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Inter-institutional Comparison Of Faculty Perceptions On The Purpose Of Freshman Year Composition Programs

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INTER-INSTITUTIONAL COMPARISON OF FACULTY PERCEPTIONS ON THE
PURPOSE OF FRESHMAN YEAR COMPOSITION PROGRAMS

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is an investigation of instructors' perceptions of composition learning objectives focusing on which should be taught and which should be emphasized. The researcher observed that instructors do not regard all course objectives in English Composition courses equally; emphasizing some and giving others brief consideration. From this observation, this study was developed to measure objectives as well as to examine principal reasons for the differences in perception. Using an 18-question (16 content area and two demographic) survey based on content areas chosen to mirror general learning objectives in composition courses, along with six focused interviews, the researcher discovered some levels of agreement, some of disagreement, and some areas of neutrality.

The researcher has established some connections and some disconnects between some of the general learning objectives from English Composition courses, which are intriguing and thought provoking. Since instructors deliver instruction using learning objectives as the goals to be achieved in the English Composition courses they teach, it is prudent to be concerned with how these objectives are perceived and implemented by the users.

The data collected conclusively reflects instructors' perceptions of learning objectives are not all the same. As the researcher measured instructors' perceptions of English Composition learning objectives, the results demonstrate that there are stronger relationships with some of the learning objectives, and some objectives have no relationships; some objectives are well matched and others are not. The purpose of this study, understanding relationships between instructors' perceptions of learning objectives in FY English Composition courses, will provide us with research to help improve objectives and positively impact instruction.

This dissertation is dedicated to the memories of my parents, Nicholas and Helen Branciforte –

who always believed in me, even when I did not; my grandfather, Cologero Sorrentino – whose

spirit and wisdom is always with me (sta forte, figlia mia); and my aunt/Godmother Nancy

Cacciola – who said I could do anything and everything. And, always, Donna Anella Verali ….

I asked for help and got an angel. Thanks for the support, it is DONE!

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When I began this doctoral journey at the University of Central Florida (UCF) I had not attended college courses in over 20 years. My first courses were overwhelming, and attempting to read textbooks that contained theories and concepts – far from bestseller material - made me question my decision. Luckily, I had several professors in the College of Education and College of Arts and Humanities who recognized and "awakened" the student in me.

One of those professors was Dr. David Boote, a distinguished master of many disciplines, and an expert in Curriculum & Instruction theories and concepts. This professor ignited the spark that helped me through the required core and specialized courses for the degree. He forced me to think (oh my God), challenge, and ask questions of why, what, and how. I credit him for awakening my sleeping brain and allowing me to realize I still had brain cells left to finish my courses and write a dissertation. Dr. Boote helped me frame and direct the context of my research in the courses he taught as well as the supportive email conversations. Thank you for being part of my committee and for all your help!

Another of the College of Education professors who provided support and direction for my education and my dissertation study is Dr. Steven Sivo, Statistics guru. His love of the field and his enthusiasm – he would literally light up and practically be giddy with excitement, as he explained another statistical concept - was charming. His course allowed me to develop and test my survey methods and measurement so that I was ready to conduct my study at the end of the semester. Every dissertation committee needs a Statistical guru, so thank you!

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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The writing process consists of skills to master and requires meaningful participation in

cultural practices and social institutions, connecting individuals to others because something

needs to be voiced. As explained by the poet Adrienne Rich (2001), writing is "re-vision," the art

of looking back and seeing from a new direction. To experience such a process a writer must

understand that looking back, forward or beyond is a complex, deliberate and personal

experience. Diogenes and Lunsford (2006) developed a working epistemic definition of writing

as a,

> technology for creating conceptual frameworks and creating, sustaining, and performing
>
> lines of thought within those frameworks, drawing from and expanding on existing
>
> conventions and genres, utilizing signs and symbols and incorporating materials drawn from
>
> multiple sources, and taking advantage of the resources of a full range of media. (p. 144)

And, over the past twenty-five years, the paradigm stressing style, organization, correctness, and

conventions has evolved into the process-oriented stages of invention and revision (Whitney et.

al., 2008), continually transforming the field of composition as well as impacting composition

programs, courses, instructors, and classroom instruction.

Background and Significance

Composition courses provide opportunities for students to use writing products to practice

and expand these skills. Current First Year (FY) post-secondary Composition Programs

incorporate different approaches to teaching writing. Several programs include one semester of

composing in different genres and one semester based on literature and argumentation; others include two semesters of writing in different genres; and others include writing with service learning community-based projects. The learning objectives of these courses include similar general areas such as mechanics, structure, diction, and language. Writing requires an intellectual approach described by Berlin (2003) as epistemic rhetoric where students learn that rhetoric is a means of arriving at the truth. Hillocks (2002) agrees with Berlin's epistemic theory and notes it is essential for "successful writing courses, inclusive of student discussion focused on complex structured problems, deliberative thinking about alternative solutions, preparation for writing, strategic critical thinking, ideas and development into genuine expression" (p. 27).

When an instructor develops lesson plans based on the objectives provided in a syllabus there are two implicit assumptions occurring. First, the instructor includes each of the objectives and skills. Second, the instructor teaches them equally over the duration of the course. These assumptions support the basis of the research questions and the survey in this study. The focus of this researcher's study will be an analysis and evaluation of faculty perceptions – importance and relative weight – of the key skills in a composition class. The necessary skills for a good writer to practice and master have been identified and then presented to instructors to evaluate according to their own perceived importance. The study will view the effectiveness of Post-secondary Composition Programs as delivered by instructors, rather than instructional practices. In addition, the study will explore which learning objectives are taught, which are emphasized, and the relative importance of all the learning objectives to instructors.

Statement of the Purpose of Study and Research Questions

There are inherent problems in teaching writing in FY Post-secondary Composition Programs, the most obvious being that writing practice that does not always transfer to real-world writing or mastery of skills and techniques. FY students have differing degrees of grammar, mechanics, diction and sentence structure competencies, so teaching students of varying competencies is a challenge within the programs. These approaches represent a quandary at the post-secondary level – teach basic skills or teach the nuances of the genres in the FY courses? Added to the questions of what to teach, different institutions' expectations in the FY courses could also be determining factors of which skills to emphasize. Thus, the depth and breadth of learning objectives along with the significance of every Composition Program could be affected by instructors' perceptions of learning objectives.

Since these issues and concerns exist, it would be prudent for researchers to investigate how instructors' perceptions vary from institution to institution. Then, researchers should investigate what learning objectives should be taught, which are currently emphasized, and finally, how important the student learning objectives are to instructors. This study would result in benchmarks to move toward better defined student needs, learning objectives, and FY programs.

Specifically, the research questions are:

1. Are instructors teaching skills for students of varying grammar, mechanics, diction, and sentence structure competencies in the Freshman Year English Composition courses?

2. Are instructors emphasizing writing as a process in the classroom?

3. At the Post-secondary level, are research skills and genre nuances taught?

4. In Freshman English Composition Program courses, do instructors emphasize organizational strategies?

5. At the different Post-secondary schools (colleges, universities, for-profit and public), which course content objectives do instructors perceive as more important in their courses?

Definitions

Composition is an activity requiring engagement, "a call to write" as Trimbur (2002, p.xxxv) expresses the process. Kinneavy (1971) identified writing in terms of four aims – expressive, persuasive, referential, and literary, stating, "no discourse is autonomous, but the expressive component of any discourse, and especially expressive discourse, requires the context of the situation to be understood" (p. 381).

The FY or First Year term used throughout the study has a similar definition across the public and for-profit institutions. At the Florida public community college or state university, the term is defined as ENC 1101 – Composition I and ENC 1102 – Composition II since these institutions follow the Statewide Common Course Numbering System. These two courses are the basic requirements for most college majors at the community college and university level, typically completed within a student's first or second year of study. At the for-profit college or university these courses would be the one or two General English Composition courses a student needs to fulfill the English requirement for a degree completed during the first or second year of study or before the student graduates. It is useful to note that several of the proprietary (for-profit) institutions have adopted the Common Course Numbering System for articulation agreements as

well as transferability. While these courses follow the same number system, they do not follow the exact course content, but are similar in purpose and some learning objectives. Thus, these are all the courses that will be included in this study as FY Composition Programs.

Limitations

The study was conducted at the Post-secondary level (state public university and community college; for-profit university and career college level), with a random sampling of 63 instructors from First Year Composition I, Composition II, and General English Composition courses. This relatively small sample of instructors reflects the quantitative and exploratory nature of this study. In addition, no distinction of degree levels (Masters or Doctorate) or length of teaching service was considered for the participants. The assumptions of the study were that the instructors teach English Composition classes and responded truthfully to the questions. The researcher clearly has no ability to verify responses or the participant information provided by School Faculty Directory Websites, Department Chairs and Deans from the different institutions.

Methodology

An 18-item survey, including 16 general content areas and 2 demographic selections, was used for data collection. The items were chosen to mirror student learning objectives in composition courses. Thus, instructors were asked to answer how important each is to them in their courses. The survey was administered using Dillman's (2007) 5 contacts including the Prenotice Letter, Survey Mailout & Cover Letter, Postcard Thank You/Reminder, First

Replacement Questionnaire, and the Final Contact for Participation. In addition, six survey

participants volunteered for individual 15-minute interviews based on five open-ended questions.

Data Analysis

The collected data was analyzed in SPSS Statistics 17.0 using quantitative procedures

including Spearman's Rank Order Correlation, Reliability and Item Analysis, and Factor

Analysis. In the context of the study, the procedures will support the conclusion that the scores

from the survey are a reliable and valid assessment of FY Composition Programs. The results

generated will be further applied and interpreted to determine recommendations and future

research areas for English Composition curriculum.

CHAPTER 2 – REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

As we review the decades of existing literature it is apparent the expectations and objectives of FY composition courses have already been identified. Many of the elements are supported by theory and studies so there is no need to reinvent the wheel. However, while theorists and practitioners are aware of the elements, it seems interpretations have changed, wavered and mutated the original intent of composition courses.

Background and Significance

In examining literature on the topic, definite criteria and rationale for inclusion and exclusion in the review have been developed. First, studies within the last 22 years (1982-2007) will be examined to evaluate the most current in the field. Second, only studies at the Post-secondary level will be included, eliminating elementary, middle, and high school settings, since the interests and expertise of the researcher are in higher education. Finally, all the studies will measure two groups with similar treatment, thus excluding individual or classroom projects, case studies, surveys, and non-instructional settings which could have methodological, reporting and control flaws.

The search began with the broad topic of "writing." Terms such as technical writing, anything including second language, teaching methods, literary education, adult literacy, composition, basic writing skills, freshman composition, college composition, teaching basic writing skills, writing skills, writing assignments, developmental writing, and adult students were

discarded. With this thorough search, descriptors were identified that resulted in sources that were pertinent to the topic. This search for the most-inclusive descriptors led to Google Scholar, the University of Central Florida databases, High Beam, and Eric Thesaurus. The final determiners are writing skills, writing instruction, and writing processes.

For studies applicable to the topic the following databases were used: Academic Search Premier, Chronicle of Higher Education, Communication Studies, Dissertation Abstracts, Education Full-Text (Wilson), Education in Sage Full-Text Collections (CSA), Educational Research Abstracts (T&F), ERIC, ERIC Document Reproduction Service, Google Scholar, Humanities Index, Infotrac Onefile, JSTOR, Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts, MLA Bibliography, OmniFile Full Text, Professional Development Collection, Project Muse, ProQuest, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, PsycArticles, PsycInfo, Sociological Abstracts (CSA), What Works Clearinghouse (U.S. Department of Education), Wiley InterScience, and WorldCat Dissertations and Theses. Finally, SSCI and Ulrich's Periodical Directory were used to examine the sources and citations regarding scholarliness and to determine if journals were academic or peer refereed.

This exercise verified several strong articles with good studies supported with literature reviews. However, the researcher has determined that the field is lacking in qualitative and quantitative studies based on the effectiveness of FY Composition Programs.

Defining Composition

Defining composition has been an ongoing process over many centuries. Perhaps the goals, objectives, and outcomes are too rigorous and overwhelming, "an academic boondoogle"

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(Bullard, 1964, p.373); however, as Kitzhaber (1963) states, "Freshman English is one of those things like spinach and tetanus shots that young people put up with because their elders say they must" (p. 1). These views have been around for over seventy years as Richards (2002/1936) stated of composition, "today it is the dreariest and least profitable part of the waste that the unfortunate travel through in Freshman English; we would do better just to dismiss it to Limbo" (p. 1). None of these views should be surprising since there is no consensus on any element in the teaching of composition. Instructors must understand the genres of writing in other disciplines, and encourage instruction that emphasizes general and flexible principles about writing rather than decontextualized skills or rigid formulas to develop writing products (Wardle, 2009, p. 782).

As Connors (1983) states, the field lacks models so there is not very much agreement between methodology and conditions. Wardle (2009) added that if the goal of FY composition is writing expertise transferred to courses in other disciplines, then, the focus must change from "writing as primary attention to a tool for acting on other objects of attention" (p. 766).

Freshman composition has been identified by researchers and commentators in statements such as, "the university's most important single courses" (Hoblitzelle, 1967, p. 600), to "an essentially punitive and negative course where dumb, bored, and boring teachers present laborious piddling routines for students" (Macrorie, 1966, p. 629). Indeed others in the university and colleges may perceive composition as a "convenient scapegoat for their guilt about refusing to teach discipline-specific literacy" (Crowley, 1991, p. 157). Years later, Fulweiler (1986) added "teaching Freshman English is the worst chore in the university; so bad, in fact, that only

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part-timers and graduate students should have to do it; or so bad that everyone on the faculty should share the English teacher's burden" (p. 104).

Historical Background

Examining composition research and theories through the years is a worthwhile exercise to determine and situate composition in the discipline of English studies. In the nineteenth century, theorists such as Locke (1849/1690) concluded, "the ends of language in our discourse with others being chiefly these three: firstly, to make known one man's thoughts or ideas to another; second, to do with it with as much ease and quickness as possible; thirdly, thereby to convey the knowledge of things" (p. 325). Blair (1853/1783) stresses the term, as

> the study of composition, important in itself at all times, has acquired additional importance
>
> from the taste and manners of the present age … To all the liberal arts much attention has
>
> been paid; and to none more than to the beauty of language, and the grace and elegance of
>
> every kind of writing. (p.12)

Mid-twentieth century theorists, such as Connors (1983) identified composition studies as "neither a mature scientific field with a paradigm of its own nor one whose first paradigm is anywhere in sight" (p. 17). Phelps (1986) added the "primary object of inquiry in composition studies is written discourse in its most comprehensive interpretation," differing from "other language-related academic fields by making the teaching act itself a primary topic of scholarly inquiries" (p. 183; 187). Shilb (1991) notes that composition "exists only to serve the 'real disciplines'" (p. 178), while North (1987) describes it as "a sort of ur-discipline blindly groping its way out of the darkness toward the bright light of a 'scientific' certainty" (p. 45).

