Writing Experiences And Expectations Of African American Students: Two Year College Composition Course

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DISSERTATION

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Summary

This dissertation study has sought to understand both the experiences and

expectations provided to students participating in a single basic writing course at a two-

year college. Analysis of student writing artifacts, with the goal of comparing 21st century

student written purpose with the written purposes shown in19th century African American

writings undergirds the study. This study enacts qualitative methodology, three data

sources were used to inform the study's questions: observation, interview and analysis of

writing. Study results provide cogent information that show several factors competing

against one another in a course that is paradoxically labeled basic and developmental.

Observations of class discourse, participant interviews and analysis of student writings

show that students expected that instruction emphasize the basic skills of writing. In

spite of this, students suggest the basic writing experiences in the course countered their

expectations. Equally, students participating in this course wanted strengthening of

writing skills and expansion of knowledge – content knowledge and writing technique.

The basic expectations of the course barred this type of expansion, thereby offering

students partial writing benefit. Taking from the historical writing purpose of 19th

century writings, this dissertation offers a reconfigured view on basic and developmental

courses.

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

I. INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Research Problem

Students enrolled in community college composition courses continue to be impacted by limited information on how to improve instructional practices (Bok, 2009). This is problematic because presently an increasing number of students enrolling in community colleges are interested in university transfer (Franco, 2002) and writing is central to students attaining their desired postsecondary goals. Equally problematic is the lack of attention in composition research focused on African American students enrolled in community colleges. To date, there are few studies among the extant college composition literature that documents African American students' experiences with and responses to instructional writing practices. Research that examines their experiences is critical because African American students who struggle with writing are assigned to non-credit bearing composition courses or developmental writing courses. Conducting research on their experiences in these courses may yield useful data for improving their retention and graduation rates from two-year community colleges.

Coupling the limited research on African American composition studies at the community college level with an absence of sound approaches that can reverse patterns of underperformance for those who enter higher education needing additional writing support, I argue that African American composition research needs attention to improve instructional writing practices at the community college level. I also argue that writing instruction with a strong theoretical conceptualization grounded in Black epistemologies and long standing relationships with writing is just as important.

The Need for Composition Research

Writing instructors are still grappling with improving students' writing and trying to identify best practices in writing instruction. Moreover, educators in the field of composition have debated the roles of composition instruction for several decades. This debate has led to multiple paradigmatic shifts of composition research. This could possibly be a result of lack of extant literature on composition instruction at the community college level in the research community compared to other levels. As Smagorinsky (2006) points out, prior to the emergence of interest in composition research in the 1970s composition did not receive attention from the research community because it was considered unscientific. Only within the last four decades has interest in writing research emerged (Nystrand, 2006). This shift occurred during the era of open college admissions. A brief discussion of open admissions is warranted because it changed the demographic landscape of community colleges and the need for additional research.

Open Admissions

Opening the Gates of Higher Education for Students of Color

Open admissions, known as a non-competitive form of college enrollment, opened the door for more Americans to be enrolled. Open admissions peaked during the 1960s and 1970s shifting the demographic landscape of community colleges throughout the U.S. (Lavin & Hyllegard, 1996). The open era's admission granted college access to all students, not just those with an elite secondary background or exceptionally high entrance exam scores. As part of the shift during open admissions, faculty across the

nation began to realize that composition, in fact, required explicit instruction. However, there was little direction for providing writing instruction to young adults and non-traditional students.

Several researchers began to pave the way for writing research (Flowers & Hayes, 1981; Hillocks, 1987; Scarmedelia & Bereiter, 1987; Graff, 1988; Smargonisky, 2006). However, Mina Shaughnessy revolutionized composition research and practice at the community college level. She openly criticized faculty pessimism about open admissions and suggested that the instructional writing practices of the time were severely prescriptive. She shared her dissatisfaction with composition classrooms within the City Colleges of New York:

> Open Admissions has reached out beyond traditional sources for its students, bringing into our campuses young men and women whose perceptions of themselves, whose needs and interests and styles of learning differ from those of the students we built our colleges around, and if the social scientists, ignoring these differences, continue to evaluate the performance of the new students with across-the-board statistics based on old criteria, then it falls upon us to formulate the new criteria ourselves. We must begin to keep our own books, recording in systematic ways our observations of our students' growth over significant developmental periods. We must organize our energies around important questions that bear upon the ways we teach, questions about the nature of error and its relationship to linguistic growth. (Shaughnessy 1973, p. 107)

As illustrated through the quote, Shaughnessy implies reinvention of instruction was necessary and encouraged closely observing students' composition development,

rather than evaluating student writing based on measurement rubrics. She supported

providing all students access to higher education. In an effort to help renew writing

instruction, Shaughnessy (1979) conducted a landmark study that examined the patterns

of linguistic error found in the writings of a 'nontraditional' student. In a study conducted

about undergraduates by the National Center for Education Statistics (2002), a

nontraditional student was defined as someone who had any of the following

characteristics:

1. Delays enrollment (does not enter postsecondary education in the same
   year of finishing high school);

2. Attends part time for at least part of the academic year;

3. Works full time (35 hours or more per week) while enrolled;

4. Is considered financially independent for purposes of determining
   eligibility for financial aid;

5. Has dependents other than a spouse (usually children);

6. Is a single parent (either not married or married but separated and has
   dependents); or

7. Does not have a high school diploma (completed high school with a GED
   or other high school completion) (Furman, 2011).

In Shaughnessy's longitudinal study, she examined writings of students who self

identified as Black and Hispanic (mainly Puerto Rican) enrolled at the New York City

Colleges, looking for patterns of error and suggested corrective expectations for each

category of errors. Shaughnessy revolutionized the field of composition by making

evident the realities of her students' writing abilities and even criticizing the lack of

faculty willingness to improve composition instruction.

Five Major Writing Trends Across College Composition

According to David Russell et al (2009), the field of composition research has

undergone five major trends within universities and community colleges in the U.S. Each

of these trends supports the need for the proposed study. First, in the 1960s, composition

experiences were heavily influenced by behaviorism. According to this view, writing is a

trainable skill and to some degree easily generalizable. It was supposed that once basic

writing skills were taught students would generalize and build on these skills with

automaticity. Writing is considered a gradual systematic process that required writing

instructors to teach rules and skills governing the written English language. Second,

writing trends shifted to cognitive science in the 1970s. The popularization of process

writing prevailed. Flowers and Hayes (1981) were known for popularizing verbal

protocols and think aloud strategies along with extensive researcher observations to track

the writing process of postsecondary education students. Third, the field shifted to

personalizing the writing experiences for students. Students were given more choice in

writing as the process shifted to more informal writing. Discourse was encouraged and

students no longer wrote within closed vacuums, but instead exchanged perspectives.

Collaborative and cooperative writing gained momentum. The field did not rest for long

as interest in improving students' writing across the disciplines grew. In the 1980s,

Bazerman (1981) was credited for research in the area of cross-disciplinary writing,

marking the fourth trend. The idea that different disciplines valued writing differently

became the center of focus. By reinforcing this view, composition instructors began to

embrace the necessity of teaching the different functions of writing. Lastly, the field advanced to an assessment-centered focus. This is similar to its origins that date back to the behavioristic and cognitive models. As a community college instructor, I now observe writing being taught as a trainable skills-based that requires frequent assessment and evaluation. The view is synonymous to let's train and then test. Paradigmatic shifts in any discipline are common because shifts presume change and change is commonly seen as improvement. However, what is occurring in the case of writing is that perhaps the field of writing is progressing at the community college level.

An Emerging Historical Lens

Researchers are beginning to realize the importance of recognizing historical literate practices of past communities when approaching college composition research (Royster & Williams, 1999). Adopting an historical orientation to ground this study, I examined the writings of African Americans during the nineteenth century, a period when the writings of African Americans began to flourish and became widespread. More African Americans writers began to publish works and create platforms, such as newspapers, to widely circulate their ideas. Theoretically, historicizing literate experiences is defined as linking historical and contemporary literary practice. By historicizing literacy experiences, researchers revisit history to grasp an understanding of the literacy climate of the past. By considering the rich social, cultural and historical literacy practices, the field can begin to understand the conceptual impetus and activity underlying historic populations (Gutierrez, Hunter & Arzubiaga, 2009). This study seeks to extend Russell's et al (2006) work, by including students' voices and compare their experiences with historical purposes undergirding African American writings. I argue

that an ideological shift toward sociohistorical writing with African American students may be beneficial as it was for writers historically.

While a focus on writing grounded in cognitive theory has affordances, shifts in writing research indicate that a focus on the cognitive dimensions of writing alone forecloses other theoretical framings of writing that might benefit students. Writing instruction focused on cognitive theory gives attention to skills and processes of the mind; it does not account for social, historical, cultural and political influences of the writing event that honor peoples' rich history of writing and diverse backgrounds, communities, and experiences.

When writing is tied to meaningful historical enactments, it has the potential to advance writing for all students (Tatum & Gue, 2012). Approaching literacy with a historical framework gives students diverse writing experiences in which they can make sense of their identities and histories (McHenry & Heath, 1994). This approach allows students opportunities to connect to their lineage while becoming familiar with excellent writing models. Importantly, historical archives of the writings of African Americans illustrate that multiple social and cultural contextual factors influenced their writings, writings that evidenced cognitive, sociocultural, historical, sociopolitical and critical characteristics. This dissertation employs a qualitative case study to examine African American students' experiences in a developmental writing course and viewing their experiences in relationship to historical writings from Black Americans.

The purpose of this study is to (1) understand current writing experiences among African American students in a community college classroom; and (2) understand how the writing experiences among African American students in a community college

classroom compare with historical purposes of writing of African American in the nineteenth century. Findings from this study have the potential to provide new understandings of writing instructional practices and how African American college students appropriate such instruction. It also has the potential to yield comparative understandings of current writing experiences to characteristics of historical writings of African Americans. While nineteenth century African American writings do not detail specific instructional practices, underlying writing purposes provide a lens that can be used to compare current practices.

This study is significant because ahistorical approaches are used when providing writing instruction to African American students in community colleges. By dismissing early conceptualizations of literacy that focused on intellectual enlightenment, literary discourse, and social collective advancement through the means of literacy, a literacy curriculum that continues to disengage many students is reinforced. There is a wealth of excellent African American writings both from historical and more contemporary times. Perhaps no recorded American civilization has understood the power of written expression as the African American community. Historically, African Americans used several different forms of literacy to pronounce identity and achieve individual, community, and social advancement (McHenry, 2002; Royster, 2000). Yet, their ways of thinking about writing and literacy are not common within instructional practices involving African American students.

Taking a historical literacy frame, the purpose of this study is to understand African American students' experiences' in a community college writing course for developing writers. The following research questions will guide this inquiry:

1. What are writing experiences and expectations of African American students at a two - year college?

2. How do the writing experiences among African American students a community college classroom compare with historical purposes of writing from nineteenth century African American writers?

This study emerges from a literature review I conducted in Spring 2011. At the time, I explored a broad range of nineteenth century African American literature. I read literature written throughout the nineteenth century. The authors of these texts both men and women, had a variety of backgrounds, including social and political activists, historians, writers of fiction and non-fiction. These writers also wrote across a diverse range of topics. My goal was to uncover the purposes undergirding the writings and compare my findings with other scholars who have engaged in similar work. I was captivated by the written purposes as I quickly realized the writings were not just mere representations of imagination, rather the writings had strong social messages intended to stir human emotion and human thought. I read only original documents written by the primary authors of the writings.

This work is timely because composition writing is viewed as a necessary experience that awards students validity and entry into academic space. Preparing students to meet the needs of credit composition writing coursework is often done through participation in developmental writing coursework. Typically students who require developmental writing coursework take anywhere between 1 to 3 prerequisite courses prior to taking the regular English 101 course. Expectations and experiences within developmental writing instruction is often uncoupled with current ways writing is

taught or suggestions for advancing writing development among African American students. In the following chapter, I detail the review of the extant literature on African American historical literature and recent studies on writing. Taken together, these sources of literature suggest the benefits of integrating sociohistorical approaches to writing instruction for African American men and women.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this literature review, I discuss the purposes of writing among African Americans based on an examination of published writings during the 19th century. These purposes of writing were found from a review of historical writings of primary source documents. I also review literacy research on African American students and writing instruction in secondary and two-year college composition classrooms. Overall, I found that early African American writers have written for purposes that extend from the tenets of cognitive and behavioral theory. Similar to other scholars' findings (Royster, 2000; Tatum, 2013), I found that African Americans have written for sociocultural and sociopolitical purposes such as (1) writing to affirm national and literary identities, (2) writing for social collectivism, and (3) writing for resistance, resilience and resolve. I have also examined literature related to what authentic writing practices look like today for African American students and writing, particularly for secondary high school and college-aged students. Collectively, researchers of these studies found that the social and cultural experiences along with advanced expressive capacities of these students should not be discounted within writing classrooms. In the research literatures involving secondary students, I found that young African American writers engage more in the writing event when it is situated in characteristics similar to historical purposes of writing—which some scholars label as authentic purposes for writing (Behizadeh, 2014). In addition, researchers found writing exercises to be meaningful when framed around the students' lives including their various histories and identities.

In the college composition literatures involving African American students, the areas of research focus are often limited to dialect and writing self-perception. These

studies also lead to the need to study authentic writing composition at the college level.

This is an important consideration because it can potentially increase student retention

and college completion rates. The proposed study intends to fill this gap in scholarship

by systematically examining how African Americans communicated their identities,

ambitions and concerns through the form of literate activity and writings. I believe

history can serve as a useful guide for understanding the purposes of writing, which could

yield different qualitative experiences for African American students in developmental

writing courses.

Historical writings for this review were selected based on first authorship. I read

memoirs, letters, public addresses, poetry, sermons, narratives, announcements, news

articles, and notes and minutes from literary organizations because these were the

prominent writing genres of this time period. I found historical writings by searching

nineteenth century African American newspapers, including *Anglo-African Magazine*

(1822 - 1865), *The Christian Recorder* (1854 - 1892), *Colored American/Weekly*

Advocate (1837 - 1841), *Frederick Douglass Paper* (1852-1855), *Freedom's*

Journal (1827-1828)*, Liberator* (1831 - 1865), *The North Star* (1847 - 1851)*,* and *The*

Weekly Anglo-African (1859 - 1862). These newspapers were central in providing

primary source documents and often included a wide range of literary and nonfiction

writings. In addition, I searched for historical writings through research databases such as

Black Thought and Culture, JSTOR, Historical Abstracts, Historical Newspapers, Early

American Newspapers (1690-1922), and Wiley Online, and online archives. I reviewed

archival websites such as http://www.blackpast.org/digital-archives and

http://research.udmercy.edu/find/special_collections/digital/baa/index.php. In addition, I

relied on online databases from the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, the world's leading research center on the cultures and histories of people of African descent. Finally, I read from several anthologies edited by leading scholars who have captured a variety of African American nineteenth century writings. These anthologies include, *The Prentice Hall Anthology of African American Women's Literature* (Lee, 2006), *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature* (Gates & McKay, 1997), *Crossing the Danger Water: Three Hundred Years of American-American Writing* (Mullane, 1993), Early Negro Writing, 1760-1837 (Porter, 1995), and *African American Literature: A Brief Introduction and Anthology* (Young, 1996). On average each anthology contained 40 pieces of writing written in the 19th century. In addition, these texts offer a compilation of writings by men and women and include literary analyses of the writings. I read more than 150 historical writings over the past three years. I also read from a number of scholars who have written about Black men and women during the 1800s (Bacon, 2007; McHenry, 2002; Peterson, 1995; Royster, 2000; Yee, 1992; Yellin & Horne, 1994).

Drawing upon Howell and Prevenier's (2001) definition of a source as an artifact from the past, I developed a search criteria and descriptive coding chart (see Appendix A). When considering the text, my selection criteria for historical writings that were examined included: (a) writings must have been written during the 1800s; (b) writings must be original; (c) primary source writings must have been written by an African American writer; (d) writings must display a range of genres, writers (including male and female) and years within the timeframe. My goal was to read a balanced number of different genres and writers, although I mostly came across non-fiction writings such as

essays, letters, narratives, public addresses, and articles to be prominent types of writing during this time. As I read each historical artifact, I grounded my method in Gaillet's (2010) approach on examining archival data. She specifically outlines 11 tasks and questions regarding document analyses:

1. Determine the research questions and what you think or hope to find.

2. Provide a physical description of the documents or artifact.

3. Categorize the findings. What are the genres of the words you are examining?

4. Couch archival materials and your analyses within political, social, economic, educational, religious, or institutional histories of the time.

5. Think about how best it is to corroborate your assumptions and claims. What other sources or archives might you consult to add credence?

6. Consult secondary and contemporary primary sources

7. Ascertain the motives inherent in the materials studied.

8. Carefully analyze the original audience for the artifact, both intended and secondary.

9. Investigate the contemporary reception of the work

10. Research the subsequent reputation of the materials.

11. Decide how to tell your story. What is your stance? Who is your audience? How will you organize findings? (Gaillet, 2010, p. 35-36)

When reading each historical document, I asked: *What the author's purpose for writing this piece?* From there, I completed the chart and engaged in inductive coding. Inductive coding was selected as a method because I wanted to go into the literatures without any

predetermined ideas or themes. The three most frequent codes that related to purposes for their writings and appeared in multiple texts types included: (1) writing to affirm identities, (2) writing for social collectivism, and (3) writing for resistance, resilience and resolve. Other themes that appeared less often included writing to express spirituality, writing to appeal some issue, writing to assert gender rights, and writing for artistic sensibility.

The three purposes of writing that I found bear close resemblance to Tatum's (2009) research on writings purposes of African American males and Royster (2000) research on why Black women have written across time. Tatum (2009) found that Black males historically have written for similar purposes of self-definition, to engage others through writing, resilience, and to build capacity for future generations. Royster (2000) and Muhammad (2012) found that African American women write to define their identities, counter power/false narratives written about them and write for social change. These scholars' findings align with my findings from my review of documents as the first focuses on writing for identity meaning making, the second focuses on writings for the sake of others. Both Tatum and Royster write about how African Americans wrote for benefits outside of their individual selves—they wrote to engage others or help change conditions of the social community. Finally, my third finding— writing for resistance, resilience and resolve—speaks to both Tatum's and Royster's second purposes of African American writing. They both posit that African Americans wrote to resist to either build or nurture resiliency or for social change. They found few differences between the writings of men and women when comparing purposes of writing. However, I found few variances. For example, women wrote unsurprisingly about issues concerning their

gender rights and state of being as women, writing across themes of sexual violence, receiving equal rights as men, physical violence, motherhood, and their physical beauty. They wrote from layered intersections of being female, Black, and American. Other scholars' works have also aligned to similar purposes of African American writing. For example, others have found that Black Americans write for expression of self-identity (Bland, 2000; Young, 1996), for resilience and resistance (Lee, 2006) and for purposes of social collectivism (Fisher, 2009; McHenry, 2002; Peterson, 1995; Porter, 1936). I compared my findings with these scholars to strengthen my interpretation. Before I offer examples of each historical purpose for writing, I discuss the historical background on the wealth of literacy success experienced by early African Americans.

The Attempt to Displace and Dislocate Literacies

Examining the social context underlying this literacy success can help researchers better understand the influence that social variables have on the production of writing. At the start of the fifteenth century leading into the nineteenth century, more than half a million African men, women and children were taken from the coastline and coastal midland of Africa. The aftermath of the Atlantic Slave Trade or mafaa', Swahili for "struggle" or "misfortune" resulted in millions of displaced and dislocated lives, language and cultures. It is believed the pejorative removal of these human beings was actually deemed sensible by their European captives since enslavement was an historically common practice in Europe (Nash, 1992). American capitalistic venture was the primary reason underlying this involuntary mass migration (Wallerstein, 1974). Especially during colonial development, most enslaved Africans were used to cultivate the North American cash crop, for both internal sustenance and commercial trade.

Suppression of language was used as a means of disempowerment. During the forced removal from the African coast and midline across the Atlantic into North America all attempts to prevent a collective revolt were put in place. Those enslaved were separated by language to obstruct communication and the planning of a revolt (Baugh, 1999). While there is no denying the atrocity of this period, Alexander and Rucker (2010) remind us how history naively documents this event as a narrative of defeat. They contend that this story instead represents triumph because a population of men, women, and children beat all of the impossible odds stacked against them.

Despite efforts of linguistic separation, Africans maintained steadfastness in the power of language and literacy. However, Holt (1990) alludes that there remains a hole within scholarship because it does not accurately or wholly represent the actual determination for schooling and literacy shown by generations of African Americans. When assessing the historical drive for education, in most cases it is apparent that perhaps African Americans sought after an education more so than those who at the time controlled the government and legislation. Scholars note (McHenry, 2002; Porter, 1936; Peterson, 1998) early African Americans had an advanced understanding of what literacy could do for their current and future generations. During this same time, the African American educative agenda was underlined with the notions of social and intellectual betterment. With an explosion of nineteenth century African American publications and literacy communities such as literary societies, writers and speakers pressed messages of social and political disapproval, removal of deleterious identity, collective advancements and affirmation of spiritual conviction. When assessing the written themes of this time it is apparent that early African Americans were interested in issues of human morality and

ethics, social and political equity, and collective advancement. Across forums, they commonly communicated the disapproval of the current state of political and social inequity (Royster, 2000).

Writing Against Dominant Discourses

In *Notes on the State of Virginia,* deemed by some as the most American book, Thomas Jefferson claims, "never could I find that a black man had uttered a thought above the level of narration" (1785). This incessant misrepresentation framed African Americans as illiterate and deplored slave expressions. In spite of the context of socio political majority-minority relations, early African Americans participated in acts of literacy, wrote and published countless pieces, and developed literate communities (Fisher, 2009; Harris, 1992; McHenry, 2002; McHenry & Heath, 1994; Porter, 1936). Within these acts of literacy, African Americans focused on promoting their voices for the sake of social, national, educative and political influence. Literary dissemination was not a covert activity. Instead, it was the means to make their literary voices heard to as many ears as possible. Their writings were widespread and they used public writing platforms such as newspapers, pamphlets, and journals to share knowledge with others. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the social and political majority was often swift in discrediting the literary value of early African American writings. However, Black people knew the content held in the writings and knew they could use language in ways to push forward their own social, cultural and political ideals, writing against other dominant and oppressive frames.

Members of the African American community found power and solace through literary expression. Literacy practices were used to voice positions against existing

sociopolitical conditions and dispel the negative perceptions prominent during that time.

Men and women participated in literary activism as McHenry (2002) notes did not

confine their writings to antislavery messages. They used language to reclaim their rights

and gain power within their country and consequently gaining print authority (Tatum &

Muhammad, 2012). In other words, early African Americans did not want to subject their

identity to the vile institution of enslavement especially since whites only associated them

by this single representation. The literary contributions of African Americans covered

vast intellectual ground; wholly intended to dismiss negative impressions imposed on

men and women, all while strengthening social and political interests. Historically, critics

of such publications accuse African American writings as mimicry. In other words, critics

unjustly reduced African American writings as replications of genre and message. This

shows the lack of attention given to such publications by whites. Suggesting that early

African American publications as iterations of one another could not be more far from the

truth. Given that the federal government failed to support equitable educative, social and

political access, many publications did express issues focusing largely on socio-political

inequities. However, it is also important to note that prominent publications varied in

written purpose and target audiences. Negligently categorizing African American

writings from the nineteenth century as simple expressions is dismissing an historical

American literary canon and important reasons for writing.

Even with restrictions on formal academic training, early African American

writers constructed highly intellectual and strategically defined writing. That is, early

writings were not written for just leisure, entertainment or recreational sale; they were

penned with social purpose. For example, in a 1863 archive found in the *Pacific Appeal*,

the editor wrote, "Verily, 'Truth is mighty and shall prevail,' and one of the greatest instrumentalities of its triumph is the pen, which, 'in the hands of men entirely great, is mightier than the sword." Here the writer asserts that the purpose of the pen (or writing) is to be used as a tool to change social conditions. Writings often communicated with multiple audiences including internal and external members, all while displaying secure spiritual conviction (Russwurm, 1829; Allen, 1827). Writing also firmly positioned the identity of a nation in a mainly European dominated society (Carroll, 2005). Confirming this in a public address delivered before the American Moral Reform Society in 1837, James Forten said:

> I conceive, our Literary Institutions to have the power of doing. It seems to me, that the main object is to accomplish an intellectual and moral reformation. And I know of but few better ways to effect this than by reading, by examining, by close comparisons and thorough investigations, by exercising the great faculty of thinking; for if a man can be brought to think, he soon discovers that his highest enjoyment consists in the improvement of the mind; it is this that will give him rich ideas, and teach him, also that his limbs were never made to wear the chains of servitude he will see too that equal rights were intended to all (Porter, 1995).

Here, Forten expresses the identities of Black people saying that they are thinkers and capable of improving their minds. He expresses that they are entitled of equal rights and should not be subsumed or wearing the "chains of servitude" as many European oppressors desired for them.

Early African Americans were interested in not only repairing misrepresented identities, but also elevating identities. In the following sections, I present three purposes

of writings from reviewing literary works of African Americans. The literature brought me to these purposes and they illustrate the very intentional intellectual and social advancement put forth by writers from early times (see Tables below).

Table 1

Historical Writing Purposes – Writing to Define and Affirm Identities

Purpose for Writing	Definition
Writing to Define and Affirm Identities	The use of written language as marker of making sense of selfhood and affirming one's multiple identities.

