AN EXPLORATION OF THE EXPERIENCES OF HIGH SCHOOL DUAL ENROLLMENT STUDENTS ENROLLED IN COLLEGE COMPOSITION

By

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To Miriam K. Browning and in memory of J. P. Browning, Sr.

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Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School
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AN EXPLORATION OF THE EXPERIENCES OF HIGH SCHOOL DUAL ENROLLMENT STUDENTS ENROLLED IN COLLEGE COMPOSITION

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The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of high school dual enrollment (HSDE) students who were taking a college composition course on a college campus. The following questions guided this study:

1. What are the contextual features of a high school dual enrollment program that influence students' school achievement?

2. What opportunities and feedback are high school students provided to develop their writing abilities in a college composition course?

3. What is the nature of the intersection/interaction of selected high school students and college instructors in a college composition course?

For the study, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with student and professor participants, collected written artifacts, and kept a detailed research journal. The researcher used the data collected to address the questions of the study, and the results explore the themes that emerged after the researcher analyzed the data. The student participants in this study represent a range of cultural and linguistic diversity, engagement with school, and past academic success. In spite of the varied backgrounds of the student participants, an across-case analysis revealed common themes that shed some light on the contextual features of HSDE

programs that may promote student success, on the experiences these students have in a composition classroom, and on the opportunities they are given to improve their writing abilities.

This study revealed that all but one of the student participants who previously were not being served by advanced course work at their home high schools were able to be academically successful in their college composition course. Several features of the HSDE program studied seemed to impact positively their academic experience. However, the students did not seem to have experiences that developed their writing abilities, as one might expect a college classroom to provide. Results of these student participants successfully completing a college composition course on a college campus include their improved confidence in their academic ability, but they conversely reported a negative emotional response to writing.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

As an instructor in a community college's high school dual enrollment program (HSDE), I often taught high school English to students enrolled in the college's HSDE program. In the spring semester, I had one new student enroll in my junior English class. It was obvious from the content of her writing that she was a talented writer, but she informed me that she was taking my class because she had failed ENC 1101, the college's freshman composition course. My interest was piqued, and I asked her if she had any of her graded assignments from her composition course. I thought that reading samples of her writing might give me some insight to why such a bright, talented writer failed freshman composition. She offered to give me all of her graded papers, and perusing these made me wonder why this capable student failed, but students no more talented than her successfully completed the freshman writing course.

To explore this question and pursue a pilot study for my dissertation, I decided to interview two students in-depth—one currently taking ENC 1101 and the student previously mentioned, who failed her first ENC 1101 attempt—about their perceptions of the usefulness of the feedback given to them on their written assignments, their understanding of the tasks they completed, and what they believed they learned in the class. Both students had the same college instructor. I then interviewed the instructor about her perceptions of the two students, their writing abilities, and her evaluations of their written work. My question became one of looking at the different experiences that these two students had in their college composition course and the sense that they made of the feedback from their instructor. Although both students had similar scores on the College Placement Test (CPT), the instrument used by the community college to place incoming students in courses, their course outcomes and experiences were markedly different.

Statement of the Problem

Research about high school dual enrollment students is sparsely represented in the field of English Education. However, high school dual enrollment programs are becoming prevalent research topics because they are seen as one method of accomplishing systematic high school reform. Almost all available research about secondary-postsecondary learning options (SPLOs) focuses on the various programs offered and their characteristics. In contrast, I found that explorations of student experiences were virtually nonexistent. While there is no shortage of SPLOs or research about their contextual features, there is a dearth of information about how these programs impact students and their learning.

Because of this lack of research, many questions must be addressed. Do the current secondary-postsecondary learning options serve the needs of all secondary students, or are there students capable of being enrolled in advanced course work not being served? What are the academic experiences of students enrolled in these SPLOs, and how do these programs impact their emotional lives? How do these high school students feel about completing college-level course work, and how does this course work affect their abilities as writers?

My study allowed me to explore not only the characteristics of the dual enrollment program that impacted students' academic success, but also the experiences of these high school students taking college composition in a college classroom and their developing communicative competencies.

Scope and Significance of the Study

The scope of this study was limited to students who volunteered for the study, but these students provided a range of past academic success, engagement with school, and developing abilities, as well as a sampling of cultural and linguistic diversity.

The specific program I chose to study offered a unique opportunity to study students taking a combination of high school and college course work on a college campus. This opportunity is open to all high school juniors and seniors in this local school district who have passed the state's comprehensive assessment test. Unlike other dual enrollment programs that allow enrollment only for students labeled gifted or advanced who can be immediately placed in college-level courses, this dual enrollment program includes students who did not score into college-level course work when they first enrolled in the program. Thus, when I examined the experiences of students in this program during the spring semester, it provided an opportunity to study students who had not originally qualified for college-level course work upon entering the program and who were not eligible for traditional advanced course work, like Advanced Placement or the International Baccalaureate program offered at their home high schools.

The purpose of my work was to add to the field of English Education a study that gives insight into the experiences of high school dual enrollment students. My study may inform English instructors who teach college composition and work with HSDE students about best practices of teaching writing to a diverse community of learners. Additionally, my work may help community college educators who have HSDE students enrolled in their courses. It also may help identify factors connected to the success or failure of high school students taking college-level course work, thus helping those who counsel HSDE students and register them for college classes. Furthermore, this project's results could shed light on high school reform efforts and other community college efforts to cooperate with high schools in their geographic region.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of high school dual enrollment students taking their first college English course, ENC 1101, on a college campus. The research questions used to guide this study are:

1. What are the contextual features of a high school dual enrollment program that influence students' school achievement?

2. What opportunities and feedback are high school students provided to develop their writing abilities in a college composition course?

3. What is the nature of the intersection/interaction of selected high school students and college instructors in a college composition course?

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

This study explores the experiences of high school students enrolled in freshman composition on a community college campus. In this chapter, I will begin by reviewing literature related to social constructionism to explain the theoretical framework for my study. Next, I review literature related to language and learning. Because my study examined experiences of high school dual enrollment (HSDE) students studying English composition on a college campus, I will review literature related to writing instruction and instructor response to student writing. Because this study was one of HSDE students and their experiences in a college classroom, I review literature pertaining to the community college and various models linking secondary and postsecondary education, secondary-postsecondary learning options (SPLOs), SPLO trends affecting community colleges, and case study research about students involved in SPLOs. Finally, I review case study methods and their appropriateness for my study.

Language and Learning

For my study, I used the theory known as social constructionism. Social constructionism is based on the notion that "knowledge is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context" (Crotty, 1998, p. 42). The individual's world cannot be separated from his/her culture, however, because when an individual encounters objects in his/her world, he/she is doing so through the lens of his/her culture. Culture, as defined by social constructionists, equals more than the products of human endeavors such as agriculture, industry, politics, and religion. Culture forms the worldview that sets expectations for an individual's thoughts and behaviors (Crotty, 1998).

Social constructionism employs several important characteristics for consideration when studying language learning in a social setting. The important characteristics of this theory that guide my study are (a) language is an important tool for teaching and learning, (b) social interaction is important in meaning making, and (c) not all knowledge or understanding is directly observable.

Language as Tool

Language is an important tool for representing our world and for the individual's understanding of that world (Bruner, 1986; Holquist, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978). Our lexicon represents a meaning or a socially shared understanding, but because language only has meaning when it is in use, the individual brings his or her own experiences and personal feelings to this socially shared understanding, creating the semantic bundle that the sign or word represents (Bruner, 1986; Lindfors, 1991; Vygotsky, 1986). While the word itself denotes a socially agreed upon meaning, the individual has his or her own sense of what the word represents (Vygotsky, 1978).

For example, if a child was asked what the meaning of a word like "grandmother" is, he/she might reply that a grandmother bakes yummy cookies. This is the sense of the word for the child, and it is based on his/her recollection of personal experience. As the child develops cognitively, his/her understanding of the word will change—it is dynamic. An individual's understanding of words is a negotiation between his/her experiences and the meaning agreed on by society. This fusion illustrates a child's understanding of the sense and the meaning of the word "grandmother." A child who has had a significant experience with his/her grandmother may develop a strong connotative meaning of the word "grandmother" but the word could have little meaning in the denotative sense. Thus, as a child's experience and interaction with his/her world continues, so does his/her development of language and construction of knowledge.

Bruner (1986) notes that language is a tool one can use to create reality. Smith's (1975) theory of how learning occurs illustrates how language can be used to accomplish this goal. According to Smith, the individual builds a theory of what his/her world is like, and when the individual encounters a new experience, he/she either fits that experience into his/her current understanding or he/she must change his or her understanding to reconcile the new experience and understand it. To "learn," one is required to adjust or modify his/her understanding. Because most thought is not possible without language and comes through the response to a sign with a sign (Holquist, 1990), language is a necessary tool for the individual's building of meaning.

Knowledge Not Directly Observable

The positivist approach to research is that meaningful reality is objective, and it can be clearly identified or proven to exist through quantitative research methods (Crotty, 1998). For the positivist, knowledge exists when it is verified with certainty. These general statements about positivism illustrate positivists' belief that knowledge is grounded in direct experience or scientific observation. Essentially, knowledge exists objectively and can be seen or discovered by researchers. This approach is in direct contrast with that of the social constructionist.

For the social constructionist, knowledge is not necessarily observable. As noted with Smith's (1975) learning theory, to "learn," one is required to adjust or modify his or her understanding. And, as Holquist (1990) explains, to make meaning is impossible without the use of signs, and words allow one to create meaning in both individual and shared social experiences. Language is a tool that supports the development of thought (Vygotsky, 1986), so in an effort to gain some insight to meaning making that is not directly observable, my study views language as a manifestation of thought.

Language, as external speech or as internal dialogue, is a primary tool that an individual can use to construct and reconstruct his or her own worldview and build meaning; as a result, we can consider a person's language use an opportunity to gain insight into that individual's understanding and experiences. Thus, to study the experiences of high school dual enrollment (HSDE) students as writers in a college composition course, a central tool that I used to observe their sense making is language. The language of the HSDE students and the professor participants—their transcribed interviews, the students' written compositions, and the professors' feedback given to students—was the primary source for my study. These artifacts or manifestations of language use can provide insight into the high school students' building of knowledge in a dual enrollment context that is an act of creative construction by individuals in a sociocultural world that Smith (1975) and Bruner (1986) describe.

Importance of Social Interaction

Another reason that I used the theory of social constructionism to guide my study was that it emphasizes the importance of culture and social interaction. We are all born into a world of meaning, a world that imbeds us in culture (Crotty, 1998). As a result, our building of meaning is always social because we are constantly interacting with a world that is socially created—one that is given meaning, in part, by other individuals (Gee, 1999). This social interaction does not necessarily involve two individuals. The social aspect of meaning making involves individuals interacting with ideas in their world, ideas that have been endowed with meaning by their culture (Crotty, 1998).

This paradigm is important for this study for several reasons. First, it is important as it applies to language development. Language development is a "complex and continuous interaction between the child and his world" (Lindfors, 1991, p. 158). The individual cannot be separated from the social world, and it is his or her active participation in this world—an

interaction with the social world, the natural world, and/or himself/herself that allows him/her to make sense of that world. Again, a primary tool for this sense making is language. This study was one that tried to gain insight into the experiences of the participants by either viewing directly or indirectly products of that interaction—the interaction with language and self that occurs with writing, the interaction between student and instructor that occurred in the evaluation of writing, and the interaction between the student and his/her learning community.

Language Development

Language development is a necessary part of one's cognitive development (Smith, 1975). Because language development is an essential part of cognitive growth, it is important to understand how it occurs. Language development occurs when the individual is an active participant in a social world where language is being used for a particular purpose. Theorists like Vygotksy (1978), Bruner (1986), and Bakhtin (1986) emphasize the importance of social interaction and the child's active engagement in language learning. As Lindfors (1991) states,

> Virtually every child, without special training, when exposed to the surface structure of language in a variety of contexts, builds for himself in a relatively short period of time and at an early stage of cognitive development a complex and arbitrary system governing language use. (p. 90)

The language development of the child was not the specific focus of this study, but the way individuals acquire language has important implications for all academic classes focused on language learning.

Through experiencing language used in context and using language in a specific context for a specific purpose, the child builds or constructs meaning (Bruner 1986; Donaldson, 1978; Lindfors, 1991; Vygotsky, 1986). And, as noted above, meaning is constructed from exposure to surface structure—without specific instruction about deep structure and its underlying meaning.

Language develops as the individual builds or constructs meaning through exposure to purposeful communication and through engaging in purposeful communication.

Language Use and the Definition of Utterance

Language transmits culture and is governed by social conventions of language. These structures and functions are regulated by the rules and conventions of the society in which they are used (Bruner, 1986; Holquist, 1990; Lindfors, 1991). To study and note this intertwining of language and culture, it is helpful to use Bakhtin's (1986) concept of the utterance, which he sees as a unit of speech communication. In Bakhtin's view, each utterance is a response to another utterance and is expected to produce a response. These utterances can be spoken or written, but each utterance is individual and created by participants who are engaging in a specific human activity (Bakhtin, 1986). Language use is both original and individual—it is created by the speaker or writer, yet affected by previous speech acts, the context of the act, and the desired goal of the speaker or writer. The utterance is purposeful, and it is greatly affected by participants and the particular context or situation in which it is used. In other words, the individual's language use is inextricably connected to the social world. Halliday (1973) writes that "what is common to every use of language is that it is meaningful, contextualized, and in the broadest sense social" (p. 20). Language use is social, and language helps a child build meaning and become a member of a culture (Bakhtin 1986; Bruner, 1986; Vygotsky, 1986).

Bakhtin (1986) notes that the individual language user is always weaving his or her thoughts into a web of discourse that is situated in a community or context. The utterance, which is preceded by a conversational turn and then followed by the active response of a listener, is shaped by the experiences of language the speaker has previously lived. The utterance, as defined by Bakhtin, has three qualities: boundaries, finalization, and expressive aspects. The boundary is determined by the change of speakers in a conversation; the finalization of the

utterance has occurred when another person can respond to it, and the expressive part of the utterance refers to its lack of neutrality. Thus, one can see that an act of writing can be viewed as an utterance. Much like an utterance created by a speaker in an effort to meet his/her communication goal and to affect the listener, a written text is created by the writer for a particular purpose and audience. The writer, just like the speaker, can use different genres when communicating and may do so based on his/her communication goal and audience.

Communicative Competence

Because of the social nature of language use, in order for one to be competent using language and to understand how to use language for a variety of purposes in a variety of contexts, he or she must do more than understand the linguistic structure of the language used. Individuals, to use language appropriately in a particular context, must have "communicative competence" (Hymes, 1974). Lindfors (1991) states that having communicative competence means "we know how to interact, how to communicate with one another appropriately in various situations, and how to make sense of what others say and do in communication situations"(p. 318). For the purpose of this study, I see developing communicative competence as developing the ability to construct utterances appropriate to particular contexts for particular purposes.

To develop language is to understand language's purposes, communication events, situations, and styles. Language can be used for a variety of purposes—to question, to greet another person, to summarize a point. These communication events can be formal or informal, and they require a person to understand the form and function required for a specific context. When individuals work to communicate in public settings—those contexts that are away from their home environments—they need to use the language acceptable for that particular environment (Kutz, 1997). The students in this study have been exposed to the language of an educational context in the course of their academic careers, but the shift in context to the

community college English classroom requires a shift in language use appropriate for this new context. Academic writing is a specific type or kind of writing that is created for a specific purpose in a particular context. One way to study the students' use of this discourse is to study the artifacts created by students' participation in the writing process for their college composition course.

Creative Construction

An individual builds meaning through exposure to purposeful communication and engaging in purposeful communication. Being engaged and using whatever means available to communicate meaning and understand the ideas of others suggest that the individual is interested in the business of the communication—there is a desired end result (Kutz, 1997). It is this desire to make sense of or accomplish a task that serves as the impetus for the individual's language learning. Language is a necessary tool for the individual's completion of a task, and using the language appropriately for the particular context and desired outcome is part of communicating or working toward achieving a desired outcome. Language is used for thought, speech, and writing. By watching others use language and participating in language use in a variety of situations, an individual works to make sense of language and add to his or her linguistic and communicative repertoire (Lindfors, 1991). Thus, language development is social and involves the individual's active involvement in language use.

The act of building meaning for each individual has similarities to the language development of other individuals because everyone works to build meaning through active participation in speech acts, but because each individual will have unique experiences, his/her language use will also be unique. Because this individual act is of the child's own making and not imposed on him/her, it is creative. The term "construction" is used because it notes the

requirement of an active learner who learns by doing or interacting with his/her world (Lindfors, 1991).

This notion of creative construction—meaning constructed by the individual in the context of a particular culture—is important to this study for several reasons. The students were engaged in language acts when composing papers for their composition course. In this study, I tried to understand their impetus for writing, their desired outcome of the writing or language act, and their interest in the assignment. Secondly, because students build an understanding of language when they are exposed to a variety of situations and styles, I studied the opportunities for writing and exploring ideas that their writing assignments provided. And, in an effort to see if and how their creative use of language was fostered, I studied the students' writing and the feedback given to them by their instructors when evaluating that writing.

The Act of Writing

When taking a freshman composition course, one of the primary activities in which students are engaged is writing. To study that writing, it is first important to recognize writing's complexities and how writing differs from spoken language. Writing, according to Vygotsky, is the deliberate structure of the "web of meaning" (Emig, Goswami, & Butler, 1983). For Vygotsky (1986), writing is a process that reflects our mental process—moving from draft, which may be compared to developing one's inner speech, to final copy. In effect, when one writes he/she is forced to engage in a process of shaping his/her ideas into written language for a particular purpose and for a particular audience. Like other language use, writing is a result of the individual creating or building meaning, but unlike speech and thought, writing involves the individual producing an original product or something that has only existed before as thought and the graphic recording of that meaning (Emig et al., 1983). In fact, the act of writing can help

the individual build meaning (Flower & Hayes, 1980; John-Steiner, 1997; Langer & Applebee, 1987).

Cleary (1991) studied the writing processes of forty 11th-grade students. While each student had his/her unique writing process, she did find patterns in their approaches. The similar aspects of idea generation, organization, drafting, and revision/editing were part of each student's process (Cleary, 1991). Others, like Flower and Hayes (1981) in "A Cognitive Process Theory of Writing," have studied the elements involved in composing. Flower and Hayes described the composing process as falling into three stages: the planning stage, the translating stage where thoughts move to words on a page, and the reviewing stage. While the names given to these parts of the writing process differ, what is important about these studies is that they identify the common practices of good writers and the recursive nature of the act of composing. The act of writing can be viewed as a "craft and an art—complex, often nonlinear in its process" (Claggett, 2005).

Unfortunately, this complicated process of moving from thought to written language has often been oversimplified by writing teachers and taught as a linear process of outlining, drafting, and editing (Emig et al., 1983; Hairston, 1982). This step-by-step notion of writing too often emphasizes the product created by the student rather than the process of discovery and meaning-making inherent in writing (Britton, Burgess, Martin, McLeod, & Rosen, 1975; Yagelski, 2009). The traditional paradigm of teaching writing that still exists in many of today's classrooms is the "prescriptive and orderly view of a creative act, a view that defines the successful writer as one who can systematically produce a 500-word theme of five paragraphs, each with a topic sentence" (Hairston, 1982, p. 403). While many teachers of writing believe writing is a process, the traditional paradigm of teaching writing as an orderly act, not a creative

process of discovering meaning, is still alive and well in many composition classrooms. Bartholomae (1985) describes this type of writing instruction as the "Big Bang theory of writing instruction" (p. 135). In this theory, writing is taught as a series of techniques, like the five-paragraph essay, and the writing assignment itself is the test to see if the student can reproduce the specific techniques prescribed in the composition class.

Writing as Social Act

Individuals, when writing, use language in an effort to represent meaning, and "meaning comes about in both the individual psyche and in shared social experience through the medium of the sign" (Holquist, 1990, p. 48). Gee (1999) notes that individuals gain a primary discourse from the language spoken in their homes, and gain other varieties or add to their communicative competence when they interact with new speech communities and contexts. Communicative competence is gained through the individual's exposure to a variety of discourse communities, and the shared variety of the language is likely to demonstrate shared cultural understandings of those who use it. The process of acquiring this new understanding of language and culture is best achieved by having the opportunity to use language for a variety of purposes with others who speak or write it (Kutz, 1997). As one experiences a variety of social experiences, he or she is invariably exposed to a diversity of language use (Lindfors, 1991). It is this exposure to and participation in a community of practice, like the college composition classroom, that can make students aware of the cultural assumptions and practices that are embedded in the discourse community (Macbeth, 2006). Something as simple as the act of raising one's hand to be recognized to speak is a cultural practice with which some community college students from diverse backgrounds may be unfamiliar.

Just as one needs to understand the social constraints of speaking, one needs to understand the social constraints of writing. As previously noted, language use, whether spoken or written,

is social, and to be able to write or speak effectively one must know and use the social customs governing that language use (Lindfors, 1991). Writing a personal letter differs from writing an editorial essay. The author needs to make a series of decisions and be able to recognize areas of potential problems and promise when going through the writing process to compose either product. The writer, as part of the creative process of building meaning, needs to attend to and make decisions about idea generation, word choice, organization, spelling, punctuation, syntax, clarity, voice, audience, and purpose. Writing for academic purposes, or in response to an assignment given by a writing instructor, can further complicate an already complicated process by forcing the writer to fit these decisions and content into a prescribed format like the five-paragraph essay. While one might expect a composition classroom to offer students many opportunities to write for real purposes in a variety of situations, writing instruction in classrooms often includes prescriptive assignments designating a particular format and topic (Britton et al., 1975; Lindemann, 2001)

Many researchers and theorists believe that the language classroom should be a community of learners all using language for real purposes and audiences. In this setting, the teacher writes with his or her students and is part of a community of language users, all working together to improve their writing and discover their voices (Elbow, 1973; Murray, 1991). This view emphasizes the teacher in a collaborative rather than evaluative role and as a member of the learning community (Langer & Applebee, 1987). Smith (1986) views the effective language classroom as a literacy club. This idea emphasizes the social nature of learning and the necessity for students to be welcomed into a learning community and desire to be affiliated with that learning community. Whether or not a student uses language in congruence with the rules of the

school or learning community can impact his or her academic achievement, as Heath's (1983) study of Trackton and Roadville students illustrated.

While not using the exact terminology of Smith, John-Steiner (1997), when studying individuals who were extremely successful in their professions, noted that these individuals often reported an important collaborative learning experience whereby they were either apprentices to a more skilled practitioner in their field or part of a group of individuals pursuing a common interest. Practitioners often suggest that it is important for the teacher in the classroom to model effective writing and behaviors or skills of an experienced writer (Claggett, 2005; Elbow, 1973; Murray, 1991). This role emphasizes both the social nature of learning and the important role that other learners and a more knowledgeable "other" play in the learning process.

Zone of Proximal Development and Scaffolding

Vygotsky (1986) explains that a child's learning occurs in what he terms the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). This is the distance between the actual development level of the learner and the potential development level that can be achieved with the guidance of an adult or more knowledgeable peer. In other words, the ZPD represents the learner's potential development. The learner's potential development is what he or she can do in a social situation, with the assistance of another or others. Bruner (1990) sees the ZPD as a place for scaffolding, and for the learner to reach his/her potential, the more knowledgeable other must recognize the learner's current stage of development and provide the proper support as he/she moves forward. The views of Bruner and Vygotsky illustrate how an individual learner develops understanding with the help of others. In the college composition classroom, the instructor has the role of the more knowledgeable other, and the student is presumably working to improve his/her writing abilities. To study students' experiences in the classroom, it is important to view the support or instruction given to the individual students. Much instruction given by the professor in the

classroom community is directed to all classroom participants. However, the individual feedback given to students on their written composition provides an opportunity to study the specific feedback given to the individual—the "scaffolding" intended to improve the individual's writing abilities.

Feedback and Evaluation of Writing

The instruction given by teachers to writers as comments on the students' written text constitutes a large part of the teaching of writing in secondary and postsecondary classrooms (Wall & Hull, 1989). Writing teachers produce written remarks to students in the form of marginalia or at the end of a submitted text in an effort to help students improve their writing (Dyson & Freedman, 2003). Because these comments are often the primary, if not the only, language exchange between the student and the teacher, they were a focus of my study. Additionally, these comments have been shown to have an effect on students' confidence as writers (Cleary, 1991; Rose, 1989, Shaugnessy, 1979). Some state that the comments made by the instructor should function to dramatize the presence of a reader and raise questions that the writer may not have considered from a reader's point of view (Knoblauch & Brannon, 1981). This type of feedback, which has been termed "formative evaluation" by Horvath (2000), can be seen as part of a collaborative effort between student and instructor aimed at helping students' writing abilities develop from text to text.

Researchers have found that teachers may teach writing as a process, but their approach to feedback on student writing—one that overemphasized the format of the text over the content of the paper—did not match their pedagogical approach to writing instruction (Cleary, 1991). This type of feedback has been termed "summative evaluation" and focuses on determining a paper's grade and writing comments to justify that grade (Horvath, 2000). A distinction between summative evaluation and formative evaluation is the focus on the text as a finished product and

a judgment or ranking of that product by the instructor, instead of seeing the writing as a draft to be revised where the comments are suggestions, questions, or reminders to the author (Sommers, 1982).

Cleary (1991) found that students valued corrections and suggestions from instructors when they viewed the feedback as part of a collaborative effort to improve a text from a teacher who respected them. Grading, or summative evaluation, had a greater effect on writing confidence than it did on the development of writing ability. In instances where the grading was seen as continued criticism, the writer's intrinsic motivation for writing was destroyed, but when it was perceived as praise, it could make students more willing to complete writing assignments. With in-school writing, the sole audience member must be a grader of the pupil's performance, and this "double-audience" system gives rise to particular tensions (Britton et al., 1975, p. 64). When the instructor evaluates a paper based on the mistakes made by the student, he/she focuses on what that person cannot do, and rather than helping the student improve his/her writing, it may actually cause more student errors (Delpit, 1988; Rose, 1989; Shaughnessy, 1979).

Many researchers have studied the evaluative comments made by instructors who teach writing. There is plenty of evidence that writing instructors often make comments about mistakes in grammar and mechanics (Harris, 1977; Searle & Dillon, 1980). Searle and Dillon (1980) characterized the instructors' responses to writing as either evaluative comments of a general nature, like "good job," or instruction correcting a mechanical error. They found that almost all of the teachers in their study tried to correct all mechanical errors. Fifty-nine percent of the comments in the papers they collected were correcting mechanical errors (p. 64). They suggested that teachers focus on correcting grammatical mistakes because they are the most apparent errors, and they adhere to a previously established standard (p. 64).

Other researchers, like Connors and Lunsford (1993) have discovered that there is a great range of grades or evaluative markings or symbols used by writing instructors. Their analysis of 3,000 college essays revealed how difficult it can be to decipher the grade actually given to a student and how the instructor arrived at that grade (p. 143). They also reported that they were surprised at how many writing samples contained no comments other than the grade for the paper. Overall, they stated that the papers and comments found in their samples revealed a world of teaching writing very different from the theoretical world of composition studies (p. 148).

Because of the importance of feedback to writing as part of students' experiences in school and as part of the development of their writing abilities, the written feedback instructors gave the dual enrollment students was a major part of this study. Exploring these comments and making an effort to decipher whether they were formative or summative evaluation provided insight to the theoretical perspective of the teachers and could have impacted how the students viewed themselves as writers and their writing abilities. Thus, in addition to studying the comments themselves, I also asked the students questions about the feedback they received from their instructors, and their transcribed answers to these questions served as another important part of my study.

Context

The context of the individual learner is of particular importance to learning because it can affect the individual's understanding in myriad ways. Smagorinsky (2001) explains this view of learning by using the Confederate flag as an example. He notes that one South Carolinian viewed the flag as representing honor and courage, while another resident of the same state saw the flag as representative of oppression and segregation. A person who lives outside of the United States may not see the Confederate flag as representing any particular meaning. Using Smagorinsky's example, one can see that individuals can view the same "text" or item as having

different meanings, and these meanings are not interpreted in a vacuum; they are interpreted inside a particular context. Meaning is constructed by the individual within a sociocultural setting, and the context in which this sense-making is done affects the individual's understanding in profound ways (Bruner, 1986). This study's context allowed high school students to take both high school and college course work on a college campus, one of the distinguishing features of this HSDE program. Therefore, a closer look at the meaning and influence of context is warranted.

The complexities of context come not only from the one speaking or writing the utterance and his or her intentions, but the sense made by the audience of that utterance. And any communication act, whether one is speaking or writing, takes place inside particular boundaries related to time and place. That is because, as Lindfors (1999) explains:

> In communication, there is no such thing as "words themselves." There are only words spoken, written, signed, heard, felt, responded to . . . words enmeshed in an intricate web of knowledge and feeling, of "meaning" and "sense" (to use Vygotsky's terms again), of expectations, associations, connections, relationships—all these reverberate in the words when they become utterances. (p. 215)

Lindfors (1999) uses Cole's (1996) notion of the surround context and the weave context to describe the notions of context that are important considerations for understanding the interactions in a classroom. A good metaphor for the context that one can apply to a classroom setting is a golf event, like this year's British Open. Some may think that the "surround" context for this year's British Open is the venue for the event, St. Andrews, and this is true to some extent. However, it is easy to see how the boundaries affecting the "surround" context for this event are not as simple as the golf course itself. The golf course encountered by those who began play in the morning during heavy rains was quite different from the golf course encountered by those who began play in the afternoon, when the rain had stopped and the greens were receptive to approach shots. These weather changes illustrate how the surround context is

impacted not only by the space in which the event occurs, but the time and conditions of the event.

Additionally, the space in which the event occurs is "psychological, drenched in emotion and sense" (Lindfors, 1999, p. 218). In the case of the British Open, several qualities of the event—the fact that it is considered "a major" and is the oldest golf championship in the history of the game, along with the fact that the event was held at St. Andrews, known as "the home of golf"—illustrate how that golf tournament was "drenched in emotion and sense." Making a putt to win the 2010 British Open is far different from making a putt at the end of a round on any other day, even if the location were St. Andrews.

Using this notion of the "surround context" and applying it to my study, one can see that the community college itself and what it may represent, along with the composition classrooms, the individuals participating in class meetings, and the features of class meetings—the time, space, and psychological aspects of the surround context—as well as the possible impact these strands of the surround context have on the students and their learning, are important considerations for this study.

The "weave" concept of context is one that conceptualizes the individual as an active participant, using the strands available in the "surround context" to contextualize fully a particular event (Lindfors, 1999). This understanding of context focuses on the individual and recognizes that each individual brings his or her own set of experiences, expectations, and understanding and, using the boundaries created by the surround, creates the context for the experience anew. Again using the metaphor above, an individual participant in the golfing event uses his own capabilities and past experiences and weaves these together with the surround context to create his own context in the tournament. Specifically, one player may choose to hit a

driver off of the first tee, while another decides it is a better strategy to hit an iron. The decision is one based on the "surround" context—the course, course conditions, weather, import of the shot at a particular time—but one made by the individual who is using his experiences, abilities, and personal strategy to construct his experience.

Applying this idea to my study, the "weave" concept of context describes what the individual members of a classroom bring to the "surround," their experiences and expectations, and how these individuals in turn draw on the "surround" context to create their understandings of and responses to classroom events. The community college context in which the student participants operated is one that differed from the high school classroom the participants had previously been members of, and it was the effect, if any, of this context on these students and their development as writers that I studied, through looking at their academic artifacts and interviewing them and their teachers about their experiences.

Issues Affecting the Classroom Context

The context of the classroom includes the physical setting of the classroom—in the case of my study, the community college campus and the individual classrooms located on that campus—as well as the participants in the classroom. The community college, with its policy of admitting students regardless of college placement test scores and its lower cost of tuition, is an institution that is attended by students with a variety of backgrounds and abilities. These participants and their variety of linguistic experiences were an important consideration for my study.

All members of a classroom community, including the instructor and all student members, bring his/her own language abilities and experiences to the classroom. These languages or abilities consist of the language(s) spoken at home and other languages or language variations, dialects, or styles gained through participation in other speech or discourse communities (Kutz,

1997). For Gee (1999), the language of home is an individual's primary discourse, and the other languages needed for various situations or communities are secondary discourses. In this view, the school is a discourse community, and this secondary discourse may be more or less like the primary discourse of one's home. Gaining this secondary discourse may pose problems for those whose primary discourse is less like the discourse of school (Heath, 1983; Kutz, 1997; Lindfors, 1991). The language of school is more like the language of the dominant group (Smagorinsky, 2001), which for most schools, and particularly postsecondary campuses, is the language of the middle- or upper-middle class. Therefore, students who speak English as a second language or whose home language uses a variation of a "standard" dialect may have a more difficult time acquiring and using language appropriate for school discourse.

Since some students will be faced with acquiring a new variety of language—the standard English of academia—we can expect the process to be one where the writer begins to incorporate the new features of the secondary discourse, while still using some of the features of his/her primary discourse. In other words, as a learner works toward mastering a new variety of English, he/she will not always be able to attend to issues of meaning and form at the same time (Kutz, 1997). As the authority figure in the classroom, teachers must recognize languages of different communities and cultures and not mistake different community languages as indicative of deficiencies in language ability (Heath, 1983; Townsend & Fu, 1998).

The business of education proceeds with the use of language or the discourse of the school. In a classroom, the teachers and students do not often physically encounter what is being studied. Rather, the student encounters these worlds conceptually through language and language use (Bruner, 1986). In a school setting, a student would encounter a concept like democracy through a lecture, perhaps. But this encounter does not ensure anything more than an exposure to an

idea. For students to come to a deep understanding of a concept like democracy, they must not merely encounter the term, but use it in speech acts and negotiate its meaning with others. According to Bruner (1986), learners must actively participate in this discussion, negotiation, or building of conceptual worlds. Complicating this active participation for some students is their possible lack of familiarity or experience with the discourse acceptable for the academic setting. Also, the teacher's stance when using language and discussing concepts can impact student engagement and learning (Bruner, 1986; Lindfors, 1991).

The instructor is the authority figure in the classroom. The teacher is the leader of the learning community in the classroom, and his/her language use and attitude toward learning are important. This stance or perspective taken toward learning and knowledge is one that is revealed, at least in part, through the instructor's use of language (Bruner, 1986; Smagorinsky, 2002). Instructors in educational settings are transmitting their worldviews and how the mind is used in respect to the world when presenting information to students (Kutz, 1997). Stance marking, Bruner (1986) states, can model how one thinks or wonders about a topic by expressing a stance of uncertainty or doubt. A teacher's stance toward a subject can welcome or close his/her students' wondering process. For example, when giving students instruction related to pronoun case, one English instructor may tell his/her students that objective case pronouns like him and her are used when the pronoun is an object, while nominative case pronouns like she and he are used when the pronoun is the subject of a verb. And while there is a grammatical rule regulating correct and incorrect pronoun use, an instructor's stance can invite students to wonder about our language's intricacies and complexities and the myriad of possibilities for expression in writing. For example, another English instructor may use language to invite his/her students to wonder why we have pronouns like him and he or her and she that both denote the same

gender and number. Initiating a conversation by wondering why this particular part of speech changes form in relationship to a change in function illustrates the instructor's interest in the complexities of language. These two instructors may be giving instruction about the same topic, but only one instructor is using a stance that invites his/her students to wonder about some of the intricacies of language.