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In general, composition deals with the written word and how it is used in our personal, professional, and scholarly lives (Lunsford, 1992). Lauer (1984) considered composition studies inclusive of the "territory of investigation; nature of the writing process; interaction between writer, reader, subject matter, and text; and the epistemic potential of writing" (p. 21). Composition, according to Varnum (1996), has multiple descriptors including "a field, a sub-field, a pre-paradigmatic field, and sometimes as a discipline" (p. 44). Using specific points, Davies (2006b) identified mechanics and analytical skills, as well as the "ability to develop an idea in detail, supporting the idea with meaningful facts, illustrations, experiences, analogies, quotes, or whatever it takes to make the thesis clear and then organize and provide adequate transitions from one idea to the next" (p. 33) as the tools needed to create good writing.

Hairston (1982) believed that writing can be a regimented activity that can be researched, discussed, and theorized. Rose (1989) adds the concept of struggle to the writing process as he believes students should compose what they wish as they navigate the "discourse of possibility" to learn the values of the acceptable mainstream (p. 79). Then if we approach teaching as a career-long process of constant renewal, notes Farber (1991), "we're going to have to work much harder at it, but, as students may learn when they take a fascinating and very demanding course, some things can be more work and yet like work" (p. 273). Further, Kent (1999), stated that no "codifiable or generalizable writing process exists or could exist because writing is a public act, situated, and interpretive" (pp. 1-2).

As we ask what composition is, Bartholomae (1996) noted,

to imagine a way for composition to name a critical project, one that is local, one whose effects will be necessarily limited, but one, still, of significance and consequence… I think of

the question this way- what does it mean to accept student writing as a starting point, as the

primary text for a course of instruction, and to work with it carefully, aware of its and the

course's role in a larger cultural project. (p. 24)

On the other hand, Yancey (2006a) noted a 2003 comment by Harris (College Composition and

Communication editor) at the opening session of the Conference of the National Learning

Information Initiative debating Bartholomae's emphasis on academic discourse, instead

advocating the personal essay as he stated,

Indeed the whole argument over whether we should teach "personal essays" or "academic

discourse" strikes me as misleading and debilitating – since the opposition between the two

tends quickly to devolve into a standoff between belletrist and pedantry, sensitivity and

rigor, and thus turns both into something that most students I have met show little interest in

either reading or writing. (p. 6)

And, perhaps if repeated reflection on course design occurs, resolution to the "balance between

academic and practical, real-world assignments" can be determined (Diogenes & Lunsford,

2006, p. 148).

Brandt (1995) adds the concept of accumulating levels of literacy, defining composition

instruction as the "task of assisting students to learn to read and write critically so that they can

carry out the tasks of their lives with some control in an increasingly complex culture" (p. 651-

2). Bishop (2003) perceives the support of writing students inclusive of praising what is, as well

as "making meaning, engaging minds, improving practices, tapping deep and meaningful rituals,

inculcating life-changing habits of thinking and persuading, reflecting, and revising" (p. 69).

Perhaps as we teach composition, according to Bloom (1998), instructors share a "complex of

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the teacher-class values or virtues embedded in every mainstream institution of higher education in the country" (p. 28). However, a definition of college writing was developed by Gunner (2006) as "outside this human social context is to invite its commoditization, to erase the subject himself or herself, to justify mechanistic curricula, and to support institutional atomism" (p. 119).

Phelps (1988) demonstrates the importance of the study of writing, stating "the potential contributions of composition to contemporary intellectual life arise, first, from the 'discourse connection,' through which composition touches base with the root metaphor of contextualism; and second, from the commitment to open this new relation between human and world to every developing person" (p. 41). Blau (2006) defines writing as a "species of intellectual discourse" that uses the mind and language to "enable students and citizens to become participants in an academic community that is itself a segment of the larger intellectual community" (p. 373).

Many theorists consider language practices as discourses, influenced by and expressed within social and cultural contexts. Lu (2003) notes that,

> students have the right to deliberate how they do language as they perform in both
>
> reproducing and reshaping standardized rules of language in the process of using them;
>
> retooling the tools one is given to achieve one's ends; and retooling the tools according to not
>
> only one's sense of what the world is but also what the world ought to be. (p. 193)

Macbeth (2006) concludes that "academic writing is filled with cultural reckonings, judgments of propriety, and figure-ground relations" and warns that attempting to instruct on these social practices to "novices through a wholly formal curriculum is more than the most scrupulous lesson plan can do" (p. 185). Elbow (2003) describes this process as three mysteries: from no

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words to words; figuring out what we really mean; and finally, using words that give meaning to the writer and reader.

Macbeth (2006) agrees that writing is socioculturally constructed, however, questions "what cultural practices might look like as we assemble them in locally situated interactions, and how we teach such practices to newcomers" (p. 181). Some believe that students construct meanings from exposure and experiences within the contexts of their environments. As we attempt to explain where words and sentences emanate from, to determine what writing means, there are many explanations and perspectives. Examining the different discussions and interpretations of composition, the common thread is that writing is the product of a process which consequently empowers writers, students, and instructors.

Considering the Reader

Flower (1979) noted that some writers fail to consider the readers, and effective writers "do not express thought but transform it in certain complex but describable ways for the needs of the reader" (p. 19). Identifying language as complex, Greenberg (1992) notes those judgments about students' writing must be provisional,

Readers will always differ in their judgments of the quality of a piece of writing; there is no one "right" or "true" judgment of a person's writing ability. If we accept that writing is a multidimensional, situational construct that fluctuates across a wide variety of contexts, then we must also respect the complexity of teaching and testing it. (p.18)

When the classroom practice is focused on reading and writing, and the student perceives himself or herself as a reader first and writer second, creating a consciousness of academic

audience, expectation of focus, development, and correctness which leads to discovering the writer's voice (Gentile, 2006, p. 325).

Theorists have similar descriptions of those who sit in the English composition classrooms. Murray (1969) sees the group as powerful coming from "rhetoric that is crude, vigorous, usually uninformed, frequently obscene, and often threatening" (p. 118). Lunsford (1992) notes that the individuals that are in writing classrooms, the students, need to be viewed and studied in terms of their different elements such as age, race, gender, class, and sexual orientations. Some programs and courses have political and social awareness as a goal, as Berlin (1996) identifies the mission of composition courses to "bring about more democratic and personally humane economic, social, and political arrangements" (p. 116). It is the nature of the field as Heikler (1996b) stated that the "disciplinary language of composition studies constructs students as 'Other' as people (or things) that are fundamentally quite different from their teachers" (p. 226). In a more current perspective, Bazerman (2008) contends that the sense of the complexity of writing has led some to consider writing only as an expressive and spontaneous art, never to be usefully described or accounted for by systematic inquiry.

Many students perceive writing as DiPardo (1992) describes, "a negotiation between multiple identities, moving between public and private selves, living in a present shadowed by the past, encountering periods in which time and circumstance converge to realign or even restructure our images of who we are"; thus, shape-shifting" (p. 125). This moment is expressed by Swain's (1997) belief that writing is actually an entrance into wonder, where instructors must "invite students to enter the zone, the place of wonder where insights become illuminated, where the difficult becomes easy, where the complex details melt into wholes" (p. 93). The concept is

aided by what Graves (1999) notes is "consciousness is suspended and the words flow, seeming to come from some place other than oneself" (p. 80).

The Role of Composition Teachers

So, who are these people known as teachers or instructors? Murray (1969) stated, "every writing teacher should be a revolutionary, doubting, questioning, challenging; creating a constructive chaos in which students can work" (pp. 118-119). Recognizing the polarized opposites between which teachers must choose, Elbow (1983) advised that teachers must "embrace rather than struggle with the contrary, conflicting mentalities in teacher" (p. 327). Hairston (1986) noted they are those who "have not known what they were doing; overworked, exhausted, resentful slaves and disillusioned, self-pitying faculty martyrs" (p. 119). Another viewpoint is Berlin's (1988) perception that the composition teacher is someone who places ideology at the center of the teaching of writing, who can offer "analysis of democratic practices in economic, social, political, and cultural spheres" (p. 492). According to Harris (2006), to "teach academic writing, one needs to be good at it – or at least show a strong promise of becoming good at it" (p. 165) and results in imparting "by omission or design" instruction that "delivers a vocabulary that writers, parents, and citizens will take with them and use during the rest of their lives" (Yancey, 2006b, p. 206). At the least, instructors must possess proficiency in writing, the ability to explain rhetorical moves and strategies underlying writing, and knowledge of the ways people learn how to write (Smit, 2005). Finally, instructors as experts, according to Jacobi (2006), will deliver experience to their students, and in Yancey's (2006b) view this expertise can be "used to support and guide them in their composing," with the understanding

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that "composition is more than a set of practices located in a vocabulary living at the center of a discipline" (p. 208).

Elbow (1983) agrees with the dual versions, as "maternal with obligation to students and paternal with obligation to knowledge and society"; realizing the roles are "supportive and nurturing 'allies and hosts' to students as well as hawk-eyed, critical-minded bouncers at the bar of civilization" (pp. 327-329; 339). Finally, Fontaine (1988) presents the view of teachers as those who "reculturate students into academic discourse communities" and in turn "missionaries who willingly share the Word with those whose words are less valuable" (p. 92). Redd (2006) agrees with Freire, Giroux, and Gee, who have identified the "indoctrinating power of literacy education"; however, she perceives the place of freshman composition as an exercise in "social conformity" that promotes "adherence to the white, Western, middle-class values of the American status quo" (p. 74). Davies (2006a) identifies competency in grammar, mechanics, organization, language, usage, critical thinking skills, and audience awareness (p. 383) as the keys for entering the college-level discourse community, providing a common ground for curriculum development, teaching, and learning.

Approximately one hundred years ago, Hopkins identified the teaching of writing as a form of laboratory instruction, with multiple assignments, one teacher, and small class sizes. The current perspective places composition in "general education, the most amorphous part of the humanities curriculum" requiring "students to learn to participate intelligently and ethically in the discourses of the communities to which they do and will belong to as citizens" (Lloyd-Jones & Lunsford, 1989, p.29). Instructors' epistemologies are a major influence on what they choose to teach and how as well as their sense of students' capacities to learn (Hillocks, 1999). A survey

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of postsecondary writing instructors resulted in identifying academic writing and argument as the two most important approaches and writing process, revision, and peer review as the most used practices (Yancey, 2004). Bazerman (2008) views the work of practitioners, theorists and researchers as "a complex, historically developed practice, composed of many small inventions that have expanded the repertoire, genres, skills, and devices available to contemporary practice" (p. 299).

Writing as a Form of Academic Discourse

Beaufort (2007) defined writing expertise with a circular conceptual model including discourse community knowledge, writing process knowledge, rhetorical knowledge, genre knowledge, and subject matter knowledge, with all five components overlapping and interacting (p. 177). The author recommends that transfer of learning will occur if students frame problems into abstract principles that can be applied to new situations, tackle opportunities to use those abstract concepts in different social contexts, and finally practice meta-cognition.

In research on responses to writing products, Sommers (1982) discovered essay comments can take students' attention away from their own purposes in writing a particular text and focus that attention on the teachers' purpose in commenting or make generic comments, in either case ignoring student needs. These points are supported by Pajares and Johnson (1994) who note that teachers need to be cognizant that, according to social cognitive theory, students' self-confidence depends in no small measure upon the feedback that teachers can provide. According to Jones (2008), instructors should focus on helping students become "more internally oriented and more

aware of productive and counterproductive academic behaviors" rather than solely on writing tasks (p. 233).

The complexity of words, sentences, and use of language are the direct influences on no agreement regarding what to call what we teach resulting in so many educated opinions. Shaughnessy (1977a) examined academic discourse in the 1970s offering that it represented what college instructors expect and require of college writers, "to approximate the high or formal style of writing" (1977b, p.320). Bizzell (1978) expanded academic discourse to a "compendium of cultural knowledge that anyone should possess" (pp. 353-4) emphasizing the relationship between knowledge, language, and community. Further, Bizzell (1990) demonstrates that the journey into academic discourse, cannot occur without providing students with "specific cultural content to remedy lack of discourse" (p. 602), since community is forever changing and unstable. Mahala and Swilky (1996) note that into the 1980s a more "heterogeneous, mutable conception of academic discourse" evolved (p. 10). Writing as a form of academic discourse has many interpretations and no common ground, thus, "the basic purposes of language teaching will continue to unsettle both normative and descriptive definitions" of the term (Mahala & Swilky p. 12). Finally, Bartholomae (2003) stated the dilemma of the teacher and student rests in "learning the distinctive register of academic discourse" (p. 650), as he or she "has to try on peculiar ways of knowing, selecting, evaluating, reporting, concluding, and arguing" (p. 623).

Academic discourse is created by the act of composing or writing, or as Heilman (1970) noted, "an achieving of oneness: a finding of such unities, small and contingent as they may be, as are possible; a resolution of discords, a removal or what doesn't belong, and a discovery of how to belong" (p. 232). Berthoff (1981) emphasized that composing is a "process of meaning

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making, the activity of abstraction, forming, which proceeds, in great part, by means of imagination or the symbolizing of insight" (pp. 66-7). Another perspective on composing was described by Heilker (1996a), as "a basic skill or set of skills, a raft, an art, a science, as the transcribing of pre-existing thought or ideas for transmission, and as the mystical ability to select and order just the right items from one's 'word horde' to achieve a desired effect" (p. 40).

The Evolving Writing Process: Intellectual Maturity and Personal Development

Some theorists perceive the writing act as mechanical and emanating from the subconscious. Mandel (1978) noted, the process is how "words appear on the page through a massive coordination of a tremendous number of motor processes, including the contracting and dilating of muscles in the fingers, hand, arm, neck, shoulder, back, and eyes; indeed in the entire organism" (p. 365). Writing as a process began to evolve from the 1970s into the present. As Emig (1977) stated, "writing represents a unique mode of learning – not merely valuable, not merely special, but unique" (p. 122). Expanding this perspective, Irmscher (1979) adds writing, "is an action and a way of knowing, as investigation, as probing; as a way of learning about anything and everything; as a process of growing and maturing; as a way of promoting the higher intellectual development of the individual" (pp. 241-242)

As they developed a writing approach model, Lavelle and Zuercher ((2001), discovered that students' writing perceptions resulted in identifying process components that "support the basic deep and surface continuum" inclusive of "writing self-concept and beliefs about the function of composition" (p. 384). The teaching of writing could be considered an "all-consuming, challenging, and intimate work because in order to show students how to revise, to reimagine, to

do something completely different in the next draft or the next essay, as opposed to 'giving the teacher what she wants,' we need to climb into their heads and they into ours" (Sommers, 1998, p. 424).

. Gibson (1970) views the process of composing as "pot-making rather than as map-making," defining this composing as "forming a man-made structure" instead of "copying down the solid shorelines of the universe" reaching into the unknown (pp. 255; 258). Murray (1972) perceives writing as discovery through language. Adding social deconstruction to the process, Lu (1987) portrays writing as a "struggle to move from silence to words, a struggle to re-position oneself among verbal-ideological worlds" (p. 438). Finally, Baumlin and Corder (1990) view this social process, as the "always unstable, always unfinished, always contingent active construction of self and the world" (p. 18). Baudrillard (1996) added that while a discourse may begin as "addressed to others, it continues to be first and foremost a discourse addressed to oneself" (p. 272).