Example
"I am your fellow man, but not your slave" (Auld, 1848)
"There is, then, a real and special influence of woman. An influence subtle and often involuntary, an influence so intimately interwoven in, so intricately interpenetrated by the masculine influence of the time that it is often difficult to extricate the delicate meshes and analyze and identify the closely clinging fibers." (Cooper, 1892)
Remaining your sincere friend and captain until death." (Letter from a Slave Rebel in Georgia, 1810)
"I was on the point of concluding there was no foundation for the alarm," (Slave Revolts Testimony on Gabriel's Revolt)
"Rolla, a conspirator." (Testimony on the Vesey Conspiracy)
"Friend to humanity," (The Founding of the African-American Press)
"I have for several years been striving to reconcile my mind to the colonization of Africans in Liberia," (The Argument Against)
"Leave me not a wretch confined, Altogether lame and blind-Until gross despair Consigned, Forever!" (The Slave's Complaint)
"Fellow men! Patient sufferers! Behold your dearest rights crushed to the earth!" (Garnet, 1843)
"Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman?" (Truth, 1851)
"They were both idealists; both governed by their views of the teachings of the Bible;" (On John Brown's Raid)
"Who so stolid and selfish that would not give his voice to swell the halleluiahs of a nation's jubilee, when the chains of servitude had been torn from his limbs? I am not that man." (Douglas, 1852)
"Whatever our ultimate position in the composite civilization of the Republic and whatever varying fortunes attend our career," (Bruce, 1876)
"Am I not a man because I happen to be of a darker hue than honorable gentlemen around me?" (Turner, 1868)

Table 2

Historical Writing Purposes – Writing for Social Collectivism

Purpose for Writing	Definition
Writing for Social Collectivism	The use of written language for social and political (empowered) advancement.

Example
"We therefore write to you as being bound with you" (Garnet, 1865)
"Such an institution (a reading room) would be productive of the greatest good. Its influence and effects would be two-fold. While it would, directly, produce much good to our community, it would also be a preventative of much evil." (Colored American, 1828)
"While this class of people exists among us we can never count with certainty on its tranquil submission."(Slave Revolts Testimony on Gabriel's Revolt)
"We are free but the white people here won't let us be so." (Testimony on the Vesey Conspiracy)
"We have spread the sense nearly over the continental in our part of the country." (Letter from a Slave Rebel in Georgia, Anonymous, 1810)
"We feel all the diffidence of persons entering upon a new and untried line of business" (The Founding of the African-American Press)
"This land which we have watered down with our tears and our blood, is now our mother country." (The Argument Against)
"My brethren, which produce our wretchedness and miseries," (Walker's Appeal in Four Articles)
"We went down into the water together, in the sight of many who reviled us, and were baptized by the spirit," (The Confessions of Nat Turner)
"We are connected by the more tender relations of parents, wives, husbands, children, brothers, and sisters, and friends," (Garnet, 1843)
"I think that 'twixt the negroes of the South and the women at the North, all talking about rights, the white men will be in a fix pretty soon." (Truth, 1851)
"So, people of the South, people of the North!" (On John Brown's Raid)
"How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" (Douglas, 1852)
"We have pioneered civilization here; we have built up your country; we have worked in your fields, and garnered your harvests, for two hundred and fifty years!" (Turner, 1868)
"I think that 'twixt the negroes of the South and the women at the North, all talking about rights, the white men will be in a fix pretty soon." (Truth, 1851)
"So, people of the South, people of the North!" (On John Brown's Raid)
"How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" (Douglas, 1852)
"We have pioneered civilization here; we have built up your country; we have worked in your fields, and garnered your harvests, for two hundred and fifty years!" (Turner, 1868)
"We can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress." (Washington, 1895)

Table 3

Historical Writing Purposes – Writing for Collective Resistance, Resilience and Unrelenting Resolve

Purpose for Writing	Definition
Writing for Collective Resistance, Resilience and Unrelenting Resolve	The use of written language as expressions of authority, strength and unyielding determination. Writing used to educate, clarify and correct.

Example
"Let your motto be resistance! Resistance! No oppressed people have secured liberty without resistance… and remember you are FOUR MILLION" (Garnet, 1843)
"Dear Sir—…for freedom we want and will have, for we have served this cruel land long enuff [sic]…" (Letter from a Slave Rebel in Georgia, Anonymous, 1810)
"Negroes intended to rise that night, kill their masters and proceed to Richmond." (Gabriel's Revolt)
"We will get free," (Letter from a Slave Rebel in Georgia, Anonymous, 1810)
"Became my duty to estimate a crisis according to its magnitude and to take regular and systematic measures to avert the danger." (Slave Revolts Testimony on Gabriel's Revolt)
"Many of us are determined to right ourselves," (Testimony on the Vesey Conspiracy)
"We wish to plead our own cause," (The Founding of the African-American Press)
"Can we not discern the project of sending the free people of colour away from this country?" (The Argument Against)
"May God Almighty, who is Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, open your hearts to understand and believe the truth," (Walker's Appeal in Four Articles)
"To concert a plan, as we had not yet determined on any," (The Confessions of Nat Turner)
"Heaven! In whom can I confide?
Canst thou not for all provide?
Condescend to be my guide
Forever:" (The Slave's Complaint)
"You should therefore now use the same manner of resistance, as would have been just in our ancestors when the bloody foot prints of the first remorseless soul thief was placed upon the shores of our fatherland," (Garnet, 1843)
"If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again! And now they is asking to do it, the men better let them." (Truth, 1851)
"Are the great principles of political freedom and of natural justice, embodied in that Declaration of Independence, extended to us?" (Douglas, 1852)
"We determined to wait until such time as an appeal to the good sense and justice of the American people could be made," (Bruce, 1876)
"We are willing to let the dead past bury its dead; but we ask you now for our rights," (Turner, 1868)

Writing to Define and Affirm Identities

Writing within this time period was largely connected to defining self and re-establishing identities, including their collective Black identity, their individual identities and their literate identities, for they were literate beings before coming to America (Hunwick, J. O., Boye, A. J., & Hunwick, J., 2008). In other words, African Americans

wanted to assert their positions in the country and world by engaging in acts of literacies. Writing to define and affirm identities meant that writing was used as mark of selfhood and assertion. Early African Americans sought to position themselves as readers, communicators and thinkers in public spaces through writing. With a socio-communicative undertone, a style of writing common to various nineteenth century publications was writing that unhesitatingly expressed that literacy would elevate the community. Socio-communicative writings focused on using text as a vehicle of communication. Textual communication was used to spread specific messages with single and multiple audiences. A number of publications during the nineteenth century like the *Freedom Journal* and the *Liberator* became platforms of complex expression and catalysts for internal discussion and self-meaning making. The *Freedom's Journal* wrote in their open editorial, "We wish to plead our own cause, too long have others spoken for us." This speaks to the importance of voice and using writing as a vehicle for speaking for oneself and constructing one's own narratives without allowing others to speak on their behalf. These literary publications helped to further develop their identities.

Another example of writing to define and affirm self comes from Harriet Jacobs (1861). In her personal narrative, she tells her story about growing up enslaved as a woman of color, a daughter, a sister, and seeker of knowledge. She wrote (under the pseudonym of Linda Brent) *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl:*

> I was born a slave; but I never knew it till six years of happy childhood had passed away. My father was a carpenter, and considered so intelligent and skillful in his trade, that, when buildings out of the common line were to be erected, he was sent for from long distances, to be head workman. On condition of paying his

mistress two hundred dollars a year, and supporting himself, he was allowed to

work at his trade, and manage his own affairs. His strongest wish was to purchase

his children; but, though he several times offered his hard earnings for that

purpose, he never succeeded. In complexion my parents were a light shade of

brownish yellow, and were termed mulattoes. They lived together in a

comfortable home; and, though we were all slaves, I was so fondly shielded that I

never dreamed I was a piece of merchandise, trusted to them for safe keeping, and

liable to be demanded of them at any. Jacobs as cited in P. 5

In the entire narrative, Jacobs writes to tell about her experiences of being a

woman of color during enslavement and the harsh conditions she endured as she worked

to gain freedom for herself and her family. She wrote to define and affirm identity by first

penning her own story or personal narrative and not allowing others to define her life.

Jacobs expressed who she is as a mother and women while also detailing of the plight of

being an enslaved Black woman who was subject to frequent abuse and rape by White

oppressors.

In another example, when expressing her gendered and racial identity while

advocating for women's rights, Sojourner Truth addressed a diverse group of people at

the Ohio Women's Rights Convention in 1851. In this talk she expressed:

That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted

over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into

carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman?

Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into

barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman? I could work as much

and eat as much as a man - when I could get it - and bear the lash as well! And

ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen most all sold off to

slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me!

And ain't I a woman?

Here, Truth expresses multiple identities, including her self as a woman, African

American, mother and resilient. She sought to connect to her audience on political and

emotion levels by asking a rhetorical question. She does this to assert her identity and to

implicitly ask if should she not receive the same rights as man by alluding to the

hypocrisy of laws.

In another genre, Paul Laurence Dunbar (1896) writes, *We Wear the Mask*:

We wear the mask that grins and lies,

It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes, —

This debt we pay to human guile;

With torn and bleeding hearts we smile,

And mouth with myriad subtleties.

Why should the world be over-wise

In counting all our tears and sighs?

Nay, let them only see us, while

We wear the mask.

 In this poem, he expressed the racism among Black Americans at the time and being

Black amongst White supremacy, using the collective "we". In the language, he

discusses the mask that Black Americans wore as they were forced to conceal or dissolve

their inherent identities. The mask in the poem represents an ascribed identity that hides their true self. I believe he wrote this because at the time, he used language to push back on the harsh social conditions forced upon African Americans.

Even when faced with external attempts to stifle their progress, African Americans continued to press their messages through print mechanism and later organized literary practice. Both in print and within literary societies they were often concerned with awarding the mass opportunities to take part in collective growth through critical discussions (Fisher, 2007; 2009). One of the main ways early African Americans resisted oppression and affirmed identities was through the medium of writing, oration and organized groups. It became clear from a review of nineteenth century African American literature and practice, that language and literacy positioned the community in the sphere of national recognition. In large part, the writers and tellers of history dismiss or fragment the early African American identities, thereby, limiting it only to periods of enslavement (McHenry, 2002), reconstruction, and the Civil Rights Movement (Gilmore, 2010). Partializing the early African American experience is to continue to focus solely on the minority versus majority narrative. By focusing the analysis through a deficit lens, that is, the minority against the majority, continues to discount the advanced rhetorical and intellectual purposes underlying early African American literary practice. Contemporary scholar, Gates (1990) alludes that the intellectualism behind early African American literary construction is incomparable, especially due to the socially restrictive parameters that they were bound to. They were clearly establishing themselves as intellectual and literate beings. This identity helped to promote a sense of ownership in a land that was so swift to eradicate their humanity.

Writing for Social Collectivism

Another purpose for writing was to engage others in their written ideas. Writing for social collectivism means using written language for social and political advancement. Through the power of ink and voice, early African Americans realized that literacy was a cultural transmission intended to pave a way for present and future generations. The notion of cultural transmission is not to be simplified to the passing of ritualistic or traditional practices, like song or dance. Rather, cultural transmission in the case of early African Americans was the deliberate passing of thought, language and literary practice. When this type of passing from one generation to the next is done, there is more opportunity for subsequent growth both cognitively and socio-politically. When referring to learning as a cultural inheritance, Tomasello notes that a successor generation is more likely to take lessons from the predecessor generation (2007), thereby sustaining growth. Similarly, Royster conceptualizes this cultural transmission as writing in the zamani (meaning past). She posits that African American writers' works (particularly women) were connected to each other through an "ancestral" or "culturally imprinted" voice. In this way, African American writings were in response to one another and greatly built upon one another.

It has become clear that literacy was not considered an individualized achievement but rather it was a collective passing. Perry posits, the main purpose of literacy was to share and pass it on, it was not something kept for oneself (2003). In much of the same way, Fisher (2009) discussed how literacy was a part of a chain letter effect for education. To keep literacy to one's self was seen as a selfish action. Therefore, literacy became a very shared collective and responsibility for African American people.

Social collectivism is an important theme traversing past and modern African American writing, though for the sake of this review I will focus only on earlier literary practice. Writing and literacy was social and shared through the development of literary societies. These societies were organized spaces to exercise writing, which then led to sharing, debating, lecturing, and publication (McHenry, 2002). Many of the literary societies were developed from this ideal of social collectivism. In a public address, William Whipper expressed the idea of writing to engage others into the fold. In attempts to entice others to join the organization, he expressed:

> It shall be our whole duty to instruct and assist each other in the improvement of our minds as we wish to see the flame of improvement spreading amongst our brethren and friends; and the means prescribed shall be of our particular province. Therefore we hope that many of our friends will avail themselves of the opportunity of becoming members of this useful institution (Porter, 1995).

Whipper goes on to state:

> It would not have been my intention here to have aimed the blow at the learned; to all classes of citizens it is equally productive of the same ill consequences. But as the world in general are taught to expect something of the highest order from minds richly furnished with education, our respect and social happiness depend much on their conduct and outward performances.

He wrote and delivered this speech for social and political advancement of African American people, which was an inherent purpose of literary societies. He speaks to empowerment that results when one seeks to improve the mind. He speaks of a metaphoric flame of improvement when other Black people share knowledge and see the

act of instructing one another as a social responsibility. Therefore the literacy and writing work they worked toward were not absent of being social endeavors. Furthermore, this ideal was echoed in the female literary societies. In a speech delivered in the summer of 1832, Sarah Mapps Douglas addressed the Female Literary Society of Philadelphia, urging listeners to focus on efforts of abolitionism:

> My Friends—My Sisters:
>
> How important is the occasion for which we have assembled ourselves together this evening, to hold a feast, to feed our never-dying minds, to excite each other to deeds of mercy, words of peace; to stir up in the bosom of each, gratitude to God for his increasing goodness, and feeling of deep sympathy for our brethren and sisters, who are in this land of Christian light and liberty held in bondage the most cruel and degrading—to make their cause our own!

Similar to the aims of Whipper, Douglas seeks to appeal to her audience toward this idea of social collectivism. She too uses a metaphor of a social meeting as a "feast, to feed our never-dying minds, to excite each other." The feast as she describes is an intellectual gathering to advance their mental state.

African American literate experiences epitomize writing as a social act especially because writings were publicized and documented for collective betterment. The discussion of text also played a central role in African American culture (Fisher, 2009; McHenry, 2002). During the 19th century, it was understood that literate activity was perhaps the one and only way that the mass would give their brethren knowledge and agency necessary for moral and socio-political advancement.

Even though outside efforts attempted to suppress literacy, literate African Americans felt compelled to share literacy in covert literacy institutions during the period of the antebellum (Fisher, 2009) further emphasizing the idea of collective advancement through literacy. Face to face literary forums like literary societies and literary conferences became a critical part of African American structures. Members of the African American community realized that literacy was the single factor that would relieve them of despair. To some, literary acquisition was considered a divine gift (Mullen, 1996) to be shared amongst others in the community (Peterson, 1998). Writings and participation in literary societies, for example gave readers and members the chance to take part in pressing discussions in a nurtured environment (Porter, 1995). Members of these organizations understood literacy as a tool for nurturing and supporting the literacy development for one another. In other words, speaking and even debating were done to nurture the individual mind and nurture kinship. Moreover, literary societies and organizations gave African Americans opportunities to formally participate in organized literary activity during a time that would not have otherwise allowed such participation. As a result, members exchanged personal expressions of agony and hope within a secure sphere. With the growth of more literary institutions, African Americans involved themselves in such organizations and became bolder in their literary expressions. They reclaimed their stolen voices and used the power of the spoken and written word to write from their perspective. Exchanging critical social perspectives and documenting thoughts liberated their minds and voices. It should be noted that literary organizations energized the black epistemic pursuit. From enslavement to empowerment, African

Americans across the nation took part in literary activity, and in many ways more than any other group in the United States.

The lack of interest shown from the federal government toward the African American community led to times of intolerable hopelessness. Because of this, African American male and female writers offered moral guidance to the mass. Furthermore, participation in political resistance writing and discussion gave rise to a sense of solidarity among African Americans. Writing in this case served as a direct proclamation to the mass, "we therefore write to you as being bound with you" (Garnet, 1865). The statement communicates powerful notions to those in domination, encouraging the linkage of hundreds of thousands of African Americans. Female writers of this time addressed the internal and external community on issues of female sexual victimization and physical torture. In opposition of such ill treatment historical female writers and poets used language to condemn suppression (Truth, 1851; Wheatley, 1774). As an example, Wheatley speaks of God given desire for freedom and impatience if that freedom is not met (1774). Sincerity expressed through language confirms how simply fed up these writers were with human enslavement. Even when questioning the centuries of degradation and demoralization inflicted on the population, nineteenth century African American writings addressed fragile issues with rhetorical sophistication and the deepest dignity. The following statement by Douglass exemplifies this:

Go where you may search where you will roam through all the monarchies and despotisms of the Old World, travel through South America, search out every abuse and when you have found the last, lay your facts by the side of the every

day practices of this nation, and you will say with me that, for revolting barbarity

and shameless hypocrisy, American reigns without a rival (Douglass, 1852)

In addition to social commentary, the historical African American repertoire

covers a range of genres including spiritual addresses, poetry, social advancement plans,

and narrative writings. Historical and contemporary African American writings radiate

powerful messages of liberation, self - sustenance, faith, and collective movement

through dialogic interaction. These were all examples of the type of writings that were

created socially and collectively. These often led to resilience and resolve.

Writing for Collective Resistance, Resilience and Unrelenting Resolve

Writing communicated *collective resistance, resilience* and *unrelenting resolve*.

To understand the impetus underlying this form of writing it is important that the two

phrases and one term be explained. Explaining that writing for collective resistance,

resilience and unrelenting resolve occurred not necessarily in separation, but integrated in

text -- is of additional importance. Despite, common integration of these ideas within

text by African American writers of the nineteenth century, the ideas held varying

purpose. Collective resistance is using written language for condemnation of

maltreatment and misrepresentation. Resilience is written use for reasons of

communicating self and community strength and unyielding determination. And, resolve

communicated determination and firmness in purpose. A powerful rhetorical

construction, the *Walker Appeal of 1829* conveys the message of collective resistance in a

way that perhaps no other widely distributed writing had done during this time. Authored

by a free man, David Walker, the appeal makes apparent that the injustices being

committed on American soil toward the African American community were no longer to

be endured. Having travelled nationally and without question a well-learned man, Walker references the conditions of the enslaved across the continent of Europe in his writings. In fairness, he alludes to the atrocity being committed against the Turks and Egyptians by the Greeks and Romans, respectively. However, he makes clear that no other experience of enslavement could come near to that of the Black man, woman and child.

   During this time, escapement to the North or even leaving the country were on the minds of many Southern enslaved Blacks. Walker makes clear that escaping was not an option, rather, collectively resisting hegemony was. What is important to note is that this appeal does not just speak to ending enslavement by promoting escapement. He claims national identity and staunchly refuses any type of migration from the United States. With the likes of others, he firmly claims that America is the Black man, woman and child's rightfully earned home because of the years of nurturance the land has received from the blood and souls of African American effort. Rather, he urges those from within to withhold their ground, show collective resolve and resist their offenders. Walker openly recommends that all Blacks residing in America confront the abominations through revolt.

   It is safe to assume that preparation of this lengthy appeal was sparked by impatience from within and as a strong message to those in dominance. Walker openly encourages revolt and this was one act of retribution most feared by hegemony. He expresses disgust toward the acts of oppression committed toward the community, namely its leaders such as Thomas Jefferson. Rhetorically, he speaks directly to Jefferson often with exclamatory remark. Interestingly, many white Americans during

this time dismissed African American expression as simple talk removed from intelligent action. That is, they did not give heed to the strategic messages common to early African American writing. Perhaps aware of this neglect, Walker left no ambiguity in his message to hegemony. In deliberate argument with Jefferson, Walker makes clear:

> But the slaves among the Romans. Every body who has read history, knows, that as soon as a slave among the Romans obtained his freedom, he could rise to the greatest eminence in the State, and there was no law instituted to hinder a slave from buying his freedom. Have not the Americans instituted laws to hinder us from obtaining our freedom? Do any deny this charge? Read the laws of Virginia, North Carolina, &c. Further: have not the Americans instituted laws to prohibit a man of colour from obtaining and holding any office whatever, under the government of the United States of America? Now, Mr. Jefferson tells us, that our condition is not so hard, as the slaves were under the Romans!!!!!! (1829)

Shortly after Walker's Appeal of 1829, a new wave of African American social collections arose of writings toward resistance and social change. Approximately between the years of 1830 to 1864, conventions spread across multiple states within the nation (Mullane, 1993). These carefully orchestrated events invited participation from men and later women.   An open invitation to women and the urge to have them take part in decision - making, was integral to the idea of collective uprising and resilience. Resistance coupled with resilience made up the tone of the conventions years leading up to the Civil War. Albeit the surge of press, literary communities and conventions, the Black community felt they lacked the political prowess necessary for changing the social and economic status of the Black community because their unrelenting messaging often

fell on the hardened hearts and deaf ears of the nation's leaders. Because the message continued to fall on deaf ears, as illustrated in Walker's address, prominent African American writers and orators began pushing messages of reflection and action (Douglass, 1852).

Around this same time, oral communicative methods were enacted, in an effort to bind collective resistance and resilience. Writings were designed with several layers of purpose. As often misunderstood by hegemony, they were not generic, linear or iterative. Writings did more than just entertain ideas. Moreover, the writings did not just communicate to a self-contained audience. Instead, the writings were deeply profound and uniquely multi-purposed. Early African American writings had the power to dialogue with multiple audiences all through just a single piece of text. For example, Douglass communicates dual messages both to the African American community at large and directly to federal constituencies. On behalf of all confined to American enslavement, he raises the question, "what value does the fourth of July bear, when the pitiful foundation of institutionalized human victimization is celebrated?" (1852). Douglass directs attention to the "empty and heartless" claim to "liberty and equality." With equal emphasis, Delaney (1852) uses writing as a vehicle of socio-political communication when he articulates his concerns to the community and the United States government. Also, Delaney (1852) fearlessly attacks federal dishonesty asserting to the African American community a need for political and moral representation. The unacceptability of federal propaganda unleashes a new tone between African American oration and writing, encouraging its members to take upon political roles.

African American oration to government constituents was not an uncommon practice. Turner (1868) succinctly called to the attention of the Georgia legislature the contributions of the African American community to the physical construction of the United States. Turner wisely counseled the legislative hegemony bringing to their realization the value in recognizing the African American community not as a deficient national membership, rather a resilient, powerful community demanding liberation.

Early journal and magazine publications serve as methods of inspiration, education and social change recruitment. Publication was used as a place to speak rather than being spoken for (Cornish & Russwurm, 1827). Early publications sought to restore and empower broken spirits as psychologically a large number of African Americans began to believe fallacious perpetual messages of racial and cognitive inferiority (Clark, Anderson, Clark, Williams, 1999). Because of this, it was imperative that powerful African American writers use communicative mediums to refute negative beliefs stigmatizing the community. Garnet writes, "let your motto be resistance! Resistance! No oppressed people have secured liberty without resistance… and remember you are FOUR MILLION" (1843). Garnet an exemplary model of resolve uses vigorous communication intended to inspire and educate those plagued with hopelessness. He also reminds the community of their size and the powers they can attain if they unify for the same cause.

Within the last decade, researchers have encouraged close examination of early African American literary practices (Fisher, 2004; Lee, 2004; McHenry, 2002; Perry, 2003). From this analysis, researchers are able to better understand the cultural and socio-political factors influencing early African American literary activity. Historical

publications and social literary activity during the nineteenth century evidences literary accomplishments by a community of readers, speakers and writers to whom literacy was barred. According to Martinez (2005), some of the enslaved were secretly taught how to read by their "owners" for religious purposes only. However, Martinez (2004) points out that the enslaved who were taught to read religious material were strictly forbade from writing. Maintaining a passive, dependent slave, whose primary purpose was servicing higher authority was the main objective. By restricting writing, slave owners ensured the passivity of the enslaved. It was understood that restricting literacy access, would suppress a community. Conversely, on the other end, it was understood that acquiring and passing literacy would liberate a community (Perry, 2003). It is important to note, that the African American community recognized literacy not only as a vehicle for upward social mobility, but as a necessity for cultivating the human mind. It is safe to suggest that no other documented American civilization has embraced reading, writing and speaking with the same initiative as has the African American community. In the next section, I discuss how African American youth on the secondary levels have appropriated historical practices (writing with authority) connected to history. This will lead to my review of literatures concerning African American students in community college settings.

Authentic Writing Practices Among African American Secondary Youth

More recently, researchers have begun exploring literacy practices within social and cultural frames. When searching for literatures on writing practices among African American secondary youth, I used the search engines of: PsychInfo, ERIC, Ebscohost, JSTOR, Wiley Online. Terms such as *African American, Black, adolescent, teenage,*

secondary, high school, writing, and *youth* were used to find studies. I found that researchers have been interested in understanding what constitutes authentic literary experiences. Young adults participating in this type of writing validate their experiences. By rewriting their lives, students belonging to historically oppressed populations no longer have to depend on someone else to interpret their lives for them. Writing became a more relevant process, wherein the writer invested in his/her construction. In terms of making writing authentic or validating the writing process, I am reminded of historical African American writings with disciplinary undertones. By this I mean writings were written in a way that the writer was directly communicating with another in almost a face-to-face type of conversation. When taking into account what warrants authenticity, the many contexts of a students personal, social, cultural, environmental, political, scientific spheres must be considered. Awareness of these spheres can strengthen and reframe existing writing practices in current developmental education in community college writing classrooms.

The term authenticity means different things to different researchers. For instance, Early, Smith & Vandespino (2010) view authenticity as writing tasks that are relevant to a student's academic career. In their study, high school seniors participated in a writing workshop geared to build their college writing entrance exam skills. According to these researchers authenticity is a task that prepares secondary students with writing experiences that has the potential to transfer into 'high stakes' post secondary writing. While these researchers define authentic in this manner, others define authenticity in deeper more historically or culturally responsive terms (Edwards, McMillon & Turner,

2010). For the sake of this review, I opt to blend the definition of authentic writing activities from the aforementioned researchers.