As mentioned, one of the primary interactions between the teacher and student in a writing class involves the submission of written work to the instructor and the instructor's written feedback to the student regarding his/her writing. Exploring this feedback and the language the instructor used gave me a way to study the participant instructors' stances toward writing and the different possibilities for expression. Additionally, the student participants' comments about writing revealed students' attitudes toward writing as well as students' understanding of which writing is acceptable for academic discourse and which is unacceptable (Samuelson, 2009).

To scaffold student learning effectively, teachers need to foster a dynamic and collaborative interaction with students (Smagorinsky, 2001). To create an atmosphere that fosters collaboration and welcomes the individual learners as important members of the classroom community, the instructor must attend to issues of distance, power, and rank.

When studying politeness and its role in cooperative language use, Brown and Levinson (1987) define power as the status of the addressee and speaker. How much power one has over the other relates to distance—the greater the power, the greater the social distance that exists between the two. When asking a question in a classroom setting, for example, the speaker is imposing his/her interests or ideas on the addressee. How great this imposition is when the speaker attempts to get the addressee to help him/her go beyond his or her present understanding is defined as the rank. It is important to consider power, distance, and rank in the classroom

because these three characteristics are related to the classroom community and whether or not the context welcomes the participation and opinions of all members of the classroom community. In the context of the classroom, a strong and close classroom community where the power, rank, and distance have been reduced works to reduce the imposition of the speaker (Lindfors, 1999). If the power of the addressee is greater than the speaker, then the social distance and rank increase, meaning that the speaker's risk increases. In a classroom setting, the teacher's job is to minimize the risk of the student, and to do this, the teacher needs to use language that illustrates that he/she is one who wonders about language—one who is interested in negotiating meaning (Lindfors, 1999). An instructor can use language that illustrates uncertainty and wondering to create a stance of openness and acceptance of other points of view (Townsend, 1998).

The composition classroom should be a learning community that welcomes diverse participants and diverse points of view. It should be dynamic and engaging, fostering the exploration of ideas and the building of knowledge. To create this rich, welcoming, dynamic learning environment, the instructor must attend to differences in student backgrounds and abilities, as well as issues of rank, power, and distance (Lindfors, 1999). In addition to these challenges, the instructor must also be aware of differences in gender and age.

Research into gender differences regarding students' participation in classroom discourse has demonstrated that, in many American schools, girls do not speak as much or as often, and they are not called on by instructors as often as their male classmates (Sadker & Sadker, 1994; Swann & Gradol, 1994). As Kutz (1997) states,

> Across levels of schooling, girls are called on less frequently than boys, given shorter turns when they are called on, and offered fewer follow-up questions that ask them to extend their thinking and expand on what they've said and engage in the kind of oral reconceptualization that supports real learning. (p. 179)

These findings should concern instructors because they indicate that girls may not be receiving the same access to the same kind of learning experiences that boys receive. Also, this type of inequity in class participation can promote gender inequities in power outside of the school setting (Kutz, 1997).

The participants in my study not only represented different genders, diverse backgrounds, and varying abilities, but in the community college classroom, the HSDE student participants were most often the youngest members of their classroom communities. Age is often privileged with power, and in a large classroom where students may have to assert themselves to participate, some HSDE students may find it intimidating to participate fully with older classmates. In my study, I used interviews with selected students to explore how welcome and comfortable students felt in their classrooms and what activities they engaged in and were asked to participate in by other members of their classroom. To explore student experiences, it was an important part of my study to try to gain insight into how these students, with their varying backgrounds, abilities, experiences, genders, and ages, engaged with other classmates and participated in their classroom communities.

Secondary-Postsecondary Learning Options

There are many different models and programs designed to allow high school students to participate in college classes and earn college credit. Because of the importance of context and its affect on students, it is important to understand the options available for high school students who wish to take college-level course work before being awarded their high school diploma. The American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF) uses the term Secondary-Postsecondary Learning Options (SPLOs) as an umbrella term encompassing the range of options that enable high school students to earn college credit before graduation (Lerner & Brand, 2006). I will also discuss these programs in an effort to describe the program that was studied for this project. Because the

research tries to label the SPLOs as one of the following programs—Singleton Programs, Dual Enrollment Programs, Advanced Placement Programs, Middle College High School Programs, Early College High School Programs, or Comprehensive Programs—it is important to note how the program used for this study compares and contrasts to the most prevalent models for dual enrollment.

Singleton Programs

Many two- and four-year institutions surveyed reported offering college-level classes to high school students but with no formal dual enrollment program (Kleiner & Lewis, 2005). Singleton programs refer to independent electives offered to high school students to introduce them to college-level work (Lerner & Brand, 2006). These classes provide enrichment to the high school course of study and enable students to earn college credit. Singleton programs are generally taught at the high school by high school faculty members. This program is quite different from the one studied for this project because all course work is completed on a high school campus, and the number of hours or amount of credit that a participant can receive is limited.

Dual Enrollment Programs

Dual enrollment programs allow high school students, as well as students who had dropped out but chose to return, to enroll in college-level courses held either on the high school or college campus (Lerner & Brand, 2006). Simultaneously counting as credit toward degrees at both levels, courses can be taught by college or high school faculty. Some innovative programs use teams composed of instructors from both institutions (Jordan, Cavalluzzo, & Corallo, 2006). As the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) survey demonstrates, dual enrollment programs vary widely in content, design, and requirements (Kleiner & Lewis, 2005). While the program used for this study is self-labeled as a high school dual enrollment program, its design is

not identical to the one described above. It does provide high school students an opportunity to take college courses on a college campus, but one of its distinguishing factors is that it also offers students the opportunity to take high school classes on a college campus.

Advanced Placement Programs

Advanced Placement (AP) programs represent a specific type of dual enrollment option, although they are frequently categorized with other programs for research purposes (Lerner & Brand, 2006). Students enrolled in AP programs are offered a wide range of courses spanning 20 subject areas and taught by specially trained high school instructors (Plucker, Chien, & Zaman, 2006). AP programs operate under the supervision of the College Board. At the end of each course, students take a standardized exam that determines whether or not they earn college credit. Most AP students take AP classes on their high school campus, but AP may be offered through independent study or, in some states, over the Internet (Lerner & Brand, 2006). For the purpose of this study, it is important to note that all participants in this study were from schools that offered AP course work. Students must meet requirements set by their district or home high school to participate in AP course work. The students involved in this study either did not meet the requirements for AP course work or chose to attend the dual enrollment program as an alternative way of acquiring college credit.

Middle College High Schools Programs

MCHSs are secondary schools, typically organized for grades 10 - 12, situated on college campuses and designed to provide students from traditionally underserved populations with a rigorous academic program in a highly supportive atmosphere (Born, 2006; Lerner & Brand, 2006). Students enrolled in MCHSs can take full advantage of the facilities available on campus, although it is important to note that not all MCHS students are eligible to participate in college-level course work. What distinguishes the MCHS from the program studied here is that students

who enroll in MCHS programs typically leave their traditional home high school to do so. The program studied in this project actually works with the home high school, allowing students to graduate from the home high school and participate in all high school extracurricular activities.

Early College High Schools Programs

The terms early college high school and middle college high school are sometimes used interchangeably (Plucker et al., 2006). Both MCHSs and ECHSs are generally situated on college campuses and designed to serve disadvantaged or at-risk students. However, ECHSs are actually small high schools organized so that students graduate in four or five years with an Associate in Arts (AA) degree with a sufficient number of credits to enroll in a baccalaureate program as a college junior (Lerner & Brand, 2006). Students begin ECHS programs in ninth grade but usually do not participate in college-level courses until they reach their junior year. While there are qualities of this kind of program that are like the one studied for this project, ECHSs may not be situated on a college campus. Additionally, students may be organized in cohort groups, thus not taking college-level classes with other college students.

Comprehensive Programs

Students enrolled in comprehensive programs take most (or in some cases, all) of the courses needed to complete their high school requirements by enrolling in college-level courses on a college campus (Lerner & Brand, 2006). This option allows students to receive both college and high school credit for taking college courses. Comprehensive programs are similar to Singleton Programs in that the main emphasis is exposing students to challenging college-level academics. Similar to AP programs, most comprehensive programs are aimed at academically talented students.

It is obvious that there is some degree of overlap among all of these programs due to the vast array of models used to provide high school students with opportunities to earn college

credits before graduation. As a fairly new phenomenon, program models are consistently evolving and expanding. But it is important to note that while all of these programs have some feature or features in common with the HSDE program used for this study, none accurately reflect all of the qualities of the study site. In the case of the site studied, the school district and community college worked together to create a program that offers its students another option for gaining college credit while attaining a high school diploma.

High School Dual Enrollment Trends

To investigate the extent and nature of concurrent enrollment participation in the United States, the NCES surveyed a nationally representative sample of Title IV degree-granting postsecondary institutions (Kleiner & Lewis, 2005). Data were based on the number of high school students taking college courses at their campuses during the 2002 - 2003 academic year. The data encompassed students taking courses both within and outside of dual enrollment programs.

In the NCES's survey of approximately 1,600 Title IV degree-granting postsecondary institutions that serve as a representative sample of postsecondary institutions in the 50 states and District of Columbia, more than half of the 1,472 colleges surveyed (57%) reported having high school students taking college-credit courses at their campuses. Among these institutions, 48% offered dual enrollment programs for high school students, while 31% reported high school students taking college courses independent of dual enrollment programs (Kleiner & Lewis, 2005). Virtually all the community colleges (98%) had high school students taking college courses at their campus, compared to 77% of public four-year colleges and only 17% of private four-year colleges. These statistics indicate the prevalence of some type of dual enrollment programs on college campuses throughout the United States.

Numerically, when this survey was completed in 2004, some 813,000 high school students enrolled in college courses, representing approximately 5% of all U.S. high school students (Kleiner & Lewis, 2005). Roughly 680,000 of those students (84%) were participants in dual enrollment programs. More than three-quarters (77%) of the college course participants, whether enrolled in a specific dual enrollment program or taking a class as an individual, took the courses through community colleges. Again, these numbers illustrate the large contingent of students participating in dual enrollment programs—most of whom are taking courses through their local community college.

Community College Dual Enrollment Program Design Trends

Officials from institutions offering dual enrollment were queried about the design of their programs (Kleiner & Lewis, 2005). Two important tends related to my study emerged from this survey of dual enrollment providers. First, community colleges were most likely to offer courses at high school campuses (73%), compared to 47% of public four-year colleges and 28% of private four-year colleges. This proportion is important to note and suggests that the majority of students taking dual enrollment classes through their community colleges will not be involved in the college setting. The largest segment of institutions with dual enrollment programs (48%) reported that high school students typically took one college course per semester, with 14% stating that their policy allowed only one course (Kleiner & Lewis, 2005).

These two trends, colleges offering classes to HSDE students on a high school campus and students enrolling in only one college-level class per semester, were important when looking at the site for this study. First of all, research completed on dual enrollment students, according to this information, would reflect students who primarily are taught on a high school campus and who most often take no more than one or two college classes. This is not the case at this study's

site, which allows high school students to take all of their course work on a college campus and also allows students to take a variable amount of college course work.

The trends for community college programs regarding student participation in dual enrollment are also important to note. According to Kleiner and Lewis (2005), community colleges were somewhat less likely to look at grade point average (GPA) than four-year institutions but far more likely to require that students pass a college placement test (CPT). CPTs were used by 73% of community colleges but only 22% of public four-year colleges and 13% of private four-year colleges. These percentages suggest that students can enter the community college program by meeting standardized testing requirements, allowing students with different grade point averages to participate. This opportunity is quite different from Advanced Placement classes and International Baccalaureate programs. Both of these SPLOs are offered on high school campuses that require particular GPAs for student enrollment. It is also important to note that, in the case of the program studied for this project, the CPT score did not require students to be eligible to participate in college-level work for all areas tested. Students simply needed to be eligible for college-level course work in reading, math, or writing.

Course Participation Trends for Dual Enrollment Students

When interviewed for the community college's League for Innovation's report concerning dual enrollment trends, Salt Lake City Community College President, Lynn Cundiff, noted that English and mathematics were two of the most popular courses with dual enrollment participants (League, 2002). Many students regarded completing these courses during high school as a way of accelerating college graduation, and Cundiff considers this course work in core classes an efficient allocation of state funds because it can eliminate redundancies between high school and college.

White and female students were overrepresented in dual enrollment in Florida (Welsh, Brake, & Choi, 2005). Dual enrollment students also tended to be more affluent than their non-participant peers (Karp, Calcagno, Hughes, Jeong, & Bailey, 2007, 2008). Findings demonstrated that collectively, dual enrollment students had a 4.3% greater chance of graduating from high school than nonparticipants. Furthermore, dual enrollment increased the probability that dual enrollment students overall would attend a baccalaureate institution by 7.7%. Once enrolled, dual enrollment students as a group were 4.5% more likely to persevere to the second semester of college.

Beyond short-term outcomes, dual enrollment students who enrolled in higher education were more likely to persist two years after graduating from high school (Karp et al., 2008). In addition, the dual enrollment participants earned significantly higher cumulative GPAs three years after high school graduation, compared to their peers with no dual enrollment experience. Dual enrollment participants also earned more college credits three years after high school graduation. While conceding that some of these credits were probably earned through dual enrollment, Karp et al.(2008) suggested that the dual enrollment students also earned more credits after becoming matriculated college students.

Data analysis of student demographics suggested that participation in dual enrollment was especially beneficial for males, low-income students, and underperforming students. Karp et al. (2008) found this especially promising because lower income and lower GPAs have been identified as risk factors that make students less likely to graduate from high school. The positive impact of program participation supports the assumption that dual enrollment can help increase postsecondary educational opportunities. While most dual enrollment programs offer college course work on a high school campus, recent research supports the idea that getting high-

risk students into college courses on a college campus as part of a dual enrollment program can increase their chances of successfully completing college (Schaffhauser, 2010).

Case Study Research of HSDE Programs

While there is plenty of information about HSDE programs and quantitative surveys of these programs, there are few qualitative studies of HSDE programs and students. In this section, I will review the few qualitative studies of dual enrollment programs and students.

Jordan et al. (2006) presented detailed case studies of five exemplary sites representing different models of high school/community college dual enrollment programs. At each site, the researchers took a campus tour and engaged in classroom observations, in addition to conducting individual interviews and focus group discussions with various stakeholders, including college faculty, school district and community college administrators, school board members, program directors, guidance counselors, teachers, students, and parents (Jordan et al., 2006). Several features emerged as cornerstones of the successful programs. A unanimous belief was that "establishing a common understanding of the need for the program" was paramount for program success (p. 736). Reducing dropout rates was a major force in creating the program. Other important factors included enhancing the rigor and flexibility of the high school curriculum, expanding students' opportunities to attend higher education, and providing additional options to conventional, comprehensive high schools.

Leadership was the key to the establishment of the programs (Jordan et al., 2006). Top executive support from both the high school and college was deemed crucial to program success, and leaders of both institutions involved in the partnership acted as powerful advocates and problem solvers throughout all stages of program development. Jordan et al. noted that to ensure that each program was properly and fully implemented, "a program director with strong leadership and management skills was put at the helm" (p. 736). Being called on to promote

collaborative action and sustain the support of all stakeholder groups, the program directors were usually experienced veterans who were widely known and respected.

Jordan et al. (2006) used the term "power of the site" to denote the concrete and intangible benefits of situating the program on a community college campus (p. 737). The students enjoyed being in a supportive but challenging learning environment, and teachers commented that the students gained maturity by being in classes alongside college students (p. 744). The teachers also viewed the dual enrollment students as valuable contributors to classroom discussions. High school teachers in the program enjoyed the professionalism and respect they were given on the college campus. Collegiality was a key feature of the five sites. Ranging in size from 125 to 148 students, the small size of each program helped promote the collegial environment or "esprit de corps" among teachers, as well as a familial atmosphere for students (p. 739).

In terms of concrete advantages, Jordan et al. (2006) observed that the students were presented with a wider variety of courses, more sophisticated educational technology, and superior facilities to those in the local high schools. Psychosocial benefits included interacting with a diverse and more mature student body who served as role models for diligent learning. Being immersed in this atmosphere motivated the students to project a mature and responsible image. However, Jordan et al. acknowledged that while most students benefited from the college environment, those involved in the program reported their belief that some dual enrollment participants had difficulties with self-discipline and responsibility and chose to return to their local high schools.

The report suggested that a combination of attributes contributed to the effectiveness of the five dual enrollment programs. In addition to dedicated faculty and administrators and excellent facilities and technology, students in each program had access to an array of support services

(including mentoring) and a carefully designed, challenging curriculum aligned with state standards and targeted to the needs of the specific student population (Jordan et al., 2006). At all five sites, students and teachers commented that teaching in the high school classes surpassed the quality of instruction in conventional high schools. According to the participants' descriptions of their classroom experiences, their HSDE program teachers controlled the learning pace, managed the material covered by the curriculum, and offered more opportunities for an exchange of ideas, especially through class discussion. Students described their assignments as more interesting and aligned with real-world experiences than the assignments they had at their local high schools. Jordan et al. noted that the teachers used a repertoire of strategies to engage students, in particular adapting their teaching to students who were not making good progress. Team teaching was a common strategy, especially at Mott and Contra Costa. Notably, the teams were composed of both high school and college faculty, building on the unique expertise of each team member.

Students and parents both expressed overwhelming support for the program (Jordan et al., 2006). Students described how involvement with the programs altered their attitudes about school and learning, and the parents substantiated their positive accounts. Having tuition-free college credit was a definite benefit for families, although Jordan et al. surmised this was secondary to parents' "new confidence in their child's life chances where previously they had doubts" (p. 745).

While the Jordan et al. study explores the programs themselves, scholarly research exploring students' perceptions of their experience is rare. In the case studies reported by Jordan et al. (2006), students' perceptions were a minor part of their project. The researchers included one quotation from a student attending a middle college program in Nashville: "When I got here,

my whole mind-set about school and people at school and everything just changed" (p. 745). Other than the one quotation, their interviews of students who participated in the programs resulted in a few notes of what the researchers found to be significant themes: students and faculty members noted that often times student behavior became more mature and assimilated to that of a college student; however, the community college campus did not provide enough structure for some students, who reported that they were unable to handle the freedom and returned to their home high schools (pp. 737-738). No specific data regarding the percentage of students who made the above comments, the number of students interviewed, or the percentage who left the programs were given.

In an article written by Nealy (2008) about dual enrollment, one quotation from a student, Grejika Abram, was included. A graduate of the dual enrollment program offered by Neville High School and Louisiana Delta Community College, she commented that her college-level courses "were taught as if we were stepping onto a college campus," describing the courses as "more laid back, more group oriented" than traditional high school classes (p. 1). Abram's experience was used to illustrate an article on the expansion of dual enrollment programs (Nealy, 2008). Her perceptions are consistent with the assumption that dual enrollment provides a context for students to familiarize themselves with the demands and expectations of the first year of college (Bailey, Hughes, & Karp, 2002; Burns & Lewis, 2000; Karp, 2007). However, her course work involved taking classes taught by a college instructor on a high school campus.

Burns and Lewis (2000) observed that school climate is a prominent topic in educational research, but it has never been applied to the study of dual enrollment. Their participants were six dual enrollment students, three who attended college-level classes at their high school and three who attended classes at a community college campus. The four female and two male

students ranged in age from 17 to 19 and had comparable GPAs. The overarching finding was that while all six students had positive perceptions of dual enrollment, those whose courses were taught on the college campus were more satisfied with their experience (Burns & Lewis, 2000). Regardless of the location, the students described their experience with terms such as "fun," "a step up," and "made it easier to switch gears" (p. 6). The students who took the classes on the college campus felt the environment made them more mature and independent. For example, one student commented that students were expected to be on time for classes with no bells or guidance from teachers. The same student admitted that she initially felt intimidated but was "proud" that she confronted her fears about venturing into a new, more adult environment (p. 6). Another student felt no apprehension but rather felt it was "exciting and new" to be surrounded by older role models and felt more at ease because "people talk more freely" (p. 6). He believed his experience provided him with an advantage in entering college because after his dual enrollment exposure, he "won't be scared to take classes" (p. 6).

One student had been involved in dual enrollment on both the high school and college campus (Burns & Lewis, 2000). Declaring that "there is no comparison," she stated, "The course I took at the college was of greater value, clearly" (p. 6). She described the dual enrollment high school class as neither "extremely rewarding and/or rigorous" (p. 6). The main factor distinguishing the two classes appeared to be the student's subjective perception of being part of a college campus. She acknowledged this herself, explaining that:

> There is a certain level of familiarity at the high school. . . . At the college location, I literally felt my concentration increase and was more meticulous with my notes. I guess it doesn't make sense, but I took it more seriously. (p. 6)

Whether or not it "makes sense" objectively, attending classes at the college clearly had a psychological impact. The two other students who took classes at the community college campus agreed that they felt more responsible for their learning experiences and consequently

put more effort into their work. Burns and Lewis (2000) viewed their study as a preliminary investigation into the role of school climate on dual enrollment students' experiences. At the present time, however, this line of research does not appear to have been carried further.

Smith (2007) surveyed 304 students from high schools in rural Kansas regarding their educational aspirations and the influence of program location on their experience. The most important finding was that involvement in dual enrollment had a pronounced positive impact on their educational aspirations. In fact, participation in dual enrollment had a more powerful impact on their educational ambitions than their academic grades or parents' educational levels. This finding supports the assertion that dual enrollment and other high school-college linkages are especially advantageous for students from groups historically underrepresented in higher education (Bailey et al., 2002; Hoffman, 2003; Hunt & Carroll, 2006; Kim, 2006; Plucker et al., 2006). However, the most striking finding was that students who took dual-credit courses on a college campus expressed higher educational aspirations than those who took the same courses at their high schools (Smith, 2007).

While these studies note the importance of the location of the dual enrollment classes, none of them attempted to discuss the impact the location might have on students completing specific course work. Because of the social nature of language learning, one might expect the site or context to impact the learner. The site used for this study offered an opportunity to study the students taking classes on a college campus and allowed them to describe how the location of the classes impacted their experiences as composition students.

Qualitative Methods and Case Studies

Quantitative research methods are effective tools for answering questions about things that can be directly measured and observed (Glesne, 1998). When studying complex behaviors or phenomena, qualitative research methods, like open-ended questioning, field observations, and

case studies, may be used to view what is being studied in its real-life context (Glesne, 1998). In this project, I wanted to study the experiences of high school dual enrollment students taking a college composition course on a college campus. In other words, the phenomena I wanted to study had many overlapping pieces. I wanted to get the perspectives of the students themselves about the dual enrollment program that they were participating in and the community college that houses the dual enrollment program. When studying these students as learners in a composition course, I needed to study their writing and gain insight into the composition class, as well as the professors teaching the course. Thus, a qualitative study allowed me to use a variety of techniques to gather information about phenomena that cannot be directly observed or measured.

Study Design and Rationale

The case study method is a method of qualitative research that looks closely at a phenomenon and studies it without separating it from the context in which it occurs (Dyson & Genishi, 2005; Yin, 1981). Case studies use many sources of evidence, and the data represent what is being studied (Dyson & Genishi, 2005; Yin, 1981). A case study is an examination of what Birnbaum, Emig, and Fisher (2003) call a bounded system—the case is fixed in time and place and has restrictions, such as the event, person, or action that is focused on (p. 192).

I chose the case study method because it allowed me to study individuals and their perspectives. To study only the individual components of the setting—the school or the teachers or classroom—would be misleading because an individual's reactions to these variables give us insight into their impact. Also, each individual brings his or her way of being to the classroom, and all of these components have an impact on the student's experience. It is by studying the individual that I hoped to be able to study the intersection between the school context and the experience of the individual. By employing case study methods like semistructured interviews of student and nonstudent participants in the program, as well as artifact collection and analysis,

I made an effort to try to separate the individual experiences from the whole. Indeed, inside each classroom the individual members participating in the classroom activities bring their own individual experiences and abilities to bear on the happenings inside the classroom. Each of these individuals in the classroom is then meshed with the other individuals to create the context (Lindfors, 1999). And it is this context that affects the individual learner. A good metaphor for this interaction is a chorus. Each individual voice is unique, and the individual voices affect the sound created by the whole chorus. In addition, the venue would affect the choral performance, just as the classroom, its physical configuration and location, and in this case, the high school dual enrollment program itself, can affect the proceedings of the class and the actions of the individual learners.

The goal of a case study is to present a holistic and lifelike description, something that might resemble what readers normally encounter in their experiences of the world (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and in this study I want to give readers as complete a description as possible of what high school dual enrollment students experience when participating in a dual enrollment program and taking college composition on a college campus.

CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

In this study, I explored high school dual enrollment students' experiences in a freshman composition course. The methods used to study and describe students' experiences are descriptive and interpretive. I began this process with a pilot study that helped me refine my approach for my dissertation study. In this chapter I will describe selection of the site and my participants, the pilot study, the collection of data, and the methods I used to analyze that data.

Selection of Site

I wanted to study the experiences of high school dual enrollment (HSDE) students taking college composition classes on a college campus; thus, my research was site-specific (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 60). I needed to find an appropriate, well-established HSDE program. Also, when engaging in qualitative research, Patton (2002) suggests the researcher think about his/her role in the setting as a part of a continuum. The researcher can be fully situated in the setting, as a full participant who goes about ordinary life in a role in the setting, or he/she can be situated in the setting as a non-participating observer. One advantage to having some level or participation in the setting is that the researcher can build important relationships and have access to information a complete observer would not (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 73).

It seemed appropriate for me to use the HSDE program in which I had been involved for many years as an instructor as the site for my study. This site had been used by other qualitative researchers studying best practices of dual enrollment programs (Jordan et al., 2006). Also, because of my involvement in the program, relationship with others who worked in the program and on the college campus, and relationship to students in the program, I was able to gain the access and information needed for a study of the experiences I wished to observe. Finally, because this HSDE program had been in existence on this campus for over 30 years, I was able

to study a well-established program with well-established practices. And because this program has been operating in the same community for such a long period of time, it is well-known by students and attracts a wide range of applicants and participants throughout the county that it serves.

Setting for Study

The setting for this study is on the campus of a community college. The HSDE program used for this study began at this location in 1974. The HSDE program began as a collaborative effort between the local school board and the community college. The dual enrollment program is well-established on the community college campus as it had been operating there for 35 years. The HSDE program that served as the site for this study was one of the first sites in the nation to have high school students full-time on a college campus. Some participants in the program take all college courses as part of the regular college offerings; others mix community college courses with high school courses taught on the college's campus by college faculty who are also state-certified to teach high school courses.

Attending classes full-time on campus is only one of the features that distinguish the program from other dual enrollment programs. This dual enrollment program serves a wider range of students than the AP courses or International Baccalaureate program offered to the high school students in this school district because it is available to Fine Arts and Technology and Applied Science students, as well as the academically gifted. The program offers a unique plan of study that allows students to excel in their areas of strength, progress with other high school students in other academic areas, and even remediate their skills in college prep courses. Hence, students with lower college-level placement scores are enrolled in some subject areas to proceed in college work, even while they are completing their high school preparation in other academic subjects on campus, so that transportation and scheduling conflicts are minimized.

The HSDE program serves approximately 500 high school juniors and seniors. Students who want to attend the program must apply for entrance. The selection process is completed by the program's counselors and the program's director. To meet the minimum qualifications for the program, students must have passed the state's comprehensive assessment test, a test that is required for graduation from high school, and at a minimum, achieved a score on the college placement test (CPT) that places them in college preparatory math, reading, and writing classes. They are enrolled in one of three full-time, college-based programs: Technology and Applied Science, Fine Arts, or College Academic. Each of these programs allows high school juniors and seniors to earn dual credit for taking college courses that also fulfill high school requirements. In addition to these college-level courses, students may take high school courses on the community college's campus that will meet requirements for their high school graduation. HSDE students are able to participate in any of the functions or activities at their home high schools, while being given all of the rights and privileges of community college students. For public school students, all costs of tuition, books, and supplies are waived.

Students participating in the HSDE program are not identified on the community college campus in any clear way as high school students. They take classes, whether at the college- or high-school level, in the same buildings and classrooms where full-time college students take classes. They are placed in college classes with other full-time college students, and instructors of those classes are not aware that high school students are enrolled until the HSDE counselor of the enrolled student asks them about the student's midterm progress. This progress report is solicited for every HSDE student enrolled in a college-level course.

This particular setting was appealing for my study because it had a well-established program, it had a large number of possible participants, and it allowed students of a wide range of abilities and backgrounds to participate in its program.

Pilot Study

To explore students' experiences and pursue a pilot study for my dissertation, I decided to interview two high school dual enrollment students in-depth, one currently taking the first college-level English course, ENC 1101, and a student who failed her first attempt at ENC 1101, about their perceptions of the usefulness of the feedback given to them on written assignments, their understanding of the nature of the tasks they were to complete, and what they believed they had learned in the class. Both students had the same college instructor. I then interviewed the college instructor about her perceptions of the two students and their writing abilities and her evaluations of their written work. My question became one of looking at the different experiences that these two students had in their college composition course and the sense that they made of the feedback they were given by their instructor. In spite of the fact that both students had similar scores on the CPT, the instrument used to place incoming students in courses at the college, their course outcomes and experiences were quite different.

Pilot Study Participants

Professor Sands

To ensure that this professor participant was given anonymity, she was given a pseudonym. This instructor teaches College Composition I (ENC 1101), Writing about Literature (ENC 1102), Advanced Composition (ENC 2301), and Poetry Writing (CRW 2300). She received her Bachelor of Arts in English from a four-year college and her Master of Arts degree in English from a Division I university. She had worked at the community college for 13

years. She spent the first three of those years working as an adjunct professor but was then hired as a full-time instructor and at the time of the study held the title of Professor of English.

Student participants

To ensure that both student participants were given anonymity, they were assigned pseudonyms. The first participant will be called Lynn, and the second participant will be referred to as Shirley.

Lynn

Lynn, when she agreed to participate in my pilot study, was a high school junior in her second semester of the dual enrollment program. When she first applied to the dual enrollment program, she was given the CPT and scored a 94 on the reading portion and 103 on the sentence skills portion. The college has determined that scores between 83 - 120 on the reading portion and 83 - 120 on the sentence skills portion are required for a student to be placed in college-level English courses. These scores meant that Lynn was able to enroll in college-level English, even though it was her first semester on campus. Lynn, after talking to her counselor, decided to take College Composition I (ENC 1101) in the fall semester. Lynn did not receive a passing grade in her ENC 1101 class.

Shirley

Shirley, when she participated in this study, was a high school senior in the dual enrollment program. Although classified a senior, she was sixteen years old. When she applied to the program and was given the CPT, she scored an 85 on the reading test and a 105 on the sentence skills test. Even though she was eligible to take college-level English courses, her dual enrollment counselor felt that her relatively low but passing score on the reading test made her a better candidate for high school course work. She was placed in high school courses for all of

her junior year and the fall semester of her senior year. She completed ENC 1101 in the spring of her senior year of high school with an A average.

Pilot Study Findings

My first findings concerned the instructor's method of assigning student compositions and providing guidance to students as they composed an essay. For each in-class written assignment, Professor Sands handed out an explicit, two-page explanation of the topic, how to prepare prior to class, and what to do in class. She also prescribed a length and form, even going so far as to explain how to introduce the subject, write the thesis statement, branch into 2 - 4 sections, create topic sentences, develop paragraphs, and conclude the essay. For out-of-class writing assignments, she handed out similar 2 - 3 page explicit assignments outlining acceptable topics, deadlines, form, and suggestions for how to start the paper. She also included a section that explained how she would evaluate the paper and what the minimum requirements were (Appendix A).

This type of explicit assignment may counteract what Professor Sands intends. In her interview she stated that she wanted to be "more direct about what was expected on the assignments." However, instead of providing guidance, the handouts were limiting and reinforced the idea that students had little agency in their writing. Rather, composing an essay required strict adherence to rules and was completed for the purpose of the instructor's evaluation.

My second finding was that an instructor's method of evaluating written essays may not be understood or helpful for each student. Professor Sands had a grading method used to give feedback to students about their written assignments. On each written assignment, the instructor placed numbers or even terms like "glos" in the left-hand margin of the paper. These numbers noted that a grammatical mistake has been made on the line corresponding to the number. The

number also represented a chapter in the student's grammar handbook, where the error was explained. For example, the number 32 corresponded to a handbook section titled "The Comma." This chapter covered pages 426 - 444 and was divided into sections labeled 32a - 32j. The number written in the left-hand margin did not designate which section the student had to read to get instruction on his/her particular mistake. On one of Shirley's papers, for example, the number 32 was placed in the left margin next to the sentence "And according to Dr. Cain animals are very faithful." The instructor also inserted a comma after "Dr. Cain." The student was then expected to look through chapter 32, discover that the section she needed to read was 32b, "Use a comma after an introductory clause or phrase," and get the necessary instruction needed to correct her mistake.

The student who received this instruction and was making an A in the course said that she made sense of this instruction and she believed it helped her (researcher referred to as AB):

Shirley: I think that helps because I go back and look at it? And, sometimes I read the sections?

AB: Sometimes you don't?

Shirley: Yeah. She's like, sometimes when you, when you've already read it, you know and then to go back and read it again is just . . . because she puts these out here it's good because I actually go to the section all the time and see what exactly like, the category I had wrong was.

AB: The number corresponds to a chapter or to a, an actual section so, which of the two?

Shirley: A chapter.

AB: A chapter. So, let's say you had a, you were missing a comma in front of a, a conjunction, um, and you needed to put it there because it was a compound sentence. Would it say that or would you have to figure it out from the chapter?

Shirley: I'd have to figure it out from the chapter.

AB: But that's not a problem for you?

Shirley: Sometimes, very rarely. Not really. Sometimes very rarely she'll put the section number there too? Like, the letter? But usually she just puts the main chapter and we have to go back and figure it out.

Lynn had different feelings about the usefulness of these numbers in the margins of her papers:

Lynn: I'd look at the numbers but, I'd, didn't want to, have to look up, the, book, page, chapter, number, for, every single number. Especially when, you have like, like four, three numbers per sentence.

AB: Right. Did you start out trying to look at the Bedford Handbook and look at the chapter? Like the first paper you did?

Lynn: Yeah. I did, but.

AB: When do you think you stopped?

Lynn: After the first one because there's like, so many ones, it's just, plus like, but it says that like, it will tell you what to do but it won't tell you why what you did is wrong, so, I can't really tell why, what I did was wrong, so.

In contrast to Shirley's experience, the numbers in the margin seemed to have only frustrated Lynn. She seemed to have started the class hoping to gain some information by following through with the instructions given because she made an effort after her first paper to get information from the book chapters. She clearly seemed to have been overwhelmed by the number of chapters referenced in her papers. She remembered the process as having to look up "three or four numbers per sentence."

My third finding was about the interaction of the professor and the students. While this professor intended to support student learning and be seen as approachable by her students—she noted in her interview that she tried "lots of different tricks to get more students to come in to office hours" and "announced to them that they can have free consultations with their instructors"—she was not viewed that way by both students. Another part of my interview of the

instructor concerned her perception of the two students and how they were receiving and putting her feedback to use. When asked about the "A" student, Shirley, the instructor responded:

> Um, so with hers I was able to give lots of positive feedback as well. Seems less of like a chore, for her, probably to make revisions. Um, she all seems to be positive. Um, asks the questions that, you know other people have questions about.