Late Twentieth to Twenty-First Century Perspectives

In the mid-twentieth century theorists such as Vygotsky, Bruner, and Briton connected written language to verbal language supported by the development of higher cognitive elements such as analysis and synthesis. Vygotsky (1962) stated, "written speech is a separate linguistic function, differing from oral speech in both structure and mode of functioning" (p. 98). Bruner (1971) identified one of his six axioms on learning as "we are connective," which again joins writing to learning (p. 126). Britton (1971) summed up the relationship with the phrase "speech-cum-action" (pp. 10-11), while Bruner (1971) reminds us "writing virtually forces a remoteness

of reference on the language user" (p. 47). These concepts provided the foundation for the late twentieth and twenty-first research and perspectives.

Gee (2000-2001) combined sociocognitive and sociocultural perspectives using Vygotsky and Bakhtin as he stated,

> Vygotsky shows how people's individual minds are formed out of, and always continue to reflect, social interactions in which they engaged as they acquired their "native' language or later academic languages in school. Bakhtin stresses how anything anyone thinks or says is, in reality, composed of bits and pieces of language that have been voiced elsewhere, in other conversations or texts…For Bakhtin, what one means is always a product of both the meanings words have 'picked up' as they circulate in history and society and ones own individual 'take' or 'slant' on these words at a given time and place. (pp. 114-115)

Bazerman (2008) deduced that the blending of Vygotskian, pragmatist, and phenomenological perspectives are a reflection of cultural history, culturally produced and transmitted tools, and the social circumstances which writers use as a base for rhetoric supported by intellectual and emotional development. Language is social, fluid, and supported by the power of discourse when students are able to perceive their audience and language in more pragmatic terms (Shafer, 2004). As Horner (1999) notes students must be active participants in determining errors and appropriate language, emphasizing that "such an achievement can be reached only through a process of negotiation, a process of joint change and learning in which power operates dialectically" (p. 142). Shafer (2004) continues, "achieving correctness is not a matter of following a set of rules" (p. 68), rather what is more important is the practicing of relationships among language, power, and audience.

Schunk (2004) notes writing skills are associated with connectionism, as transfer refers to the extent that strengthening of one connection produces a similar change in another connection (Hilgard, 1996; Thorndike, 1913b). However, theory notes practice or training in a skill in a specific context does not improve ability to execute that skill in other circumstances. Skills such as those required for writing, as Schunk (2004) notes, need to be taught within different contents for application in different areas and transfer needs cross-referencing with memory networks. Finally, Ausubel identified using prior knowledge in new contexts as meaningful reception learning supported by activating appropriate schema as the basis of transfer (Driscoll, 2000).

Elbow (2004) has noted that writing is a process of slowly constructed meaning, socially negotiated through feedback and "clarity is not what we start with, but what we work towards" (p. 13). Learning theory supports the concept that for writing to develop, concentrated skill mastery instruction is needed for transfer to differing writing styles and situations. Writing instruction should allow students to achieve positive identity along with skills; as Lavelle and Zuercher (2001) note, "students need to be familiar with how writing works as a tool of learning and of self-expression as well as to find personal voice in expository and academic tasks" (p. 385). Writers' intentions and beliefs about writing are inseparable. In fact, writing is the externalization and remaking of thinking as well as a reflective tool for making meaning (Emig, 1977; Lavelle & Zuercher, 2001).

In short, English curriculum must contain the capacity for critical thinking about texts, culture, and community. Harris (2006) articulated four teaching goals for the Duke University writing program which included teachable and academic elements: "reading closely and critically; responding to and making use of the work of others; drafting and revising texts; and

making texts public" (p. 160). Rutz (2006) adds that first-year writing programs should deliver instruction that can,

> document student experience with writing; assess individual student performance; offer opportunities for students to reflect upon their writing; acquaint faculty with a variety of writing approaches; inform faculty development programming; and affirm and adjust the institution's method of delivering writing instruction. (p. 69)

As Kinloch (2009) stated, "students should be encouraged to write powerfully about their (dis)connections to multiple arguments, positions, perspectives, and locations of learning" (p. 333).

Studies of existing literature support skill transfer when taught within content areas. By involvement as writers, readers and listeners, students' megacognition processes can prosper, demonstrated by self-correction and self-monitoring skill mastery. Kinsler (1990) researched structured peer collaboration with writing drafts and discerned improved essay unity, coherence, organization and development of audience sense in both the reader and writer. The practice created powerful and reflective writing senses as the students confronted meaningful experiences and perspectives on the writing process. It is quite interesting that even though the skill mastery created more adept writers, the students did not significantly improve in language, diction and grammar as their writing improvement did not transfer to reflect better language proficiency exit exam results (Kinsler, 1990). Grubb (2001) noted that current writing instruction trends include remedial labs translating and updating former worksheet/workbook-based skills and drills exercises to computer-based programs (Grubb, 2001, p. 11).

Instructors are convinced certain exercises work, but students cannot connect to meaningful learning in this disconnected fashion. As instructors see didactic and behaviorist models of teaching fail, they are turning to more successful constructivist, student-centered models for teaching writing. Writing instruction is currently influenced by group work and then language as a social process of communication. The reasoning behind this approach is to create students that are involved, connected, engaged and aware of the complexity of the English language. Without such understanding students will continue to fail, provided with the same instruction that did not work in the elementary through secondary years. Lunsford (2006) notes that students should be challenged with texts that contain complex issues so they read against their biases and in turn write to demonstrate their abilities by thinking "about difficult topics abstractly and with some openness" (p. 196). Challenging students is necessary according to Kearns (2006) since first year students approach writing as a transaction or performance designed to please the instructor for a reward; as an extension and declaration of the self; as a collection of techniques and rules instead of a form of personal expression and "fundamentally monological, unaware that writing is not and cannot be private" (p. 348).

Current traditional rhetoric teaches the modes of discourse with a special emphasis on exposition and forms such as analysis, classification, cause-effect, and argument. It pays special attention to language. This language is to "demonstrate the individual's qualifications as a reputable observer worth of attention and it must conform to certain standards of usage, thereby demonstrating the appropriate class affiliation" (Berlin, 1987, p.9).

White (1990) notes that English instructors should define the value of teaching as "developing students thinking processes and broaden their experiences" (p. 196), not only by assessments. Determining writing curriculum according to White (1995) is,

> There is no professional consensus on the curriculum of writing courses, at any level. There is also no shortage of advice from researchers and practitioners; whatever approach to instruction an individual instructor might elect or inherit seems to have its prominent exemplars and promoters, and the profusion of textbooks is legendary. How can we arrange a sensible and useful syllabus in the face of so many theories, texts, research findings, pedagogical truisms, content suggestions, and methodologies? (p. 419)

Yancey (1999) notes that assessing writing over the last fifty years has been a pendulum swinging between demands for reliability and validity in a dual attempt for effective course placement and meaningful feedback. According to Pagano, Bernhardt, Reynolds, Williams, and McCurrie (2008) this has evolved into judging "institutional and program effectiveness as value-addedness" (p. 286) and thus attached to demonstrable outcomes.

Downs and Wardle (2007) struggle with FY composition as a one-year model that hardly teaches all possible elements noting that there is limited transfer of skills to students' fields of study. Certainly, even the best student will not master all of the nuances required to write in the different essay styles. Ideally, "an approach extending beyond the first year, based on a more complex and inclusive view of Writing Studies" is another avenue to managing a "field and the range of pedagogical possibilities that are too vast for a single course" (Miles et al., 2008, pp. 504-5). However, Kutney (2007) added that Downs and Wardle's model of learning about

writing, practicing and comprehending the elements rather than simply learning writing, can still have limited transfer of writing awareness to other fields.

Misconceptions of FY composition courses are not perpetrated solely by theorists and practitioners, as commission and policy reports, privately and government funded, have added to the problem. Two reports produced by the National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges, *The Neglected R* (2003) and *Writing: A Ticket to Work* (2004), focus on syntactic and mechanical concerns. Harris (2006) notes that some writing programs interpret these outcomes of freshman year programs as purpose, syntax, grammar, and punctuation; and Lunsford (2006) adds the ability to respond to abstract content, specifically, "to deal with complex issues that challenge students to read against their biases" (p. 196).

Downs and Wardle (2007) attempt to make sense of these varying assumptions noting research demonstrates the complexity of writing misconceptions that persist and inform FYC courses around the country as practitioners attempt to teach academic discourse. In both Reither (1985) and Diller and Oates (2002), the discourse referred to as writing cannot be separated from content and is more than words, grammar, and syntax constructions. It is Grassi's (1994) view that "teaching must be based on a sense of wonder, or the emotion awakened by the text to be studied" rather than in "knowledge imparted by the teacher, or a mnemonic exercise on the part of the student" (p. 44).

Revision is one of the elements the support the difference between writing and speech. Consequently, Kearns (2006) states that critical reading is a recursive revision process as it "coordinates the writer, the implied reader, and the critical reader, then the levels of the writer presenting a case and the recursive process of both the writer and the implied reader" (p. 352);

to this end writing becomes "an act of declaring ourselves and our connections with a larger scheme of things" and to the world at large through all the interactions, "to be about life and our place in it" (p. 353). Ede and Lunsford's (1984) explanation of audience includes not only "the intended, actual, or eventual readers of a discourse, but to all those whose image, ideas, or actions influence a writer during the process of composition" (p. 169). According to Elbow (2003), freewriting can promote a strong and lively voice, including audible, dramatic, distinctive, or authority to speak out. Grassi (1994) perceives that the "ingenious, inventive activity of writers must be connected to developing and shaping using the study of the meaning of words; forever changing in accordance with the historical perspective within which words must be experienced" (p. 44).

Finally, Brand (1987) views composition as the product and the process, emphasizing it is prudent to continue the investigation into the collaboration of emotions and cognition, specifically combining the what, how, and why of writing research. She notes, "it is in cognition that ideas make sense; but it is in emotion that this sense finds value" (p. 442). To shift from writer-based to reader-based, literacy education needs emphasis on elements that Connors (2000) identified as composition, materials, visual, practice, theory, rhetoric, circulation, transfer, broker, and reflection. Wenger commented on the broker concept as the "connection made by a person with memberships in multiple activity systems, introducing elements of one practice into another" (p.105); then related it to writing instructors who are requested to "translate, coordinate, and align between the genres of the students, the English department, and the various disciplines in which the students will participate" (p. 109). Wardle (2009) adds that many of these instructors do not have knowledge of the contexts or the ability to broker; however, Yancey and

Morrison (2006c) question if instructors are "not brokering the conventions and genres of other disciplines, then what is left to broker?" (p. 273). To fully express this brokering through academic literacy, according to Gentile (2006), "assignments should be characterized by a complexity with a high degree of cognitive engagement for the student to reflect and interpret, the academic setting to develop the writer-reader relationship, and finally the ethical dimension to develop that connection" (p. 324).   Further, Schorn (2006) perceives the concept of brokering imperative to all disciplines as the "need to talk to people who see the world differently from the sciences to business, and is a vindication of our focus, in composition, of the ability to question, reflect, persuade, and listen" (p. 339).

Over the past thirty years, researchers in the field have written extensively about the paradigm shift from product to process. In the early 1980s, Hairston (1982) argued against the strength of current paradigm beliefs where "writers know what they are going to say before they write; that the composing process is linear; and teaching editing is teaching writing" (p. 78). Conversely, Phelps (1988) contends that the "process/product opposition is itself compartmentalizing, in that it separates the text from the historical process of production, writing from reading" (p. 135). Tobin (1994) concurs, noting the result is "an odd though not unusual discontinuity between theory and practice as the "writing process movement is frequently dismissed" (p. 7), in research but embraced by huge numbers of classroom teachers. Petraglia (1999) addressed the current postprocess theory, which emphasizes writing as "another site of cultural studies lending itself to theorizations of power, ideology, and the construction of identity" (pp. 60-61).

Fulkerson (2005) and Lunsford and Lunsford (2008) support the belief that most first-year composition instructors emphasize the elements of writing as a process, peer review, and multiple steps of drafting and editing for a final product. The writing effort is contingent upon mastering skills including mechanics, diction, grammar, voice, and others, which must be internalized and practiced. Lu (2003) contends it is important for students to grasp the "to language tools they have been ordered to acquire by the regime of flexible accumulation but also to ways of working on those tools and skills in the interest of building a more sustainable world for all" (p. 206). A more generalized perspective is presented by Jacobi (2006) who emphasizes composition content as "the development of skills of critical thinking, organizing, and crafting effective rhetoric, all of which are necessary in a pluralistic society and for a democratic system" (p.25). Weiser (2006) added,

> we emphasize the concept of process, the recursive activity of planning, drafting, revising, and editing work. We emphasize as well the rhetorical nature of writing, a person writing about a particular topic to a particular audience, taking into account the interplay of purpose, audience, and language. We encourage students to see writing as a social act, both through the emphasis on audience and through the use of collaborative work, and we try to help students see writing as a means of personal empowerment and reflection as well as a means of practical communication in personal, academic, and professional settings. (p. 32)

Sullivan (2006) adds a summative perspective by relating good reading, good thinking, and the ability to discuss and evaluate abstract ideas as imperative for students to produce good writing (p. 16). Good choice and unique words, according to Lujan (2006) results in good writing, when

the writer "manipulates the task" with a voice and a stamp, "answering the question, thoughtfully creating intelligent prose, poetry, or poetic prose" (pp.55-6).

Global Composition Studies

A significant amount of relevant studies exist in the area of writing programs and composition, examining elements, objectives, and goals that are most important to learning outcomes. Researchers at foreign universities (Perpignan, Rubin, & Katznelson, 2007) such as Israel have conducted meaningful studies to discern writing and other skills as perceived by students as probable learning outcomes of their writing courses. In the United Kingdom, Bloxham and West (2007) conducted a longitudinal study of students' in non-traditional or vocational courses of study, exploring attitudes toward instructor and peer assessment of writing products. The authors reported that students' noted that feedback is used as long as it is supported with informal verbal clarification. Educators expect students with varying skills to enter into a discourse community; however, as Clarke and Ivanic (1997) and Northedge (2003) note, students may not have any awareness of the proper voice, which may be completely discordant to their everyday voice, dialogue, and communication. So, the expectation of all students to develop strong skills must be supported with instructors' sharing assessment requirements with students, detailing points such as dialogue, observation, practice, and imitation (O'Donovan, Price, & Rust, 2004).

Studies of Students with Varying Degrees of Academic Backgrounds in Composition

Studies of writing programs have produced interesting common elements. Perin (2002) observed students with suspect academic backgrounds exhibited low self-esteem, diminished self-efficacy, poor motivation and finally low levels of scholarly interest. Perin's study determined an essay assignment that necessitated processing, summarizing and synthesizing of passages resulted in students copying the passage - perhaps driven by the realization of the increasing difficulty and complexity of the task.

In a study of FY composition students at Carnegie Melon University, researchers discovered that the courses may set high intellectual goals, but the instructional support provided is inadequate for students to meet the goals and objectives (Cheneweth et al., 1999). Young (2002) identified factors such as teacher-student interaction, assessment, and institutional support as important contributors to successful community college developmental writing courses. Similarly, Nussbaum and Kardash (2005) noted that objectives such as persuasion skills building critical thinking skills could be curriculum outcomes when credible different views and counterarguments are considered. Research conducted by Grodnick (1996) demonstrated that students' self-esteem has no bearing on writing proficiency, so other factors must be considered as detrimental to favorable outcomes. Wambach and delMas (1998) determined that the community college practice of non-credit, developmental, and remedial writing courses do not prepare students for college writing. The authors contend that immersing students in the writing process with in-depth content and strengthened requirements to challenge and retain students is a more effective way to develop writers. Jones' (2008) study of first semester college English students suggested that students' self-beliefs are an important predictor of success in weak

writers, implying that instructors should work to improve students' locus of control and self-beliefs.