In another study, Winn (2010) explains the impact lived experiences have on the writings of high school aged Black girls. In her study, Winn provides female African Americans the opportunity to playwright. With this type of writing, female participants share narratives using techniques like reclaiming voice, dialogic exchange and constructing plots. In other words, their words are authenticated through their own lenses and voices, without depending on someone else to write their lives. Studies of this type award students pen authority by creating experiences for students of African American backgrounds to take on written authority. The impetus guiding this writing research study is shaping writing experiences from the: *what matters most* perspective. By including the *what matters most perspective*, students are more apt to writing authentically. Moreover, aligning writing experiences with the historical written purposes shown in nineteenth century African American writings can award not just a sense of open voice, but rather writing with voice intentioned to assert issues of self and community.

Ball (1996, 2008) claims there are inevitable benefits to integrating cultural literacy acts practiced by students outside of school within the school setting. Ball studied the writings of four African American young adults, two male and two female over the period of two high school semesters. In close analysis of their writings, Ball found the use of rhetorical devices, audience awareness, and application of figurative language. More specifically, Ball has concluded the following language patterning has been found in their writings: metaphoric use, application of cultural idioms, linking conversation and socially engaging others through writing and blending narrative along with expository

prose. The latter finding integrating narrative and expository language suggests the writers are keenly aware that writing is a socio-communicative process. As McCutchen (2006) states, within a paradigm of social communication exist the writer and target audience. In other words, the writings are designed with dialogic intent in that they directly communicate to the reader. This trait is common to historical African American writings. Like Ball, Lee (2007) authenticated the literary experience for African American high school students by constructing an interpretive literary method known as cultural modeling. Cultural modeling utilizes the advanced out of school interpretive techniques employed by urban African American youth. Again, this includes advanced linguistic stylistics and compare/contrast techniques. Once inside the literary classroom, students are given opportunities to exercise interpretive skills with texts they are able to identify with. Gradually as students begin to hone interpretive literary skill they are given opportunities to apply analytic lenses to other genres.

Mahiri and Sablo (1996) examined the instructional practices of two writing teachers and the non-academic (outside of school) writings of two students of African American heritage. In their exploratory study, they were interested in learning more about the participants out of school writing preferences. More specifically, the researchers were looking to learn more about the motivations, functions, genres, themes and knowledge evidenced in the participants writings. Mahiri and Sablo concluded that the participants' writings were deeply epistemic. These two young adults openly expressed their lived experiences or as the researchers have coined it "they sought to bring order to the mercurial flow of their lives" (p. 174). Writing was used to express, contemplate and attempt to understand their identities and lives. Writing was used as a

vehicle to systematically interpret life's lessons through their own lenses without having these real experiences ignored or discredited simply because they do not match the expectations of dominant ideology.

Muhammad (2012) posits the importance of creating spaces to read literature that espouses thought about race, gender and social positioning. Muhammad's qualitative study is another example that students can be given authentic writing experiences and purposes. However, unlike the other studies where participants write voluntarily, Muhammad integrates reading, dialogue and writing connected to youth identities and histories. Young adult African American girls first read historical pieces as mentor texts. Mentor texts essentially enable the reader to gain from not just important lessons from the content of the texts, but to also learn about rhetorical expressions, written goals, and written cohesion through the reading of literature. Commonly, the literature on mentor text targets the younger adolescent population (Dorfman & Cappelli, 2007). However, as shown in Muhammad's study, mentor texts can help authenticate the writing experience even for young adults. Reading such powerful pieces of work not only enables the young adult reader to reclaim his/her identity, but also understand that s/he has the authority to correct the overly popularized deleterious image of the Black woman through writing. O'neale (1984) asserts the Black woman is America's favorite prototypical image of false and derogatory depictions. Through narrative and poetic prose, writers of the modern day invalidate these conceptions through just and accurate representations of Black women. Characters brilliantly refute pervasive stereotypes, by actualizing the truth of the African Americans (Angelou, 2002). According to Muhammad, composition instruction "can create a safe space where Black adolescent girls can openly and unapologetically

express themselves and need not mask who they are" (p. 210). It is clear the participants of this study were allotted access to historical literary practice through critical discussion of text and the authority to self-position themselves in opposition to mistaken representation.

Similarly, a writing study rooted in historical, social and cultural perspectives argues in favor of authenticating the writing experiences of African American male students (Tatum & Gue, 2012). This study enlivened the historical literary traditions and writing impetus of historical African American communities. From this, the researchers suggest the following writing purposes/platforms were evidenced across historical writings: defining self, becoming resilient, engaging others, and building capacity. What is interesting is that when participants were asked to write in respect of these platforms, the authenticity of their experiences, thoughts, and visions grew.

By dismissing the literary riches of communities past, practice continues to emphasize that literacy is an isolated, de-socialized act. Street (2003) refers to this as an autonomous model of literacy. Disconnecting literacy practice from its historical roots is a potential national setback in that non-dominant groups continue to run the risk of an incomplete literacy experience at the hands of a broken school system. Most community college composition classrooms promote cognitive approaches to writing, while there is evident benefit to this, namely in the area of helping students acquire the skills necessary for English writing. On the other hand, there are also limitations to just using a cognitive approach to writing. Klein (1999) posits following a cognitive processing model in post secondary composition classrooms can be useful because this will allow for strategy instruction, provide opportunities for peer conferencing followed by feedback. This

model of composition instruction prevails in college classrooms yet in many cases ignores populations of potential strong writers. The next section will synthesize research on recent college composition praxis.

African Americans in Two -Year Community College Courses

The study of writing especially with students categorized as underprepared for college writing took flight in the 1970s. As emphasized earlier in this chapter, two-year colleges began taking on a new, more diversified image during the 1970s and this in turn sparked a wave of interest in basic writing skills. Nontraditional students became the new face of the two-year college. Race in itself did not serve as the primary indicator of nontraditionalism rather, unready, underprepared, remedial, basic literacy skills supplemented the definition. From this grew an interest in trying to figure out how to best support the writing potential of nontraditional students. Researchers and theorists began devoting their professional careers to the study of basic writing issues (Shaughnessy, 1977; Bartholomae, 1986, Hull & Rose, 1989). Interestingly, it is the work of these three researchers that paved the way for basic writing research and in many ways continues to influence the tone of writing research today.

Shaughnessey (1977) devoted an entire career to the study of basic writers. One of her primary concerns included written punctuation, syntax, vocabulary usage, idea formulation, written cohesiveness what I consider topic qualities of writing. She did not underscore the intelligence of early college writers and instead she wanted to understand the cultural traditions behind their writing choices. However, her research inquiries continued to focus on what students were not able to do in accord with the academy's written expectation. Similarly, Bartholomae (1986) and Rose (1989) emphasized in their

research the importance of students being able to take on academic discourse so that they could fully participate in the literate contributions of the academy. Following the research traditions of these pioneers of basic writing, basic writing studies in both the 1970s and early part of the 1980s investigated rudimentary issues related to writing. Bartholomae and Rose's influences are still shown today especially in the area of writing research and African Americans. There is an increased interest in language and dialectical topics as they relate to African American writers in early college writing experiences. While this information is nonetheless informative, there are limitations to just studying the rudimentary features of writing and African American dialectical influences in writing. There is much more that can be researched regarding African American writing. Using historical writing tradition as the foundation for current writing pedagogy is just a beginning and it for that reason I find that my study is perhaps overdue. The following section reviews literature on writing in community college settings with African American students.

The literature search was conducted using three large database search engines, Psych Info, JSTOR and EBSCO Host. The following information details the terms used within the literature search. Search terms of *African American, community college* and *writing* were applied in Psych Info.   In order to ensure that all possible descriptors were used, *Black, community college* and *writing* were another set of search terms used in Psych Info. Again, a total of two peer reviewed journal articles resulted from this search query. Yet, another search in Psych Info included *African American, writing experiences, community college* and *African American, composition writing* and *community college*. Both search efforts produced zero results.   However, the following

search effort, Black college students and writing experiences resulted in one peer reviewed journal article. Both JSTOR and EBSCO yielded one result with the following search terms, *African American*, *community college* and *writing*. Other search combinations as used in Psych Info were applied in these database engines, however, zero peer reviewed articles resulted. It is critically important to note, that searches of electronic databases and writing research journals like the *Journal of Basic Writing* and *Written Communication*, yielded zero to less than six peer reviewed studies on African American/Black students writing experiences/instruction/developmental writing/basic writing/two-year college/community college. Studies on writing in the community college with African American students represents an informative yet limited view of research interest. Research interest centers on issues related to ability and self concept as it relates to writing and the influence of African American language/dialect on traditional forms of writing and digital social networking writing.

Forston (1997) conducted a study on building the cultural awareness and career writing skills of twenty-five African American male students at a community college. In the study, students were given the Brookover Self Concept of Ability Scale to show growth in self-confidence preceding the program. Researchers note that the program did not influence the students' academic self-concept. While the researchers were interested in building cultural awareness, perhaps as a means of strengthening identity, this was not assessed in the self-concept ability scale. Another study on student self perception and writing assessed the writing anxieties and linguistic insecurities of African American community college students (Holland, 2013). Holland used student observations and interview responses to conclude students who communicated mainly through Black

dialect showed increased writing anxiety. The study itself appears to be an effort to merge counseling services into the instructional routines. Holland's study is framed with the theoretical perspective that suggests a person who write using African American dialect are in most cases unaware of the dialectical differences it poses when compared to Standard English. Furthermore, Holland argues that African American students who adhered to Black dialect as their primary form of communication might evidence writing anxiety, thus warranting the need for college counseling support. The purpose of integrating college counseling support is to help alleviate writing anxiety or linguistic insecurity shown by these writers.

Studies both past and more recent show continued interest in the influence of African American dialect and writing. Jeremiah (1986) examined the writing syntax and lexical choices of community college African American students. Results of the study indicate the "errors" shown in African American student writing do not align with traditional English language assessment rubrics. Jeremiah explains sociological factors must be considered when attempting to understand the linguistic features underlining the participant's choice of written expression.   The studies raise issue of what the students are not able do with writing and in an effort to understand perhaps student/s inability to write according to college proficiency standards, researchers are interested in understanding the sociological experiences of students – while neglecting the instructional experiences provided to students within the two year college writing classroom.

In another study, dialectical issues continue to be the area of interest. Syrquin (2006) studied the academic writings of 20 African American undergraduate college

students. The writings of the participants were examined through discourse analysis.

Results indicate that stylistic and grammatical differences were shown in the writings of

African American students. Furthermore, the study explains African American students

from lower socio economic backgrounds expressed sentences using unrelated clauses and

paratactic use of the word *because*. Another study used a Via a Speak Aloud and Write

protocol methodology when examining the writings of seven freshman African American

college students. Findings from the study indicate nonstandard English features were

present in the participants' writings 30 to 40 percent of the time. Cunningham (2014)

noted African American participants wrote at high rates when social networking using

African American interlocutor. While these studies are important to consider when

assessing the linguistic preference of African American students and writing, viewing

written communication from this lens can be very limiting. Studies such as these run the

risk of viewing African American communication as "non standard or problematic" thus

continuing to reinforce the notion that African American writing issues can only be

examined through a narrow deficit lens. While the researchers in the above studies are

careful not employ deficit language in the explanations of their studies, the studies are

restrictive in nature nonetheless in the sense that the only way to understand the writings

of beginning level African American college students is to examine dialectical issues.

What my study attempts to show is that there is more to African American writing than

just dialectical influence.

 While two-year colleges offer more remedial, developmental writing and writing

preparatory coursework, one of the research questions in Callahan and Chumney (2009)

study investigated whether basic writing programs prepared students for higher education

writing than two–year college writing programs. According to the study, basic writing programs at a four-year university in particular, weighed better in providing students clearer preparation and instruction for subsequent credit composition classes. Van Ora (2012) notes students have expressed that they are less likely to complete developmental coursework at a community college and one reason for this is inadequate pedagogy. What is of value here is that the notion of inadequate pedagogy is something that is stemming directly from student experience and not a statement from an administrative community college official.

Banks (2003) argues, when it comes to writing, African American students are taught how to summarize or retell text prior to college entry. Banks argues that some African American students might have difficulty meeting the expectation of college literacy because of the underrated literacy demands prior to college. The interplay of complex text, personal and sociocultural experiences in college English classrooms emphasizes that literacy is more than simple retelling.

Perin, Keselman and Monopoli (2003) conducted a study titled The Academic Writing of Community College Remedial Students: Text and Learner. The study is interested in studying the influence informational reading has on writing. The researchers raise concern that developmental reading and writing courses are taught on separate spectrums. Furthermore, while students might be exceeding in remedial reading their performance continues to lag in informational writing quality. Callahan and Chumney (2009) argue, even though remediation is prevalent across the nation's colleges and universities, "there remains a great deal of uncertainty about how remedial courses develop the academic skills and habits of mind required for students to succeed in

college-level courses" (p. 1619). As evidenced by Van Ora (2012) students participating in these courses are observing the repercussions of the pedagogical inconsistency in remedial courses. Rose (1989) attempted to disregard the term remedial and encouraged the field to use the word basic writing. Unfortunately, the term remedial is still widely used.

Nineteenth century African American literature, writing studies using African American secondary youth as the target population and African American community college students are used to frame the proposed study. More recent community college writing research studies appear to be fixated mainly on issues of self-perception and dialect. As explained earlier, remediation is present across community colleges and even universities across the nation. However, when considering the institution where this study seeks to take place, student persistence and retention in developmental education literacy courses remains to be an issue of concern. Similar to the findings with Black adolescents in writing spaces, Purcell Gates, Degener, Jacobsen and Soler (2002) have implied that when adults are presented with literary experiences that connect with their real life experiences they are bound to show more commitment to their learning. Connecting writing to real life experiences is exactly what early African Americans have done during the nineteenth century. What was missing in the literature on African Americans in community college writing settings is an examination if writing instruction is connected to the students' identities and histories. Furthermore, the students' voices were absent on the research findings. In other words, we do not hear from the voices of the students' themselves on how they are receiving the curriculum. In several of the studies, the students are talked about in deficit ways—as if they are not capable of

gaining high intellectual achievement. This proposed study helps to fill this lack of understanding.

The Need to Merge Historical Literate Practice into Current Composition Practice

When considering authentic writing experiences for adult students of African American heritage, the following must be considered: writing experiences should be informed by historical literary practice and writing experiences must purposefully place value on student perspective and literary growth. It is safe to glean from these historical documents and research studies that authentic writing activities and purposes for writing in respect of historical, social and cultural practice have value. After conducting an in depth search of adult composition research it is apparent authentic literary practices have been explored mainly with upper secondary education students (Ball, 1996, 2008; Early, Smith, & Valndespino, 2010; Mahiri & Sablo, 1996; Lee, 2007; Winn, 2010). The field of college composition research has yet to approach this issue because it has shown to be academically profitable in other school contexts. It appears the field continues to push for a cognitive process approach to writing (Klein, 1999) as has been done in decades past (Bereiter & Scarmadelia, 1987; Flowers & Hayes, 1981; Hillocks, 1987). Without question, writing research efforts have broadened our understanding. However, there exists ample space for more research especially from a social, cultural lens, with specific connection to historical literary practices of past communities. I attempted to make clear, the literary culture and practices of early African Americans is an example of what a community of writers accomplished despite their harsh realities. It was the impetus underlying their writings, ***writing to define identity, writing for social collectivism and writing for resilience and resistance*** that became the catalyst for their writings and

literary organizations. As researchers strive to continue to improve writing practices in the college composition classroom, this study seeks to understand the writing experiences of African American students today and if they write for similar purposes. In the next chapter, I will outline the methodological approaches for the proposed study.

III. METHODS

Overview of the Study

This study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What are writing experiences and expectations of African American students at a two-year college?

2. How do the writing experiences among African American students at a community college classroom compare with historical purposes of writing from nineteenth century African American writers?

A qualitative case study was selected as the method for the study because student writing experiences and the context for their writings was examined from multiple sources of data. In this chapter, I will discuss the theoretical lens framing the study and provide details on the methodological approaches employed. I provide explanations for the data collected along with interpretations. Included in this chapter is a table showing the study's research questions, the data sources, methods of data collection and the methods of analysis. The purpose of this table is to help explain how the research questions for the study have been examined.

Table 4
Research Blueprint

Research Questions	Data Sources	Methods of Data Collection	Methods of Analysis
RQ1: What are writing experiences of African American students at a two-year college?	Classroom observations Interviews (students and instructor) Artifacts (instructional documents and student writing)	Observational field notes Semi-structured protocol Scan and copy	Inductive coding
RQ2: How do the writing experiences of African American students at a two-year college compare with historical purposes of writing from 19th century African American writers?	Classroom observations Interviews (students and instructor) Artifacts (instructional documents and student writing)	Observational field notes Semi-structured protocol Scan and copy	Thematic Analysis

Sociocritical Theory: Historicizing Literacy Experiences

Sociocritical theory is the framework for this writing instruction study. Sociocritical theory historicizes literacy experiences by revisiting history to grasp an understanding of what the literacy climate of the past was like. Theoretically, historicizing literate experiences is defined as linking historical and contemporary literary practice. It is believed by considering the rich social, cultural and historical literacy practices of historically non-dominant populations, the field can understand the conceptual impetus and activity underlying historic populations (Gutierrez, Hunter & Arzubiago, 2009).   Gutierrez (2008) implies by historicizing literacy experiences researchers revisit history to grasp an understanding of what the literacy climate of the past was like. Theoretically, historicizing literate experiences is defined as linking historical and contemporary literary practices. For example, researchers have used a historicized writing approach that awards migrant farm workers of Hispanic and Asian heritage a secure space to rewrite their histories (Pacheco and Nao, 2009). Sociocritical theory is helpful for understanding how people construct texts that challenge dominant narratives, while also helping to create critical thinking opportunities that are not often afforded within traditional society or school settings (2009). Participants in Fisher's (2007) study used poetry and writing to construct powerful literary constructions that instantiate their identities as inheritors of literary wealth.   Participants in this study acknowledged the forgotten literary wealth of earlier generations. Historical communities, such as African Americans communities of the nineteenth century, used literacy for life changing purposes. Literacy shaped culture and awarded identity to a community whom had much of their identities stolen. As exemplified through historical

writings (please see Appendix A), African Americans wrote for aesthetic interest and framed their writing for social, spiritual and political purposes. In this study, I employed a historical literacy frame to compare African American students' writings in a developmental writing course to writing purposes of nineteenth century African Americans. This has helped me understand historical writing relationships to current students' histories and identities.

I have explored the literate writings of nineteenth century African Americans. After careful assessment of original works of historical African American literature, I now have clearer understanding of the purpose underlying their writings. An analytical form was used to examine historical documents (see Appendix A). Because a sociocritical theoretical frame recognizes the value in historicized literary practice, I understand African American writings of the nineteenth century were designed to do much more than originally acknowledged. Their writings originally acknowledged by white colonists as simple expressions focused only on issues of enslavement, when in fact, the writings were designed with a particular social, cultural and intellectual premise. Nineteenth century African American writings were designed to uplift humanity at a collective social, intellectual, spiritual and political level because they were not just writing for the benefit of themselves but for wider society. When answering research question two, I examined data sets using the three historical writing purposes as found in the writings of nineteenth century African Americans 1) Identity, 2) Social Collectivism 3) Resistance, Resiliency and Resolve. Comparing the current state of writing to historical writing will help me understand how African American students partaking in

this study are engaged in the curriculum and how that materializes in their writings (Tatum & Muhammad, 2012).

The Community College Developmental Writing Course as a Case Study

First-time students enrolled at the community college are required to take a sequence of English composition courses, typically English 101 and 102. In some cases, students are required to take prerequisite developmental composition courses prior to entering credit-bearing writing courses. College entrance writing exam scores often determine whether a student is assigned to a developmental education writing courses. In addition, the e-Write, a computed-based exam, is used as a writing placement test. Students provide a response to a prompt and are asked to provide a five-paragraph essay responding to the prompt. The college uses the following cut off scores: 8 or above for college level; 7 requires English 100; 5-6 requires English 98; and Foundational Studies Writing is required for a score of 4 or below. Based on this, a student can take anywhere from 1 to 3 prerequisite composition courses prior to English 101 (Table. 5 provides course descriptions pre-college credit composition courses). About 90% of first-time students have to take prerequisite composition coursework known as developmental education coursework. The long course track to credit courses has led students to leave college. The majority of students enrolled in day composition courses transition directly from high schools near the college. There were a total of 409 students who enrolled from local high schools in the past year in the community college where this study will take place. The purpose of this section is to provide a brief look into the way the community college places students in developmental writing classes. It is within this context or bounded system that I plan to conduct the study.

Table 5
Pre-College Credit Basic Writing Course Descriptions

Course Name	Course Description
Foundational Studies - Writing	Emphasis on word choice, mechanics, grammar, sentence structure and paragraph development.
Basic Writing Skills I: English 98	Emphasis on individual expression in paragraph and essay form and structure, sentence structure, grammar and mechanics.
Basic Writing Skills II: English 100	Emphasis on individual expression in essay form, paragraph structure and development, sentence structure, grammar, mechanics and word forms.

Methods

Research Site

The setting for the research study was an urban community college in the Midwest. This institution is one of seven colleges within the district. Recent student data shows a total 120,000 students have been enrolled in the college over the course of a single academic year. Students who self-identify as Black make up 37% of the entire school population. Of the 37%, roughly two-thirds of students are African American. The Hispanic student population is 35%; the White student population is 18%, and the Asian student population 7%. Generally, most students who attend this community college reside in urban areas in close proximity to the college. However, there is a low percentage of students who attend the college from other locales, states and countries.

Nearly 70% of the faculty are adjunct or part-time instructors and the remaining 30% are of full-time status. All faculty are required to hold advanced graduate degrees in the subject areas they teach. The community college offers programs ranging from adult education, medical training, and other state approved associate degrees. Courses are offered throughout the day and evening. At present, the college is working on strengthening its student retention and graduation rates by revising their curricula,

increasing number of available tutors, and offering supportive academic programs in literacy and math. Past college reporting has found that the college had a 47% retention and 10% graduation rate, but did not offer explanation of 28% student transfers and whether the transfers were to other two-year colleges or four-year universities.

Participant Selection

For this study, I observed a developmental writing class identified as English 100. Purposeful selection was used participants provided voluntary consent in participation. There were 27 African American students enrolled in the class at the beginning of the semester. Nearly all students except for one military veteran, approximately age 50, are categorized as traditional students. Traditional students are generally defined as students entering postsecondary education directly from high school. It is important to note that a few male students within their late teens and early twenties have taken a few semesters off from entering college or attended postsecondary education in another state. One male student, 19 years of age, briefly attended a four-year university in the Midwest. Another male student, attended college on the West Coast. During the participant interview, the latter student explained that his impetus to attend college on the West Coast was due to a partial football scholarship. When I asked why he opted to return to a community college in his local hometown, he explained this decision was based on advice from his mother. His mother was concerned for his financial situation and recommended that he return to a community college closer to home. The other male student who attended another university within the state did not voluntarily provide a reason for his transfer into the community college where the study takes place. I selected to observe and interview

participants in a daytime developmental education writing composition class taught by a tenure track instructor.

There were two minimum criteria for the composition instructor. The teacher had to have a minimum of three years teaching experience at the community college level and have a tenure track position. The instructor also had to have an advanced graduate degree in composition instruction or a closely related field of study. Because of the limited number of full time, tenure track instructors teaching day time developmental education composition writing courses spring 2015, I selected the one tenure track instructor who met the criteria. For purposes of this study, the instructor will be represented by the pseudonym Penn. The following chart provides brief descriptions of the 10 regular student attendees including one English 100 instructor.

Table 6
Participant Descriptions

Participant	Participant Description
Penn	White
	Tenure Track instructor
	Graduate of affluent universities
	Actively involved in college assessment planning and placement test design.
	He wants students to write well as he sees writing as an entry into many of life's benefits.
Jacob	African American
	Missed first class
	Noticeably attentive beginning of semester (evidenced in body language)
	Attended sparingly, soon after the first few sessions passed
	Jacob looks up to his uncle who serviced in the military.
	Discontinued attending class session 10 (CCC IRB allowed me a data collection extension based on my request)
Saleha	African American
	Second trimester of pregnancy
	Discontinued attending class midway through the semester
Ian	African American
	Second time participating in English 100
	Published local musician and song lyricist
	Preferred to work alone
	He wants to be a catalyst for social change.
	Discontinued attending class near the end of the study and semester

Gabe	African American
	Military veteran
	Surgical tool specialist in the army
	One of the older students in the class
	Had interest in correcting misrepresentations about the inner city
	Completed class
Sadie	African American
	From a large well-connected family.
	Felt the items covered in class were topics attended to in previous schooling experiences, namely elementary and high school.
	Completed class
Pax	African American
	Four year university transfer
	Partial football scholarship
	New father
	Views writing as an entry way into life.
	Writes to release anger (a recommendation made by his mother).
	Completed class
Daniella	African American
	Member of poetry group
	Showed signs of attentiveness and non attentiveness during class.
	Completed class
Andrew	Four year university transfer
	Lead role in poetry recitation at well-known local theatre
	Expressed distress with the lecture heavy nature of class
	Attending this course was a struggle for him
	Completed class
Mike	Interest in web design
	Offered that that the class did not always stimulate his intellect
	Completed class
Kendra	Self-identified lesbian
	Sexual orientation created confusion among her family
	Has interest in writing about social issues, mainly local and community issues
	Completed the class

Instructional Time

The course was a regular semester course that spanned a sixteen - week period. The class met for seventy-five minutes from 12:30pm to 1:45pm on Mondays and Wednesdays. I observed a total of sixteen class sessions beginning January 21, 2015 and ending March 25, 2015.

