned to you and to the university that you represent to ensure **confidentiality** throughout the process, including in the reporting of any findings.

If you **wish to participate** or **decline to participate** in this study, please send notification via of email and return a copy of this **Informed Consent Form** with your signature in the provided self-addressed stamped envelope to the investigator.

Your participation for this study will be greatly appreciated.

Primary Investigator: Kathleen A. Richards

Rank/Position: Doctoral Candidate

Home Address: 1540 Helton Drive, Apt 212
Florence, AL 35630

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Informed Consent Form

VOLUNTARY CONSENT FORM:

I have read and understand the information on the form, and I consent to volunteer to be a subject in this study. I am over 18 years of age. I understand that all interviews will be audio taped, and **I also understand that the use of videotape will be used for classroom observations, solely for the purpose of accurate transcriptions. At no time will students in the classrooms be videotaped or identified.** I understand that my responses are completely confidential and that I have the right to withdraw at any time. I have received an unsigned copy of this Informed Consent Form to keep in my possession.

NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

SIGNATURE

DATE

PHONE NUMBER and/or EMAIL ADDRESS (where you can be reached)

(best days and times to reach you)

I certify that I have explained to the above individual the nature and purpose, the potential benefits, and possible risks associated with participating in this research study, and have answered any questions that have been raised.

Date

Investigator's Signature

Appendix B: Institution Request/Consent Letter

Kathleen A. Richards
1540 Helton Drive, Apt 212
Florence, AL 35630

Dear Fellow Educators,

As part of my dissertation research at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, I am gathering information from teachers like those at your institution regarding the knowledge constructed and methods used by English literature teachers who are assigned to teach composition courses. I am interested in obtaining information about the experiences of how knowledge is constructed, from literature content/pedagogy to composition content/pedagogy, which is the basis of this study. The information offered by the participants of this study will be abstracted through personal interviews, classroom observations and exchange of dialogues via electronic mail. There will also be a blog website offered for each participant's use, to randomly add ideas, thoughts, and/or situations that occur throughout the study. The blog will be password protected and will only be available for those participants who choose to contribute to this study.

I would like to interview two teachers who have completed either a Master's or Doctoral degree in English literature, who are assigned to teach first year composition classrooms. It is NOT my goal to identify if literature teachers are successful or unsuccessful teaching first year composition. My only goal is to discover *how* teachers are learning or have learned to teach composition throughout their teaching career. Their participation is strictly voluntary and they and your institution will remain completely anonymous in all reports and publications of the data collected.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Kathleen A. Richards, ABD

Kathleen Richards has my permission to conduct interviews and observe at the (institution name) in the fall and winter semesters of the 2010-2011 academic year.

Signature

Date

Appendix C: Participant Request/Consent Letter

Kathleen A. Richards
1540 Helton Drive, Apt 212
Florence, AL 35630

Dear Fellow Educators,

As part of my dissertation research at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, I am gathering information from English literature teachers like you who are assigned to teach first year composition courses. I am specifically interested in obtaining information about the experiences of how knowledge is constructed, switching from the content/pedagogical knowledge of literature to the development of content/pedagogical knowledge of composition, which is the basis of this study. The information offered by you will be abstracted through several processes. First, a personal interview will be conducted, lasting a minimum of one hour, recorded by audiotape. Later, classroom observations will be requested, recorded by both audiotape and videotape, strictly for the purpose for accurate transcription. Afterward, an exchange of dialogues via electronic mail may be needed throughout the study. There will also be a blog website offered for each participant's use, to randomly add ideas, thoughts, and/or situations that occur throughout the study, as well as answer any prompt questions throughout the study. The blog will be password protected and will only be available for those participants who choose to contribute to this study. Exchange of dialogues on the secure blog site are encouraged but not required.

In order to gain a richer picture of how knowledge is developed by literature teachers who are assigned to teach composition courses, a total of six teachers will be selected. Specifically, three teachers will be selected, including adjunct, part-time or full-time instructors, or teaching assistants, who have completed or are in the process of completing their Master's degree in literature, with less than four years of composition teaching experience. The other three participants will include more experienced literature teachers, who have completed either a Master's or Doctoral degree, with at least four years of composition teaching experience. All participants must be willing to be observed within their classroom environments, at least twice per semester.

It is NOT my goal of this study to identify successful or unsuccessful strategies or behaviors. My only goal is to try to discover *how* composition teaching knowledge is constructed through your personal and/or professional experiences as teachers, who have been trained in one content area and assigned to teach another. **Your participation is voluntary. A pseudonym will be assigned to you and to the school that you represent to ensure confidentiality throughout the investigative process and in the final report.**

Thank you for your assistance.

Kathleen A. Richards, PhD Candidate
Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Participant's Consent

Kathleen Richards has my permission to conduct an interview. _____ yes

Kathleen Richards has my permission to observe in my classroom
during the school year of October 2010 to April 2011 _____ yes

Kathleen Richards has permission to use both audio and video
devices to record conversations and/or observations. _____yes

Signature

Date

Appendix D: Guidelines for First Meeting with the Participants

Procedures:

1. Go over the informed consent (2 copies: one for participant and one for myself)
 - a. Give participant time to read over consent form
 - b. Address some of the pertinent issues like, freedom to withdraw, and discuss any questions the participant may have regarding data collection.
2. Discuss the dissertation study.
3. Discuss the guidelines and instructions for using electronic journal (blog).
 - a. Help participant set up a protected username and password to log in to blog account.
 - b. Go through the procedures with participant.
 - c. Provide typed procedures for participant's continuous review.
 - d. Discuss the possibility that journaling is not intended for daily use, but instead, designed for the participant to log events or occurrences that have happened, including recent or past events. Explain to participant that once a week throughout the study, prompt questions will be posted. It will be at the participant's discretion when to answer these questions. Also, it will be suggested to the participant that he/she may post an entry at any time throughout the study.
 - e. Define to the participant what is meant by "events" or "occurrences."
 - f. Explain to participant that each entry will be printed and saved for future meetings with participant for verification and clarity.
 - g. Lastly, time will be dedicated to answer any and all questions that participant may have regarding the duties of the participant and to provide my contact information to participant for any further questions later throughout the study.

Appendix E: Initial Interview Questions for Dissertation

The following is a general guide of questions used for the first interviews. These questions assist the researcher in learning the backgrounds of each of the participants.

1. Tell me about yourself and your teaching.
 - Travel Experience
 - Languages you speak or have studied/length of study
 - Subject areas of study/degrees
 - Years of teaching
2. Tell me about your experiences of teaching.
 - Institutions where you have taught
 - Classrooms/courses you have taught
 - Lectures you have given (workshops, conferences, etc.)
 - Papers you have written for publication
3. Tell me what materials you use to teach English composition.
 - Textbooks
 - Rubrics
 - Handouts
4. Tell me what you do to construct the materials used to teach English composition. Please include
 - Syllabi
 - Handouts
 - Outside reading assignments (if any)
5. Tell me about your experiences with students in your first year comp classrooms.
 - Cultural Issues
 - Student Interaction
 - School Support System
6. What techniques do you use to involve students in learning to write?
 - Teaching/Learning
 - Special Projects
 - Use of literature

7. Tell me what you do to learn new techniques for teaching writing.
 - Read Subject Material
 - Attend Workshops/Conferences
 - Converse with Peers/Colleagues
 - Observe Writing Classrooms

Appendix F: Observation Protocol

Each class was observed twice during the spring semester (except for Eliza's second observation due to severe weather). The classes were recorded via video and notes were taken. The video camera was placed in the very back of the classroom, focused entirely on the teacher and not the students. At no time were students faces recorded or identified. The videos were then uploaded onto the researcher's computer for personal review of pedagogical practices used within the classrooms by each participant. Notes were also taken during time of observations which have been included as evidence.

Appendix G: Prompt Questions for Blog Site

Prompt One: Reflecting back upon all my experiences (at least, those which my memory will allow me to remember), I have asked myself these careful questions:

What have I learned? 2) What thoughts have I considered during or after my role as a teacher? What influences my teaching as a composition teacher? 3) What were/are my goals for my composition class and for myself as an educator? 4) Throughout my experiences, what feelings did I express? (anger, frustration, confusion, helplessness, joy, excitement) 5) What did I learn and how did it occur? Did I seek out knowledge? Was knowledge spontaneously told to me by someone else? 6) What did I do to learn? 7) Who specifically was/is involved in my learning? Colleagues? Students? Friends?

How would you answer the above questions?

Prompt Two: When did you begin teaching college writing? How many years have you taught college writing? If you have taught secondary education, how is teaching writing in the post-secondary educational context different from teaching writing in the secondary educational context?

Prompt Three: As a new instructor, I remember that one of the more difficult challenges of teaching was grading. While I was teaching, I developed my own unique way of grading. At the time, it worked for me; however, now, knowing what I know, I would do it differently. I now know that there are many different ways that one can grade coursework.

My question to you is, how did you learn to grade coursework? Did someone in your department at the university (where you first taught) hand you a rubric and say "Use this."? Were you left on your own to figure out your own system for grading? Did you follow your own teachers' styles of grading as examples?

How do you grade now? Have your grading methods changed over the years? If so, why and how?

Prompt Four: As a graduate student of English Literature, I never had the opportunity to observe another instructor teaching English courses, except to simply observe my own instructors teaching me. Reflecting back, as I began my teaching career, I remember thinking, "What did my past instructors do?"

When you began teaching, or as a graduate student, did you have the opportunity to observe other teachers/instructors teaching courses? Did you have teachers as mentors when you began teaching? Were you a teacher's assistant (TA) or a graduate assistant (GA)?

Prompt Five: I believe that I have inquired about the number of years that you have been teaching, but what I should have asked is, *how many years have you been teaching first year composition (college composition)?*

Also, do you find that teaching first year comp is different from teaching any other composition course - whether those courses are technical writing, basic writing, creative writing, etc? If so, why? Do first year comp courses entail a specific group of students different from other students in other writing courses? If so, how? Are your methods of teaching different in FYC than in other writing courses you may teach? Do you develop different teaching approaches? How are these developed?

Prompt Six: Most of you are teaching the second section of First Year Comp this semester, so I haven't had the opportunity to talk much about the first section of First Year Comp. As a literature graduate, do you find that teaching the first section is more challenging than teaching the second section of First Year Comp? (I am assuming that the first section is generally based on teaching expository essay writing.)

Are essays written in class or do you require students to write the essays out of class, generally on a computer? Are the essays then brought to class for peer review? Is peer review a part of the grade for the course? Are students given a final exam essay? Is this essay written in class? Are rubrics used in this course? Do students generally understand the use of the rubric once it is explained to them?

Does your university require a certain number of essays for section one of First Year Comp? What (essays) does your university require the students to write? If the university does not require specific types of essays, what types of essays do you generally require? How did you "come to know" what types of essays are important to teach?

Every university has a different policy regarding what is taught in First Year Comp courses. However, generally it is the discretion of the instructor to decide how essay writing is taught, and sometimes the instructor is given the "freedom" to choose what types of essays the students will write. How do you decide? Do you find yourself changing your teaching strategies every semester? Why or why not?

Prompt Seven: As I began teaching, I remember that I never really knew my students. I could say that I "knew" at least one in every class, but knowing a student's name and recognizing that student in a crowd is definitely different from *knowing* that student. Where were my students from? How much writing had they done prior to attending my class? What were their goals for the class? What were their goals in life?.....I am embarrassed to say, but I had NO IDEA.

When I began teaching, I taught five freshmen composition courses at two different institutions. I had approximately 100 or so students. Maybe I was more worried about how I was going to pull off teaching a course I had never taught before, or maybe I was simply overwhelmed by the number of students and papers to grade. Whatever my reason at the time, I should have paid more attention. After all, the students in our classrooms have needs. They are not just students, but bright, eager-to-learn (we hope), incredible individuals.

So what will I change next time? Maybe I will set aside the first day of class as a "getting to know you" exercise (without the music from *The King and I*, of course)....coffee and donuts anyone? Or maybe I'll make the first writing assignment a biographical narrative of sorts. Or

maybe I'll have the students write a book, entitled "Things People Should Know about Me" composed of all their class writings. Or maybe I'll suggest that we all go to dinner one evening to chat the night away! Or, being from the South, maybe I'll host a 'pot-luck' dinner and invite everyone to bring their favorite dish!

I really don't know at the moment what I *will* do; I only know that I intend to try harder.

How important do you think it is to know your students, and *how* do you get to know them?

Prompt Eight: As a new college/university teacher, I remember how challenging it was (and time-consuming) learning the use of new technology for the classroom (equipment and programs). What sorts of technology do you use for teaching composition? Over the years, have you had to learn a/any technological program(s) or machine(s)?

Do you enjoy using technology in the classroom or for assigning outside writing projects?

Prompt Nine: Some of you have stated that the use of literature (essays, short stories, articles, etc.) contributes greatly in your comp classrooms because published writings help students to recognize "good" writing. Would you ever try teaching composition courses without using literary examples?

As literature trained teachers, do you feel more comfortable using literature in your composition classrooms?

Prompt Ten: What have you found to be effective strategies for teaching freshman composition? How did you learn these effective teaching strategies?

Prompt Eleven: As trained literature teachers who are hired to teach composition, we seem to stumble every now and then, learning techniques and methods for teaching comp as we go along, semester after semester.

I would like to hear about some of your trial and error experiences while teaching freshman composition. If you can remember any (some may stick out in your mind more than others), please tell me about them.

Prompt Twelve: As literature teachers teaching freshman composition, do you think it would be beneficial if your university offered some sort of "composition teaching training course" for newly hired teachers....or even for teachers who wish to update their teaching practices/methods for teaching composition courses?

Prompt Thirteen: Each university generally has a set of objectives for freshman composition courses which are required for students to comprehend before completing the course. These objectives may be centered on the general structure of writing, the use of grammar, and/or the creativity of the work.

Two questions: First, what are your university's objectives (writing goals) for students in freshman writing courses? (You do not need to provide the name of your university.) Second, what do you consider the most important objectives (writing goals) for students to complete in freshman writing courses? In other words, what do you want your students to learn in freshman composition?

Prompt Fourteen: Sprinthall and Thies-Sprinthall (1983) mention that "adult learning theory suggests that adults learn more readily when they have the opportunity to interact with peers."

If this theory is true, then why do we seek out learning opportunities through interaction with others? Today, 2011, we can learn just about anything and everything on the internet, so why still seek out knowledge from our peers?

As adults (and teachers), do we find that we feel more confident in our own shoes to seek out knowledge from our peers (i.e. to discuss issues and methods/practices)? Do we do this (as teachers) to justify our teaching approaches? To find out how others teach differently? To incorporate other teaching methods/practices with our own?

Or, do we feel less confident as teachers (especially when we venture, or are placed, into new environments) that we seek out approval or "approved methods/practices of teaching" from our peers?

Either way, is approval from our peers just as important today as ever? Do we continually strive to learn from others, and if so, why? What are your comments?

Prompt Fifteen: When you need advice regarding questions you have about your students or about teaching writing, where do you go (or have gone) for this advice ?

Prompt Sixteen: As I slowly learned over the years, by reading books and discussing issues with other colleagues regarding teaching writing to students in my classroom, one particular category of student went under my radar....students with special needs. As most teachers do, it is our responsibility to have the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) statement available for students to read, either printed out on our syllabus or posted online somewhere. Of the three years of teaching first year composition, only one student approached me stating that this Act applied to her. I was obliged to help her. So she completed most of her writing out of class, since she needed more time to do so. After the semester was over, it would be months later when I thought about this student again.

While attending another university for my doctoral program, I decided to work part time in the writing center. While working there, the Writing Center Director held meetings once a month and invited speakers from different departments - GLBT Support, American Language Institute, and Center for Disabilities. The speakers from each of these support groups pointed out certain cues to look for when working with students and techniques to use while helping these students with their writing. Of all the classes and coursework I was completing, I learned my most valuable lessons while working in the writing center. For me, working in writing centers has changed my way of thinking about teaching writing.

There is no telling how many other students had needs that went "under my radar". Did I have students with dyslexia? Did I have students with reading challenges or other disabilities? Did my essay topics exclude certain students? If I had never worked in *that particular writing center and learned about those particular issues and skills*, it may have been years (or gosh forbid, decades) before I would have learned the ignorance of my ways.

We learn through experience. We learn from the mistakes that we have made and the time given to reflect upon those mistakes (from minutes after making those mistakes, to months, or even years). As teachers, we are continuously learning. I believe that this continuum (learning) is what makes the best teachers!

So the question for today is *what have you learned from your past teaching experiences regarding your students' needs, interests or wants? In other words, what sorts of reflections have encouraged you to seek changes in your teaching methods (if there have been any changes)? If there have been changes in your teaching, what changes have you made in your teaching, and why?*

Prompt Seventeen: I remember during my second semester an occurrence that I worried over for quite some time. I was teaching Basic English at a local junior college. One of my students, out of a class of twenty, was an English language learner. Let's say that her name is Maria. Maria sat in the back of my classroom, and never spoke, except when I called attendance.

On the first night of teaching, as a 'get to know you' exercise, I asked all students to write a paragraph explaining who they are, where they are from, why they are in college and what they wanted to accomplish. This also gave me a chance to examine each student's writing skill without the student having to worry if the assignment was going to be graded.

Maria's writing was very short...three sentences to be exact. So, I found out her name, where she was from, and that she was in college to study cosmetology. Her sentences were written in English, but her writing was similar to a fourth grader. I should have known from this 'sign' that writing, for Maria, was going to be a struggle, but I didn't. I also did not understand the language barrier she was struggling with, or the courage she secretly held in her silence, surrounded and dominated by English speakers. Unfortunately, Maria dropped the class after a couple of weeks. At the time I thought nothing about it. I did not know if she dropped out of all of her classes, or if she just dropped my English course. I was "too busy" to pursue this investigation, and in fact, as a part-time teacher, I didn't know if I had the authority to check to see if she was still attending the junior college.

You must remember that my Master's degree is in English Literature and at no time were any courses in pedagogy offered in the Master's program. So 'teaching' ANYONE was new for me. Needless to say, my first experience teaching an English language learner was disastrous. In a way, I'm grateful for the situation that occurred because I never would have questioned myself or my teaching methods. However, I am disturbed that the occurrence happened. Maria was entitled to a 'professional' teacher, one who knew how to help her instead of one who was ignorant of her and her situation.