Sommers' (1980) study considered attitudes toward revision, noting that students in general "do what they were taught to do in a consistently narrow and predictable way" (p. 382); and those writers who are more experienced operate on a higher level as they try to find the shape and form of the work. The process is a reordering, moving, and changing to accommodate dissonance, which is the opposite of the linear approach that restrains the student. Revision involves a management of errors in a draft; and in Lunsford's (1987) study she viewed considering and reworking errors as an active part of learning. In their 2008 study, Lunsford and Lunsford reported that compared to other historical error studies, spelling, grammar, and punctuation issues continue to be the most common formal error areas in samples of student writing. The researchers acknowledged prior studies noting that when analyzing frequency of errors per 100 words, in 1986 Connors and Lunsford reported 2.26 errors, comparing their results the 1930 earlier studies of Witty and Green with 2.24 errors, and Johnson in 1917 with 2.11 errors. Finally, Lunsford and Lunsford (2008) compared their frequency of errors of 2.45 per 100 words results to Sloan's 1990 study results of 2.04 errors, demonstrating that the errors were consistent with figures from previous studies. Error studies are of some interest to this researcher since if the same types of errors have been committed over 100 years, then perhaps the elements identified as important in this study are not really stressed in the classroom; however, this point is out of the scope of this study.

Grammar is a controversial subject and has created many opinions for and against implementation in a composition program. The issue seemed settled forty-five years ago when Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Schoer (1963) concluded,

> In view of the widespread agreement of research studies based upon many types of students and teachers, the conclusion can be stated in strong and unqualified terms: the teaching of formal grammar has a negligible or, because it unusually displaces some instruction and practice in composition, even a harmful effect on improvement in writing. (pp. 37-8)

Emig (1980) noted grammar is "magical thinking or the assumption that students will learn only what we teach and only because we teach" (p. 22). Hartwell (1985) values a holistic approach, stating composition instruction is a "rich and complex interaction of learner and environment in mastering literacy, an interaction that has little to do with sequences or skills instruction" (p. 108). So, the subject has not been resolved despite research and studies to determine best practices.

In summary, writing starts as a simple process, reflecting what the writer sees and feels. At some point, the process then moves from reaction to synthesis to analysis. Rudimentary writing containing one to two sentences evolves through instruction, practice, and mental development to multi-paragraph essays. This movement demonstrates learning theories such as Gagne's (1985) intellectual skills including discrimination, concrete concepts, defined concepts, rules and higher order skills. Despite some consensus of opinion, we can identify similar, conflicting, and innovative writing theory through the centuries. We have discussed similar

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issues, determined perspectives, replaced the perspectives with new views, and then, reworked the old perspectives.

This review presents a comprehensive examination of the writing process and major theorists, with no attempt to find a consensus, but rather to demonstrate the vast opinions in the field. Using the review as a foundation, the study will evolve into an exploration of instructors' perceptions of key learning objectives in English Composition courses. The results of this investigation will provide valuable data regarding anticipated skills and learning outcomes of current Composition Programs and benchmarks for change.

CHAPTER 3 – PROCEDURES AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

There are questions of what to teach at the FY level, different institutions' expectations in the FY courses and then instructors' perceptions, all factors which could be influencing which skills to emphasize in English Composition courses. Thus, the depth and breadth of learning objectives along with the significance of every Composition Program could be affected by many factors. This study is an investigation of which learning objectives are taught and emphasized, and finally, how important the learning objectives are to instructors. This investigation will result in benchmarks to move toward better defined objectives and instructional.

Statement of the Purpose of Study and Research Questions

There are inherent problems in teaching writing in FY Post-secondary Composition Programs, the most obvious being that writing practice that does not always transfer to real-world writing skills and mastery. FY students have differing degrees of grammar, mechanics, diction and sentence structure competencies, so teaching these students of varying competencies is a challenge within the programs. These approaches represent a quandary at the Post-secondary level – teach basic skills or teach the nuances of the genres in the FY courses? Added to the questions of what to teach, different institutions' expectations in the FY courses could also be determining factors of which skills to emphasize. Thus, the depth and breadth of learning objectives along with the significance of every Composition Program could be affected by instructors' perceptions.

Since these issues and concerns exist, it would be prudent for researchers to investigate how instructors' perceptions vary from institution to institution. Then, researchers should investigate what learning objectives should be taught, which are currently emphasized, and finally, how important the student learning objectives are to each instructor. So, this study will identify a starting point to determine which learning objectives are taught, which are emphasized, and the relative importance of all the learning objectives to instructors. The outcomes from the study will result in benchmarks to move the field toward better defined student needs and objectives in English Composition courses.

Specifically, the research questions are:

1. Are instructors teaching skills for students of varying grammar, mechanics, diction, and sentence structure competencies in the Freshman Year English Composition courses?

2. Are instructors emphasizing writing as a process in the classroom?

3. At the Post-secondary level, are research skills and genre nuances taught?

4. In Freshman English Composition Program courses, do instructors emphasize organizational strategies?

5. At the different Post-secondary schools (colleges, universities, for-profit and public), which course content objectives do instructors perceive as more important in their courses?

Participants

The FY or First Year term used throughout the study has a similar definition across the public and for-profit institutions. At the Florida public community college or state university, the term is defined as ENC 1101 – Composition I and ENC 1102 – Composition II since these institutions follow the Statewide Common Course Numbering System. These two courses are the basic requirements for most college majors at the community college and university level, typically completed within a student's first or second year of study. At the for-profit college or university these courses would be the one or two General English Composition courses a student needs to fulfill the English requirement for a degree completed during the first or second year of study. These are the courses that will be included in this study as FY Composition Programs.

The study was conducted at the Post-secondary level (public university and community college; for-profit university and college level) in the state of Florida, with a random sampling of 63 instructors from First Year Composition I, Composition II courses, and General English Composition courses. This relatively small sample of instructors reflects the quantitative and exploratory nature of this study. The assumptions of the survey were that the instructors teach English Composition classes and responded truthfully to the questions. The researcher clearly has no ability to verify responses or the participant information provided by School Faculty Directory Websites, Department Chairs and Deans from the different institutions.

Survey Development

The researcher developed an 18-question (16 content area and two demographic) survey using the content areas as shown in the table below (Table 1) for data collection. The content areas were chosen to mirror general learning objectives in composition courses.

Table 1: FY Writing Programs Blueprint

Content Base Category	Number of items
Organizational Strategies	2
Grammar Skills/Mechanics	1
Application of Composition Principles	1
Audience – Intended or Invoked	1
Concise and Clear Language	1
Practice of Writing Genres	1
Self-esteem and Writing Proficiency	1
Assessment	2
Writing Processes	3
Synthesis and Integration of Research	1
Diction/Sentence Structure	1
Avoidance of Plagiarism/Use of MLA/APA	1
Demographics	2
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From these general content areas, items were developed to determine and judge the importance of each area as the instructors deliver the objectives and curriculum in their English Composition courses (See Table 2). Construction of the items demonstrated simple wording, short statements, and complete grammatically correct sentences as well as avoided the use of negatives, indefinite qualifiers, bias, and vague or ambiguous interpretation. The one-page, two-sided, paper survey Instructions (at the top left) directed participants to "Consider the course

content you teach to your class and then rank each of the following according to how you evaluate its importance to you." Participants then used a five-point ranking scale (1 to 5) to measure each item's importance. Specifically, the points were (1) Strongly Disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Neither Agree or Disagree; (4) Agree; (5) Strongly Agree; and (N/A) Not Applicable (Dillman, 2007). Note that the neutral response (#3, in the middle) from undecided or N/A (at the end of the scale) was separated to avoid the respondent's confusion between the two choices.

Navigation from top to bottom of the page and question to question was carefully examined by the researcher. Placement of instructions where the information was needed; use of larger fonts for "Instructions", "Start Here", "Continue on Back", "Continue Here"; formatting the ranking categories vertically; alternating between shading to no shading for item selections; ample white space; and a large box for open-ended responses, comments, or suggestions provided clear visual cues for ease of navigation throughout the survey. For this particular group of busy professionals, the inclusion of "Thank you for your time in completing this questionnaire" to express gratitude, was deemed appropriate and necessary. This statement was placed at the end of the items and before the comment box. Finally, the survey and the items were reviewed for construction, ease of navigation, and visual cues by 20 colleagues who determined there were no design or navigation flaws that would prevent data collection.

Table 2: English Composition Instructor Survey Questions

1.	Students choose topics that are focused and culturally diverse.
2.	Students write in essay genres that inform, describe, analyze, or comment on a topic.
3.	Writers develop a thesis containing the main idea of the essay in the form of a declarative statement.
4.	Students compose introductions that include an attention-getter, topic background, and the main points of the essay.
5.	Writers develop paragraphs that use transitions from topic sentences to main points supported with details, examples, or analysis.
6.	Students utilize vocabulary appropriate for the audience without contractions, slang, or clichés.
7.	Students use the active voice with varying sentence lengths, patterns, and rhythms to engage readers.
8.	Writers compose conclusions that summarize major points and offer analysis, solutions, or a call to action.
9.	Using sources from the University Library, students include APA or MLA formatted in-text citations and Works Cited page.
10.	Students demonstrate research skills by synthesizing, integrating, and paraphrasing source material.
11.	Writing products are free of spelling and typo errors following the rules of grammar, usage, and punctuation.
12.	Students follow style and appearance requirements such as printing, font style, spacing, headers, pagination, and sections.
13.	Students demonstrate word processing skills using Microsoft Word to create essays.
14.	Writers develop cohesive essays that reflect planning, exploring, construction, revision, and proofreading.
15.	Writers develop new ideas or approaches by conceptualizing theories or practices on their topics.
16.	Instructors provide grading rubric with detailed content areas for assessment.
17.	How many years have you taught in post-secondary institutions?
18.	At what type(s) of post-secondary institution do you teach?

Interview Development

After constructing the quantitative design part of this study, the researcher realized many of

the item selections could lead to some significant insights and meaningful discussions. So, to

capture this opportunity, a qualitative design part was added to the paper survey. The

participation request was positioned after the "Thank you" and before open-ended response box.

The invitation statement, "If you would be interested in participating in a short interview, please

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print your name, email, and phone number and you will be contacted," was followed by two rule lines for the volunteer to place the requested information. The researcher planned 15-minute interviews with six volunteers (9.5% of the survey participants). Five open-ended questions were developed with the purpose of gaining additional perspectives from current practitioners on what is occurring in composition courses. The five questions were:

1) Considering the statements listed on the survey, which one do you feel is the most important for you to develop and practice in your composition classroom? Why?

2) Considering the statements listed on the survey, which one do you feel is the least important for you to develop and practice in your composition classroom? Why?

3) Reviewing the statements, are there any additional elements or instructional areas that should be included in composition courses? Why?

4) Reviewing the statements, are there any elements or instructional areas that should be eliminated from composition courses. Why?

5) If you feel that multiple elements need to be emphasized and concentrated on in a composition course during the semester or term, how does this occur?

Procedures

    The researcher compiled a list of 130 potential participants using personal contacts and college directories for the master mailing list. This master list was not changed or added to during the entire data collection process. Over an eight-week period in the early spring 2010, the survey was administered using Dillman's (2007) five-contacts including the Prenotice Letter, Survey Mailout, Postcard Thank You/Reminder, First Replacement Questionnaire, and

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the Final Contact for Participation (see Appendices). Each survey was numbered to account for completed returns in order to identify the mailing list for the subsequent Fourth and Fifth Contacts.

The Prenotice Letter, on the researcher's personalized letterhead and signed in ink, was brief, positive, and built anticipation. The notice did not provide details or conditions but did invite participation in a research study that would arrive in the next few days as well as announce there would be a token of appreciation in the mailing. This letter was mailed to 130 participants and was the important first step to set the stage for the success or failure of the survey return rate.

The Survey Mailout with a Cover Letter, on the researcher's personalized letterhead and signed in ink, was the second contact with the 130 participants, mailed two days after the Prenotice. The Cover Letter included the purpose of the study, identified the researcher, stressed confidential nature of the study, and asked for voluntary participation. Included in the mailing with the letter and the survey, was the small token of appreciation - a one-dollar Florida Lottery Scratch-Off Ticket.

The third contact with the 130 participants was the Thank You/Reminder Postcard mailed seven days after the Cover Letter. This contact served a dual purpose - a thank you for returning the survey or a reminder to complete the survey and mail today. The card also provided an opportunity for participants who had lost/misplaced the original mailing or never received it to request a replacement, increasing the return percentage.

About two weeks after the Postcard, the Fourth Contact Letter on the researcher's personalized letterhead and signed in ink, was mailed to the 75 potential participants who had not yet returned the survey. Included in this mailing were a replacement survey and a letter offering

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a thank you, a renewed call to action for completion, and an emphasis of the importance of the study.

Finally, one week after the Fourth Contact, a Fifth Contact Letter on the researcher's personalized letterhead and signed in ink, was mailed to the remaining 70 potential participants. This mailing again emphasized the value of the study and the need for the respondent's participation as well as noting that this was the last attempt for contact.

As the surveys were returned the researcher logged them for data analysis and noted that several participants had added observations, remarks, and suggestions in the comments box, information which will be presented in Chapter 4. Several had also volunteered for participation for the qualitative part of the study, providing either emails or cell phone numbers or both. These volunteers represented the state community college and university, for-profit university, and for-profit career college institutions. The researcher made contact with each to determine a mutually agreeable time and place; then phone or in-person appointments were made for the interviews depending on the choice of the volunteer. Over a two week period, six interviews were conducted and recorded by the researcher which will be reported in detail in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5.

Limitations and Assumptions

The study will be conducted at the Post-secondary level (state public university and community college, for-profit university, and career college level), with a random sampling of 63 instructors from First Year Composition I, Composition II, and General English Composition courses. This relatively small sample of instructors reflects the quantitative and exploratory

nature of this study. In addition, no distinction of earned degree levels (Masters or Doctorate) or length of teaching service was considered for the participants as these areas will have no affect or alter the outcomes of this study.

The assumptions of the survey were that the instructors teach English Composition classes and responded truthfully to the questions. In addition, the researcher assumed that each of the participants had been approved to teach English Composition at their institutions according to the requirements of either national or regional accreditation guidelines. The researcher clearly has no ability to verify responses or the participant information provided by School Faculty Directory Websites, Department Chairs and Deans from the different institutions.

<div align="center">Analysis</div>

The collected data was analyzed in SPSS Statistics 17.0 using quantitative procedures including Spearman's Rank Order Correlation, Reliability and Item Analysis, and Factor Analysis. In the context of the study, the procedures will support the conclusion that the scores from the survey are a reliable and valid assessment of FY Composition Programs. The results that are generated and reported in Chapter 4, will be further applied and interpreted to determine recommendations and future research areas for English composition curriculum in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 4 – RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was an investigation of instructors' perceptions of composition learning objectives focusing on which should be taught and which should be emphasized. Using an 18-question (16 content area and two demographic) survey based on content areas chosen to mirror general learning objectives in composition courses and six individual interviews, the researcher discovered some levels of agreement, some of disagreement, and some neutral. These results are presented in this chapter along with an examination of the research questions of this study.