This response reveals that Professor Sands was aware that giving positive feedback on student papers may affect the outcome. She also noted that it was easier for a student with fewer grammatical mistakes to make revisions on papers, and since Shirley had a greater knowledge of grammar, it was easier for her to make sense of the instruction from *The Bedford Handbook*. All of this positive feedback from the instructor made Shirley feel good about her writing—that it was a rewarding experience for her; thus, she was more likely to ask questions in class. Her willingness to participate was well-received by the instructor, as indicated by her response that this student is "all positive."

There were several differences revealed, however, when Professor Sands was asked about Lynn, the student who did not pass her class:

> Lynn on the other hand, would get, and I don't know if it's because of the numbers, or and you can see I'm even doing it this was a little bit of a, a different rubric. This was from the in class essays, um, and maybe because, there's less, feedback here, the number stands out. She left a note, I think it frustrated her. Maybe just didn't even look at the number just [sighs], it's not as, as much of an improvement. She went, from the very first one, and there she kinda leveled off.

First of all, the instructor noted that the numbers in the left-hand margin of the paper could have been off-putting for Lynn. She also said that she gave her "less" feedback, so this student, the one who was not doing as well and could perhaps use more guidance, had to rely on the number related to the rubric's chart. Professor Sands believed this process frustrated her. In her interview she stated, "maybe because it was a very frustrating experience that maybe kinds of comments would make her very defensive, perhaps and uh, less likely to want to improve."

While this professor noted Lynn's reaction to the grading, she did not directly speak to the student about the student's obvious level of frustration. The student's progress did not show significant improvement, an indication that the feedback was not helping, but again, it appeared as if the instructor did nothing to intervene. In fact, the instructor noted in the interview that when this student began to use the accommodations made available to her through student services, her grades improved. This improvement, she said, was a result of the student being allowed to use the computer's spell-check. This comment revealed several things. First, the instructor said she was aware that her feedback did not help the student, but the extra time and use of a computer did help. Secondly, the instructor equated an improvement in mechanics with an improvement in writing. She did not make similar notice of the student's organization or tone or use of examples or paragraph development. It seemed that the instructor acknowledged that this student did not pass the class because of the number of grammatical and spelling errors that she made.

The results of my pilot study encouraged me because I felt that the study demonstrated that there was much to explore about the high school dual enrollment students' experiences in college composition. The results also helped me create the design for the larger study. After reviewing the pilot study results, I wanted to enlist more student and professor participants so that I would be able to study a wider range of experiences. Also, because students who struggle academically in their home high schools are often underrepresented in dual enrollment or gifted programs, I hoped to study those students. Instead of gathering information at just one point in the semester, as I did in my pilot study, I decided to interview students at several points during the semester, and these interviews gave me an opportunity to ask additional questions about other aspects of the students' experiences. This wider view would give me opportunities to ask questions more

than once and track their experiences. Additionally, I hoped that I would be able to study students' written and graded essays. Although I collected graded essays during my pilot study, I had not budgeted the time required to analyze the feedback given from the professor. The dissertation study gave me time to analyze the papers from the student participants as well as the papers gathered during the pilot study.

Selection of Student Participants for Dissertation Study

I made an effort in my dissertation study to enlist student participants who represented a range of developing abilities and backgrounds—those who struggled a bit with school achievement so that their grades or test scores might preclude them from more traditional dual enrollment options and/or those students who were underserved by the traditional dual enrollment options like Advanced Placement classes or the International Baccalaureate programs.

I decided to conduct my dissertation study in the spring semester, as I had my pilot study. This choice allowed me to study participants who did not test into college-level English in the fall, but were able to use this HSDE program to improve their skills in a high school English class over a semester, albeit on the college campus, before enrolling in a college-level English course.

In an effort to engage in "purposeful sampling" (Birnbaum et al., 2003) and gather information from a variety of perspectives, I invited all HSDE students enrolled in ENC 1101 during the spring semester to participate in my study. I did this near the end of the fall semester by identifying, with the help of the HSDE counselors, all students who planned to enroll in ENC 1101 during the spring semester. I then asked the counselors and fellow instructors to give these students a parental permission slip and volunteer form, both of which had been approved by my university's Institutional Review Board. Of the roughly 30 HSDE students who enrolled in ENC

1101 during the spring semester, seven agreed to be part of the study and returned their signed permission slips/volunteer forms to me. I then scheduled an initial interview for all of the willing participants. This interview was to take place at the end of the fall semester. All seven students responded to the interview request, and transcripts of those interviews formed part of the database for the dissertation.

These seven students represented a range of developing student abilities, past academic success, and student engagement in school (Table 3-1).

Table 3-1. Student participants of study

Participant name	Gender	Race	Reason for entering HSDE	Academic challenges	Class outcome
Alex	M	Black-Haitian	Parents / Academic Rigor	ESL Student / Low CPT	B
Bob	M	Caucasian	Academic Rigor	Low CPT	A
Ethel	F	African-American	Leave H.S. Environment	Single Mother / Low CPT	C
Joe	M	Caucasian	Academic Rigor	Low CPT	Unknown
Maylen	F	Caucasian	Leave H.S. Environment	Failed FCAT / Low CPT	B
Renaldo	M	African-American	Parents / Academic Rigor	Low CPT	B
West	M	Caucasian	Academic Rigor	Academic Challenges	Unknown

Instructor Participants for Dissertation Study

Because I wished to gather as much information from as many different perspectives as possible, I also asked all of my participants' professors to participate in my study. I was able to interview three full-time English professors on the community college campus. One of these

professors was the instructor for three of the student participants. I received e-mail communication from another professor and no communication from one professor.

To create rapport and encourage their participation, I tried to contact each instructor in person by visiting his or her office during the professor's office hours. This initial contact was made near the end of the fall semester, before my study, (during week 12 of the 16-week semester). This date was chosen because I wanted to have enough time to schedule an interview with each professor during the following semester, but did not want to reveal to the professors that their students were HSDE students earlier than necessary. From my experience working on this campus, I had anecdotal evidence of college instructors expecting different behavior from HSDE students. I tried to meet each professor in his/her office during office hours so that I could explain my project in person. I also brought participant volunteer forms that had been approved by the university's Institutional Review Board, which explained the project and commitment of time needed for the volunteers. Because I wanted the instructors to participate at the end of the semester, I knew that the amount of time required in an interview would be of concern to them. Thus, I asked each instructor to commit to one semistructured interview. I submitted the five general interview questions to the professors when I met with them in their offices.

I successfully met four of the five instructors. (All names used to refer to instructors or any other participants in the study are pseudonyms used to protect participants' identity.) One instructor, Professor Stricker, did not respond to e-mail or phone messages and was unable to be reached during office hours. It should be noted that this instructor split his time teaching at two of the community college's four campuses. Thus, his time and office hours on the main campus were limited. I was never able to contact this professor; therefore, he was not a participant in the

project. The other four professors were contacted and agreed to participate. After they all signed consent forms, I tried to schedule each for an interview.

Data Collection Methods

Data Collection

My data were qualitative and resulted from semistructured interviews of the students and professors, and the artifacts or written work the students completed during the semester. My data collection methods consisted of: (a) Information gathered through semistructured interviews with students. I interviewed each student in the pilot study once, and in the dissertation study, I conducted four interviews with each of the seven student participants. As a result of attrition, only five participants completed all four interviews for the study. I transcribed and analyzed a total of 24 student interviews. (b) The assigned writing that students completed in their ENC 1101 class (some of this work included prewriting or rough drafts). Overall, I analyzed the feedback professors gave to students and the grading marks in the text for 24 student essays. (c) Information gathered through semistructured interviews with college professors about their experiences with the HSDE participants taking their college classes. I transcribed and analyzed four of these semistructured interviews with instructors, and I analyzed one e-mail correspondence. (d) Recorded information in my field journal before and after interviews with participants. I used a field journal to note dates and times of interviews, participants' reactions to the transcribed interviews, and other aspects of the interviews with participants that might not have been clear through the transcription of the interview.

Research Questions

1. What are the contextual features of a High School Dual Enrollment (HSDE) program that influence students' school achievement?
   Data sources: student interviews, counselors' information, personal background knowledge as a former instructor in the HSDE program, student participants' transcripts

2. What opportunities and feedback are high school students provided to develop their writing abilities in a college composition course?
   Data sources: professor interviews, graded writing, student interviews, writing assignments/class artifacts, including handouts, syllabi, grading rubrics

3. What is the nature of the intersection/interaction of selected high school students and college instructors in a college composition course?
   Data sources: student interviews, graded writing, professors' interviews, class artifacts/writing assignments

Interviews with Student Participants

The first round of interviews was completed at the end of the fall semester. These initial semistructured interviews helped me get acquainted with the students and their reasons for enrolling in college composition course and explore their backgrounds and experiences as writers. A specific example of the kinds of questions posed to student participants during our initial meeting follows: What prompted you to enroll in ENC 1101 in the spring semester? Did you have any advice from counselors, parents, other students, and if so, what was their advice? Questions like these also helped me introduce the study to the participants and acclimate them to the process of meeting me for interviews and submitting written work. After the first interviews were completed, I began transcribing them. This transcription and then reading the transcriptions allowed me to notice themes, recognize similarities, or form questions for the next interview. This type of data gathering and analysis is representative of the beginning of what Schatzman and Strauss (1973) call an analytic strategy (p. 108). It allowed me, for example, to notice early on that all participants mentioned being separated from their friends who still attended their home high schools. This information allowed me to consider the emotional dimension of attending an HSDE program on a community college campus. This aspect also made me wonder whether or not these students still considered themselves high school students and led to several questions about their academic identities in the second and subsequent interviews.

As a part of our interview routine, I conducted member checks (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) by summarizing the subject of our previous interview and asking them if these summaries were accurate. I also brought copies of transcribed interviews to each subsequent interview so that I could ask a student to clarify any part of the transcription that I may not have understood or heard from the tape recording. If differences in summaries or understanding occurred, I noted those in my journal and asked students to clarify or expand on their answers, when possible.

Professor Interviews

I conducted semistructured interviews in person in the professors' offices at a time that was convenient to them. During the interviews, I asked the professors to answer questions like the following: 1.What is your assessment of the student's ability to perform in this class? 2. Do you believe the student understands the assignments and feedback given? I conducted three such interviews with three professors. The fourth professor was not interviewed in person because she did not agree to a meeting time with me. This instructor was an adjunct professor. As a result, her office hours were limited, and she did not seem interested in extending them or meeting at another time. Rather than abandon an attempt to get information from this professor about the student participant, I decided to ask the professor to correspond by e-mail or phone, and the professor agreed to respond to questions via e-mail.

One of the professors who agreed to participate in the spring study was also the professor for the two students in the pilot study. Thus, for one professor I had two interviews. The willingness of this professor to meet with me and answer questions not just about her students but also about her pedagogy gave me a rare opportunity to gain insight into her methods regarding feedback and course design.

Written Artifacts

The essays written by the students served as another important part of the data I collected. These essays were written by the HSDE students, and all of these writings were responses to assignments given by their professors. This writing was evidence of the tasks the students were asked to complete and their developing skills and abilities as writers. Additionally, these essays allowed me to view and explore the evaluation of that writing ability by the professors and to query the students about their impact on their sense of success and understanding of their learning.

Because these students were all enrolled in separate classes or sections of ENC 1101, the number and type of assignments submitted to me varied for each student. Also, submission of the written work was voluntary, so while some participants, like Bob, submitted all assigned and graded work, Ethel, Maylen, and Alex submitted only two graded papers. The other participants fit somewhere in the middle of the spectrum. Overall, I collected two samples from Alex, four samples from Bob, two samples from Ethel, seven samples from Lynn, two samples from Maylen, four samples from Renaldo, and four samples from Shirley.

Data Analysis Procedures

To analyze my transcribed interviews and written artifacts, I organized, synthesized, interpreted, and searched for patterns (Glesne, 1998; Lincoln & Guba 1985). Early generative analysis was done while collecting my data, allowing me to reflect on the information I gathered, generate new interview questions, and organize my preliminary findings. This early analysis included my notes in a reflective journal, looking for developing themes in interviews. I made these notes in an effort to make sure that I kept track of my developing thoughts and in an effort to prevent losing any information (Glesne, 1999). This early analysis also led me to develop codes and to organize and categorize information. This information helped me shape the study

and clarify my focus. This constant comparative process was recursive and continued to be used as I drafted my results.

Analysis of Interviews

As stated, I transcribed my interviews after each interview and before the subsequent interview. I typed the transcribed interviews and saved them as Microsoft Word™ files. I kept printed hard copies of my transcribed interviews in a notebook. I carefully read and re-read these interviews as they were completed and made initial notes as the study progressed. After all interviews were transcribed, I re-read them and looked for emerging themes or patterns. I noted these patterns in the margins or on the hard copies of the transcribed interviews. I then proceeded to organize these themes in emerging categories. I created the categories/themes for each participant. For example, in the first interview, when asked about why she wanted to take the college-level course, one participant stated, "I'm ready for the challenge, for anything." In my initial analysis this comment was coded as attitude, as it represented her attitude about facing a potential academic challenge. As the interviews progressed, all of my participants gave many responses that expressed attitudes about writing, assigned tasks, and grades in the interview data. As my analysis proceeded, I recoded the statement attitude toward course to resilient attitude toward academic challenge and belief in self. These coded statements were then placed in the emotional dimension category under the general theme of context about the contextual features of a HSDE program that influence school achievement. See Appendix B for a sample printed transcript.

This method of reading through printed transcripts, looking for emerging themes, and making notes in Microsoft Word™ documents and journals, then coding these themes, continued throughout the study. I was then able to look at potential similarities and patterns among my

participants. From analyzing the transcribed interviews with students, I identified seven categories:

- students' feelings about their progress as writers;
- students' reactions to and feelings about their professors;
- students' feelings about professors' feedback on essays and grading;
- students' sense of personal agency and inquiry;
- students' feelings about context and being in classes with college students;
- students' views of the impact of college and high school course work; and
- students' views of the influence of HSDE counselors.

Analysis of Graded Essays

Because I also wanted to explore the feedback given to the students, I began my analysis by reviewing the comments made by professors in the text of the papers. Themes or commonalities that I found in the professors' comments helped me create four categories of response (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The four categories I identified based on the commonalities found when analyzing the professors' comments were (a) grammar / editing, (b) sentence / wording, (c) content, and (d) positive feedback. Each comment was then coded into one of the four categories (Table 3-2). For example, in one of the papers, the professor circled the word "it" and wrote "ref" in margin. This pronoun reference error was initially coded grammar. After noting all of the comments made, this category became grammar / editing while comments like a professor's suggestion by writing in the margin "would be good to add a quote for proof" in response to one of the student's sentences was coded content. It was difficult to put all comments in one category. Often, professors made marks on papers and circled words or added words with no explanation. For example, a professor underlined the word "compassion"

in a student essay and wrote “empathy” above. This type of change was coded as sentence / wording because it was not a grammatical mistake, but it seemed to be a word or structure that the professor disliked. Often, as was the case here, the professor made no note of why the word “empathy” would be a better choice for the essay. For a sample of the process of analysis of student assignment, paper, and in-text comments, see Appendix C.

Table 3-2. Sample instructor comments and their corresponding categories

Comment	Category
Professor circled “alot”	Grammar / editing
Professor circled “extreamly” and wrote “sp.”	Grammar / editing
Professor added the word “against” to the sentence but no explanation given	Sentence / wording
Professor underlined “would not take anything from them” and wrote “weak diction”	Sentence / wording
Professor wrote “this paragraph needs clearer focus”	Content
Professor wrote “these details are off topic”	Content
Professor wrote “strong opening” in right margin	Positive feedback
Professor wrote “good details” in right margin	Positive feedback

Researcher Bias

As an instructor in the HSDE program for over 13 years, I was a subjective investigator. It was necessary, during the course of the study, to guard against allowing my positive feelings about the program to color the underlying data that I collected. Even so, my years of work with the HSDE program allowed me greater access to HSDE personnel, participants, and records than if I had studied a program with which I had no affiliation. I also had student participants in the study who had been students of mine before they agreed to be participants. While I had to make sure that I did not allow this previous experience to create an untoward bias, I believe that my rapport with the participants promoted their frank disclosure of ideas and experiences.

As a safeguard against undue influence by my own biases, I kept a reflective journal chronicling my experiences in the process of data collection and the study overall. I also used

triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) by collecting data from different sources and member checks to ensure the validity of transcribed interviews.

CHAPTER 4
RESULTS

Dissertation Study

After completing the pilot study, I wanted to extend my research to include a range of participants and abilities in an effort to get a glimpse of as many different experiences and perspectives as possible. Also, the additional time allowed me to investigate further the graded student essays I had gathered during my pilot study and include them in my dissertation study.

Table 4-1. Student participants in study

Participant name	Gender	Race	Reason for entering HSDE	Professor pseudonym	Class outcome
Alex	M	Black Haitian	Parents / Academic Rigor	Prof. Smith	B
Bob	M	Caucasian	Academic Rigor	Prof. Hanson	A
Ethel	F	African American	Leave HS Environment	Prof. Stricker	C
Joe	M	Caucasian	Academic Rigor	Not Reported	Unknown
Lynn (pilot study)	F	Caucasian	Parents / Academic Rigor	Prof. Sands	F
Maylen	F	Caucasian	Leave HS Environment	Prof. Casey	B
Renaldo	M	African American	Parents / Academic Rigor	Prof. Sands	B
Shirley (pilot study)	F	Arab American	Parents / Academic Rigor	Prof. Sands	A
West	M	Caucasian	Academic Rigor	Not Reported	Unknown

Students' Backgrounds Prior to Entering HSDE Program

Alex. Alex, a Black Haitian male, was an 18-year-old high school senior when he agreed to participate in my research project. His parents moved to Florida from Haiti, and he had only attended school in the states for one year before he began participating in the HSDE program. In his one year attending high school in Florida, he was placed in the high school's ESL program, which meant that he took his English class with other students who spoke English as a second

language. When he joined the dual enrollment program, he took a 12th grade high school English class in the fall semester with other dual enrollment participants, none of whom spoke English as a second language, before entering a college freshman composition course in the spring semester. The college composition course was a course designed for ESL students.

I found Alex to be a friendly young man who was quick to smile when we met, but his answers to my questions were often short. In our four interviews, Alex only had ten responses that, when transcribed, took up more than two lines of text, and not one of his responses was longer than three lines of single-spaced, 12-point font text. Like many of the other students, Alex was encouraged to attend the program by his parents, who wanted him to leave his high school and attend the community college. He said, "I think it was an advantage to possibly get high school and college credit at the same time."

Bob. When I began interviewing Bob, a Caucasian male, he was a high school junior who had just enrolled in ENC 1101 for the spring term. He was a driven student, highly motivated and successful, if judging by his grade point average (a 4.0 before entering the program, and a 3.75 while taking 6 hours of college courses and 3 high school courses during the fall semester of his junior year, the first semester he participated in the HSDE program). Before attending the dual enrollment program on the community college campus, Bob had attended a laboratory school located in his school district. He had heard that this school would be a challenge academically. However, he reported that it was not as much of a challenge as he had hoped. During our first interview, when asked why he had chosen to attend the dual enrollment program, he stated:

> For a challenge. I heard [his home high school] was going to be really—I went to [his home high school]; I heard it was going to be really strict, and disciplinary, and hard, but it really wasn't. It was easy, and I needed a challenge.

Bob reported that his grade point average at his home high school was a 4.0. In spite of that, Bob did not pass the writing portion of the College Placement Test (CPT); thus, he was not eligible to enroll in college English classes. After one semester of the dual enrollment high school English course, Bob successfully passed the CPT and was eligible to enroll in ENC 1101. Bob said that he was eager to get a jump start on his college career, so he enrolled in ENC 1101.

Bob was a well-mannered student who answered any questions posed to him, but he did not offer information to me without responding to a question. My overall impression of him was that he was a quiet young man, and during our interviews I learned that he preferred to be a quiet participant in the composition class.

Ethel. Ethel, an African American female, was a 17-year-old high school senior when she agreed to participate in this project. Ethel was also a single mother of a 2-year-old boy. Ethel's application to the program was at the end of her sophomore year of high school, which coincided with her pregnancy. She did not, however, mention her pregnancy as a reason for wanting to enter the program. Instead, she recalled that she disliked high school. She stated that she came to the dual enrollment program because "it's a much more mature environment out here versus [her home high school]."

Ethel was a cheerful young woman, quick to smile whenever we met, but she seemed shy and demure when interviewed. She often responded to my questions by saying, "I don't know," and I often had to rephrase questions or provide additional prompts to get a response.

Joe. Joe, a Caucasian male, was a high school junior when he agreed to participate in my dissertation study. He had attended a laboratory school, but he said that classes there focused on "[name of standardized test]—and that's kind of boring." He said that he attended the dual enrollment program because he is "up for anything—I like challenges." He also stated that he

could get some college-level course work out of the way and "not have to worry about it later on." Like many of the other students, Joe was looking for an academic challenge and wanted to take advantage of saving money later by taking college classes now. Joe, when I met him during our first interview, seemed like a nice but quiet young man. He was proud that he was a member of his home high school's varsity cross country team.

Maylen. Maylen, a Caucasian, upper middle-class female, was 17 years old when she agreed to be interviewed for this project, while attending the local community college's dual enrollment program. Both of her parents worked as professors, one at the community college and one at the university level. She seemed to be a bright, cheerful girl, and when asked about something she felt strongly about, she had much to say.

Through analyzing her elaborated responses to my questions in our four interviews, I was able to understand more about her experiences as an English student in the secondary school system. Maylen did not enjoy her time at her home high school, and she made that point clear. Her dislike of her home high school and high school classes is what I remember most when I recall my interviews with Maylen. It was this dislike for her home high school and search for any alternative for which she was qualified (her grades / test scores did not qualify her for AP classes, honors classes, or the IB program) that served as the impetus for her enrollment in the HSDE program.

Renaldo. Renaldo, a 17-year-old African American male, was successful academically and socially on his high school campus. He was an A - B student and a member of the varsity football team, weightlifting team, and track team. Renaldo said that he was not at all interested in attending the HSDE program: "It really wasn't my decision. My mother wanted me to go and get some of the college courses from Santa Fe over with."

Renaldo was a nice and polite young man. He was pleasant during our interviews, and he willingly answered all of my questions, but his quick answers made me feel that he was ready to complete the task at hand without pondering it. He often said he was tired and pushed for time. As a HSDE student taking classes on the college campus while participating in both fall and spring varsity sports at his home high school, most days he spent a lot of time on both campuses, taking classes at the community college in the morning before traveling across town for track or football practice.

West. West, a Caucasian male, was 17 years old when he agreed to participate in this project. During his sophomore year of high school, he had attended two schools, transferring from the east side to a home high school in the center of town, and he reported that the curriculum overlapped, so he was taught the same thing twice in each school. Perhaps this frustration contributed to his decision to attend the dual enrollment program, but he stated that the primary reason he, along with his parents, decided he would attend the HSDE program was to get a head start on college and save money: "the idea of getting to go to [college] like uh basically either skipping a year or two—that way you didn't have to pay as much." When I met West during our first interview, he struck me as jovial and interested in discussing his decision to enter the HSDE program.

As I reviewed and analyzed the students' answers to the question of why they wanted to enter the HSDE program, I found a recurring theme. The opportunity to access advanced course work or academic rigor was the impetus for Alex, Bob, Joe, Renaldo, and West (five of the seven participants) to enter the program. The students, alone or with the direction of their parents, wanted an opportunity to take college-level course work for free, and they could get this opportunity by enrolling in the community college's HSDE program.

Research Question 1

Because of the variety of secondary-postsecondary learning options (SPLOs) available to students, I hoped to use their perspectives to analyze any outstanding characteristics of the program and its setting that contributed to their academic achievement. These inquires would help me answer my first research question—What were the HSDE program's contextual features that influenced students' academic achievement? After analyzing transcripts of the interviews with student participants, reviewing counselors' comments, reviewing student participants' transcripts and records, and reflecting on my experience as an instructor in the HSDE program, three features emerged as repeated themes influencing students' academic achievement: the academic counseling, the opportunity to take both high school and college-level course work, and the freedom from the high school context.

Academic Counseling

In this community college's dual enrollment program, HSDE students worked with counselors. These counselors were assigned to work with HSDE students only, and the counselors must be able to help students meet their high school graduation requirements and manage the course work needed for their AA, AS, or certificate degree. When students are accepted into the program, they are assigned to one of the program's three full-time counselors. This counselor will work with the student throughout his or her time in the dual enrollment program. Students are required to schedule a registration appointment with their counselor before each semester. During these appointments, the counselor and the student create the student's schedule for the next semester. While conducting my study, I discovered that this feature of the program had an impact on many of the participants' experiences.

Three of the students in the study, Alex, Renaldo, and Shirley, noted that their high school dual enrollment counselor influenced them to take freshman composition. For example, Renaldo

stated that it was not his idea to enroll in ENC 1101 after just one semester of high school English in the HSDE program. He said it was "pretty much my counselor's decision." While this dual enrollment program employed three full-time guidance counselors to work with the 500 or so students enrolled in the program, the local high school that is closest to this community college in proximity had four full-time counselors for their 2,300 students ("School Facts," School Home Page, 2005). This difference in counselor to student ratio may not ensure that all students get more attention when enrolled in the HSDE program, but it is an important contextual feature to consider when studying student achievement.

Renaldo would not have enrolled in ENC 1101 in the spring of his junior year without the advice to do so from his counselor. Renaldo said about his dual enrollment counselor, "like she had influenced me to take the next step—she was like, your grade was good, your test improved. You know most people who do well on it—they don't really struggle so much—we can go ahead and put you in the class." This excerpt from the transcript highlights another important feature of the counselor's role in the HSDE program. Renaldo was not stating that he did not believe in his ability to complete the college composition class. Instead, it seems that this quotation exemplifies how high school students may not be aware of what indicators illustrate their preparedness for college-level course work. The counselors of the HSDE program were needed to guide students moving from high school course work to college-level course work.

Counselors can also help guide students toward specific courses that might help them succeed. For example, one of the participants, Alex, spoke English as a second language, but he was unaware of the special section of ENC 1101 that was designed for ESL students. When looking at the college's course schedule for any semester, it is not evident that there is a distinction between the "regular" class and the class for ESL students. When Alex expressed an

interest in taking the college-level English class, his counselor contacted the dual enrollment English professor who had Alex in class during the fall semester to discuss the placement. Alex had retaken the CPT and improved his score, so he was eligible for the college-level class, but the counselor wanted the opinion of his instructor before placing him in freshman composition. His instructor told the counselor that Alex needed an ESL class, so his schedule was built around one of the two ENC 1101 courses offered that semester for ESL students. Without the help of his counselor, he may not have been aware of a specific class for ESL students or felt it necessary to enroll in that particular ENC 1101 course. Again, Alex's experience exemplifies the importance of the role of dual enrollment counselors in helping students negotiate registering for their high school and college course work. The counselor identifies when a student may be prepared to move from high school to college-level course work. In addition, he/she may also be aware of specialized college course offerings—like the ESL composition class—that a high school student is unaware of, due to his/her lack of experience in a college environment.

The evidence found when reviewing Renaldo's and Alex's transcripts illustrated how the academic counselors in the HSDE program positively influenced these students' academic achievement. A counselor can help support student achievement by giving them advice about which courses to take and ensuring that students are prepared for college course work, but they can sometimes be a hindrance to student achievement.

For example, Ethel, a student who wanted to take college-level English during the spring semester of her senior year, met with resistance from her college counselor. Ethel had scored into college-level English after retaking the CPT, and she had been given "B" grades in her three semesters of high school English in the HSDE program. Ethel, whose qualifications aligned with the other student participants in this study, seemed to be a good candidate for college-level

English, but her counselor was not convinced that Ethel was up to the challenge of a college-level course. I was perplexed as to the reason for her counselor's resistance. In my analysis of Ethel's transcript, her grades in the high school English classes taken in the HSDE program, and her CPT scores, I could find no clear reason for her counselor to dissuade her. Perhaps it was Ethel's use of black vernacular or a concern about whether or not a young, single mother would be up to the challenge of a college composition course that influenced her counselor's advice.

Regardless of the cause for concern, Ethel's experience seems to exemplify how the qualifications for certain college programs and college-level course work can be mystifying to one who is not familiar with the college system. Fortunately, Ethel advocated for herself. She insisted on taking the college English course, and the counselor, after consulting with Ethel's high school English instructor, who had taught Ethel for the previous year and a half, acquiesced. A less-motivated student may have been stymied by the advice of the counselor and unable to earn more college credit.

Ethel's experience illustrates how a counselor's intervention could have precluded an able student from making the most of the experiences the HSDE program offered her. One of the benefits of the HSDE program in this study is that it can improve access by offering college-level course work to students who would not be allowed to take courses offering college credit at their home high school. In this case, Ethel, an 18-year-old single mother, avoided paying for ENC 1101 because she took the class while enrolled in the HSDE program. If she had not worked to change the counselor's mind and simply accepted her counselor's recommendation to stay in the high school English course, she would have been denied that access to advanced course work.

During my study, I found an exception to the theme of counselors working to guide students toward academic success. Lynn's experience illustrates the possible result of a

counselor not acting to help a student understand and make use of the services offered by the college. A counselor's intervention might have saved Lynn, one of the pilot study participants, from a difficult first semester in college-level English. In my interview with Lynn, she revealed that she was dyslexic. Lynn mentioned in her interview that she did not know that she had to go to the disabilities office to register and receive the extended time or use of a spell-check, to which she was entitled. This lapse became a big problem because she believed that the poor grades she received on her essays were a result of her being marked off for spelling mistakes resulting from her dyslexia. Lynn thought that registering with disability services would fix this mistake, but after registering, when she did not see a big difference in her grades, she became frustrated:

> Well, I think is kinda, probably a hassle for her to deal with me when I, first came here because I didn't know, like you know like the disabilities office, and then I needed to go get that filled out, and then like things still seemed to be going badly I was, upset and um, you know. Cried during class.

This student obviously cared about her grade and experienced frustration during her semester of freshman English. A counselor's intervention to make sure a student with disabilities understands how to use the services offered by the college—a process that high school students could be unaware of—could have helped this student avoid some frustration. In the student's home high school, the assistance for the student and a plan to help the student deal with his or her particular disability are automatically created at the beginning of each school year and semester. This process differs at the community college where this HSDE program is located. At this particular college, a student is not required to register with disability services when enrolling in a class. Enrollment in the additional services is voluntary, unlike the mandatory enrollment at the student's home high school.

There were two important themes found when analyzing the impact that the counselors had on the academic success of the students in the study. First, students who are not accustomed to working in a college environment may not know what student performance indicators demonstrate their preparedness for college-level course work. Thus, students use the guidance and suggestions of their counselors to help them decide on the appropriate course work. In addition, a counselor who does not make a student aware of important college services or who may suggest a student enroll in college course work too soon can negatively impact a student's academic achievement.

Opportunity to Take Both High School- and College-Level Classes

Other features of this HSDE enrollment program—the location of this program on a college campus and the opportunity for students to take both college and high school course work—seemed to influence positively students' academic achievement. Since most of the students in this study (Alex, Bob, Ethel, Joe, Maylen, Renaldo, and West) were told that their English skills were not at the college level when they entered the program, and they were required to take either a high school English class or a college prep class that would not give them college credit, one might expect them to lack confidence about their ability to do well in a college-level English course. To my surprise, that was not the case. One student, West, stated, "Uh, I've learned a lot when it came to writing. I mean, like I said, I had very poor experiences from the past couple of years, [paused] didn't really have a solid foundation on my writing skills—and now this is the most confident I think I've been with writing when it comes to that in a long [trailed off]." West was discussing the way he felt after taking the high school course on the college campus. Another student, Joe, described the high school course work as "it's more of a college level—it's more toward college level than at my high school." He continued to describe the high school course work in the HSDE program by saying, "Well, they don't have

honors classes here, but a regular class here is like an honors class at my high school." Thus, the course work that the students perceived as being more difficult than a "regular" high school class or more aligned with a college-level course perhaps made them feel prepared for college-level course work. These excerpts from Joe's and West's interviews highlight a theme that I found when analyzing the students' transcripts. Many of the students associated the HSDE program and the course work connected to that program—even the high school course work—as at a level "above" their home high schools. This evaluation suggested that the location of the course on a college campus, even if that course was a high school course, influenced the students' perceptions of the class as being more like a college-level class.

All of the student participants in my study, except Lynn and Shirley, did not have the required CPT scores to register for college-level English when they enrolled in the HSDE program. When students enrolled in this HSDE program do not make the score on the CPT required for college-level course work, they are enrolled in the high school English class, and they must complete that class successfully, in addition to retaking the CPT and making the required score, before they are allowed to move into college-level course work. Alex, Bob, Joe, Maylen, Renaldo, and West had to retake the CPT to be eligible to enroll in the college course work. This requirement, which all of the students met before participating in this study, seemed to improve their confidence regarding their academic ability.

This excerpt from my interview with Renaldo highlights this experience. Renaldo stated, "before I took my English class here at [the community college] I had to take the CPT test and I got like a 76 on the reading or writing or something and then after I took [the English class] I got like a 109 and I know I benefited—it showed in my test grade." The exact source of this improved test score is unknown, but his awareness of his previous test grade and the

improvement highlight the importance of testing to students who have grown up with high stakes testing as a major part of their academic career. Also, he read his score as a big improvement, even though I doubt he knew what the exact numbers meant or the amount of growth they represented. At this time, a score of 83 on both the reading and writing portion of the CPT was required to enter college-level English. Renaldo did not recall the specifics of how close he was to scoring into college level English when he first took the exam. However, the numbers still represented to him a dramatic improvement in his ability, and they served as proof of something that would otherwise be unseen. Thus, instead of feeling like he was incapable of performing at a college level, he now felt that he had proof of his ability to work at a college level.

Another related example of this feeling of academic achievement connected to the course work and context of the dual enrollment program is exemplified by Maylen. Maylen, when she entered the program in the 11th grade, had not passed the state's comprehensive assessment test, which is given to high school sophomores and is a requirement for high school graduation. Because of the program's flexibility and structure, she was still admitted. Maylen said that while at her home high school taking the assessment test, people were talking and having problems, and it was not a comfortable setting. According to Maylen, it was this atmosphere at her home high school that contributed to her failure on the test. The "people" she referred to could have been students and teachers, but she did not make a distinction or identify the "problems" or the specific source of her "discomfort." When she arrived in the dual enrollment program at the community college, she had to retake the state's assessment exam so that she would be eligible to receive her high school diploma. She said, "I passed the [state exam] as soon as I went to [the community college]. It was quiet, it was big and open, and everyone (other test-takers) was in the same position I was." It seemed clear to me that she attributed her failure on the state exam

to her high school and the atmosphere there, and while there are obviously more variables at work than the room in which the test was taken, the fact that her home high school's atmosphere was a difficult one for Maylen during her classes and testing is clear. Maylen asserted that if she had remained at her home high school, she "probably would have given up completely—I don't know if I would be graduating now."