As the years passed, and I encountered more and more students from other countries in my classes, I was the one who felt more and more 'uneducated' by their presence. I needed help....and a lot of it. I had MANY, MANY questions. So I sought out ways to learn.

My question for you all (ya'll) is this, have you, at any point in your career(s), ever been faced with questions regarding teaching students whose primary language is not English? If you have had questions, regarding the student(s) or teaching strategies, what did you do to search for the answers?

Prompt Eighteen: When I began teaching English Composition, I found out that it was my own responsibility to make a syllabus for each of my classrooms. Since I was a British Lit major, with no former classes or training in pedagogy, I found this a little unnerving. SO, I took my textbook, assigned for my class, and developed my syllabus with bits and pieces from each chapter, making sure to cover what needed to be covered for the semester. However, I was still unsure if this was the 'correct' procedure. So, what did I do next? I simply went to any full-time professor (instructor) teaching English and asked for the 'correct' procedure (how to develop a syllabus). Here's what I found out. At a junior college, the teachers were more than happy to oblige. A couple of teachers simply gave me copies of their syllabi. However, at the university level, teachers were not so forthcoming. I heard answers such as. "I don't use a specific syllabus" or "I haven't developed a syllabus yet". I suppose these answers were to challenge me to set out on my own adventure (aka do my own work). I wasn't 'lazy': I just didn't want to 'make a fool of myself' or 'do anything wrong', considering my position wasn't permanent and I wanted to be re-hired in the future. I later found out that novice adjuncts go through a process called "sink or swim". I guess the dog-paddling worked, because I survived for four years before going back to school to begin my PhD.

So, my question to you is, how did you develop your first syllabus (for teaching first year comp)? Has your syllabi development changed over the years? Does it change every semester? Why or why not?

Prompt Nineteen: Can you remember your first day of teaching? Can you remember how you felt? Can you remember the butterflies in your stomach and the shortness of breath, right before entering your first classroom? Can you remember the classroom full of faces that expected you to be some all-knowing, wise individual and expected you to distribute this knowledge to them, providing wisdom and expertise? Do you remember the pressure and anxiety? All those feelings that I just described are what I experienced my first day of teaching. I did not lose those feelings until a couple of weeks had passed. And even after three years of teaching, I never felt like some "all-knowing, wise individual." To this day, I still don't. I'm always seeking answers to questions that I cannot answer on my own.

I would like to hear about your first day of teaching. Make sure to include where you were when you began teaching (institution, city, state, etc.) and how you coped with the anxiety (if you were anxious, that is).

Prompt Twenty: How is thinking about teaching composition different than thinking about teaching literature?

Appendix H: Final Interview Questions

- 1) Please describe a particular classroom episode that you feel was a learning experience for you as a college writing instructor.
- 2) Please describe a new approach/technique/activity to teaching writing that you may have tried in your classroom – how did it work?
- 3) For the first section of first year English composition, expository writing, do you instruct students to use the five paragraph essay structure? Why?
- 4) What teaching methods have you used to teach writing? (i.e., peer review, free writing, etc.)
- 5) Do you share your own teaching practices with other teachers of first year English composition? If so, why? If not, why?
- 6) If you have experienced any ineffective teaching methods throughout your years of teaching, what were they and what have you done to make your teaching methods more effective?
- 7) Discuss any pedagogical changes you may have made in your first year English composition courses over the years. What occurrences lead you to these changes?
- 8) How often do you change your syllabi for first year English composition?
- 9) Discuss any surprises concerning your first year English composition teaching experience which may have lead you to change your pedagogical approaches to teaching.
- 10) Since you have been teaching first year English composition, have you ever read any texts written by composition theorists? If so, can you relate to any of them?
- 11) Please discuss how your literature classes (English classes) were taught in your upper grade/graduate classes while you were attending college?
- 12) Would you say that when you first began teaching, you simply imitated teaching styles/methods/practices that you observed your teachers doing when you were a student? If so, how? If not, why?

- 13) When you first began teaching, did you follow the “guidelines” given to you by the institution (textbook/objectives/etc) where you taught? How long after did you break through this “shell” and develop your own individual techniques for teaching college writing?
- 14) Why is/was it important (personally or professionally) to seek out new knowledge needed for teaching first year English composition?
- 15) How do you know how to teach first year English composition today?
What are the reasons for teaching FYC the way that you do?
Why do you ask your students to write as you instruct?
- 16) Did you study literary theory in your English graduate study? What do you remember most from your study of literary theory? Do you still rely on what you’ve learned in literary theory while teaching composition? Do you feel you ever use or think about some aspect of literary theory while teaching composition? If so, how?
- 17) Describe the term ‘diversity’?
- 18) Does a diverse student body comprise your first year composition classrooms?
- 19) Have you ever had any questions regarding teaching first year composition to multilingual students? If so, where do (did) you go or what do (did) you do to find the answers to your questions?

Appendix I: Eliza's English 1010 Course Syllabus

This course is the first of a two-course sequence designed to help you master college level writing and to give you a foundation for the kind of writing that you will have to do throughout your professional and personal life as an adult. We will be building on what you learned in high school and developing more sophisticated ways of communicating with a reading audience.

While you are not yet (and may never be) professional writers, I will organize this class as professional writing classes are organized. That means that at some point in the semester you will have your paper reviewed and discussed by the entire class. Although this will be scary at first, this is the best way for you to see how your audience is responding to your paper, and what is working or what is going wrong in the paper.

Furthermore, I expect that you will begin to act like professional writers who write on demand according to various kinds of tasks contracted to them and who revise their work so that they can communicate more effectively.

Books and Materials

Axelrod and Cooper, *The St. Martin's Guide to Writing*, 6th edition.

Hodges' Harbrace Handbook or an equivalent handbook to use as a reference source

A desk dictionary (again, to use as a reference source)

A freshman writing folder

Albom, *Tuesdays with Morrie* (also assigned for Univ. 101)

Money for photocopying

Requirements

1. You are required to complete and turn in all six major paper assignments. If you fail to turn in any one of the assignments, you will fail the course.
2. If you fail to be prepared for the day that your draft is being reviewed, your final grade will be dropped 10 points (the equivalent of a letter grade).
3. Attendance and participation are required. You are allowed 4 absences for whatever reasons you see fit. Any more than 4 absences will mean that your final grade will drop 5 points for each additional absence. Attendance in class means more than just occupying a seat. Make sure that you come prepared to do the work of the class on that day.

Classroom civility

It is very important, particularly in a writing class, to behave towards each other with civility and professional courtesy. While constructive criticism is the most helpful comment a writer can receive, under no circumstances will you be allowed to insult another person or that person's work. Also, during the duration of class, I expect that your attention will be focused on the work of the classroom and that any other distractions, such as beepers and telephones will be turned off.

Grading

I will be using a portfolio assessment to determine your final grade. That means that throughout the semester the grades on your papers will be informative and will not figure in your final grade. At the end of the semester you will be required to turn in four

of your essays. They can be the versions that you turned in initially and that I graded or revised essays. I will grade the portfolio holistically (i.e., I look at the portfolio as a whole rather than grade each individual paper) according to the standards of the English Department that are included in your freshman writing folder. In an introduction to your portfolio, you will explain your own improvement as a writer and explain why you chose these four papers to show off your strengths as a writer. While this introduction won't be graded, it will influence your grade if it points out strengths that I might not have noticed otherwise.

Your final grade will be based primarily on your portfolio (75%). The other 25% of your grade will be based on your participation in class (including the completion of any intermediate steps in the process of writing a paper that I ask you to prepare).

I will be using the new +/- grading system for your final grade. The numerical scale that will determine your grade is:

A=100-90

B+= 87-89 B=84-86 B-=80-83

C+=77-79 C=74-76 C-=70-73

Please note that you cannot pass this class with a grade lower than a C-. If you complete all the work of the class and do not have excessive absences, you will be awarded an N, which means that you have not passed the course and will be required to repeat it. The N will not affect your GPA.

Disabilities

If you have a disability that requires accommodation or assistance, please see me immediately, and if requested, provide me with documentation and assessment from the Office of Disabled Student Services.

Calendar

(subject to revision)

Aug 21 Introduction

Aug 23 Diagnostic writing assignment

Aug 25 St. Martin's , Chapter 1. The writing process

Aug 28 St. Martin's , Chapter 3. Paper #1 assigned (profile of yourself as a child)

Aug 30 Discussion of essays in St. Martin's

Sept 1 Patterns of organization and development

Sept 4 Labor Day Holiday

Sept 6 Rough Drafts due from everyone. Workshop on drafts

Sept 8 Workshop on drafts

Sept 11 Workshop on drafts

Sept 13 Paper #1 due. Assign Paper #2 (profile a university service or career).

Research methods and materials

Sept 15 St. Martin's , Chapter 4. Documentation

Sept 18 Discussion of essays in St. Martin's

Sept 20 Paragraph organization and development

Sept 22 Drafts due from the designated students. Workshop (If you haven't yet read Tuesdays with Morrie , start now)

Sept 25 Workshop
 Sept 27 Workshop
 Sept 29 Paper #2 due. Assign Paper #3 (Response). Defining your topic
 Oct 2 How to do research on a text
 Oct 4 Analysis of sample essays
 Oct 6 St. Martin's , Chapter 13
 Oct 9 Drafts due from the designated students. Workshop
 Oct 11 Workshop
 Oct 13 Workshop
 Oct 16 Paper #3 due. Sign up for mid-term conferences
 Oct 18 No class—mid-term conferences
 Oct 20 No-class—mid-term conferences
 Oct 23 Assign Paper #4 (explain a concept, process, event). St. Martin's, Chapter 5.
 Oct 25 Analyze essays in St. Martin's .
 Oct 27 Discuss different development patterns (St. Martin's, Chapters 14-18)
 Oct 30 Drafts due from designated students. Workshop
 Nov 1 Workshop
 Nov 3 Workshop
 Nov 6 Paper #4 due. Assign Paper #5 (analysis of an artifact).
 Nov 8 Review of methods of development and discussion of which would be
 appropriate for a particular artifact
 Nov 10 Discuss sample essays
 Nov 13 Drafts due from designated students. Workshop
 Nov 15 Workshop
 Nov 17 Workshop
 Nov 20 Paper #5 due. Assign revision
 Nov 22 Workshop on revision
 Nov 24 Thanksgiving Holiday
 Nov 27 Workshop
 Nov 29 Workshop
 Dec 1 Workshop
 Dec 4 Read or review if you have already read St. Martin's , Chapter 23. Assign
 portfolio introduction. How to choose your portfolio pieces.

 Dec 6 Organizing and shaping the introduction
 Dec 8 Submit portfolios

Portfolios will be returned for your review during the regularly scheduled final exam period. However, the portfolio becomes the property of the English Department. If you would like copies of your essays, please make them prior to including them in your portfolio.

Appendix J: Eliza's English 1020 Course Syllabus

English 1020-064

Spring 2011

Research and Argumentative Writing Syllabus

We will focus on three skills essential to your success in college and in your professional and personal life once you leave college: research, writing, and rhetoric, particularly persuasion. By the end of the class you should be more informed about a topic you have chosen, a more confident writer, and a more competent persuader.

This class will be run as a workshop. Come to every class period prepared to write on your current project by having an up-to-date draft of your current writing project.

My expectations

- Come to every class session prepared to think and write
- Recognize that class assignments are designed to teach you life-long writing skills
 - Treat your work and the work of your classmates seriously, particularly when working collaboratively
- Challenge yourself to do your best work

My commitment

- I will provide clear and supportive instruction to help you achieve your best work
- I will be available for consultation, in class if time allows and outside class during office hours and by appointment
- I will provide models for you as you learn new skills
- I will provide you with helpful feedback to improve your work
- I will be fair regarding expectations but I will also set the bar high so that you improve as much as possible. This course will be a stretch for every person.

Required texts and materials

- *Hodge's Harbrace Handbook* or another up-to-date handbook
- A pocket folder (for submission of your final portfolio)
- A 3-ring binder or some other way of keeping all of your work and research in one place. This is very important for making your life easier in the middle of the semester.

Required assignments and activities Percentage of Final Grade

| | |
|---|----|
| Research assignments | 20 |
| 4 Papers (approx. 1200 words each) | 40 |
| Portfolio | 30 |
| All other homework assignments | 10 |
| 2 required conferences outside of class (missed conferences will count as absences) | |

I use the + / - system. A minus (-) will end at the 2 of each decade (e.g., 72 is a C-) and a plus(+) will begin at the 8 of each decade (e.g., 78 is C+). Please remember that you cannot pass English 1020 with a D. You must receive a C- or better as your final grade in order to pass. If you submit all your assignments, but your writing is not up to passing standards, you will be assigned an N as long as you have not violated the classroom policies regarding absences or late work. The N

does not affect your gpa that determines graduation or academic standing; however, it may affect the gpa used for scholarship eligibility, such as the lottery scholarship. If you receive an N, you must retake English 1020. You cannot receive an N if you have previously received a grade in English 1020

Course business: All assignments will be emailed as attachments to your university email address. It is your responsibility to make sure that your inbox is sufficiently clear to accept emails from me.

Disabilities: If you have a disability that requires accommodation, please see me immediately and provide documentation from the Office of Disabled Student Services.

Tentative Calendar

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Jan 17 | No Class – MLK Day |
| Jan19 | Introductions |
| Jan 24 | Defining a topic |
| Jan 26 | Research – Meet in the Library |
| Jan 31 | Research and writing |
| Feb 2 | Research – Meet in the Library |
| Feb 7 | Research and writing |
| Feb 9 | Research – Meet in the Library |
| Feb 14 | Research and writing |
| Feb 16-March 2 | Paper #1 |
| Mar 2 – Mar 28 | Paper #2 |
| Mar 7-9 | Spring Break |
| Mar 28-Apr 11 | Paper#3 |
| Apr 11 – Apr25 | Paper#4 |
| Apr 27 | Revision workshop; instructions regarding the portfolio |

Final portfolio submitted at the time scheduled for the final exam.

This calendar will be supplemented with specific due dates and assignments for individual writing projects.

Appendix K: Kelly's English 101 Course Syllabus

English 101:02

Monday/Wednesday/Friday 10:20-11:15

Spring 2011

TEXTS: Selzer, Jack and Dominic Delli Carpini. *Conversations:*

Readings for Writing. New York: Pearson Longman, 2009.

Lunsford, Andrea. *Easy Writer*, **3rd** Edition. Boston, Bedford/St. Martins, 2009.

Graff, Gerald, Cathy Birkenstein and Russel Durst *They Say/ I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 2009. (*readings available on Angel*)

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS NEEDED:

3-ring binder (for all class notes & assignments)

several z-pocket folders (for essays only, not homework)

small stapler &/or paper clips (bring to class on essay due dates)

dictionary

CATALOG DESCRIPTION: EH 101 (3 hours) Critical reading, essay writing, and documentation. Grading scale: A, B, C, NC (No Credit). Prerequisite: placement

NCATE-based Learning Outcomes (or Course Objectives): The purpose of this course is to promote critical thinking and facilitate improved oral and written communication skills. So that you may understand how this course is relevant to your learning and overall educational experience, outlined below are the means by which the objectives for this course will be fulfilled.

Critical Thinking

Students who successfully complete this course should be able to understand the process of writing as a way of knowing.

- Through reading assignments and class lecture they will become acquainted with various forms of academic writing conventions
- Through class discussions, in class reviews of grammar/usage and essay drafts they will acquire a basic knowledge of grammar, sentence structure, rhetorical strategies and learn to treat writing as a process
- Through group work, class discussions and peer review activities students will encounter and employ multiple explanations of crucial concepts that will maximize students' varied learning styles and encourage a richer understanding of ideas.
- By writing a research paper, students will select or create interesting problem situations and/or integrate real-world problems to engage audiences.

Oral and Written Communication

Students who successfully complete this course will also write essays that: develop and argue a

clearly-stated thesis, evaluate, utilize and document evidence, allow for complex writer-reader relationships and employ a clear yet distinctive prose style.

- All written assignments will require planning, revising, and refining writing samples that are grammatically correct, convey information effectively, and are appropriately constructed for various purposes and audiences.
- By writing multiple drafts of each essay, students will develop, write and revise assigned materials that connect new concepts to prior knowledge structures.
- In all written assignments students will demonstrate their knowledge of the discipline. Teacher's feedback on essay drafts will identify problem areas and suggest solutions in order to help students address common difficulties and questions.
- By writing a research paper, students will produce materials that illustrate multiple viewpoints, theories, and methods of inquiry.
- The research paper will also allow students to create, write, and revise interdisciplinary assigned materials that give opportunities to integrate knowledge and skills across disciplines.
- Through group assignments/activities and oral presentations of research, students will demonstrate effective verbal, nonverbal, written, and media communication techniques that foster inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction.

SUMMARY OF COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Written ssignments:

10 Essay #1
10 Essay #2
10 Essay #3
40 Research paper

Class Participation:

30 Class Participation (in-class assignments, quizzes, drafts, attendance, etc.)

DETAILS OF COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Written Assignments (70)

Much of the writing in this class will be for the purpose of developing and refining the "raw" ideas and resources that come out of our class discussions/activities as well as your own reading and researching. Yet, part of learning about the "process" of writing is grasping the concept of "true revision." A true revision is one that makes "wide ranging changes at the idea level as well as the sentence level." That means more than just the correction of grammar and proofreading mistakes, but the extensive reevaluation of concepts and experimentation with new approaches to a given topic that bring about a final paper that, while containing elements of earlier versions, actuality becomes an entirely new thing. (We will talk more about revision" in class.)