Recruitment

The class total was 34 students, 27 self identified as African American and 7 Hispanic. Six of the Hispanic students dropped participation in the class. One Hispanic student discontinued attending the class during the first half of the semester. Of the 27 African American students, a total of 11 dropped and 6 discontinued attending. Initially, 17 students provided consent, but the study is comprised of 10 students because these students attended class more regularly. Table 7 below details student attendance patterns.

ENGLISH-100-MX-E Basic Writing Skills

Professors:	Professor Penn
Printed On:	2015-05-06T13:14:35.000
Total # of Enrollments	34
Total Drops	17
Total No-Shows	0

Student	Enrollment Status	Total Absences	# of Excused Absences	1/12/15	1/14/15	1/19/15	1/21/15	1/26/15	1/28/15	2/2/15	2/4/15	2/9/15	2/11/15	2/16/15	2/18/15	2/23/15	2/25/15	3/2/15	3/4/15	3/9/15	3/11/15	3/16/15	3/18/15	3/23/15	3/25/15
XXXXX1	Dropped	0	0																						
Ian		10	0	.	.		1	.	.		.	2	.		.	.		3	.	.	4	.	.	5	.
XXXXX2	Dropped	0	0																						
XXXXX3	Dropped	0	0																						
Saleha		16	0	.	.		.	.	.		.	1	.	2	3		.		4	5	.	T	6	7	8	
Jen	Dropped	11	0	.	.		1	.	.		2	3	4	5	6			7	8	9	10	11			
Gabe		1	0	.	.		.	1	.		.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
XXXXX4		16	0	.	.		.	1	.		.	.	.		2	.		3	.	4	.	5	6	7	8
XXXXX5	Dropped	2	0	1			2																		
Sadie		5	0	.	.		.	.	.	1	2	.	.		.	3		.	.	4	.	.	.	.	.
XXXXX6	Dropped	0	0																						
Mike		3	0	.	1		.	.	.		.	.	T		.	.		T	2	.	.	.	.	.	.
Sophie		7	0	1	.		.	.	.		.	.	2		.	.		3	.	.	.	T	.	4	.
Chris		4	0	.	.		.	.	.		.	.	.		.	1		.	.	.	.	.	2	.	.
XXXXX7	Dropped	11	0	.	.		1	2	.		3	.	T	4	.		5	6	7	.	8	9	10	11	
Pax		6	0	.	.		.	.	1		.	.	T		.	.		2	.	3	4	.	.	.	T
Kendra		7	0	.	.		.	.	1		T	2	3		.	.		4	.	.	5	6	.	.	.
Excluded - Hispanic	Dropped	10	0	1	.		.	.	2		3	.	.	4	5		6	7	8	9	10			
XXXXX8	Dropped	2	0	1			2																		
Eric		18	0	.	.		.	.	.		1	2	T	3	4		.	.	5	6	7	8	9	10
XXXXX9	Dropped	0	0																						
XXXXX10	Dropped	0	0																						
XXXXX11	Dropped	2	0	1			2																		
Leena		8	0	.	.		.	.	1		.	.	.	2	.		.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
XXXXX12		15	0	1	.		.	.	.		.	.	2		.	3		.	.	.	4	.	5	6	7
Daniella		1	0	.	.		.	.	.		.	.	T		.	.		1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Jacob		17	0	1	2		.	.	.		.	3	.		4	.	5	6	7	.	.	8	9
Nickie		18	0	.	.		.	1	.		.	.	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9	.	10
XXXXX13	Dropped	2	0	1			2																		
Ali	Dropped	10	0	.	.		.	1	.		.	.	.	2	.		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Tori	Dropped	9	0	.	1		.	.	2		.	.	.		.	.		3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Andrew		7	0	.	.		1	.	.		.	.	.		.	2		.	3	.	4	T	.	.	.
XXXXX14	Dropped	2	0	1			2																		
XXXXX15	Dropped	0	0																						

Because of interest in conducting the study with a developmental writing English 100 class, purposeful sampling was used. Participants were recruited within an intact classroom. For the purpose of this study, only students who identified as African American were selected for the study. Students of non-African American background were also given study consent forms. This was done to reduce any unneeded misunderstanding or distress among students at large. Despite participation consent from non-African American students, data were not collected on these students. Prior to the official start of the spring 2015 semester, I provided Penn with UIC IRB approved study flyers. I explained to Penn that he was discouraged from "pushing or selling" the study to students, rather he was to simply post the flyer on Blackboard. The reason for having the flyer posted prior to the first day of class was so students had an idea of what the study entailed. Following this, at the actual start of the semester, I visited Penn's English 100 composition classroom and explained the nature of the study. I also distributed hard copies of the study flyers along with participant consent forms. The majority of the students signed the consent forms on the spot and handed them to me at the end of class. Participants for this qualitative inquiry were selected purposefully.

Participants

Penn (English 100 instructor): Graduate of a Big Ten and Big East conference schools both located in the Midwest. He holds degrees in Literature and Liberal Arts and Science. As an adjunct composition instructor he has worked at a couple community colleges within the state. More recently, he attended a job fair and distributed his resume throughout an urban community college district. As he explained, some time later the community college he is currently employed with called him in to interview for an

adjunct composition teaching position. Penn taught as an adjunct instructor for five years before attaining full time status. The hiring process at the college where he is employed requires a minimum of three interview cycles. Initial interviewing takes place with the department faculty. A teaching demonstration is typically part of this process. Second, an interview is conducted with administration. Lastly, interviewing takes place with District officials.

As part of the tenure process, he is teaching a full load (four composition classes) and is providing professional service/contributions to his home campus and more broadly the district. Penn explained during one his interviews as part of the study that he is invested in student writing progress. He sincerely wants to see students write and write well, so that they can earn the many of life's benefits that come from writing.

Jacob: He missed the first class session. When Jacob entered class during the following session, I recall him walking in with a timid expression. I gather his expression might have been because of possible guilt or trepidation for having missed the first class session. During the first half of the semester, despite a few absences, his body language showed that he was interested and wanted to gain something of value each class session. There were, however, times when boredom showed with his body language and facial expression. With his tall frame he would slouch in his chair, rather than sitting upright with his arms on the table in front of him as observed when he was exhibiting focused attention. He contributed in class when the opportunity arose, however, I sensed at times that he refrained from fully participating as if he was afraid of saying or be taken as having said something deemed "unacceptable." Jacob participated in the study's interview. Most of his responses were brief, again he showed that he was not interested

in over sharing, possibly. I collected a total of three written artifacts from him.

Unfortunately, at about week ten of the semester, he discontinued attending class.

Saleha: Having had the chance to informally interact with her at the start or end

of class, she showed to have a welcoming, warm personality. During class, I observed

her openly contribute when she was given the opportunity. I did observe her fall asleep a

few times in class. During the interview, she expressed that her commute to school was

lengthy. Because she was in the second trimester of pregnancy, she was going to ask the

doctor for medical documentation excusing her from school. A short while after this

conversation, she expressed to me, her doctor did not see substantial health grounds for

excusing her from school. I was able to collect a total of three written artifacts from her.

She collected a total of sixteen absences. Unfortunately she discontinued attending class

after 3/17/2015.

Ian: He often sat at the very rear of the classroom, the seat directly next to the

classroom door. He attended class more frequently in the beginning and sparingly half

way through the semester. While in class he appeared as if he wanted something of value

from the writing course, a take away of some kind each class session. He attended to the

instructor's lectures, respectfully and opted to work alone when encouraged to work in

pairs. During the interview, I received a better sense of who he was as an individual.

That is when I learned that he wanted to be a catalyst for social change. He is lyricist as I

describe him, but he identifies more as a rapper and songwriter. As he expressed, his

mind is constantly flowing with language. He writes down anything that intrigues him,

whether it is something that can bring a smile or something that has an opposite effect on

him. During the interview, I asked if I could listen to some of his lyrics. He pulled out

his android and humbly pulled out a music collaboration he had done with a friend (an existing urban gang member). In a short forty-five minute time period, I learned a lot about Ian. The most important lesson I learned about him that he is sincerely passionate about life. Writing is a way that he documents his passion and purpose in life without inhibition. Unfortunately, he accrued a total of ten absences. He decided to discontinue attending class on April 27, 2015 because of the large amount of work he had not completed. Ian did speak with the instructor about this. From what I have learned, he has arranged to receive an incomplete. However, the instructor of the course cannot award him an incomplete because he had not completed a sufficient amount of work that would qualify him for an Incomplete. I collected a total of two written artifacts from Ian.

Gabe: He is a military veteran, approximately in his fifties. When walking over to the interview room, I asked what branch of the military he served in. He explained that he served in the army medical unit as a surgical tool technician. He is the father of six children, four sons and two daughters. He spoke proudly about his children; saying all but one (the youngest) has successful careers in life. He also spoke respectfully about his friendships. He noted that he enjoys spending quality time with his friends and moreover, he enjoys examining the social structures of friendships. He brought up the issues of life and living in urban America. Gabe voluntarily communicated that all that is taking place in the inner city is not necessarily bad, that there is in fact goodness taking place. When asked if these were issues he would want to write about, without reservation, he said yes. In class, unsurprisingly, he showed evident commitment. He was punctual, frequently the first in class and last to leave. Gabe would frequently sit in the back row, the seat closest to the window. He often showed a pleasant smile on his face when in

class. He mainly asked questions that were clarifying in nature. In other words, *what is the assignment* or *when is the assignment due* type of questions. During the first in-class writing assignment, he raised a question about the number of journal entries required to date. The tone of his question was slightly exasperated and to that, the instructor responded in perhaps equal exasperation. The instructor explained that journal entry requirements were posted on Blackboard. I noticed from that point on, Ian refrained from contributing information in class. He explained during the interview that he does not provide extensive verbal contributions because he chooses to avoid any possible critical encounters in class. The best way to describe his demeanor toward his participation in a developmental writing education class was solemn. He solemnly shared that he was behind in his writing development because of his educational lags and age. However, when reading his writing, I regard his sentence structure as clear and written coherence as unambiguous. I was able to collect a total of three written artifacts for Gabe.

Sadie: She comes from a large well-connected family. According to our interview discussion, her grandmother plays a pivotal role in the family. Her maternal grandmother visits Sadie's home daily, provides daily words of inspiration and learning. Her maternal grandmother is an avid reader and when she comes across anything intellectually, socially or politically fascinating, she shares that information with her grandchildren. Sadie would show expressions of disinterest. On occasion, I would see her on her cell phone in the corridor near the classroom. When encouraged to hustle into class, she would almost drag her feet in slow movements. She expressed during the interview that she felt the items covered in class were topics attended to in previous

schooling experiences, namely elementary and high school. Sadie's total absences are five. I have collected two written artifacts from her.

Pax: He attended college for a brief time on the West Coast on a partial football scholarship. He returned to the community college where the study takes place, mainly for financial reasons. He is tall, mild-mannered male. He began the semester by sitting toward the front of the class. Sitting in the front could very well be because at the start of the semester the class had a total over twenty participants and seating options were rather limited. Toward the half and end of the semester he began sitting in the back row, the table nearest the door. On occasion he walked in tardy. He accrued a total of six absences. In his first writing assignment, he opted to write about an experience that changed his life. Fatherhood and especially being a young father to a daughter has changed his outlook on life. According to his first written artifact and interview responses, he lives with purpose now because of the young life that is endowed to him. Of all the students, he showed an implicit desire to want to be shown the way to becoming a better writer. This is not to say that other students have not said this, but their expressions were notes of frustration and complacency. Whereas, Pax, although mild in manner and not openly expressive other than what was asked of him. In the interview I felt that he had an urgency or responsibility to want to advance his writing. I gather his daughter might be the primary motivation for this. Perhaps Pax sees writing as an entryway to life as a form of communication that is needed to navigate life. More personally, he uses writing as a way of exiting his emotions. He explained that he releases his anger through writing, maintaining a writing journal from time to time. His

mother recommended that he write out his thoughts. I collected a total of three written artifacts from Pax.

Daniella: Frequently, she would arrive tardy by just a few minutes. Daniella had only one absence. She was seen both attentive and non attentive in the class. Interestingly, she was seen to show more attention during the grammar or sentence structure activities. There were times she showed expressions of apparent boredom. On a single occasion she was seen fidgeting through her phone. Then there were times that she raised her hand and asked questions about writings that were handed back to her, often this was done privately. In other words, she waited until the instructor approached her. During these times, I could overhear her respond with words like "ok" or "right." I did not expect for her to open up during the interview, but she did. Although during the interview there were times when I felt she held a particular kind of reservation, though I do not fault her for this because this might have been an entirely unfamiliar academic experience for her. In spite of that, she opened up and spoke about writing in profound ways. She described her brother's poetry writing group and how she would often accompany the group to feel as if she was a member of that community. She spoke highly of her brother's writing experiences and identified a well-known local female poet whose words were unparalleled.

Andrew: Prior to attending the community college where the study takes place, Andrew attended a four-year university in the Midwest. Almost immediately, Andrew stood apart from the other students. When contributing in class, I found that he might have had previous post secondary education experience. I also learned through his first written artifact that he has had performing experience with a well-acclaimed theater in the city's entertainment district. As with nearly all of the other students, Andrew's demeanor was exceptionally pleasant. However, I must emphasize there was something sophisticated about Andrew. He owned an unusually subtle confidence that showed me he was distinctly aware of life, but again, this was shown in a polite and unpretentious way. Modest frustration also showed on his face occasionally. I am not aware what the exact cause of the frustration was. Although he felt that he needed the class, because according to his perception, his writing required structural improvement, he openly expressed attending class in itself was nearly impossible for him at times. He felt that he wanted to be there on a few occasions. He accrued a total of seven absences. I collected four writing artifacts from Andrew.

Mike: He showed to have a particular energy in his step. He had a quite a few tardies in the beginning of the semester. On average he walked in about a half an hour after the official start of class. Eventually his tardies declined. During the interview, he expressed that he has an interest in web design. He explained that this interest stems from fascination with machinery from a young age. Mike was openly vocal during the interview. He expressed that the class was of importance because he felt that he needed the extra writing support. However, he explained that at times the class objectives did

not stimulate his intellect. He had a total of three absences. I collected a total of three writing artifacts from him.

Kendra: At the start of the semester, Kendra exhibited minor contentious behavior with the instructor. Occasionally, she arrived to class about ten to fifteen minutes late. One time, there was an in-class writing assignment. Kendra arrived late and unprepared (she was not aware of the writing prompt and did not have a prewriting essay draft with her).   Because of this, she and the instructor had a brief verbal exchange. Following this, she attempted to walk out the classroom, but the instructor invited her to stay and so she did. During the interview, Kendra identified herself as a lesbian and explained that her family did not understand her preferred sexual orientation. She did not appear bothered by her family's perception of her. She alluded that she has interest in writing about social issues, mainly local and community. She accrued a total of seven absences. I collected one written artifact from her.

Data Sources

This study was a qualitative case study. Data was collected beginning January 21, 2015 to March 25, 2015. The following three data sources informed this study: 16 classroom observations, 10 individual interviews with both students and the lead instructor, and 38 artifacts of student classroom writings and the syllabus, assignment expectations, and writing resources. The following sections will explain the purpose of selecting these three particular data sources.

Data Collection

Classroom Observations

Observational data was collected in a Developmental Writing English 100 classroom two times a week over eight weeks, for sixteen sessions. A total of 1,200 minutes of observation were collected. During each observation, I purposefully seated myself in a discreet part of the classroom that did not interfere with the students or instructor this was toward the center rear of the classroom behind student seating. I wrote detailed field notes focused on the type of composition instruction taking place in the classroom based on my study's observational protocol (see Appendix B). The observational protocol helped me track expected and spontaneous events, dialogue and interactions taking place in the composition classroom under study. As an observer, I was better able to write down extensive field notes, which is key to qualitative research. I created a line of preliminary analysis through constant reflection of field notes (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011). I specifically observed interactions, dialogue, instructional practices and routines in the developmental education composition class.

Observations are central to qualitative research, in that the researcher attempts to make meaning of the actions/happenings being researched. However, Bogdan and Bilken (2007) suggest researcher interpretations are often biased by the researcher's age, race/ethnicity, gender, professional philosophy/ies, and personal disposition. While it is generally accepted that some researcher bias is unavoidable, there are certainly ways to help reduce it. In an attempt to reduce researcher partiality, I employed self-reflexivity. Self-reflexivity requires the researcher to think about his/her research goals and the influence his/her lived experiences can have on research interpretation (Wallace & Atkins, 2012). These authors continue to suggest that reflexivity is an ongoing process

that allows researchers to talk about and examine their own biases, experiences, identities, etc.

Participant Interview

A total of 11 participants volunteered to take part in the interview (this includes one instructor and ten students). The interview was held in a private room, distant from classroom instructional rooms. The interview room was a glassed encased room part of what the college has labeled digital classrooms. The room itself was small in size equipped with a round table and few chairs. I sat kiddy corner from the participant for effective recording of interview communication. Interviews were recorded on my personal MacBook Air using the Photo Booth recording program. Shorter interviews averaged about 30 minutes, while longer interviews averaged close to 45 to 60 minutes. The participant responding to interview questions determined the length of the interview. The majority of students had lofty contributions that were prompted by my follow up questions. However, two males in particular showed slight reservation and did not have illustrious responses. The instructor's interview was perhaps the longest as it extended beyond 60 minutes. Scheduling interview times with students began week 9 of the semester. Actual interviews began week 10 and continued until week 16. The semi-structured interview protocol is attached (see Appendix C). Despite offering students snacks and beverages, many of the students were more interested in talking to me and did not show interest in the snacks. Toward the end of the interview, when I remarked ok that took so and so minutes, quite a few students expressed "I did not expect to have so much to say." Interview recordings have been transcribed in full, for a rather nominal fee, a graduate assistant enrolled in a Literacy, Language and Culture program agreed to

transcribe interview files. I have listened to and read interview files multiple times, while re-reading or reviewing segments of interview transcription that yield information close to the writing purposes of nineteenth century African American writers. Analytical memoing was included in this process.

The philosophical tradition framing the questions for this study follow an interpretivist perspective. In an interpretivist perspective, the respondent has the power to reflect on an experience and explain what it means to them personally (King & Horrocks, 2010). The interview questions were open-ended. In other words, the interview was designed in a way that did not deliberately steer respondents to answer questions in one particular way. At the start of the interview, I emphasized that the respondent should not provide answers that s/he assumes I would like to hear. Rather, they should provide responses that align with their individual beliefs and experiences.

Written Artifacts

I collected a total of 38 artifacts from the writing course observed. In addition to this, I collected instructional artifacts used by the instructor. This includes the syllabi, instructional outlines, and assignment requirements. The written artifacts were digitally scanned and then returned to students. Students participating in the study were made aware that some of their writings would be examined during the observation process. They were also made aware that analysis of their writings would not impact their participation in the course. Multiple readings of participant observations, interview, instructional documents and student writings have helped me identify critical themes/messages offered through the participants' writings. Analysis is explained below.

Researcher Reflexivity

I have worked at the institution where the study took place for the past four years.
I have developed a special connection with the district and I imagine myself remaining
here for several years beyond this study.   The reason I feel loyalty of service to this
institution is mainly because of the students. The students are passionate about
education, which is the reason many commute from varying areas of the city. Writing is
imperative for many of my students. They are aware of its academic importance. Each
semester I begin class with a brief introduction of myself when I share my academic
accomplishments and downfalls. I share my academic experiences openly to humanize
the journey that many of my students will possibly one day follow. They might not
follow my exact academic trajectory, but they are sure to travel an academic path,
nonetheless. At the end of my introduction, I raise the following question: "What would
you like to gain from this course?" The course I am referring to is a developmental
education reading and writing course. Quite a few students will respond, "I want to
improve my writing." I am happy knowing that my students realize the critical
importance of writing, certainly because I did not completely realize its importance when
I was an early college student. Another experience I have had several times over the past
few years is students requesting help with writing. I have had students email or even stop
me in the college corridors to ask for assistance. For these reasons, I want to learn more
about community college writing as delivered to and experienced by students of African
American heritage.

Data Analysis

In the following section, I will explicate five phases of data analysis. The table
below illustrates and condenses what was involved in each of the five phases of analysis.

Table 8

Data Analysis				
Phase 1: Initial Review of Raw Data	Phase 2: Revisit Data	Phase 3: Thematic Analysis	Phase 4: Responder Validation and Triangulation	Phase 5: InterRater Reliability
Transcribe interview data	Continue rigorous reading	Thematically analyze (Braun & Clarke, 2006 & Boyatzis, 1998) all data sources closely	Participants will have the opportunity to review researcher notes on findings	Two doctoral students with advanced knowledge in qualitative research will be recruited as raters
Type handwritten classroom observation field notes	Continue applying inductive analysis Methods (Dey, 1993; Elliot & Gillie, 1998; Thomas, 2008).	Examine vocabulary, phrases, expressions in interview transcriptions, observation field notes and written artifacts	Participants will provide feedback if they find warranted	Quantify the number of code agreements and disagreements; Goal is 90% or greater accuracy (Tinsley & Weiss, 2000)
Read data rigorously several times	Establish categories	Compare written artifact vocabulary, phrases, expressions	Interview, observation and writing artifact data will be triangulated to ensure that all data sources offer evidence on the themes, but also to explain a phenomenon as captured by different sources of data collection (Jick, 1979)	
Examine data and make preliminary				

interpretations
(inductive
coding)

Gain familiarity
with data

Examine
researcher
memos

Examine
researcher
memos

Begin segmenting data by commonalities				
Preliminary Categorizing				

Phase 1: Initial review of data

Inductive analysis has been used to respond to my first research question. The

objectives of the research study include understanding the experiences of African

American students participating in a developmental writing classroom at a two-year

college and to then compare the historical writing purposes found in nineteenth century

African American literature to the writings of African American students enrolled in the

developmental writing class. Inductive coding and analysis are qualitative methods that

give rigorous attention through deep and frequent reading of raw research data (Elliot &

Gillie, 1998). Inductive analysis or inductive reasoning helps to manage large data sets;

expansive data sets have been collected from this study. Qualitative methodology

suggest that data initially be segmented into preliminary categories, so any early patterns

of meaning are noted. I analyzed data from three sources, including, interview,

classroom observation and the collection of writing artifacts, inductive analysis was

applied to help understand the patterns of meaning underlying each of the data sets. This

type of data analysis has served pivotal in answering the research questions because of

the exploratory, unbound nature of inquiry. Understanding the patterns of meaning

threaded in the data required several close raw data readings. Qualitative researchers

suggest that examining raw data sets from a variety of sources through several close reads

allows the researcher to draw links and assumptions from the data (Thomas, 2008 & Dey,

1993).

I began by reading the data sets in the following order: observation, interview and

writing. Dividing these large qualitative data sets from most to least bulky in terms of

quantity was my strategy. This approach helped me manage the reading and analysis.

Each data set was read through three to five times. Importantly, especially for the

observational data, I wrote memos and session reflections following each observation.

From this early analysis process, subsets of data were categorized by common

themes/linguistic patterns. Inductive analysis requires analysis and several re-analyses of

data, so constant reflection is required on the part of the researcher. The recursive

analytical nature of inductive analysis develops a strong relationship between the

researcher and the data.

Because inductive analysis is not solely concerned with confirming patterns of

codes among the varying data sets, my goal included understanding how a code is

represented in one set of data versus another. This type of analytical approach allows for

deeper understanding of meaning. This type of explanatory analysis will provide more

understanding behind a code as opposed to just merely linking codes based on topical

qualities.

To respond to the second research question, I employed methods of thematic

analysis for each participant and across participants to yield a within case and across case

analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis is a relevant approach to making

sense of data because it provides systematic knowledge about the research questions

while providing patterns of awareness in the data and meaningfulness. The three themes

that guiding the thematic analysis include writing to self define, writing for social

collectiveness, and writing for resilience and resolve. Specific terms, phrases or

expressions that align with identity, social collectiveness, resilience and resolve have

been documented. For both research questions, I concurrently wrote memos to record my

ongoing reflections. Memos are recorded reflections from the researcher. The purpose of

memoing is to provide researcher insight into a hypothesis or observed phenomenon

(Groenewald, 2008).

As suggested by Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (2011), the data reflection process

occurred immediately preceding classroom observations, participant interviews and the

collection of writing artifacts. Central to inductive analysis is rigorous reading. I read

raw data sets several times. Preliminary lines of interpretation were drawn from the data

readings with justification for the interpretation.

Phase 2: Revisit data and continue engaging in confirmation of codes

I took two more rigorous passes through the data. At this stage, familiarity with

data was established and code development strengthened. That is, the patterns of codes

and potential gaps in the data showed more visibly. While examining the data, secondary

and primary categories were identified. Secondary categories are defined as less frequent appearing codes and primary categories are defined as stronger appearing codes. During this stage, some secondary categories merged into more dominant categories, while other less frequently occurring categories remained secondary. The terms code and categories are used interchangeably.

Phase 3: Continue engaging in thematic analysis: compare the three historical writing purposes to the data

I closely reread all data and searched for evidence of 19th century African American writing purpose (identity, collective engagement and resilience and resolve among all data sets). I thematically analyzed all three data sources: observations, interviews and participants' writings. According to Braun and Clarke (2006) thematic analysis is a relevant approach to making sense of data because it provides systematic knowledge about the research question while providing patterns of awareness in the data and meaningfulness. I examined participant writings assigned in his/her composition classroom multiple times. I first read the text to gain an overall understanding of the written artifact. Specifically, I assessed the communicative features of the data; including vocabulary, expressions, phrases that align with the three historical writing purposes. As explained in data analysis stages one and two, coding, also referred to as categorizing, took place on the onset of this study. Once all codes for the second research question were finalized, I created a coding scheme by labeling, defining, and providing illustrative data examples of each code. See Appendix D.

> 1) Writing to define and affirm identity – Writing with awareness and
>
> acknowledgement of self.