This contextual feature of the HSDE program, giving students the opportunity to take a combination of high school- and college-level course work, positively influenced the student participants in this study in several ways. First of all, this feature promoted student access by allowing students who otherwise would not have been given the opportunity to take college-level course work at their home high schools to enroll in this HSDE program and improve their writing skills, retake the CPT (college placement test), and qualify for college-level course work. Secondly, students associated being and taking classes on a college campus, even if they took high school classes, with increased academic rigor. And finally, achieving academic success in this program, along with the improving CPT test scores, made students feel positively about their academic achievement.

Freedom from the High School Context

It was sometimes difficult to get students to respond to the questions I posed in our interviews, but there was one subject or topic of discussion that all but one of the participants managed to bring up in the course of at least one of our interviews—friends. Several students, while mentioning that they liked the academic challenge posed on the community college campus, stated that they missed their friends. One student said, "I miss [my home high school]." And when I asked what specifically he missed, he stated, "friends—well, not that I don't have friends here, I mean like just the organization it's like kind of all to yourself here." Other similar statements were made when students were asked what, if anything, they missed from their home

high schools: “Um, not really much academic wise, they offer the same things and better here, um, just said bye to some friends but then again I can see them on the weekends;” and “ at [home high school], I was with all the international students I was [unintelligible] every day because I don’t know well all came together and stayed together but here I have less friends than at [home high school].”

While these students missed the friends who were still at their home high schools, their move to the community college campus was an opportunity for them to demonstrate their maturity or growth as people and as students. One student mentioned that at his home high school, he was on a closed campus and could not leave, but at the community college he could do as he pleased. He stated, “I had to take responsibility for myself now, like being a grown up now.”

Of all of the students I interviewed, to me, Renaldo seemed to miss his high school the most. Renaldo was a starter on his home high school’s varsity football team, and several times he mentioned missing his friends. We had the following exchange during our first interview:

AB: I know it was your mom’s idea to come here, but I mean if you had a choice to go back would you go back or stay here? If it was just all up to you and all about you and your academic goals?

Renaldo: Being that I have now been in the [HSDE program], I’d probably stay just to finish what I’ve started and I wouldn’t go back to [home high school] and kind of dumb myself down because I’m actually learning out here.

Renaldo’s statement that he would stay to finish what he started revealed to me that he was focused on completing academic goals, and the second part of his statement, that he would not “dumb himself down,” demonstrated his ability to choose academic opportunity over popularity.

One of the interesting themes that students discussed regarding their move from a high school campus to a college campus was the idea of “space.” Ethel, the student who was a single

mother, stated, "because it's much more mature environment out here versus [home high school]. It was like so many people—you didn't have any time to yourself or any space. It's just from class to class seeing everybody all over again." In our interview, Ethel did not mention any specific issues or problems that she had dealing with peers from her home high school, but being a pregnant teen on a high school campus may not have been a comfortable experience for her. When meeting with Ethel during the semester of my study, she proudly displayed pictures of her son and would speak of him before or after our interviews. She did not offer any information about her pregnancy, even though I asked her if anything other than the people or the maturity level led to her enrolling in the HSDE program. However, I can imagine that the anonymity given to her on the community college campus—the actual space given to her—could have been a welcome change.

The space or independence that was discussed by other participants was more figurative than literal. Reminiscent of Alex's, Renaldo's, and West's comments about being independent on campus and without friends were the comments by Joe. He stated, "I like that I, nobody, like there isn't all the gossip and all the everybody talking about everybody. And there isn't really a lot of cliques and it's more of like an independent thing, like you're here for you and not really anybody else." Joe seemed to enjoy this learning environment more than the others since he did not mention missing his friends from his home high school. He pointed out the expectations for a college environment—to him, it is one that focused on academics rather than socializing.

One participant, however, was more negatively affected by her high school environment than the other students. When I asked Maylen to describe the difference between her college course and her home high school English course, she said, "well, high school English class at [home high school] was insane. It was chaos all the time, like we hardly got anything done." I

then asked her to describe what happened in class, and she responded "people were talking, and riots and chairs. It was bad. Like it was just bad. Nothing got accomplished. I remember learning a couple things here and there."

What struck me when I analyzed this excerpt was her use of the words chaos, insane, and riots. These are certainly strong words used to describe what should be a learning environment. This student experienced a hostile environment, one that she seemed to struggle to describe in a more specific way. Her stating, "It was bad. Like it was just bad," implies that she was unable either to find the appropriate words to describe the environment or unable to use words acceptable for our conversation. I can assume that she was making an effort to reveal her experiences because she did take over an hour to respond to my questions, and this question was posed to her within the first few minutes of our interview.

After her response to me that school was "just bad," I asked her to describe how bad it was. She stated it was "terrible—incredibly bad," and that she "hated school. [She] hated going." I again probed for more detail by asking, "So why did you hate school, what was so bad?" Maylen responded, "It was hostile. It was a very hostile environment." And prompted again by me to be more specific, she stated, "It [paused] pushing in the hallways and, I mean, I , I schools are like that, but I mean I felt like it was bad, really bad and pushing in the hallways, yelling, cursing, like all over the place. It was bad. Graffiti everywhere." Again, Maylen seemed unable to use specific words to describe her experience, but her continued statement that it was "hostile" and "very bad" made it clear that this experience at high school was not related specifically to one subject. Instead, her comments spilled over to describe her experiences being stuck in a context or environment that she found hostile and extremely uncomfortable. She noted that high schools "are like that" suggesting that some crowding or pushing is to be expected.

Perhaps her clearest description of the environment in which she found herself was her statement that "I felt like I was in some New York bad school."

The meaning of and cultural expectations of a "bad New York school" have been established in television shows and movies, where high school teachers and principals battle gang violence, student drug use, truancy, and a host of other issues. To think that this comparison seems appropriate to a girl attending a public high school in a small, southeastern city is a bit shocking. While other students may not have experienced this high school in the same way, this student's experience at this high school was extremely negative—"hostile," "bad," "terrible," and "insane" are not words that anyone would use to describe an environment conducive to learning.

Interestingly enough, Maylen did not see all students in her high school having the same "bad" experience. She noted that her friends who were in AP or advanced classes had "good teachers" and "got a lot done." Since these were her observations, it was no surprise that she felt the school system that separated students according to ability was not fair because it privileged the students in advanced classes. This separate experience made Maylen feel like she and her classmates were not as smart as the other students.

One of my exchanges with Maylen clearly illustrated how these feelings changed when she entered the HSDE program and took courses on a college campus with other college students:

Maylen: Like in my high school class when everyone wasn't prepared I felt weird 'cause I was.

AB: Uh huh, right.

Maylen: And it kind of was uncomfortable because like what if they think weird about me or something like that. But in my college classes, finally everyone's the same. Everyone is just as prepared as everyone else.

AB: Okay. Um, so if you had to label yourself now a high school student or a college student, what would you say?

Maylen College.

AB: And why?

Maylen: Well, I've, for a while I haven't really considered myself a high school student just because I don't really I don't associate with high school kids not like in a snobby kind of way but like I just don't relate anymore, so I mean I like my college classes better.

Maylen never saw herself as a member of her high school classes, and she felt the atmosphere of her college class was a better fit. Maylen's negative experience at her home high school was obviously extreme when compared to other participants', but it is clear that it did not help her grow academically. The college atmosphere was a refuge for her, and it could be for other students.

Another student who had the same feeling, although she expressed it differently, was Ethel. When asked if she saw herself as a high school or college student, she said:

Ethel: Um, hmm, I consider myself a college student because um, hmm—good question.

AB: Thank you. [laughs]

Ethel: [laughs] Well, um, I don't know.

AB: Well, how about this. Why are you not a high school student?

Ethel: Because I'm past the high school stage now.

AB: What is the high school stage? What do you mean by that?

Ethel: The whole just going to school 'cause it's fun and being there for your friends and not for the education.

It seemed that the students not only equated being a college student with a focus on academics, but they also associated whether one is a college or high school student with one's behavior. Students focused on the social aspect of school and/or less focused on academics were

classified as “high school students.” When I asked Bob to explain if he identified as a high school or college student, he said that he was “a little bit of both because I’m a high school student because I still procrastinate and go through the processes that I learned in high school, but I think I’m a college student because I do the level of work that a college student would do.”

However, this college environment may not fit all students. For example, Lynn, when discussing how she felt about her instructor, told me about an incident in class where she cried in front of other students and her professor after receiving a poor grade on an assigned essay. Lynn felt humiliated after that incident and said that she did not feel that she could approach her instructor for help afterwards. She did not go into any other specific details, but I could see that some students may feel that there is pressure to behave in an “adult” manner—one that does not permit emotional reactions.

These excerpts from my interviews reveal several themes related to the participants’ sense of freedom from the high school context. This environment allows students to focus on academics, not friends. It gives students the opportunity to operate in a setting where they can gain some anonymity instead of being in a confined environment, taking classes with many of the same students. This learning environment can be a refuge for students stifled by high school issues that are not necessarily academic. It can be a good fit for some students; however, this environment, which does require students to be responsible and which takes them away from their peers, can be difficult for others. Some students may not be ready to operate in this “adult” environment.

Summary of Results for Research Question 1

After analyzing transcripts of the interviews with student participants, three features of this HSDE program emerged as influencing students’ academic achievement: the academic

counseling, the opportunity to take both high school and college-level course work, and the freedom from the high school context.

The program's academic counselors, employed to work solely with the HSDE students, are an important component of this program. These counselors help the HSDE students navigate the unfamiliar college environment and guide them as they plan their course work. I found that the student participants relied on the advice of their counselors as they moved from high school to college course work. Because students rely on their counselors to help them navigate this unfamiliar environment, a counselor who does not make a student aware of important college services or who may suggest a student enroll in a college course too soon can negatively impact a student's academic achievement.

This HSDE program's feature allowing students to take both high school courses and college courses on a college campus positively impacted the student participants. First, the ability to enroll in this program when a student was not able to enroll in all college classes allowed more students to gain access to the program. This feature allowed students who could take college-level course work in one area, like math, to enter the program and take a college math course while enrolling in a high school English course, for example. Thus, the students could begin the program and work toward improving skills to take more college courses. Next, I found that the students associated being on a college campus, even if they were taking high school classes, with increased academic rigor. I also found that achieving academic success and improvement on the college campus can make students feel positively about their academic achievements.

The third important contextual feature of this HSDE program is that it offers students freedom from the high school context. The students are given some anonymity on a college

campus, are viewed as college students, and are given room for emotional growth. The student participants reported relating to college students and seeing themselves either as college students or as transitioning from high school student to college student, reflecting their perceived focus on academics. However, this environment, which does require students to be responsible and which takes them away from their peers, can be difficult for some students. Some students may not be ready to operate in this "adult" environment.

Research Question 2

To answer my second research question—What opportunities and feedback are high school students provided to develop their writing abilities in a college composition course?—I analyzed and identified three major aspects of the experience: (a) the assignments given to students to develop and demonstrate their writing abilities; (b) the assessment and feedback given to students from their instructors; and (c) the students' comments about their assignments and assessment.

Table 4-2. Student participants and corresponding professors' names and ranks

Participant	Professor	Professor rank
Alex	Smith	Professor
Bob	Hanson	Associate Professor
Ethel	Stricker	Associate Professor
Joe	Dropped out of study after 1st interview	—
Lynn	Sands	Professor
Maylen	Casey	Adjunct Professor
Renaldo	Sands	Professor
Shirley	Sands	Professor
West	Dropped out of study after 1st interview	—

Assignments Given to Students to Develop and Demonstrate Their Writing Abilities

When I analyzed the data, I found clear themes regarding the assignments given to students. They were often complicated, constraining, and uninteresting to the students.

Complicated assignments

When Bob submitted his first completed, graded writing assignment to me, I was surprised and a bit confused by the number of pages, handwritten and typed, completed on pages of differing colors. The colors, I was told by Bob, signified a particular part of the prewriting and rewriting required by the instructor. Bob called all of the writing that accompanied his final draft "busy work."

The steps that Bob's professor required of her students in order to complete and submit essays included:

- prewriting
- an in-class essay or draft written from the prewriting
- a typed draft of the essay from the prewriting (the sample from Bob gave no evidence of changes from the handwritten version completed in class)
- a second typed draft of the essay (which did give evidence of the student making changes to content and editing the paper)
- a paper titled "workshop 1" that included the student's written critique of his paper
- a paper titled "workshop 2" that included another student critique of this same paper, and
- a critique titled "ICR" that included the student's comments about the improvement his paper had undergone through this process of writing
- the final paper submitted by the student.

The final paper submitted by the student was the only one with comments from the professor about the writing. Other than that, there was no evidence that the professor gave any substantive comments on the process, which included 8 versions of the paper. There were two other comments that I found in the stack of papers preceding the evaluation of a final essay. The last paper, the one titled "ICR," had two notes from the professor. The first was "15," which I

assumed to be points earned for the "ICR," and the second was the comment, "Yes, I agree" in the margin next to the student's comment that his conclusion is the strongest part of his essay.

The eight assigned "steps" that comprised this one writing assignment could be helpful, but for them to be helpful they would require some feedback or involvement from the professor. An assignment like this does seem to emphasize one's need to review and evaluate his or her own writing, which could be a reason for Bob mentioning parts of the writing process that he felt he improved rather than solely mentioning the surface structure of language as most of the other participants did. However, some of the students who are being served by the community college—returning students or those who are entering through the "open door"—may not be able to make use of these parts of the writing assignment without guidance or evaluation from the instructor. Instead, the many steps could deter students from completing the assignment.

Interestingly enough, the professor's feedback (not the assignment itself, which obviously included many steps) did not give any evidence that she focused on the parts of the process of writing more than the surface structure; her feedback still clearly focused on grammar. Forty percent of her comments focused on grammar / editing (see the following section about in-text comments for more discussion of this aspect).

Another example of instruction concerning writing that could be construed as complicated was one professor's focus on a writing technique. One of the professors I interviewed, Professor Sands, explained her paper requirements this way:

> I do have specific directions, there are general directions about what I think makes a good essay, makes it easier to read, easier to follow. I always preface it that way. That these are things, these are techniques that are shown to make the essay easier to follow. I talk about having a keynote technique, having a one-part thesis statement, and I talk about using a keynote that you repeat in your topic sentences and the other sections of your essay, and they sometimes feel that that's constraining, but I try to show them that if they feel that way, that there's lots of ways to do it, using synonyms or making it a more creative essay

> using imagery, type of thing, but all aiming at from the beginning saying this is what makes a good essay something that is easy to follow, easy to read.

What I found interesting was the professor's assertion that if the students found the technique to be constraining, she simply showed them a variety of ways to accomplish the technique—no discussion, apparently, of ways to write the essay without using this "keynote" feature. One of the students, Lynn, who had taken ENC 1101 from this instructor stated in our interview: "And I'd really really really like to know what a keynote is. Never figured that out the entire class."

This student's comment demonstrates how a professor's use of a term like "keynote," presumably intended to help a student with a writing technique, can actually inhibit a student's understanding of the assigned task. Lynn's comment, made after she had completed the course with the professor, further illustrates how a professor's focus on something like "keynote" can turn into a focus for a student that obscures any other possible writing techniques. For this professor, the thesis is a "one-part thesis statement" with a "keynote" repeated in the "topic sentences and other sections" of the essay. From the professor's description, it seems as if this "keynote" can and should be located in and throughout the paper. It is also related to, but apparently not equal to, the thesis statement. The professor's focus on one "technique" for writing turned into a roadblock for Lynn, who was unable to understand and complete what was to her the complicated requirement of her professor.

Writing is a difficult, intellectual exercise, and while I assume professors want to assign students work that will help them improve as writers, some of the assignments seemed to complicate an already complicated activity. For example, this same professor described a writing assignment this way:

> One of the middle papers I assigned is to write about broad topics, and they do two rough drafts. One is about a place, either a place that they love or hate, and one is a person who has been important in their lives in some way. . . . And the trick of that is to take such broad topics and narrow down and come up with one dominant impression and to be able

to focus the paper based on that and find what are the (unintelligible) or kind of evidence that would help support them, rather than trying to write about everything.

When I reviewed our interview, what stood out was the professor's description of her assignment as a "trick." It left me wondering whether she was genuinely focused on having students improve their writing. Her assignments and requirements for writing may be well-intentioned, but they include an unnecessary "tricky" component for students to "solve."

This professor then described another example of a complicated assignment. This assignment was to be a collaborative writing assignment requiring students to pair up with another classmate.

Prof. Sands: So uh, they had a collaborative assignment. They do not write a paper together, I am afraid to do that kind of thing, but they come up with, I have particular assignments, and they have to do a kind of comparison.

AB: Uh huh.

Prof. Sands: Whatever it is they're both, like one takes one side and they can do a pro and con—they just have to devise some where each one does kind of half of the comparison, and they have to have the same focus of the assignment and then they have to use the same branching method, and I tell them you have to use subheadings, and the subheadings have to be identical, so there's the trick of trying to come up with, well if this person is writing, one of the topics was blue collar jobs/white collar jobs, you know [trailed off].

Again, Professor Sands noted that there was a "trick" to completing this assignment, something much more constraining to the writers than asking them to write a persuasive essay. In addition to working on writing a paper that would persuade the reader, they must also use a "branching method" and use the "identical subheadings" of their writing partner. I assumed that these terms were ones used by the professor in class, and they were included in her written directions—another example of a complication for this writing assignment and for the students who must complete the writing assignment.

Constraining and uninteresting topics

Another student participant experienced a constraining assignment as the first writing assignment of the semester. According to Ethel, during the first few classes, the professor showed the class the movie *Fast Food Nation*. The professor then instructed the students to write a dissuasive paper about the movie, or as Ethel stated, "we had to write a dissuasive essay on a bad movie." Ethel stated that while she understood the movie, she did not want to write about it. The topic, however, was a requirement. Ethel described her feelings about the assignment this way: "I understand it, but I didn't like the whole *Fast Food Nation*. I don't understand all that. I understand it, but I don't want to write about it." Her use of "all that" seemed a bit confusing at first. It made me think that while she understood the movie, she did not understand why she would be assigned to write about it. Perhaps she did not understand the professor's interest in the assigned topic. The type of writing assigned—a "dissuasive" essay—may already be a challenge for students who are likely to be familiar with a persuasive essay but may have never been asked to write a dissuasive paper. Requiring a specific topic can compound the difficulty for a writer who is not interested in the topic.

Assigning a specific topic to write about, one that students are not interested in, is a constraint on which several students commented. Alex, Bob, and Ethel mentioned that their lack of interest in the assigned topic made the writing more difficult and "boring." When discussing what she found to be difficult in the class, Ethel stated:

Ethel: Maybe doing essays on stuff that I really wouldn't write about.

AB: Topics you didn't like to write about?

Ethel: Yeah, like the fast food and then we had to write something about songs we like and why we like them and I don't know, some stuff.

AB: And that was hard, so it was just the topic that made it hard?

Ethel: Yeah, I can't write a lot about something I really don't like.

Alex agreed with this view when he reported that his assigned research paper was hard—not just because he had to find information, but also because "sometime you're not used to the subject that he gives you." Alex's statement revealed that a research paper, which could be an opportunity for the students to explore areas that they found to be interesting, was constraining because he was assigned a topic. And if a student, particularly an ESL student like Alex, was assigned a topic with which he was unfamiliar, his writing assignment could be much more difficult for him than it would be for the students who spoke English as their first language.

Bob also found the assigned topics difficult, but he seemed to have this problem throughout the semester, not just on one or two assignments. He stated, "Her topics are really bland and boring and hard to find things to write about." I found his use of the personal pronoun "her" important. This comment not only illustrated that she, the professor, gives students the topics, but it suggests that Bob perceived that the assignments were hers—there was no ownership of the topic for the student, and he found "her" topics to be bland and boring, making writing a more difficult task than it already was.

Not all writing assignments bored the students. Renaldo, for example, recalled a writing assignment that he enjoyed. For this assignment, Renaldo was able to choose the person or place he wanted to describe. He said, "It was personal; you actually got to do something about yourself instead of having to read something and have to talk about it. It made it somewhat different." This comment demonstrates how writing about a topic that is of interest to the author can make writing more interesting.

After analyzing the transcripts of interviews with students and professors, the complications of the writing assignments, including complex steps required to complete the assignment, a complicated or "tricky" topic, and complicated language like "keynote" used to

describe a writing technique illustrated a clear theme. Overall, these examples illustrate how students can be given assignments in ways that make the difficult exercise of composition perhaps unnecessarily complicated, and students often found the assigned topics uninteresting and difficult to write about.

Assessment and Feedback Given to Students From Their Instructors

Students participating in this study received several forms of assessment or feedback from their instructors. To study these artifacts and the information given by the students and professors in their interviews, I separated the data into three categories: (a) in-text evaluation of writing, (b) evaluation of essays given at end of paper / assigned grades, and (c) assessment of grammar assignments.

In-text evaluation of writing

To describe and analyze the comments students received from instructors in the text of their papers, I noted every word, phrase, or mark made on student papers. I also created four categories that represented the type of feedback I noted:

- grammar / editing
- sentence / wording
- content
- positive feedback

A table identifying the numbers of essays submitted and by whom follows in the next section.

Sources

The following table indicates the quantity of data collected from the written artifacts the students submitted to me.

Table 4-3. Data collected from student written artifacts

Student	# Essays submitted	# Paragraphs evaluated	# In-text comments from professor	Professor
Alex	2	7	70	Smith
Bob	4	17	60	Hanson
Ethel	2	10	0	Stricker
Lynn	8	42	413	Sands
Maylen	2	8	48	Casey
Renaldo	4	16	70	Sands
Shirley	4	17	71	Sands
Totals	26	117	732	—

My analysis of the artifacts indicated in the above table, a total of 26 submitted essays and 732 in-text comments made by the professors, revealed several common patterns that could be identified across all of the essays submitted as part of my study. The professors' feedback focused on the surface structure of language, positive comments were the most infrequent type of comment found in the graded papers, and many comments were made, but they contained ambiguous and sometimes disheartening messages to the students. Several examples of the analysis I completed that illustrate the themes mentioned above can be found in Appendix D. These samples include a verbatim listing of all of the professor's written comments in the graded essay and my coinciding categories, arranged by paragraph (a sample of the submitted essay connected to the analysis of in-text comments is contained in Appendix C).

An example of the type of analysis I completed and the themes I discovered follow. In this analysis, I studied a paper submitted by student participant Alex and graded by Professor Smith. First, I categorized the numbers and types of comments that Professor Smith placed in Alex's paper. Figure 4-1 illustrates the numbers and types of in-text comments that Professor Smith returned to Alex.

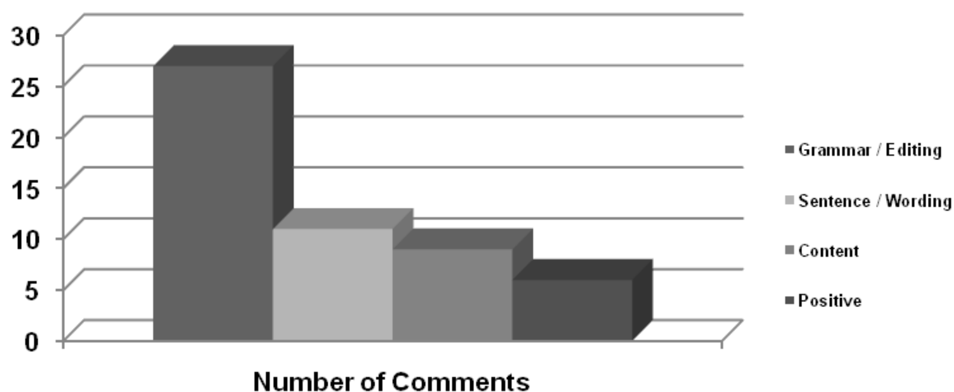

Figure 4-1. Analysis of in-text comments on Alex's paper (Professor Smith)

The comments found in the text of Alex's paper illustrate the themes that I found after analyzing the in-text comments made by all of the professors. First, Alex primarily was given feedback concerning the surface structure of language. A majority of the comments made by his professor, 27 of 53 total comments, were about capitalization, subject / verb agreement, spelling, etc. Professor Smith made 11 comments that I categorized as being about sentence / wording, 9 comments about content, and 6 positive comments. When viewing the analysis of all of the professors and their in-text comments, this grading from Professor Smith represented the sample that contained more positive comments than any of the other essays submitted by student participants. However, she still, like all of the other professors, most often made in-text comments related to grammar and editing and made positive in-text comments the least.

Another theme that I discovered was the ambiguous nature of the in-text comments made. A specific illustration of this ambiguity can be seen when one views the 27 grammar / editing in-text comments made by Professor Smith. The following table contains a verbatim list of only the 27 grammar / editing in-text comments made by the professor and the portion of student writing being "corrected."

Table 4-4. Grammar / Editing comments on Alex's paper by Professor Smith

Paragraph #	Comments
1 (Introduction)	—
2 (Body)	"Verb agree" (did not identify error—job/do)
	Wrote "not parallel" again in left margin, but did not identify "values, respects, and is proud of" as the problem
	Wrote "the" in text and "missing article"
3 (Body)	Identified two apostrophe errors by writing "apostrophe" in the margin, but does not identify the actual errors ("a student family" and "children education")
	Wrote "verb form" in margin and circled "do not seems" (to me this seemed more like a subject / verb agreement error—and one to be expected from an ESL student— the subject was "members" and the first verb of the verb phrase agrees although the second does not)
	Wrote "verb form" in margin and circled "do not really cares" (again, same error of Subject / verb agreement made, but not identified—his subject was "native Americans" but he had only one part of his verb phrase agree with that
	Circled "said" and wrote "says" on top (no explanation or identification of the error)
	Wrote "no cap/cap" in margin—student had capitalized the word "Focus," the second word in a sentence
	Wrote "cap" in left margin (did not identify "he," which was the error)
4 (Body)	Wrote "verb agree" in left margin (did not identify "moms and dads/cares," the error made by student)
	Wrote "pronoun agree" in margin; circled "them" and drew line to "child"
	Wrote "apostrophe" in margin (did not identify error, "their child education")
	Wrote "comma" in margin (did not identify missing comma after "for instance")
	Crossed out "s" in "theses problems"
	Crossed out "s" in "theses different groups"
5 (Body)	Wrote "apostrophe" in margin (did not identify error, "their children education")
	Added "s" to "alcoholic"
	Wrote "on" over "in" in "in the reservation"
	Drew line connecting two words under "week" and "end"
	Wrote "sp/cap/cap" in margin (did not identify errors—the sp referred, I believe, to use of "a" when he should have used "of;" the cap refers to not capitalizing author's name, "glib," and not capitalizing the first word of a quote)
	Wrote "sp" in margin and circled "is" (should have been written "his")
	Underlined "children" and wrote "use singular" over the top
	Circled "said" and wrote "says" over the top (no explanation)
6 (Conclusion)	—

First, this sample illustrates the overwhelming number of grammar and editing comments that a student like Alex had to process if he were to try to make sense of the feedback his professor returned to him. Even trying to process the comments made about one specific grammatical mistake could be challenging. In this sample, the professor marked several subject / verb agreement errors, but the markings and comments were inconsistent. When the error was

first noted, the professor made the “correction” by writing “verb agree” in the margin. She did not identify the error that the student had made (writing “job do” instead of “job does”) in the sentence that was next to her in-text comment. In the next body paragraph, she twice noted that the student had written the same kind of subject / verb agreement error, but she labeled the mistake “verb form” which is different from the first mark which labeled the mistake “verb agree.” And another inconsistent mark occurs in this paragraph when the professor this time identifies the error made by the student by circling “do not seems” and “do not really cares” in the text of the sentence. In this same paper but in the fourth body paragraph, the student writer makes the same subject / verb agreement error. The in-text comments made by the professor return to the form first used. She labels the error by writing “verb agree” in the margin, but fails to circle the error the student made when he wrote, “moms and dads cares.”

I found these inconsistent comments to be confusing for several reasons. First, the same error made by the student is given two different labels. Referring to the same error as “verb form” and “verb agree” could confuse any student, and it suggested that the student made two separate types of errors instead of the same mistake four times. Also, the student had already demonstrated that he did not understand a grammatical rule by making the same error four times. Therefore, what was he supposed to do with the information in the margin identifying a type of error but not identifying where the error occurred? Was the student to search the paragraph for the error and correct it? Perhaps the professor believed the student was capable of identifying the subject / verb agreement error himself as a result of her pointing out the previous errors he had made.

This professor’s habit of sometimes identifying the student’s error in the text of the paper and writing an accompanying in-text comment, but other times simply writing the in-text

comment was a confusing practice that I found she repeated in this grading. I found no discernible pattern as to why some errors were marked and identified but others were only identified. Many of the comments, like “cap” or “apos,” made by the professor refer to a specific type of error, but the professor did not identify where the error occurred. Again, for a student who obviously did not understand the rule in the first place, not identifying the error could prove problematic if the professor assumed he would learn from and correct his mistake. It was possible that this ambiguity in the grading represented how the professor may not be thinking of the student and how to best deliver feedback to him about his writing when grading his essay.

When asked if he understood his professor’s comments about his paper, Alex said that he did. He said that he needed to work on making fewer grammatical mistakes. Analysis of the graded papers submitted by Alex in the course of this semester to his professor did not reveal any significant changes in the number of errors she identified. This lack of change in performance suggested that Alex did realize that he made grammatical mistakes, but being given 27 corrections by his professor in this one paper did not result in a clear improvement in his grammatical correctness on future papers.

While I found commonalities among my analysis of all of the in-text comments made by the professors, two professors represent the extremes of my findings. Professor Hanson did make the majority of her in-text comments about grammar; however, the proportion of comments about the surface structure of language was closer to the proportion of comments made about sentence / wording and content. She also had the largest percentage of positive comments.

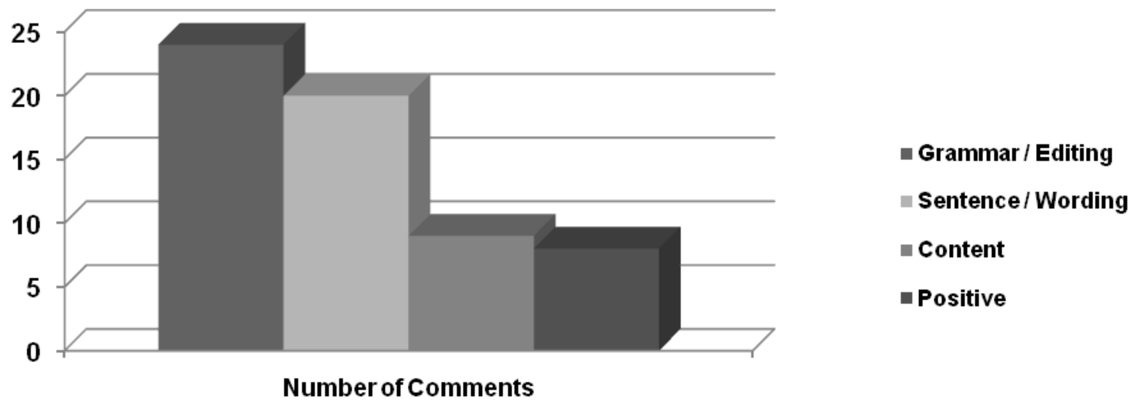

Figure 4-2. Analysis of in-text comments on Bob's papers (Professor Hanson)

Interestingly enough, Professor Hanson is the only professor in the study whose graduate work was in English composition.

The in-text comments that Ethel received in her graded essays and illustrated in the following figure were in sharp contrast to the in-text comments that other student participants received. In the two graded essays that Ethel submitted to me, her professor made no comments in the text of her essay. Instead, Ethel's professor only made comments at the end of her paper, and these were comments that seemed to justify the grade rather than deliver instruction to Ethel (these comments and analysis are detailed in the next section of the results).

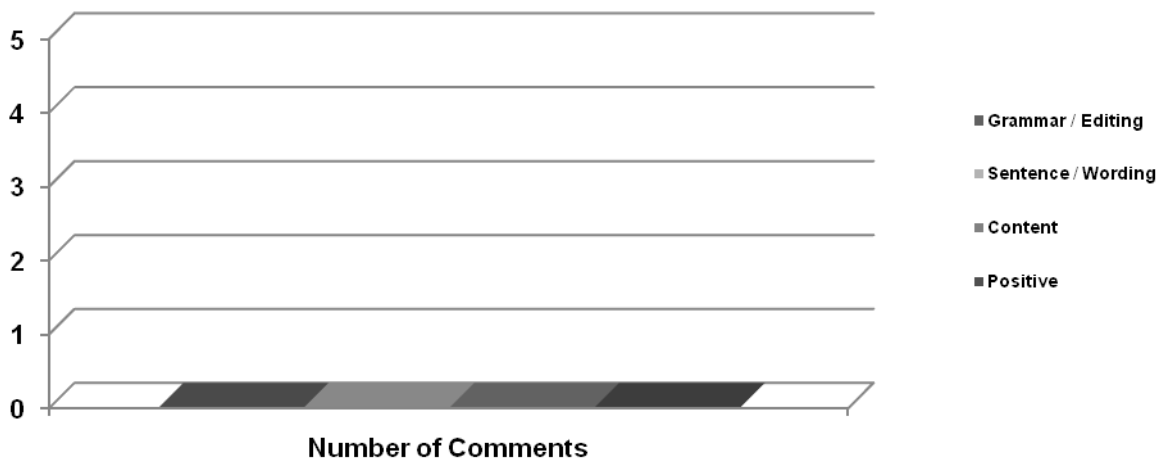

Figure 4-3. Analysis of in-text comments on Ethel's papers

There was no written message delivered to Ethel in the text of the paper, but I believe the lack of feedback is a kind of feedback being given to the student. The lack of in-text comments is a failure of the professor to recognize the writing completed by the student. When asked about the feedback she received on her essay, Ethel stated that her professor "grades funny," but this comment was not specific to the lack of in-text comments. It does seem to suggest that what she received in feedback from her professor differed from what she expected to get or differed from the type of feedback she had received in the past. A lack of feedback or response from the professor may not be a directly stated disheartening message, but the meaning is not encouraging to the student.

The in-text comments made by Professor Stricker and Professor Hanson represent the range of in-text comments that student participants experienced, but analysis of the in-text comments made by all professors revealed several common themes. While the professors did not give identical feedback, all professors who made comments in the text of the paper had the majority of their comments address editing or grammar issues like spelling mistakes, or pronoun

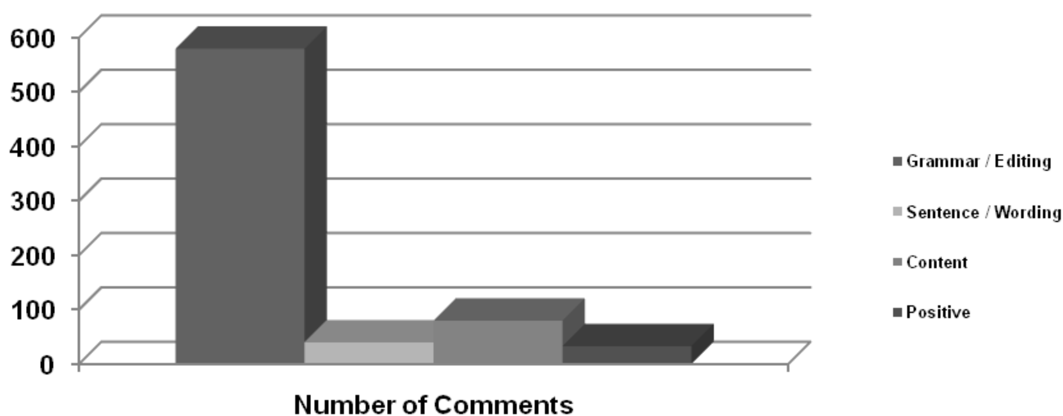

Figure 4-4. Analysis of in-text comments on all students' papers

agreement issues, etc. Overall, professors gave positive comments or feedback the least. Professors made a great number of marks or comments to students in the text of their papers.