Factor Analysis

The initial step in the analysis of data was to explore the factor structure underlying the Instructor item responses in the FY English Composition Instructors data set. Factor analysis has as its key objective reducing a larger set of variables to a smaller set of factors, fewer in number than the original variable set, but capable of accounting for a large portion of the total variability in the items. The identity of each factor is determined after a review of which items correlate the highest with that factor. Items that correlate the highest with a factor define the meaning of the factor as judged by what conceptually ties the items together. A successful result is one in which a few factors can explain a large portion of the total variability and those factors can be given a meaningful name using the assortment of items that correlate the highest with it.

In the context of this study, when success is attained, we may say that we have validity evidence supporting the conclusion that the scores from this instrument are a valid assessment of a FY English Composition Instructor's perceptions of learning objectives. We can feel confident when adding similar items up for total scores to represent the different categories of one's overall perceptions of learning objectives (each factor represents a category). This kind of validity evidence is called internal structure evidence because it suggests that items line up in a predictable manner, according to what thematically ties them together conceptually. The descriptive statistics of the item responses are presented in Table 3. The data demonstrates that the standard deviations are

Table 3:   Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Q1	63	2	5	4.16	.884	.781
Q5	63	2	5	4.62	.607	.369
Q6	64	1	5	4.02	.951	.905
Q7	64	2	5	4.17	.767	.589
Q9	63	3	5	4.49	.644	.415
Q11	64	1	5	3.91	1.080	1.166
Q12	64	2	5	4.14	.794	.631
Q14	64	2	5	4.50	.816	.667
Q15	64	2	5	4.05	.844	.712
Valid N (listwise)	61					

smaller than the respective means. One standard deviation for Question #11 stands out upon observation, with a mean of 3.91 (S.D. = 1.080), as remarkably larger than the other variables.

The maximum likelihood estimation procedure was used to extract the factors from the variable data. Kaiser's rule was used to determine which factors were most eligible for interpretation because this rule requires that a given factor is capable of explaining at least the equivalent of one variable's variance. This is not unreasonable given that factor analysis has as its objective reducing several variables into fewer factors. Using this rule, two factors were extracted. Together they are capable of explaining roughly 55.9% of all the variable variances. A review of the initial factor loadings suggests that a proper solution was attainable through maximum likelihood, as it was capable of converging in 5 iterations. The computer printout does not warn that the results are nonpositive definite, so one important condition for proceeding with the interpretation has been met.

Another portion of the results to inspect before proceeding with an interpretation are the table of communalities. Communalities are interpreted like Multiple R^2s in multiple regression. Communalities indicate the degree to which the factors explain the variance of the variables. In a proper solution, two sets of communalities are provided, the initial set and the extracted set. Sometimes when the maximum likelihood procedure goes awry (because of ill conditioned data), the values of one or more communalities can exceed 1.00, which is theoretically impossible because explaining more than 100% of a variable's variance is impossible. In such a case further interpretation is impossible. In this study, the communalities were fine, providing further evidence that the results are appropriate for interpretation.

A chi-square test of independence was calculated comparing the results of the variables (survey item selections). A significant interaction was found (x^2 (13) = 8.64, p<.05) which indicates the variables are not independent.

With greater confidence that the maximum likelihood solution is proper, interpretation of the results is permissible. Once the factors are extracted using maximum likelihood, a linear transformation of the data is necessary so that the interpretation of the results can be easily accomplished. Among the various rotational procedures available, Promax was chosen because it assumes that nonzero correlations among the factors are theoretically tenable or at least plausible. When the results are generated, the researcher will be able conduct interpretation of the factor correlation matrix.

If the researcher decides that the correlations are too low, then the results would be re-run using the Varimax rotation. These correlations are large enough to justify retention of the Promax results from the researcher's perspective because two of the correlations exceed the value of .25.

Reviewing the structure coefficient matrix suggests that the two factors group the items in a theoretically understandable way. The coefficients suggest that the way instructors responded to the English Composition course evaluations items was very consistent for Question #14 (developing cohesive essays), Question #11 (free of errors), Question #7 (use of the active voice), and Question #12 (use of appropriate mechanics). Instructor responses for Question #14 (developing cohesive essays) tended to be very similar to responses to the remaining variables mentioned. For example, if a person agreed (or disagreed) students must develop cohesive essays, that person probably also agreed (or disagreed) students must write free of errors, must use the active voice and use appropriate mechanics. The variables together contribute most prominently to Factor 1. The structure coefficients for these variables suggest that Question #14

is correlated .860 with Factor 1, therefore sharing roughly 86% of the variance of that factor. All

remaining coefficients may be interpreted in this way (see Table 4 below).

Table 4: Structure Matrix

	Factor	
	1	2
Q1	.308	.534
Q5	.426	.683
Q6	.504	.532
Q7	.648	.714
Q11	.750	.504
Q12	.543	.455
Q14	.860	.581
Q15	.358	.193

Extraction Method: Maximum
Likelihood.
 Rotation Method: Promax with
Kaiser Normalization.

Reliability

Respondent ratings of different Freshman Year Writing Program learning objectives obtained

from the composition survey were judged to be very reliable for the College English

Composition Professors to whom it was given. At first pass all 18 questions were used and

Cronbach's Alpha resulted in .792. An examination of the "Item-Total Statistics" identified

several questions should be deleted in order to obtain the highest possible Alpha (using a less

than .25 as the unacceptable value). Thus, the demographic questions (Number of Years Taught

and Type of Institution) were deleted and reliability analysis re-computed. No further iterations

were computed as the researcher was satisfied with the Alpha result. Thus, the respondent ratings of different Freshman Year Writing Program learning objectives obtained from the composition survey were judged to be very reliable for the College English Composition Professors to whom it was given, with a reliability coefficient of .850.

To examine the strength of the relationship between the survey questions as determined by instructors' perceptions of importance, Spearman's Rank Order Correlation was conducted for this study. This choice was influenced by the interval nature of the variables – instructors' perceptions and survey item selections. The survey selections that related to the Research Questions were grouped and correlation coefficients were run. To prevent data integrity issues based on non-responses and missing values, an average instead of a sum was computed. In order to draw conclusions, correlation coefficients greater than 0.7 are considered strong; in the 0.3 and 0.7 range moderate and correlations below 0.3 are weak. The results are presented below by Research Question.

Research Questions

The research questions in this study were based on the Content Base Categories and question selections in the survey. The following section details the statistical and interview results that were collected during the survey and individual interview meetings.

Research Question #1

Are instructors teaching skills for students of varying grammar, mechanics, diction, and sentence structure competencies in the Freshman Year English Composition courses? To

measure this question, the Content Base Categories of Audience – Intended or Invoked, Concise or Clear Language; Diction/Sentence Structure; Grammar Skills/Mechanics; and Self-Esteem and Writing Proficiency were used to develop survey items. The selections that were used to measure how the participants answered were:

   Q# 6: Students utilize vocabulary appropriate for the audience without contractions, slang, or clichés;

   Q# 7: Students use the active voice with varying sentence lengths, patterns, and rhythms to engage readers;

   Q# 11: Writing products are free of spelling and typo errors following the rules of grammar, usage, and punctuation;

   Q# 12: Students follow style and appearance requirements such as printing, font style, spacing, headers, pagination, and sections;

   Q# 13: Students demonstrate word processing skills using Microsoft Word to create essays.

   Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient statistical procedures were used to analyze the degree of correlation between the data collected. The researcher was interested in assessing the relationship between two sets of data in terms of similarity. If one set of values changes (increases or decreases) what changes (increases or decreases) occurs with the other? A summary of the results for Research Question 1 follows and also presented in Table 5.

   A Spearman's rho correlation was calculated for the relationship between Q# 6 and Q# 7. A moderate positive correlation was found (*rho* (62) = .373, p<.001), indicating a significant relationship between Using Appropriate Vocabulary and Using Active Voice.

A Spearman's rho correlation was calculated for the relationship between Q# 6 and Q# 11. A moderate positive correlation was found (*rho* (62) = .385, p<.001), indicating a significant relationship between Using Appropriate Vocabulary and Writing Free of Errors.

A Spearman's rho correlation was calculated for the relationship between Q# 6 and Q# 12. A moderate positive correlation was found (*rho* (62) = .346, p<.001), indicating a significant relationship between Using Appropriate Vocabulary and Using Appropriate Mechanics.

Collaborating these statistical results, one interview participant perceives it is possible, depending on students' level of writing, that some may not master mechanics, grammar, diction, and sentence structure skills in one or two English courses. Similarly, a participant shared an interesting grammar drill with a twist, suggesting that the student reads a paragraph aloud daily including all punctuation and nuances. This will help reinforce grammar hardwiring into the brain to develop the discourse of language and certainly help with supporting mastery levels.

A Spearman's rho correlation was calculated for the relationship between Q# 6 and Q# 13. An extremely weak correlation that was not significant was found (*rho* (62) = .058, p>.05), indicating Using Appropriate Vocabulary and Word Processing Skills are not related.

A Spearman's rho correlation was calculated for the relationship between Q# 7 and Q# 11. A moderate positive correlation was found (*rho* (62) = .423, p<.001), indicating a significant relationship between Using Active Voice and Writing Free of Errors.

A Spearman's rho correlation was calculated for the relationship between Q# 7 and Q# 12. A moderate positive correlation was found (*rho* (62) = .442, p<.001), indicating a significant relationship between Using Active Voice and Using Appropriate Mechanics.

Another respondent supported these statistical results, stressing that while these skills are important, recognizing and using point of view in composition is equally vital. An additional comment was that instructors need to address the practice of using first or third person in writing and to help students understand that voices should not be mixed within the same piece. After all, learning to write in the third person is preparation for future academic purposes.

A Spearman's rho correlation was calculated for the relationship between Q# 7 and Q# 13. A weak correlation that was not significant was found (*rho* $(62) = .241$, p>.05), indicating Using Active Voice and Word Processing Skills are not related.

A Spearman's rho correlation was calculated for the relationship between Q# 11 and Q# 13. A weak correlation that was not significant was found (*rho* $(62) = .250$, p>.05), indicating Writing Free of Errors and Word Processing Skills are not related.

Finally, a participant concurred with the results and acknowledged developing computer skills belongs in other courses but if they are not addressed elsewhere then they must be taught in English courses. After all, the ink – somehow, some way – must hit the paper for the writing process to occur.

A Spearman's rho correlation was calculated for the relationship between Q# 11 and Q# 12. A moderate positive correlation was found (*rho* $(62) = .358$, p<.001), indicating a significant relationship between Writing Free of Errors and Using Appropriate Mechanics.

A Spearman's rho correlation was calculated for the relationship between Q# 12 and Q# 13. A moderate positive correlation was found (*rho* $(62) = .362$, p<.001), indicating a significant relationship between Using Appropriate Mechanics and Word Processing Skills.

Table 5: Correlations for Research Question 1

Spearman's Rho		Q# 6	Q# 7	Q# 11	Q# 12	Q#13
Q#6	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.373	.385	.346	.058
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002	.002	.005	.646
	N	64	64	64	64	64
Q#7	Correlation Coefficient	.373	1.000	.423	.442	.241
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002		.001	.001	.055
	N	64	64	64	64	64
Q#11	Correlation Coefficient	.385	.423	1.000	.358	.250
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.001		.004	.047
	N	64	64	64	64	64
Q#12	Correlation Coefficient	.346	.442	.358	1.000	.362
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.001	.004		.003
	N	64	64	64	64	64
Q#13	Correlation Coefficient	.058	.241	.250	.362	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.646	.055	.047	.003	
	N	64	64	64	64	64

Research Question #2

Are instructors emphasizing writing as a process in the classroom? To measure this

question, the content areas of Application of Composition Principles and Writing Processes were

used to develop survey selections. The selections that were used to measure how the participants

answered were:

Q# 3: Writers develop a thesis containing the main idea of the essay in the form of a

declarative statement;

Q# 4: Students compose introductions that include an attention-getter, topic background,

and the main points of the essay;

Q# 5: Writers develop paragraphs that use transitions from topic sentences to main points

supported with details, examples, or analysis;

Q# 8: Writers compose conclusions that summarize main points and offer analysis,

solutions, or a call to action.

Again, Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient statistical procedures were used to analyze the degree of correlation between the data collected. A summary of the results for Research Question 2 follows and also presented in Table 6.

A Spearman's rho correlation was calculated for the relationship between Q# 3 and Q# 4. A moderate positive correlation was found (*rho* (61) = .595, p<.001), indicating a significant relationship between Developing a Thesis and Composing Introductions.

A Spearman's rho correlation was calculated for the relationship between Q# 3 and Q# 5. A moderate positive correlation was found (*rho* (60) = .310, p<.001), indicating a significant relationship between Developing a Thesis and Developing Paragraphs.

A Spearman's rho correlation was calculated for the relationship between Q# 3 and Q# 8. A moderate positive correlation was found (*rho* (60) = .467, p<.001), indicating a significant relationship between Developing a Thesis and Composing Conclusions.

Supporting these results, several participants agree that FY English essays should move beyond the five paragraph format with a focus on thesis, introduction, and conclusion. In fact, one respondent suggested to look beyond an introduction that announces what the writer intends to tell the reader and finishes with a summary as a conclusion; rather, an introduction should not be an announcement and the conclusion should be a reflection on what the writer has learned from the process. One was adamant that a major goal element of FY English is developing scaffolded assignments that teach writing is a process and then, writing as a process.

A Spearman's rho correlation was calculated for the relationship between Q# 4 and Q# 5. A moderate positive correlation was found (*rho* (61) = .434, p<.001), indicating a significant relationship between Composing Introductions and Developing Paragraphs.

A Spearman's rho correlation was calculated for the relationship between Q# 4 and Q# 8. A moderate positive correlation was found (*rho* (61) = .406, p<.001), indicating a significant relationship between Composing Introductions and Composing Conclusions.

A Spearman's rho correlation was calculated for the relationship between Q# 5 and Q# 8. A moderate positive correlation was found (*rho* (60) = .332, p<.001), indicating a significant relationship between Developing Paragraphs and Composing Conclusions.

All of the participants perceive writing as a process and emphasize that students must understand the steps to be successful. One added that good readers are good writers who can duplicate and replicate; so, analyzing written works such as literature or editorials is important.

Table 6: Correlations for Research Question 2

Spearman's Rho		Q# 3	Q# 4	Q# 5	Q# 8
Q#3	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.595	.310	.467
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001	.014	.001
	N	63	63	62	62
Q# 4	Correlation Coefficient	.595	1.000	.434	.406
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001		.001	.001
	N	63	64	63	63
Q# 5	Correlation Coefficient	.310	.434	1.000	.332
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.014	.001		.008
	N	62	63	63	62
Q#8	Correlation Coefficient	.467	.406	.332	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.001	.008	
	N	62	63	62	63

Research Question #3

At the Post-secondary level, are basic skills or genre nuances taught? To measure this question, the content areas of Avoidance of Plagiarism/Use of MLA/APA, Synthesis and

Integration of Research, and the Practice of Writing Genres were used to develop survey selections. The selections that were used to measure how the participants answered were:

Q# 9: Using sources from the University Library, students include APA or MLA formatted in-text citations and Works Cited page;

Q# 10: Students demonstrate research skills by synthesizing, integrating, and paraphrasing source material;

Q# 14: Writers develop cohesive essays that reflect planning, exploring, construction, revision, and proofreading.

The Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient statistical procedures were used to analyze the degree of correlation between the data collected. A summary of the results for Research Question 3 follows and presented in Table 7.

A Spearman's rho correlation was calculated for the relationship between Q# 9 and Q# 10. A moderate positive correlation was found (*rho* (61) = .538, p<.001), indicating a significant relationship between Library Skills/Use of APA or MLA and Synthesis and Integration of Research.

A Spearman's rho correlation was calculated for the relationship between Q# 9 and Q# 14. A moderate positive correlation was found (*rho* (61) = .366, p<.001), indicating a significant relationship between Library Skills/Use of APA or MLA and Developing Cohesive Essays.

A Spearman's rho correlation was calculated for the relationship between Q# 10 and Q# 14. A moderate positive correlation was found (*rho* (61) = .621, p<.001), indicating a significant relationship between Synthesis and Integration of Research and Developing Cohesive Essays.

One participant noted a new initiative at the community college level is a connection between disciplines focused on real writing. Similarly, others emphasize that elaborate conclusions rather than simple summary are necessary for college level writing. Another participant stated cohesive essays and new ideas are important as students demonstrate essay development with ideas, theories, and concepts that are of merit and deserve consideration, which are all factors that are impacted by research skills.

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Table 7: Correlations for Research Question 3

Spearman's Rho		Q# 9	Q# 10	Q# 14
Q# 9	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.538	.366
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.003	
	N	63	63	63
Q# 10	Correlation Coefficient	.538	1.000	.621
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003		.001
	N	63	63	63
Q# 14	Correlation Coefficient	.366	.621	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.001	
	N	63	63	63

Research Question #4

In Freshman English Composition Program courses, do instructors emphasize organizational strategies? To measure this question, the content area of Organizational Strategies was used to develop survey selections. The selections that were used to measure how the participants answered were:

Q# 1: Students choose topics that are focused and culturally diverse;

Q# 2: Students write essay genres that inform, describe, analyze, or comment on a topic.

Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient statistical procedures were used to analyze the degree of correlation between the data collected. A summary of the results for Research Question 4 follows and presented in Table 8.

A Spearman's rho correlation was calculated for the relationship between Q# 1 and Q# 2. A weak correlation that was not significant was found (*rho* (61) = .275, p>.05), indicating Choosing Topics and Composing Genre Essays are not related.

Table 8: Correlations for Research Question 4

Spearman's Rho		Q# 1	Q# 2	
Q#1	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.275	.
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.030	
	N	63	63	
Q#2	Correlation Coefficient	.275	1.000	.
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.030		
	N	63	63	

One participant emphasized that informing, describing, analyzing, and commenting on topics are concepts expected from students and in turn should be expected of the instructor. Another supported this approach, emphasizing these ideas are necessary to practice to complete the writing process. A participant added that exploring organizational strategies also contribute skills for getting away from formula writing of the five paragraph essay, giving students more than one way to attack the writing process.

Research Question #5

At the different Post-secondary schools (colleges, universities, for-profit and public), which course content objectives do instructors perceive as more important in their courses? To measure

this question, all of the content areas of Audience – Intended or Invoked, Concise or Clear Language; Diction/Sentence Structure; Grammar Skills/Mechanics; Self-Esteem and Writing Proficiency, Application of Composition Principles, Writing Processes, Avoidance of Plagiarism/Use of MLA/APA, Synthesis and Integration of Research, Practice of Writing Genres, and Organizational Strategies were used to develop survey selections. All of the selections (with the exception of the demographics) were used to measure how the participants answered were:

Q# 1: Students choose topics that are focused and culturally diverse;

Q# 2: Students write in essay genres that inform, describe, analyze, or comment on a topic.

Q# 3: Writers develop a thesis containing the main idea of the essay in the form of a declarative statement;

Q# 4: Students compose introductions that include an attention-getter, topic background, and the main points of the essay;

Q# 5: Writers develop paragraphs that use transitions from topic sentences to main points supported with details, examples, or analysis;

Q# 6: Students utilize vocabulary appropriate for the audience without contractions, slang, or clichés;

Q# 7: Students use the active voice with varying sentence lengths, patterns, and rhythms to engage readers;

Q# 8: Writers compose conclusions that summarize main points and offer analysis, solutions, or a call to action.;

Q# 9: Using sources from the University Library, students include APA or MLA formatted

in-text citations and Works Cited page;

Q# 10: Students demonstrate research skills by synthesizing, integrating, and paraphrasing source material;

Q# 11: Writing products are free of spelling and typo errors following the rules of grammar, usage, and punctuation;

Q# 12: Students follow style and appearance requirements such as printing, font style, spacing, headers, pagination, and sections;

Q# 13: Students demonstrate word processing skills using Microsoft Word to create essays.

Q# 14: Writers develop cohesive essays that reflect planning, exploring, construction, revision, and proofreading.

Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient statistical procedures were used to analyze the degree of correlation between the data collected. A summary of the results for Research Question 5 follows.

A Spearman's rho correlation was calculated for the relationship between all the Questions-#Q 1 through Q# 16. A moderate positive correlation was found (*rho* (61) = .506, p<.001), indicating a significant relationship between all of the variables.

Examining the relationships between all the survey item selections with no concern of the Content Base Category proved to be quite interesting. As noted previously, correlation coefficients greater than 0.7 are considered strong; in the 0.3 and 0.7 range moderate and correlations below 0.3 are weak. In order to draw conclusions, although the range of .03 to .07 is considered moderate, the researcher determined the midpoint of .05 and above to reflect the strongest relationship between moderate survey selections. Conversely, the lowest coefficients in

the range of .00 to .03 were identified to reflect the weakest, or no relationships, between the survey item selections.

A Spearman's rho correlation was calculated for the relationship between Q# 10 and Q# 14. A moderate positive correlation was found (*rho* (61) = .621, p<.001), indicating a significant relationship between Synthesis and Integration of Research (Research Skills) and Practice in Writing Genres (Developing Cohesive Essays). See Table 9 for a list of the strongest survey item selections.

Table 9: Strongest Correlations for Survey Item Selections

Content Category	Survey Item Selection	Q#	Spearman's Rho
Synthesis & Integration of Research	Research Skills	#10	.621
Practice in Writing the Genres	Developing Cohesive Essays	#14	
Composition Principles	Developing a Thesis	#3	.595
Writing Processes	Composing Introductions	#4	
Writing Processes	Composing Conclusions	#8	.566
Avoidance of Plagiarism/MLA-APA	Library Skills + Annotations	#9	
Diction/Sentence Structure	Spelling, Typos, & Grammar	#11	.541
Practice in Writing the Genres	Developing Cohesive Essays	#14	
Avoidance of Plagiarism/MLA-APA	Library Skills + Annotations	#9	.538
Synthesis & Integration of Research	Research Skills	#10	

A Spearman's rho correlation was calculated for the relationship between Q# 5 and Q# 15. A weak correlation that was not significant was found (*rho* (61) = .021, p>.05), indicating Writing Processes (Developing Paragraphs) and Assessment (Developing Topics) are not related, representing the weakest correlations. See Table 10 for a list of the weakest or not related survey item selections.

Table 10: Weakest Correlations for Survey Item Selections

Content Category	Survey Item Selection	Q#	Spearman's Rho
Writing Processes	Developing Paragraphs	#5	.021
Assessment	Developing Topics	#15	
Writing Processes	Composing Conclusions	#8	.030
Assessment	Developing Topics	#15	
Organizational Strategies	Writing Genres	#2	.030
Assessment	Providing Rubric for Grading	#16	
Mechanics	Style & Appearance	#12	.039
Assessment	Developing Topics	#15	
Organizational Strategies	Writing Genres	#2	.040
Assessment	Developing Topics	#15	

Supporting this data, several respondents and survey participants agreed that all the concepts of the survey item selections should be taught better than we are doing currently. One participant noted that some of the item selections depend on the course level, student level, and type of assignment and another teaches for more than the item selection guidelines. Finally, one survey participant commented that in reality of all of the survey selections, "are supposed to be" the purpose of FY English courses; and, while " .. some elements are clear and straightforward, some need those shades of gray for success in composition".

In the context of the study and the Research Questions, the procedures used supported the conclusion that the scores from the survey are a reliable and valid assessment of FY Composition Programs. The data reflected the strongest relationship appeared in Research Question #3 between Using Source Material/Research Skills (Synthesis and Integration of Research) and Developing Cohesive Essays (Practice in Writing Genres). Conversely, the data reflected the weakest relationship in the Research Question results was in Research Question #1 between Vocabulary (Audience- Intended or Invoked) and Word Processing Skills (Self-Esteem/Writing Proficiency). When the survey items were analyzed in pairs for relationships, without

consideration of Content Base Categories, the strongest relationship was identical to the result in

Research Question #3 (Using Source Material/Research Skills - Synthesis and Integration of

Research and Developing Cohesive Essays - Practice in Writing Genres). However, when the

survey items were analyzed for the weakest pairs that were not related, the outcome differed

from the Research Questions results; Writing Processes (Developing Paragraphs) and

Developing Topics (Assessment) represented no relationship. The results, along with the

individual interviews, will be discussed and interpreted to determine recommendations and

future research areas for English composition curriculum in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5 - SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

The final chapter of this dissertation will provide a summary of the study and discussion of the results as well as implications, suggestions for further research, and conclusions of value to FY English courses. The research questions will be revisited, summarized, and analyzed to examine instructors' perceptions of learning objectives and content area categories.

Summary of Study

The purpose of this study was an investigation of instructors' perceptions of composition learning objectives focusing on which should be taught and which should be emphasized. Added to the questions of what to teach, different institutions' expectations in the FY courses could also be determining factors of which skills are emphasized. The depth and breadth of learning objectives along with the significance of every Composition Program could be affected by instructors' perceptions of their relative importance.

Using an 18-question (16 content area and two demographic) survey based on content areas chosen to mirror general learning objectives in composition courses, the researcher discovered some levels of agreement, some of disagreement, and some neutral. In the context of the study, the procedures supported the conclusion that the scores from the survey were a reliable and valid assessment of FY Composition Programs. The results will be discussed and interpreted in this chapter to determine insights, recommendations, and future research areas for English Composition curriculum.

Summary and Discussion of Findings

Research Questions

The research questions in this study were based on the Content Area Categories and question selections in the survey. Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient statistical procedures were used to analyze the degree of correlation between the data collected. The researcher was interested in assessing the relationship between two sets of data in terms of similarity. Specifically, if one set of values changes (increases or decreases) what changes (increases or decreases) occurs with the other? The following section examines the statistical and interview results that were collected from the survey and during individual interview meetings to illuminate the meaning of the results of the study.

Research Question #1

Are instructors teaching skills for students of varying grammar, mechanics, diction, and sentence structure competencies in the Freshman Year English Composition courses? The results for Research Question 1 indicated a significant relationship between Vocabulary and Active Voice; Vocabulary and Error-Free Writing; Vocabulary and Mechanics; Active Voice and Error-Free Writing; and Active Voice and Mechanics.

The correlation coefficients of the relationship between the three survey item selections based on grammar, vocabulary, and formatting competencies were between .34 and .37, representing the weakest points of the moderate range (.3 to .7). Due to this relatively weak moderate relationship, it is obvious these learning objectives are the least important to FY

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English Composition Instructors. Research supports this viewpoint, as many instructors are convinced that grammar should be taught within writing rather than a separate drill and kill process, divorced from texts and disconnected from writing methodology (Grubb, 2001, p. 11).

The correlation coefficients were stronger along the moderate relationship scale (.42 to .44) for Voice, Error-Free Writing, and Mechanics. The survey results and the individual interviews demonstrated that instructors perceive these specific skills as more important than grammar. As Grubb (2001) discovered, writing programs focused on programmed texts, grammar and sentence completion exercises ignore communication higher order skills.

The data also indicated no significance as well as no relationship between Vocabulary and Word Processing Skills; Active Voice and Word Processing Skills; and Error-Free Writing and Word Processing Skills. These results demonstrate that instructors do not perceive a strong relationship between learning objectives involving word processing skills. A respondent concurred with these results and acknowledged developing computer skills belongs in other courses but if they are not addressed elsewhere then they must be taught in English courses. After all, the ink – somehow, some way – must hit the paper for the writing process to occur.

The results indicated a significant relationship between Error-Free Writing and Mechanics and Mechanics and Word Processing Skills. These results represent the weakest points of the moderate range (.35 to .36). So, due to the relatively weak moderate relationship, it is obvious these learning objectives are the least important to FY Instructors but not as weak as word processing skills. This direction was supported by a respondent who noted that instructors should be more interested in the process of learning displayed to determine if the student is progressing and on the right path for growth.

Research Question #2

Are instructors emphasizing writing as a process in the classroom? The results for Research Question 2 indicated a significant relationship between Developing a Thesis and Composing Introductions; Developing a Thesis and Developing Paragraphs; Developing a Thesis and Composing Conclusions; Composing Introductions and Developing Paragraphs; Composing Introductions and Composing Conclusions; Developing Paragraphs and Composing Conclusions.

The survey item selections were based on composition principles and writing processes and the results support a strong moderate relationship between developing thesis, introductions, and conclusions and less with developing paragraphs. The data demonstrates that FY English Composition Instructors are purveyors of knowledge so that students can engage in developing writing products. These reactions make sense along with Bizzell and Herzberg's (2001) definition of rhetoric, "the use of language, written or spoken, to inform or persuade; the study of the persuasive effects of language; the study of the relation between language and knowledge" (p. 1).

The results continue to support the stronger perceptions of instructors in the areas of Composing Introductions, Composing Conclusions, and Developing Paragraphs (range between .40 to .43); however, the relationship between Composing Conclusions and Developing Paragraphs is weak moderate (.33). The implication is that instructors do not perceive as strong a relationship between Developing Paragraphs and Conclusions as they do with Introductions. These results are supported and confirmed by survey participants who perceive writing as a process and emphasized that students must understand the steps to be successful.

A respondent added that good readers are good writers who can duplicate and replicate; so, analyzing written works such as literature or editorials is important. Another added that seeing the language as well as understanding differences and connections between verbal and written language is necessary to duplicate the process. And all of these comments support the need to address the process of writing, the parts of the work, and good examples of introductions, conclusions, and development of paragraphs for good writing. Then, as one respondent noted, the individual can become a writer who can make claims, take ownership, and above all, think critically.

The strong relationships between Composing Introductions, Composing Conclusions, and Developing Paragraphs are reinforced by several participants would rather have a literary approach in courses with ample examples of good writing. One noted that instead of teaching the indefinite article rule, it is more worthwhile to spend time on questioning what is being read; reading and questioning skills impact writing. Finally, another strongly believes in deep essay analysis using samples from past classes or from magazines, newspapers, then dissected thought by thought, sentence by sentence, and paragraph by paragraph. Asking questions and debating answers will help students practice inquiry as they excavate texts for meaning. A final comment by a participant on this topic was interesting, "the rhythm of how you deliver information is important as it becomes part of the student's toolbox for the writing process".