Building up to each essay assignment will be three written assignments:

1. *Summary (1/2-1pg): an interpretation and reiteration of another person's main ideas stated in your words, but without your comment or opinion. The goal of this piece is to demonstrate your understanding of another's point of view.*

2. *Critique/Analysis (2pg): an interpretation and reiteration of a writer's main ideas stated in your words along with your comments and opinions about the content and form (if relevant) of the author's work. The goal of this piece is to demonstrate your ability to articulate someone else's views and your position in relation to it.*

3. *Synthesis (3Pg): an interpretation and reiteration of two or more writers' main ideas and explanation of their relationship to one another. The purpose of this piece is to demonstrate your ability to make connections between multiple points of view, present a common thread that runs through them (similar to summary except that you are dealing with more than one source).*

There will be three essay assignments and one research paper:

4. *Essay(4Pg): an assertion or argument put forth by you on the topic or theme that has been read & discussed over the past few weeks. Includes interpretation and reiteration of the writers' read thus far along with your comments and opinions about the issue being discussed. The goal of this piece is to make your own assertion on this topic and incorporate the perspectives of other writers. (similar to the critique and synthesis except the focus is on your rather than their perspective and similar to research paper, except everyone writes on the same topic and uses only articles from textbook)*

5. *Research paper (5-7Pg): an assertion or argument put forth by you and supported by others. Includes interpretation and reiteration of multiple writers' main ideas along with your comments and opinions about the content of each author's work and the importance of their relationship to one another as well as to your own perspective. The goal of this piece is to make your own assertion on a topic that is also discussed by others. (similar to the previous assignments except the focus is on your rather than their perspective, you choose which of the 3 broad topics to write on and utilize at least 2 sources outside of class textbook)*

Reading Assignments

We are using three textbooks this semester; however, you will only have to purchase two of them. Excerpts from *They Say/I Say* will be posted on Angel and you are expected to print and bring these reading assignments to class.

Reading and writing are equally important for obtaining the goals of the course. For this reason, it is MANDATORY that you keep up with all reading assignments and that you read carefully and thoughtfully-preferably with pen in hand, taking notes and highlighting as you go.

I will frequently give quizzes on reading assignments at the beginning of class. Those who are late or absent will not be able to make these up.

Class Participation (30)

This area of evaluation includes class discussion, homework, quizzes, in-class assignments, attendance and pretty much anything else that doesn't fall under the "written assignments" category above (see *Policies and Procedures* below and class schedule attached).

I will frequently give quizzes on reading assignments at the beginning of class. Those who are late or absent will not be able to make these up.

Class Participation (30)

This area of evaluation includes class discussion, homework, quizzes, in-class assignments, attendance and pretty much anything else that doesn't fall under the "written assignments" category above (see *Policies and Procedures* below and class schedule attached).

Writing Center: You are encouraged to meet with a Writing Center consultant during the semester. The Writing Center is located in 123 Mad Hall Monday-Thursday, 9:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m. and Friday, 9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m. and in 115 CCRH (Central Campus Residence Hall) Sunday-Thursday, 6:00-8:00 p.m. Consultants are available for 50 minute sessions and help by giving you feedback on any kind of writing. They are also happy to help you brainstorm ideas if you do not have a draft yet. * *As an added incentive, at the end of the semester I will drop the lowest grade on a quiz or homework assignment for any student who has had at least 3 Writing Center consultations during the semester!* (Note: in order to receive credit, you must give tutors permission to email me a copy of your record of session forms)*

Appendix L: Kelly's English 102 Syllabus

Freshman Composition —Summer 2010
EH 102-02 T/TH 12:30p-2:30p

TEXTS: Gwynn, R.S. *Literature: A Pocket Anthology*, 4th Edition. New York: Penguin, 2009.

Lunsford, Andrea. *Easy Writer*, 3rd Edition. Boston, Bedford/St. Martins, 2009.

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS NEEDED:

3-ring binder (for all class notes & assignments)

Spiral notebook (for journal only)

several pocket folders

small stapler &/or paper clips (bring to class on essay due dates)

dictionary

CATALOG DESCRIPTION: EH 102 (3 hours)

This course serves as an introduction to literature and literary analysis. Students will participate in rigorous academic discussion and written analysis of required readings and assignments. The instructor will provide students with the opportunity to explore various forms and manifestations of literature while at the same time create an environment that encourages written academic interrogation and critique. **NOTE:** Students must earn the grade of “C” to receive credit for this course.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Critical Thinking

- Students who successfully complete this course should be able to understand and discuss literature as an interpretation of experience and a way of knowing (see “Critical Thinking Activities” under Class Participation description below)
- They will become acquainted with important literary works and authors and should develop “an aesthetic awareness and creativity” that will enable them to effectively explore, evaluate and interpret literature through the writing of formal compositions. (see “Essays”)

Oral and Written Communication

- Students will develop, write and revise assigned materials that connect new concepts to prior knowledge structures. (see “Essays”)

- Students will demonstrate effective verbal, nonverbal, written, and media communication techniques that foster inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction. (see “Class Participation”)
- Students should acquire a basic knowledge of grammar, sentence structure, rhetorical strategies and learn to treat writing as a process (see “Essays”)
- Students will also identify major literary genres, demonstrate understanding of elements significant to written analysis and evaluation and be able to define and use literary terms in both oral and written discussions. (see “Essays,” “Class Participation”)

GRADING/COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Grading:

50% Essays 1-4

50% Class Participation (in-class assignments, quizzes, drafts, attendance, etc.)

Grading Scale:

90 or above = A: the paper, for the most part, makes a clear and valid assertion that is both convincing and compelling; assertions are well supported with examples from the text and scholarly criticism. Outside sources are well documented and skillfully integrated.

80 or above = B: the paper may make a clear and valid assertion but lacks convincing and compelling support or there is adequate support but the assertion is unclear. The paper includes the use of scholarly criticism that may need to be better integrated. The skeleton of a strong paper exists but needs additional drafts to achieve it.

70 or above = C: although there is evidence of important assertions and an attempt to organize them, there may or may not be evidence of a main idea or central theme and it may or may not include adequate use of outside sources; overall paper lacks effectiveness and requires revision in several key areas

Below 70 = F: the paper is a first draft, ideas are scattered, unorganized and unsupported; it is difficult to discern the point or argument; with no thesis, no support and no evidence of organization or inclusion of outside sources this paper requires significant revision

Essays (50%). The essays you write will focus on interpretation and analysis of several literary texts representative of two genres: poetry & fiction. All essays will incorporate outside sources that include literary analysis as well as credible and relevant sources in areas such as Psychology, Sociology and History. Each essay assignment builds on the one before to help you understand the principles of revision and writing as a process. (See definition below)

Revisions: Much of the writing in this class will be for the purpose of developing and refining the “raw” ideas and resources that come out of our class discussions/activities as well as your own reading and researching. Yet, part of learning about the “process” of writing is grasping the concept of “true revision.” A true revision is one that makes “wide ranging changes at the idea level as well as the sentence level.” That means more than just the correction of grammar and proofreading mistakes, but the extensive reevaluation of concepts and experimentation with new approaches to a given topic that bring about a final paper that, while containing elements of earlier versions, actuality becomes an entirely new thing. (We will talk more about “revision” in class.)

Class Participation (50%). This area of evaluation includes class discussion, journals, homework, quizzes and in-class assignments as well as attendance (see *Policies and Procedures* below and class schedule attached).

- **Critical Thinking Activities:** With most reading assignments you will be assigned a critical thinking activity such as to answer discussion questions or write responses and/or interpretations of assigned readings. Actual assignments will vary but all will be used in one way or another during class discussions and group activities. These must always be typed as they may, at times, be turned in to me. Unless otherwise specified, **NO HANDWRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS ARE ACCEPTED** (see “Assignment specifications” below).
- **Drafting & Revising:** Rough drafts are very important. When drafts are due, please bring **typed copy only** and be prepared to have fellow classmates critique. (Note: no credit given for handwritten drafts).
- **Writing Center:** You are encouraged to meet with a Writing Center consultant (in person or on-line) during the semester. The Writing Center is located in Madison Hall 123 as part of the Student Success Center. To make an appointment go to the university website, select “Tutoring” in the menu and then click “Make an Appointment”.
- **Writing Workshops.** Actively participating in classroom workshop activities and peer response sessions is an important part of the learning process for this course.

--CLASS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES--

ATTENDANCE

1. Class participation is vital for success in this class! You will lose one letter grade for 6 absences. Seven or more absences will result in a failing grade for the course. **Note: Students who drop the course are responsible for properly withdrawing. (Last day to drop March 26)**
2. Each day you will be responsible for signing the sign-in sheet. **If you don't sign in, you are not present!**

3. If you know ahead of time that you will need to miss class, documentation must be provided and arrangements made before, not after, your return. A phone or e-mail message could go a long way in saving your grade!

EXCUSED VS UNEXCUSED ABSENCE:

- Please understand that when you miss a class—whether excused or unexcused—you are considered “absent.” If you have an “excused” absence you will be allowed to turn in any assignments missed or you will not be penalized if there are any assignments that cannot be made up (i.e. in-class activities).
- **However, your absence will still count towards the minimum allowed** (see #1 above), which means that 6 excused absences (or 3 excused, 3 unexcused, or any other combination) will still result in a letter grade deduction.
- Also, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed by scheduling a meeting with me **outside of class time**.

DEADLINES

1. Classwork: Must be present to do! If you miss a daily assignment for any reason (excused or not), you will not be able to make it up.

2. Essays: Essays are due at the beginning of class. Essays (and homework) are accepted up to 1 class period after the due date with a 10% grade reduction. Without prior arrangement, no assignments will be accepted beyond this allowance. (**Note:** I do NOT accept papers from students who are not *regularly* attending class.)

COURSEWORK

You are required to have a three-ring binder for this class. In it you should keep all assignments and activities that we do during the semester. Before the semester ends you will receive a progress report which will show your grades for all assignments completed to that point. It is your responsibility to check this report for any discrepancies. If you find there to be an error you will need to have your copy of the graded assignment so that any corrections necessary can be made.

ASSIGNMENT SPECIFICATIONS

All assignments that are turned in to me must be typed unless they are done in class and turned in on the same day. MLA format must be adhered to on all assignments (see Lunsford) and essays must be submitted in a two-pocket folder. Folders must include: a copy of the portion of each source from which you cite the most and a copy of the draft used for peer review. Other specifications will be given during class time. **PLEASE NOTE:** points will be deducted from class participation for any missing materials

COMPUTER LITERACY

For this class it is imperative that you be computer literate and have a working knowledge of word processing software (preferably Microsoft Word). If you do not own a personal computer there are numerous labs on campus that you may utilize to complete your assignments.

NOTICE: We all know that computers can be unreliable so always save assignments on a backup disk. “My computer crashed” is an excuse as old and tired as “my dog ate my homework”!

E-mail: The e-mail address that you use when registering for classes is the e-mail address that I will use when sending out information relevant to class assignments or discussions. This means that you **MUST** check that e-mail account (or have your messages forwarded from that account to whichever account you use) in order to stay abreast of any changes or last minute information that I may need to relay.

Assignments may be e-mailed, but must comply with the same deadline policies listed above with these additional requirements: (1) Send as a Microsoft Word (rich text) attachment –**DO NOT CUT AND PASTE INTO THE MESSAGE**; (2) include voicemail message telling me you sent an e-mail; (3) bring additional materials (in a two-pocket folder) to the next class meeting. (Remember, e-mail and voicemail record time and date message was sent. This will be used to determine how late (or not) an assignment is.)

Angel: We will be using Angel in this class for homework assignments and class discussion. We will discuss the particulars in class.

Office hours: Thanks to modern technology I need not be in my office to be accessible to you! You may e-mail me at any time about anything. I check my e-mail regularly, even on weekends, and try to reply as quickly as possible. Although the number of hours that I have designated for actual office time is limited, I am still available and accessible to you so do not hesitate to contact me.

Copies of Student Papers: Periodically during any given academic year, copies of student papers are needed for pedagogical purposes. No identifying information is used and primarily

only faculty and staff have access to them. However, if at any time during the semester you wish for your paper to not be used, please contact me immediately.

Plagiarism: I have a “zero-tolerance” policy for plagiarized work, “plagiarism” being the use of others’ ideas as your own without proper acknowledgment and/or the purchase (or bribery) of papers written by anyone other than you. The penalty for plagiarism is a **zero** on the work in question and, potentially, a **zero** in this class.

THE “GOOD FAITH” PLEDGE

1. I will not enroll in a class that I don’t have time to attend or to prepare the work for.
2. I will faithfully endeavor to attend class every time it meets.
3. I will strive mightily to BE ON TIME for class each time it meets.
4. I will not schedule medical appointments, job interviews, or other activities so that I have to leave class early.
5. I will not expect the teacher to bend the rules or make special allowances to accommodate the events of my personal life.
6. If the circumstances of my life become so involved that I miss a large number of classes and/or fall so far behind in my classwork that I cannot catch up, I will drop the class.
7. When my instructor gives instructions, I will actually *read* or *listen to* the instructions and endeavor to follow them.
8. I will be sure to ask my instructor questions when I do not understand something, but first I will consult my textbooks, notes or syllabus to see if the answer to my question has already been given to me.
9. I will complete and deliver every assignment on time.
10. I will not talk with my neighbors or work on assignments for other courses during class.
11. I will never, when contemplating cutting class, ask my instructor, “Are we going to do anything important today?”
12. I absolutely will TURN OFF MY CELL PHONE before entering the classroom.

Appendix M: Jessica's English 101 Course Syllabus

| |
|---|
| EH 101 Freshman Composition I – Fall 2009 |
|---|

Course Description

Critical reading, essay writing, and documentation. Grading scale: A, B, C, D, F. Prerequisite: placement.

Required materials

- ❖ Behrens, Lawrence; Rosen, Leonard J. *Sequence for Academic Writing*. 4th ed. New York: Longman, 2010.
- ❖ Muller, Gilbert H. *The McGraw-Hill Reader*. 10th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2008
- ❖ Lunsford, Andrea A. *Easy Writer: A Pocket Reference*. 3rd ed. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's. 2009.
- ❖ Internet access

Course Objectives

This course is designed to introduce freshman students to the academic writing process. Academic writing includes critical reading, analysis, and writing as a process. More specifically, each area will focus on writing techniques and procedures applicable to all disciplines. The noted assignments will lead to the learning goals listed:

- **Critical Reading** – Critically read and evaluate essays which discuss significant issues (readings). Identify the audience and purpose for which a given text was constructed (quizzes/discussions). Summarize argument and exposition of a text accurately (essays 1-6).
- **Rhetorical Knowledge** – Explore multiple strategies and structures used to convey ideas and argue points (quizzes). Uncover evidence, logic, and sources to evaluate and understand relationships of ideas (essays 1-6).
- **Writing** – Develop and argue (support) a clearly-stated thesis. Cite and document in MLA style all sources of material. Draft and revise essays to strengthen focus and improve clarity. Complete major revision of one essay to self-assess/note strengths and weaknesses (essay 6). Evaluate progress of self and others (peer review exercises).

All instructors are required to include course objectives in each course's syllabus. In addition to the objectives stated above, I would like to include these goals for this course:

- Conclude EH 101 as a student who is more than adequately prepared for the writing tasks of EH 102 and the sophomore literature survey courses.
- Develop methods for managing assignments, including assessing time needed, understanding the assignment given, and overcoming issues or problems with completing the assignment.
- Understand personal perspectives on writing and your writing process as well as the role of writing in your academic and professional lives.

Assignments/Grade Distribution/Late Policies

| Assignments | Description | Total Points |
|---|---|--------------|
| Essays (6 essays total; 19 total pages minimum) | Summary, Critique, Argumentative (2), Research Essay Draft, & Research Essay | 80% |
| Reading Responses (1.5-2 pages) | Seven responses total; drop lowest two grades | 5% |
| Midterm Exam | Critique of and Response to Sample Essays | 5% |
| Homework & Class Participation | Various assignments given most class periods as well as assessment of total participation over the course of the term | 10% |
| | Final Grade: | 100% |

Assignments receive a letter grade which I then convert to a numerical grade: A+ = 100, A = 95, A- = 90, B+ = 89, B = 85, B- = 80, etc. Even though you might be tempted to skip an assignment because it does not seem essential, eventually missed assignments add up to missed points, which in turn causes lower grades. Your chances of earning the grade you want increase when you participate in class and turn in all assignments.

Essays

In each Freshman Composition course, the University requires students generate at least 19-22 pages of writing. To fulfill this requirement, you will write six essays of various types and lengths as well as some reading responses. For each essay, you either will receive a list of potential topics to choose from or I will give you the chance to generate your own topic, which I must then approve.

These essays will help you build the academic writing skills that you will have to employ over and over in subsequent courses. In classes such as this one, I am not grading you based on what you say so much as how you say it. You will use these essays to learn the strategies necessary for effective written communication in all situations.

Prior to turning in each essay, the class will have a workshop session where you will exchange your drafts with other students who will then offer comments on your essay. This session is worth 20 of the 100 points each essay can earn. Missing a workshop session will cost you 20

points; if your paper gets a B, which is an 85, missing a workshop brings the grade down to a 65 instead. **It is imperative that you attend each workshop with a draft of your essay in hand.** Whenever we have a workshop, please bring in the proper number of copies of your draft. You must bring a complete draft (at least 1.5 -2 pages) or you will not receive credit for the workshop and will be docked an absence.

Reading Responses

This semester, you will complete 7 short essays on a prompt that I will provide you. Each should be 1.5-2 pages, double-spaced. These give you an opportunity to think about and discuss the articles and other materials that we will cover in class. You can also use them as an opportunity to do some brainstorming before you write your next essay. I will drop the two lowest grades at the end of the semester. Each of these is worth 40 points, for a total of 200 potential points.

Midterm Exam

Your midterm exam will be a take-home assignment that will ask you to examine one or two critical essays and discuss what they do right, what can be improved, and how those writers can make those improvements. This critique should help you look more critically what your own writing as you examine that of others. The midterm is worth 100 points.

EH 101-23 Policies and Procedures

Submission Guidelines

All assignments must

- be typed and double-spaced,
- be in any 12 point font (with a few exceptions),
- follow MLA format and citation guidelines,
- include a separate Works Cited page,
- have a suitable and accurate title,
- be submitted to the appropriate dropbox on Angel by 11.59 pm on the due date.

Point deductions apply for failure to adhere to each of the submission guidelines (half a letter grade *minimum* for each). Any essay turned in after the designated time on the designated due date can earn only half credit.

Office Hours/Email

My office hours are listed on the first page; feel free to stop by without an appointment during those times. If you need to see me and cannot come by during those hours, email me to set up an appointment.