2) Writing for collective growth – Writing with the notion of intellectual, social, cultural and spiritual transmission. Writing for the community with the community.

3) Writing resiliently with resolve – Writing against the dominant, stereotypical narrative.

Phase 4: Responder validation and triangulation

During week fifteen and sixteen of the spring 2015 semester, participants had the opportunity to check preliminary data findings for accuracy, so that any pronounced inadvertent researcher bias could be avoided. I provided participants with a document detailing my preliminary data findings. Additionally, I walked each participant through my findings individually. I invited feedback should they see any differences in my views versus theirs. An area for entering feedback was provided on the preliminary findings document.

Phase 5: Inter-rater reliability.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) explain the importance in establishing trust and credibility in qualitative research. I met with one colleague with an advanced degree Literacy, Language and Culture along with background in journalism and writing. I provided instruction on the codes that I had generated. The outside coder examined 50% written, interview, and field observation artifacts. The coding results were consistent, resulting in 100% agreement. Because 100% agreement was found, the need to quantify the number of code agreements and disagreements to seek a 90% or greater accuracy as

suggested by Tinsley & Weiss in order to determine confidence in code findings was not needed (2000).

Conclusion

This study sought to describe the student experiences enacted within community college writing classrooms. By understanding the literate practices of the past and the literate contexts that helped create such powerful written text, we can better understand what factors are necessary in constructing moving text in a developmental community college writing class. Commonly, writing classes are considered gateway courses leading into most degree and certificate programs within the community college. In my three years as a full time instructor at the community college, I have had countless numbers of students express to me their desire to write with clarity. For these reasons, I wanted to learn more about community college writing as delivered to and experienced by students of African American heritage.

IV: Findings

Overview of Chapter

Consistent with the literature, expectations in Penn's class seemed basic and this in turn showed in the writing experiences afforded to students. There were some structural reasons for this focus, perhaps due in large part to student learning outcomes and the instructor's instructional preference. While I open this chapter with mention of the basic expectations and experiences of this class, what should not be overseen are the observed instances when Penn wanted his students to excel in writing. He has been overheard using the phrase *write confidently* and he has implied on differing occasions that *writing is one's identity* suggesting that writing is access to opportunity. I emphasize that Penn wanted for his students to write in improved ways, but at times, as will show in the findings below – the desire to want students to write in academically sound ways was deterred by basic writing standards that sat at the hub of the course. As explained in detail below, some students preferred this instructional style while others wanted more. For example, some students experienced writing benefit from grammar instruction and instructional emphasis on reading audience awareness. Alternately, others felt the course did not match their expectations and viewed the course as lecture centered with elementary expectations, particularly. This writing course is the third and final course within the basic writing course spectrum at this two-year college.

Chapter Purpose: Introduction to Codes Found in Data

The purpose of the chapter is to explicate the findings from this research study.

Following the chapter overview, the first research question is presented and answers to

research question one are provided. Research question one asks: What are writing

experiences and expectations of African American students at a two-year college? In

response to research question number one, two major codes emerged from the data.

These include Externally Influenced Disengagement (EID) and Partial Writing

Experience (PWE). A total of eight sub codes emerge from Partial Writing Experience: 1)

Bottom Up Approach 2) Discontent with Writing 3) Student Confusion 4) Audience

Awareness 5) Expanding Writing Quantity 6) Writing as Progression 7) Writing as

Freeing 8) Heightened Writing Expectations Expressed by Students

Research question two asks: How do the writing experiences among African

American students at a community college classroom compare with historical purposes of

writing from nineteenth century African American writers? In response to research

question number two, the following four major codes emerged from the data: Student

Perceived Writing Purpose (SPWP), Teacher Perceived Writing Purpose (TPWP),

Comparison of Student and Teacher Writing Purpose (CSTWP) and Historical Writing

Purpose – Writing for Others (WO). One sub code emerged from Student Perceived

Writing Purpose: Writing for Emotional Release. The study also attempted to draw

comparison in writing purposes between research participant writing artifacts and

historical writings. Because of this, Historical Writing Purposes (HWPs) were carefully

examined in the writings of students participating in the study. In order to fully grasp

writing instruction in a community college composition course, first understanding how

exactly instruction is delivered, thereby influencing the writing experiences of students

undergirds this study. Table 9 below is a condensed view of the coding chart available in

Appendix D.

Table 9. *Coding Chart*

Code	Definition	Student Example
Major Code: Partial Writing Experience Sub Code: Writing is Freeing (Student Expectation)	Writing frees the mind. It frees emotion. It allows self to use words/expressions that cannot be spoken aloud. * Some students implied that writing in a freeing way was not afforded in the course as it has been afforded outside of the course, in non-academic spaces.	Sadie: Writing allows me to express my feelings in words that I can't…that I can't say out loud. That's what writing does for me. Ian: It's important because you can say many things, that you really can't say out your mouth. Like umm… you can say what's it's like to live in (location hidden), other people don't know about it. So it's important for you to like write about it, tell a story about how it is. Write a song about it. And people who aren't from there, they know about it. They'll know the goods and the bads about it. You can just spread your words and feelings about it (referring to writing).
Major Code: Student Writing Purpose Sub Code: Writing As Academic and Professional Requirement (Student Expectation)	Writing as means of moving to credit English or professional entry.	Saleha: Is just something I have to do. I treat like that. I just have to get to Eng 101.

Classroom Context Overview

Over the period of sixteen sessions, Penn the instructor was always observed to arrive in class a few minutes prior to English 100's scheduled afternoon start time. The classroom routine consistently began on time. A typical classroom session started off with Penn positioned in front of the classroom. The session's instructional outline detailing the happenings for the day was regularly projected on a power point slide facing student view. Mostly, Penn's demeanor during class was calm and welcoming. Frequently, he opened class with a question related to writing in an effort to elicit student

response. For example, on January 21st, the second week of the Spring 2015 semester, at the very start of class Penn asks, "What makes starting off paragraphs so difficult if in fact it is?" Another example of his opening class inquiry was January 26th, the third week of the semester. Penn began class by asking, "Why is it important to be descriptive?" On February 23rd, week seven of the semester, on a white document Penn projects the script below at the start of class:

> We now have a couple of essays under our belt. As we continue the process of developing our skills, I would like for us to take a moment to focus on the paragraph. Although we are writing longer documents, strong paragraphs really will drive the essay forward and keep the reader from straying. So, with that in mind, what are some of the challenges you have had with paragraph writing, either in the past or that I have mentioned to you? For those that are comfortable with paragraph writing, what are you secrets?

On some other occasions he began class with general comments related to a recent collection of essays received from students. He noted strengths and also alerted students of general areas of need. Instructional time followed an instructional outline that was observed to always be spent on issues related to writing instruction. Side conversations unrelated to writing were not observed to take place between Penn and his students. Week one of the semester, attendance numbers were high, despite what the college refers to as "no shows" referring to students who do not attend the first two days of class -- being the exception. Attendance patterns decreased drastically as the weeks progressed. Toward the end of the sixteen observations regular attendees ranged between six and

eight students. A chart detailing attendance is available in chapter three. The following

table details English 100 developmental writing enrollment, withdrawal, retention and

completion rates across multiple sections taught by differing instructors. Penn was

observed to be an organized instructor. Assignments were graded and returned to

students within one two subsequent sessions. Assignment information, handouts and

writing resource information was posted on Blackboard at the start of the semester and

uploaded according syllabus. Instruction was mainly centered on instructor lecture. Penn

spent instructional time explaining the writing topics in the order presented on the

syllabus.

Instructional Preference:

Penn's instructional style is best described as effortless. It often seemed as if he

might have pre-rehearsed his delivery. While I do not imagine that he actually pre-

rehearsed his oral routine, I think years of experience and overall dedication to teaching

the course has helped him in delivering instruction with ease. By this I mean, Penn knew

during each class exactly what his instructional objective was and the way in which he

was going to assess student learning. Not once did I detect that perhaps he was "winging

it." Much of Penn's delivery style was verbal. He supplemented instruction with some

electronic referencing (visiting other college websites for explanations on a particular

writing, grammar exercise websites, Blackboard). He did use the white board during

class time, in order to elaborate on a concept (layout of a five paragraph essay, noting

where the introduction, body and conclusion position; repositioning words in a sentence

to show sentence variation; grammatical examples, and student contributions to his

questions would also be recorded on the white board).   I must say, Penn allowed me to

feel very comfortable in the class. While we conversed only when needed, he welcomed all of my questions and was quite willing to adjust his routine to fit my needs (for an example, Penn who typically read, graded and returned journals the same session that journals were collected easily agreed to return student writing journals the following session just so that I had the time to review student writing). If I felt welcomed and comfortable, I am confident that Penn's students did as well. I did not once over hear students comment negatively about him or even signal non-verbal cues that might suggest their disapproval of him (I did observe looks of boredom on occasion and during the individual interviews students did express their dissatisfaction with the instructional experience. Descriptions for this are provided in subsequent sections).

Penn's philosophy is direct, students or individuals who arrive in his class with a particular purpose, with the purpose to learn and evolve are openly welcomed. Any late or missing delivery of an assignment calls for a brief outside of the classroom meeting with Penn and the student. He plays by the rules and expects that students do as well.

In one conversation, Penn's preferred intellectual philosophical tradition and pedagogical stances were made known. Through email exchange and interview responses, Penn identified himself with existentialist philosophy as his preferred intellectual tradition. His pedagogical stance of choice is critical pedagogy. Existentialism is a philosophical tradition best defined as an individual's voluntary responsibility over their actions and decisions, wherein, individual development is a direct result of autonomous decision making (Marcel, 2002). Critical pedagogy in a writing classroom is recognized as awarding students opportunities to wrestle with and

write about issues of social justice.   What I observed most in Penn's classroom was an emphasis on existentialist philosophy. Students were reminded that despite the instructor's readiness to assist, primary responsibility relied on the student and this would be indicative of their writing progress in English 100.

Writing opportunities affording students the chance to interact with critical pedagogy were less observable. During the teacher interview session, when I asked Penn which kinds of writings he taught and what he valued in terms of writing instruction? Penn provided the following response.

> Penn: Well…in terms of the 100 class, I won't lie. It's less of a feature other than I ask them to be a little bit more aware of the things around them opposed to kind of self. But I think in the argumentative essay, we interwove that a little bit towards that. It's something that I put a little bit more stock in than say a 101 or 102 class where we're able to explore these ideas a little bit more. In trying to kind of present some different writing styles, umm in 098 or 100 class, I'd probably take my foot off the gas as far as that's concerned because they're more skill based and we're going to spend more time talking about those skills and if we can just address some of those things of basic writing so that they kind of have some of the tools available so that they can take on those topics later on.

Twice Penn makes mention of critical pedagogy, once in conversation and once during the interview. As Penn explains, critical pedagogy is "less of a feature other than I ask them to be a little bit more aware of the things around them opposed to kind of self, but I think in the argumentative essay, we interwove that a little bit towards that." During

the field observation dated March 23, 2015, Penn asks students to "take a position on any issue." This was done during the session that emphasized argument essay writing. Penn explains the idea of thinking about an issue from differing angles. One male student opted to choose sports fan behavior as the writing topic. After the student selected the topic, Penn presented follow up questions to aide the student in devising an oral argument. Examples of the follow up sub questions include "ok good so if we are going to talk about heckling what can we argue?" A total of six students partake in the discussion. Answers they provide to this question range from one to two word responses. The teacher continues to push student thinking by commenting, "good, this would be a perfect opportunity to define what you define as abusive heckling. Abusive heckling is open to debate so you get to define. It's not concrete, there's no rule book to define it." On this snowy third day of spring, nine African American students are present. Six are participating, a few females appear as if they are bored. A male and female student are observed note taking. As Penn stimulates argument thinking, he writes on the board "in order to protect children and the general decorum at sporting events, abusive heckling should be _____. What's problematic with words like ban?" Throughout the observations Penn has placed instructional emphasis on grammar and word choice. For a short while the lesson transitions to a focus on word choice and then reverts to positing arguments with the use of reasons and examples.

The example above provides an overview of what is common of Penn's instructional approach. It also displays the type of participation commonly made by the students enrolled in this class. Understanding, the writing teacher's intellectual and pedagogical stances are important in understanding the preferred writing expectations and

experiences given to students. The following student statement ties in with the idea that instructor's shape the writing atmosphere of a classroom. When asked during the interview "do you feel it's the absolute responsibility of a school or a classroom to bring out the writing potential of a student and inspire him or her?"

> Saleha: Umm it all depends on the teacher. Sometimes you have those teachers that will just okay umm…you do this and it's … you do it with the syllabus and we're going to go in that order. There's really like nothing better. And you'll have those teacher's where you're in class for an extra 15 minutes because he'll be talking about how much writing is important and I see potential in you can just really want to be there for you. And then you have those teachers who just teach to do what they have to do to get by and we'll do what we have to do to get by.

In this statement, this student explains the influence a teacher has on a student's writing experience. I will provide a general sense of the type of experiences offered to students in this developmental college writing class. I will also provide insight into the philosophical and pedagogical traditions that have helped shaped the experiences in this class.

Findings Research Question One (RQ1)

Two major codes emerged as I analyze the observational data over the course of this study: Externally Influenced Disengagement and Partial Writing Experience. Seven sub codes extend from Partial Writing Experience: 1) Bottom Up Approach 2) Student Confusion 3) Disconnect with Writing Assignments 4) Audience Awareness 5) Expanding Writing Quantity 6) Writing as Progression 7) Writing as Freeing. Sometimes a code emerged directly from explicit language of the student. Other times codes

generated from similar patterns of meaning (synonymous terms and phrases) represented in the language of the data sets. The first prominent code Externally Influenced Disengagement (EID) is defined as student disengagement resulting from teacher over talk, imposed student inactivity, limited writing experience in class, and failure to meet the writing expectations of incoming students. Student activity is characterized by students mainly listening to instructor lecture with limited opportunity for dialogue. Factors contributing to this code include being talked over by the instructor, forced passivity, characterized by sitting and listening.

Partial Writing Experience (PWE) is defined as the tension between the instructor's observed intended and enacted instructional goals. The observation between week one and three differed. This three-week period was critical to my observations, I noticed the following shift early on: decrease in student attendance and student inactivity because of the prominent lecture centered instructional approach and rudimentary writing instruction (writing from a sentence, paragraph to essay writing approach). The following sub sections provide more information on the data's two major codes.

RQ1 Major Code Found in Data: Externally Influenced Disengagement

Externally Influenced Disengagement (EID) is defined as students showing physical signs of disengagement. Students express boredom and reasons for disengagement during the writing class. Three weeks into the fall 2015 semester, Penn starts the session noting student writing strengths and some general statements on areas requiring writing improvement. Penn's statements are referring to a previous writing assignment. Penn's instructional preference appears teacher centered with an emphasis on lecture. In this particular session, Penn makes mention of reader and audience awareness.

The emphasis on reader and audience awareness has been stressed throughout my sixteen weeks of observation. However, on February 9th audience awareness was given more priority. Penn uses two examples to explain this point. He begins with asking students how a tire is changed. Because he is showing students the importance of audience, Penn emphasizes to students that if they were to explain something like a tire change, students have to employ written specificity to really help the reader accomplish his/her goal that in this hypothetical case is changing a tire. Carrying on with the idea of process writing, a short time later, Penn reads an excerpt aloud on *how a photograph is taken using a camera.* It is at this juncture I notice boredom with one male and a few females. The male appeared attentive at first, but as the lecture continued, his posture was observed to slouch. He is of tall frame and his legs are noticeably stretched before him. While the two females have their eyes fixated on Penn, their facial expressions communicate lack of interest. Again, despite these student's eyes focused on the instructor, they just appear as if they are genuinely not in tune.

February 11th the session begins asking students possible topics for their upcoming process essays. One student Gabe, a military veteran volunteers to share his writing topic. His interest is in writing about kidney dialysis. Penn and Gabe spent about ten minutes exchanging thought and ideas on the structure of Gabe's essay, other students appear engaged in Penn and Gabe's reciprocal conversation. At the conclusion of Penn and Gabe's conversation, a female student volunteers to share her process essay idea on the steps involved in attaining an RN degree. When the student was unable to contribute ideas supporting her topic, Penn grew slightly frustrated and suggested that the class think of ways to become more successful as English 100 students. Penn used the

opportunity to illustrate ideas for a process essay using the topic he just suggested. While a few female students attempt to contribute on the topic, toward the middle of the lesson, students began showing expressions of disengagement. The overall tone of the classroom began to draw flat. From such observations emerges the code EID. EID is a code that shows in all three data sets, with notable presence in the interview data, with 12 occurrences. Students express boredom and reasons for disengagement during writing class. Students have either made direct mention of feeling disengaged, a desire for more engaging activities and more interesting experiences. Below are examples of student responses emphasizing experiences of disengagement, they are responding to the question: what would you prefer was done differently in the course? In the four responses teacher talk is emphasized as a factor influencing student disengagement.

> Kendra: Yeah…if a teacher is talking a lot, then we just sitting there listening, we gonna become bored.

> Jacob: Because…he just sits there and talks about stuff the whole time. And we just look at a PowerPoint and talk about what we're gonna be doing next week or what we're going to be doing today. If we do activities, we would probably understand it a lot better than him just explaining it. We don't do enough activities.

> Sadie: Like…to me, he just be talking. It's not really teaching anybody anything. To me personally like some of the stuff he's saying like my high school teacher told me the same thing. He saying .... Like but like I expected like more since it's

college. So, I just I really don't know what I'm expecting out of this now because I didn't really learn anything from it at all.

Gabe: Well…he lectures. You know. He tries to get his point…he tries to get his point across. And then it's sometimes, he goes…like when he's lecturing to you and maybe you're not grasping what he's saying you know at that point…you know, don't just cut it off and then go somewhere else on another subject

In another field observation, teacher over talk on the topic of *appropriate use of words* appears as a catalyst for loss of student attention. The dominant factor influencing EID has been teacher over talk. As an example, the third week of the semester, during the first portion of class, about 30 minutes in length, Penn starts off by saying: "next week is the first in-class essay on narrative and descriptive writing. The writing prompt is on Blackboard." Penn gives writing prompts ahead of time, so students are given time to draft their writings in advance. He believes nearly all writing requires planning because as he implies spontaneous writing is rarely expected in life. Penn orally emphasizes the need for prewriting especially for the upcoming in class writing assessment. During this first half of this instructional time, Penn shifts the conversation into writing confidence. He asks, "Where does writing confidence come from and descriptively why do some students show lack of written confidence? I suppose he is introducing discussion on the idea of confidence and description because the upcoming writing assignment focuses on narrative description. Two students partake in the conversation. One female suggests lack of written description is the result of "leaving some things unsaid." Penn quickly regains control of the conversation to help stress the instructional point. He writes on the board: Confidence comes from word choice and

diction. From there he says, "today we are going to talk about five basic sentence types.

We are going to talk about parts of a sentence." He presents a webpage on the drop down

white screen facing the students. On the webpage are definitions and examples for

subject predicate, transitive verbs, linking verbs and subject complements, and direct

objects. The second phase of instruction, also about thirty minutes in length, Penn directs

students to "take a couple of moments and think of a couple of stories- two or three - that

would fit in a five-paragraph format." Two female students participate in this discussion.

In the midst of the discussion, Penn offers an oral example of a possible narrative

descriptive story line, about a young lady who endures a car accident. During the final

phase of the instructional period, this was the shortest segment of instruction according to

time -- Penn presents an example of a descriptive paragraph from a local community

college webpage. It is titled "Watson and the Shark."

Tension between unmet student writing expectations and instructional experience

also resulted in EID. Student disengagement mainly influenced by external factors,

excessive teacher talk, boredom, and limited instructional expectation residing within the

instruction. Factors within the composition classroom environment have created

situations of externally influenced disengagement, thereby suppressing student writing

experiences. When asked in the interview, what students expected to gain from this

composition writing course, 6 of 10 students explain that they wanted to gain structural

written improvement. The others allude to the idea that they wanted to gain more

specified funds of knowledge to help lengthen the quantity of their essays. Of the nine

student interviewees, two students, one male and one female suggest that this course was

too elementary and basic. They expected more advanced writing opportunities. The

example below is an interview question and answer exchange between Andrew and myself.

> Khan: So, let me ask you this, if you don't mind. So you said, and again, I appreciate your honesty, you said you wanted to get something out of this class but due to your own lack of doing, maybe, that's kind of what you said, you didn't get what you wanted to get. So, if you wanted to get that and wanted to get it so bad, what got in the way?

> Andrew: Just distractions. Yeah and then like not coming to class due to like you know I've said at home, you know this class is boring. So, I would just not go. But it's kind of hard for me to just sit in the class. Just like quiet the whole time. And I try to be, you know, more vocal in class so that it won't be as boring. But it's tough. It's really tough. Well, for a while it was like, I don't think I'll make it because it was like this class is like really like draining, it's tiring. Just sitting there and he'll say something, like ask a question. Like nobody would respond and (inaudible). That's why words can really change something, like silence can say a whole different message.

Another student, Pax, communicates the same message as Andrew. Pax and Andrew are transfer students who have come to this two-year college from four-year universities. Pax wrote the following sentence in his end-of-the-semester reflection letter:

> Pax: But this semester was kind of boring to me that's why I would lose track of work or not even come to class.

Gabe, explains in the interview:

Gabe: Well…he lectures. You know. He tries to get his point…he tries to get his point across. And then it's sometimes, he goes…like when he's lecturing to you and maybe you're not grasping what he's saying you know at that point…you know, don't just cut it off and then go somewhere else on another subject.

The first two examples indicate the influence student boredom has had on student participation. The first two students, both recent attendees at four-year universities express that the boredom experienced in this developmental writing class hindered their desire to attend class. While the last example in this set shows that Penn's excessive lecture approach is making it difficult for Gabe the army veteran to maintain focus.

RQ1 Major Code Found in Data: Partial Writing Expectation

Partial Writing Expectation (PWE) is a broad code with seven sub codes (identified below). Partial Writing Expectation is defined as the tension between the instructor's observed intended and enacted instructional goals. On one hand the instructor communicates interest in building student confidence in writing and then there are observed instances when students experience imposed disengagement. However, as shown in the seven sub codes resulting from PWE are two opposing student experiences, some positive and others negative. There are instances when students reap benefit from writing instruction, but there are other times when the full complete benefit of writing instruction is not met.

It is important to note that the instructor made several attempts to encourage students while fostering an inviting, pleasant classroom atmosphere. His tone was often welcoming and his instruction routine was well mapped. Eleven instances with
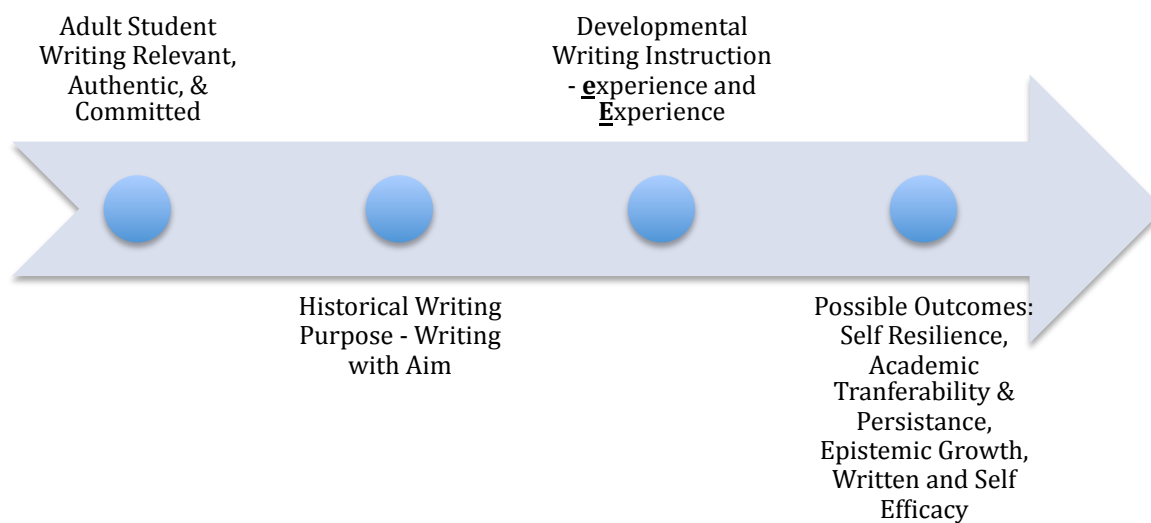
encouraging remarks by Penn have been noted during the field observation. A few examples for this include, the mention of good grades earned by students. During a lesson on the five basic ways of writing effective sentences, one male student makes the argument that he is comfortable writing the way that he is accustomed to and asks if it is a requirement that the five basic sentence formats be integrated within his writing. To this Penn provides an explanation showing the importance of varying sentence structure, but while suggesting so, he also awards the student written authority. In another situation, Penn encourages students to send drafts his way for the purpose of review and he explains that he enjoys providing this type of feedback. Toward the end of the semester, during the end of the semester written reflection, three students Sophie, Gabe and Mike express gratitude toward Penn's efforts.

Despite instances of teacher well-intentioned instruction, teacher encouragement and student appreciation toward the teacher, PWE is a code that results after close analysis of three data sets (observation, interview and writing artifacts). As suggested earlier, the code name PWE describes students not provided total writing benefit from participation in this developmental writing course because of partial instructional writing demands. Further, as the code suggests, benefit was met, however, not to a fuller observable extent. PWE is an overarching code that extends into the following sub coding, student experienced confusion and student experienced disconnection with assigned writing topics. Instructionally, PWE resulted from isolated grammar instruction.