Research Question #3

At the Post-secondary level, are basic skills or genre nuances taught? The results for Research Question 3 indicated a significant relationship between Library Skills and Research

Skills; Library Skills and Developing Cohesive Essays; and Research Skills and Developing Cohesive Essays.

It is no surprise to the researcher that Library and Research Skills and Developing Cohesive Essays have a high moderate correlation as the data demonstrates these are perceived as important skills by FY instructors. The relationship between Library Skills and Developing Cohesive Essays is low moderate demonstrating instructors are more apt to stress Library and Research Skills and then Research Skills and Developing Cohesive Essays.

Supporting these results, one participant noted a new initiative at the community college level is a connection between disciplines focused on real writing and research. Similarly, others emphasize that elaborate conclusions rather than simple summary are necessary for college level writing. Another participant stated cohesive essays and new ideas are important as students demonstrate essay development with ideas, theories, and concepts that are of merit and deserve consideration, which are all factors that are impacted by research skills. So, it follows that the study and interview results demonstrate research needs to be emphasized since it affects how students learn and skills that will be used in future college courses. In addition, the researcher believes that FY English Composition Instructors feel the pressure to emphasize the development of research and library skills so their students can be successful in their upper level degree major courses. As a participant noted, research and genre practice represent a learning objective of FY writing courses that cannot be overlooked or ignored.

Research Question #4

In Freshman English Composition Program courses, do instructors emphasize organizational strategies? The results for Research Question 4 indicated a weak correlation that

was not significant between Choosing Topics and Composing Genre Essays. The data for Choosing Topics and Composing Genre Essays resulted in no relationship, so FY English Composition instructors do not perceive these areas as important. In fact, one respondent helps students to develop depth in writing by providing thought provoking philosophical topics so they do not have the opportunity to pick simple and trite "easy way out" essay topics. Most instructors do not view the relationship between these learning objectives as strongly as compared to the others.

However, there is some disagreement between the survey data and the individual interview results. One participant noted, emphasizing that informing, describing, analyzing, and commenting on topics are concepts expected from students and in turn should be expected by the instructor. Another participant added that exploring organizational strategies also contribute skills for getting away from formula writing of the five paragraph essay, giving students more than one way to attack the writing process. A comment was made regarding emphasizing brainstorming, which contributes to developing critical thinking and can be applied in all areas of real life. Prewriting steps are organizational aids that provide a basic foundation so that writing does not become arduous and challenging. Another supported these points, emphasizing these steps are necessary to practice to complete the writing process. However, despite these observations, neither the interviews nor the literature supported the survey data results.

Research Question #5

At the different Post-secondary schools (colleges, universities, for-profit and public), which course content objectives do instructors perceive as more important in their courses?

Examining the relationships between all the survey item selections with no concern of the Content Base Category proved to be quite interesting. As noted previously, correlation coefficients greater than 0.7 are considered strong; in the 0.3 and 0.7 range moderate and correlations below 0.3 are weak. In order to draw conclusions, although the range of .03 to .07 is considered moderate, the researcher determined the midpoint of .05 and above to reflect the strongest relationship between moderate survey selections. Conversely, the lowest coefficients in the range of .00 to .03 were identified to reflect the weakest, or no relationships, between the survey item selections.

When all the item selections are considered, the data results indicated a significant relationship between all of the variables in the survey. The most significant relationship exists between Research Skills and Developing Cohesive Essays. Finally, the weakest and least related correlation exists between Developing Paragraphs and Developing Topics.

Supporting this data, several respondents and survey participants agreed that all the concepts of the survey item selections should be taught better than we are doing currently. One participant noted that some of the item selections depend on the course level, student level, and type of assignment and another teaches for more than the item selection guidelines. Finally, one survey participant commented that in reality of all of the survey selections, "are supposed to be" the purpose of FY English courses; and, while "... some elements are clear and straightforward, some need those shades of gray for success in composition".

Implications for Composition Courses

In the context of the study and the Research Questions, the procedures used supported the conclusion that the scores from the survey are a reliable and valid assessment of FY Composition Programs. The data reflected the strongest relationship appeared in Research Question #3 between Research Skills and Developing Cohesive Essays. Conversely, the data reflected the weakest relationship in the Research Question results was in Question #1 between Vocabulary and Word Processing Skills. When the survey items were analyzed in pairs for relationships, without consideration of Content Base Categories, the strongest relationship was identical to the result in Research Question #3 between Research Skills and Developing Cohesive Essays. However, when the survey items were analyzed for the weakest pairs that were not related, the outcome differed from the Research Question results as Developing Paragraphs and Developing Topics represented no relationship.

The results demonstrated that grammar does not correlate with other learning objectives. So, instructors do not perceive this objective as important; and consider that one respondent noted these skills cannot be mastered in one or two courses. The rules, guidelines, and exceptions are elements that are building blocks that students must maneuver and master to compose essays; however, the how, why, and when are outside the scope of this study. And, the survey results demonstrated that instructors' do not perceive learning objectives based on grammar as important in FY English Composition courses.

Research Skills and Developing Cohesive Essays; Developing a Thesis and Composing Introductions; Composing Conclusions and Library Skills; Grammar and Developing Cohesive Essays; and finally, Library Skills and Research Skills are the survey categories that have the

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strongest moderate relationships of all the FY English Composition course learning objectives. Then, Developing Paragraphs and Developing Topics; Composing Conclusions and Developing Topics; Writing Genres and Assessment; Mechanics and Developing Topics; and finally, Writing Genres and Developing Topics are the survey categories that have the weakest or no relationship of all the FY English Composition course learning objectives.

The data analysis from this study has demonstrated that not all learning objectives are related, some are well matched and others are not. The literature supports the intent that writing must address the categories and survey item selections which are based on the learning objectives. However, the data confirms that the objectives are not considered equally in practice. This researcher has suspected that this is happening in classrooms and now this study confirms those suspicions. It is apparent that there is no consensus among FY English Composition instructors, course developers, program directors, and supervisors regarding how learning objectives are applied in the classroom as well as their rank importance. Thus, the connections and disconnects of the learning objectives and English instruction are intriguing and thought provoking.

Future Research Recommendations

This study was conducted with 63 participants in state, community college, and for-profit institutions in the state of Florida. Another project should include a larger sample size using a database of instructors representing all of the states from the across the country. In addition, a study should be conducted including variables such as the number of years taught, the type of course taught (basic, general, Composition I and Composition II) and also the different types of

institutions (for-profit, community college, university). In addition, since this study demonstrated that instructors' perceptions of learning objectives are different and in turn, this could be reflected in the classroom. So, an exploration of the ramifications of this study in conjunction with what occurs in the FY English Composition classroom should be conducted, as this is outside the parameters of this investigation. All of the above would certainly yield interesting results and more inquiry into what is happening in college English classrooms.

Another approach for research would include student input, instructor input, and a review of essays. Both students and instructors would complete a survey based on learning objective perceptions and then the results could be compared to determine strengths, weaknesses, and relationships.

Considering that grammar skills was in the weakest relationship with the learning objectives in this study, it would be prudent to spend some time exploring the issues between concentrated skill mastery instruction and transfer to application. This investigation would revolve around the improvement of isolated grammar instruction, grammar instruction integrated with writing, and the instructor factors that contribute to inadequate transfer from instruction to practice. The research questions would evolve from exploring the issues between concentrated skill mastery instruction and inadequate transfer to application in correlation to instructor and student interaction.

An example of a study would be conducted in three types of institutions (university, community college, and proprietary) with an equal number of instructors who teach English Composition. The researcher would proctor a writing sample at the beginning of the semester and at the end of the semester. The instructors and the students will be required to complete the

Kolb's Learning inventory at the beginning of the semester. In addition, the instructor will need to complete a short survey noting general classification and college information, education, experience, and intended teaching approach/instruction to grammar and writing throughout the semester. The collection of the data will allow comparison of grammar mastery in writing samples from the beginning and to the end of semester as well as the examination of instructors' teaching styles and students' learning styles. Correlations will be drawn between improved writing samples and successful linkage of teaching and learning styles and attempt to define best practices for teaching grammar.

Conclusion

The Mock Turtle from *Alice in Wonderland* understood what was important when it came to learning English, as he identified "Reeling and Writhing of course...", as part of his regular education lessons (Carroll, 2003). The practice of teaching English has been transformed from utilitarian to humanistic approaches, influencing and changing the content as well. Educators struggle between the balance of reading, writing, and literature components as well as how learning objectives should be taught and learned.

As the researcher considered the results of this study, one underlying theme was apparent – the one-size-fits all, broad survey approach by curriculum developers of FY English Composition courses may be too ambitious for the classroom. Course developers need to realize that all learning objectives are not treated or taught equally in FY English Composition courses. The data collected from this study is vital to English Department directors, supervisors, and chairs, since administration expects that that the syllabus is followed without changes or

disregard of topics or learning objectives. Some learning objectives are taught minimally, others are emphasized, and some are skipped due to time constraints and/or instructor prerogatives.

As an administrator, the researcher now has valid proof to confirm that learning objectives are not treated equally in the classroom. Literature supports the need for writers to practice good mechanics, processes to develop parts of the essay, research and library skills, and organizational strategies. The survey results demonstrate that theory does not necessarily translate to practice. In addition, while instructors may understand theory, the application for practice in the classroom is subject to broad degree and range of interpretation. Finally, instructors teach as they were taught unless they question, challenge, and change those entrenched behaviors. Thus, the interpretations are further clouded, as evident in the significant varying faculty perceptions of learning objectives in this survey.

The results should serve as a wakeup call to English Department personnel, notably to reveal that all is not well with the transition from FY English course development to application in the classroom. Perhaps the practitioners are demonstrating that when choosing the learning objectives, the outcomes should mirror skills that students will use in their lives and careers. This study has reflected that learning objectives should be less ambitious and more focused on what instructors consider important and vital for teaching English in the classroom. Understanding relationships between instructors' perceptions of learning objectives in FY English Composition courses as well as what ought to be taught and what should be taught, will provide investigators with endless discussion and research opportunities. Examining the connections with learning objectives and the data from this study must persist, to change and impact the imminent success of FY English Composition courses.

APPENDIX A
PRENOTICE LETTER – FIRST CONTACT

March 19, 2010

Greetings!

A few days from now you will be receiving a mail request to participate in a brief questionnaire for a doctoral research study. This study concerns college professors and the effectiveness of English composition instruction.

I am writing in advance so you will know that you will be contacted. I have found that busy people, such as you, appreciate the advance notice. The study is very important since the results will be beneficial to college education. My research will help determine the feasibility and usefulness of current approaches to teaching composition as well as determine best practices and a direction for the future.

Thank you for your time and assistance. Your generous contribution of a few minutes of time will provide me valuable data for a successful research study.

Sincerely,

Rosie N. Branciforte
University of Central Florida
College of Education
Ed. D. – C & I Doctoral Student

P.S. I will be enclosing a small token of my appreciation with the questionnaire as a thank you!

APPENDIX B
QUESTIONNAIRE MAILOUT – SECOND CONTACT

March 26, 2010

I am writing to request your help with a study I am conducting for my Ed.D. – Curriculum & Instruction doctoral dissertation research at the University of Central Florida. This study concerns English Composition college professors and the effectiveness of English composition instruction.

You have been selected to participate in this study because you are an English Composition faculty member and teach or have taught English Composition at your institution. I am contacting a random sample of professors across the state of Florida to determine the feasibility and usefulness of current approaches to teaching composition.
The results of the study will be used to help college English departments implement best practices and a direction for the future.

Participation in the survey is voluntary. However, you can help me very much if you share your English composition teaching experiences and opinions. If you wish to be interviewed, please provide your contact information on the form and I will contact you. Your answers are completely confidential and will be released only as summaries with no individual's answers specifically identified. When you return your completed questionnaire, your name will be deleted from the mailing list and never connected to your answers in any way. If for some reason you prefer not to respond, please let me know by returning the blank questionnaire in the enclosed stamped envelope.

I have enclosed a small token of my appreciation as my way of saying thanks for your time and assistance.

If you have any questions or comments about this study, I welcome your input. My cell number is (407) 399-3648, or you can write me at the address on this letterhead.

Thank you for your generous time and assistance with this important research study.

Sincerely,

Rosie N. Branciforte
University of Central Florida
College of Education
Ed. D. – C & I Doctoral Student

P.S. If I have made a mistake in identifying you as a past or a current English Composition professor, please note that in the comment section on the back of the questionnaire – leave the rest blank – and return in the enclosed stamped envelope. Thank you!

APPENDIX C
POSTCARD THANK YOU/REMINDER – THIRD CONTACT

April 9, 2010

Last week a questionnaire was mailed to you requesting your input in a study on college composition instruction. Your name was selected randomly from English professors across the state of Florida.

If you have already mailed the questionnaire back to me, please accept my sincere thanks. If not, please complete it today. I am really grateful for your help since input from people such as you will provide the data I can use to begin to understand and draw conclusions about teaching composition.

If you did not receive a questionnaire, or if it was misplaced, please call me at (407) 399-3648, and I will mail you another today.

Sincerely,

Rosie N. Branciforte
University of Central Florida
Ed.D. - C& I Doctoral Student

APPENDIX D
FIRST REPLACEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE – FOURTH CONTACT

April 23, 2010

About three weeks ago I sent a questionnaire to you requesting input for a study about the effectiveness of English composition instruction. To the best of my knowledge, it has not yet been returned.

The comments of your peers who have already responded include an amazing variety of methods and styles of teaching composition. Many have described different approaches to writing instruction with varying results. I believe these comments and data will be very useful to my research study.

I am writing again because of the importance that your questionnaire has for contributing toward obtaining accurate results. Although I sent questionnaires to professors across the state of Florida, it is only by hearing from nearly everyone in the sample that I can be sure that my results will be truly representative.

A few professors have advised me they should not have received the questionnaire since they are not teaching composition courses or have moved into administration. If either of these applies, please write the applicable one on the back of the questionnaire and return it in the enclosed stamped envelope so that I can delete your name from the mailing list.

As I mentioned previously, the survey procedures are aimed at confidentially. On the back of the questionnaire is printed an identification number so that I can check your name off of the mailing list when it is returned. The list of names will then be destroyed so that individual names will never, ever be connected to the results in any form. Protecting the confidentially of people's answers is very important to me, as well as the University.

We hope that you will fill out and return the questionnaire soon, but if for any reason you prefer not to answer it, please let me know by returning a note or a blank questionnaire in the enclosed in the enclosed stamped envelope.

Sincerely,

Rosie N. Branciforte
University of Central Florida
College of Education
Ed. D. – C & I Doctoral Student

P.S. If you have any questions or comments about this study, please contact me immediately. I can be reached at (407) 399-3648.

APPENDIX E
FINAL CONTACT FOR PARTICIPATION – FIFTH CONTACT

May 1, 2010

Over the last two months I have sent you several mailings about an important research study I am conducting on the effectiveness of English composition instruction.

The purpose of the study is to help college English departments implement best practices and a direction for the future. By understanding what, how, and when college students are learning in Composition classes, college professors can develop courses with more effective objectives, purposes, and lessons.

The study is drawing to a close, and this is the last contact that will be made with the random sample of college English professors who teach composition.

I am sending this final contact by certified mail because of my concern that professors who have not responded may have had different input than those who have. Hearing from everyone in this small statewide sample helps assure that the survey results are as accurate as possible.