Turning in Assignments

I do not accept assignments by email. Most of the bigger assignments must be turned in to a dropbox on Angel, but some may need to be submitted in hard copy. If you need to submit an assignment when I am not on campus, please submit it to the English Department office. They will stamp the assignment with its date and time of submission so that I will know when you turned it in. **Please do not slide anything under my office door. I will not accept assignments slid under my office door.**

Attendance

You are expected to attend every class meeting; you are not rewarded for doing so. Regular attendance, however, must work in tandem with preparedness for class. You are considered absent if you are not present when I take roll during class. You may have 4 unexcused absences without penalty. Five to six unexcused absences net a 10% deduction from your final grade. More than 6 unexcused absences earn you an F for the course. Excused absences will not count toward your total number of absences provided you give me a copy of your excuse for that absence; I need to have a physical copy to keep for myself. Additionally, coming in to class 15 minutes late counts as an absence. If you find yourself absent excessively, excused or not, you may want to consider dropping the course and taking it another time.

Ultimately, your grade depends upon the skills with which you complete your work. I hold you responsible for learning material covered in any given class period, even if you do not attend that class. If we do an assignment in class and you are absent, you may make up that assignment *if it is an excused absence*. Unexcused absences will not be able to make up in-class work. If you are absent, excused or not, it is your job to find out what you missed and to submit any and all assignments due that day. Your absence does not mean the assignment should also be absent.

Tardiness

Tardiness is disruptive for your classmates and for me, so do not arrive late to my class. There is no acceptable excuse for habitual tardiness. If this class does not fit into your life or into your schedule in such a way that will enable you to attend **on time**, then you should take a different section of this course at a time that is more conducive to your schedule. Coming into class 15 minutes late counts as an absence.

Late Assignments

You must turn in assignments at the beginning of class *or* to the appropriate dropbox on Angel by 11.59 p.m. on the due date. If you know that you will be absent, you need to make arrangements to turn the assignment in when it is due. Assignments are due on the posted date even if class is cancelled. I reserve the right to change due dates if necessary.

Any assignments turned in after 11.59 p.m. on the due date will earn ***half credit***; therefore it is imperative that you have them ready to submit the day that they are due.

Conferences

I require each student to meet with me at least once this term, usually during the run-up to the research paper. Our conference should last at least 15-30 minutes and is worth 50 bonus points. In the interim, feel free to stop by my office during my office hours or make an appointment to discuss any questions or issues you may have.

Writing Center

The Writing Center is a valuable resource for writers at all levels. You can go to them with a writing assignment at any stage and they will do what they can to help you achieve the desired end result. At least one of your essays will require a Writing Center visit as part of your grade so I recommend that you get to know the consultants there. The Writing Center is located in Madison Hall 123. Their website also features a Virtual Consultant option, which allows you to submit an essay online for their review.

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism, the unacknowledged use of others' ideas or words, is a serious academic violation. It can result in failing that particular assignment or the whole class and/or proceedings for academic misconduct. *I have failed students for an entire course because of plagiarism.* I have resources that will allow me to determine your honesty if I question it. Do not allow that to happen.

If I find that you have plagiarized an assignment, I will give you an F for that assignment and then allow you to revise it. If this happens more than once, you will fail the course. I also have the right to file a miscellaneous memo with the Judicial Review Board alerting them to your offense. Additionally, I can document your plagiarism officially, which will then go on your record and may require that you attend a plagiarism workshop (at your expense). I recommend that you not plagiarize in order to avoid the consequences of such a serious violation. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism or how to avoid it, please talk to me!

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should review carefully the definition and examples provided in Article III, Code of Student Conduct, *Student Handbook*, p. 93. If you have any questions in this regard, please contact me right away.

Note: Students should be aware that the English Department policy requires each instructor to use all possible means of detecting plagiarism, including free or pay-per-use detection services available online. An increasing number of plagiarism cases are being referred to Student Development Services for a judicial proceeding under the Student Code of Conduct. Sanctions for academic misconduct are listed in the Student Handbook.

Angel & TurnItIn.com

Angel is an online course support system. I use it as a repository for materials covered in class (lost your syllabus? Find it on Angel.) as well as the central area for submitting assignments. Your job is to make sure you have access to Angel and understand how to use it. Most assignments will be submitted on Angel so it is imperative that you become familiar with this system as soon as possible.

TurnItIn.com's original role was as an anti-plagiarism site where student work was checked against a database of other student writings and the content of all websites to detect any evidence of plagiarism. Turnitin is now available through Angel, which means that I will use Turnitin's capabilities as much as possible. Instructors can now use it for grading as well; rather than have you turn in hard copies of your essays, you must submit them to the appropriate Angel dropbox for grading. You must submit these assignments on the given due date by 11.59 pm or you will receive half-credit for the essay.

Use of Prior Work

You may not submit in fulfillment of requirements in this course any work submitted, presented, or used by you in any other course or section of this course.

Classroom Conduct

Each student should treat their classmates and instructor with courtesy. All cell phones should either be turned off or silenced for the duration of the class period. Anyone caught text messaging or talking on the phone during class will be asked to leave and penalized an absence. Repeat offenses (>2) will merit a 5% deduction from your final grade. If you have an emergency that requires you to answer your cell phone, please take your conversation out of the classroom or wait until after class is over to address the issue.

Withdrawing

Withdrawing from this course is the responsibility of the student, not the instructor. If you stop coming to class, that does not automatically equal a withdrawal. Students who stop coming to class, but do not withdraw will receive a failing grade for the course.

Students with Special Needs

If you have a disability or special need of any kind, please see me. In addition, students needing special accommodations must contact the Office of Student Development Services, located in the University Center.

Schedule

I reserve the right to make adjustments to the class schedule. Any adjustments will generally be in your favor; you will receive plenty of notice of these adjustments.

EH 101-23 – Fall 2009

S = Sequence for Academic Writing MHR = McGraw-Hill Reader EW = Easy Writer

| <i>Date</i> | <i>Pages to Read</i> | <i>Class Activities/Due Dates</i> |
|---------------|----------------------|--|
| Week 1 | | |
| 8/20 | Syllabus | Class Introduction |
| Week 2 | | |
| 8/25 | S225-259 | Writing Process Selecting Articles |
| 8/27 | S3-30 & 73-84 | Summary vs. Critique |
| Week 3 | | |
| 9/1 | S40-55 S58-73 | Critical Reading Quoting, Paraphrasing, & Avoiding Plagiarism |

| | | |
|-----|--|---|
| | MHR 2-12 | |
| 9/3 | S87-133 MHR 370-374 MHR 344-349 MHR 602-608 | Using Sources “Supersaturation” Gitlin; “Why Men Don’t Last” Angier; “Family Values” Rodriguez Essay 1 (summary) draft due |

Week 4

| | | |
|------|---|---|
| 9/8 | S188-222 MHR 370-374 MHR 344-349 MHR 602-608 | Analysis “Supersaturation” Gitlin; “Why Men Don’t Last” Angier; “Family Values” Rodriguez |
| 9/10 | MHR 370-374 MHR 344-349 MHR 602-608 | “Supersaturation” Gitlin; “Why Men Don’t Last” Angier; “Family Values” Rodriguez Essay 1 (summary) revision due |

Week 5

| | | |
|------|----------------|---|
| 9/15 | Writing Issues | Critiquing Others’ Writing Essay 2 Workshop |
| 9/17 | EW 58-135 | Grammar Review Essay 2 (critique) due |

Week 6

| | | |
|------|----------------------------|---|
| 9/22 | S134-187 | Argument & Bias |
| 9/24 | MHR 582–589 MHR 610-621 | “Disney and the Female Imagination” Ross; “My Creature from the Black Lagoon” King; “Salvation” Hughes; “The Rival Conceptions of God” Lewis |

| | | |
|---------------|--|--|
| | MHR 693-695 MHR 712-714 | |
| Week 7 | | |
| 9/29 | MHR 582–589 MHR 610-621 MHR 693-695 MHR 712-714 | “Disney and the Female Imagination” Ross; “My Creature from the Black Lagoon” King; “Salvation” Hughes; “The Rival Conceptions of God” Lewis |
| 10/1 | MHR 582–589 MHR 610-621 MHR 693-695 MHR 712-714 | “Disney and the Female Imagination” Ross; “My Creature from the Black Lagoon” King; “Salvation” Hughes; “The Rival Conceptions of God” Lewis Essay 3 Workshop |
| Week 8 | | |
| 10/6 | Library | Using the Library (meet in Library 206) Essay 3 (argumentative) due |
| 10/8 | No Class | Fall Break |
| Week 9 | | |
| 10/13 | MHR 809-812 MHR 830-833 MHR 321-325 MHR 327-332 | “Why I Hunt” Bass; “Am I Blue” Walker; “Stone Soup” Kingsolver; “Once More to the Lake” White Midterm Exam due |
| 10/15 | MHR 809-812 MHR 830-833 MHR 321-325 MHR 327-332 | “Why I Hunt” Bass; “Am I Blue” Walker; “Stone Soup” Kingsolver; “Once More to the Lake” White |

| Week 10 | | |
|---------|--|--|
| 10/20 | MHR 809-812 MHR 830-833 MHR 321-325 MHR 327-332 | “Why I Hunt” Bass; “Am I Blue” Walker; “Stone Soup” Kingsolver; “Once More to the Lake” White |
| 10/22 | Writing Issues | Debate (Topic TBD) Essay 4 (argumentative) due |
| Week 11 | | |
| 10/27 | S261-288 MHR 178-202 | Writing a Research Paper Looking for Sources (Library Visit – Meet in Library 206) |
| 10/29 | Library | Looking for Sources (Library Visit – Meet in Library 206) |
| Week 12 | | |
| 11/3 | MHR 104-129 | Developing Deeper Thoughts Revising for Expansion |
| 11/5 | | Essay 5 Workshop Essay 5 (Research Essay Draft) due Friday (11/6) |
| Week 13 | | |
| 11/10 | Conferences | Conferences |
| 11/12 | Conferences | Conferences |
| Week 14 | | |
| 11/17 | Workshop | Essay 6 Workshop #1 |
| 11/19 | TBA | Short Stories/Poetry |

| Week 15 | | |
|---------|------------|--|
| 11/24 | EW 196-231 | MLA Review Essay 6 Workshop #2 |
| 11/26 | No Class | Thanksgiving Holidays |
| Week 16 | | |
| 12/1 | Last Day! | Essay 6 due |

Appendix N: Jessica's English 102 Course Syllabus

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| EH 102 Freshman Composition II – Spring 2011 |
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Course Description

Critical reading of literature, essay writing, and research. Grading scale: A, B, C, D, F.

Prerequisite: EH 101.

Required materials

- ❖ Kirszner, Laurie G. & Stephen R. Mandell, eds. *Portable Literature: Reading, Reacting, Writing*. 7th. ed. Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2010.
- ❖ Lunsford, Andrea A. *Easy Writer: A Pocket Reference*. 3rd ed. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's. 2009.
- ❖ Internet access

Important Information about This Course

Course Outcomes

The focus of EH 102 is to engage in critical reading of literature and parlay that knowledge into analytical and argumentative essays that focus on a text or combination of texts.

Rhetorical Knowledge

By the end of EH 102, students should demonstrate the ability to produce writing that

- Demonstrates rhetorical purpose by creating a position relative to their research
- Analyzes the needs of the audience and the requirements of assignment or task
- Demonstrates knowledge of the genres employed in writing with research
- Provides supporting evidence from research sources
- Employs a tone consistent with purpose and audience.

Critical Thinking and Reading

By the end of EH 102, students should demonstrate the ability to produce writing that

- Engages with literary texts
- Identifies rhetorical strategies and summarizes main ideas of outside sources
- Represents and responds to multiple points of view in research.

Processes

By the end of EH 102, students should demonstrate the ability to produce writing that

- Develops a research strategy
- Identifies and evaluates sources
- Uses research sources to discover and focus a thesis.

Conventions

By the end of EH 102, students should demonstrate the ability to produce writing that

- Integrates sources with one another and with own analysis

- Demonstrates control over conventions of format and presentation for different purposes and different audiences
- Demonstrates an understanding of the purposes and conventions of documentation
- Demonstrates awareness of MLA style citation.

All instructors are required to include the above course outcomes in each course's syllabus. In addition to the objectives stated above, I would like to include these goals for this course:

- Conclude EH 102 as a student who is more than adequately prepared for the writing tasks of the sophomore literature survey courses as well as future courses in other fields.
- Develop methods for managing assignments, including assessing time needed, understanding the assignment given, and overcoming issues or problems with completing the assignment.
- Understand personal perspectives on writing and your writing process as well as the role of writing in your academic and professional lives.

Why Do I Need This Course?

Writing is communication, plain and simple. The writing we will be doing in this course is somewhat specialized, but the point here is to build on the argumentative and analytical skills you picked up in EH 101 and hone them even more. Such skills will come in handy on the job as you will need to analyze information and present it in a way that communicates your message effectively to your audience. *Regardless of your career choice, you will need effective writing skills and experience in any job.* This class is intended to give you more of that necessary experience before you progress to other courses.

I know this is a required course and you might be questioning the need for multiple semesters' worth of a class like this. After this class, you will not receive much more writing instruction before you move on to later courses. Your future professors will expect you to have certain writing skills and experiences. I suggest you make the most of the time and money you are spending in the course.

What Will I Be Expected to Do in This Course?

In your EH 101 course, you learned about different types of essays (summary, critique, explanatory, analytical, argumentative). In this course, we will focus on analysis and argument. That is, I expect that you know what it means to argue as well as to analyze. You will read the literature assigned, look at the essay prompts I give you, decide what interpretation of your chosen text(s) you want to argue for, and then write an essay forwarding that argument using elements from the texts themselves. In addition to discussing the literature, we will discuss various aspects of the writing task, including critiquing others' writing, strengthening your arguments, and more.

You will apply everything you learn in this course to your final assignments, the research paper and the final exam. By the end of this term, I anticipate that you will be able to write a sustained argument about your interpretation of the text(s) you choose, using scholarly articles and critical

essays to reinforce your points. I also anticipate that you will be able to revise an essay to strengthen it. Those are skills you will need to have in future courses.

Why Do We Study Literature?

Literature introduces us to new experiences and perspectives; improves vocabulary, spelling, language, etc.; and teaches us about past cultures and persons. Reading it adds value to your personal experiences of the culture around you since so many films, television shows, and other media allude to literary elements, characters, and plots over and over. Studying literature builds your knowledge of our culture and your ability to participate in it.

Why do we write about literature? Writing about literature asks you to complete three intellectual tasks: 1) read critically (examining what a text says as well as how it says it); 2) analyzing what you read (breaking down the text into several elements and defining the relationship of those elements); 3) arguing for your perspective on the text (defending your interpretation of the text by using those elements you discovered in the analysis). All of these tasks are valuable to you in college as well as on the job, where you will be asked to take in information and know how to do something with it.

How Do I Succeed in This Class?

This is a 100-level course. It is required of all students, regardless of major, to fulfill this course in some way. For you to pass this class, you need to do three things: 1) come to class; 2) turn in your assignments, *every assignment*, and 3) participate. While I do not give participation credit, students who read the literature, participate in class, and turn in the assignments, even minimally, tend to pass the class. I expect all of you to read the assigned literature, come to class, participate in our discussions, and submit your assignments. I will do my best to help you pass this class provided that you work to meet the expectations I have outlined here.

Assignments/Grade Distribution/Late Policies

| Assignments | Details | Total |
|--|--|-------|
| Essays (3 pages minimum; 5 essays total) | In addition to the original grade, you may revise essays to bring essay grades up. | 50% |
| Research Paper (6-8 pages) | The research paper is a revision of an original essay. Essay 5 will be your draft. | 20% |
| Weekly Writings (1.5-2 pages) | You will write a total of seven, but I will drop the lowest two grades. | 10% |

| | | |
|-------------------------|---|-------------|
| Final Exam | This will include a variety of tasks, including writing and critiquing. | 10% |
| Homework | This category includes everything else, including quizzes, midterm, and more. | 10% |
| Total for Course | | 100% |

Assignments receive a letter grade which I then convert to a numerical grade: A+ = 100, A = 95, A- = 90, B+ = 89, B = 85, B- = 80, etc. Angel will compile the grades for each category, divide the total by the total point value, multiply that number by the percentage for that category, and add those all together to get your final grade. Even though you might be tempted to skip an assignment because it does not seem essential, eventually missed assignments add up to missed points, which in turn causes lower grades. Your chances of earning the grade you want increase when you participate in class and turn in all assignments.

Critical Essays

In each Freshman Composition course, the University requires students to generate at least 19-22 pages of writing. To fulfill this requirement, you will write five (5) short essays of at least three (3) pages and a research paper of at least 6 pages in length on assigned readings. You will receive a list of potential topics when I assign each essay and then you will choose your topic for that essay from that list.

These essays will hone your analytical skills, asking you to look at characters, events, and situations more deeply and offer your take on what is going on in these pieces of literature. In classes such as this one, I am not grading you based on what you say *so much as how you say it*. You will use these essays to improve both how you present information in your essays and how you communicate the message you want your readers to take away from your writing.

Prior to turning in each essay, the class will have a peer review assignment where you will post your draft and other students will then offer comments on your essay. This assignment is worth 50 of the 100 points each essay can earn. Missing a peer review assignment will cost you 50 points; if your paper gets a B, which is an 85, missing a peer review brings the grade down to a 42.5/100 instead. **It is imperative that you submit a draft for each peer review.** Whenever we have a peer review, you must submit a complete draft (at least 2 pages) or you will not be able to participate in peer review.

Research Paper

Additionally, this class requires each student write a longer paper incorporating outside research. This is one way of preparing you for longer, research-intensive assignments that you will face in subsequent courses. The research paper must be **six (6) – eight (8) pages** in length and

incorporate a pre-set number of sources. You will receive more information on this assignment as the semester progresses.

We will have two peer reviews in the weeks prior to the paper's due date. Each peer review is worth 50 points, or 25% of the paper's final grade. Bring a typed draft of your research paper to these peer reviews; **DO NOT** miss these sessions. **If you miss both peer reviews, you will only be able to earn half credit for the research paper.**

Weekly Writings

This semester, you will complete 7 short essays on a prompt that I will provide you. Each should be 1.5-2 pages, double-spaced. These give you an opportunity to think about and discuss the readings we will be doing in class. You can also use them as an opportunity to do some brainstorming before you write your next essay. I will drop the two lowest grades at the end of the semester. Each of these is worth 40 points, for a total of 200 potential points. These constitute 10% of your final grade.