I note audience awareness is also indicative of PWE. Audience awareness was a viable emphasis of instruction, however, overemphasis on telling students that audience

awareness should be employed in writing absent of showing students how to employ this in their personal writings resulted in partializiation of the writing experience. The use of what I have phrased as a rudimentary writing approach was central to the instructional experience. Isolated grammar instruction was central to instruction especially in the beginning weeks of the semester. This instructional focus gained appeal from the majority of students. However, as explained above, non-contextualized forms of grammar emphasis deterred students from this study's notion of a fuller writing benefit model, thereby partializing the enacted experience for students. Figure 1 below shows the factors involved in providing students full writing benefit (the figure is not referring to linearity of progression).

Full Writing Benefit Model (see Figure 1).

Adult Student
Writing Relevant,
Authentic, &
Committed

Developmental
Writing Instruction
- **e**xperience and
Experience

Historical Writing
Purpose - Writing
with Aim

Possible Outcomes:
Self Resilience,
Academic
Tranferability &
Persistance,
Epistemic Growth,
Written and Self
Efficacy

Partial Writing Benefit Sub Code One: Rudimentary Writing Approach (Student Experience)

The focus of most developmental education writing courses is progressive building of writing skill. This approach has its benefit because students who lack skill or structural writing practice need an approach much like this. However, partialization of the writing experience can occur if this approach overpowers other important factors such as writing relevantly, with commitment and aim as exemplified in the writings of nineteenth century African American writers. In concert with the idea of presenting writing skill on a progressive continuum, Penn was seen to use a rudimentary or bottom up approach to teaching writing. I define a rudimentary writing approach as the instructional emphasis initially being on the rudiments of writing.

On January 21, week two of the start of the semester, Penn started class of with the following inquiry: "What makes starting off paragraphs so difficult, if in fact it is?" A couple students reply "because you have to read and re-read. You need an idea. To that, Penn responds: "paragraphs have a purpose within an essay. This is an argument I'm making "all students should be able to master writing a paragraph." After a short pause, students attempt to offer verbal contributions to the original question "what makes starting off paragraphs so difficult?" One student replies, "organizing ideas." While another student offers, "you have to be more detailed in an essay but paragraphs you don't have to be." It appears the in the second response, the students is attempting to explain essay writing is perceived as more difficult in comparison to paragraph writing. Whether it is because of Penn's instructional influence or participation in other writing courses with similar appeal, Pax raises concern about the basics of writing structure.

February 23, 2015 Penn opens the class with an inquiry: "as we continue the process of developing our skills, I would like for us to take a moment to focus on the

paragraph. Although we are writing longer documents, strong paragraphs really will drive the essay forward and keep the reader from straying. So, with that in mind, what are some of the challenges you have had with paragraph writing, either in the past or that I have mentioned to you? For those that are comfortable with paragraph writing, what are your secrets?"

Moments later Pax seated in the back of the class, raised his hand and in a soft spoken voice expressed interest in learning how to better transition paragraphs. I assume Pax is in his early twenties. He is a new father as his daughter is only months old. I know that because he mentioned fatherhood in one of his narrative writings. To hear a student express interest in better transitioning paragraphs really shows me that Pax understands how necessary it is that ideas move on a piece of paper with ease. Penn, who is very responsive to student questions, immediately began showing Pax and the rest of the class two ways of transitioning ideas.

> Penn: There are a couple of different ways to go about this. One of the things you can often rely on is – bare basics (writes first, next and finally). You can do something akin to this. Each time I see one of those, I know there is a slight relationship beforehand and you are moving to the next point. Real small stuff that shows that at least you've thought out the planning of this.

He explained that the words first, next and last were the simplest way of indicating idea/concept transitioning. Penn made clear that this was a rather simplistic way of transitioning ideas. In conversation, I have come to learn that Penn is not entirely in favor of awarding grades for composition writing classes. As I understood it, Penn

believes that grades deter students from really developing as writers. He suggests the fixation on grades and performance achievement, takes away from the experience of writing. Grades almost pressurize students into working toward achievement rather than experience which can result in a accomplishment and achievement. Despite Penn's discontent with the standard letter grading system, perhaps knowing that students from an early stage are enculturated in valuing grades, Penn said basic writing transitioning (here he refers to first, next, final as basic transition efforts). In trying to give students a standard he says this basic transitioning equates to a "B."

The other example, Penn used was a bit more elaborate. Penn wrote opening sentences to paragraphs showing evident shifts from one paragraph to the next. Penn began by saying "I like using transition sentences. I'll give you an example." "You guys are working on process essay." He writes on the board *acquire materials* and *organize work station*. He uses the topic cooking an omelet as an example. He provides students with two sentences that refer directly to material acquisition and workstation preparation. "Once you have all of your materials in place…now you are prepared to make your omelet." He even added that students could introduce a transitional idea at then end of one paragraph and then re-emphasize it at the start of the subsequent paragraph.

After spending a fair amount of time exemplifying sentence transitions, Penn asked Pax whether he understood the idea. Seated a diagonal from Pax I was able to see Pax's reaction to Penn's response. Pax nodded yes that he understood, but something suggested otherwise to me, perhaps it was his body language. While Penn did wonderfully at responding to Pax's spontaneous question, in other words Penn did not have time to design an even better explanation for Pax given the suddenness of the

question. I believe had Penn known of this question in advance, then he would certainly

have presented Pax and the others with essay examples.

During this same segment, a young lady who I have named Nickie asked: what if

you run out of ideas to write about on a topic, like advanced stuff? Penn as with Pax,

responded to Nickie's question with genuine attention. He provided an example of a

student enrolled in his other composition writing class.

Penn: "a student is writing a research paper in another class, the student is

struggling with stretching out her topic. Should teens at 16 be charged as adults?"

Penn explains the importance of strengthening funds of knowledge through

reading. As he puts it "books have been written on this."

Penn continues with "I'm trying to think of a good example. A good topic is

Race in America. You have to ask yourself why am I writing the essay? Because Penn

asked me to do this assignment and I have to turn it in, that's' just going to get words on

an essay?" Since students are writing process essays, Penn explains:

Penn: For a process essay, if you're going to tell me how to make something.

You have to decide what the goal is. For instance, my purpose is to entice Pax to

learn how to bake something. I might continually mention that in the paragraphs.

Referring to getting Pax interested in the writing, Penn tells Nickie:

Penn: Nickie, this is a great opportunity to talk to his daughter (referring to Pax's

daughter). It fills the purpose, and space sort've what you're (Nickie) concerned

with). Do these things make sense?"

Nickie: Yeah.

Partial Writing Benefit Sub Code Two: Discontent with Writing (Student Experience)

Table 9

Essay Prompts Developmental Writing English 100	
Type of Essay	Essay Prompts
Narrative Essay	Write a five-paragraph narrative essay describing an encounter with someone or something you were afraid of. IF that does not suit your fancy, THE other option is to address an encounter that changed your life. Include the reasons for your choice. As you write this essay, remember that we want to be as descriptive as possible. Use the skills and techniques that were discussed during week three of the term.
Process Essay	In an approximately five-paragraph essay, you will need to choose a proper procedure or process to discuss. For example, how to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich (oh, by the way no one is choosing this—get creative!!). We need to be sure that we include the following information: introduce the topic, be sure you include any material that are necessary, then tell us why this is important; next, work through the steps, be sure that you include all the is necessary (nothing that is not); at the end summarize the point.
Definition Essay	We will be tackling a method of development that can be useful with the presentation of concepts that may be unfamiliar to our readers, definition. The need for definition relies on the topic for discussion and the knowledge of the reader. While many times we will need to have just a sentence definition, there will be times in which an extended definition of a paragraph or longer is necessary. You will be asked to select from either of the following topics: You are taking a psychology course and an essay question reads: "Define stress and give several examples of its sources." Write an answer for this essay question. Or, you are taking a speech communication class and have been asked to choose a team sport and a particular player in that sport. Your task is to define that player's position and the position's contribution to the team as a whole.
Classification Essay	Write a five-paragraph essay in which you classify your friends. You will need to work through the creation of your subgroups, identify them, and explain them. If this is not to your liking, classify the stores at a mall. As you write this essay, remember that we want to be as precise as possible. Use the skills and techniques that were discussed during weeks six/seven of this term.
Argumentation Essay	In a five-paragraph essay, you will need to provide reasons for the following prompt: Argue on thing that you would like to see changed in Chicago and provide the reasons why. For example, we may want to see better after-school programs for schools age kids (K-8). What are the reasons for that? The only topic that I would like for you to avoid is violence (we all want less violence). We need to be sure that we include the following information: a concise thesis statement, establish a purpose for your writing, have meaningful reasons/support for your argument, proper organization, and solid transitions

Discontent with Writing Assignments shows more prominently during the interview and shows three times in student writing artifacts, namely the end of the semester reflection letter. Discontent with Writing Assignments is defined as students express feeling a disconnection with writing assignments. Pax writes in his end of the semester reflective essay, "Writing has always been a strong point for me all my years that I've been in school because I felt is easy to me." Something I struggled with this semester is writing about topics that were given sometimes I didn't really have a lot of details or ideas to write about. (The second half of Pax's statement is representative of another code. Students have expressed difficulty meeting the expectation of written quantity due to lack of ideas. Information on Student Desire for Writing Ideas and Quantity will be explained in the next section.).

Jacob writes:

> I wish I would've been more engaged in the material taught by the teacher. Instead of just doing what it takes for the sake of the grade.

Daniella writes:

> I managed to stay on top of all my writing assignments and journal entries that was assigned. Even though, some topics did not matter to me, I still tried my best to get the writing done.

When Andrew was asked "If you could make some changes to the way that writing is taught, what would you suggest?"

> Andrew replies: "Umm, well initiating that you don't need to know all that stuff. Just be like, if you want to like…like if you're going to school for English, okay

then you teach that. But as far as like for a grade or for a class, just teach what's more important. Umm…so far it's pretty good. I mean it's a writing class so there's going to be a lot of writing. I asked the student if he preferred something more interesting? Captivating? But like more…like everything's not going to be to your leisure. Like every prompt isn't going to be like something you like. You're going to have to write about something that's boring. But I want the class to be like something that going to prepare me for those boring prompts and how to work through it.

The student begins by suggesting he prefers to be taught only what is needed. It is safe to assume that he means he prefers to be taught only that which will help him progress through college. It seems he is less interested in focusing on technicalities of the English grammar, perhaps the specific rules of grammar or the suggested five sentence starters once presented as an instructional mini lesson. He goes onto explain that writing within the college experience is not going to be entirely appealing. He expects "you're going to have to write about something boring." However, he wants to instruction to help him "work through the difficulty." In an interview conversation with Pax we began talking about his previous writing experiences at a college in another state. He described the experience as being one that he could not connect with and that he preferred the overall writing experiences offered in the state where this study takes place. He explained that by attending schools in the state where the study takes place, he has grown accustomed to the writing expectations offered to him. In explaining this, he makes more reference to feeling a sense of comfort with the stages or steps in process writing. Pax states, "I feel more comfortable with it (referring to his home state's writing instruction

vs. the state he previously visited). "Like the writing styles are the styles I was brought up with, that I knew since I was little like the outlines and stuff. I'm familiar with it, it makes it kind of easier." Since he told me what he found of benefit from his overall writing experience with his home state, I then asked him if there was anything he didn't like about the way writing has been taught in these classes (referring to his over writing experience)? Referring to English 100, the following dialogue took place:

Pax: I just didn't like the process essay. On the grade I did good, I got a B, but I feel like I didn't do well.

Khan: How come, why did you feel this?

Pax: It was like I had a hard time of what to do. At first it was like I didn't want to write about how to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Then I tried to do like preparing for a game and I couldn't get anything out of it. Then I did a typical day, but I still didn't feel I did good, but he said I did. It was like I had a hard time of what to do. At first it was like I didn't want to write about how to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Then I tried to do like preparing for a game and I couldn't get anything out of it. Then I did what a typical day is like, but I still didn't feel I did good, but he said I did.

It appears that the writing topics did not satisfy him. While he prefers the instructional approach offered to him, he desires more intellectually stimulating writing assignments.

Sadie was asked to describe herself as a writer.

Khan: I know that you've done quite a bit of writing. You know grade school, high school and now.

> Sadie: I don't really like writing at all. My specialty is math. Writing to me…writing to me is kinda complicated. Like the way the professor or the teacher wants you to write it, it's not my type of skill. I would…I know you have to have some type of uhh structure and stuff like that. But at the same time, I feel as if, when they give you a topic…it be like topics you never thought about not a day in your life. Like topics like you just clueless about…I feel like if you gone give a topic, give a topic that you know…like you experienced in and something like that so me and writing it never really worked out. I mean I wrote a few things. It was okay I guess. But the only time I get to write like…is like…well that's when I do my best at writing.

In this statement Sadie feels a sense of detachment with the writing topics. Below Daniella expresses similar sentiment.

> Daniella: like some of my writing…I can see that some of my writing…like from the topics, he give us, it be like…I don't know…I can't really engage in that because it be boring topics. Sometimes I can't engage in what somebody else wants to talk about and then they want me to specifically say it how they want … how they want you to say it or whatever. I can't do that. I like to write how I write.

Jacob described his English 100 writing experience as being an opportunity to expand his understanding of the different writing genres. He also expressed that at times instruction was confusing for him especially because of the rapid pace of the course. As a follow up question, I asked why he felt confused at times. He explained the essay identified as a classification essay, where students are to take a topic and examine it broadly and then

more generally did not seem necessary to him. According to Jacob: the classification essay (this assignment required students to categorize either mall stores or friendships), the stuff he's doing now. Where you're breaking it down. I kind of don't see why we're doing that."

> Khan: What do you mean about that? What do you mean "I don't get why we're doing that?"
>
> Jacob: Hmm.. I know it's to be very detailed and stuff that you say. But sometimes I don't feel we need it.
>
> Kendra: I mean…the work…it don't get explained enough. I don't know (pause)
>
> Sadie: I feel as if when they give you a topic…it be like topics you never thought about not a day in your life. Like topics like you just clueless about…I feel like if you gone give a topic, give a topic that you know…like you experienced in and something like that so me and writing it never really worked out. I mean I wrote a few things. It was okay I guess. But the only time I get to write like…is like…well that's when I do my best at writing.

Ian who identifies as a local rap artist says:

> Ian: Yes, because this is not the first time I'm taking this class over. Like my last class the stories we could relate to that she gave us. Like we read it outside of the book and everything. And we wrote drafts and related it to the argument and everything. This one I don't know what he have us writing about. Like I wrote some, but everything else I just go lost. So I don't know what to write about once you get lost it's like you can't catch up now and the only thing you can do is move forward.

From the information above, seven students openly communicate their dissatisfaction with the writing assignments. Pax admits to have struggled with the assigned topics. In another part of the interview he explains his struggle with the writing topics and how he eventually decided on a topic, it appeared he settled for a topic just because he needed to get through the writing assignment. Pax a transfer student from a four-year institution spoke almost listlessly when expressing his discontent. Jacob and Danielle both desired more engagement. Jacob who had a particular goal oriented appeal in his eyes openly criticized the classification essay (classifying friends or stores in a mall). He said he did not see purpose in this. Sadie uses the word clueless when referring to the assigned topics. Similarly, Ian communicates that in his prior writing class he preferred the extra support provided from the teacher and book, however, in this class he felt he did not what the writing assignments required of him. Interestingly, Andrew a transfer from a four-year institution who has also performed poetry at a well-known local theater, considered the prompts boring. In spite of this, he wanted to learn how to navigate the boring writing prompts because according to him this type of writing expectation was inevitably a part of the college writing experience. The comments made by these students demonstrate a sense of discontent. Their comments suggest that they were confused by the caliber of the writing assignments and perhaps even belittled. Some suggest that they felt a lack of awareness with the topics that were assigned. While one student, Ian an underground musical artist, communicated that he was in need of more scaffolding, that was not made available to him. The majority of the students were openly dissatisfied with the required writing because of the detachment experienced with the assigned

writing. Table 9 (Appendix E) explains the topics students chose within the parameters assigned for each writing assignment.

Partial Writing Experience Sub Code Three: Isolated Grammar Instruction (Teacher and Student Expectation)

Central to Penn's rudimentary instructional approach is the teaching of isolated grammar skills. Isolated grammar skills instruction focused on the basic foundations of English language grammar. In the interview, I asked the question: what do you want students to ultimately gain from your composition writing class and you definitely talked about it. If you just kind of want to recap?

> Penn: Umm…I want for them to feel confident about their writing ability. Umm…I want them to know that they have the ability to make the changes in their own writing. Umm…this is especially true for native speakers. There have been many studies that show that even if their grammar is not strong, they do know it. Just by virtue of existing in our society. And so kind of breaking down kind of those self walls that exist. Umm, I think some are like "I don't know commas" and that's their position so they put commas wherever. If they just stop for a second and thought about what they're doing, they can make those changes. But…I think it's kind of getting that confidence. But it's also being critical about what they put down on paper.

Through this statement, Penn explains that grammar should exist in students and if it does not exist as it should then students are required to increase grammatical consciousness. Throughout the observations, the following instances are examples of explicit grammar instruction. Grammar was integrated as way a way of having students

gain grammatical awareness, so that they could assess their writing for communicative accuracy. At the start of the semester, Penn relays to students that My Writing Lab will be reviewed to identify student error. My Writing Lab is an electronic grammar program that accompanies the assigned textbook. My Writing Lab is equipped with several grammar exercises. Penn explains that one of the main purposes of My Writing Lab is to identify areas of grammatical struggle with the goal of rectifying the areas of grammatical challenge. Penn supports the notion that when students award the time to attending to their writing consciously, they are in better positions of error elimination. He has remarked "when you catch an error, add it to your list." On another occasion he said "understand the writing basics, then improve flaws." Students responded favorably to grammar instruction.

During one early semester session, Penn showed students how to use My Writing Lab. On the drop down screen in front of the classroom My Writing Lab was projected to the entire class. After some introductory talk, Penn says "identify the subject in the following examples." One of the statements projected on the screen read give me more popcorn please. A few students in chorus reply the subject in the example is "you." To that, Penn explains it is you, however it is "you implied." Penn continues with a few more examples on subject and predicate. Class time ranged seventy - five minutes in length. At times, a single class session was observed to cover multiple objectives. In this session, information on paragraph structure, fragments and topic sentences was given. Following that the instructor, introduced My Writing Lab with an emphasis on subject and predicate. Proceeding that, within My Writing Lab was a page titled ESL (English as a Second Language) Concerns. He was showing them an example of a writing module,

explaining to the students that if they are to say to themselves "I identify that these are something's I struggle with" then the writing modules with My Writing Lab would be beneficial practice. The final phase of the grammar session ended with two activities. The first activity being identifying and correcting fragments and the next activity was identifying topic sentences. With continued emphasis on grammar, in another session, students were asked to build sentences in pairs. Penn started the activity off by posing the question "why is grammar important?" He then explained that grammar can be seen as tools that help a writer write more in depth sentences. He presented students with some basic rather simple sentences. He then asked that students add more grammatical elements to the sentences. The purpose of this activity was to help students apply the information on grammar they had gathered thus far. In this particular class session, three weeks into the semester, five male African American students were on time. Gabe, was five minutes late and two female students were five and ten minutes late, respectively. Another male student walked in close to a half an hour late. During the collaborative sentence building activity all students present during that particular session readily took part in the activity. It was also observed that while Penn explained the activity nearly all of the students present in the classroom had their eyes and attention on Penn.

While observing students reaction to the grammar lessons presented to them at the very start of the semester and the revisiting of grammar ideas throughout the sixteen observations, students reacted in favor of information on grammar. However, the writing artifacts and interview data show students had mixed reactions toward their experiences with grammar. While most students showed interest in the grammar lessons, two students did not find grammar instruction helpful because they required more exposure

and repetition.   The following references to grammar have been made within student writing artifacts.

Sophie: I still get nervous because as I write I just keep writing and my sentences become run on's, that has always been an issue with my writing.

Gabe: When writing I always had a problem with having the correct grammar and using the correct point of views in my essays.

Khan: What are some experiences maybe that you might of had that make you dislike writing?

Kendra: I think the reason I don't like writing is like…like…text messaging could be a way I don't like reading… I mean writing. 'Cause when you write, you gotta say it a certain way, you gotta think about grammar and all that. When you texting, you just text it how you wanna text it. So like when you writing, you don't wanna be looking at…rereading your work and I don't know. My Writing Lab was also something that helped me because it taught me about sentence structure, and how an appropriate paragraph is suppose to be set up.

In the interview, when I asked the type of writing feedback students have received. Three students said they received feedback on misuse of words, sentence clarity and syntax. During the interview, Sadie and Gabe, voluntarily referred to previous experiences in developmental writing at the two year college. They both mentioned that grammar had a central place in either English 98 or 99 (classes preceding English 100). When speaking of their previous experiences, they expressed regard for grammar. Alonso also communicates value for grammar. He is heard saying that he is interested in speaking and writing in a more fluid way.   It was during grammar lessons that students

attended to the teaching lessons with interest. Interest was observed via student body posturing, fixation of eyes on the instructor and the any visual aides. Students also participated actively during these lessons.

Partial Writing Benefit Sub Code Four: Student Confusion (Student Experience)

Student Confusion (SC) is defined by student display of verbal or non-verbal confusion. In a lesson on paragraph organization, Penn writes on the board - *how to be successful in English 100*. In this lesson, Penn reminds students of the importance of a topic sentence and how other sentences in a paragraph relate to it. He writes a few sentences on the board, one sentence has to do with student attendance and the other sentence makes mention of student participation. Penn then asks the questions, "What's going to fit with this point? How do we organize details? We can organize in time, spatially. Does working through this in time order work?" A female student responds: "I think so. I mean first would be attend class, the second would be participate in class. I'm a little confused." Despite her expression, "I'm a little confused," the female student continues adding to the conversation with "it doesn't have to be time order." It appears that the student while starting off confused she and teacher reach agreement that the sentences on the board do not have to follow specific chronological order, rather sequencing the sentences in way that makes best sense is of importance.

Khan: What have your experiences been in this composition class?

Jacob: Uhh, they've been okay. It's like some of the stuff he goes over, he doesn't get very detailed and sometimes I'll be lost. But in the end, I understand it after I do more research on it myself.

Other explicit examples of student confusion show in the observational data. On one instance, Pax mentions that he would like to learn how to transition ideas in an essay. Penn begins by explaining: "Transition in writing is a style issue, subjective. Kind of like when you're going on an interview, it makes a difference as to how you're perceived. This is kind of like the clothes that you wear. In an essay you can get away with the mill of the run stuff, but stuff that pops is better." The teacher explains that there is a basic way to transition ideas and that is with the use of the words first, next and last. Penn also makes mention that there is a more academic or sophisticated way of transitioning ideas. In reference to the more academic or sophisticated way of transitioning, Penn presents the example of ordering a pizza. Penn continues to further illustrate the point using an example. He writes on the board and interacts orally with the students; he looks at and speaks particularly to Pax because Pax raised the question on transitioning. Penn introduces an example of ordering pizza. He explains that when discussing the different toppings of choice on a pizza, each pizza topping can be used in the form of a transition. Penn continues with presenting a written example of this on the white board. He ends the explanation and example by asking Pax if his understanding was made clear. Pax responds in a one-word response, "Kinda." Pax then continues asking another question again on transitioning. Penn acknowledges the question and Pax expresses his understanding is now clearer. About one month into the semester, February 23, toward the very last minutes Penn describes the difference between a topic sentence and thesis statement. The military veteran, Gabe who has maintained consistent attendance, immediately raises his hand and comments "I'm confused." To that, Penn responds I'll

write this on my hand, we will talk about it on Wednesday because if we don't get this down, we are in trouble."

Another evident example of student confusion was shown on March 4. Penn shared a writing outline. While referring to the outline, he suggests to students "Make sure you follow the organization you've laid out in the outline, this just shows that you have good organization." When showing students the details of the outline, Penn refers to this as "point by point details." The phrase point by point was perhaps in reference to the intricate specificity of each piece of information included in the outline. Penn, as in most sessions, asks "What are some issues that are making sense or not?" Pax responds, "I'm losing the point by point part." In response to Pax's confusion, the teacher says the points serve as details for the essay and elaborating on these details is important.

Partial Writing Experience Sub Code Five: Instructor Encourages Audience Awareness (Teacher Expectation)

Audience Awareness (AA) is a dominant code across all three data sets. AA is defined as teacher encourages students to be aware of an audience when writing; as a result students develop an awareness of audience when writing. AA is a very apparent code that shows within teacher lecture as observed. This code provides answers to both research question number one and two. In this section, I will focus solely on the answers it provides to research question one. Having audience awareness, when writing was an instructional expectation of Penn's. For instance Penn has mentioned, connect with reader, envisioning a reader be mindful of reader have control over writing for reader's comprehension, avoid colloquialism because readers might not understand it. In another session, Penn states to the class you have to understand how words work, if you use the

word you then I'm speaking to you. You have to be very conscious of that, words matter

because as a reader I might become distant from it because how does it

apply. How do I make something like this matter? How does this match my particular

life? Or maybe that this is interesting, or this is interesting information to know about it.