I also wish to assure you that your response to this study is voluntary, and if you prefer not to respond, I understand. If you feel I have made a mistake including you in this study, please let me know by making a note in the comment box on the questionnaire and returning it in the enclosed stamped envelope. This would be very helpful so that I may delete your name from the mailing list.

Finally, I appreciate your willingness to consider my request as I conclude this effort to better understand the issues facing colleges and the teaching of English composition. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Rosie N. Branciforte
University of Central Florida
College of Education
Ed. D. – C & I Doctoral Student

APPENDIX F
TRANSCRIPTS FROM PERSONAL INTERVIEWS

1) *Considering the statements listed on the survey, which one do you feel is the most*

   important for you to develop and practice in your composition classroom? Why?

   Xorganize their ideas, need for a foundation or writing becomes arduous and challenging.

   Emphasize brainstorming which is a life skill too; develops critical thinking – can be

   applied in all areas of real life

   x#14

   should be beyond the 5 paragraph essay – intro is no longer what you are going to tell

   reader as this can be done in any other paragraph; conclusion becomes a reflection on

   what the writer has learned from the process.

   Respondent adds a fourth dimension to the three ways of knowing – experience, research,

   common knowledge and writing

   X#14 … respondent states this is what is expected from students; in turn what she is in

   the classroom to do.

   emphasizes writing as a process and all the steps that are necessary to complete the

   process

   X#14   represents a unified goal of writing courses

   X#1 too much emphasis on mechanics; move beyond critical thinking need to

   concentrate on making connections between the world and within their own minds; need

   to open the door to realize the thoughts in their heads are not the only thing going on in

   the world.

2) *Considering the statements listed on the survey, which one do you feel is the least*

   important for you to develop and practice in your composition classroom? Why?

   x#6 least .. a stage that some students cannot reach depending on their level of writing

   X#16 respondent provides adequate guidelines in class, prefers to view and grade work

   holistically

   Xall are important

   X#1 to help develop depth in writing students do not choose writing prompts – provided

   by instructor based on philosophical concepts to make them think –if they choose they

   will always pick the easy way out. (Is there a God; What is the meaning of life? Does

   mind control the body?)

   Writing in third person – preparation for future academic life

   X"writing is process"

   More interested in the process of learning displayed to determine what and if the student

   is progressing-

   how far have they come and is on right path for growth?

   X#13… however, the ink must hit the paper for the process to occur.. Unfortunately if not

   taught anywhere else, it must be taught in English courses

3) *Reviewing the statements, are there any additional elements or instructional areas that*

   should be included in composition courses? Why?

   X move beyond critical thinking need to concentrate on making connections between the

   world and within their own minds; need to open the door to realize the thoughts in their

   heads are not the only thing going on in the world.

X new development at CC//// connections between disciplines focused on real writing……

X if anything, teach the elements listed better

Xmastering Point of View recognizing and using it… developing first or third person but not mixing in the same piece.

XDeep essay analysis from past classes, magazines, newspapers – dissected thought by thought, sentence by sentence, and paragraph by paragraph. Ask questions so students practice asking questions as they excavate for meaning. "Rather than spending time on the indefinite article rule, spend time on questioning what is being read to reading and questioning impact writing"

Xresearch needs to be emphasized… affects how we learn and will be used in future courses!

Xgroup learning… we need to work together in the real world so we need to practice talking and exchanging ideas., …

{"rhythm of how you deliver information is important… becomes part of the student's toolbox for the writing process"

Xgrammar drill with a twist to work on the hardwiring into the brain needed for grammar /// respondent suggests finding a paragraph, reading words, punctuation and nuances aloud to help develop pathways of the discourse of language into the brain.

Xrespondent would rather have a literary approach in courses… examples of good writing are needed ..

good writers are readers /// have to see the language to duplicate the process…
understand the difference between verbal and written language

4) *Reviewing the statements, are there any elements or instructional areas that should be eliminated from composition courses. Why?*

Xformula writing….5 paragraph essay .. teaching students a one way writing process..
xgroup projects .. unfair to hard workers

X Allow academic freedom… tell them what to teach but not specifically how to teach ..
do not pigeon-hole

Xrubrics ….needs to consider a holistic approach... it is about writing not mechanics…
"writing is never done, it is only due"

5) *If you feel that multiple elements need to be emphasized and concentrated on in a composition course during the semester or term, how does this occur? (combo of in-person interviews and paper survey comments)….*

XAll of these are "they are supposed to be .. some elements are clear and straightforward, some need those shades of gray for success in composition"

XI teach for more than any of these guidelines"

Xsome of the practices depend on the course level and assignment…

Xproviding a rubric is not important…

XEmphasize elaborate conclusions rather than simple summary for college level writing

X a major element of teaching FYC is developing scaffolded assignments that
teach..writing is a process, you are a writer, you have authority, you can make
claims/take ownership and above all think critically"

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X Writing is critical .. the ability to write with unity and coherence using an appropriate

level of discourse is my pedagogical goal in all of my courses.

XRespondent states cohesive essays (14) and new ideas (15) are most important as

students demonstrate essay development with ideas, theories, and concepts that are of

merit and deserve consideration.

APPENDIX G
STATISTICAL DATA AND RESULTS

Descriptives

[DataSet1]

Descriptive Statistics						
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Q1	63	2	5	4.16	.884	.781
Q5	63	2	5	4.62	.607	.369
Q6	64	1	5	4.02	.951	.905
Q7	64	2	5	4.17	.767	.589
Q9	63	3	5	4.49	.644	.415
Q11	64	1	5	3.91	1.080	1.166
Q12	64	2	5	4.14	.794	.631
Q14	64	2	5	4.50	.816	.667
Q15	64	2	5	4.05	.844	.712
Valid N (listwise)	61					

Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary			
		N	%
Cases	Valid	61	95.3
	Excluded[a]	3	4.7
	Total	64	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.814	9

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q1	33.95	18.714	.393	.809
Q5	33.54	19.352	.475	.801
Q6	34.13	17.316	.528	.793
Q7	34.00	17.267	.680	.775
Q9	33.64	19.101	.512	.797
Q11	34.28	15.804	.604	.784
Q12	34.02	18.350	.485	.798
Q14	33.67	16.891	.689	.772
Q15	34.08	19.277	.309	.820

Factor Analysis

[DataSet1]

Correlation Matrix		Q1	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q11	Q12
Correlation	Q1	1.000	.366	.340	.360	.217	.150
	Q5	.366	1.000	.321	.487	.335	.264
	Q6	.340	.321	1.000	.388	.342	.375
	Q7	.360	.487	.388	1.000	.460	.428
	Q11	.217	.335	.342	.460	1.000	.423
	Q12	.150	.264	.375	.428	.423	1.000

Communalities	Initial	Extraction
Q1	.215	.218
Q5	.298	.362
Q6	.268	.319
Q7	.413	.577
Q11	.297	.367
Q12	.285	.313

Extraction Method: Maximum
Likelihood.

Total Variance Explained

Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.771	46.186	46.186	2.157	35.944	35.944
2	.938	15.634	61.820			
3	.711	11.853	73.673			
4	.579	9.642	83.315			
5	.545	9.084	92.399			
6	.456	7.601	100.000			

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.

Factor Matrix[a]

	Factor
	1
Q1	.467
Q5	.602
Q6	.565
Q7	.760
Q11	.606
Q12	.560

Extraction Method:
Maximum Likelihood.

a. 1 factors extracted. 4
iterations required.

Goodness-of-fit Test

Chi-Square	df	Sig.
5.866	9	.753

Rotated Factor Matrix[a]

a. Only one factor was
extracted. The solution
cannot be rotated.

Factor Analysis

Correlation Matrix

		Q1	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q11	Q12
Correlation	Q1	1.000	.366	.340	.360	.217	.150
	Q5	.366	1.000	.321	.487	.335	.264
	Q6	.340	.321	1.000	.388	.342	.375
	Q7	.360	.487	.388	1.000	.460	.428
	Q11	.217	.335	.342	.460	1.000	.423
	Q12	.150	.264	.375	.428	.423	1.000
	Q14	.246	.362	.439	.545	.648	.453
	Q15	.182	.004	.157	.281	.284	.061

Correlation Matrix

		Q14	Q15
Correlation	Q1	.246	.182
	Q5	.362	.004
	Q6	.439	.157
	Q7	.545	.281
	Q11	.648	.284
	Q12	.453	.061
	Q14	1.000	.311
	Q15	.311	1.000

Communalities

	Initial	Extraction
Q1	.226	.293
Q5	.334	.471
Q6	.295	.318
Q7	.468	.555
Q11	.464	.563
Q12	.312	.306
Q14	.543	.740
Q15	.189	.134

Extraction Method: Maximum
Likelihood.

Total Variance Explained

Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings	
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance
1	3.420	42.750	42.750	2.897	36.208
2	1.060	13.244	55.994	.484	6.051
3	.974	12.174	68.167		
4	.715	8.939	77.107		
5	.565	7.064	84.171		
6	.534	6.677	90.848		
7	.405	5.065	95.912		
8	.327	4.088	100.000		

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.

Total Variance Explained

Factor	Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings	Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings[a]
	Cumulative %	Total
1	36.208	2.676
2	42.259	2.381
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.

a. When factors are correlated, sums of squared loadings cannot be added to obtain a total variance.

Factor Matrix[a]

	Factor	
	1	2
Q1	.401	.363
Q5	.537	.427
Q6	.549	.132
Q7	.715	.210
Q11	.725	-.192
Q12	.553	-.017
Q14	.832	-.216
Q15	.331	-.156

Extraction Method: Maximum
Likelihood.

a. 2 factors extracted. 5 iterations
required.

Goodness-of-fit Test

Chi-Square	df	Sig.
8.641	13	.800

Pattern Matrix[a]

	Factor	
	1	2
Q1	-.120	.618
Q5	-.091	.746
Q6	.260	.352
Q7	.295	.510
Q11	.772	-.031
Q12	.437	.152
Q14	.880	-.030
Q15	.432	-.107

Extraction Method: Maximum
Likelihood.
 Rotation Method: Promax with
Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 3
iterations.

Structure Matrix

	Factor	
	1	2
Q1	.308	.534
Q5	.426	.683
Q6	.504	.532
Q7	.648	.714
Q11	.750	.504
Q12	.543	.455
Q14	.860	.581
Q15	.358	.193

Structure Matrix

	Factor	
	1	2
Q1	.308	.534
Q5	.426	.683
Q6	.504	.532
Q7	.648	.714
Q11	.750	.504
Q12	.543	.455
Q14	.860	.581
Q15	.358	.193

Extraction Method: Maximum
Likelihood.
 Rotation Method: Promax with
Kaiser Normalization.

Factor Correlation Matrix

Factor	1	2
1	1.000	.694
2	.694	1.000

Extraction Method: Maximum
Likelihood.
 Rotation Method: Promax with
Kaiser Normalization.

Reliability - Overall

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary		N	%
Cases	Valid	58	90.6
	Excluded[a]	6	9.4
	Total	64	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the
procedure.

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.792	18

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q1	69.76	41.695	.422	.779
Q2	69.28	44.238	.393	.784
Q3	69.45	43.059	.386	.782
Q4	69.71	39.685	.557	.768
Q5	69.31	42.077	.565	.773
Q6	69.93	40.346	.484	.774
Q7	69.76	39.309	.727	.759
Q8	69.57	42.004	.549	.774
Q9	69.43	41.688	.603	.771
Q10	69.29	42.176	.671	.771
Q11	70.09	38.536	.526	.770
Q12	69.79	40.588	.560	.770
Q13	69.79	42.869	.317	.786
Q14	69.47	40.358	.552	.770
Q15	69.86	43.595	.235	.792
Q16	69.71	45.474	.076	.802
Years	71.05	47.173	-.092	.822
Type	71.59	48.598	-.193	.822

Reliability - Eliminating Demographic Information

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	58	90.6
	Excluded[a]	6	9.4
	Total	64	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the
procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.850	16

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q1	64.53	42.920	.432	.843
Q2	64.05	45.559	.401	.845
Q3	64.22	44.282	.401	.845
Q4	64.48	40.921	.564	.836
Q5	64.09	43.308	.579	.837
Q6	64.71	41.439	.503	.840
Q7	64.53	40.218	.769	.825
Q8	64.34	43.318	.552	.838
Q9	64.21	42.904	.618	.836
Q10	64.07	43.714	.640	.837
Q11	64.86	39.700	.536	.839
Q12	64.57	41.969	.554	.837
Q13	64.57	44.144	.324	.849
Q14	64.24	41.379	.581	.835
Q15	64.64	45.077	.224	.855
Q16	64.48	46.394	.119	.860

Item-Total Statistics

Reliability - Eliminating Q16 (less than .25 threshold from prior analysis)

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	58	90.6
	Excluded[a]	6	9.4
	Total	64	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.860	15

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q1	60.31	40.849	.450	.854
Q2	59.83	43.549	.413	.856
Q3	60.00	42.421	.395	.856
Q4	60.26	39.213	.551	.848
Q5	59.86	41.419	.579	.848
Q6	60.48	39.447	.516	.851
Q7	60.31	38.463	.762	.837
Q8	60.12	41.371	.560	.849
Q9	59.98	41.140	.603	.847
Q10	59.84	41.712	.657	.847

Q11	60.64	37.498	.567	.849
Q12	60.34	40.160	.548	.848
Q13	60.34	42.581	.290	.862
Q14	60.02	39.315	.603	.845
Q15	60.41	43.159	.223	.866

Reliability - Eliminating Q15

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary		N	%
Cases	Valid	58	90.6
	Excluded[a]	6	9.4
	Total	64	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the
procedure.

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.866	14

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q1	56.24	37.835	.446	.862
Q2	55.76	40.327	.427	.863
Q3	55.93	38.943	.441	.862
Q4	56.19	35.876	.585	.854
Q5	55.79	38.167	.606	.855
Q6	56.41	36.492	.512	.859
Q7	56.24	35.695	.741	.845
Q8	56.05	38.225	.571	.856
Q9	55.91	38.080	.604	.854
Q10	55.78	38.738	.642	.855
Q11	56.57	34.881	.541	.859
Q12	56.28	37.045	.558	.855
Q13	56.28	39.466	.290	.870
Q14	55.95	36.576	.577	.854

Item-Total Statistics

APPENDIX H
IRB – APPROVAL OF EXEMPT HUMAN RESEARCH

University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board
Office of Research & Commercialization
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246
Telephone: 407-823-2901 or 407-882-2276
www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html

Approval of Exempt Human Research

From: **UCF Institutional Review Board #1**
          FWA00000351, IRB00001138

To: **Rosemarie N. Branciforte**

Date: **January 27, 2010**

Dear Researcher:

On 1/27/2010, the IRB approved the following activity as human participant research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review:	Exempt Determination
Project Title:	INTER-INSTITUTIONAL COMPARISON OF FACULTY PERCEPTIONS ON THEPURPOSE OF FRESHMAN YEAR COMPOSITION PROGRAMS
Investigator:	Rosemarie N. Branciforte
IRB Number:	SBE-09-06555
Funding Agency:	
Grant Title:	
Research ID:	N/A

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the Investigator Manual.

On behalf of Joseph Bielitzki, DVM, UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

Signature applied by Joanne Muratori on 01/27/2010 01:28:19 PM EST

IRB Coordinator

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