Other Assignments

Over the course of this semester, you will complete various assignments that do not fall under the previous categories. These include quizzes (15 @ 20 points each = 300 points), a midterm exam (100 points), a library assignment (50 points), a scholarly article summary (100 points), a research paper proposal (50 points), and a conference with me (50 points). Together, these assignments constitute 10% of your final grade.

The quizzes will cover the readings we discuss in class and will be given the day that we cover that text. Each quiz is worth 20 points and will ask short answer questions about that day's reading as well as a brief essay question for you to discuss in a paragraph. You will receive your quiz at the start of class. I will allot between 10 minutes for the quiz. If you are late or absent, you cannot make up these quizzes.

Your midterm exam will be a take-home assignment that will ask you to examine one or two critical essays and discuss what they do right, what can be improved, and how those writers can make those improvements. This critique should help you look more critically at your own writing as you examine that of others.

The library assignment, the research paper proposal, the conference with me, and the scholarly article review are all part of the run-up to the research paper. I intend each to cover some aspect of the skills you will need to write the research paper for this course. You will receive more details on these assignments closer to time.

Final Exam

The final ‘exam’ has three components: a self-assessment, a short essay, and an essay critique. The self-assessment will discuss your perspectives on your progress over the semester. Then you will write a short essay based on a given prompt. Finally, the last portion is a critique of a sample essay, discussing what is done well and what needs work. The final is due to Angel by 11.59 pm the day the final is due. The final is worth 200 points and is 10% of your final grade.

EH 102-15 Policies and Procedures

Submission Guidelines

All assignments must

- be typed and double-spaced,
- be in either Arial or Times New Roman, 12 point,
- follow MLA format and citation guidelines (parenthetical citations, margins, etc.),
- include a separate Works Cited page,
- have a suitable and accurate title,
- be submitted to Angel by 11.59 pm on the due date.

Point deductions apply for failure to adhere to each of the submission guidelines (half a letter grade *minimum* for each). Any essay turned in after the designated time on the designated due date can earn only half credit. Assignments more than one week late will receive zero credit.

MLA Bibliographic Citation for This Textbook

Hawthorne, Nathaniel. “Young Goodman Brown.” *Portable Literature: Reading, Reacting, Writing*.

Eds. Laurie Kirsznner and Stephen Mandell. Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2010. 332-341.

This is a sample citation for our textbook. For the text(s) you are using in each essay, substitute the author information, the title, and the page numbers. A citation for the text(s) you write about should be on your Works Cited page for every essay. If you do not include a Works Cited page, that is a ten-point deduction from your final essay grade.

Turning in Assignments

I do not accept assignments by email. Most of the bigger assignments must be turned in to a dropbox on Angel, but some will need to be submitted in hard copy. If you need to submit an assignment when I am not on campus, please submit it to the English Department office. They will stamp the assignment with its date and time of submission so that I will know when you

turned it in. **I will not accept any assignments that are slid under my office door or are submitted by email.**

Problems Submitting Assignments

If you have issues submitting assignments online, then inform me immediately by sending me an email on Angel or to my email account. All assignments submitted online are due by 11.59 pm on the due date. Because the computer network can have an outage at any time and can delay submissions of your assignment for any reason, submit assignments early to avoid any late penalties. If you know that you will be absent for any reason, it is imperative that you make arrangements to submit assignments on time. In order to apply these policies consistently, I cannot make exceptions for anything. However, alerting me to problems is the best way to avoid catastrophes.

Attendance

You are expected to attend every class meeting; you are not rewarded for doing so. Regular attendance must work in tandem with preparedness for class; not having homework or not reading the day's material not only puts you at a disadvantage, but also will annoy your instructor. Try not to annoy the person who is in the best position to help you and also happens to determine your grade.

Being present and on time is a mark of professionalism and a courtesy to others in the class. Frequent absences can have an adverse effect on your work and, consequently, your grade. If circumstances force you to miss more than **6** classes without an excuse, you should consider dropping the course and taking it later. **Withdrawing from class is the student's responsibility.** University policy mandates that students who miss more than 20% of the classes for this term can be failed for the course; twenty percent is six classes. If you have more than **six** unexcused absences, I will fail you for the course. If you stop coming to class but do not officially withdraw, you will receive an F for the course.

In order to have an excused absence, I need some sort of proof, including a doctor's excuse or any documentation from the university or other authority. Without tangible proof, your absence will be considered unexcused and will count toward that six. If possible, please let me know in advance of your absence and make arrangements for missed work.

Ultimately, your grade depends upon the skills with which you complete your work. I hold you responsible for learning material covered in any given class period, even if you do not attend that class. If we have an assignment in class and you are absent, you may make up that assignment if *it is an excused absence*. If you are absent, excused or not, it is *your job* to find out what you missed and to submit any and all assignments due that day. I will not chase you down to make sure that you get the handouts or assignments that were distributed during your absence. Your absence also does not mean the assignment should also be absent.

Absences

If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed. I may assign some sort of in-class or homework assignment on nearly all class days so you must contact me or someone in your class to find out what you need to do. Students with excused absences can make up any in-class work. Unexcused absences cannot make up any quizzes or in-class assignments, but can and should get any homework (out-of-class) assignments that I give. Students with excused absences need to present the excuse to me before I will distribute any in-class assignments to make up. It is your responsibility to find out what you missed; I will not track you to down to remind you to turn this or that in. Do not wait to find out what you might have missed. Contact me as soon as you can to find out what you missed and how to make it up.

Tardiness

Tardiness is disruptive for your classmates and for me, so do not arrive late to my class. There is no acceptable excuse for habitual tardiness. If this class does not fit into your life or into your schedule in such a way that will enable you to attend **on time**, then you should take a different section of this course at a time that is more conducive to your schedule. Coming into class 15 minutes late counts as an absence.

Late Assignments

You must turn in assignments to me at the beginning of class *or* to the appropriate dropbox on Angel by the appropriate time by 9.35 am (online) or in class on the due date. If you know that you will be absent, you need to make arrangements to turn the assignment in when it is due. Assignments are due on the posted date even if class is cancelled. I reserve the right to change due dates if necessary, but, if that happens, you will receive plenty of notice!

Any assignments turned in after 9.35 am on the due date will earn **half credit**; therefore it is imperative that you have them ready to submit the day that they are due. I will not accept assignments that are more than a week (seven days) late. If the assignment was due on a Tuesday and it is not submitted by the following Tuesday, then it is too late. Any assignments that are more than a week late will receive a zero.

Conferences

I require each student to meet with me at least once this term, usually during the run-up to the research paper. Our conference should last at least 15-30 minutes and is worth 50 points. In the interim, feel free to stop by my office during my office hours or make an appointment to discuss any questions or issues you may have. My door is always open!

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism, the unacknowledged use of others' ideas or words, is a serious academic violation. It can result in failing that particular assignment or the whole class and/or proceedings for academic misconduct. *I have failed students for this entire course because of plagiarism.* I have resources that will allow me to determine your honesty if I question it. Do not allow that to happen.

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Note: Students should be aware that the English Department policy requires each instructor to use all possible means of detecting plagiarism, including free or pay-per-use detection services available online. An increasing number of plagiarism cases are being referred to Student Development Services for a judicial proceeding under the Student Code of Conduct. Sanctions for academic misconduct are listed in the Student Handbook.

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Use of Prior Work

You may not submit in fulfillment of requirements in this course any work submitted, presented, or used by you in any other course or section of this course. If you have taken this course previously and are taking it again, you cannot use essays that you submitted for your previous incursions into this class.

Classroom Conduct

All students in the class must treat others with civility and respect and conduct themselves during class sessions in a way that does not unreasonably interfere with the opportunity of other students to learn. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in points being deducted from a student's final numerical average, up to a maximum of 15 points.

Cell Phones and Laptops

Please turn your cell phones off or put them on silent while in class. If you need your phone on so that you may be reached during class, please put it on vibrate. If you must answer your phone, take your conversation out of the classroom.

Text-messaging during class is prohibited; it distracts you and your classmates from the task at hand. If I find you texting during class, I will ask you to leave and dock you an absence. Anyone caught text messaging or talking on the phone during class will be asked to leave and penalized an absence. Repeat offenses (>2) will merit a 5% deduction from your final grade.

You also may not use laptop computers in this class. Such devices are distractions for their owners, those sitting around them, and the instructor. Consider how you would feel if I pulled out my cell phone and started texting while I was supposed to be teaching this class that you are paying for!

Disability Accommodation

The University will make reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. If you need support or assistance because of a disability, you may be eligible for academic accommodations. Students should identify themselves to the Disability Support Office and their instructor as soon as possible to coordinate accommodations.

Schedule

I reserve the right to make adjustments to the class schedule. Any adjustments will generally be in your favor; you will receive plenty of notice of these adjustments.

Changes to Assignments

I reserve the right to make changes to assignments even after they are assigned. You will receive plenty of such changes as well as reminders both in-class and via email.

You Should Do Your Own Work

I expect everything that you submit for this class will be your work. Though you may consult others from time to time, everything you put your name on should be your own work. You may not use any work from a previous version of this class or from another class you are taking or have taken. You may not share work with another classmate. I reserve the right to investigate and penalize students that I find are violating the rules and conventions of the work you will perform in this class. Plagiarism and cheating of any kind are not acceptable in this class.

EH 102-15 – Spring 2011

Week 1

| | | |
|------|----------------|--|
| 1/11 | Syllabus | Course Orientation |
| 1/13 | Writing Issues | Writing about Literature, Thesis statements “Happy Endings” (394-396); “The Flea” (690) |

Week 2

| | | |
|------|--------------|---|
| 1/18 | Parent/Child | Short Stories: “A Rose for Emily” (115-122), “Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?” (427-439), “Everyday Use” (312-318); Poetry: “My Papa’s Waltz” (647), “Those Winter Sundays” (647-648) |
| 1/20 | Parent/Child | Short Stories: “A Rose for Emily” (115-122), “Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?” (427-439), “Everyday Use” (312-318); Poetry: “My Papa’s Waltz” (647), “Those Winter Sundays” (647-648) |

Essay 1 Draft due

Week 3

| | | |
|------|--------------|---|
| 1/25 | Parent/Child | Short Stories: “A Rose for Emily” (115-122), “Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?” (427-439), “Everyday Use” (312-318); Poetry: “My Papa’s Waltz” (647), “Those Winter Sundays” (647-648) |
|------|--------------|---|

Weekly Writing #1 due

| | | |
|------|----------------|--|
| 1/27 | Writing Issues | Critiquing Others’ Writing; MLA Formatting |
|------|----------------|--|

Week 4

- 2/1 Love & Gender Short Stories: "The Yellow Wallpaper" (415-427), "Cathedral" (320-330), "The Story of an Hour" (106-108); Poetry: "My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun" (540-541), "Porphyria's Lover" (499-501), "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" (543)

Essay 1 due

- 2/3 Love & Gender Short Stories: "The Yellow Wallpaper" (415-427), "Cathedral" (320-330), "The Story of an Hour" (106-108); Poetry: "My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun" (540-541), "Porphyria's Lover" (499-501), "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" (543)

Week 5

- 2/8 Love & Gender Short Stories: "The Yellow Wallpaper" (415-427), "Cathedral" (320-330), "The Story of an Hour" (106-108); Poetry: "My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun" (540-541), "Porphyria's Lover" (499-501), "Shall I compare Thee to a summer's day?" (543)

Weekly Writing #2 due

- 2/10 Love & Gender Short Stories: "The Yellow Wallpaper" (415-427), "Cathedral" (320-330), "The Story of an Hour" (106-108); Poetry: "My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun" (540-541), "Porphyria's Lover" (499-501), "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" (543)

Week 6

- 2/15 Writing Issues Revising an Essay
- 2/17 Power & Powerlessness Short Stories: "Barn Burning" (226-238), "The Lottery" (304-310), Poetry: "Suicide Note" (488-490), "Barbie Doll" (714), The Chimney Sweeper (handout)

Essay 2 due**Week 7**

- 2/22 Power & Powerlessness Short Stories: "Barn Burning" (226-238), "The Lottery" (304-310), Poetry: "Suicide Note" (488-490), "Barbie Doll" (714), The Chimney Sweeper (handout)
- 2/24 Power & Powerlessness Short Stories: "Barn Burning" (226-238), "The Lottery" (304-310), Poetry: "Suicide Note" (488-490), "Barbie Doll" (714), The Chimney

Sweeper (handout)

Weekly Writing #3 due

Week 8

3/1 Library Visit Research in Literature (Meet in Library)

3/3 Drama *A Doll's House* (1402-1454)

Essay 3 due

Week 9

3/8 Drama *A Doll's House* (1402-1454)

Weekly Writing #4 due

3/10 Drama *A Doll's House* (1402-1454)

Week 10

3/15 Drama *A Doll's House* (1402-1454)

3/17 Writing Issues Developing Deeper Thoughts

Weekly Writing #5 due

Week 11

3/22 No Class Spring Break

3/24 No Class Spring Break

Week 12

3/29 Library Visit Looking for Sources (Library Visit – Meet in Library 206)

Reading Scholarly Articles and Critical Essays

Essay 4 due

3/31 Library Visit Looking for Sources (Library Visit – Meet in Library 206)

Weekly Writing #6 due

Week 13

4/5 No Class Honors Day

Essay 5 due

4/7 No Class Conferences

Week 14

| | | |
|------|-----------------|---|
| 4/12 | <i>No Class</i> | <i>Conferences</i> |
| 4/14 | Peer Review | Research Paper Peer Review #1 Meet in Library 206 |

Week 15

| | | |
|------|----------------|---|
| 4/19 | Writing Issues | Final Exam (cover letter/revision) discussion & MLA Review Student Evaluations Weekly Writing #7 due |
| 4/21 | Workshop | Research Paper Peer Review #2 Meet in Library 206 |

Week 16

| | | |
|------|------------|--|
| 4/26 | Last Class | Quiz Show/End-of-Term Celebration Research Paper due |
| 4/28 | Final Exam | Final Exam due to Angel by 11.59 pm |

Appendix O: Geoffrey's English 101 Course Syllabus

EH 101-03 #10270 and 101-04 #12985: Freshman Composition Spring 2011
3.0 Credit Hours

CATALOG DESCRIPTION Critical reading, essay writing, and documentation. Grading scale: A, B, C, D, F. Prerequisites: Placement.

OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to acquaint students with strategies of college-level critical reading and writing.
Students will practice reading to understand and evaluate sources, and also to infer relationships among sources.
As a component of this objective, students will practice using and documenting sources.
In addition, students will explore various structures and strategies for essay writing while developing a better understanding of the revision process.

For more detailed course objectives, see the end of this document.

REQUIRED TEXTS Your texts are available at the campus and off-campus bookstores. They are:

A Sequence for Academic Writing by Behrens and Rosen; Pearson Pub. 4th ed.
The New World Reader: Thinking and Writing About the Global Community by Muller; Cengage Pub. 2nd ed.

STRONGLY RECOMMENDED: A good college-level dictionary and a thesaurus

OTHER REQUIRED MATERIALS: Access to the internet for substantial assignment components.

Access to and familiarity with a major word processing program.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

GRADING PERCENTAGES Grades for specific assignments in this course are A-F, which contribute to the following percentage of the overall grade:

- Portfolio of 6 graded essays, at least 22 pages total, individual essays ranging from 2 to 6 pages in length, paper copies, with drafts, commentary, revisions, corrections, and cover letters. Types of essays include the: Summary/Precis, Descriptive/Example, Comparison/Contrast, Cause/Effect, Argumentative/Persuasive, and Self-Analysis-**80%**

•Class Participation, including: **20 %**

- all in-class writing assignments- 5%
- peer editing sessions with submitted written commentaries-5 %
- attendance and active classroom participation-5 %
- at least two writing conferences= 5%;

- at least one at the writing center and one with me or a second one at the writing center

NOTE FOR READING AND WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:

Come prepared to each class with plenty of loose-leaf paper, functional pens, and all Required texts (the dictionary and thesaurus are a good idea too). You must complete assignments, be they readings, exercises, or whatever, before class.

Outline of Planned Activities and Assignments

- 10 Jan. Mon. Introduction to formal writing; Basic grammar review; exercise in the need for uniformity; graphic organizers, such as the writing plan forms (bubble sheets for paragraph and for essay); peer editing materials; sample essay; and final copy. Learn writing a "Thesis." Learn 2x4 Note-Taking.
Assmt.: Read "Summary, Paraphrase, and Quotation" in *Sequence for Academic Writing*, pp. 3-55. Then, read "China: the Educated Giant" in *The New World Reader* and take 2x4 notes of the content.
- 12 Jan. Wed. Basic grammar review-Dos and don'ts in formal writing. Use handouts of "Common Composition Errors." Discuss Chapter 1 of *Sequence for Academic Writing*, noting the differences between summary, paraphrase, and quotation. Regarding the above article "China: the Educated Giant," write a one-paragraph summary of the article. Use the "theme" of the article as the title of your paper. Discuss cartoon-p.30. Then do Class exercise #1-Read the article and answer the questions.
Assmt.: Class exercise # 1 assignment.
- 17 Jan. Mon. Martin Luther King-Holiday-No Classes
- 19 Jan. Wed. Diagnostic Essay-Summary-Due-Introducing the *Descriptive/Example Essay*. Discussing Bloom's "Taxonomy" and applying it to essays.
Assmt.: Write an outline (Bubble Sheet) of your treatment of your descriptive subject: develop a thesis and at least three main ideas.
- 24 Jan. Mon. In class: Editing Groups assigned. Practice Peer Editing session using "bubble sheets." Discussion.
Assmt.: Write a first draft summary and practice response of your *Descriptive/Example Essay*. Note: Put your name on EVERY peer critique that you give and/or hand in.
- 26 Jan. Wed. MEET IN LIBRARY-Lab Room #206. Please be prompt so the orientation may proceed on time.
Library session is 60 minutes. We will use the remaining time for practicing peer editing. Assmt.: Revise your essays as per peer input.
- 31 Jan. Mon. Peer Editing #1 (Come to class with one sheet of significant commentary on each essay you received at the prior session.) Clarify student "corrections" in class groups. In class: Thesis exercises. Discuss all assigned readings.
Assmt: Revise your essays as per peer input. Review Citing Sources in Your Text, MLA Style, for format appearance.