 These examples show Penn's emphasis on reader consciousness. Penn has also made

reference to objective writing. During week three of the semester, Penn provided the

class with a subjective versus objective example. He cordially pointed to the logo on a

student's sweatshirt. He first asked the class the color of that students sweatshirt. The

color was undeniably red. He then asked a less obvious question, he asked students to

identify the logo which appeared to be an animal characterizing human action. Students

were less adept to answering this. They began employing their social and cultural

experiences perhaps to answer the question. Students responded with all types of

answers, "It's a wolf of some kind or it's a bob cat." Penn's point appeared to emphasize

to students the difference between objective and subjective perception. In terms of

objective perception as it relates to writing and ultimately the understanding of the reader,

is perhaps a more widely accepted notion of what something is. As Penn explained to

students objectivity is dependent on what the primary senses are able to compile and

make sense of. With emphasis on objective writing, Penn is not at all opposed to

dismissing oneself in their writing. Despite this, he communicates to the students that

objective writing is perhaps more reliable information source. During one instructional

lecture, Penn clarifies his stance on objective writing. Objective writing is a subcode

within audience awareness because the instructor's instructional expectation that students

write for the reader is governed by his presiding position on objective writing. Penn says: "some of you might think why does he harp on avoiding I? To help illuminate his point, Penn adds the pronoun I to the argument school should be year round. He then includes the pronoun I coupled with words like feel and emotion again to the argument that school should be year round. I think school should be year round. I feel school should be year round. He ends this example with, "how strong of an argument was that?" He answers with not very, however, if I take a third person approach, I appear somewhat rhetorically objectives.   In this example, Penn is not entirely removing the individual from the writing. He is affording students the opportunity to influence a their interpretation of a situation, however, he encourages students to refrain from overuse of pronouns and adjectives that can possibly lessen the strength of an argument. During the interview, Penn elaborates on his stance on objective writing. He explains: "I want for them to relish in the experiences that they've had but not uhh…not wallow in them. I think that you know it's important for them to kind of, you know, look to their experiences and I think a lot of my writing assignments allow them to do so. But keeping in mind, what's the larger picture? Probably something I get, probably flack from students about and…only because I read it in reflection essays that they write for their portfolio, you know is that, I'm tired of them getting one me about this idea of thinking about the reader. Umm…writing isn't for the self. Umm…and I believe that to my core." This instructional expectation became a part of the English 100 students writing experience.

 For instance, Gabe, had consistent attendance and high work completion (that is he did not miss any writing assignments) explains that this class forced him to apply intelligence in writing for the purpose of informing others. The influence of AA, writing for the

reader and writing objectively shows in the writing of Daniella. This student explains the reason underlying her perceived written struggle. "In my writing I always had a problem with having the correct grammar and using the correct point of view in my essays. I think the reason I do this is because I sometimes may get off topic and too personal with the prompt and get carried away with what is on my mind." By making specific mention that writing with a personal agenda deters her from writing well suggests perhaps that writing absent of self and with increased awareness of the reader might improve her writing.

Partial Writing Experience Sub Code Six: Students Desire Expanding Writing Quantity (Student Expectation)

Expanding writing quantity is a desired writing expectation for five students, particularly. This code is defined as student desire to write more fully while limiting writing repetition. One female student, Nickie who discontinued coming to class before the semester's midpoint, raised her hand mid lesson during week six and raised the question "how do I stretch my writing more"?

During the interview others have expressed:

Andrew: Yeah, just be able to write more…I don't know how to write more…I don't know how to describe it…just like 'cause like I feel like at first I was a good writer. But, like actually learning how to write could, you know…and then practicing it, would you know change how I write. You know, I just wanted to be better.

In the interview I asked student participants what the benefits of writing in a group writing setting were and Sadie chose to include information on writing more extensively when in group setting.

> Sadie: "Yeah. The benefits of writing with others, it's just so you don't have to get the writer's block. Like you know, what am I saying...So you won't…so you won't uhh….(pause)

> Sadie (continues): Because half of the time, I just be tryna make it stretch. Like…it be like a topic, I be having all the ideas in my head but when I come to write it on paper, it goes blur. Like my ideas just go away. And I don't even remember what I was trying to say before I even do like outline or something. I don't even remember what I was trying to say. So it just be like a blur. So, what I could remember, I just write it down and I try to expand on it like make it stretch

Similarly, but to another question Pax makes reference to expanding written quantity.

> Khan: what do you expect to get from this class?

> Pax: just being able to write more

During the interview, Penn makes mention of written quantity. However, his view of writing quantity differs from that of the students above. In conversation, he revisits a childhood in - school writing experience. He makes mention that he and his classmates competed one time as to who could write the longest paper. He draws a connection from his past childhood experience to his present teaching experience.

Penn: Yeah. Yeah. And (laughs) I guess it's kind of odd because it kind of speaks to what students think the length of the writing is going to be …or the quantity is equivalent to quality

From this statement, it appears that Penn's previous and current students have shown concern for writing quantity. Participants of this study have made clear that they are not merely interested in filling written space, despite one student's use of the phrase "stretching my writing" others are more interested in knowledge and funding papers with knowledge.

When Saleha was asked to describe herself as a writer, she said "Umm.. I would say that I'm an okay writer. Umm, I will just…I will just feel myself saying the same thing over and over again. So, I would just kinda wander off at the last two paragraphs. Jacob reports that Penn made reference to writing quantity in providing journal writing feedback:

You know, he told me I wasn't doing the journal in the right way. I needed to have more…needed more paragraphs. So, I actually laid down and thought about it after I wrote. But, you know what, after I thought about it from laying down, it actually took me about n hour to write two and another paper (laughs). And he said that was…

Even though Penn was aware that students held a desire to write with more detail. It seemed that he misconstrued or minimized this student writing desire. He made mention that students value writing quantity over quality.   Students who voluntarily contributed to the code: Expanding Writing Quantity, came across as much less interested

in writing to just fill a page. Rather, it came across to me that they wanted to write intelligently in a non – simplistic or non – repetitive way. This desire does not deter from written quality.

Partial Writing Experience Sub-Code Seven: Writing As Progressing Academically and Professionally (Teacher and Student Writing Expectation)

Writing as progression (WP) is an expectation both heard from the teacher and students. WP as writing as means of moving to credit English or professional entry. During the interview Penn gives a description of what this means (below). However, it is important to note that during a rare informal after class conversation, Penn explained his view on writing, suggesting writing has importance beyond just the academic and professional world. While he did not use these exact words, he almost implied that writing was a necessity for human beings extending beyond just functional, academic or professional use. Given that most students attending this two year college, where the study takes place are mainly interested in receiving an education and attaining a job. In a possible attempt in grabbing student attention, Penn did imply that writing was the mark of one's identity for an employer. It appeared that he was attempted to tap into those students whose first ambition is professional attainment, by appropriating writing is the antecedent to professional attainment. This statement almost sounded like a motivational appeal to students.

In the interview Penn elaborates on the idea of writing as progression. He makes mention that achievement in the English 100 class is just a step close to English 101. Wherein, English 101 is then another class that paves better opportunities for a student to then pursue their intended academic and professional goals.

Penn: I'm firm with things but that's because we have a goal in life. You know if

it's, you know a class such as this 100 class, I have to get them through 101. If

they don't get into that class, they're not going to be advancing towards their

career goal or their academic goals or whatever goals they may have. (100 is

important for students to meet their goal in life, moving over to 101 and beyond,

get students on the credit track for their own good) They may not understand it for

whatever reason which is odd to me. But that's what my goal happens to be. And

not just some of them, but all of them. And I'll joke about hey you guys don't

want to do the assignment, hey I don't have to grade the papers. And they may

find that to be a smart aleck remark and that's fine by me. Because truthfully, on

Sunday when I'm grading the papers, while I don't mind grading them and I

enjoy sitting there, listening to music and grading them, when I have less papers,

it's less work. Umm…but that's a choice that they're making and they have to

realize their choices. And I think that kind of attitude kind of rubs students the

wrong way. He doesn't care. Well, you know. I do but I'm going to care for

students who are going to care about themselves. You're an adult. Umm, whether

you're 18 or whether you're 38. You, it's up to you. I can only do so much.

In the interview conversation, Saleha refers to herself as almost a helpless and

disinterested writer, she says "I really don't know what they can do to help people like

me become better writers because… I then pose the question, "When you talk about

people like me, what do you mean by that? How do you see yourself as? She responds "I

see myself honestly, an it's kind of sad to say, I just see myself getting by … to go to

English 101 and just be over the writing… you have those people who just do it because

they have to do it." It is clear she envisions her current writing experience as movement into English 101.

March 23rd, Penn introduces a sample argument essay to the class. The essay is about mandating year round school. During this session 9 African American students are present. One male and one female are observed taking notes. Referring to the sample argument essay, Penn inquires if there are opposing arguments in the essay. He encourages students to "pick apart one or all of the support points." He follows up with what is another side to that (referring again to the main argument of the essay). Andrew says "children might get overwhelmed with year round schooling." After acknowledging Andrew's contribution, Penn offers a more extensive opposing argument: "I also may want to wish to mention, summer is the time that people want to take vacations. If more schools did it (referencing year round school mandate) it could severely hinder the tourism industry around the country because people hire a lot more during the summer …. These are the things you can think about when addressing these ideas." Pax says: "you can even mention the breaks."

The class tone during this particular session was energetic, while not all students were providing verbal contribution, the three way dialogue between the teacher and the two male students removed a flat, disengaged tone in the class. As a closure to the dialogic exchange between himself and the two students, Penn said "ok for just a brief moment I want to show you an idea map, this is for writing the first few classes in your 101 classes." By referencing English 101 it is safe to gather, that English 100 is seen as a preparatory or in fact developmental course that is a fundamental stepping stone to the English 101, considered a college credit course at this two year college. The code writing

as academic and professional progression is shown here. Below is an interview excerpt between myself and a student participant.

> Khan: When asked what writing does for you?

> Gabe: …it don't do nothing for me (laughs) I'm just doing it because I gotta pass this class, to tell you the truth.

When Mike is asked the similar question, he says

> Mike: "it's emphasized if you think about it right throughout your schooling life for many of us. Hmm…why is it so important? Like say for instance you want a job, you gotta do an application, you just have to know how to write, period. In general. No matter if it's write this down or take this and break it down into multiple … how can I put that? Uh… it's important you need it in your every day life. You'll use it every single day. Like you're not going to go one day without using it 'cause it's all around you. Writing you need it."

Mike sees writing as progression into both the professional and functional world. In his statement, he makes evident that writing is almost a necessity for survival in the modern world. But, again his description of writing importance is a pathway toward professional attainment first and then he describes writing's functional uses. Similar to Gabe, Jacob makes clear that "especially in this class, we do a lot of writing. Essays after essays. I was like man, he's bombarding us with work. But it pays off in the end because 101 may be a little tougher than this." As a result of this class, Jacob is looking forward to being prepared for 101. The next set of question and answer is from Andrew's interview.

Khan: what did you expect to get from this class & have you gotten it?

Andrew: I expected to get just, you know, basic writing style…not style but like how you write. Like professional. Like basically helping you write professionally. And I think I could of got it, but feel I didn't put that much effort in trying to achieve that goal. So, it was basically on my part. But as far as like teaching, he did a great job. But on my part, I didn't just give as much effort.

Andrew the university transfer student has referred to this class as being a "step back" or as he later clarifies a more basic writing experience compared to his previous university writing encounter. He makes evident in this expression that he entered English 100 in anticipation of writing with a more professional or even perhaps written fluidity. In what he regards as his inability in mastering this intended goal, he explains that he might be the cause of his unachieved goal. These instances are threaded in commonality in that all of these students including the teacher of the course perceive English 100 writing as a precursor to either English 101 and or professional entry. On the other hand, Mike couples writing as a means of professional entry and functionally purposeful membership into wider society.

Partial Writing Experience Sub Code Eight: Heightened Writing Expectations (Student Expectation)

The terms experience and expectation have shared characteristics. An expectation is not a stand - alone idea without an individual first experiencing a situation often resulting to either a positive, impartial or negative expectation based off the experience/s. An expectation can also be a precursor to an experience. So, in the case of this study, if a student enters the developmental composition classroom with a heightened set of

expectations and if those expectations are not fulfilled in the student's view, then the likelihood of having a poor writing related experience or overall impoverished writing experiences grows. This is an example of experience and expectation functioning simultaneously. For the sake of simplicity and delineation of these ideas, experience is influenced by external environmental factors. An experience is an event or more specifically a writing instructional event that a student partakes in, thereby resulting in some type of view. And, an expectation is a belief imposed by either the teacher or student. Students participating in the interview were each asked "what did you expect to get from this class?" Students provided a variety of responses. Expectation responses include, the desire to write more in terms of quantity, the expectation that the class would be more challenging, and the expectation to write more professionally.

> Andrew: I expected to get just, you know, basic writing style…not style but like how you write. Like professional. Like basically helping you write professionally. And I think I could of got it but feel I didn't put that much effort in trying to achieve that goal. So, it was basically on my part. But as far as like teaching, he did a great job. But on my part, I didn't just give as much effort (inaudible).

> Sadie: I wanted to learn like…my previous teacher, she said it was going to be like a challenge and teach you more like a variety of things, higher stuff that she couldn't teach at the moment. But as I got like into that class, I was excited. I was excited to learn about stuff like some interesting things that she was talking about. But as I moved through the class, it's like…his teaching is not really teaching. Like…to me, he just be talking. It's not really teaching anybody anything. To me

personally. He saying...like some of the stuff he's saying like my high school teacher told me the same thing. Like but like I expected like more since it's college. So, I just I really don't know what I'm expecting out of this now because I didn't really learn anything from it at all.

Khan: Do you think if writing challenged you intellectually you'd be into it?

Sadie: Well I'm not going to say necessarily challenge. But be interesting. Like a interesting challenge. Well not a challenge...well yeah a challenge but like a interesting challenge. Like something you want to explore. Stuff like that.

Because Sadie felt that the expectation she had for this class had been unmet, I asked "if you could change the way writing is taught in these writing classes, what would you suggest?" She responded:

Like instead of writing five paragraphs like writing more like research papers or something, citation pages or something. More how to expand like what to put in the body paragraphs. Writing about things that you know your students would engage in. Writing about things that they wanna know. And find out the interests in the students and go from there.

The next response is from Gabe the non-traditional student, a military veteran, who decided to enter school while in his late fifties.

Khan: What do you expect to get out of this composition class? We're coming to the end but what is it that you want to get from here?

Gabe: Well, I wanna pass it! (laughs). And you know ... it's teaching me…the way I was writing must not of been the right manner of writing. It's teaching me, I guess express more on…instead of it being the "I" and all…you know it's on my…I'm taking more information from other places and putting it into writing. Than just thinking I know everything. Gabe once limited expectations of what writing is was transformed as he participated in this developmental composition writing course. When asked to describe himself as a writer he says:

Well you know, personally I never thought I was a writer. But uhh…I figured that I would try to uhh put my words that…or things that have happened to me in the writing. I try to express myself that way. I didn't know it was so many forms of writing that you had. I just thought it was write what you know and write what you know you're talking about. That's how I always do it.

At the onset of the course, Gabe did not readily identify as a writer. The different genres of writing have been new insight for this military veteran and also the oldest student in class. Prior to taking part in this writing experience, Gabe claims his view of writing was limited to writing down what one already knew. He did not realize that varying forms of writing entail the need for learning, researching, understanding and then interpreting. His once limited expectation for writing changed as a result of this class. He recognizes the change in view on writing and the expectations surrounding certain genres of writing as being eye-opening experience for him.

Kendra responds to the question what do you expect to get from this course by saying:

Kendra: Hmm (pauses) Like ideas on how to explain myself more when I'm writing. And like if they tell you like pick any topic or something to write, think of topics that everybody else wanna read about. Like…I don't know how to explain it (pause).

When Pax is asked the same question he replies:

More like how to extend my papers.

Daniella : Umm….what do I want to get out of it? (laughs) Umm…a better, like, I want a better way of… I want to learn a better way of writing. I have a hard time with writing sometimes. Like creative writing or whatever it is. I have a hard time doing it so I want to improve myself in writing. Making people understand what I'm saying in my writing.

Students Pax and Kendra are interested in improving written quantity, while Daniella expresses that she has difficulty writing and wants to improve her overall writing ability. Daniella is conscious of the reader and wants her writing to be easily understood by other's reading her writing.

A heightened expectation held by some students was writing as freeing. Based on student description, this has been defined as writing frees the mind. I consider this a heightened expectation some students hold toward writing. In other words, students entered the course with a desire to experience writing as metaphorically freeing, but perhaps did not feel the freedom that writing has given them outside of the classroom. Participant comments during the interviews show five students with a four to one female

to male ratio have heightened expectations of writing. It frees emotion. It allows self to use words/expressions that cannot be spoken aloud. These five students in particular do not just view writing as an *academic rite of passage*, rather they view writing as something that can do more than just fulfill an academic requirement, writing for these students as expressed in their own choice of language as freeing. When looking at my observations and other data sources, student expectations were not realized instructionally. Impeding this heightened student writing expectation was the instruction that took place. Instruction did not yield student experience especially for those who came in with appreciation for writing.

Leena did not partake in the interview because of her work schedule. However, in one written artifact she reveals:

"sometimes I write just to write just to express my emotions and show myself that I don't have to write just because I'm not doing a school assignment. Writing helps me express my feelings."

Comparably, others communicate a similar message. At the start of Danielle's interview I asked:

Khan: So let's start off by you describing yourself as a writer

Leena: Well…I like writing…I write just to write sometimes. I just overboard write but sometimes just to free myself. Just like writing in my composition book.

In an effort to have her unpack the term free, I asked:

Khan: What do you mean by free myself? That's interesting.

Danielle: free yourself like free your mind. Like it get you a clearer vision of like…writing. Just clear my brain."

When Sadie is asked "What does writing allow you to do?"

Sadie responded: Writing allows me to express my feelings in words that I can't…that I can't say out loud. That's what writing does for me.

In response to the question why is writing so important?

Saleha explains, Umm… it's important because it helps you communicate with others and it also helps you be umm… free to write umm… anything you want, well the way you want to write. Yeah, it basically just helps you communicate and write freely.

Ian the student with a background in music and lyric writing claims that he does a lot of writing outside of school. The interview questions purposefully asked similar questions in different ways with the underlying goal of having interview participants really rethink their statements on the writing experience and their expectations for writing.

Ian explained: (writing) it's important because you can't say many things, that you really can't say out your mouth. Like umm… you can say what's it's like to live in (blank), other people don't know about it. So it's important for you to like write about it, tell a story about how it is. Write a song about it. And people who aren't from there, they know about it. They'll know the goods and the bads about it. And people who aren't from there, they know about it. They'll know the

goods and the bads about it. You can just spread your words and feelings about it

(referring to writing).

Students in this section explain writing as liberating. The questions asked during the

interview did not in any way use the word free thereby influencing student use of the

term free in their response. According to the students above, writing is freeing as it

allows for more expression than speaking alone. Students find more communicative

liberty in writing as compared to speaking. Having had this high expectation of what

writing can do -- could have been reduced as a result of participation in the course

because the course required students to write within traditionally driven developmental

writing standards.

Research Question Two (RQ2)

Research Question two asks: How do the writing experiences among African

American students at a community college classroom compare with historical purposes of

writing from nineteenth century African American writers? Throughout the sixteen

sessions of observation, students were assigned four, five paragraph writing assignments

(Table 8 above). Students were given two weeks to write each essay. Penn spent class

time mainly discussing the format and expectations for each assigned essay genre.

Students were not given time to draft writing in class. It was expected that students wrote

outside of class during their personal time. While in class, Penn was heard encouraging

students to bring draft writings to him either during his office hours or through email.

Because students were not allotted free writing time within class, there are no

observations of students voluntarily seeking writing aide from Penn when in class. On

two different occasions, two female students, voluntarily interacted with Penn when he handed graded essays back to them. Saleha and Daniella were observed initiating brief conversation with Penn relative to their essays. Students were given two peer review opportunities in class. During the second in class peer review session, six students were present and four participated in the peer review. Leena remarked that if more students participated in this, then perhaps this would be a more worthwhile experience. While during the interview, Mike said students should have a grade penalty, so that they participate more in class. In this situation he was referring to the disappointing number of participants in the peer review writing activity.

RQ2 Major Code: Student Perceived Writing Purpose

During the interview, five participants perceive writing as an academic and professional necessity. Four male students, three of whom are traditional students and one non - traditional student answered the questions "why is writing important to you, why is writing necessary and what does writing do for you?" without any pause or reluctance.   One female student also provided a rapid response, without any hesitation. When explaining their perception of written purpose all of the students uninamously made mention of writing as an academic or professional need. In other words, according to their responses, writing is a necessary element for academic development and professional entry as well as professional continuity. The following are verbatim excerpts from participant interviews:

> Pax: Yes, it's important to me. In order for me to want get to where I want to get, I have to take it seriously I can't just go through the motions… I might need it for a job one day.

Jacob: Well you need a certain kind of skill set in order to be successful in life and that's about it. Yep. (He continues saying): Especially in this class, we do a lot of writing. Essays after essays, I was like man, he's bombarding us with work. But it pays off in the end because 101 may be a little tougher than this.

When Jacob is asked why is writing necessary? Why do you think schools emphasize it? He responds:

Uhh, because it prepares us for the future basically. And a lot of stuff that we do now has to do with writing. That's about it.

What does writing do for you?

Gabe: Well…it don't do nothing for me (laughs) I'm just doing it because I gotta pass this class, to tell you the truth…that's why I'm doing it. 'Cause I want to pass & get off into that profession.

Sadie: Because first you gotta learn how to talk to somebody instead of just… I mean you know how you got that conversation with your friend, you use slang and stuff like that. But in the professional world, you gotta have you know, you gotta know words, you gotta you know, engage in the conversation if you don't know what they saying, you just gon be lost in the conversation. And like writing helps your vocabulary. So when you writing it's not just about just writing. It's helping your vocabulary. You know expanding on what you learn. When Sadie says "so when you writing it's not just about just writing. It's helping your vocabulary. You know expanding on what you learn," she is emphasizing that vocabulary growth within writing influence different ways of communicating a

message using a variety of words. Sadie makes a connection between writing,

vocabulary development and communication with others, namely in the

professional world.

When asked "what role does writing play in your life?

Sadie replies: to be honest, it's just like a academic thing. Like I write

occasionally about what I wanna write. But really, it's like an academic thing.

Because I'm not really a writer. I could care less about writing. That's just not

really my thing. Give me a math problem and it's like a challenge for me.

Math is perceived as more of challenge for Sadie, however, writing is seen as less

likeable and more of an academic requirement. When she makes mention that "she

writes occasionally about what I wanna write," she elaborates later in the interview, that

she writes on occasions that she feels angry. Information on this is provided in more

detail in the next section under the code writing for emotional release.

Student Perceived Writing Purpose Sub Code: Writing for Emotional Release

"When I'm writing it's basically just me and my thoughts depending on what I'm writing about. Writing helps me to express my feelings." – Leena

Four participants say that writing is a form of emotional release. Analysis of the

responses shows that writing is used to relieve frustration and more so, anger.

Participants provided broad insight into what causes their frustration and anger, I was

able to gather the following information. Frustration and anger is often a result of

something happening within their environment, for instance in one response, Pax gives

the example of anger emanating from negative professional interaction. As he puts it, he

holds back his words during less than ideal professional situations and instead writes

about the situation.   Sadie rids herself of anger by writing down the experience, followed

with tearing apart the writing. This is symbolic of momentarily ridding the catalyst for

the anger and the feeling of anger itself, as she explains. Kendra uses the word calm in

her response. According to this student, writing down a frustration is way of calming one

self. Another dominant code emerges from Kendra's response is writing for others. This

code is explained in the section that compares student writings to the writing motivations

of nineteenth century African American writers. Kendra was asked what does writing

allow you to do? With an initial pause, the utterance "hmm," followed by a longer pause,

she replies:

> (pause) Hmm.. (long pause) Writing, it can allow you to relieve stress in a way.
> Hmm… like I said before, it can…allow you to give other people information.
> Like your thoughts. Hmmm…Yeah like what you said, it could be a everyday
> stress. Or it could be like some stress that was just piled up. Like if you had
> something going on over the weekend and you just start writing and you just write
> everything that happened and you just take it off your mind and you could just put
> it on the paper. And it just like help you calm down. Yeah… It help you like stop
> thinking about it so much. Like I'm cool or I'm gone handle it in this way. It
> just... I don't know. I don't know how to explain it.

When Pax was asked where do you write more often, do you write mainly in school or

outside of school? He replied:

I use to write a journal like at night about how my day went. I get angry fast a lot so my mom she would have me write my feelings in my journal, I didn't like it at first.

Khan: Do you still write in it?

Pax: Not as much but I still do sometimes

Pax: Like if I had a hard day at work, if I had words with someone but I didn't say it to them, I kept it in or had to keep it in, or I'd get fired.

In his end of the semester reflection letter, Pax writes "writing has been a way for me to get my frustrations out on paper since I was a young child." Pax is a transfer student, who intends on transferring again once e accumulates enough credits.

When Sadie is asked "do you write outside of school? Do you keep a journal? Do you keep a diary?" She responds:

I write on a regular piece of paper. Like I just be writing then I rip it up.

Khan: Got it. Do you mind if I ask? Like what…what fuels you to write? Is there a particular situation that kind of pushes you to write?

Sadie: Like everyday like…like if I get angry, I just start writing and it help me. It help me control my anger and stuff like that.

Both Sadie and Pax suggest writing helps control anger, specifically.

Khan: And then you tear it up? Does that like…

Sadie: Not my problems are gone. But it kinda is.

Writing as shown in these particular examples are cathartic for some students. Writing is used a way of releasing emotion, namely anger, frustration and stress.

RQ2 Major Code: Teacher's Perceived Writing Purpose

Writing is Identity

Penn made it very clear that he wanted the students enrolled in English 100, to write with clarity. Maintaining reader awareness when writing was emphasized and students were reminded of this prior during the teaching of a new writing genre. On two occasions, Penn explained to students that they needed to write and write well in English 100 in order to meet more immediate academic goals like entry into English 101. During one rare after class conversation, between Penn and myself, Penn mentioned to me that in he used writing well for professional entry as a way of appealing student attention because the majority of students at this two year community college are interested in attaining a specialized degree or certificate and acquiring a job. By using the writing and job comparison, he did grab student attention as I observed (note student numbers showing attention) students listening attentively to his talk during the (date session). During the interview, however, Penn spoke about writing for academic and professional entry in more detail. Writing for social change is a written purpose Penn supports, however, students enrolled in English 100 did experience this writing purpose fully. As Penn explains the writing experiences in English 100 are more skills based and preparatory in nature. The interview excerpt below is an answer to the question, what are you trying to accomplish with your writing instruction?