Overall, professors averaged over 6 comments per paragraph written. In a five-paragraph essay, students could be receiving 30 or more comments, most of which addressed problems with grammar or editing. On average, students received 6.25 comments per written paragraph. This number represented a volume of comments, most of which addressed grammatical or editing mistakes that students had to wade through and interpret if they were to make sense of their professors' feedback.

These specific comments were not only overwhelming in number, but they often presented one single "correct" option and could be difficult for students to understand. Lynn's paper contained a sample "correction" that illustrated how a professor made an in-text comment or "correction" as if a grammatical mistake had only one remedy. Lynn submitted a paper to her instructor containing the following sentence: "This are just some of the many benefits of having a part time job, provided of course that a teen works for ten hours a week or less, have enough sleep, and healthy eating habits, they should be fine." To provide feedback to her students regarding grammatical mistakes, Lynn's professor used a strategy of placing numbers in the margin of the student's paper. These numbers corresponded to chapters in the student's grammar handbook, where there was presumably instruction regarding the mistake made. The professor sometimes included editing or comments in the paper that again, presumably, could be used with the instruction in the chapter of the grammar handbook to improve the student's writing. The problem, however, was that writing completed by students with varying degrees of ability may not fit into one clear category of error. Additionally, the sentences they write most often do not resemble the sentences written in the grammar textbook, so the task the instructor assigned her students in the above example—to read an entire chapter addressing a grammar skill like parallel structure—was complex.

A closer look at Lynn's sentence, cited above, provided an example of the complexity of Lynn's writing, her mistakes, and the ambiguous, vague "instruction" Lynn's professor gave her. Lynn's sentence was one that contained several grammatical mistakes. But these mistakes were complex. The student wrote, "This are just some of the many benefits," and the instructor crossed out the word "this" and wrote "these" on top. The instructor then placed the number 43 in the margin, which corresponded to a chapter about "spelling." The instruction to use "these" instead of "this" is given, but if the student did as instructed and read the chapter in her grammar book about spelling errors, I do not see how she could understand the error. In addition to the above comment made by the professor, she wrote the following numbers in the margin: 20, 9, and 21. These corresponded to chapters about run-on sentences, parallelism, and subject / verb agreement. The instructor expected the student to look through four chapters of a grammar handbook, find the portion of the chapter that corresponded to her writing, read that portion, and apply the instruction to the mistakes made in one sentence. This type of feedback seemed inefficient at best and completely ineffective at worst. It should be mentioned that this professor did offer students an opportunity during the semester to revise one of their graded essays, but in our interview she expressed her frustration over their reluctance to act on this extra credit assignment. Perhaps this indicates how few students were able to make use of her in-text comments.

Another example of this problematic communication for the student was found in Shirley's writing. She submitted a paper including the following: "Although everyone she knew was there for her, she only felt better talking to her mom. Which is natural because her mother, the only really close family she has left, is the most comforting person she has to talk to because she too knew her father and also hurt because of the loss." Shirley's instructor edited the paper by

adding a comma after "mom" and crossing out the capital "W" in "Which." There was no communication, other than the editing, that would indicate to the student why it was necessary to join the two word groups.

Later in this same paper, Shirley wrote, "Family is such a strong bond between the people that they will help you with anything they can, even if it is financially." In the margin of the paper, next to this sentence, Shirley's professor wrote the number 19 in the margin, and she edited the paper by crossing out the comma after "can," replacing it with a period, and capitalizing the "E" in "even." The number 19 referred to sentence fragments. The "correction" seemed to create a sentence fragment, so I found the editing by the professor and the chapter she assigned to the sentence to be perplexing. The professor made a mistake, and it is understandable that mistakes can be made, especially when professors are asked to evaluate so many papers in the course of a semester. However, when professors' corrections make the grammatical correctness of the paper appear to be the most important quality of good writing, a mistake in editing by the professor sends a confusing message to the student.

Another example of an instructor delivering a confusing and disheartening message to a student was the one given to Lynn, the student struggling with dyslexia. Lynn's instructor, when evaluating her "out-of-class essay #2," wrote in the margin of paragraph 3, "I did not mark all errors." In the margin of the next paragraph she wrote "many grammar errors to check for in this part" but she made no notations for the student. In the first paragraph of this paper, the instructor had noted 8 grammatical mistakes, 17 were circled in paragraph 2, and 10 were identified in paragraph 3. In paragraph 4, the instructor noted 4 grammatical errors before writing "many grammar errors to check for." When I looked for the errors in the paragraph, I found six "extra" errors not marked by the instructor. The student made 10 grammatical mistakes in the

paragraph, not a number too different from the previous paragraphs, but the feedback from the instructor indicates that there are so many mistakes that she cannot point them all out. This feedback to the student was different from all of the other comments she received on her other graded papers, as the professor never again stated there were too many errors to grade. But I did not find that the student's ten errors in that portion of the writing varied much, if at all, from the writing produced in the previous paragraphs, which had 8 and 10 grammatical mistakes, respectively.

In this study, I read 26 essays submitted by seven student participants. In these 26 essays, professors made 732 in-text comments, and 580 of those focused on grammar and editing. This large number of comments represents a great deal of work by the professors of the student participants, but this work clearly focuses on the surface structure of the student's language. One might expect these comments to have helped students identify and correct grammatical mistakes in their writing. However, as an observer of the student participants' writing artifacts submitted over the course of the semester, I could see no difference in their writing abilities or in the grammatical correctness of their papers from the beginning of the semester to the end of it.

Overall, the patterns found by analyzing the comments made by the professors illustrate how the professors' in-text comments focus on the surface structure of language and deliver positive feedback the least. A closer look at specific in-text comments exemplifies that students can be given a large number of comments or "corrections," but these "corrections" can be difficult to understand and contain disheartening messages for students.

These in-text comments, however, were not the only comments made by the instructors about the students' writing. All professors of the student participants offered comments at the end of the papers, accompanied by grades, and all professors except Professor Stricker (Ethel's

professor) attached rubrics with additional comments. My analysis of these comments and the rubrics follows.

Evaluation of essays given at end of paper / assigned grades

My analysis of the evaluative comments given by instructors at the end of student essays and through rubrics attached to those student essays revealed that the theme of confusing and ambiguous evaluation continued. I found that connecting comments given at the end of the essay to the students' writing performances in the essays was difficult. These comments were ambiguous, often nonsensical, and difficult to understand. Additionally, I found it to be difficult to decipher how the comments and evaluative marks made in the rubric equaled the assigned grade.

Connecting comments at end of essay to writing performance

In addition to the marks and/or feedback given on the paper, all but Ethel's professor also used a rubric, which was attached to each final draft. The rubrics given by the professors were not identical, but the sample that follows, one given to Renaldo on the essay titled "MAP 1," exemplifies the types of categories and corresponding comments the students received in this type of evaluation.

Table 4-5. Grading rubric for Renaldo's paper (Professor Sands)

Professor's comments	Category
Yes	On time
Excellent	Fulfills basic requirements
S+	Effectively limits the focus, unifies the essay, and emphasizes a strong thesis statement
S+	Effectively divides essay into relevant branches with effective topic sentences
S-	Includes sufficient and relevant details illustrating the keynote idea
S+	Correctly uses standard grammar, diction (word choice), and syntax (sentence structure)
S+	Follows MLA format for typed papers
Grade = B- / 80	
Tips for the next assignment—"Push yourself to include lots of concrete details and description."	

I found the above rubric confusing. I was not sure a student could understand how the feedback in the paper related to the feedback on the attached "rubric." Additionally, how did the evaluation of four categories labeled "S+," one labeled "excellent," and one labeled "S-" equal a grade of "B-" or 80? I also found that the professor used language that might not be clear to the students. For example, the category described as dividing the essay into relevant "branches" seemed to discuss body paragraphs, so why would the professor use terms like "branches" or "keynote" that may confuse students?

Another example that typified the kinds of categories and comments given to students in the rubrics is the one given to Bob. Bob's professor titled her attached rubric, "Final Grading Sheet." On top of this sheet, she said items were scored on a scale of 1 - 10, with 1 being "weak" and 10 being "good." Bob's "final grading sheet" for his essay, out-of-class essay #1, appeared as follows:

Table 4-6. Grading rubric for Bob's paper (Professor Hanson)

Category	Range / Score
Final Grading Sheet	1 weak – 10 good
Introduction	8/10
Thesis	7/10
Paragraph Structure	8/10
Paragraph Development	15/15
Overall Essay Structure	10/10
MLA formatting / presentation of quotations	10/10
Grammar and Sentence Structure	8/10
Grade	66/75
Comments	(Bob), note my comments and let me know if you have any questions
ICE	35/35
ICE	15/15

This rubric was an example of another piece of confusing evaluation. First, the category of paragraph development, at 15, is outside of the range (1 - 10) listed by the professor. I also found it confusing to have two seemingly overlapping categories: paragraph structure and overall

essay structure. I wondered how a student could discern from this “grading sheet” why there were points deducted from “paragraph structure,” while no such points were deducted from the “overall essay structure” category. To further investigate the possible connection between the in-text comments and the comments at the end of the paper and on the rubric, I completed a careful analysis of the in-text comments and noted their relationship to the comments made on rubrics at the end of the essay (Table 4-6).

The theme that I discovered was one of a lack of correspondence or connection among the in-text comments and the evaluative comments given on the rubric at the end of the writing. To illustrate the confusion student participants could encounter when trying to connect the in-text comments made by their professor to the ending or evaluative comments made by their professor, I am including a specific example. In the following table, I have included Professor Hanson’s in-text comments, in toto, so that I can illustrate the difficulty of trying to connect this instruction to the comments made in the rubric (Table 4-6).

Table 4-7. Analysis of grading for Bob (out-of-class essay #1)

Comment type	Comment #	Comment
Paragraph 1		
Grammar / Editing	Comment 0	—
Sentence / Wording	Comment 1	Underlined “different”
	Comment 2	Underlined “different”
	Comment 3	Underlined “different”
	Comment 4	Underlined “different”
	Comment 5	Underlined “different” and wrote at the end of the paragraph, “you’re overusing the word ‘different’”
Content	Comment 0	—
Positive	Comment 0	—
Paragraph 2		
Grammar / Editing	Comment 1	Put brackets around sentence and wrote “frag” in margin
	Comment 2	Circled quotation marks in “Bob’s” and wrote “?” in margin
Sentence / Wording	Comment 1	Underlined “was more common” and wrote “word choice (are you saying what you mean here?)”

Table 4-7. Continued

Comment type	Comment #	Comment
	Comment 2	Wrote word "idea" over the word "thought"
	Comment 3	Underlined "he would" in and wrote "c" over the "w" in would and placed "?" in the margin
Content	Comment 1	Wrote "I'm not sure whether or not views on sexuality fall into the category of generational conflicts" and drew an arrow to student's sentence "these opposite viewpoints on sexuality goes to show that, because of different childhood experiences, you can not bypass generational conflicts." (no note from professor of the subject / verb agreement error in this sentence or misspelling of cannot)
Positive	Comment 0	—
Paragraph 3		
Grammar / Editing	Comment 0	—
Sentence / Wording	Comment 1	Underlined the student's writing "could tell" in "could tell his dad in public" and wrote "hear from" on top
Content	Comment 1	Underlined the student's writing "because his father never did that for him" and wrote "yes, this is often the motive behind parents' actions"
	Comment 2	At end of the paragraph, drew brackets around blank space and wrote "emphasize your main point here"
Positive	Comment 0	—
Paragraph 4		
Grammar / Editing	Comment 1	Circled "it" and wrote "ref" in the margin
	Comment 2	Wrote "of" over the word "to" when the student had written "proof to the fact"
Sentence / Wording	Comment 0	—
Content	Comment 1	Drew bracket around the student's last sentence and wrote "yes" next to it. (seemed like an affirmation of his final point but not necessarily a positive comment)
Positive	Comment 0	—
Paragraph 5		
Grammar / Editing	Comment 0	—
Sentence / Wording	Comment 1	Underlined "receive" and drew line to where professor had written in the margin "Is this the right word?"
Content	Comment 0	—
Positive	Comment 0	—

The above example illustrates a theme of confusing or unclear feedback to students regarding their grades. How was the student to relate the points on the grading sheet and the

overall grade to the professor's in-text comments? My analysis revealed that most of the professor's in-text comments regarded the student's use of grammar and wording or sentence structure. How did these 14 comments connect to the score of 8/10 on grammar and sentence structure? Additionally, it was unclear which comments, if any, the student would use to inform himself about his grade of 7/10 on the "thesis statement" category. The only comments the professor made in the introduction paragraph—that the student overused the word "different"—suggested that this was the cause of his receiving 8/10 on the introduction and not related to his grade of 7/10 on the "thesis statement" category. I found no written comments about the student's thesis statement when analyzing the professor's in-text comments.

How could the student use this information in the rubric, along with the in-text comments, to improve his writing and his grade? Could the student avoid similar deductions on the introduction by using more variety in his vocabulary, or was that deduction related to some other problem with the introduction? Was the student to connect the professor's underlining of the word "different" five times to his reduced points in grammar and sentence structure, or the broad and vague category of "the introduction"? These questions illustrate how the in-text comments and their relationship to the comments made on the rubric were unclear.

Connecting comments to grade

When analyzing the final comments made in the rubrics and at the end of the students' papers, I discovered another ambiguity. The comments on the rubric did not clearly relate to the overall grade of the paper. When noting the final comments, found in Table 4-9, I had difficulty connecting the comments in the rubric to the overall grade. How did the specific comments in the paper connect to the overall grade, and how did a student who gets 100% on the prewriting assignments, the "ICE" and "ICR," end up with reduced points on the final writing? The "ICE" and "ICR" seemed to represent some of the assignments that were part of the six steps assigned

to Bob in the writing of this one essay, but I could not clearly identify what these acronyms stood for nor how they were evaluated, since there were no corresponding in-text comments for these parts of the submitted writing. After adding up the "scores" given to Bob, I surmised that he scored a 116 of 125 possible points, but I was not sure what this represented as far as this student's writing ability or competency was concerned. If I were to use the professor's in-text comments as a guide, the clearest way Bob could improve his score, a number that represented his writing ability or competence on that assignment, would be to eliminate grammatical mistakes.

I was not the only one who was confused by the lack of correlation between the markings in the text, the attached "rubric," and the assigned grade. In one of my interviews with Bob, he noted that he felt his professor's grading was subjective. When asked about his writing assignments, he responded:

Bob: The assignments were okay, they were sort of easy, but the grading, the way she grades, is kind of hard. She grades really tough on the essays.

AB: Meaning what? What was so tough about her grading?

Bob: She, I don't know, to me it just seemed like the class, the way that she graded the class was kind of subjective. She kind of, if she liked you, you got a little bit higher grade, 'cause if I looked at my essay and somebody else's essay who got like a D or an F and they're like almost identical. The only major difference is a few more grammar mistakes. And they get a D and I get an A.

And when he was asked about his grades, he stated that he felt that most of the grades he had been given were "pretty fair," but one grade was a mystery to him. He felt he wrote an "A" paper: "the last essay I wrote which was, I thought was, really good but, um, she I guess didn't think so, so I don't know." And when I asked if he knew why he received the reported grade (88 or 87, he could not remember) instead of the expected "A," he stated, "Um, honestly I just I

don't know if it was a bunch of grammar mistakes or something. I think it was just a bunch of grammar mistakes. I'm not sure."

Bob's comment illustrated how students can see an "A" grade as the only grade representing "really good" writing. Bob believed that because his professor gave him a grade of "B+" on a paper, she did not see it as an example of "really good" writing. Also, even though his instructor gave him a large amount of feedback—making notes in the text of his paper and including a "rubric" with categories and corresponding feedback—he still failed to understand why his paper did not get a grade of "A." Given his comments, I assumed that all of the feedback given by his instructor did not communicate to him how he could improve his writing.

Lynn also had trouble understanding the meaning of the rubric. When I asked her what information or instruction she received from the rubric, she said, "I mean all of them are like, most of them are, average or above average so, I didn't really see why I was getting 70s and then this one failing and language incorrectness." For this student it seemed as though the majority of her paper ranged from above average to average, except for the "language and correctness" portion. So how did these items add up to a grade below average? A sample rubric received by Lynn and one that exemplifies her confusion is included here in Table 4-8. The rubric was a small sheet of paper stapled to Lynn's essay that was titled "Overall – rubric." This rubric had four categories given a rating of 1 - 5; at the bottom of the small sheet, the professor typed: 1 = failing, 2 = weak, 3 = average, 4 = good, 5 = superior. Lynn's categories and corresponding scores were:

Table 4-8. Grading rubric for Lynn's paper (Professor Sands)

Category	Score
Purpose	4/5
Organization	4+/5
Development	3/5
Language and Correctness	1/5
Overall grade	69

This sample rubric illustrates how something presumably intended to clarify the student's grade and help her make sense of her writing performance and abilities did nothing but confuse her. Using this rubric as a sample, one can see how Lynn would find the grades of "good," "good +," "average," and "failing" to equal a grade of 69 or D confusing. Additionally, the math does not work here. If the "score" on the rubric is a number (1 - 5) and there are 4 categories, I would assume that the numbers would relate to the 100 point scale, but that is not the case here. In fact, if extrapolated, the number score that the rating of the 4 categories at 1 - 5 would represent would be a 60. Another confusing message is given by awarding the student the grade of 69. And in this class, freshman composition or ENC 1101, the college requires a grade of 70 or C for students to get credit that can be used toward graduation. In other words, the grade of 69 is one that would be "failing" as opposed to "passing," but this student had 3 grades representing good, good + , and average but just one that was failing. Another question I had regarding these "scores" was the 4+ given for organization. I could not understand the meaning of 4+. If the professor felt the student's organization was better than good, then would her score not be a 5, representing "excellent"?

Another example of grading or evaluation of the essay that did not make sense to the writer was Ethel, who received little or no feedback from her professor. Ethel's first essay assignment was to write a paper about the movie viewed in class, *Fast Food Nation*. She said it had to be a "dissuasive paper," a type of writing she was unfamiliar with. Ethel completed the assignment and submitted it. Her essay was 1.75 pages long. The assignment stated that her paper should be 2 pages long. When her paper was returned to her, there were no marks or comments except for those at the end of the essay: "Does not meet minimum requirements." The grade assigned was a D+. Her second essay grade was also a D+, and the grade was given for similar reasons—failing

to meet requirements of the assignment. She was asked to write three paragraphs that were to respond to the movie *Super Size Me*. In her paper, she had to write a total of three paragraphs. She was instructed to have each paragraph address one of four possible assigned topics. The paragraphs could be about the movie's presentation, the performance of those in the movie, the facts used in the movie, or the opinions presented in the movie. Ethel received a score of 3 out of 3 possible points on paragraphs 1 and 3, but her second paragraph, the one where she chose to discuss the movie's presentation, received 0 points. At the end of the paper the professor wrote, "Does not reflect an understanding of the assignment." No other feedback was given, and no other markings were made on the paper. Thus, Ethel received 6/9 and was given the letter grade of D+. When asked about the grades she was given, Ethel simply stated, "He grades funny."

When viewing comments written in the text of the papers by the professors and comparing these to the comments made at the end of the writings, a theme of ambiguity emerged. It was difficult to understand the professors' intended message to the students. When evaluating a paper, an instructor is essentially communicating with the student. Presumably, he/she is trying to communicate information to the student that will help him/her improve his/her writing. However, the feedback given was difficult for my participants to understand.

For example, the evaluation of Maylen's narrative essay contained 27 in-text comments. Twenty-six of these comments were about grammar / editing. Only one of these comments was about content. The professor drew brackets by the sentences "I thought I knew myself but in reality I didn't know myself at all, instead I went along in life trying to please everyone." Next to these brackets in the margin of the paper the instructor wrote, "This is redundant, don't you think?" In addition to these in-text comments, the instructor stapled a paper titled "evaluation check sheet" to the essay. On this sheet the professor placed checks next to chosen categories.

Next to these categories were check marks (represented in Table 4-9 with "X") made by the instructor, along with a few handwritten comments. Table 4-9 only includes categories the instructor marked for her student and her corresponding comments. Categories not marked by the professor, such as spelling, were excluded.

Table 4-9. Grading rubric for Maylen's paper (Professor Casey)

Category	X marks	Professor comments
Topic sentence and development	—	Add more descriptive details
Run-on sentences	X X X X	—
Pronoun reference	X X X X X	—
Comma	X X	—
Apostrophe	X	—
Your essay title	X	No underlining or quotation marks

Overall, the instructor placed 13 "X" marks on the evaluation sheet, but these did not exactly correspond to the comments in the paper. For example, the instructor placed four checks next to "run-on sentences" but in Maylen's paper these errors were labeled "comma splice," and there were five identified comma splices. Next to the category "commas," the instructor placed two checks, but in Maylen's paper she noted 7 comma errors. And while the professor marked one check next to "apostrophe" in the rubric, I found two mistakes in the paper. These discrepancies made me question the need for the check marks on the rubric. If they did not exactly represent a number of errors made in the paper, then what did they represent?

These discrepancies in the terminology used (comma splice and run-on sentence) and in the number of comments and corresponding check marks could be confusing to Maylen, and the lack of parallel comments in the text and on the rubric did not make the feedback to the student clearer. If anything, they added to the student's confusion regarding how the comments and rubric equaled a number and/or grade. But for one comment about content that I found in the in-text comments, the feedback on the rubric offered no real additional feedback to the student.

Overall, after reviewing the feedback given to students about their writing at the end of the papers and in rubrics, I found that this feedback was often nonsensical to students, confusing, and ambiguous. It could be overly complicated because there were several attempts to explain the grade—comments at the end of the paper and comments on a rubric—or overly simplistic and lacking any explanation of a mistake when editing student structural / grammatical mistakes. Finally, students often found it difficult to understand how the comments in the text and on the rubric corresponded to the assigned grade. It was unclear how the feedback given to students might be used to improve their writing.

Assessment of grammar assignments

All student participants mentioned grammar when discussing their writing abilities, and all student participants but Ethel mentioned some grammar instruction, evaluation, or assignment separate from the feedback given in their written essays that was a part of their class grade and their assigned class work. When analyzing the data related to evaluation of writing abilities, one of the themes that continued to surface was the focus on grammar and the surface structure of language, and these grammar assignments described by the students seemed abstract and unrelated to their writing.

At this community college, the English department had a battery of grammar skills tests that could be given to students through WebCT, their online educational software provider. Of the student participants in my study, Alex, Maylen, and Renaldo were assigned to complete multiple choice tests that reviewed specific grammar skills, like parallel structure or subject / verb agreement, by accessing and completing the tests online via WebCT. These online, multiple choice tests served as these students' primary means of grammar "instruction." These tests were like the exercises given at the end of grammar text books, but they included no specific instruction through the computer. Most students described their professors assigning a

chapter in their grammar textbooks for the students to read, and their evaluation was the corresponding skills test given through WebCT.

For example, Maylen explained her understanding of the grammar assignment and instruction: "Well, actually, we had to do WebCT, the skills test, 15 of them at 100% and that was really difficult. I didn't finish it." In other words, the students in Maylen's class were assigned 15 grammar topics, and through WebCT, they would be given one version of the test. Each test had at least five different versions. Students in her class were to complete one of the five available tests at 100% in order to have completed that skill.

This method of "grammar instruction" frustrated Maylen. A portion of her transcribed interview that revealed this frustration follows: "I did one of them like 8 times and I got 90, I got 70, and I mean it just fluctuated, and I couldn't get it to 100 and it was really frustrating, so then my grades got lower and it just, I think 100 is too high." This excerpt illustrates not only Maylen's frustration, but it demonstrates that her focus is on the grade instead of the skill. When I asked Maylen to identify the test that gave her so much trouble, she stated:

Maylen: I don't [paused] I think it was subject and verb [paused].

AB: Subject / verb agreement?

Maylen: I think so, no, it wasn't. I lied. I don't remember.

AB: Okay.

Maylen: I don't remember. It was something that I should have known—but I couldn't get to 100 and then I just gave up.

This excerpt further illustrates Maylen's frustration and focus on the grade of the test. Her professor may have thought that this method of grammar assessment would benefit students by allowing them to re-take an exam and get a higher grade. However, Maylen could not remember the skill she was studying, but she certainly could recall the frustration of trying to get a score of

100, instead scoring 70% or 90% and not understanding why. Additionally, this excerpt was interesting because when she stated, "It was something that I should have known," she seemed to indicate that she felt an understanding of grammar skills was expected for college students. She continued discussing her lack of understanding:

Maylen: And a lot of the stuff, not a lot, but I didn't know what parallelism was. I didn't know what homonyms were. Like I just, I just didn't know what a lot of the stuff was, and that might be the fault of high school, but I just didn't know a lot.

AB: Now, did she give you any instruction about this, about these skills at all in class?

Maylen: No.

AB: She just told you go, this was a complete it on your own kind of thing?

Maylen: Yes.

I found these responses interesting because Maylen did not seem to consider that her instructor could have changed the assignment or worked to explain the material on the tests. Instead, Maylen suggested the professor should change the percentage required to complete the test. This particular suggestion of Maylen's, and the lack of other suggestions to change the method of delivering grammar instruction, demonstrated how she was accepting of the way instructors present material and design assignments. Perhaps her acceptance of a portion of the class with which she was displeased resulted from her satisfaction with the rest of the class and the outcome of the class, or perhaps it was because she stated that she liked her professor, while she did not like her home high school. What this vignette makes clear is that this student was given evaluation without the benefit of instruction from the professor or other students. Left to work on her own, the student could not understand why she would score a 70% one time, then a 90% the next time, and her focus—one dictated by the requirements of the test—was on the grade, not the skill. This student was diligent and completed all of the exams, in spite of not being able to complete any of them at 100%. She reported that only five students in her class

were able to complete all 15 tests with the required 100%. This type of grammar testing without any input from the instructor seemed to have had no benefit for Maylen. Instead, it appeared that she felt as though there was a lot that she "should know" but of which she was unaware. Maylen left this class without feeling as if she understood the grammar she should know.

Two exceptions to the WebCT work were Bob and Ethel. In Ethel's case, she did not state that any specific grammar instruction, assignments, or quizzes were given in her class. While Bob was not assigned to work on grammar quizzes through WebCT, he said that in his class, his instructor used "group work" to "go over the grammar for the quiz the next day." It seemed to me that at least Bob's instructor attempted to get students in her class to discuss usage and grammar, and I was interested in how his instructor gave a group grammar quiz.

When asked to detail the grammar exercise, Bob stated, "One person is the scribe and then you all have to agree on what mistakes are and you got one person corrects them and turns in that paper." I replied, "very good—sounds pretty cool." But Bob quickly responded, "But I don't like it," without being prompted. When I asked why he didn't like what seemed to me to be an interesting way of getting students to discuss grammar, he stated, "because I don't get to because a lot of people are not intelligent enough to see all the mistakes and when somebody else tries to correct them they're like no that's not it or, um, not everybody agrees on the same things or whatever. It's just I'd rather do it independently. I get done quicker that way too."

I found the first part of Bob's response, "because I don't get to," interesting. This response suggested that grammar discussion could be of interest to him, something he might like, but something precludes him from getting the chance to "like it." While the instructor seemed to be trying to get students to discuss usage when asking them to come to a consensus about their writing quiz, what Bob's description revealed is that he experienced something closer to conflict

than dialogue. This excerpt from the transcript illustrates how a professor's well-intentioned assignment may not be experienced as intended for all students. And since Bob did not mention any other form of grammar instruction, this excerpt reveals that he was frustrated by being forced into group work whenever being given a grammar quiz. Additionally, because this instructor did not seem to give grammar instruction to the students in any other way, I wondered what opportunities for learning about language, particularly for a student like Bob, who was interested, were missed. Another part of Bob's answer, "I get done quicker that way too," reveals not only his frustration, but that the quiz was something he wanted to finish quickly. This quiz was not something that he viewed as a group discussion, but a chore that kept him from moving to another task.

Overall, this type of grammar "instruction" and assessment focuses on the surface structure of language and seems to be of more benefit to the instructor than the student. The instruction and assessment methods detailed by the students lacked variety. Both assessment methods—group quizzes and WebCT—would benefit the instructor by limiting the grading. The WebCT evaluation is automatically graded by the computer software, and the group quizzes limit the number of quizzes to be graded because each quiz represents the work of a group of students.

After analyzing the (a) in-text evaluation of writing, (b) evaluation of essays given at end of paper / assigned grades, and (c) assessment of grammar assignments, several themes emerged. The evaluation and assessment of student work focused on the surface structure of language, and it was difficult for the students to understand the evaluative comments and how the professor arrived at a particular grade. The comments themselves might have been overwhelming in number, and these comments often projected a closed stance offering one "right" correction of

wording and grammar. Finally, the professors' assessments might have included evaluation techniques that seemed to benefit the professors more than the students.

The Students' Comments About Their Evaluation and Learning

To understand the students' experiences making sense of their evaluation and assessment, I asked all students what they had "learned" as writers. Analysis of their responses revealed three clear themes. First, the students focused their comments on grammar with no demonstrated understanding of what grammar means or a limited understanding, focused on a single aspect or issue. Secondly, the students were unable to be explicit about their learning. Additionally, the students did not understand the basis for the grades they received.

Student focus on grammar

When Maylen was asked what she learned in the class, she said that she became a better writer. When prompted to explain how that happened, she said the grammar and topics became better, but no specifics other than the mention of her awareness about pronoun use and an overuse of clichés came up. While she demonstrated an awareness of an error, she did not demonstrate a clear understanding of what her professor was "correcting." For example, when Maylen recalled a piece of feedback given to her by her instructor, she stated, "she did keep saying stuff, I don't know if it was in this essay or another one, but she kept saying something about clichés and I shouldn't write clichés." Maylen recalled this correction, but I am not sure she understood it. She said, "I didn't know that I was even writing clichés, well sometimes I did, but yeah it was weird. I know what a cliché was; I just didn't know that I couldn't write that in an essay." This statement made me think that again, Maylen may not have fully understood the instructor's comments. Obviously, there is no "rule" that a cliché should not be used in an essay—Maylen's comment, however, made it seem as if she thought there was an actual rule in a grammar handbook that precluded students from using clichés in papers.

Another student who reported learning grammar but did not demonstrate a clear understanding of the rule he reported learning was Renaldo. When asked about his skill as an English student or what he learned in class, Renaldo discussed one skill—commas. During the first interview, Renaldo stated that he had not always been the best English student. He said, "I just don't understand the concepts to it, but when I do, I actually express them very well, like um, the commas that we went over this year. I had no clue, but now I, I even use them when I'm typing on the Internet and stuff just because we have been going over them so much I want to use them." This excerpt highlighted Renaldo's awareness of commas and his distinction between writing in class or a formal setting and informal writing, like that on the Internet: "even when I'm typing on the Internet and stuff" distinguishes this informal writing where commas would not normally be used by him, from writing completed in class, where commas were emphasized. However, he was not discussing the way the commas should be used. Instead, he simply stated that he was aware of a need to use them. And because commas were corrected by his professor in all of his submitted essays, there was no evidence of his ability to "fix" this error.

Additionally, this excerpt illustrates Renaldo's focus on one aspect of grammar. Renaldo focused on commas and the "surface level" of language use rather than focusing on "substantive changes" or the layering of an essay. This view should not be surprising, however, since this focus on mechanics mirrors the focus on mechanics given in feedback from instructors. Renaldo's focus on a particular aspect of grammar—comma use—illustrates how students can grab hold of the first surface structure correction they understand or that is pointed out to them and focus on it, even if they do not fully understand that rule.

Another student who focused her comments about learning on one specific aspect of grammar was Shirley. When asked about what she had learned, Shirley stated, "What I really

learned from my teacher was to stop using ‘thing’ and um, like wrongly modi—, modified pronouns like ‘they.’ I just used ‘they,’ and it could refer to two people. Or I use ‘it,’ and it could refer to like, many different things.” After this, I confirmed her statement by saying that she had learned indefinite pronoun use. And she responded, “Yes. I got that especially because of [the professor]. I use it less; she circled them all up in the paper.” Shirley, like other students, focused on only one of the several grammatical mistakes pointed out to her by her professor’s grading. However, her comment about “wrongly modified pronouns” made me wonder if she fully understood the pronoun errors her professor circled on her paper.

A student who focused his comments on grammar with no evidence that he understood what he was referring to was Alex. When I asked Alex to tell me what information he had learned about his writing so far, he responded with an answer that focused on his grade and grammar. Unlike the other students, who focused on a single grammatical mistake, he stated that his professor had shown him that he needed to improve his “ESL mistakes.” He demonstrated through this comment that he had picked up his professor’s lingo regarding grammar and that his focus was like the other students’ in that it was clearly on grammar and the surface structure of the paper. However, he did not demonstrate a clear understanding of any specific grammatical mistake or give an example of the ESL mistakes he referenced.

The analysis of student responses and reported “learning” demonstrates a clear focus on the surface structure of language—a focus that mirrors the professors’ emphasis on the surface structure of language in their evaluation of students’ work—but it does not illustrate that the students fully understand the grammatical rules they claimed to have learned.

Inability to be explicit about their learning

A clear example of a student being unable to articulate what he or she had learned was found in Ethel’s response. When asked how the professor helped her writing, Ethel said, “He

improved it because of the feedback and, what did we do? We did something about, we used, one of those words, oh goodness, um, I forgot. He improved it." Like the other students, Ethel did not give specifics about how her writing had improved.

In another interview, when I asked Ethel to state what she was learning or studying, she stated that she learned about "fallacies and all" but she was unable to explain what that meant. In the third interview, when asked to explain what she had learned, she simply stated, "I haven't learned much." Again, Ethel could not explain further. Another student unable to state what she had learned and if she had learned anything at all was Lynn. When asked if she had learned about writing and improved her writing, she replied, "Um, I can't tell. Maybe. I just don't know if I did or not."

And another student, Alex, was unable to give specific information about his learning. When asked what he had learned, Alex stated, "Um, um, this is probably the same thing." I tried to clarify this statement by asking, "So just relearning, maybe?" Alex responded with an affirming nod. And as mentioned above, Alex stated that he had learned about "ESL mistakes" but did not give any specific examples of these mistakes. Alex's comment suggested that he focused on grammar, but did not have a clear understanding of the mistakes.

In the second interview with Renaldo that took place after the first quarter of the semester, I asked him how prepared he felt for class. He stated that with "grammar and commas I feel well-prepared" but that he was doing more writing in this class. When asked what he had learned in this class, he said, "how to improve writing skills and reread, and proofread, and most just grammar other than that." This statement was global, and he was unable to name a specific grammar skill. And while Maylen was able to use a specific term like "cliché" when reporting

what she learned, she was unable to clearly define cliché or understand her professor's comments about usage. She had only learned they were unacceptable in college writing.