- 2 Feb. Wed. In class: Discuss all assigned readings. Discussion of citing sources: parenthetical citations, footnotes, endnotes, "Works Cited." (Peer editing if time permits, and I will work one-on-one with students.)
Assmt.: Work on citation practices, essay format, stylistics and complete your essay drafts.
- 7 Feb. Mon. ESSAY #1 *Descriptive/Example Essay*==DUE. Make sure you attach peer edits. Place into pocket folder: drafts and edits in left pocket, final copy in right pocket.
In class: Next essay assigned: The *Comparison/Contrast Essay*. Discussion and pre-writing exercises. Discuss all assigned readings.
Assmt.: Select writing for *Comparison/Contrast Essay*. Prepare "Bubble Sheet" outline: Develop a thesis with at least three main ideas.
- 9 Feb. Wed. Discuss all assigned readings. Thesis exercises. (Peer editing if time permits, and I will work one-on-one with students.)
Assmt.: Develop your working thesis for your topic, and develop your essay. Write a rough draft for the peer editing.
- 14 Feb. Mon. Peer Editing #2. Discussion and clarifications. In class: Work on stylistics. I will work one-on-one with students.
Assmt.: Develop and revise *Comparison/Contrast Essays* as per peer edits and complete them.
- 16 Feb. Wed. Peer Editing #3. Students peer edit while I work one-on-one with students.
Assmt.: Revise as per peer edits and complete essay. Turn it in Monday with all peer editing attached.
- 21 Feb. Mon. ESSAY #2 *Comparison/Contrast Essay*-DUE. In class: Discuss all assigned readings. Next essay assigned: *Definition/Example Essay*; discussion, formulating a definition thesis/statement of purpose.
Assmt.: Select writing from text for *Definition/Example Essay*. Prepare "Bubble Sheet" outline: Develop a thesis and at least three main ideas. Write a rough draft.
- 23 Feb. Wed. Discussion, prewriting exercises. Peer editing of bubble sheets-thesis/statement of purpose as well as development of rough draft of the essay.
Assmt.: Revise as per peer edits.
- 28 Feb. Mon. Mid Term. Peer Editing #4. Review the common composition errors. Then peer editing. Discuss all assigned readings.
Assmt.: Revise as per peer edits and complete final rough draft of your essays.
- 2 Mar. Wed. Peer Editing #5. Discuss all assigned readings. Students will peer edit final rough drafts, while I work one-on-one with students.
- 7 Mar. Mon. ESSAY #3 *Definition/Example Essay*==DUE. Introduce *Cause/Effect Essay*.
Assmt.: Select writing from text for *Cause/Effect Essay*. Prepare "Bubble Sheet" outline: thesis and main ideas. Write a rough draft.
- 9 Mar. Wed. Peer Editing #6. Review the common composition errors. Discuss all assigned readings. Then students will peer edit rough drafts, while I work one-on-one with students.

14 Mar. Mon. Discuss any assigned readings. Review grammar and composition errors. Peer editing as time permits.

Assmt.: Revise as per peer edits and complete final rough draft of your essays.

16 Mar. Wed. **Peer Editing #7**

Assmt.: Revise as per peer edits and complete final draft of your essays

21-25 March – Spring Break

28 Mar. Mon. **ESSAY #4 Cause/Effect Essay - DUE** Introduce

Argumentative/Persuasive Essay; discussion, formulating an argumentative/persuasive thesis/statement of purpose.

Assmt.: Select writing from text for *Argumentative/Persuasive Essay*. Prepare "Bubble Sheet" outline: thesis and main ideas. Write a rough draft.

30 Mar. Wed. **Plenary Editing #8**. Present arguments to class groups and then to class, to determine if the arguments are supported. Discuss all assigned readings. Discuss finding empirical evidence and using note cards.

Assmt.: Revise rough drafts and prepare for peer editing.

4-Apr. Wed. Peer editing #9. Discuss finding empirical evidence. Discuss all assigned readings.

6 Apr. Mon. Discussion of citing sources: parenthetical citations, footnotes, endnotes, "Works Cited." Following proper MLA format. Discuss when to cite and when not to cite, and what to cite and what not to cite.

11 Apr. Wed. Presenting empirical evidence while avoiding plagiarism. Students will bring in copies of their sources to work on proper citations-parenthetical citations, footnotes, endnotes, "Works Cited" page.

13 Apr. Mon. Peer editing #10. Continued discussion/revisions of *Argumentative/ Persuasive Essays*.

18 Apr. Wed. **ESSAY #5 -Argumentative/Persuasive-DUE**. Introduce final assignment: *Self-Analysis*.

20 Apr. Mon. *Discuss Self-Analysis*. Discuss assigned readings.

22 Apr. Wed. Discuss assigned readings. Review and class wrap-up. Last Class Day.

2 May Mon. **ESSAY #6--Final Exam for EH 101-03-11:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m.-Turn in Portfolio of all essays- graded and rewritten-and prepare to write ESSAY #6 Self-Analysis.**

OR

4 May Wed. **ESSAY #6--**Final Exam for EH 101-04-- 3:00 p.m.-05:30 p.m.-Turn in Portfolio of all essays- graded and rewritten-and prepare to write **ESSAY #6 Self-Analysis**

POLICIES:

ATTENDANCE: Attendance for this class is required. Come to class. Every session. After all, this is why you paid your tuition. If you miss often, you will not improve as a writer, and you certainly will not have participated in activities upon which your participation grade rests.

- Your essay grades depend upon you providing evidence that your editing group has worked with you on your essays, so missing workshop days (or coming without a draft) is particularly damaging-not just to you, but to your full editing group.
- For this reason, your paper will be penalized $\frac{1}{2}$ to a full grade, at my discretion, if you were not present for the session.
- Departmental policy requires you to attend at least 80 of the course in order to pass.
That means you may not miss more than 6 sessions (for any reason-illness, personal problems, job responsibilities, whatever).
- Missing on workshop days is particularly damaging to your grade, since you will be responsible for work that you cannot make up on other days, so in essence there is a double penalty for such misses.
- Bear in mind that 6 absences constitute more than THREE full weeks of class time, and a significant percentage of the class as a whole. Try to contact me BEFORE CLASS if you will miss a Peer Editing class.
- NOTE: Failure to attend classes does not constitute withdrawal from a course. It is extremely important that you follow withdrawal procedures should you elect not to take this or any other class. I will be happy to help you drop the class should you find that necessary, but if you simply stop coming, you will force me to assign you a failing grade for the semester.

GRADING I will assign letter grades A-F throughout the term, but your overall average must be a C- by the end of the semester for this course to be credit-bearing.

- Do not wait until the last essay or two to become concerned about a pattern of lower grades.
- On the other hand, students often begin the term with grades at or below that C- and complete the term with a B or better, so consider initial lower grades as an indication that you need to work harder on your essays.

PEER EDITING SESSIONS Ordinarily, we write for an audience; writing is not primarily a private activity.

Consequently, we learn as writers best by seeing others' work and having them comment on ours.

- So, for this class, we will peer edit all essays.
On days designated for peer editing, please bring at least one copy of your current essays.
- I will place you into your peer editing groups. In those groups, you will sit in circles and hand your papers the right or left.
- As the others review your paper, you will do the same for the others' papers.
- For each paper, you will fill out one of the "Peer Editing" handouts from me, adding your commentary and/or corrections.
- After you have filled out the Peer Editing forms, you will return the forms to the owners of the respective essays.
 - Every paper will have received scrutiny from at least four other people before you finalize your draft.

Editors must put their names on the "Peer Editing" forms; **I will be grading you on the comments you provide to each other. For this reason, be very careful with the commented drafts you receive; you will turn them in to me with the final paper, and so you have a responsibility to the members of your group to be careful with the comments they have given you.**

- Workshop sessions will also give you a chance to 'try out' a final draft of your essay, but it will still provide you with enough feedback (and time-I've generally left a session or a weekend after peer editing sessions before due dates) for significant revision. It is only through revisions that you become good writers, not through first draft writing.
- We will spend serious time and emphasis on revision, so pay attention to my comments and to the comments of your editing group because this is how you will improve as a writer.

Paper Format and Submission Policies:

At the end of the semester, you will submit a portfolio of completed work along with an assessment of your progress over the semester.

- To facilitate this process, please submit your first essay in a new 9" x 11 " manila file folder with pockets (no other type of folder will be accepted) with your name and *EH 101-03* or *04-Spring 2011* printed on the side tab (not top or bottom).
- You may retrieve your portfolio the following semester if you wish; at the end of one calendar year, I will shred all materials still in my possession.
- Unless you specifically request otherwise, I may use anonymous versions of a part or all of one of your essays for worksheets in future classes. I will always strive to use these materials in a way that respects both your privacy and your work.

- Type or word-process all public drafts (i.e. work you submit to me or to your peer editors). You must clear any exceptions through me in advance. FOLLOW ALL RECOMMENDATIONS ON MANUSCRIPT FORM AND PREPARATION IN YOUR HANDBOOK AND MY HANDOUTS. In other words, use 1" margins on all sides and double space Using the "Times New Roman," style, a #12 font size (this syllabus is # 11), a reasonably sophisticated vocabulary, and conventional margins and spacing, you should have roughly 280-350 words per page.

In Class Writings: Anything you write fully in class, you must 'write on loose-leaf paper, use double spacing (that means: skipping a line), and maintain one-inch margins all around. This facilitates markings for corrections as well as adding specific comments when editing. • You may NEVER write on the back of a sheet of loose-leaf paper.

CONFERENCES:

- With me: Feel free to visit me any time during my office hours. If necessary, I will schedule appointments for writing conferences at times other than my office hours, and I strongly encourage you to come in to discuss your writing-to go over drafts of any paper or my comments on previously graded projects if you have questions or concerns. I particularly encourage you to come in either to discuss your performance on the first essay or to look toward the second or both. You should come in at least one time during the semester to discuss your writing. I encourage you to do so earlier rather than later in the term so that you will get the most out of our work.
- With the WRITING CENTER: You must also take an essay to the Writing Center at least once during the term. They provide me with a record of your attendance, so simply telling me you have gone will not be adequate, nor will phone consultations, on-line queries, or any other partial use of their services. Feel free to use their services at any time, for any or all papers (assuming you can schedule an appointment and that you attend all sessions you schedule). In some cases, students have been able to set up a standing appointment at the Writing Center. If you are aware that your preparation for this course is marginal, you may wish to discuss this possibility with me, but please do so within the first week of classes.

I'll be happy to look at any work you'd like to discuss, but other readers and other voices will be equally helpful in your development as a writer. YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR SCHEDULING CONFERENCES!!! *You* will find your grade penalized if you do not do so, but I will not repeatedly remind you about this component of your grade

COURSE OBJECTIVES

| Indicator (What it is I expect you to be able to do at the course) | Assessment Tool (How I'll determine whether or not you've met objectives) |
|---|--|
| CONTENT 1. Acquiring and demonstrating a basic knowledge grammar, sentence structure, rhetorical strategies: writing as a process | Portfolio of |
| 2. Understanding the basics of MLA format preparation and citation techniques, as well as the of non-MLA style sheets. | Portfolio of |
| 3. Creating, writing, and revising interdisciplinary materials that give opportunities to integrate skills across disciplines. | Portfolio of |

| | |
|--|--|
| CRITICAL THINKING 1. Develop critical thinking skills and analyze, and evaluate knowledge | Portfolio of essays Class participation |
| 2. Selecting or creating interesting problem engage audiences for assigned materials. | Portfolio of essays |
| 3. Developing reading skills that facilitate and evaluating sources, and also inferring among sources. | Portfolio of Essays |
| 4. Integrating real-world problems into assigned materials. | Portfolio of essays |
| ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATION 1. Demonstrating effective verbal, nonverbal, media communication techniques that foster collaboration, and supportive interaction. | Portfolio of essays Response memoranda Class participation |
| 2. Display skill in editing and polishing a written project | Portfolio of essays |
| 3. Planning, revising, and refining writing samples grammatically correct, convey information are appropriately constructed for various purposes audiences. | Portfolio of essays Response memoranda |

Appendix P: Geoffrey's English 102 Course Syllabus

EH 102-09: Freshman Composition II

Fall 2007 3.0 Credit Hours

Class Meetings: TR 2:20-03:40 MH 324

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course serves as an introduction to literature and literary analysis. Students will participate in rigorous academic discussion and written analysis of required readings and assignments. The teacher will provide students with opportunities to explore various forms and manifestations of literature, while at the same time he will create an environment that encourages written academic interrogation and critique.

Grading scale: A, B, C, NC (No credit). **Students must earn at least a “C” to receive credit for this course.**

- | | | | |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| • A+ = 100 pts. | • B+ = 88 pts. | • C+ = 78 pts. | • NC = 69 pts. or fewer |
| • A = 95 pts. | • B = 85 pts. | • C = 75 pts. | |
| • A- = 90 pts. | • B- = 80 pts. | • C- = 70 pts. | |

Prerequisites: Successful completion of EH 101 or placement.

As with most college courses, students should expect to spend an average of 2 – 3 hours for every hour spent in class. This means that students should set aside 6 to 9 hours per week in preparation for the class, in addition to the 3 hours of class time. Students should also see “Policies” and “Expectations” later in this syllabus.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: Students will

- understand and discuss literature as an interpretation of experiences and as a way of knowing and learning.
- analyze literature through the writing of formal compositions.
- become acquainted with important literary works and authors.
- identify major literary genres and demonstrate understanding of elements significant to written analysis and evaluation.
- define literary terms and use them in oral and written discussions.

For more detailed course objectives, see the end of this document.

REQUIRED TEXTS (available at the campus and off-campus bookstore):

Keys for Writers 5th ed. (Keys)

Literature: Reading, Reacting, Writing, compact 6th ed. Kirszner and Mandell

STRONGLY RECOMMENDED: A good college-level dictionary and a thesaurus

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

- Three-ring binder—1 ½ inch for hand-outs, loose-leaf paper, and drafts.
- Manila two-pocket folders (without clasps) for turning in essays. (One for each essay)
- Adequate supply of loose-leaf paper, small stapler, paper clips, writing utensils—both pens and pencils, erasers,
- Regular access to the internet for substantial assignment components
- Regular access to and familiarity with a major word processing program

SCHEDULE OF READING AND WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:

Come prepared to each class with plenty of loose-leaf paper, functional writing utensils, and all required texts (the dictionary and thesaurus are a good idea too). You must complete assignments, be they readings, writings, or whatever, before class.

NOTE: The following is an outline of planned activities and assignments. It should serve as a guide for our semester's activities. It does not mean that we must be bound by this list. If I find that the class has specific needs, we can and will adapt to these needs by expanding particular sessions and/or shortening others. **I will announce any changes.** Remember, unless I have specifically announced a change, you must adhere to the syllabus's list.

Outline of Planned Activities and Assignments

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 21 Aug. | Introduction to Literature, syllabus, in-class writing—ungraded diagnostic paragraph—in class. Writing format, highlighting reading material, 2x4 note-taking method and practice. Assmt.: Read Kirszner and Mandell, chapters 1 & 2, pp. 3 – 42. Do 2x4 of chapter 1—text material only |
| 23 Aug | Review 2x4 of chapter 1. Review of diagnostic paragraphs. Discussion: Valenzuela, p.7, Soyinka, p.8, Interpreting literature. The Short Story. Assmt.: Read: Hemingway— <i>Hills Like White Elephants</i> , p. 143. Note implied information, symbolic dimensions , and change in tone . Highlight important details. |
| 28 Aug. | Ch. 2—Reading and Writing about Literature, pp. 17-42—Discussion—Hemingway— <i>Hills Like White Elephants</i> , p. 143. Drafting an essay. Establish peer-editing groups. |

Assmt.: Flesh out the essay as discussed in class.

30 Aug. Peer editing. Also plenary discussions.

Assmt.: Complete the essay's rough draft—Suggested length 2-3 pages. Learn about **stream of consciousness; symbolic dimensions; use of archetypes, stereotypes, static character; use of irony (grim wit) in Kirszner and Mandell.**

4 Sept. MEET IN LIBRARY—Lab Room 207. Our Appointed instructor will be Dr. Lisa Hullett. Please be prompt so the orientation may proceed on time. Main topic: Learning about literary research sources.

Assmt.: Read: Katherine Anne Porter—*The Jilting of Granny Weatherall*, p. 625. Note **stream of consciousness, symbolic dimensions, static character, irony (grim wit).** Highlight important details.

6 Sept. **Essay #1 Short Story – A — DUE.** Class discussion about how to use research sources. Possible Library Quiz. Discussion of Katherine Anne Porter's—*The Jilting of Granny Weatherall*, p. 625.

Assmt.: Read "Plot," p. 189, Naguib Mahfouz's *Half a Day*, p. 195, William Faulkner's *A Rose for Emily*, p. 205, "Character," p. 216, and John Updike's *A&P*, p. 219. Pay particular attention to plot development and character

11 Sept. Discussion of the three short stories

Assmt.: Select a writing topic and prepare an outline. Flesh out the outline.

13 Sept. Plenary discussions. Peer editing.

Assmt.: Complete the essay's rough draft—Suggested length 2-3 pages.

18 Sept. Plenary discussions. Peer editing. Introduction to poetry.

Assmt.: Revise your essay. Read: "Understanding Poetry," p. 655+. Read Marianne Moore, *Poetry*, p. 657; Nikki Giovanni, *Poetry*, p. 658; e. e. cummings, *I(a)*, p. 666, "Visual Poetry," p. 669+, George Herbert, *Easter Wings*;

20 Sept. Discuss "Understanding Poetry," p. 655+. Marianne Moore, *Poetry*, p. 657; Nikki Giovanni, *Poetry*, p. 658; e. e. cummings, *I(a)*, p. 666, "Visual Poetry," p. 669+, George Herbert, *Easter Wings*. Peer editing of Essay #2.

Assmt.: Complete your essays. Read: "Voice," p. 697+, Langston Hughes, *Negro*, p. 701; Robert Browning, *My Last Duchess*, p. 702; Robert Frost, *Fire and Ice*, p. 709; William Wordsworth, *The World is Too Much With Us*, p. 715; Percy

Bysshe Shelley, *Ozymandias*, p. 721; Dudley Randall, *Ballad of Birmingham*, p. 725.

- 25 Sept. **Essay #2 Short Story – B — DUE.** Discussion of “Voice,” p. 697+, Langston Hughes, *Negro*, p. 701; Robert Browning, *My Last Duchess*, p. 702; Robert Frost, *Fire and Ice*, p. 709; William Wordsworth, *The World is Too Much With Us*, p. 715; Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Ozymandias*, p. 721; Dudley Randall, *Ballad of Birmingham*, p. 725.

Assmt.: Select a poetry topic for an essay (3-4 pages long) and prepare an outline. Flesh out the outline.

- 27 Sept. Plenary poetry discussion.

Assmt.: Write first rough draft.

- 2 Oct. Peer editing of drafts.

Assmt.: Work on Poetry essays.

- 4 Oct. Peer editing of drafts.

Assmt.: Work on poetry essays. Read: “Word Choice and Word Order,” p. 729+; Gwendolyn Brooks, *We Real Cool*, p. 746, *Word Order*, p. 747; A. E. Housman, *To an Athlete Dying Young*, p. 750; “Imagery,” p. 753+, William Carlos Williams, *Red Wheelbarrow*, p. 755; Robert Frost, *Nothing Gold Can Stay*, p. 760.

- 9 Oct. Poetry discussion of the above poetry selections

Assmt.: Work on poetry essays. Read: “Figures of Speech,” p. 766+, Audre Lorde, *Rooming houses are old women*, p. 769; Allen Ginsberg, *A Supermarket in California*, p. 791. “Sound,” p. 794+, Emily Dickinson, *I like to see it lap the Miles*, 799; Gerard Manly Hopkins, *Pied Beauty*, p. 811; Lewis Carroll, *Jabberwocky*, p. 816; “Form,” p. 819+, William Shakespeare, *When in disgrace with Fortune and men’s eyes*, p. 824; Alberto Alvaro Ríos, *Nani*, p. 827; Carl Sandburg, *Chicago*, p. 836; e. e. cummings, *the sky was can dry*. p. 837

- 11 Oct. NO CLASS: FALL BREAK

- 16 Oct. **Essay #3 Poetry – A — DUE.** Poetry discussion of the above poetry selections

Assmt.: Read: “Symbol, Allegory, Allusion, Myth,” p. 847+; William Blake, *The Sick Rose*, p. 847; Jim Simmerman, *Child’s Grave, Hale County, Alabama*, p.

849; Edgar Allen Poe, *The Raven*, p. 851; “Discovering Themes in Poetry,” p. 872+. Select 2nd poetry essay topic (3-4 pages), write outline, flesh out.

18 Oct. Discussion of the above poetry selections, pp. 847-872. Peer editing as time permits.

Assmt.: “Poems about parents,” p. 872+: Theodore Roethke, *My Papa’s Waltz*, p. 873; Edna St. Vincent Millay, *The courage that my mother had*, p. 874; Raymond Carver, *Photograph of My Father in His Twenty-Second Year*, p. 874; Judith Ortiz Cofer, *My Father in the Navy: A Childhood Memory*, p. 875; Mitsuye Yamada, *The Night Before Good-bye*, p. 875; Wanda Coleman, *Dear Mama*, p. 876.

23 Oct. Discussion of “Poems about parents,” p. 872-876. Peer editing as time permits.

Assmt.: “Poems about war,” p. 885+: Wilfred Owen, *Dulce et Decorum Est*, p. 887; Denise Levertov, *What Were They Like?*, 890; Yusef Komunyakaa, *Facing It*, p. 891; Wislawqa Szymborska, *The End and the Beginning*, p. 892;

25 Oct. Discussion of “Poems about war,” p. 885-892. Peer editing as time permits.

Assmt.: “Poetry of Langston Hughes, pp. 894-934; Miscellaneous poems, pp. 935+, Matthew Arnold, *Dover Beach*, p. 940; Goeffrey Chaucer, from *The General Prologue* of *The Canterbury Tales*, p. 947; Emily Dickinson, *Because I could not stop for Death*—, p. 954; T. S. Eliot, *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*, p. 960; Poems by Robert Frost, pp. 965-968; Carl Sandburg, *Fog*, p. 998.

30 Oct. Discussion about “Poetry of Langston Hughes, pp. 894-934; Miscellaneous poems above, pp. 935-998,

Assmt.: Complete Essay #4.

1 Nov. **Essay #4 Poetry – B — DUE.** Introduction to the Research Paper—Keys for Writers, pp. 97-204.

Assmt.: Read and study the handouts as well as the text materials. Think about a research paper topic about an aspect of one of the following plays: Henrik Ibsen, *All Doll House*, pp. 1121-1176; Arthur Miller, *Death of a Salesman*, pp. 1248-1321; William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, pp. 1322-1425; Tennessee Williams, *The Glass Menagerie*, pp. 1543-1592. Read: Greek Drama and Sophocles, *Oedipus the King*

- 6 Nov. Discussion of Greek Drama. Sophocles, *Oedipus the King*, p. 1431-1473.
Assmt.: Establish a working thesis and write an outline of the research paper (5-7 pages), establishing the three/four main ideas you wish to discuss and support. Gather your sources and begin assembling your research on notecards.
- 8 Nov. Discussion of Greek Drama. Sophocles, *Oedipus the King*, p. 1431-1473.
Assmt.: Organize your research and begin to flesh out the outline.
- 13 Nov. Discussion of Greek Drama. Sophocles, *Oedipus the King*, p. 1431-1473.
 Peer editing or research papers
Assmt.: Work on research paper
- 15 Nov. Discussion of Greek Drama. Sophocles, *Oedipus the King*, p. 1431-1473.
 Peer editing or research papers
Assmt.: Work on research paper
- 20 Nov. Discussion of Greek Drama. Sophocles, *Oedipus the King*, p. 1431-1473.
 Peer editing or research papers
Assmt.: Complete the research paper
- 22 Nov. NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING BREAK
- 27 Nov. **Essay #5—Research Papers—Drama—DUE.** Discussion of Greek Drama. Sophocles, *Oedipus the King*, p. 1431-1473.
Assmt.: Practice writing essay responses for short stories and poetry to prepare for final exam.
- 29 Nov. Discussion of Greek Drama. Sophocles, *Oedipus the King*, p. 1431-1473.
Assmt.: Practice writing essay responses for short stories and poetry to prepare for final exam.
 Get your portfolio in order, putting rough drafts and peer edits into the left pocket and the final papers into the right pocket.
- 06 Dec. Thursday 3:00 – 5:30 p.m. Portfolio of all essays. Final Exam **Essay #6**

POLICIES:

ATTENDANCE: Class attendance is an obligation as well as a privilege, and all students must attend regularly and punctually. After all that is the purpose your tuition serves. This class requires attendance and active collaboration with the teacher and with other students in order to participate fully in this community of writers. Department policy requires you to attend 80% of the course in order to pass. If you miss more than 4 (four) sessions (for any reason—illness, personal problems, job responsibilities, or just forgetting) (a total of 2 weeks of instruction and participation), you will not be able to pass the course for the semester. Missing Peer Editing days is especially damaging to your grade, since you will be responsible for work that you cannot make up on other days. Contact me BEFORE CLASS if you must miss a Peer Editing class if at all possible. Note: Failure to attend classes does not constitute a withdrawal from a course. It is extremely important that you follow withdrawal procedures should you elect not to take this or any other class. I will be happy to help you drop the class, should you find that necessary, but if you simply stop coming, I will be forced to assign you a failing grade for the semester.

GRADING: The NC grade emerges from state guidelines that require a student to pass Freshman Composition with a C- or better; no lower grade will transfer between schools and no lower grade can be accepted within institutions. The NC grade protects your GPA from the ramifications of a D or an F, although you should be aware that an NC may carry significant ramifications for your financial aid or scholarship arrangements, and that you will need to retake the course (and pay tuition again). I will give letter grades A-F throughout the term, but your overall average must be a C- by the end of the semester for this course to be credit-bearing. **Do not wait until the last essay or two to become concerned about a pattern of lower grades.** On the other hand, students often begin the term with grades at or below that C- and complete the term with a B or better, so consider initial lower grades as an indication that you need to work harder on your essays.

LATE WORK: In fairness to everyone, papers are due at the **beginning of class on the date assigned.** Late work loses ½ letter grade per day; it is not reasonable for the same standards to be applied to papers on which you have taken more time than the rest of the group has had. (It is also not fair to me; I schedule my time to give your papers my complete attention, and I may not be able to give it that attention if your paper comes in at an unexpected time). **Barring emergencies, papers not on my desk before the beginning of the class session will count as late** (So, do not come late. Do not slide your paper under my door during class and/or miss class and still expect the paper to count as on time).

PAPER FORMAT AND SUBMISSION POLICIES: At the end of the semester, you will submit a portfolio of completed work along with an assessment of your progress over the semester. To facilitate this process, please submit your first essay **in a new 9" x 11" manila file folder with pockets (no other type of folder will be accepted)** with your name and EH 102--Fall 2007 printed on the side tab (not top or bottom). You may retrieve your portfolio the following semester if you wish; at the end of one calendar year, I will shred all materials still in my possession. Pay attention to my comments and to the comments of your editing group, because this is how you will improve as a writer.

Anything fully written in class must be written on loose-leaf paper, double spaced (that means: skip a line). This facilitates markings for corrections as well as adding specific comments when editing. All public drafts (work submitted to me or to your peer editors) must be typed or word-processed. Any exceptions must be cleared through me in advance.

FOLLOW ALL RECOMMENDATIONS ON MANUSCRIPT FORM AND PREPARATION IN YOUR HANDBOOK AND HANDOUTS FROM ME. In other words, use 1" margins on all sides, double space, use good-quality ribbons, ink-jet or laser printers. Assuming a relatively standard type font (such as this one, which is "Times New Roman," a preferred font style) and a #12 font size like this (this syllabus is #11), a reasonably sophisticated vocabulary and conventional margins and spacing, you should have roughly 250-300 words per page.

Include the essay number in the heading and all other information as on page 195 (Keys). Avoid unusual type fonts, and justify type only on the left-hand margin (all computer programs can handle this—if you cannot, then get a book and learn how!). If using a dot-matrix printer, be sure the ribbon is fresh, separate all pages and remove all perforated edges. All papers should be stapled or paper-clipped. **YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING THE STAPLES AND/OR PAPER CLIPS!**

Always supply a title for each essay, centered at the top of the page and **not underlined**. On a separate page and in correct format, acknowledge any sources you use—be they conversations, works consulted, television shows, Web sites, class sessions, or anything. This is the case even if you have not directly quoted the source in the work itself—in this case, include a Works Consulted page instead of a Works Cited page.

In addition, all essays will be submitted to turnitin.com for similarity verification and *GradeMark* use. I hope to have a training session and some discussion of this program as the term progresses. You will need to be able to save your projects in .doc or .rtf format for them to appear correctly on my screen for GradeMark. All major word processing programs have this capability; you are responsible for figuring out your system.

ACADEMIC HONESTY: Follow all guidelines in the university student handbook, as you would for any class. Allow me point out a few areas of concern for this course, however, primarily in terms of plagiarism. Plagiarism consists in taking the words or ideas of another writer—be that fellow student, published or unpublished text, even from websites—and presenting them without clearly indicating that they are not your own material. (This includes using work you've done in one class to satisfy requirements in another—sometimes using prior *research* may be acceptable, but be certain to discuss it with your professor first). Plagiarism is a serious matter. It is a violation of the trust that scholars and students must be able to have in one another if genuine knowledge is to be created and sustained. Words and ideas are intellectual property, so that using them without proper credit is no different from stealing a wallet and using the credit cards inside. A plagiarized paper will definitely receive a failing grade—and at my discretion (that is, if I believe it to be a deliberate attempt to deceive), you may fail the class as a whole. Additionally I will pursue the matter through the Office of Student Affairs, at a minimum filing a complaint with Judicial Affairs and possibly pursuing judicial action. Cite accurately—see my handout on correct citation methods for some suggestions on using primary and secondary sources, and see the handbook for ways to be sure you've not fallen into unintentional plagiarism. You are responsible for learning and understanding the definitions of plagiarism and the means of avoiding it. Even well intentioned students may sometimes plagiarize inadvertently, but even accidental plagiarism is serious enough to warrant a failing grade for a paper. Avoid it!

I will not accept any essay for credit unless it is also submitted to the turnitin.com website. If the on-line version and the hard-copy version are substantially different, I may fail the paper at my discretion.

Your written assignments and examinations must be your own work. Academic misconduct will not be tolerated. To ensure that you are aware of what is considered academic misconduct, you should review carefully the definition and examples provided in Article III, Code of Student Conduct, Student Handbook, p. 93. If you have any questions in this regard, please contact me right away. You may not submit in fulfillment of requirements in this course any work submitted, presented, or used by you in any other course.

The University is committed to the fundamental values of preserving academic honesty as defined in the Student Handbook (7.III.A). The instructor reserves the right to utilize electronic means to help prevent plagiarism. Students agree that by taking this course all assignments are subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com. Assignments submitted to Turnitin.com will be included as source documents in Turnitin.com's restricted access database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents.

CONFERENCES:

- With me: Feel free to visit me any time during my office hours. If necessary, I will

schedule appointments for writing conferences at times other than my office hours, **and I strongly encourage you to come in to discuss your writing—to go over drafts of any paper or my comments on previously graded projects** if you have questions or concerns. I particularly encourage you to come in either to discuss your performance on the first essay or to look toward the second or both. **You should come in at least one time during the semester to discuss your writing;** I encourage you to do so earlier rather than later in the term so that you will get the most out of our work.

- With the WRITING CENTER: **You must also take an essay to the Writing Center at least once** during the term; they provide me with a record of your attendance, so simply telling me you've gone will not be adequate. Nor will phone consultations, on-line queries, or any other partial use of their services. Feel free to use their services at any time, for any or all papers (assuming you can schedule an appointment and that you attend all sessions you schedule). In some cases, students have been able to set up a standing appointment at the Writing Center; if you are aware that your preparation for this course is marginal, you may wish to discuss this possibility with me, but please do so within the first week of classes.

I'll be happy to look at any work you'd like to discuss, but other readers and other voices will be equally helpful in your development as a writer. **YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR SCHEDULING CONFERENCES!!!** You will find your grade penalized if you do not do so, but I will not repeatedly remind you about this component of your grade.

EXPECTATIONS REGARDING CLASSROOM CONDUCT: For us to enjoy and benefit from this class, we all need to behave in accordance with professional expectations, with an understanding that classroom environments are professional environments. Let me detail some of what it means to act professionally:

You should expect me to:

- Come prepared for class
- Start and end class on time.
- Treat all students fairly and equally and with respect, both in and out of the classroom
- Return all work promptly, generally within one week
- Provide useful feedback on work so that students have the opportunity for improvement
- Clearly state all learning objectives, assignments, and due dates, and follow all syllabus specifics unless I notify you of necessary revision
- Be in my office during office hours or for appointments (barring emergencies, for which I will provided as much advance notice as is possible)
- Promptly respond to emails concerning the course, generally within 24 hours (**barring weekends**).

I expect you to:

- Take responsibility for your own learning
- Come prepared for class
 - Being prepared for class means that you and I will have read the assigned material at least once prior to the class session, we will have the books and other required

material with us, and we will have ideas and interests we want to pursue with regard to that material during class.

- Behave in courteous ways that do not disrupt the learning environment (See below for specifics)
- Treat all other students and me with respect, both in and out of the classroom
 - All students in the class must treat others with civility and respect and conduct themselves during class sessions in a way that does not unreasonably interfere with the opportunity of other students to learn. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in points being deducted from a student's final numerical average, up to a maximum of 15% (1 ½ letter grades). Exceptionally disruptive or threatening behavior will lead to you being asked to leave the session of the course where the behavior occurred.
- Arrive to class **on time and stay for the duration** (barring emergencies)
 - Schedule other appointments during non-class hours. Let me know at or before the beginning of class if you anticipate a need to leave in the middle of the session; other students and I will be distracted if you simply pick up and walk out.
- Be interactive in the classroom and participate during in-class discussions
- Submit all work on time as specified for the assignment
- Consistently check your university email account for course-specific announcements as needed. Arrange to have that e-mail account forwarded if it is not the one you routinely check; you will need to check on a daily or at most every-other-day basis.
- **Provide useful feedback to me so that I have the opportunity for improvement.** Do not let things that upset you about the class simmer throughout the semester. Tell me so we can resolve them or at least understand.
- Complete work in an ethical, professional manner.
- Schedule appointments with me by e-mail if you are unable to come during office hours or if you would like to speak with me in private.
- Let me know if you are having trouble understanding the material we are covering in class.

Courtesy specifics:

- Except in emergencies (and let me know you have one), turn beepers/cell phones to vibration mode during class and do not take routine calls; class should be your priority during the session itself, and you are not available for casual contact. Do not text during class. Phones and other electronic devices are not permitted on your desk during exam or quiz situations.
- Restrict non-class related conversations to non-class times.
- Avoid eating unless you absolutely must do so for health or scheduling reasons. Feel free to bring in water or a non-staining beverage. A soda pop spill would be much too disruptive.
- Avoid doing work for other classes during this class; the people around you—and I—can certainly tell the difference between taking notes and writing papers, between attentive listening and doing other homework
- Be particularly mindful of the risk of disruption if you are using a laptop or other keyboarding device; sit where your screen will not impede other students' ability to see,

be sure to set your keyboard to make the least amount of noise possible. Realize that any use of the computer for non-class-related activities is unprofessional and rude.

- While I hope these expressions of courtesy seem obvious to you, they represent problems I've encountered in previous terms and want to avoid in the future.

Disability Accommodation:

The University will make reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. If you need support or assistance because of a disability, you may be eligible for academic accommodations. Students should identify themselves to the Disability Support Office (824-6203, UC113) and their instructor as soon as possible to ensure that appropriate accommodations are implemented in a timely manner. All discussions regarding disabilities will remain confidential.