Alex showed that he had begun to use the professor's language regarding grammar—he refers to run-ons and verb errors as "major mistakes," a term used by the professor to note the errors that were considered to be more egregious than spelling mistakes or capitalization errors. Alex's use of specific terminology like "major mistake" illustrated that his focus was on grammar, and he believed, as did the other students in the study, that limiting grammar mistakes was the key to improving his writing. He was primarily focused on the grammatical mistakes in his paper, but he did note that, in addition to helping him with grammar, his professor helped him with "all that stuff like thesis," suggesting that he was at least aware of the prescribed pieces comprising the structure of an essay. But this comment did not reveal an ability to articulate what "that stuff" was or an understanding of how to improve his writing.

If students did say something about their learning, they focused on a grammar skill, but they did not seem to understand fully what they were discussing. And what was most striking to me was what was not being said by these students. They were not mentioning any "learning" related to writing like idea generation, limiting a topic, developing ideas, or strategies for revision—substantive, content-related aspects of writing development.

Lack of understanding basis for grades

Most of the student participants clearly focused on grammar, and they connected grammatical correctness, often related to one specific skill, to the grades they received. Again and again, student participants demonstrated that they believed the way they could improve their writing and their grades was to correct one particular grammatical mistake.

When Maylen discussed her essay grade, she said that she "felt decent about it." When asked to reflect on the comments made by her instructor, she said that she "messed up on like

pronouns and stuff like." She also noted, "[her professor] circled 'it' a lot too, and I did not know that was unacceptable." Several things about Maylen's comments struck me. First of all, in the grading of the rough draft and final draft she referred to, her professor made a total of 48 comments in the text of the paper. Maylen noted that she messed up on pronouns, and her second comment about overusing "it" was also about pronouns. Her professor noted errors in comma use, spelling, verb tense, colon use, vague words, run-ons, apostrophes, homonyms, and capitalization. Maylen did not mention these other errors. Perhaps she forgot about them, but her comments seemed to reveal that she did not truly understand pronouns or pronoun use, in spite of her recognition of the mistake and the comments by the instructor—she discussed "it" and pronouns as if they were separate topics. Or, could it be that she was overwhelmed by the information she received and only able to hold on to a few basic comments? Either way, these comments revealed a lack of understanding of the basis for her grade. Additionally, she demonstrated a clear focus on pronouns but lacked an understanding of this grammatical mistake and gave no evidence of an awareness of how to improve her writing.

Maylen first mentioned her overuse of pronouns in her second interview, early in the semester. During our last interview of the semester, I asked her what she learned in the class. She recalled that one skill / correction: "[The professor] hated when I used 'it' and um, not [paused]. I don't know what the word is, just not words to describe very much." I think that she was talking about vague pronouns, but I found it interesting that she used the word "hate" to describe her instructor's feelings about her writing. It alluded to the fact that students see essay grading as a subjective activity revealing an instructor's personal likes and dislikes. Another example of Maylen's lack of understanding of the basis for her grades was revealed when she noted that "the way [the professor] likes for us to write and the grammar, she didn't really teach

us, but that she instilled upon us, I guess." This comment reinforces the idea that students hold that grading is a subjective matter—one where the instructor imposes his or her likes and dislikes on students.

When asked about the professor's grading, Renaldo said, "She lets you know what you need to do—to improve your writing—what you're missing—you need to lay off the commas." Again, he has focused on one feature—commas—that he said he "knows" and it was this feature that he reported needed improvement for him to better his writing. It also illustrated that he was not focusing on other grammatical mistakes made in his paper and marked by his professor.

And in our last interview, when asked how the professor's feedback affected his writing, Renaldo said, "She improved it. She gave me good feedback and showed me areas where I need to work." When I asked what those areas were, he said, "like comma usage and like reviewing my paper." Again, whenever pressed for specifics, Renaldo returned to "comma usage," even though he said he felt confident about that skill and had "learned it" before he began the class. This comment suggests that he was simply using a term or skill that he connected to being a part of successful or good writing. Perhaps Renaldo's repeated mention of comma use in his answers to interview questions illustrated that he had become more aware or cognizant of comma use. Overall, the professors in this study focused their grading feedback on the surface structure of writing, and the students believed that correcting grammar and learning to punctuate their writing correctly was the key to improved writing.

Alex had to adjust to the professor's grading, which, according to him, was harder than he was accustomed to and focused on deducting points for grammatical mistakes. In our second interview, after he had received his first graded paper, he said that he was "shocked because I work hard to, for this thing, but I had a, can I see this? I had a 78." He continued to reflect on the

grade and said that in high school, he was used to higher scores for the same amount of work so that was why he was shocked, but he also said, "I think that's what the class is for." This comment by Alex was a bit obtuse. It was hard to say what his use of "that" specifically referenced. When I asked him to explain, he said, "She (the professor) told me there is like ESL errors, ESL mistakes that I have to try to not make on other papers." After hearing this explanation, I thought that Alex could have been saying that the purpose of being in the college composition course was to make him aware of the grammatical mistakes he had in his paper. He did later say that "[at the community college] we make more grammar than at [home high school]." I interpreted his comment "make more grammar" to mean that his community college English class focused on grammar more than his high school English class.

I found Ethel's comment about grading and that her professor's feedback had helped her writing to be of particular interest because her instructor had provided no comments in the text of her graded papers. In the essays she submitted to me for analysis, her professor's feedback to her was limited to comments at the end of the paper. Comments like "you did not meet all of the requirements" were used by her professor, apparently to justify her grade, but no other comments about her writing were given. It might be unfair to expect Ethel to have an understanding for the basis of her grade, but she did answer the question posed. Not surprisingly, Ethel's answer to the question about how her professor improved her writing was the shortest of any given by the student participants, perhaps because in spite of her noting that his feedback helped in some indeterminate way, Ethel's professor gave little or no feedback on papers.

When asked about her learning and whether or not her writing improved in the course of the semester, Lynn stated, "My last paper in there was like one of my higher graded ones, I actually thought I was doing better!" but then stated that she could not tell if she was doing

better. Lynn's experience was marked by uncertainty. This excerpt not only expressed her doubt about her experience, but it also revealed the utter uncertainty she had when trying to discern the grades she made and why she made them. While her grade improved, she did not know what that meant for her as a writer, and because she eventually learned she had failed the course, she did not know how to evaluate her writing or learning in the semester.

There was one student, however, whose reported "learning" was not on grammar and the surface structure of language. Bob's answers to questions about his "learning" revealed an exception to the theme. Bob's experience differed from the experience of the other participants. When interviewed after the first quarter of the semester, he reported that he had learned more about writing—and actually discussed deep structure. This perspective differed from the other students' comments, which noted learning about surface structure. He, unlike other students, did not focus on one grammatical error like pronoun agreement and say that he learned more about that one grammatical rule.

In contrast, he said that he learned "better writing techniques. How to, um, structure the essay my essay better." When I asked him to give me specifics, he stated, "Um, the topic sentences and how to make them flow better with the essay. How to make them incorporate into the essay where they sound better." There was no specific explanation by Bob that accounted for his answer and why it differed from the other student participants' answers. However, when I recalled the strict six-step process for completing writing assignments that Bob was given, I thought that it was possible that his professor's strict instructions and requirements for essay assignments could have at least made him aware of other parts of the writing process.

Overall, analysis of students' interview transcripts revealed that most students who participated in the study focused on the surface structure of writing when reporting what they

learned. This view could be related to the feedback they received from professors, which also focused on the surface structure of writing. Students reported learning something, even when apparently dissatisfied with the class. Each student reported that his or her writing improved in some way, even if it was "not much."

Summary of Results for Research Question 2

My analysis of the collected data in an effort to discern what opportunities and feedback are high school students provided to develop their writing abilities in a college composition course revealed several important themes.

My analysis of the transcripts of interviews with students and professors and artifacts submitted from student participants revealed the complications of the writing assignments, including complex steps required to complete the assignment, a complicated or "tricky" topic, and complicated language like "keynote" used to describe a writing technique. Students can be given assignments in ways that make the difficult exercise of composition perhaps unnecessarily complicated, and students often found the assigned topics uninteresting and difficult to write about.

My analysis of the assessment and feedback given to students from their instructors revealed several themes. When I analyzed the in-text comments professors returned in student essays, I discovered that the students made large numbers of comments, but these comments most often focused on the surface structure of language. These comments, I found, often contained ambiguous and sometimes disheartening messages to the students. I found positive comments were the most infrequent comments given to student participants. When I analyzed the comments professors returned to students on rubrics found at the end of the essays, I discovered that it was difficult to connect them to the in-text comments made in the same essay.

Additionally, trying to decipher how the comments on the rubric equaled the assigned grade was difficult. Analysis of the grammar assignments given to students revealed that the assignments themselves were abstract and focused on the surface structure of language. Most of the student participants were instructed to complete grammar instruction in a learning lab where their professor was not present. Overall, these grammar assignments were abstract, and their assessment that was most often completed by the program on WebCT seemed to benefit the professors more than the students.

When I studied what students reported about their evaluation and learning, I found that they focused on the surface structure of language, often stating one specific grammatical rule that they had learned. However, when asked questions about their understanding of the rule, I discovered that students were unable to be explicit about the topic. Another theme that became apparent after my analysis of the student transcripts was the student participants' lack of understanding for the basis of their grades. They connected grammatical correctness, often of one specific skill, to the grades they received.

Research Question 3

To address the third research question—What is the nature of the intersection / interaction of selected high school students and college instructors in a college composition course?—I studied the professors' and students' transcribed interview questions. I first analyzed the perspectives of the professors and how they experienced working with HSDE students, and then the experiences the HSDE students had working with their individual professors.

Professor Participants

Three common themes emerged when I analyzed the transcribed interviews with the four professor participants. The professors were dealing with the pressure of an increased workload. They associated HSDE students with immature behavior; and they had expectations of students'

academic performance that were based on the age of the student. Through my own experience working on this campus as a high school English teacher, I knew that some professors did not necessarily embrace having high school students in their college courses. For this reason, I thought it was important to ask the instructors about their experiences with and feelings about working with HSDE students.

Increased workload

First, the process of trying to secure interviews with the professors, as well as their responses to my questions, made it clear that they felt pressed for time. They were grading final papers and final essays, and I surmised that this timing was a reason for their reluctance to schedule an appointment with me for an interview. The spring semester of my research project was the first semester after the college's administration had implemented a change to the teaching load required for all full-time college English faculty members. Previously, full-time English faculty members completed their contract obligations by teaching 12 contact hours a semester. These hours were fewer than the 15 contact hours required of all other full-time teaching faculty in the college's Liberal Arts and Sciences division. That semester was the first time that full-time English faculty members were required to teach 15 contact hours in one semester. There were a few comments in the interviews and behaviors of the professors that indicated these professors felt the increased workload was stressful and impacted their teaching.

Two of the professors I met with, Professor Hanson and Professor Smith, had to consult their grade books to recall exactly which student we were discussing and his or her performance. For example, when our interview began, Professor Smith, Alex's professor, stated, "Um, at this point I'm dealing, they just kind of increased our course load, so I'm dealing with more students than I'm used to so it's very hard for me to get perspective with that many students, but let me just look at his grade." From this statement I gleaned that the professor was having difficulty

dealing with the increased workload presented by an increase in students and apparently had no clear memory of Alex and his work. Additionally, while the portion of her comment "it's very hard for me to get perspective" seemed a bit vague, it suggested to me that the professor had difficulty connecting a particular student like Alex to his performance in class. I do not think she was unaware of who Alex was, but she did seem to need to consult her records to connect Alex to particular work or performance in class.

Another professor I interviewed, Professor Hanson, stated in the course of our discussion that her student, Bob, did not visit her during office hours. In my interview with Bob, he asserted that he had visited her in her office five or six times. Through my experience interviewing Bob and connecting his answers to specific information from the class, particularly the artifacts he submitted to me, I found him a reliable source and a person focused on the details of his class performance. My experience with Bob made me believe that he had visited her office, but this professor, perhaps because of her increased workload, was unable to remember all of the students who visited her office. This professor would need to keep track of up to 30 students in each of the five classes she taught that semester, so it is understandable that a detail such as who visited her office could be forgotten, or she could be visited by a student whose name she did not immediately know.

In my interview with Professor Sands, who was Lynn, Shirley, and Renaldo's professor, she stated that she spent so much time grading, she felt it necessary to record the hours each week that she spent out of class grading and completing paperwork. She reported to me that she had recorded over 60 hours of grading and additional school work that she completed outside of her class meetings. And while I received no response from Professor Stricker, Ethel's professor, when I e-mailed him and phoned him requesting his participation in my project, it is possible that

the increased workload and the fact that he taught in two different locations, downtown and north of town, could have made him less likely to contact me and agree to give up his time for an interview.

While this press for time and increased workload that clearly affected Professor Hanson, Professor Smith, Professor Sands, and probably Professor Stricker was not directly related to the HSDE students enrolled in their classes, the additional three-hour class was a new stressor for these full-time English professors. Because the HSDE program at the school asks teachers to complete a progress report for each HSDE student enrolled in a professor's class, the HSDE student could also be seen as an additional burden for these instructors. However, I did not expect these professors to complain to me about the extra work the HSDE students presented, as I was a representative of the HSDE program.

HSDE students and immature behavior

Another common theme found in the responses from the professors was their concern about the potential for immature behavior from HSDE students. Because this program had been established at the college for over 25 years, all of the professors had worked with several dual enrollment students. All mentioned that they had experienced having excellent HSDE students in their classes, and three of the four professors who responded (Professors Hanson, Sands, and Smith) noted that high school students are often some of their best students. However, this experience of having well-performing HSDE students in their classes did not keep all of the respondents from stating that they were leery of working with high school students because HSDE students often behave in an immature manner. Several comments that I found through my analysis of transcribed interviews and correspondence with professor participants illustrated the theme of professors' associating HSDE students with immature behavior.

In her correspondence with me, Professor Casey wrote:

> A few high school students are immature. One in particular stands out. She turned in a D research essay, expressed anger at her grade, and then claimed, "But I'm only a high school junior." This same person was also squeamish and disapproving of some of the material we discussed in class.

When I reviewed Professor Casey's statement, what stood out was that while she said only a few were immature, her experience with the one particular student stood out. I found that to be a feature in the responses from all of the professor participants—they all cited one specific instance that seemed to impact their opinion of working with HSDE students. Additionally, I found only one part of Professor Casey's description of working with the student—when she seemed to suggest she should not be graded harshly because of her age—to be immature. Being squeamish and disapproving of material or turning in a poor research paper could be a product of many variables other than a student's age. In other words, because this student was an HSDE student, the professor seemed to attribute all of her unwanted behavior to her apparent immaturity.

Another recollection from a professor participant, Professor Hanson, had features reminiscent of Professor Casey's comments. In the course of our interview, I asked Professor Hanson about her experiences with HSDE students:

Prof. Hanson: And one time I did have a classroom full of dual enrollment students.

AB: Really?

Prof. Hanson: Yeah, I had, um, it was the worst class I ever taught, actually.

AB: Really?

Prof. Hanson: Yeah, it was years ago.

AB: Why would it be the worst class?

Prof. Hanson: Um, you know, because they knew each other. It was a unique circumstance; there were about 10 of them and 6 or 7 of them knew each other, so it had an effect of making it feel very retro for me. I mean they were not, they were not easily controllable.

AB: Right, so it was more behavior than—

Prof. Hanson: Absolutely.

AB: —than writing potential and skill level?

Prof. Hanson: Yes, yes.

Again, this exchange illustrates how one specific negative experience with HSDE students stands out for the professor. But again, these students, who seemed to be friends outside of class, behaved in a manner of which the professor disapproved. When this professor stated that "it had an effect of making it feel very retro for me," I wondered if she did not enjoy her high school experience and having a group of HSDE students in the classroom made her feel uncomfortable for that reason. In any case, the "uncontrollable" behavior, which she seemed to attribute to them being friendly with each other, does not seem to be related specifically to an age group. However, like Professor Casey, Professor Hanson attributed this unwanted behavior to the age group of the HSDE students.

The other two professor participants did not cite specific examples, as Professors Hanson and Casey did, but they did continue the theme of connecting immature behavior in class to HSDE students. When asked about working with HSDE students, Professor Sands stated, "Sometimes they are the students who have the worst in-class [paused] misbehavior. Yeah, chatting with other students." Again, Professor Sands seemed to be recognizing that more than one category of students chat with others during class, yet she seemed to be attributing the "worst" of that "misbehavior" to HSDE students. Then she continued to describe working with the HSDE students and stated:

Prof. Sands: I teach in a computer classroom and that just exacerbates the situation.

AB: Sure.

Prof. Sands: And they're not the only ones who will do this, but just, yeah, I try to forbid them. In fact I have a policy they're not allowed to do stuff on the Internet or don't even access the computer while I'm talking. I don't even allow them to get on the computers before or after class either.

In addition to Professor Sands continuing to focus on the HSDE students as the most egregious offenders when it came to accessing the computer rather than focusing on her class lecture, her comment that she "forbids" students to access the computers, even when class is not in session, revealed a seemingly inflexible classroom management style.

Another example of a professor participant connecting HSDE students to immature behavior was found when analyzing Professor Smith's transcript. She stated, "Only occasionally do I get someone who is a little too immature uh, I had a few problems last year with a couple immature students that just weren't working up to their potential because they were, you know, slacking off or not taking the assignments seriously." The language Professor Smith used "only occasionally" and "a little too immature" suggested to me that while she did connect HSDE students to immature behavior, she experienced it either as less of a problem than the other professors did or she had not had an experience with HSDE students that was as strikingly bad as the experiences recounted by the other professors. She did not mention the behavior or classroom management as issues in working with HSDE students. Instead, the "immature behavior" she connected to some HSDE students was their lack of effort on their assignments.

Overall, the professors' responses made it clear that while they had experienced "good" HSDE students, their overriding concern was that HSDE students might be behavior problems in their classrooms. None of the professors interviewed stated that the students were unable to complete the assigned work. Instead, it seems as if they believed some of their previous HSDE students were not "mature" enough to be in their class. And one of the professors, Professor Sands, stated that the problem of how to deal with the behavior of students in class was a real

inconvenience. When asked if she contacted the students who were behavior problems outside of class or contacted the HSDE office for help, she stated, "I never take it that far. I usually carry so many students that I have other things to worry about." Again, it is not difficult to see that these HSDE students could be perceived as additional work for the professors.

Expectations for students based on age

In addition to dealing with an increased workload and connecting HSDE students with immature behavior, another theme that I found after analyzing the data suggested that professors may have expectations for students' academic performance based on their age. Professor Sands stated:

Prof. Sands: So I do have actually more A's, I think, this semester than I had last semester.

AB: Really?

Prof. Sands: They are primarily from older students.

AB: Yeah?

Prof. Sands: They really are.

Professor Sands had not been prompted to make a statement about the numbers or types of grades awarded to students, but she was discussing her students' academic performance in this spring semester. This response was not backed up with any specific evidence, but it did suggest to me an expectation or connection between the age of the students and their academic performance in class.

I found another example of this type of connection between age and student grades or performance when interviewing Bob's professor. When asked about Bob's writing ability and the appropriateness of his placement in the course, Professor Hanson stated:

Prof. Hanson: I do notice that sometimes my dual enrollment students, they sort of fall into, well they fall into a couple of categories, but I do have a number of them who tend to be very quiet. They are, you know, I think just trying to get a sense of how the

classroom environment works here and they're very aware that it's quite different from what they've come from.

AB: Right.

Prof. Hanson: And I think it can make them a little timid.

AB: Uh huh.

Prof. Hanson: And maybe they're just timid by nature, which I think might be the case with [Bob].

AB: Yes, I think so.

Prof. Hanson: And I think that raises the volume on that effect, makes it more so, so yeah, maybe that inhibits participation when we're discussing ideas about the literature because they don't have as much experience. Certainly my older students always bring that life experience to the classroom.

Her response suggested that she was aware that HSDE students could feel out of place in the college classroom community, but she made no statement about how she could address this problem. Additionally, her comment that her older students "always" brought that life experience to the classroom suggested that she did have more positive expectations for her older students and their participation in a classroom discussion. Professor Hanson's comments suggested that she had expectations for students and their level of participation in the class based on their ages. It is possible that these expectations were communicated to students in some way, so this professor inadvertently encouraged older students to participate in the class activities but expected the HSDE students in her class to be "quiet" or "timid."

While only two professors made these explicit comments associating their students' ages with their academic performances in the class, these responses do illustrate how some HSDE students may intersect or be placed in classrooms that are more or less welcoming, with a professor who may have expectations about their behavior or performance based on their age.

Students' Perspectives of Their Professors and the Community College Context

When I studied the students' perspectives, I identified two common dimensions of the experience that impacted their experiences as students. The first was the impact that their professor had on their experience, and the second was the overall impact that completing the class had on them as writers and as students.

The impact of the professor

During my pilot study, it became clear to me that one of the problems that Lynn had in her ENC 1101 class was her lack of willingness to approach her professor. Lynn stated that she did not find her professor approachable. This feeling came, at least in part, from her interpretation of her professor's reaction to her crying in class after receiving a failing grade on a paper. While completing my research, I could not help but wonder how the interaction between instructor and student affected Lynn's experience.

While not all of the participants seemed greatly impacted by their professors, the professors and their teaching methods and personalities intersected with the students in the course of the semester and impacted the students' experiences. Three examples that illustrate how a professor can impact a student's experience follow. One student began the semester with a high opinion of his instructor, but ended the semester with a different opinion. Another student who began the semester not engaged in the class finished the class with a different opinion of her professor, and one student who had left her home high school because of a dislike of the high school's climate and her teachers entered a classroom where the professor's empathy for her as a student created a welcoming learning environment.

Bob began the semester liking his professor, describing her as a good professor, but his opinion of her declined as the semester continued. In Bob's class, the instructor had strict instructions and requirements for essay assignments. Students were given two topics to choose

from. Then the essay assignment required brainstorming, drafting and revising, and a final draft. Students had to submit all parts of this assignment, but the work submitted by Bob showed that the professor graded and made comments only on the final draft. At the beginning of the semester, Bob did not find fault with these assignments. He said that he understood them fully, and he even complimented her as an instructor. He stated, "She's, she helps a lot like if you have questions about your essay or whatever she will help you. Um, she's available a lot of the time. Um, like two hours every day she's available for questions one on, [paused]. She does a lot of one on one help in class." I replied, "Uh huh," and he added, "Um, I think she's a pretty good teacher."

His opinion had changed when I interviewed him at the end of the semester. He was not complimentary. When asked in the final interview to assess how this class affected his writing, we had the following exchange:

Bob: I think it improved, a little bit. Not a lot because I've done a lot of writing at my high school, but I've never done an argument essay before, a straightforward argument essay, and that's one of the major things I learned was how to do that and the strategies to do that.

AB: Okay, so anything else other than a reasoned argument that you believe you learned this semester?

Bob: No.

AB: Okay, anything else you hadn't done this semester other than argumentative writing?

Bob: Anything I hadn't done?

AB: Yeah, was there anything that you were presented in the class this semester that you had not done before?

Bob: No.

AB: No, just the persuasive writing?

Bob: Just the persuasive writing.

At the beginning of the semester, Bob had reported learning more about how to write a thesis and work on the structure of his essays, but at the end of the semester, the persuasive writing was the only assignment he found useful. This change in his feeling about the course work seemed to correlate with his growing impatience with his professor and his dislike of the way she ran her class. While he described his professor as "helpful" and stated, "She is a pretty good teacher," at the beginning of the semester, at the end of the semester he reported that he did not like his professor. When asked, "Okay, did your professor make the class better or worse?" he replied, "Uh, I didn't really like the professor, so I would say she made it worse." Our conversation continued:

AB: Okay, how so? Why was she not likeable?

Bob: Because, it was just, I didn't like the group quizzes in the class that we took.

AB: Okay, you already told me about those.

Bob: Yes, and I didn't like the way the class was run. She was just, she wasn't an organized, a really organized person. I'm one of these organized, everything has to be square.

AB: What was unorganized about it?

Bob: The way she taught. Her writing on the board was sideways, she just wrote over here and then drew big long arrows all the way around the board, and I just, it was hard to follow her instructions sometimes.

Since Bob previously mentioned that he did not like the group work required by his professor as part of the grammar quizzes, that part of the response did not surprise me. I did find the mention of her unorganized writing on the board unexpected. That complaint seemed to be about something meaningless, and it sounded more like Bob found the personality of the instructor annoying. Later in the interview, Bob had another complaint about the class:

Bob: It was very frustrating because it was, every time I'd go into class, I would just think like, oh I wish I could skip this class 'cause it was so boring, all we do is just busy work basically, just busy writing work—

AB: Uh huh.

Bob: —about random things she thinks up over night, I think, I don't know. I really didn't like writing a lot, I'm one of those kind of people I guess. And I just, it just frustrated me to have to sit in class and write for 75 minutes.

The "busy work" complaint by Bob seemed to be about something more substantive than his professor's writing on the board. Perhaps Bob's dissatisfaction with the class and the assignments led him to be annoyed by the smaller things his professor did in the class, like writing on the board in an unorganized fashion. Perhaps Bob's opinion of his professor changed from "good" at the beginning of the semester to "bad" at the end because the teacher did not change or vary the way she presented the material or assigned writing to the students. He may have simply grown weary of the many required assignment parts, which included prewriting, outlining, rough drafts, final drafts, and self-editing. Certainly these could be productive assignments, but evidence of little or no feedback from the professor made it seem as if these assignments were the busy work that Bob described.

Another point is that it seemed as if Bob was a structured person, with a clear idea of how he would have liked the class to be run. This professor may simply have been incompatible with him in regards to organization and structure. Overall, Bob's professor impacted his classroom experience and his experience as a writer negatively.

Ethel's opinion of her instructor, Professor Stricker, also changed in the semester, and this change seemed to be related to his personality. She began the semester seemingly displeased with her instructor's assigned writing topics, assigned reading material, and grading practices. In contrast to Bob's experience, her opinion of her instructor changed for the better. By the end of the semester, she was pleased with her professor and described him as fun and a good teacher.

In the second interview, when I asked Ethel if she felt her instructor was a good teacher, she stated, “Um, he’s a nice person but as a teacher, um, I don’t think I’m pleased with the way he teaches.” One of the specific reasons she gave for her dissatisfaction with the class was her first writing assignment. She described her first writing assignment as a “dissuasive essay on a bad movie.” She said that she understood the movie, but “didn’t like the whole *Fast Food Nation*. I don’t understand all that.” Here the “all that” implied that she understood the facts of the movie, but she did not understand why it was a topic worth discussing or writing about. She stated, “I don’t want to write about it.” Her comments made it clear that what the professor had chosen as material for the class to study was not salient to Ethel, and she found it difficult to write about a topic that did not interest her.

However, at the end of the semester, she said “the way he taught and his personality made [the class] exciting.” This statement that the class was “exciting” was far different from her opinion at the midterm of the semester. In her third interview, she stated that her professor jumped around from topic to topic, and when I asked her to rate how interesting the class was (with 1 being most interesting and 10 being most boring), she said that the class was a 7. But by the end of the semester, she stated several times that she “liked the way he acted, he just like joked around and made us laugh all the time.” It was his personality or the entertainment factor that she enjoyed. And while her interest in the assigned movie from the beginning of the semester did not change, her interest in her professor did. Additionally, as Ethel’s opinion of her professor changed, so did her performance in the class. When Ethel was asked about her grade in the class in our second interview, she said she had received grades of “D” on all assignments. However, by the end of the semester, Ethel was passing the class with a grade of “C.”

That Ethel found her professor entertaining may not have made her a successful student, but it made her experience in the class more enjoyable than if she had not been engaged by the professor. It may have been a coincidence, but her grade in the class did improve from a "D" in the beginning to a "C" by the end of the semester, coinciding with her improved opinion of her professor. It seemed likely that Ethel's changing opinion of her professor indicated that her professor, at least during a major portion of the class, positively impacted Ethel's experience in class by making it more interesting for her.

Another student who had a positive view of her instructor was Maylen. From our first interview, she made it clear that she left her home high school for the dual enrollment program because she did not like her home high school. In particular, she described herself as a student who was prepared for her classes and interested in learning, but other students at her home high school made fun of her. When I asked Maylen if she felt comfortable in the college classroom, she said, "At first I wasn't 'cause I'm like a high school student and it felt kind of weird but then like the atmosphere is really like easy going." It became clear from Maylen's responses to additional questions that her professor's attitude toward her and her classmates contributed to Maylen's comfort in the classroom.

Maylen described her instructor, Professor Casey, as being "really laid-back" and having "kind of like a 'whatever' attitude but not in a bad way." She went on to explain that if a student forgot his or her book or if he or she was not prepared, the professor would lend the student her book and say something like, "Oh, it's okay; just don't let it happen again." I found this example of Maylen's interesting for several reasons. First, it illustrated that Maylen still saw the professor in the college class as one whose job was to keep order or to "discipline" students who were not doing what she (Maylen) judged most important: being prepared for class. Maylen

responded well to the "laid-back" attitude of the professor but did seem to want the professor to note the students who came to class unprepared. Also, I found it interesting that when asked what made her professor a good instructor, Maylen did not note anything that I would have expected to qualify one as a good professor. She did not note the professor's stimulating class assignments or insightful feedback about her writing. I am not suggesting that these things were not present in the class, but if they were, they were not noted by Maylen.

Several times, she noted the professor's "friendly" demeanor as what made her a good instructor. The specific things she recalled were the professor's icebreaker activity, which promoted the students learning the names of their peers, the "circle wagon" or discussion group activities with the whole class, and the professor's concern for her students. Maylen believed that the professor "made it clear that she was open to talk about things, that she cared about us, not just as students, but as people and not just our writing but what we write about." When asked how the professor did this, Maylen recalled her first essay when she wrote about a difficult time in her life: her grandmother had just died, and her older sister, her only sibling, had just left home for college. In addition to feedback about Maylen's writing, her instructor wrote a note on the paper which she quoted as saying, "If you want help, I am always here to talk to." Maylen summed up her experience with this instructor by saying, "I think that's really the key for teachers—not just the academic." This comment implied to me that for Maylen, a good instructor was one who would relate to her on a personal level, not just as an instructor.

Additionally, this comment made me realize that when professors assign and receive personal writing or narratives from students, even though that writing may be designed to accomplish an academic task, a professor may be privy to information that is extremely important to that student. This information may require more of a response from the professor

than the response of a reviewer, critic, or editor for students to feel at ease and open to instruction. Overall, these excerpts from Maylen's transcribed interviews illustrated the positive impact that her professor had on her experience entering the college classroom community.

Reported overall impact of the community college context

When studying students' responses to questions regarding their overall experiences in the class and the outcome of the class experience, I found several important themes. Students, after successfully completing the college class and gaining college credit, reported that they would change nothing about their class experience, even if they had complained about the class and/or the professor. Some student participants' experiences in their college composition course may have given them a negative emotional response to writing, as they found the class meetings and writing assignments boring. However, students who successfully complete a college course may have improved confidence in their academic abilities.

Students would change nothing about their class experience

In spite of having complaints about the class, all student participants except one reported that they would not change anything about the class experience. Two students, Alex and Ethel, had almost identical responses when asked if they would change anything about the class. They both agreed they would not change anything about the classes, but they did mention that they wish the class meetings had not been so long—their class meetings were an hour and fifteen minutes each. Another student, Renaldo, also would not change the class because "I got a good grade. You can't be upset about that." However, he also mentioned that the class was boring "because she talked the whole time and all we did was take notes, and she gave us worksheets."

The theme of not changing anything because one was successful in the class despite having a boring class continued. Bob said the class was boring because "we really don't do anything in class." As he said earlier when discussing his professor, he felt that her forcing the students to

write drafts and rewrite drafts was busy work. In spite of this dissatisfaction with class and the previously mentioned dissatisfaction with his professor, he still stated that he would change nothing about the class:

AB: Would you change anything if you could change anything about this class experience?

Bob: Not that I can think of.

I found Bob's response the most interesting because he clearly stated that he did not enjoy his professor, and when I asked him if he would recommend her to other students, he said that he would not. Of all of the student participants, Bob reported being most dissatisfied with his professor and the class. He said the class was boring, his professor assigned boring topics and busy work, and she was disorganized. He was not willing to suggest that other students take the class from his professor. Thus, I found it perplexing that he would not change anything about his class experience.

The students' responses suggested two important points. First, the student participants were focused on completing the course and gaining college credit. All student participants but one were able to accomplish that task, and all student participants but one would not change the course at all because it moved them closer to their ultimate goal of earning a college degree. Second, the focus on the course outcome, or "passing" the course, suggested that the students did not focus on developing their writing abilities. The students' focus on gaining college credit and successfully completing the class mirrored the professors' focus on the surface structure of the students' writing. If students were not given clear information from their professors about how to improve their writing competencies, it should not be surprising that they failed to focus on the development of those writing competencies as a desired outcome of the class.

Negative emotional response to writing

My analysis of the students' responses resulted in identifying another important theme. The students, even though they successfully completed the college writing class as high school students, may have gained an adverse emotional response to writing and writing classes. Bob, Ethel, and Renaldo all reported finding the classes boring, and all reported dissatisfaction with most of the writing assignments they were given. The writing assignments did not interest them, and the class meetings were too long. The students' reported experiences, instead of illustrating an interest in writing, revealed that writing in the college classroom had proven to be a less than exciting and interesting activity for them.

Lynn, the student who failed the college writing class, was the only student participant who reported that she regretted taking the class. I am sure that she was unhappy that she did not receive college credit, but I also think the data collected in her interview suggested that her response to the outcome of the class was more complicated than that. She had no additional comments about the effect of the class, perhaps because she was unable to put into words how she felt or what it meant, but in my time spent with Lynn, her frustration with the class, the professor, and her inability to understand how to make sense of the feedback she received about her writing was clear. I was left wondering what kind of emotional response to writing resulted from Lynn's experience in the college composition classroom. I cannot imagine that she was more enthused about writing after her experience in ENC 1101.

These responses suggested that the students, like the professors, were focused on a product. The product for the professors was the finished paper, and the product for the students was ultimately the grade that they received for the class and the credit earned toward a college degree. Indeed, the completion of a college class while still a high school student may give some students a sense of accomplishment. Two particular student examples illustrate this point.

Gaining confidence in academic abilities

When Ethel started taking the class, she was not getting passing grades, and she did not think her professor was a good teacher. Ethel had said in one of her interviews that she worked hard to make sure her counselor allowed her to take the college-level English class because it would be a challenge. When she began getting grades of "D" on her papers, I asked Ethel in one of our interviews if she regretted taking the class. Ethel responded by saying no, and then adding, "I wanted the challenge, so now I have it." And after successfully completing the class with a C, Ethel stated she was happy she had taken the class "because I knew I could do it." These excerpts from Ethel's transcript illustrated how her experience of successfully completing a college-level class allowed her to prove something to herself, and perhaps to others like the counselor who initially tried to dissuade her from taking ENC 1101. Ethel may not have improved her writing competencies, and she may not have become more interested in writing, but she did prove to herself that she could be academically successful in college-level course work.