NOTE: I have scheduled office hours when I hope you are most likely to be able to take advantage of them. There's no need to make appointments during these times; just stop in to see me! If those times aren't possible for you, I'll be happy to make appointments for a mutually convenient alternative. You should also feel free to contact me at my home office number; if I'm not available when you call, leave a message and I'll call you back. Students have also found it convenient to contact me via e-mail (which I prefer to phone calls if the matter isn't so urgent that a 12-24 hour delay would be a problem). I check e-mail at least one time a day and usually respond at once. (If you would like help on e-mail or internet use, the library has several sessions available to introduce you to both; check with them for schedules.) I also have voice mail on my office phone; feel free to leave detailed messages there.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

| Indicator/Objective (What it is I expect you to be able to do at the end of this course) | Assessment Tool (How I'll determine whether or not you've met that objective) |
|--|---|
| CONTENT | |
| 1. Obtaining familiarity with poetry, drama and short fiction | Portfolio of essays and research paper |
| 2. Further developing basic knowledge of grammar, sentence structure, and rhetorical strategies; treating writing as a process. | Portfolio of essays and research paper |
| 3 Further understanding the MLA format manuscript preparation and citation techniques, as well as the existence of non-MLA style sheets. | Portfolio of essays and research paper |
| 4. Developing an understanding of major intellectual and aesthetic ideas | Portfolio of essays and research paper |
| 5. Considering the subject in its relation to other disciplines and its application to human concerns. | Portfolio of essays and research paper |
| CRITICAL THINKING | |
| 1. Develop critical thinking skills and analyze, synthesize, and evaluate knowledge | Portfolio of essays Class participation |
| 2. Selecting or creating interesting problem situations to engage audiences for assigned materials. | Portfolio of essays Classroom discussions |

| | |
|---|--|
| 3. Developing reading skills that facilitate understanding and evaluating sources, and also inferring relationships among sources. | Portfolio of Essays Classroom discussions |
| 4. Integrating real-world problems into assigned materials. | Portfolio of essays |
| ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATION 1. Demonstrating effective verbal, nonverbal, written, and media communication techniques that foster inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom. | Portfolio of essays Class participation |
| 2. Display skill in editing and polishing a written project | Portfolio of essays |
| 3. Planning, revising, and refining writing samples that are grammatically correct, convey information effectively, and are appropriately constructed for various purposes and audiences. | Portfolio of essays |

Appendix Q: Lila's English 111 Course Syllabus

First-Year Composition I: EN 111-05
3 hours credit

PREREQUISITE: Minimum ACT English subtest score of 16, minimum SAT English subtest score of 411, or completion of EN 099, Basic English.

NOTICE: *Students not meeting these prerequisites may not receive credit for EN 111/121.*

Required Texts: Hacker, Diana. *A Writer's Reference*
<http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/custom/una/>, link to corrected
custom material for **AWR**

McWhorter, Kathleen T. *Successful College Writing, Brief Fourth Edition*

Recommended Text: a good collegiate dictionary

Information for the first ten sections below can be found in *A Writer's Reference*:

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: The written composition requirement of the General Education Curricula is designed for students to develop skill in prewriting, writing, and rewriting expository and persuasive essays of various lengths for a variety of audiences and rhetorical situations; in thinking critically; in analyzing texts of various types; and in conducting research to seek out and acquire knowledge.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: Upon completion of the written composition sequence, the student will be able to

- 1) express controlling ideas
- 2) support ideas with adequate and appropriate evidence and thoughtful analysis
- 3) apply a reasonable method of organization
- 4) demonstrate a sensitivity for words in the language
- 5) employ a variety of sentence structures
- 6) locate primary and secondary sources using existing and new technologies, analyze and evaluate sources, and synthesize sources without committing plagiarism
- 7) use the grammar and mechanics of Standard American English. Specifically, the following serious errors will be heavily penalized:
 - a) the comma splice
 - b) fused sentences and run-on sentences
 - c) the sentence fragment
 - d) lack of subject-verb agreement and verb errors
 - e) incorrect use of pronouns
 - f) excessive spelling errors, including misuse of the apostrophe (or lack thereof)
 - g) inconsistent tense usage

- h) use of nonstandard verb forms
- i) use of nonstandard constructions
- j) in appropriate diction

METHODS:

- 1) Since the primary aim of the sequence is to increase students' skills in expository and persuasive writing, emphasis will be placed on all stages of the writing process: prewriting, writing, and rewriting. The instructor will stress improvement through revision.
- 2) During the course of the semester, the instructor will hold a fifteen-minute conference with each student. Students are encouraged to request additional conferences with the instructor as needed.
- 3) The instructor may use pop tests and/or writing tasks (including essays) to ensure that the students become familiar with the daily materials assigned.

READING REQUIREMENT: : Students will be required to read selected chapters in *A Writer's Reference*, seventh edition, as well as other materials as assigned by the instructor

ACADEMIC HONESTY and PLAGIARISM: Academic honesty is also discussed in the *University Catalog* (48). Guidelines on avoiding plagiarism can be found at on the university website and on the English Department's web page. Penalties for plagiarism [sic] may range from a failing grade for a specific assignment to a failing grade in the course to suspension from the university (in repeat cases). I DO NOT make distinction between "accidental" and "intentional" plagiarism. It is your responsibility to make sure plagiarism does NOT happen. **You must complete, sign, and submit the Plagiarism Awareness Form before I will accept any assignment for grading.**

WRITING REQUIREMENT: ESSAYS Each student will be required to write a *minimum of five (5) essays*. As a result of the process of revision, the instructor may give a student's essay additional grades; however, revisions will not be counted as separate essays toward the required five. A composition shorter than three paragraphs in length will not be counted as an essay. At least *three (3) essays will be written in class*. The final essay, which is written during the final examination period, counts toward the required minimum.

UNIVERSITY WRITING CENTER: The Center for Writing Excellence is located in the basement of the university library. The purpose of the Writing Center is to provide students with support and resources for writing instruction at the academic level. Support includes individual and group consultations, as well as presentations for classes and student organizations. For more information, see pages 13-14 of *A Writer's Reference*.

ACADEMIC RESOURCE CENTER: The Center for Academic Advising and Retention Services (CAARS) provides academic support to promote student academic success. For more

information regarding the services and resources of (CAARS), see page 15 of *A Writer's Reference*.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:

GRADE COMPUTATION:

| | |
|---|-------------|
| Essay #1 (Illustration), due Feb. 10 | 10% |
| Essay #2 (Process Analysis), due March 1-3 | 15% |
| Essays #3, #4, and #5 (best 2 out of 3 x 15%) | 30% |
| #3 (Compare and Contrast), due March 24 | |
| #4 (Classification/Division/Definition), due April 19 | |
| #5 (Cause and Effect), in-class, due May 1 | |
| Homework and Participation | 10% |
| Reading Quizzes (4) | 10% |
| Essay #6 (Final Examination), May 10 | <u>25%</u> |
| TOTAL | 100% |

IMPORTANT NOTE ON ESSAYS #3, #4, AND #5: I will drop the lowest grade of these three essays **as long as you submit a completed essay** (on the required topic and of the required length) for each assigned topic. **If you do not submit one of these essays**, I will drop one of the other grades and **KEEP the 0**.

GRADING SCALE: A=100-90; B=89-80; C=79-70; D=69-60; F=59-0.

Note: Final grades of D and F will be recorded as NC (no credit), and students who earn NC will be required to repeat the course.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Whenever your cumulative absences for any reason—excused or unexcused—exceed the equivalent of four weeks of scheduled classes (*i.e.*, 12 classes), no credit may be earned for this course.

PARTICIPATION POLICY:

You will not receive any credit for attending class; participation points must be earned through participation. However, you will not have the opportunity to earn participation points if you do not attend. **I do not give participation points to students who come to class without their books.**

MAKEUP POLICY:

You are responsible for all work and assignments missed during your absence. I strongly recommend finding a classmate who will be your study buddy. Participation points will be excused if the absence is legitimate and documented, and not otherwise. If you know in advance that you will be absent on the day of a test, you must schedule your make-up test with me before the date; otherwise I reserve the right to assign a grade of zero, even if the absence is excused. Similarly, if you know in advance that you are going to be absent on the day an assignment is due, I expect you to submit it **early**.

CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION AND CIVILITY:

In order for every student to get the most benefit from the short periods of time we spend together, it is essential for each one of us to arrive prepared, to be completely focused on the work before us, and to treat one another with civility and respect. This means, of course, that I expect you to have completed any readings or other tasks required for the class, and to come to class with your textbooks, notebook, and writing implements. It also means that you will not use ANY personal electronic devices during class without my express permission. Any student who uses a personal electronic device during class will be asked to leave, and will be marked absent. This policy applies to planned OR unplanned occurrences (like a cell phone's ringing).

I also expect each class member to participate in class, not only by paying attention and taking notes, but by engaging in required activities and participating in discussion. Valuable members of a classroom community do two things during discussion: they express thoughtful responses to the material under consideration, AND they express thoughtful responses to one another's ideas. They do both of these things, furthermore, in a way that demonstrates respect for ideas different from their own, and in a courteous manner. Students who do not appear to be making an effort to be valuable members of the classroom community, and whose behavior appears to be interfering with the learning of others, may be asked to leave and will be marked absent.

COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR PROFESSOR:

Every professor keeps office hours. It is part of our job! Never hesitate, therefore, to come see me during my office hours. You are entitled to my attention and assistance; besides, I very much enjoy meeting one-on-one with my students. Furthermore, it is the institution's policy that each one of you must meet with me at least once to discuss your writing. Here are some guidelines for how to get the most out of our class time and conversations:

What you should and should not expect from me in the classroom and in my office:

- Expect me to clearly communicate the requirements and standards for each assignment.
- Expect me to teach you effectively and to make the effort to get to know your learning style.
- Expect me to answer your thoughtful and appropriate questions.
 - Do not expect me to repeat information that has already been made available (whether on Angel or in a lecture).
- Expect me to assess your work fairly.
 - Do not expect me to lower the course's standards at your request.
- Expect me to respect you as a person.
 - Do not expect me to rescue you from the consequences of your own choices.
- Expect me to accommodate you in legitimate and documented emergencies and for university-sanctioned absences.
 - Do not expect me to accept undocumented or inappropriate excuses.
- Expect me to direct you to helpful resources.
 - Do not expect me to provide significant remediation.
- Expect me to support and encourage you in your efforts to learn and improve.
 - Do not expect me to take the blame when you find the work difficult or when you haven't paid attention.
 - Do not expect me to give you favors that other students don't get.

ACCOMMODATION STATEMENT:

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the University offers reasonable accommodations to students with eligible documented learning, physical and/or psychological disabilities. Under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, a disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities as compared to an average person in the population. It is the responsibility of the student to contact Developmental Services prior to the beginning of the semester to initiate the accommodation process and to notify instructors within the first three class meetings to develop an accommodation plan. Appropriate, reasonable accommodations will be made to allow each student to meet course requirements, but no fundamental or substantial alteration of academic standards will be made. Students needing assistance should contact Developmental Services.

Appendix R: Lila's English 112 Course Syllabus

First-Year Composition II : EN 112

PREREQUISITE: EN 111 OR EN 121.

NOTICE: STUDENTS WHO HAVE NOT COMPLETED EN 111 OR EN 121 WITH A
PASSING GRADE MAY NOT RECEIVE CREDIT FOR EN 112.

Required Texts: Hacker, Diana. *A Writer's Reference*

Goshgarian, Gary and Kathleen Krueger. *Dialogues: An Argument
Rhetoric and Reader*

Recommended Text: a good collegiate dictionary

Information for the first ten sections below can be found in *A Writer's Reference*.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

METHODS:

READING REQUIREMENT:

ACADEMIC HONESTY and PLAGIARISM:

ACCOMMODATION STATEMENT:

WRITING REQUIREMENT:

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:

UNIVERSITY WRITING CENTER:

ACADEMIC RESOURCE CENTER:

GRADE COMPUTATION:

| | |
|---|-----|
| Homework and in-class assignments | 5% |
| Workshop and Conference participation | 5% |
| Essay #1 | 10% |
| Essays #2, #3, and #4 (best 2 out of 3 x 15%) | 30% |

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------|
| Research Essay (#5) | 25% |
| Essay #6 (final exam) | <u>25%</u> |
| Total | 100% |

GRADING SCALE:

A=100-90; B=89=80; C=79-70; D=69-60; F=59-0.

Note: Final grades of D and F will be recorded as NC (no credit), and students who earn NC will be required to repeat the course.

Whenever your cumulative absences for any reason—excused or unexcused—exceed the equivalent of four weeks of scheduled classes (*i.e.* 8 classes), no credit may be earned for this course. You will not receive any credit for attending class; participation marks must be earned through participation. However, you will not have the opportunity to earn participation marks if you do not attend.

Makeup Policy:

You must provide documentation to support your claim for missing a test or quiz that was announced in advance. Homework checks and class participation activities cannot be made up; reading quizzes can only be made up in the case of an excused (documented) absence.

Classroom Participation and Civility: In order for every student to get the most benefit from the short periods of time we spend together, it is essential for each one of us to arrive prepared, to be completely focused on the work before us, and to treat one another with civility and respect. This means, of course, that I expect you to have completed any readings or other tasks required for the class, and to come to class with your textbook, notebook, and writing implements. It also means that you will not use ANY personal electronic devices during class without my express permission. Any student who uses a personal electronic device during class will be asked to leave, and will be marked absent. This policy applies to planned OR unplanned occurrences (like a cell phone's ringing).

I also expect each class member to participate in class, not only by paying attention and taking notes, but by engaging in required activities and participating in discussion. Valuable members of a classroom community do two things during discussion: they express thoughtful responses to the material under consideration, AND they express thoughtful responses to one another's ideas. They do both of these things, furthermore, in a way that demonstrates respect for ideas different from their own, and in a courteous manner. Students who do not appear to be making an effort to be valuable members of the classroom community, and whose behavior appears to be interfering with the learning of others, may be asked to leave and will be marked absent.

Appendix S: Amy Jo's English 111 Course Syllabus

English 111: First-Year Composition I

Monday/Wednesday 2:00-3:15

Prerequisite: Minimum ACT English subtest score of 16, minimum SAT English subtest score of 411, or completion of EN 099, Basic English.

Texts and Materials:

- *A Writer's Reference*, Diana Hacker
- Notebook (for journal)
- Collegiate dictionary

Evaluation:

- Essays (5) 50%
- Final Exam 25%
- Quizzes 15%
- Journal 10%

Scale: 90-100 A

80-89 B

70-79 C

69 and below: NC (No Credit)

Attendance: Because essays will be written, peer-edited, and discussed with the instructor during class time, excessive absences are strongly discouraged. More than eight absences may result in the student's not receiving credit for the course.

Makeup Policy: Missed in-class essays can only be made up with a reasonable, documented excuse. Any missed essay must be made up within one week.

****Syllabus is supplemented by material found in pages 1-15 of *A Writer's Reference***

Schedule of Classes

August 25 Introduction to Course

August 30 Plagiarism Policy, Journals, Language Exercise

September 1 Write Essay 1 (Diagnostic Essay)

September 6 NO CLASS

September 8 Library Orientation

September 13 AWR Composing and Revising 1-2

September 15 Composing and Revising 3, Basic Grammar

September 20 Composing and Revising 4, Grammatical Sentences 5

September 22 Composing and Revising 5, Grammatical Sentences 6

September 27 Discuss Narration
September 29 Write Essay 2
October 4 Peer Groups for Essay 2
October 6 Discuss Description, Grammatical Sentences 1-2
October 11 Write Essay 3
October 13 Grammatical Sentences 3-4, Peer Groups for Essay 3
October 18 Conferences
October 20 Conferences
October 25 Discuss Compare/Contrast, Punctuation 1-2
October 27 Write Essay 4
November 1 Peer Groups for Essay 4, Punctuation 3-7
November 3 Mechanics
November 8 Word Choice
November 10 Discuss Cause/Effect, Sentence Style 1-3
November 15 Write Essay 5
November 17 Peer Groups for Essay 5, Sentence Style 4-7
November 22 Academic Writing
November 29 Conferences
December 1 Conferences
December 6 Journals due
December 8 Review for Final Essay

Final Exam: Friday, December 10, 1:00-2:45

Appendix T: Amy Jo's English 112 Course Syllabus

English 112: First Year Composition II

Required Texts and Materials:

- *A Writer's Reference*, Diana Hacker
- Collegiate dictionary

Grading:

- | | |
|------------------|-----|
| • Essays (5) | 50% |
| • Research Paper | 25% |
| • Final Exam | 25% |

| | |
|----------------------|----|
| Scale: 90-100 | A |
| 80-89 | B |
| 70-79 | C |
| 69 and lower | NC |

Attendance: Because essays will be written, peer-edited, and discussed with the instructor during class time, excessive absences are strongly discouraged. More than **eight** absences may result in the grade of NC (No Credit) for the class.

Makeup Policy: Missed in-class essays can only be made up with a reasonable, documented excuse. Any missed essay must be made up within one week.

Accommodation Statement: In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the University offers reasonable accommodations to students with eligible documented learning, physical, and/or psychological disabilities. The student should contact Developmental Services prior to the beginning of the semester to initiate accommodation process and notify the instructor within the first three class meetings to develop an accommodation plan.

***This syllabus is supplemented by material found in pages 1-15 of *A Writer's Reference*.**

Schedule of Classes

| | |
|------------|---|
| January 13 | Introduction, Discuss Syllabus + UNA section of <i>A Writer's Reference</i> |
| January 18 | Plagiarism Policy, Review EN111 |
| January 20 | AWR A3: Evaluating Arguments |
| January 25 | AWR A3: Logical Fallacies |
| January 27 | AWR A2: Constructing an Argument |
| February 1 | Discuss Essay 1: Technology |
| February 3 | Write Essay 1 |
| February 8 | Peer Groups for Essay 1 |

| | |
|--------------|---|
| February 10 | Discuss Essay 2: Opposing Viewpoints Resource Center Discuss research papers |
| February 15 | Write Essay 2 |
| February 17 | Peer Groups for Essay 2 |
| February 22 | AWR L: Writing about Literature Research paper topic due |
| February 24 | Library Orientation |
| March 1 | Discuss Essay 3: "A Jury of Her Peers" |
| March 3 | Write Essay 3 |
| March 8 | Conferences |
| March 10 | Conferences |
| March 15 | Discuss Essay 4 |
| March 17 | Write Essay 4 |
| March 22 | Peer Groups for Essay 4 Research paper outline due |
| March 24 | Discuss outlines, AWR R1: Research |
| March 29, 31 | NO CLASS |
| April 5 | AWR R2-3: Research |
| April 7 | AWR MLA |
| April 12 | Research Presentations |
| April 14 | MLA Q & A |
| April 19 | Research Paper due |
| April 21 | Discuss Essay 5: Success |
| April 26 | Write Essay 5 |
| April 28 | Conferences |
| May 3 | Review for Final |

Final Exam: Friday, May 6, 10:15-12:00