Another example of a student gaining confidence academically by being successful in a college class is Maylen's reported experience with a particularly successful writing assignment. Maylen reported that received an "A" on one of her first essay assignments. When I asked her how she felt about her grade, she said, "I was proud of myself." I asked Maylen to explain what made her proud and she said, "'cause I got the only A, and it was a college class, and I'm the only high school student." I found this response interesting because of what she did not say. She did not say that this experience helped her see how her writing had improved or that she was a good writer. What Maylen reported was not a specific item that she learned, but a sense of pride that she gained as a result of out-performing her college classmates. In an effort to get Maylen to delve deeper into how this affected her as a writer, I then asked her to explain how the

experience affected her as a writing student. She stated, "Well, it made me feel more confident. And, not so much in like, chemistry and that, but it helped me like in my writing aspects of feeling better." In this response she mentions "writing aspects," but she associated that with a "feeling." This experience seemed to have affected Maylen's confidence as a writer, but she made no specific comments that I would associate with awareness of improved writing competencies.

Summary of Results for Research Question 3

After analyzing the transcribed interviews with professors, I identified three important themes. The professors felt that the increased workload was stressful and impacted their teaching. Drawing on their previous experiences working with HSDE students, the professors associated immature behavior with HSDE students and professors attributed good performance in class with older students, suggesting they had preconceived notions of a student's performance based on his/her age.

I also analyzed the students' transcripts and comments about their professors. I found that while not all of the participants seemed greatly impacted by their professors, the professors and their teaching methods and personalities intersected with the students in the course of the semester and impacted the students' experiences. The analysis I completed revealed a range of experience. One student who was not interested in the course at the beginning of the semester became interested and reported that her professor was funny. Her interest in the professor coincided with her improved grades. Another student began the semester believing his professor was a good teacher, but ended the semester complaining of her teaching and her assignment of "busy work." Another student who left the high school context because she felt it to be a

difficult, hostile environment was assigned a caring, welcoming professor in her college classroom.

After studying students' responses to questions regarding their overall experiences in the class and the outcome of the class experience, I found several important themes. Students, after successfully completing the college class and gaining college credit, reported that they would change nothing about their class experiences, even if they had complained about the class and/or the professor. This disparity suggested that these students were focused on acquiring college credit more so than improving their writing competencies. Some student participants' experiences in their college composition course may have given them a negative emotional response to writing, as they found the class meetings and writing assignments boring. However, students who successfully completed a college course may have improved confidence about writing, even without improved writing abilities.

Summary of Results

Research Question 1: What are the contextual features of a HSDE program that influence students' academic achievement? Analysis of the data revealed that academic counseling, the opportunity to take both high school- and college-level course work on a college campus, and the freedom from the high school context were three important contextual features of the HSDE program studied that influenced students' academic achievement.

Academic Counseling

- Students who are not accustomed to working in a college environment may not know what student performance indicates their preparedness for college-level course work. Thus, students use the guidance and suggestions of their counselors to help them decide on the appropriate course work.
- Also, a counselor who does not make a student aware of important college services or who may suggest a student enroll in college course work too soon can negatively impact a student's academic achievement.

Opportunity to Take Both High School- and College-Level Course Work on a College Campus

- This opportunity to take a combination of high school and college course work promotes access, allowing students to begin the program and work toward improving skills in order to take more college course work.
- Students associate being on a college campus, even if they are taking high school classes, with increased academic rigor.
- Achieving academic success and improvement on the college campus can make students feel positively about their academic achievements.

Freedom From the High School Context

- Students who are given some anonymity on a college campus and who are viewed as college students are given room for emotional growth.
- Student participants reported relating to college students and seeing themselves either as college students or as transitioning from high school student to college student, reflecting their perceived focus on academics.
- This environment, which does require students to be responsible and which takes them away from their peers, can be difficult for some students. Some students may not be ready to operate in this "adult" environment.

Research Question 2: What opportunities and feedback are high school students provided to develop their writing abilities in a college composition course? To study the opportunities and feedback that the HSDE students were provided to develop their writing abilities in a college composition course, I studied (a) the assignments given to students to develop and demonstrate their writing abilities, (b) the assessment and feedback given to students from their instructors, and (c) the students' comments about their assignments and assessment.

Assignments Given to Students to Develop and Demonstrate Their Writing Abilities

- Students were given constraining and complicated assignments.
- Students found their assigned topics uninteresting and difficult to write about.

Assessment and Feedback Given to Students From Their Professors' In-text Comments

- The professors' feedback focused on the surface structure of language.

- Positive comments were the most infrequent type of comment found in the graded papers.
- A large number of comments were made, but they contained ambiguous and sometimes disheartening messages to the students.

Evaluation of essays given at end of essays and on rubrics

- Connecting comments given at the end of the essay to the students' writing performance in the essay was difficult.
- It was difficult to decipher how comments given to students on the rubric equaled the assigned grade.

Grammar assessment

- The grammar assignments given were abstract and focused on the surface structure of language.
- The grammar assignments and assessment seemed to benefit the professors more than the students.
- The grammar assignments lacked variety and were not experienced as intended for all students.

Students' comments about their evaluation and learning

- Overall, students' comments about their evaluation focused on the surface structure of language, often stating one specific grammatical rule that they had learned.
- However, when students were asked about the specific grammatical rule they reported "learning," they were unable to be explicit about the topic.
- Students lacked a clear understanding of the basis for their grades and most often reported that grammatical correctness, often related to one specific skill, was responsible for the grade they were given.

Research Question 3: What is the nature of the intersection/interaction of selected high school students and college instructors in a college composition course? Analysis of the professors' perspectives and students' perspectives revealed several important themes.

Professors' Perspectives

- The professors were dealing with the pressure of an increased workload.
- They associated HSDE students with immature behavior.

- They had expectations of students' academic performance that were based on the students' age.

Students' Perspectives of Their Professors and the Community College Context

The impact their professor had on their experience

- The student begins with a positive impression of the professor, but ends with an overall negative impact.

- The student begins with a negative impression from the professor, but reports a positive impact at the end of the semester.

- The student begins the semester uneasily, but the professor positively impacts his/her experience.

Overall impact of the community college context on students

- Students, after successfully completing the college class and gaining college credit, reported that they would change nothing about their class experiences, even if they complained about the class and/or the professor. This acceptance of their experience suggests that these students are focused on acquiring college credit more so than improving their writing competencies.

- Some student participants' experiences in their college composition course may have given them a negative emotional response to writing because they found the class meetings and writing assignments boring.

- Students who successfully completed a college course may have improved confidence about writing, rather than improved writing abilities.

CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSIONS

Summary of the Results

All of the students participating in this study were high school students taking a college-level course on a college campus. The "surround context" described by Lindfors (1999) is of extreme importance because it constitutes the strands that the student participants used to create their experiences in the composition classroom. An across-case analysis of the individual students' experiences revealed several important contextual features, all part of the surround context, that impacted students' academic success. Many characteristics of the dual enrollment program seemed to influence the students' academic achievement, even if this achievement did not include developing their writing capacities. The characteristics that influenced achievement were the location on a college campus, the counselors specifically available for HSDE students, and the feature of allowing students to take a combination of high school and college-level course work.

When studying the reasons for student participants' desires to leave their home high schools and enter the dual enrollment program on the college campus, I found that students sought academic challenges that they were either not receiving at their home high schools or unable to access at their home high schools because their academic records precluded them from entering other secondary-postsecondary learning options (SPLOs), like AP course work or IB programs. These students could enter the HSDE program I studied and take a combination of high school and college course work on a college campus. To navigate the college campus and enroll in appropriate course work with success, the student participants needed the assistance of the HSDE program's guidance counselors. Additionally, I found that the college context, which gave the students some anonymity, provided them room for emotional growth. Students

mentioned the physical and emotional space as a positive part of their experience. The students reported missing their friends at their home high schools but identified themselves as college students or as high school students transitioning to college students. This self-identity reflected their sentiment that being involved in college course work required a focus on academics and a move toward adulthood.

Overall, the context of the HSDE program offered students opportunities for academic and emotional growth. This program made advanced course work and a college context available to students who were, for one reason or another, dissatisfied with their home high schools. Students participating in this study who successfully completed college course work on a college campus as high school students reported that they felt proud of their academic achievements.

When studying the opportunities students were given inside their community college English classrooms to improve their writing abilities, I found several common themes. Students were given complicated assignments. Explicit but somewhat confusing instructions regarding the steps required to complete the writing assignments were common. Students were also given constraining and uninteresting assignments. Professors usually assigned the topics, and these were not salient for the students.

Additionally, the feedback given to students in the text of their papers focused on the surface structure of their language, attending to aspects such as grammar and editing. Overall, professors gave positive comments and feedback the least, and students received an overwhelming number of comments in the text of their papers. Professors made almost seven comments per paragraph. In a five-paragraph essay, students could receive 35 comments, most addressing problems with grammar or editing.

When analyzing the rubrics, grades, and comments made at the end of the students' papers, I found that the comments were confusing and difficult to understand. The comments could differ in terminology used from the in-text comments, and there often was a lack of correlation between the in-text and the summative or evaluative comments. Also, it was difficult to determine how the markings in the text, the attached "rubric," and the evaluative comments equaled the assigned grade. Overall, the in-text and end-of-text feedback given to the students were problematic and summative in nature. The professors' feedback seemed more of an effort to defend the grade given than to provide students with formative feedback to help improve their writing.

When asked about their professors' feedback and what it helped them learn during the semester, students focused on grammar or one single aspect of grammar, while still unable to articulate a clear understanding of grammar or the aspect they believed they had learned. They also could not express a clear understanding of the basis for their grades. All of the students primarily focused on the surface structures of language, editing, and grammar, and this focus reflected the feedback given to them by their professors. While students may have felt positive about their writing and increased confidence because of success in a college class, they did not seem to be aware of what content or deep structure qualified as "good" writing (Claggett, 2005).

When studying the nature of the interaction between the individual college professors and the student participants, I found that professors were reticent to work with HSDE students. Their answers to interview questions revealed that some professors had expectations for student behavior and academic performance based on age. They associated positive academic performance with older students and immature, unwanted classroom behavior with HSDE students.

The particular professor assigned to a particular student and his or her ability or inability to communicate and interact may have had an impact on the students' academic achievements. However, even those students who did not seem to be pleased with their professor would not change anything about the class experiences. This lack of desire to change anything about their classroom experiences, even when reporting dissatisfaction, seemed to illustrate that student participants were primarily interested in the final product or credits earned. Successfully completing the class meant they had taken a positive step toward acquiring their degree. That degree, not necessarily the learning that accompanied it, was their desired goal. Even so, this experience of acquiring college credit seems to have positively impacted their confidence as students.

One common complaint of most participants was that their composition class was boring or too long. This complaint could have reflected their lack of engagement in the writing process, but an unfortunate by-product of taking this class seemed to be that the students had an adverse emotional response to writing.

Limitations of the Results

In this study I examined the experiences of particular individuals in a specific HSDE program. As is the case with qualitative research, it was my hope that studying specific students enrolled in a particular HSDE program and writing class would give me detailed information to help me describe the particular phenomenon I have studied. Because the specific students, professors, artifacts, and program studied are unique, any conclusions drawn from this study apply only to this particular situation. However, I believe that my particular case study can help us understand something about the experiences of any HSDE student attempting to complete freshman composition on a college campus (Glesne, 1998). I think this study has implications for school leaders developing and maintaining high school dual enrollment programs, and it

sheds light on issues concerning the teaching of writing in the community college. I will discuss these implications in the next section.

The student participants in this study provided unique perspectives on their experiences in the college composition classroom. These experiences from students of various backgrounds, genders, and academic abilities varied widely. However, the number of participants in this study also limited its scope. While I made an effort to recruit as many student participants as possible, most students enrolled in the HSDE program and enrolled in freshman composition during the spring semester were not willing to participate. Additionally, two students who began the study did not participate in all interviews or submit artifacts for analysis. And because I was using student volunteers and asking them to voluntarily submit all of their graded essays, my analysis of artifacts was limited by their willingness or even their remembering to do so. The artifacts I gathered varied in type and number from participant to participant. Another limitation of the study was my inability to videotape or otherwise document the proceedings in the composition classroom. Because of the limitations of time and my inability to follow each student because of their overlapping schedules, I relied upon interviews from the participants to document what happened in the classrooms.

I was also unable to convince all the HSDE students' composition professors to participate in the study. Furthermore, most professor participants did not seem willing to spend an extensive amount of time talking to me during the semistructured interviews, and they were more willing to discuss the HSDE students than their own classroom practices. Because these professors knew me as a colleague, I believe they were more willing to grant me an interview, but I also feel that they may have been more reluctant to discuss pedagogy with another English professor—especially one studying the teaching of English.

As stated above, I believe that my working as an English teacher in the HSDE program at this college benefited me because it allowed me access to students, professors, and artifacts that may not have been made available to someone from outside the program. However, my connection to the program made me a subjective researcher. Another limitation of my study and others using the case study method is the limitation of time. While I believe my data collection for this study is sufficient, having more time to increase the breadth and depth of this study by working through two or more semesters and with more student participants would have strengthened my project's results.

Discussion of Results

When I began working at the community college where the study took place, I was a part-time English instructor. Like many adjuncts, I worked in several different departments to earn as much money as possible. I worked in the college's grammar lab as a tutor, taught basic writing classes to students hoping to improve their College Placement Test (CPT) scores to become eligible to take college English classes, and I worked in the HSDE program. Before seeking job opportunities at the community college, I was unaware that programs like this HSDE program existed. When I started working as an English instructor for the HSDE program, I became aware of the many opportunities for college course work, both academic and technical, offered to the students who lived in this particular school district. I also became aware of the diverse student population served by the program. People may believe that only students with high GPAs and test scores are allowed entry into a program like this college's HSDE program, but my experience allowed me to see students of differing levels of academic ability and experience successfully completing college-level course work. The student enrolled in my high school English class might be leaving my class to take high school biology or college chemistry.

After three years of part-time work, I became a full-time instructor of high school English on the college campus, working almost exclusively with HSDE students. In my ten years of full-time work in this program, I worked with many different students and shared in their successes and sometimes witnessed their failures. These experiences of seeing some of my students leave my high school English class and flourish in the college English classroom, while others floundered, made me wonder about the experiences that these HSDE students had when they left the high school classroom on the college campus and entered a college classroom. To explore their experiences and perhaps gain insight to what the students experienced in the college composition classroom and how that experience was impacted by the context of the HSDE program, I designed a pilot study, and my dissertation study followed.

What I discovered about their experiences was interesting and in some respects, unexpected. I found that the community college context and the HSDE program offered valuable opportunities for academic growth to the student participant as a bridge to college course work. However, I was surprised at the lack of opportunities for development of writing abilities offered to the HSDE students in their college composition classrooms—the writing instruction they received, the evaluation of their writing, and the roles of their professors in their experiences were underwhelming.

HSDE as a Bridge to College Course Work

School reform seems to be an ongoing discussion in our nation, as evidenced by the release of the documentary *Waiting for Superman* (2010). The aforementioned documentary focuses on high-performing charter schools and demonstrates the frustration of those whose only option is to send their child to an ineffective school. Those who are not being well served by their public schools, as well as leaders in education and in our government, are alarmed about schools' and students' academic performances. The International Baccalaureate (IB) program and Advanced

Placement (AP) courses are often given as examples of the best opportunities for academic achievement that our public school system can provide high school students. However, these programs are only offered to a limited number of students who meet the programs' GPA and test score requirements. The HSDE program used as the site for this study is an example of how a partnership between a county school system and a local community college can work to increase access to college-level course work for secondary students without requiring that students meet the prerequisites of the aforementioned programs.

Studies have shown that virtually all community colleges in the United States (98%) offer some form of dual enrollment (Kleiner & Lewis, 2005). However, of the community colleges that offer dual enrollment classes, the majority (73%), conduct classes on the participating high school's campus. More recent studies have suggested that the location of these classes can impact student achievement. Getting high-risk students into college courses on a college campus as part of a dual enrollment program can increase their chances of successfully completing college (Schaffhauser, 2010). While the time limitations of my study did not allow me to follow students' academic achievement after they completed their composition classes, my research did give me some insight to the contextual features of this HSDE program that positively influenced the academic achievement of my student participants.

Two experiences in particular, those of Lynn and Renaldo, illustrated the importance of having counselors in the HSDE program who only work with HSDE students on the college campus. This contextual feature was an important part of Renaldo deciding to take college English. Because Renaldo's CPT score did not allow him to take college-level English at first, and because he was unsure of what academic markers would indicate his preparedness for college level English, Renaldo did not initially plan to enroll in college composition. His

counselor, during their counseling session for the spring semester, told Renaldo that his performance in the high school English class indicated that he should retake the CPT and enroll in college-level English. Without the counselor's intervention and suggestion, Renaldo would have remained in high school English. The role of the guidance counselor who was able to understand credit and course requirements for high school and college degrees and help students navigate scholarship programs was extremely important to the HSDE program and its students.

And just as a counselor can help a student be successful academically, this role can contribute to a student's academic difficulty. In the case of Lynn, her counselor did not make her aware of how to access college services for her dyslexia. At the end of the semester, when Lynn's English professor learned of her dyslexia, Lynn was failing the course. In this case, Lynn's counselor did not do enough to make sure from the beginning that Lynn was capable of navigating the college environment. Lynn's experience in college composition might have ended differently if her counselor had either recommended she take high school English and finish it successfully before enrolling in the college course, or helped Lynn register with the college's disability services before the semester began.

The contextual feature of this program that seemed to have the greatest positive academic impact on the student participants was its location on a college campus. This feature was important for two reasons. First, the location of the program on the college campus allowed students to take both high school and college course work on a college campus. This combination led students to associate their high school classes with a college environment—one they associated with academic rigor and a focus on academics instead of socializing. Two students who had personal difficulties on their high school campuses, Ethel and Maylen,

appreciated the anonymity that the college campus gave them. They enjoyed the increased emotional and physical space the community college campus gave them.

Interestingly, students either identified as college students while enrolled in the HSDE program or high school students transitioning to college student status. This identification indicated their focus on academics, a focus necessitated by their attendance in a program located on the college campus. The students felt that their ability to succeed in the classes on the college campus, either high school- or college-level, was a positive academic attainment. In effect, this program, with high school course work offered on a college campus and counselors who work closely with HSDE students allowed students to begin navigating a college campus and college course work. For high school students in this specific county, this unique program offered an opportunity for them to begin college-level course work, attend classes on a community college campus, and earn college credit without having to pay the cost of tuition.

Writing Instruction

What seemed to be missing from this college experience, however, was the opportunity for the students to improve their communicative competence and writing abilities. Much is known about the writing process and effective pedagogical methods to help students improve their writing. One of the necessary components for effective language learning is the student's active engagement (Bakhtin, 1986; Bruner, 1986; Vygotsky, 1978). Most of the students in the study complained about the difficult topics assigned by their professors. These topics were most often uninteresting to the students. Additionally, these topics and writing assignments were complicated, making the students' jobs of completing the writing more difficult. An example of a typical assignment, this one given to Alex, made me aware of how complicated these writing assignments could be. Alex was told that he could choose from three specific topics, but any of the three topics was to be an "analysis" paper that either compared or contrasted the themes in

two assigned essays. Additionally, Alex was told to write a minimum of three body paragraphs and a minimum of 500 words. He also had to use a minimum of three quotes from the essays and use “tag phrases” when doing so. He could choose from the following topics: 1. Discuss the differences in attitudes seen in the two groups of people described in the essays “Pride” and “Indian Education;” 2. Discuss the similar attitudes between the author of “Indian Education” and the community members described in “Pride;” and 3. Discuss the author’s methods for making the reader care about the plight of the homeless in “Homeless” and “On Compassion.” And at the end of the third topic, the professor wrote “Notice this is not really a comparison/contrast topic.”

By allowing only three possible topics, the instructor took away the opportunity for students to learn how a writer chooses and narrows an appropriate topic. Additionally, it may confuse the students to be assigned a comparison/contrast analysis but then given a topic that was “not really” a comparison/contrast topic. To further confound the student, he/she is told how many body paragraphs to write, the number of quotes to include, and how to include them. Essentially, Alex’s job was to fill the template his instructor created. This assignment exemplified the type of unnecessary complication presented by the professor when he/she requires a particular phrasing to be used when presenting quotes or when he/she requires an analysis paper but notes that one of the topics is not an analysis. It is almost as if the instructor has placed several “red herrings” in the assignment to throw the writer off-track.

What Britton et al. (1975), Hairston (1982), and Lindemann (2001) found true in their research on the teaching of writing I found occurring in the student participants’ classrooms. Writing instruction most often included prescriptive assignments designating a particular format and topic. And what I found in these prescriptive topics seemed more limiting than I would have

expected—not just the format and topic were prescribed, but particular topic sentences or types and numbers of quotes. A good example of the extremely specific and constraining topics assigned the students is described by one the professors as follows:

> One takes one side, and they can do a pro and con. They just have to devise some where each one does kind of a half of the comparison, and they have to have the same focus of the assignment and then they have to use the same branching method, and I tell them you have to use subheadings, and the subheadings have to be identical, so there's the trick of trying to come up with, well if this person is writing, one of the topics was blue collar jobs/white collar jobs, you know [trailed off].

The assignment described by the professor was intended to make students work together, and certainly students had to devise a way to use identical "subheadings," which I assumed meant writers used identical topic sentences, and they also had to use the same "branching method," which seemed to be a similar method of organization. But I was unable to see how this particular assignment facilitated the development of their writing abilities, and the assignment itself confused both the researcher and the students.

Ultimately, the assignments given by the professors in the study, like the one described by the professor above, emphasized the end product, not the difficult but intellectually challenging process of writing that occurs as one moves from thought to written language (Flower & Hayes, 1980). The opportunity to be exposed to a variety of writing situations and styles and to be active learners engaged in building an understanding of language should be part of a freshman composition classroom, but I found no evidence of those learning opportunities during this study.

Ideally, a composition classroom that helps students develop their writing abilities would give students opportunities to explore topics they found salient (Lindfors, 1991). The teacher would engage in the class activities, giving students the perspective of an advanced or accomplished writer (Claggett, 2005), and students might have opportunities to publish their

work for an audience other than their instructor, who is also their evaluator, by developing a class collection of writings or submitting work to the college's newspaper (Elbow, 1973).

Formative Evaluation

In addition to analyzing the types of assignments given to student participants, I analyzed the feedback given to students about their writing. I found that students received a lot of feedback, but it was summative and confusing. While the instructor's goal of providing in-text comments should be to dramatize the presence of a reader and raise questions that the writer may not have considered from a reader's point of view (Knoblauch & Brannon, 1981), the in-text feedback that I found primarily pointed out grammatical mistakes. Instead of providing what Horvath (2000) has termed "formative evaluation" that is part of a collaborative effort between student and instructor aimed at helping students' writing abilities develop from text to text, the professors in this study functioned as editors whose primary goal was to point out and correct grammatical errors.

Additionally, what one might expect to be straightforward corrections of grammatical errors were not clearly identified or explained. Some professors circled an error and wrote a correction above it, with no explanation of the grammatical mistake. Another professor wrote a number in the paper's margin that corresponded to a chapter in the grammar handbook addressing the type of mistake. In the left-hand margin of a sentence in which a comma error was made, the student might find the number 18, which corresponded to a chapter on comma use in the student's grammar handbook. I believe the professor's intent was for the student to read the sentence, identify the error, and then read the entire chapter on comma use, identifying the rule he/she had misused or failed to use in his/her essay.

This type of instruction seemed futile at best. One student, after receiving this type of instruction, said she gave up looking through the grammar handbook in an effort to learn about

her grammar mistakes. Other problems that I found with the grammar instruction included professors using different terminology, like “verb use” and “subject / verb agreement” to refer to the same error. It is unlikely that students who make the grammatical mistake in the first place will understand that they are repeating the same mistake. After analyzing all submitted essays, it was clear that students did not reduce the number of grammatical mistakes they made from one writing assignment to the next. Overall, the professors seemed to work diligently to correct students’ papers, but they did not seem aware of how to give formative feedback and help students develop their writing from text to text or draft to draft. Instead of working as the more knowledgeable “other” (Vygotsky, 1978) and modeling the effective writing and behaviors or skills of an experienced writer, the professors in this study functioned as evaluators and editors.

The feedback professors gave students in the rubrics and comments at the end of their papers was also confusing, and students reported difficulty understanding the basis for their grades. The professors used grammar terminology in the rubrics that did not always match the terminology used to mark the same mistake in the text of the paper. The grades given in the rubric were difficult to connect to any comments in the text of the paper, and the numerical grade assigned by the instructors did not have a clear basis when trying to connect the grade to the professors’ feedback. Overall, my findings concerning the professors’ feedback to students about their writing mirrored those reported by Connors and Lunsford (1993)—there were a number of different evaluative comments given to students, the bases of their grades were difficult to decipher, and the world of teaching writing differed greatly from the theoretical world of composition studies.

Given the type of feedback delivered to students about their writing, it should be of no surprise that when reporting what they had learned, the students identified grammar in general or

a single aspect of grammar, like "commas." This focus on the surface structure of language mirrored the focus of the feedback given to them by their professors. However, there was no evidence that they learned the grammar mentioned. They could not articulate the grammatical rule they thought they learned, and their subsequent writings did not demonstrate an improvement in grammatical correctness. The students only gained awareness of making a grammatical mistake.

The analysis of the assignments and feedback given to students made it clear to me that they were not given opportunities to improve their writing competencies. Instead of gathering evidence that students improved their writing abilities, I found that students gained confidence about their writing abilities, a distinct and possibly damaging difference.

While the professors in this study did not give formative evaluation, it must be mentioned that the number of students placed in their composition classrooms and the number of classes professors were required to teach created a heavy workload for the professors. When professors have 25 - 30 students enrolled in their classes, and they teach five such classes each semester, it is difficult for them to find the time to read the essays submitted and give meaningful, substantive feedback to students. It is difficult to imagine the workload a full-time composition professor would endure if he/she gave both formative evaluation of final drafts and meaningful feedback to students from draft to draft.

The Role of the Professor

A professor is a part of the surround context of the classroom (Lindfors, 1999). As part of the classroom context, the professor sets the tone for the class proceedings and discussions and sets the class agenda. The students in this study reported different experiences as related to their professors, but all students in this study were impacted by their professors. The experiences of

the students reflect the ability of the professor to have either a positive or negative impact on the students' experiences in their classes and their writing abilities.

Lynn's experience stood out as a student whose experience in the college composition classroom was greatly impacted by the professor. Lynn felt her professor did not approve of her writing or her behavior in class. Additionally, Lynn did not understand some of her professor's requirements. Lynn began to get poor grades, but she felt her professor was not approachable, so she continued in the class but doubted her writing ability. While Lynn's failing the class may not have been a direct result of the professor she was assigned, it is clear that Lynn's professor did not help her develop her writing abilities.

Another student, Ethel, started her class not liking her professor, not enjoying the writing assignments he gave, and not understanding his grading method. Over the semester, however, Ethel's opinion of her professor changed. She found him funny and entertaining, and her reported feelings about both her professor and the class changed. She thought her professor was a good teacher, even though she could not articulate what she had learned, and she enjoyed his class. As her opinion of her professor changed, so did her grade in the class. Ethel began the semester earning "Ds" on her writings, but earned some "Bs" by the end of the semester. Although her grades on her papers changed, I found no evidence to suggest that her writing ability had improved. According to the summative comments made by Ethel's professor, her "D" grades were a result of her failure to meet some part of the writing assignment. Ethel's later submissions seemed to meet those length or topic requirements, and it is her meeting of his requirements, not an improvement in writing ability, that I attributed to her change in grades.

From my analysis of our interview transcripts, I deduced that Ethel became more engaged in the class because she grew fond of her professor and found him entertaining. Ethel's change

in grades and change in opinion of her professor's teaching ability occurred at the same time that she reported finding her professor to be fun and interesting. His personality may not have improved her writing abilities, but it seemed to keep her interested in the class at a crucial time, when she could have become discouraged by her poor grades.

Overall, even students who found fault with their professors reported that they would not change anything about their experiences. What this common thread demonstrated to me was that the students were happy to complete the class and get a passing grade. This grade that allowed them to get credit toward their high school and college graduation was the desired outcome—not necessarily improving their writing abilities. However, because they believed that grammatical correctness was the key to good writing, it was understandable that the surface structure of language and their reported improvement of one aspect of that surface structure would be what they discussed when asked to report the evidence of their improved writing abilities.

Another common outcome of their composition classroom experience was their reported dislike of writing. Participants reported that they found their writing assignments to be uninteresting and difficult. Only one student mentioned being given an engaging essay assignment. For this assignment, Renaldo was allowed to choose the person, place, or thing that he wanted to describe. Renaldo was engaged in this assignment and composed an essay describing his aunt's messy, unappealing living quarters. He delved into his conflicting emotions about wanting to see his aunt because he loved her and enjoyed her company, but he felt uncomfortable in her home.

This type of engaging writing assignment, one that prompted the student to use language as a necessary tool to convey his feelings to the reader (Lindfors, 1991), was lacking in most of the students' classroom writing experiences. The "creative construction" required of the students in

my study was not one that allowed them to explore ideas and build meaning through engaging in purposeful communication (Lindfors, 1991). Instead, the students had to be creative if they were going to produce a text that met all of the requirements made by their professors, requirements that in many cases seemed to go beyond the ones discussed by Hairston (1982). Students were "tested" in their writing assignments and required to reproduce specific writing techniques prescribed by their professors instead of being asked to engage in the creative, recursive, non-linear process of discovering meaning through writing (Bartholomae, 1985).

The writing assignments given to students, as well as the feedback given to students by their professors, in most cases differed from what researchers and theorists have identified as effective writing instruction. The college composition classroom should be a welcoming and social community of learners. The professor's role is to guide the work of the students and support their learning and their developing writing abilities, acting as what Vygotsky refers to as "the more knowledgeable other." Ideally, students would be exposed to a variety of writing styles for a variety of purposes and given the opportunity to explore ideas and topics they find salient (Lindfors, 1999). The professor would engage in writing along with the students in an effort to give students examples of the work of a more experienced writer (Claggett, 2005), and feedback would be given during several "stages" of the writing process. That would mean that professors would engage in formative evaluation, a kind of feedback that has been found to help developing writers. And if students view the feedback from their professors as part of a collaborative effort to improve a text, they are more likely to value that feedback (Cleary, 1991). The professor, by using summative evaluation to help students improve a particular text and giving them opportunities to publish that writing or develop it for an audience other than the

evaluator, allows the students to see him or her as the person supporting learning rather than criticizing it.

Implications for Practice

The results of my study illustrated how these student participants were not being well-served by their home high schools. While there were characteristics of the HSDE program that supported their academic success and opportunities for these students to improve their confidence in their academic abilities, more could be done to support their development as writers. Because of the link between writing and intellectual development, supporting writing growth is an important part of supporting intellectual growth (Vygotsky, 1986). For this development to occur, I suggest the following:

- We must ensure that all writing teachers, even those at the college level, are given appropriate instruction regarding writing research, theory, and practice or have an advanced degree in English Education. Professors of freshman and sophomore composition at the community college need to understand how to teach writing. We cannot assume that those who are proficient writers because they have a degree in English or literature understand the practice of teaching writing.

- We must support the difficult practice of teaching writing. Schools require instructors to assign students a significant amount of writing but fail to limit class sizes and teaching loads; as a result, formative evaluation is nearly impossible. To support effective writing instruction, schools need to address the teaching load of writing instructors.

- Writing instructors need to give students more opportunities to develop their writing abilities. Students could be asked to produce writing that may not fit a prescribed format like a five-paragraph essay. Students could be asked to engage in activities like reverse outlining that help them think about their writing. A reverse outline requires a student to look at his completed text and derive an outline from that essay, thus evaluating his organization and development of ideas.

- The writing classroom should be a “literacy club” where all members are working together to read, understand, evaluate, and produce good writing (Smith, 1986).

- Students should be given opportunities to explore their own areas of interest. If students are able to pursue topics they find salient, they will be more engaged in the writing process.

- Students should be given opportunities to produce writing for an audience other than the evaluators. Students could be asked to produce work for their school paper, their fellow classmates, or a member of their family. This kind of activity would allow the instructor to support writing for a specific purpose not simply to assign a grade to an essay and would help students develop a broader sense of audience.

- Writing instructors need to offer students opportunities for real revision, including strategies from rewriting a particular sentence several ways to choose the best fit for the essay's purpose and audience to revising the entire work by turning a narrative essay into a one-act play to promote students' use of dialogue and action.

- Writing instructors need to be involved in all parts of the writing process, making the often "invisible" and seemingly mysterious decisions a writer makes about brainstorming or how one chooses an appropriate topic "visible" and practical. To do so, writing instructors should model how one brainstorms, chooses a fruitful topic, makes decisions about tone or wording, develops ideas, and incorporates outside texts and sources into his/her writing.

Implications for Future Research

This study, which allowed me to explore the experiences of HSDE students taking college composition on a college campus, raises several questions that should be explored in future research. HSDE programs are growing, and much research has been completed that describes the different secondary-postsecondary learning options (SPLOs). However, more research should explore the students' perspectives and how different contextual features of these various programs may affect academic performance. I believe that my study reveals the importance of having HSDE counselors who work solely with HSDE students. These counselors need experience working with high school students and their graduation requirements as well as experience working within college systems. The counselors serve as the students' academic guardian, ensuring that they are properly prepared for and enrolled in appropriate course work. Further, they serve as the tether linking the students to two institutions and cultures—the high school and the college.

In this study, it became clear that the students were able to use the high school course work on the college campus as a bridge to advanced, college-level course work. This contextual

feature and its affect on students merit further investigation. Perhaps students were able to transition to college course work because they began to identify themselves as college students rather than high school students. More research into this question of academic identity and how it affects or is related to academic achievement is warranted. Additionally, research that does more than just describe the contextual features of SPLOs, research that endeavors to probe these contextual features and more deeply study their affect on students, is needed. Another important question that should be addressed by researchers is about the long-term effect of these programs on students. Perhaps researchers could gain insight into possible long-term academic effects on those who do or do not successfully complete these various programs. The value these programs hold to students and society, particularly if they are able to increase access to advanced course work for underserved students, merits further investigation.

While the results of analyzing the assignments and feedback to students confirmed previous findings from studies over the last 20 years (Britton, 1975; Hairston, 1982), it does raise a question about why the gap in composition theory and the practice of teaching writing still exists. Are those whose primary job it is to teach freshman and sophomore composition to students—who are entering a community college through their open-door policy—being given the proper pedagogical background to make them successful writing instructors? Or does the college system privilege advanced degrees in English literature, even when those specialty areas will rarely be used to teach the majority of courses offered at that institution? Additionally, professors' comments about their expectations for students' academic performance and classroom behavior based on the student's age made me wonder if professors stereotyped students because of their ages. Are professors resistant to working with younger, HSDE students

because of their experiences with immature students and/or because they believe that teaching high school students is not as prestigious as teaching college students?

What this study demonstrated to me is that teaching writing is an extremely difficult task. While much research has been conducted and theories developed about the effective ways to teach writing, little evidence of effective practice was found in the college classrooms I studied. I wonder if this is an anomaly or the prevailing condition of our college writing classrooms. Does the resistant-to-change culture of so many classrooms prevail over our understanding of best practices? Perhaps the lack of monetary rewards or recognition for the difficult and time-consuming job of providing meaningful feedback to 30 students who have each submitted several pages of writing provides no real incentive for professors to pursue best practices.

While my study revealed that there are several questions about the teaching of writing in college composition classrooms that should be addressed, it also revealed how the student participants benefited from being given the opportunity to participate in this dual enrollment program. The students, ones who for one reason or another were not able to get access to advanced course work at their home high schools, were allowed to take a combination of college-level and high school-level course work on a college campus. Their academic success on a college campus and in college classes helped them gain confidence in their academic abilities. Additionally, being members of the college community and involved in the college context supported a transition in their academic identity from that of a high school student to that of a college student. These positive outcomes are directly related to two characteristics of this program that are most often not a part of other HSDE programs (Kleiner & Lewis, 2005). The location of this program on a college campus and the opportunity for students to take more than one college class as well as enroll in a combination of college- and high school-level courses

were important components of these students' academic success. The effect of these components, as well as the possibility of other community colleges offering these opportunities to students, merits further investigation. Ultimately, addressing these topics in research will help offer all students educational opportunities, and delving into research that promotes and supports writing education will help our schools, at all levels, develop better writers and independent thinkers.

Our nation's public school system is in crisis. As national, state, and local leaders of education look for ways to improve the education being offered to our students, they must not fail to address the teaching of writing. Teaching writing is an essential part of educating our students. Writing is an important activity that supports creativity, critical thinking, and intellectual development.

APPENDIX A
SAMPLE CONSTRAINING ASSIGNMENT

ENC 1101
ICE #3 Assignment

Bring an outline of your essay. Bring this handout. You may use a dictionary, *Successful College Writing*, and the *Bedford Handbook.*

Write an outline at home: Include your thesis, keynote, topic sentences, any quotations or details from the source essay you would like to include, and a few short details about each example you will use. Do not write a full sentence outline.

Topic: Read "The Village Watchman" by Terry Tempest Williams (p. 234). Select one of the following topics. Requirement: Include details from Williams's essay. Optional approach: Include external examples in addition to details from Williams's essay.

1. Williams suggests that our society sees those who are mentally handicapped for "who they are not, rather than for who they are." How does this attitude affect mentally handicapped people such as Williams's Uncle Alan?

2. Williams declares that her uncle was "unusual; extraordinary; rare." Explain what we can learn from or how we can benefit from knowing people like Uncle Alan who are mentally handicapped.

3. Williams says her family judged other people by the way they treated Alan. According to Williams, how should we treat mentally handicapped people?

Length: Essays should be 4-6 paragraphs, 400-500 words.

No revision: You will not be allowed to revise this essay.

Prewriting Annotation Tips: Before the scheduled in-class writing time, complete the following steps:

1. Look up any words or allusions you do not understand.
2. Underline several general statements, including the essay's thesis.
3. Highlight several key details and examples.
4. Review the most difficult passages.
5. Review any study questions preceding or following the essay.
6. Draw outside connections to the information in the source essay. For example, have any current events disproven the author's opinions? How have your personal experiences related to the author's ideas?
7. Identify the main theme and argument of each source essay. Try to summarize the main points the author uses to support the argument.

In Class: Bring an outline to use in class. During the class session, you will draft the body of your essay and make changes to content, organization, and grammar. You may us the computer or you may write by hand. If you work by hand, revise your draft with cross-outs, arrows, and white-out. Do not recopy your first draft.

Form: Use the following organizational methods for more formal essays that refer to a "source" essay.

Introduction: Since your ideas are influenced by the assigned essay reading (the "source" essay), you should introduce the author and title of the source essay in paragraph one. Introduce us to the connection between the source essay and your point of view. Lead up to your thesis statement, which should be located at the end of your introduction.

Thesis statement: Your thesis should clearly respond to one of the assigned topics. It should sum up your essay's main argument. Emphasize an interesting keynote in your thesis. Do not quote in your thesis statement.

Branch into 2-4 sections: Divide your topic into 2-4 main points. Some paragraphs may include ideas from the source essay, others may rely solely on your own examples, and some may combine your ideas and the source essay's ideas. Aim for 3-4 body paragraphs.

Topic sentences: Begin each paragraph with a topic sentence that refers to your thesis and keynote. Each topic sentence should refer to one specific section of your branching. Do not quote in your topic sentences. You may include a transition phrase as a part of each topic sentence.

Paragraph development: Each paragraph should be at least 7 sentences in length. Include at least one specific example per paragraph. The most effective paragraphs will combine several specific examples. Examples must include quotations and details from the assigned essay reading (the "source" essay). Examples may also include personal experiences or other outside references of your own choosing.

Use of quotations: You are required to include several references to the assigned essay reading (the "source" essay). These references may include quotations, summary of details, and paraphrases. Include a dialogue tag for each quote. Do not quote excessively. Page references are optional.

Emphasize your opinion: For each reference that you include, you should explain *in your own words* the relevance of the reference. Explain how each reference relates to your thesis idea. You may need to restate the quotation in your own words. You could compare the reference with a personal experience or another outside reference. You may also express your own opinion. Sometimes you will need to explain difficult quotations more clearly and thoroughly.

Conclusion: If you have time, write a conclusion that sums up your main argument. Do not duplicate your thesis. Perhaps add a specific reference from the assigned essay reading (the "source" essay or one more personal example.

Works Cited Page: Add a Works Cited page that indicates your indebtedness to the assigned essay reading (the "source" essay).

Handling Quotations

1. At the end of each sentence with a quote, indicate in parentheses the **page number** of that quote, "like this" (505). Page references may be optional during a timed writing.

2. Introduce each quote with a phrase that blends it into your essay. Most introductions should refer to the author and give him or her credit for his or her ideas. Three variations:

   Krauthammer writes, "More than anything, we tuned in to see a good man excel" (507).

   Krauthammer argues that we watch Tiger Woods because he is a good man" (507).

   Krauthammer explains our fascination with Tiger Woods: AMore than anything, we tuned in to see a good man excel" (507).

3. Take one or two sentences before or after each quote to **integrate** it into your discussion. In other words, explain why this passage is important at this specific point in your essay.

4. Quotation marks indicate an **exact quote**, just as the passage appears in the original. Indicate **deletions** with ellipses marks **. . .** and **additions** or **changes** in brackets **[ ]**.

5. Some quotes may be part **paraphrase** (your own words) and part unique phrases from the author (which are placed in quotation marks). Indicate page numbers even for total paraphrases.

6. If you quote a passage which will be 4 or more lines long in your essay, use the **indented quote** format as discussed in Bedford, 49e.

7. Refer to the author by **last name** after introducing his full name (as appears on the title page) in your introduction.

8. If your quote includes quotation marks from the original essay, convert the **interior quotation marks** to one slash each (like an apostrophe). "Note how this 'sentence' accomplishes this feat."

9. At the end of your essay, include a Works Cited page that credits the source of any quotations. Following is the standard MLA format for a source that is part of a collection of essays by many authors (such as your textbook).

   Krauthammer, Charles. "A Personality Is What Makes Woods Special." <u>Successful College Writing</u>. Ed. Kathleen T. McWhorter. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000. 505-507.

APPENDIX B
TRANSCRIPT ANALYSIS

Transcript of interview #4 with Ethel

I – okay, you ready? Ethel, it's over

E thank goodness

I – thank goodness, and did you just finish that English exam?

E – no, we didn't have an exam, we just had to write fifty facts about what we learned

I – really? Did you come up with 50 facts?

E – unh hunh, at least a lot of them (laughter)

I – (laughter) what were they? Give me some of the things you learned

E – uhm, we just, it was just like all the stuff we read. We had to write 50 facts about the essays we've done and the movies we watched and all of the books we read.

I – unh hunh

E – so, I was just writing facts about the stuff

I – okay, good. All right, was the writing class easy or hard?

E – uhm, (pause). In the middle, it wasn't too easy, but it wasn't too hard, so

I – what parts of it were easy, then?

E – uhm, what parts were easy? (I don't know, sound)-uhm

I – what parts were hard?

E – maybe doing essays on stuff that I really wouldn't write about

I – topics you didn't like to write about?

E – yeah, like the fast food and then we had to write something about songs we like and why we like them and I don't know, some stuff

I – and that was hard, so it was just the topic that made it hard?

E – yeah, I can't write a lot about something I really don't like

I – okay. Was the class exciting or boring?

APPENDIX C
SAMPLE OF PROCESS ANALYSIS

Essay 4—Analysis of Readings

For essay 4, you will be showing connections between 2 essays. This kind of an assignment is called an analysis. Instead of simply repeating what an author said (summary), you are asked to think critically and make your own observations about the content of readings. We will be focusing on where the content of the two essays intersects and/or the differences between the essays. **Your discussion should be at least 500 words and include at least 3 body paragraphs (of course, more paragraphs would make the content better). Include at least 3 quotes from the readings in your discussion.** Be sure the quotes are correctly presented and punctuated. Use tag phrases to give the author's name, and put the page number in parentheses at the end of the sentence. Don't forget to mention the author and title of each essay in the introduction.

Since you are basing your discussion on two sources, both sources must be listed on a Works Cited page. Arrange the 2 citations alphabetically according to the authors' last names. Use the format for an anthology (Bedford Handbook p.628, #10). **You will need to submit your essay through turnitin.com.**

Your rough draft is due 4/19. The essay is due 4/24. Choose from the topics below.

1. In "Pride," Dagoberto Gilb describes the positive attitudes he observes among the members of his Mexican-American community. In "Indian Education," Sherman Alexie describes life among the Native Americans on his reservation. Discuss some of the differences in attitudes that are apparent between these two groups of people based on the readings.

2. In "Pride," Dagoberto Gilb describes the positive attitudes he observes among the members of his Mexican-American community. In "Indian Education," Sherman Alexie reveals that, unlike the rest of his tribe, he also has a positive attitude. Discuss the similarities in attitudes between Alexie and the Mexican-American community as seen in these two readings.

3. In "Homeless" by Anna Quindlan and "On Compassion" by Barbara Lazear Ascher, both authors try to create sympathy for the homeless. Discuss each author's method(s) for making the reader care about the plight of homeless people. (Notice this is not really a comparison/contrast topic. Discuss Quindlan's method(s) in one or more paragraphs. Then discuss Ascher's method(s) in one or more paragraphs. Your essay must have at least 3 body paragraphs.)

In the 2 readings the authors use several methods to create [illegible] the reader [illegible]

- giving specific examples [illegible]
- show attitude of homeless people
- show [illegible]
- show how people [illegible] to people
- [illegible] a house [illegible]
- how homeless people used to be like us

ENC1101-039

24 April 2007

Different Groups, Different Values

In the essays written by Dagoberto Gilb "Pride" and by Sherman Alexie "Indian Education", the authors talk about their communities. Based on the readings, some comparisons can be shown between the two cultures. For example, the Native Americans and the Mexican Americans are both minorities. They both lost their lands to the Europeans, and both races are discriminated and affected by prejudice. However, values vary between cultures, and every culture is different. Based on the readings, there are also many differences between the two communities in their pride, their focus on education, the roles of the parents, and the communities' lives.

One of difference between the two communities is in their pride. In "Pride" Gilb talks about an assistant manager who washes the glass windows of a store. He says," A good man, gray on edges, an assistant manager in brown starched and ironed uniform, is washing the glass windows of the store, lit up by as may watts as venus, with a roll of paper towels and blue liquid from a spray bottle" (503).This assistant manager is well dressed even if his job do not required that. This shows that the assistant manager values, respects, and is proud of his job. Additionally, he talks about a young woman wearing a party dress that looks good and wears latest fashion clothes. She is poor and drives a horrible car but still makes the efforts to have a good appearance.Gilb also mentioned that the Mexicans love their culture and history. They love their brown skin color. They also love their food and love their heritage overall. However, in the

Native Americans community, Alexie talks about a young man who killed himself in a car accident. When the policeman did not find any trace of alcohol, he asked why was the reason. The Indians said that they did not know, but they all understood that what it was related to their history and their failure. So, it shows that the Indians are not proud of their culture but was ashamed.

The Focus on education is another difference between those communities. In "pride" the author talks about the graduation of a child in the Mexican American community. Gilb mentioned that during those events, every member of a student family is there. Not only the parents, but uncles, aunt, cousins, sisters, brothers, and other relatives are there. They all are happy, and other parents even cheer for students that are not related to them. It shows that education is a major step in the Mexican American community. Unlike the Mexican community, the Indians do not really participate in their children education. The schools are bad, but it does not look like the authorities and the parents try to ameliorate it. For instance, Alexie said, "Back at home on the reservation, my former classmates graduate: a few can't read, one or two are given attendance diplomas, most look forward to the parties" (110). This clearly shows that the schools are not competent because after twelve years of school, some students cannot even read. Also, at graduation his graduation, Alexie's family members do not seems to be present. So, it can be inferred that the Native Americans do not really cares about education.

Another difference is in the role the parents have in the community. In the Mexican American community, the parents are responsible. They work hard to support their family. They also care about their children. For instance, Gilb says," he gets ready putting on the shirt and pant his mom would have ironed…" (504). It shows that the moms and dads in this community help their children and cares about them. Moreover, at graduation, the parents come with the whole

family to support their child. It shows that they appreciate the work done by their child and push them forward. However in the Indian community, most parents do not work. They do not participate in their child education. Furthermore, at home they do not provide a good environment for their child. For instance Alexie's dad is always drinking and the mom is crying. Theses problems affect him in a way. So, there are some differences in the roles of the parents in these communities.

Moreover, the communities' lives are different in theses different groups. In the Indian community most people eat government food. They live in HUD (housing and urban development). The parents seem to be irresponsible. Most do not work and do not participate in their children education. A lot of them are alcoholic which create problems in the family. Most spend people spend all their lives in the reservation. For instance, Alexie said that their graduating class has a reunion every week end. However, in the Mexican American community, the people are also poor but work hard to have a decent standard of living. They have their own houses. They make the effort to look good. They eat what they want. Moreover, there is also a sense a brotherhood in this community. For instance, in the essay written by glib, he said" good night, m'ijo. He tells a young boy coming out after playing a video game…" (503). The assistant manager called the children is son even though he was not his dad. They love and care about each other. For example, the assistant manager worried about the woman in the car and asked her if she was going to make it to the town. The parents are responsible and support their children in their education. So the life in the Mexican American community is really different from the Native American community.

Despite prejudice, both communities seem to have their own way to live. As I said before, values differ from culture to culture. Life is hard for both communities, but it seems like

an Americans deal with their problems in a better way. In conclusion, it can be said

and values determine how life is in community.

- The content looks pretty good. Each body paragraph is
cused and most are well supported. The 4th body paragraph
akest one. It repeats material from paragraph 3, and it's really
Maybe focus on brotherhood in the communities.
unately, there are quite a few grammar problems. Verbs
errors. Capitalization + apostrophes cause minor errors.

(78)

Grading Analysis –

Stephen –

min. of 3 body ¶ + 500 words

Assignment → had to choose among 3 topics – assigned format, min. # of quotes to use (3); how to introduce quotes w/ "tag phrases" → Analysis essay – had to compare or contrast themes in two essays –

grading: "Different Groups, Different Values

---

grammar instruction: #1 → 0

---

sentence structure / wording: 1,2 move titles / before author (2)
¶1 {3 shown / made (added – no explanation)
{4 added word (against) – no explanation)
5 removed (also) → gave instruction

Content: Took issue w/ mexicans being differentiated from Europeans)¶1

---

positive: ¶1 – "pretty good introduction" (but does not identify any one part specifically)

#2 →

grammar inst. : 3 →
1) verb agree (but did not identify error – (Job/do)
2) not parallel (again, in left margin – did not identify : values, respects, and is proud of
3) missing article (the) (does id spot missing)

sentence structure/wording
↳ 1 → change ~~why~~ to what → (he asked what ~~why~~ was the reason)

Content → 1: challenges his description of "young man" – she circles & replies : (he's married w/ children, so he's not that young)
2: wants further explanation – circles (their failure) + says – explain this idea
3: suggests : would be good to add a quote for proof

positive : Identifies "good topic sentence"

#3 → (a student family)

grammar inst : 1 + 2 – "apostrophe" written in margin : not identified (children education)
3 – writes "verb form" in margin + circles (do not seems) (subj = members)
4 – writes "verb form" in margin + circles (do not really cares) (subj = Native Americans)
(* has now labeled S/V agreement errors two different things)
5 – circles (said) + writes "says" on top – (no other id of error)
6) No cap/cap in margin (cap. Fico – good work)

sentence structure/wording :
1) circled (it) ?? + writes "the problem" (no instruction given)

2) underlines "at graduation his graduation" + writes "wording" on top

content → (1) challenges his description "of a child" – circles "child" + writes "young man – it's high school"

positive : (1) "good topic sentence" w/ arrow to topic sent.
(2) "good discussion here!"

#4 -

grammar:

1) Writes "Cap" in left margin (does not ID "(he) ...)
2) Writes "verb agree" in left margin (does not ID moms and dads... (cares)
3) writes "pronoun agree" in margin - circles (them) + draws line to "child"
4) Writes "apostrophe" in margin - does not ID error (their child education)
5) Writes "comma" in margin - does not ID "For instance Alexis dad"
6) Crosses out "s" in "Theses problems"

sentence structure / wording : Ø / Content:

1) underlines "affected him in away" + writes "What way?"
2) questions "most parents do not work" + writes - How do we know? suggests - "maybe mention HUD houses + commodities from the government"

positive:

1) good topic sentence

#5 -

grammar: 1) Crossed out "s" in "theses different groups"
2) writes "apostrophe" in margin - does not ID error (their children education)
3) Adds "s" to alcoholic(s)
4) Writes "on" over "in the reservation" (no explanation)
5) Writes ◡ under week end (no explanation)
6) writes SP/Cap/Cap in margin - does not id errors
7/8 (a should be of), glib should be "Glib", god in quote should be "Good"

is this a spelling error?

grammar, cont. - ~~8~~ 9) sp in margin + (is) circled (should be "his")
10 ~~9~~) underlined children + wrote "use singular" over top
11 ~~10~~) circled (said) + wrote "says" over top - no explanation given

---

Sentence structure / wording:
1) added "housing" to end of sentence: "They live in HUD"
2) underlined spend people spend + wrote "wording" over top

Content:
1) Circles two sentences + ~~says~~ writes "you covered these ideas in the previous paragraph"
2) draws arrow to "every" + writes "explain where - show they didn't leave
3) circled a sentence + wrote "repetitive"

---

positive:
1) write "good topic sentence"

¶6 →

grammar → 0

sentence structure /wording → 1) - Circled "As I said before" + wrote → "Avoid talking about your own essay"

~~sentence~~ content → 0

positive → 0

Final comments →

writes content looks "pretty good" w/ focused body ¶¶ + most are well supported

Critiques 4th body ¶ + says - It is "weak," "brief," + repeats material" → suggests → maybe focus on brotherhood in 2 communities

what grammar -

says "unfortunately, quite a few grammar problems" - verbs cause "major errors" + "cap + apostrophes cause minor errors"

grade = C+ / 78

(date: April 2007)

total [improper] comments = ~~52~~ 53

positive = 6

grammar = ~~26~~ 27

wording / sent structure = 11

content = 9

Analysis of grading for (Alex) by (professor)

Assignment – given very specific instructions (had to choose among 3 topics – assigned format) ; (min. of 3 body paragraphs and 500 words); (had to introduce quotes with "tag phrases" and had to use a minimum of 3 quotes). Essay had to be an "analysis" that required students to compare or contrast themes in two essays.

GRADING:

Paragraph 1 ---

Grammar instruction – 0 comments

Sentence Structure / Wording –

comment 1 and 2: "move titles / before author"

comment 3 "shown / made" added to text (no explanation)

comment 4 added the word "against" (no explanation)

comment 5 removed (also) by crossing it out – (no explanation)

Content:

comment 1 – the instructor took issue with "Mexicans being differentiated from Europeans."

Positive:

comment 1: instructor wrote "pretty good introduction" (but does not identify any one part specifically.

Paragraph 2 –

Grammar instruction –

Comment 1 : wrote "verb agree" but did not identify error (job / do)

Comment 2 wrote "not parallel" again in left margin, but did not identify "values, respects, and is proud of" as the problem.

Comment e – wrote "the" in text and "missing article"

Sentence structure / wording –

Comment 1: challenges his description of "young man" – instructor circles and writes "he's married w/ children, so he's not that young"

Comment 2: wants further explanation – circles "their failure" and writes "explain this idea."

Comment 3: suggests "would be good to add a quote for proof" in response to one of his sentences

Positive comments –

Comment 1: identifies "good topic sentence"

Paragraph 3 ---

Grammar instruction:

Comment 1 and 2 (identifies two apostrophe errors by writing "apostrophe" in the margin, but does not identify the actual errors ("a student family" and "children education")

Comment 3: writes "verb form" in margin and circles "do not seems" (to me this seemed more like a subject / verb agreement error – and one to be expected from an ESL student – the subject was "members" and the first verb of the verb phrase agrees although the second doesn't)

Comment 4: writes "verb form" in margin and circles "do not really cares" (again – same error of subject / verb agreement made, but not identified – his subject was "native Americans" but he had only one part of his verb phrase agree with that.

Comment 5: circles "said" and writes "says" on top – no explanation or identification of the error.

Comment 6: writes "no cap / cap" in margin – student had capitalized the word "Focus" the 2nd word in a sentence.

Sentence structure / wording:

Comment 1 – circled "it" and writes "the problem" near it – no instruction given

Comment 2 – underlines "at graduation his graduation" and writes "wording" on top

Content:

Comment 1 – challenges his description “of a child” by circling “child” and writing “young man – it’s high school.”

Positive –

Comment 1 – writes “good topic sentence” with arrow to topic sentence

Comment 2 – writes “good discussion here!”

Paragraph 4 –

Grammar:

Comment 1 – writes “cap” in left margin (does not id “he”)

Comment 2 – writes “verb agree” in left margin (does not ID “moms and dads / cares” – the error made by student)

Comment 3 – writes “pronoun agree” in margin – circles “them” and craws line to “child”

Comment 4 – writes “apostrophe” in margin – does not identify error (their child education)

Comment 5 – writes “comma” in margin – does not id missing comma after “for instance”

Comment 6 – crosses out “s” in “theses problems”

Sentence structure / wording:

0 comments

Content:

Comment 1 – underlines “affected him in a way” and writes “what way?”

Comment 2 – questions “most parents do not work” and writes – “how do we know?” suggests – “maybe mention HUD houses and commodities from the government”

Positive:

Comment 1 – good topic sentence

Paragraph 5 –

Grammar:

Comment 1 – crossed out "s" in "theses different groups"

Comment 2 – writes "apostrophe" in margin – does not ID error (their children education)

Comment 3 – adds "s" to "alcoholic"

Comment 4 – writes "on" over "in" in "in the reservation"

Comment 5 – draws a line connecting two words under "week" and "end"

Comment 6, 7, and 8 – writes "sp / cap / cap" in margin – does not id errors (the sp referred, I believe, to use of "a" when he should have used "of"; the cap refers to not capitalizing author's name "glib" and not capitalizing the first word of a quote.

Comment 9 – writes "sp" in margin and circles "is" which should have been written "his"

Comment 10 – underlined "children" and wrote "use singular" over the top

Comment 11 – circled "said" and wrote "says" over the top – no explanation

Sentence structure / wording:

Comment 1 – added "housing" to end of sentence "they live in HUD"

Comment 2 – underlined "spend people spend" and wrote "wording" over top

Content:

Comment 1 – circles two sentences and writes "you covered these ideas in the previous paragraph"

Comment 2 – Draws an arrow to "every" and writes "explain where – show they didn't leave."

Comment 3 – Circled a sentence and wrote "repetitive"

Positive:

Comment 1 – wrote "good topic sentence"

Paragraph 6 –

Grammar –

0 comments made

Sentence structure / wording:

Comment 1 – circled “as I said before” and wrote “avoid talking about your own essay.”

Content –

0 comments made

Positive –

0 comments made

Final comments for essay –

Instructor writes “content looks pretty good with focused body paragraph and most are well supported” Instructor critiques 4th body paragraph and says it is “weak, broad, and repeats material” Instructor suggests “maybe focus on brotherhood in 2 communities.” Instructor critiques grammar and says “unfortunately, quite a few grammar problems – verbs cause major errors and cap. and apostrophes cause minor errors.

Grade = 78

Total comments in paper – 53

Grammar comments – 27

Content comments – 9

Wording / sentence structure comments – 11

Positive comments - 6

APPENDIX D
SAMPLE GRADING ANALYSIS 1

Analysis of grading for Bob (out of class essay, Jan 31, 2007)

Paragraph 1

Grammar = 0

Wording / Sentence Structure =

1- 5 underlined the word "different" five times ; wrote at the end of the paragraph "you're overusing the word "different"

Content = 0

Positive = 0

Paragraph 2

Grammar =

1. fragment – put [ ] around sentence and wrote "Frag" in margin

2. punctuation – circled quotes in "Bob's" and wrote "?" to right

Wording / Sentence Structure=

1. Underlined "was more common" and wrote "- word choice (are you saying what you mean here?)

2. wrote word "idea" over the word "thought"

3. underlined "and told him that he would not be gay…" and wrote "c" on top and placed "?" in the margin

Content =

1. drew line to sentence:

"these opposite viewpoints on sexuality goes to show that, because of different childhood experiences, you can not bypass generational conflicts." And wrote – "I'm not sure whether or not views on sexuality fall into the category of generational conflicts"

**note – did not correct subject / verb agreement error

Paragraph 3

Grammar = 0

Wording / Sentence Structure =

1. underlined "could tell his dad in public" and wrote "hear from" on top

Content =

1. underlined "because his father never did that for him" and wrote "yes, this is often the motive behind parents' actions"

2. at end of the paragraph, drew brackets of sorts and wrote "emphasize your main point here"

Paragraph 4

Grammar =

1. pronoun reference – circled "it" and wrote "ref" in margin

2. preposition – wrote "of" over the word "to" in "proof to the fact"

Wording / sentence structure = 0

Content =

1. Drew bracket around last line and wrote "yes" – seemed like an affirmation of his final point but not necessarily a positive comment

Paragraph 5

Grammar = 0

Wording / sentence structure =

1. underlined "receive" and drew line to where she/he had written "Is this the right word?"

Content = 0

Total comments in text of paper = 18

Grammar = 4

Wording / sentence structure = 10

Content = 4

Positive = 0

Then stapled a "final grading sheet" to the paper and which had the following –

There were categories connected to a likert scale (1 – 10 with 1 being weak and 10 being good)

Introduction 8/10

Thesis 7/10

Paragraph Structure 8/10

Paragraph development 15/15 (*outside range of scale listed at top of page)

Overall essay structure 10/10

MLA formatting / presentation of quotations 10/10

Grammar and sentence structure 8/10

Grade = 66/75

Comments: "Jason, note my comments and let me know if you have questions."

Were two other grades also listed ICE 35/35; ICR 15/15

***how does one relate points on grading sheet to comments in paper?

***what is grade for this paper? A possible 125 points?

APPENDIX E
SAMPLE GRADING ANALYSIS 2

Lynn grading analysis out of class essay #1

Paragraph 1 –

Positive – 1
1. wrote "good title" next to "The Baby Ward"

Content – 1
1. Wrote "find a keynote that sums up why these 3 qualities are bad to you"

Grammar – (unless otherwise noted, only put number in margin – no underlining or marking a corresponding mistake in text)
1. wrote 10 (refers to add words) in margin
2. wrote 32 in margin (commas)
3. wrote 36 (apos.) in margin
4. wrote 20 (run on sentences) in margin
5. wrote 43 (spelling) in margin
6. wrote 36 (apostrophe) in margin

Paragraph 2 –

Content –

1. wrote "like what" over "all the magazines"
2. wrote "take more time to explain why" over "it's hared for teens to deal with."
3. wrote "physical?" over "general atmosphere"

Grammar –
1. wrote 32 (commas)
2. wrote 33 (unnecessary commas)
3. wrote 23 (pronoun reference) and circled "they"
4. wrote 42 (italics)
5. wrote 23 (pronoun reference)
6. wrote 32 (commas)
7. wrote 18 (exact words) and circled "thing"
8. wrote 36 (apos.)
9. wrote 32 (commas)
10. wrote 18 (exact words) and circled "enhanced"
11. wrote 33 (unnecessary commas)
12. wrote 43 (spelling)
13. wrote 42 (italics)
14. wrote 36 (apostrophe)
15. wrote 43 (spelling)
16. wrote 37 (quotation marks)

Paragraph 3 –

APPENDIX F
SAMPLE GRADING RUBRIC

ENC 1101

Grading Sheet—Out-of-Class Essay #2

Introduction (development, intrigue)

1---2---3---4---5---6---7---8---9---10
(weak) (average) (good)

Thesis (specificity, clarity)

1---2---3---4---5---6---7---8---9---10
(weak) (average) (good)

Paragraph Structure (topic sentences, support, discussion)

1---2---3---4---5---6---7---8---9---10
(weak) (average) (good)

Paragraph Development (explanation and discussion)

1---2---3---4---5---6---7---8---9---10---11---12---13---14---15
(weak) (average) (good)

excellent

Transitions (within and between paragraphs)

1---2---3---4---5---6---7---8---9---10
(weak) (average) (good)

, good

MLA Formatting (headings, font, parenthetical citations, work-cited entry)

1---2---3---4---5---6---7---8---9---10
(weak) (average) (good)

ICE/Prew/Wkshps
35/35 15/15

Grammar & Sentence Structure & Punctuation

1---2---3---4---5---6---7---8---9---10
(weak) (average) (good)

lots of comma errors

Total Points: 73

Comments: You've written a very fine essay. Let me know if you have questions

Conference Recommended: ___ Writing Lab Recommended: ___

APPENDIX G

INSTRUCTOR CONSENT

Instructor Consent

Dear Instructor:

I am a graduate student at the University of Florida. As part of my dissertation, I am conducting a research study, the purpose of which is to learn about the experiences of high school dual enrollment students enrolled in college composition. The focus of my study will be interviews with the students about their academic progress and about their experiences as members of the classroom community. You are being contacted because one of the students taking part in this research is enrolled in your college composition course.

With your permission I would like to interview you about your observations of the student. I believe this interview will take thirty minutes. Only I will have access to the tapes, which I will personally transcribe, removing any identifiers during transcription. The tapes will then be erased. Your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law and your identity will not be revealed in the final manuscript.

There are no anticipated risks, compensation or other direct benefits to you as a participant in this research. You are free to withdraw your consent to participate and may discontinue your participation in the interview at any time without consequence.

If you have any questions about this research protocol, please contact me at 381-3616 or my faculty supervisor, Dr. Jane S. Townsend, 392-9191 ext.231. Questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant may be directed to the UFIRB

office, University of Florida, Box 112250, Gainesville, FL 32611; ph (352) 392-0433.

Please sign and return this copy of the letter in the enclosed envelope. A second copy is provided for your records. By signing this letter, you give me permission to audiotape our discussion. I will keep these taped discussions until transcribed, all participants will remain anonymous, and taped discussions will be destroyed after they are transcribed. You may request a copy of the final research project submitted to the doctoral committee.

Angela Browning

I have read the procedure described above for the research project. I voluntarily agree to participate in the study, and I have received a copy of this description.

____________________________ __________

Name Date

APPENDIX H
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) APPROVAL LETTER

Institutional Review Board

98A Psychology Bldg.
PO Box 112250
Gainesville, FL 32611-2250
Phone: (352) 392-0433
Fax: (352) 392-9234
E-mail: irb2@ufl.edu
http://rgp.ufl.edu/irb/irb02

DATE: February 1, 2006

TO: Angela Browning
2403 Norman Hall
Campus

FROM: Ira S. Fischler, Ph.D., Chair
University of Florida
Institutional Review Board 02

SUBJECT: **Approval of Protocol #2006-U-0060**

TITLE: The influence of a community college's high school dual enrollment program on at-risk students and their performance as English students

SPONSOR: None

I am pleased to advise you that the University of Florida Institutional Review Board has recommended approval of this protocol. Based on its review, the UFIRB determined that this research presents no more than minimal risk to participants. Given your protocol, it is essential that you obtain signed documentation of informed consent from each participant over 18 years of age, and from the parent or legal guardian of each participant under 18 years of age. When it is feasible, you should obtain signatures from both parents. Enclosed is the dated, IRB-approved informed consent to be used when recruiting participants for the research.

> Given your protocol, it is essential that you obtain signed documentation of informed consent from each participant over 18 years of age, and from the parent or legal guardian of each participant under 18 years of age.

If you wish to make any changes to this protocol, **including the need to increase the number of participants authorized**, you must disclose your plans before you implement them so that the Board can assess their impact on your protocol. In addition, you must report to the Board any unexpected complications that affect your participants.

If you have not completed this protocol by January 31, 2007, please telephone our office (392-0433), and we will discuss the renewal process with you. It is important that you keep your Department Chair informed about the status of this research protocol.

IF:dl

Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Institution

APPENDIX I
STUDENT CONSENT LETTER

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am a graduate student in the School of Teaching and Learning at the University of Florida, conducting research on the influence of SFCC's high school dual enrollment program on students' performance in English classes. The results of the study may help teachers better understand the effect the context may have on student performance. These results may not directly help your child today, but may benefit future students. With your permission, I would like to ask your child to volunteer for this research.

All students participating in this study will be asked open-ended questions about their academic experience before and during their participation in SFCC's dual enrollment program. There will be two interviews that will take up to 60-minutes each, depending on the students' responses. These interviews will take place on SFCC's campus at a time agreed upon by the student and investigator. With your permission, your child will be audio taped during the interview. The audio tape will be accessible only to the principal investigator for purposes of transcription. At the end of the study, the tape will be erased. The participants' identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. I will replace their names with pseudonyms. Any direct quotation of a student's response will be reported using the student's pseudonym. Your student's name will not be used in any report. Participation or non- participation in this study will not affect the students' grades or placement in any programs.

You and your child have the right to withdraw consent for your child's participation at any time without consequence. There are no known risks or immediate benefits to the participants. No compensation is offered for participation. Results of this study will be available in December 2007 upon request. If you have any questions about this research protocol, please contact me at 381-3616 or my faculty supervisor, Dr. Jane Townsend, at 338-4479. Questions or concerns about your child's rights as research participant may be directed to the UFIRB office, University of Florida, Box 112250, Gainesville, FL 32611, (352) 392-0433.

Angela Browning

I have read the procedure described above. I voluntarily give my consent for my child, ________________, to participate in Angela Browning's study of SFCC's high school dual enrollment students. I have received a copy of this description.

________________________ __________
Parent / Guardian Date

____
2nd Parent / Witness Date

Approved By
University of Florida
Institutional Review Board 02
Protocol # 2006-U-0060
For Use Through 01/31/2007

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Angela Elizabeth Browning received her Associate in Arts from St. Johns River Community College, her Bachelor of Arts from Presbyterian College, her Master of Arts from the University of South Carolina, and her PhD from the University of Florida, in Spring 2011. She lives in Neptune Beach, Florida, where she enjoys teaching college composition.