Penn: (pauses) For the students, I want them to be able to communicate their

ideas. To be able to articulate what it is they want, want and need. And too often,

they struggle with how to articulate those. If they're going to apply for jobs in a

world where they're not going to be face to face with somebody, they better be

able to write. It's not…it's not an arguable point. And I still feel that many of

them feel like stopping by CVC, picking up an application, filling it out and

giving back. The jobs that they're going to be getting, whether it's in the health

field, business or whatever it is that they're studying, they're going to be applying

via a computer. Their faces aren't going to be there. If they're not articulate, if

they can't communicate how their education and their job experiences are going

to contribute to them being able to do their job, they're dead on arrival in terms of

getting that job. Umm…and a point that I often kind of struggle with in terms of

some of the changes that are going on with city colleges, is there's often this

desire to sell the job you could get instead of what you could do to get the degree

to get that job. Umm…it sounds really go tell a 18 year old or a 25 year old or 52

year old that, hey there's these jobs out there if you get this degree. Umm…but

there needs to be an understanding that there's a process in order to accomplish

that particular goal. And our students, unfortunately, are often working at a

deficiency. And you know, it's our job to try to get them to you know,

uhh…make it through that, erase that deficiency the best we can and then to excel.

And I know that in class, they're in competition. If they're going into nursing,

they're in competition with a lot of schools, across the country, let alone here in

Chicago. And we have to kind of recognize that when we're putting our students

out there that the school's name is on the resume. If they're inarticulate, the next

student that comes through with an application or resume from there, they're

going to toss it. I mentioned my mom is in HR. I know the first ways they weed

through things. It's a limited number of jobs and hundred of applicants.

Umm..you know, there's going to be plenty of time and this is also unfortunate,

they're going to see student names even and going to toss it to the side and it's an

untraditional name and there's a set of expectations that may come with that. As

unfortunate as that may be, it's still a reality. Umm…and I think…

It is evident Penn passionately believes that writing is a student's identity

especially when applying for jobs. He understands this to be a primary identity that

supports a job candidate's chances of being considered for a particular position.

Additionally, he explains the job industry is competitive making it even more important

for job applicants to be able to communicate well because effective communicative

ability weighs in favor of candidates. While Penn teaches both developmental

composition writing classes and credit composition writing classes, he perceives his role

as a developmental composition writing instructor as that of erasing student deficiency

and providing writing skills training. Eliminating writing struggle is something Penn said

openly to students during the first week of class. It appeared as if he was setting the tone

for the semester by introducing this idea so early on.   During week one he asked students

to be aware of their errors, so errors can be consciously corrected. Students reiterate this

message too as it shows in written artifacts and student interviews. Students perceive the

need for eliminating their individual writing deficits prior to moving academically

forward. Participants have openly made mention to weakness in writing, they have openly underestimated their writing abilities.

In the following response Penn elaborates more on what he values as instructional necessities in a developmental writing classroom.

> Penn: Umm…I want for them to feel confident about their writing ability. Umm…I want them to know that they have the ability to make the changes in their own writing. Umm … this is especially true for native speakers. There have been many studies that show that even if their grammar is not strong, they do know it. Just by virtue of existing in our society. And so kind of breaking down kind of those self walls that exist. Umm, I think some are like "I don't know commas" and that's their position so they put commas wherever. If they just stop for a second and thought about what they're doing, they can make those changes. But…I think it's kind of getting that confidence. But it's also being critical about what they put down on paper. Umm, when I send out an email and I think I've mentioned this also in class, I don't know if I've done this is other classes, I will spent sometimes like 25 minutes, if people are sending an email for (inaudible) for our portfolio, it can be a 5 sentence thing, I will read that thing over and over again. Not so much that I care about having a small spelling error or something. But I want to make sure everything is as clear as it can be. (inaudible) when you're sending something out to writing instructors, is kind of poor…

It appears through the interview that Penn cares for his students, however, he is discouraged in knowing that they have arrived in his classroom and continue to progress

in his classroom at a rate that is not yet college credit ready. Toward the end of the interview, I asked him the following.

> Khan: What writing strengths or proficiencies do you expect your students to arrive to class having?

> Penn: So what do I want them to have already… be on top of?

> Khan: Yeah…

> Penn: Umm… (pauses) This will sound like bad. But I don't have any expectations. Umm…except for those students I made have had in the past. I have a handful of students in the class.

Toward the early half of the interview Penn explained that sometimes students put up walls. I interpreted this as if he was referring to student writing apprehension, so I asked him "where do you think this apprehension stems from?"

> Penn: They've been cheated in terms of their high school and grade school educations. Umm…many have not written anything. I've had students tell me that they wrote 10 page papers in high school and based on what they've done on a 5 paragraph essay, it must be…and I don't mean to be super negative about it but those most of been mostly pictures because it's not there. The ability is not there and so I think they've been kind of cheated.

According to Penn's two most recent responses under this section, Penn is invested in his students becoming confident writers. He equates writer's confidence with writing that is structurally sound. Alternately, another way to look at this is that Penn

see's confidence as being antecedent to the outcome, which in this case is writing. In other words, if student's enter a writing situation with confidence they are perhaps more likely to write more consciously or in accord with standard grammatical convention. According to Penn, by default, "just by virtue of existing in our society," members acquire grammatical awareness. Penn notes using the preexisting grammar awareness students have is advantageous to their writing, however, he implies neglecting this would create a less ideal written product.

Because Penn has openly remarked as his years in teaching progress, student writing quality and overall communication skills are deteriorating, I asked him "do you think writing instruction needs to be advanced lower leveled institutions?"

Penn: Yeah. In the current environment, it's not going to happen. And I can prove that it's worse than when I first started teaching. Because I have essays from first class that I taught at Triton in 2008 and I don't know why I still have them. They're in my closet. But every time I go through them, those B papers are all A, all of those C papers are probably A- papers. And I'm sitting here going, well what has changed? Our students ability to communicate is getting worse every single year.

I was interested in knowing what his perspective on the worsening of student writing and communication was, so I asked him the following questions:

Khan: Why do you suppose?

Penn: It's not being taught and I've talked to students. It's not taught. They're not reading. If they are reading, it's like reading stupid things for tests. It's all about

reading comprehension. "Can you read this stupid article about gorillas or whatever and tell us what Jane Goodall did". Great, you read that. So what. There's no real investment in it. It's all about taking tests and other stuff. And instead of lessening that, we continue to get more and more invested. "Oh no, now we have the right test". Whatever.

Khan: What piece of advice would you have for these districts as a writing instructor? What would you want them to do differently so that when these students come to you, they are a whole lot more prepared.

Penn: Teach 'em to communicate. Invest the time in it. And it's not going to be a one year thing. Umm…I think they have the abilities. I know they have the abilities. But it's just like it's not being cultivated. And so, that's what uh..needs to be done so. I don't know how that's done so. I don't know secondary education or…. I don't know how to do it at that level. I don't even remember how it went for us. We just wrote and we did stuff. Now that I think about it, I was reading earlier. That's where a lot of it came from. I read. I read on the bus. I read when I'm bored. You know, every night after dinner, we had to read.

While Penn is not interested in removing students of their individuality, he is not interested in students "wallowing about themselves in their writing." With that in mind, I was interested in knowing why Penn emphasized objective writing in the sixteen sessions I observed. Similar to his students, Penn views writing as being of benefit to others. However, as shown in this chapter, while his students share the same view, students enrolled in his class also value a sense of self.

Khan: Tell me how your student's identities influence your writing instruction.

Penn: I want for them to relish in the experiences that they've had but not uhh…not wallow in them. I think that you know it's important for them to kind of, you know, look to their experiences and I think a lot of my writing assignments allow them to do so. But keeping in mind, what's the larger picture? Probably something I get, probably flack from students about and…only because I read it in reflection essays that they write for their portfolio, you know is that, I'm tired of them getting one me about this idea of thinking about the reader. Umm…writing isn't for the self. Umm…and I believe that to my core. That even if I'm writing…even if I were writing in a daily journal, which I've never done, I'm writing to me some other time, who isn't be now. So I have to think about that. Am I going to be able to communicate ideas. Umm…I think that what I mean by not wallowing in these ideas and kind of their experiences is that there is often times kind of a want to say it to say and it may be some cathartic experience that comes from that and that's great. Umm…but I don't care and not that I don't care about them as people. But in terms of the writing assignments that they have, I don't. They need to be thinking about how can I connect with this person and they can still…like they had to write about personal experiences for a narrative essay. Great. But if it's just telling a story to tell a story at the end of it, I feel that why am I listening to this? If they think instead that I had a situation that occurred, whether it's the death of my grandfather or (inaudible) that affected by life in someway, if I can think…if they're able to start thinking this peer is probably experiencing something similar to this. Whether it's the death of their

grandfather or the loss of somebody who was important, can they make that
connection? Because they should be drawing from those experiences but they
have to get beyond "It's just about me". They have to write about something they
want to change in Chicago. Like, great. Get rid of red light cameras. You know if
I ask them why, it's "'cause I keep getting tickets". Well, that's great so stop
breaking the law or tell me is there something that is beyond just you and your
behavior. You know, are we noticing that there's a certain level of society that's
being targeted to more than others? Is there a certain part of the city that's being
targeted more than others? That matters to somebody like myself as a reader. And
I don't me as the teacher, I mean me as the generic reader that exist.

Comparison of Student and Teacher Perceived Purposes for Writing

Penn is a musician and writes lyrics. In the interview excerpt below his purpose for
writing is in some ways is in stark difference with the writing impetus underlying student
writing. He is aware of this difference because he notes the difference.

I mean I wrote…I wrote lyrics and they weren't really autobiographical. I didn't
really kind of uhh fall into myself very much. Umm I uhh…it's the one thing I
guess I don't…. where I don't kind of identify with the students. And I think
that's something that is difficult especially in terms of writing is that I…I can't
say I always have but as long as I can remember, I knew I wasn't important. And
I don't mean that in terms of like oh woe is me type of situation. But I realized my
place in this sort of larger world that my opinion didn't mean much of anything.
And it wasn't because my parents said anything to me or something like that. But
it was just a recognition that who am I and how do I fit into the larger structure or

society? Umm kind of the egocentric kind of view point that many students

umm…I think students in your study tend to take rubs me the wrong way.

Because there is this over valuing of kind of the self umm beyond kind of their

connectedness with their classmates, with their school at-large, with their

community at-large. Umm, and there may be plenty of reasons that I'm not privy

to or knowledgeable about and that may be fair.

Penn is aware his students esteem their individual voices. As they have made

apparent to me, they want to record their voices in writing because their stories matter,

there lived experiences matter. Unlike what Penn perceives as egocentrism, the students

do not, either through the interview or writings claim writing for egocentric reasons.

Instead they spoke and wrote honestly about personal motivations that fuel their impetus

for living and succeeding. For instance, students who are parents in particular write that

their children are their individual motivations for self advancement. The musicians in

particular, Andrew and Ian have openly said during the interview that they have

compassion for others and they want to write from a personal level for the betterment of

others. The military veteran, Gabe said that his process essay discussed his dyer health

condition and if another were to read it he would want that person/s to learn from his

experience and perhaps not have to endure the same suffering he has. These statements

are not egocentric. Daniella when asked if her writing about her self can help others she

says:

I mean…it can. Far as like a person being into they self more. It can like help

them see the type of person that they is. Far as like the character they have. It's

basically like…it can teach them, but it can't. Not about me but they can put

myself….they can put they self in my shoes and talk about the type of person they is. What they will do about they self.

These are individualistic stories that are important to the students participating in this research, however, Penn although aware of student desire to want to represent a sense of self in writing misinterprets their impetus. While misinterpreting or not even fully knowing why students desire to write like this in particular instances, Penn himself as evidenced above refrains from including a sense of self in his musical writing, but instead aims to write on broader topics that are considered perhaps relatable to the mass.

A code for writing quantity has emerged in the data as a writing desire that students have. They have openly said, I want to write more. In a conversational part of the interview, I asked Penn to reflect on his earliest most successful writing experience and be revisited his fourth grade memories. He explained that students in the class competed at who could write the longest piece of writing, he did not specify the nature of the writing assignment. He followed this explanation with the following statement:

Yeah. And (laughs) I guess it's kind of odd because it kind of speaks to what students think the length of the writing is going to be …or the quantity is equivalent to quality.

However, when students explained to me that they wanted to write more and wanted to learn how to write more they added the idea that they want to write in a meaningful way. This is not the same as just writing to fill space, rather they want to write with a goal in mind. It appears to me that their interest in expanding their funds of knowledge to help elongate their written ideas. When asked why they would like to work in writing groups,

all participants make mention that the perspective exchange would help to add ideas to their writing. Again, this is far different than the notion that Penn held, students want to write to fill empty space.

Penn used a rudimentary skills based instructional writing approach. The classroom writing sessions centered on recognizing grammatical units to writing paragraphs with topic sentences and sentence support, to writing a well organized five paragraph essay. While some students such as Gabe and Saleha saw this writing approach as a challenge that did indeed benefit them. Others like Daniella, Ian, Andrew, Pax, Sadie, and Jacob perceived this writing instructional approach as less than ideal. Sadie views this as a back track to what was taught in high school. Andrew, found this class as being an "awkward" experience that focused on basic writing skills. He said he enjoyed his previous writing experience at a four-year university prior to transferring to two-year college where this study takes place. However, in expressing his discouraging experience at the two-year college, Andrew added that he acknowledged the benefit of revisiting writing basics as a way of strengthening his writing foundation.

Both Penn and the students share the notion that writing is a necessity for academic progression and professional entry. In terms of professional entry, Penn makes more mention of how effective writing can aide a job candidate in a better position as opposed to a candidate with less effective writing ability. However, when the students made mention of writing for professional entry they also alluded to the idea that writing was necessary for professional continuity. Penn, Gabe, Mike, Ian and Andrew credit writing as being a representation of the perfect self. In other words, writing as different

than speaking allows a person the time to think, plan and write using well devised sentences, whereas speaking is spontaneous resulting in less linear sentence expressions.

Comparison of Historical Purposes of Writing

In close examination of primary writings (written with first authorship) by early African American writers, I have found these writers have written for purposes that extend from the tenets of cognitive and behavioral theory. I have also found, similar to other scholars' findings (Royster, 2000; Tatum, 2013), African Americans have written for sociocultural and sociopolitical purposes such as (1) writing to affirm national and literary identities, (2) writing for social collectivism, and (3) writing for resistance, resilience and resolve. I have also examined literature related to what authentic writing practices look like today for African American students and writing, particularly for secondary high school and college-aged students. Collectively, researchers of these studies found that the social and cultural experiences along with advanced expressive capacities of these students should not be discounted within writing classrooms. Research literatures involving secondary students, shows that young African American writers engage more in the writing event when it is situated in characteristics similar to historical purposes of writing — some scholars label this as authentic purposes for writing (Behizadeh, 2014). Additionally, researchers found writing exercises have more probability of being deemed meaningful when writing expectations and experiences center students' lives including histories and identities.

Historical Writing Purpose: Writing to Affirm Identity

This section opens with a poem recited by Andrew. Andrew openly makes reference to the issue of identity. During the interview, he mentions that he worked at an

acclaimed local theater. The director of his performance group asked Andrew to conclude the production by reciting an original piece of poetry. Andrew mentions to me during the interview he was honored to have this responsibility, however, the weight of this role weighed heavy on him. It was one afternoon, while riding the bus back from the theater he came up with expressions for the poem below. Upon arriving at home, he rushed past his mother who was in the kitchen preparing dinner and went directly to his room and wrote. The dialogue below started after Andrew said he wrote mainly outside of school. Following the dialogue is an original piece of poetry written by Andrew and inspired by the events of Trayvon Martin. The poem was presented at a well acclaimed local theatre in the city and received a theatre standing ovation at the end of the recitation:

So I just kept writing…like uhh junior year…after junior year in the summer… uhh…I went to the (inaudible) theater for like a 6 week program, acting program. And I did a part where, in my part, in the role, it was like a poet so I had to write a umm…a spoken word piece. And my spoken word piece was about a like…I don't want to say discrimination but sort of like whites against black people and so I said the verse and afterwards people were like that's was amazing. Like everybody like I'm walking out the building with people like clapping…

Khan: Oh wow!

Andrew: Like I really want to do this like… (MUSIC WRITING AND POETRY EXPRESSION AT THEATER SPARKED INTEREST IN WRITING – energy

from others? Response from others fueled self confidence or interest in this, it sounds like he is committed to writing on issues of social importance)

Khan: Yeah…so… you were a poet, or you probably still are. What inspired you to write about that particular topic?

Andrew: Umm so I guess it was right around the time of the Trayvon Martin situation. So, it was the same summer that uhh Zimmerman got found not guilty. The whole play was about this black kid, this white older man who clashed in the grocery store and how the white man got treated better and the black kid (inaudible) so it was sort of like my feelings towards like…it was like my aim towards that situation, the Trayvon Martin situation, not towards the play. But **<u>I gave it more power and like my words were more like strong.</u>**

The Trayvon Martin situation is what inspired him to write, the play itself did not spark interest in him as did the Trayvon Martin situation. Student Alonso chose to use poetry as a vehicle of powerful expression.

Khan: Do you remember part of it? (referring to the poem)

Andrew: Yeah.

Okay so it's (begins to recite piece) "You can't walk a mile in my shoes without being judged/Just because I like to wear my hoody, do I have to hold this grudge?/At least read to Chapter 3 about this so-called thug/ I wear my hoodie because that's who I am, will be and was/ You see it over my head and you think the worst/How do you think my people felt when we went from noose to

hearse/Accused and hurt/**<u>We're either being profiled or a lost identity</u>**/ Either way the plan is to just get rid of me/ 'Cause in Chicago vicinity where we officially die by infinity and literally ain't no possibility of breaking from captivity/ No sense of sensibility/You're either feeling me or you're killing me" And then like everybody on stage was like you know the snaps.

Another student, Ian, also a song writer has me listen to a rap excerpt from the perspective a gang member. According to him, while he does not use the term identity, he says he wants others to understand what it is like to be a gang member. While this student decided to leave gang life years ago and he mentioned that "I wasn't too deep into it." He credits an elder gang member who encouraged him to leave while he could. The rap excerpt is below prefaced with his reason for writing on this particular topic:

Ian: Well not too long ago, I just got done writing. Like my boy he wanted me to get on track with him to this new beat. He wanted me to get on track with him. It's like a gang related song telling everybody else like how they do, what they do to people (inaudible) or first in a gang or something. Like how it is up in Chicago. So I'm still like writing, I just want to get the message out like how it is. How a gang member is or something. So, let me show you something of what I wrote. (Looks through phone, inaudible).

Well it goes like. I gotta a 38 I'm gonna let it ride in (blank) You better watch your back to fuck around, you fuck around or you gonna get whack, whack on the ground on the West Side. In "L" Town, in (blank) on the street ground, playing around fuck all you clowns. You think you doing something, I'll shut you down.

> In (blank) I'm cool don't play around, quick as hell, two bucks fifty rounds, don't
> give a damn to play a nigger down. Hell nah we in (blank), (blank), gang, gang
> we all around. (Ian says: but I ain't done yet, I still have a lot).

He collaborates on song writing with a friend of his. It seems his friend is the main motivation behind the songs, especially in this case. As Ian says, "because he be doing a song about gangs, gangs and I have to write something that relates to that." Others have also implied that writing is a representation of them as individuals. According to Daniella she prefers to write about herself as record of who she is. While others, Sadie and Ian say writing allows them to say things that cannot be expressed outwardly. Mike implies writing is a representation of one self and here is referring more to a professional context. As referenced in the section, writing for emotional release, Leena writes in her reflection letter to the instructor, writing is between her and her thoughts. Leena did not partake in the interview, due to timing conflict.   In each of the responses, the term individual or individual perspective is emphasized.

Sadie and Ian perceive writing as a form of unleashing one's inner self. Again, similar to Ian these students do not openly apply the term identity, however, they do make clear reference to self. According to Sadie "writing allows me to express my feelings in words that I can't…that I can't say out loud. That's what writing does for me." Daniella expressed writing is a documentation of self. When saying this she explained she adores herself and writing about herself is record of her progress. When asked "what do you find important to write about?" Below Sadie explains:

Like ain't gone give you nothing. Like you gotta do it for yourself. Like I used to

like write what I want my future to be like or like how close I am to getting to

where I wanna be. Or something like that.

Historical Writing Purpose: Writing for Others

In response to the question why is writing important? Two male students had a

difficulty answering this question, they expressed difficulty by either say "Oh…can I

come back to that one?" And, when the question was revisited, Pax did not have a

response for the question. Similarly, Jacob did not have a response for this. When the

question was revisited, he said writing was important because it allowed for creative

thought. A total of four other students, two male and two female students readily

explained that writing is important because it provides others with information. Below

are participant responses:

Gabe repeats the question as if he is thinking while he is repeating the question,

why is writing important to you? He responds:

"I guess you…for people to understand you. That'll be very important." He

continues with, "well I guess with writing, you got to use more of…you got to

use more of a meaning for what you're trying to say in writing."

Gabe emphasizes the importance of writing for the understanding of others. In

the second statement, implying the careful selection of words, so that written meaning is

clear suggests the communicating a message is significant for the sake of the reader's

understanding.

Khan: Why is writing so important? Why do you think…

Andrew: Umm…I think words like what you say and what you write can go…like what I write can change someone's life. Like if I write something and I don't act upon it, someone else could read it and be like "oh, what he said was true" and act…so…Like writing can change people or…

Kendra says:

Writing is important because it teaches you how to communicate with people. It's also important because it help you get feelings and emotions out. If you like writing outside of class in like a diary or something like that. Hmm. (pauses) It's important 'cause it can show other people what you know or you could help other people through your writing.

Here Kendra explains writing can benefit others and it is a form of communication with others. Within this explanation, the student opts to iterate that writing is a medium to release emotion. In an earlier response, when asked what do you expect to get from this course, Destiny replies what she expects/desires from the class. Within that same response she posits, additionally she wants others to be able to understand her writing. I asked her, if that was an idea she came up on her own and she replied yes. She then added.

It's important because if nobody understand, how would they know what you're trying to say? How would they know the message that you're trying to bring to them?

During part of the interview, Daniella centered the discussion on her desire to write for herself, writings that represent her individual self. As a follow up question, I asked, if others could take something away from her personal narratives. To that she replied:

> I mean…it can. Far as like a person being into they self more. It can like help them see the type of person that they is. Far as like the character they have. It's basically like…it can teach them, but it can't. Not about me but they can put myself….they can put they self in my shoes and talk about the type of person they is. What they will do about they self. (inaudible)

According to her, writings about self can help others reflect on their own happenings in life. Umm..why do you want…why is it so important for others to be able to understand what you've written?

When asked what does writing allow you to do? Daniella and Gabe make clear reference to writing for others. Knowing that this is something Penn has explicitly emphasized I asked Daniella in particular, if the notion of writing for the benefit of others was her individual creation or an idea influenced by someone else. Without reluctance, she said it was her own belief.

> Daniella: To become a good writer. Hmm… to understand…to understand my writing and how others understand it too.

> Why is writing so important? I guess you… for people to understand you. That'll be very important.

Concern for others emerges in student writing artifacts. In an expository essay, Leena self selects to write about the basic steps for getting a child ready for life. Leena writes:

> Soothing and comforting a baby is key. If you follow all of the instructions on how to be patient…comforting and showing the baby you care helps a lot as well.

In her argument essay, Daniella writes more job opportunities are needed for (name of location concealed) residents. "(Name of location concealed) needs to start hiring …." In her definition essay, an essay where students are asked to elaborate on a term, she chooses to write about stress. Within this essay the word *we* is used 18 times, *our* is used 3 times and *us* is used 3 times. She selects to write her category essay about friendship rather than mall store placement, these two classifications were recommended by Penn and students selected one of the two to write about. In this essay she writes:

> Daniella: People who support you and care for your problems almost as much as you are very helpful and it can get rid of the unimportant things having people in your corner that's there for you uplifts you and makes you want to achieve more.

Gabe also selects to write his classification essay about friendship. While making reference to his child and adulthood friends he writes:

> Gabe: We are true friends for life. We treat each other like brother's one for all and all for one.

Gabe writes in his reflection letter:

> I have a better understanding of what to write. I learned to try and keep a reader's attention and make them want to keep reading it.

In her reflection letter Shannon writes:

> Shannon: Being an English 100 I learned whenever writing I always have to
> grab my reader's attention because if I give the paper away it will get boring and
> make the reader not want to read the rest of my paper."

Kendra, when comparing a mother and father's relationship with a child, she writes:

> Kendra: A mother is a caregiver that does mostly all the nurturing in a child. The
> mother is the parent that is very over-protective over the child.

> While Kendra had the opportunity to write about any comparison and contrast

issue, she opted to write about the a mother versus father's relationship from her view. In
this writing as shown above she makes open reference to the care and concern a mother
shows as perhaps she might have experienced herself.

Historical Writing Purpose: Writing About Resilience and Resolve

Although students were not given specific opportunities to write about resiliency
and resolve, three student writings do represent these messages. The first example, are
musical lyrics by Ian. He did not write this particular piece as part of an English 100
assignment, however, he chose to share the following rap excerpt with me during the
interview. In this rap excerpt Ian shares with me, he writes more about survival. His
lyrics reveal the experiences he has just in terms of daily survival. As with the previous
writing, he writes and announces what life is like through his lived experience, so that
others can understand the rawness of the experience. There is also a message of
resilience and resolve from the excerpt below:

> "I'm trying to survive, I'm trying to stay alive. I'm trying to survive, trying to
> keep my eyes open. Be alive, the ghetto be hopeless. I'm trying to survive, while

keepin my eyes open. Trying to survive, trying to stay alive, gotta keep focused.

Every single day I'm focused on the corner, it'd be so fucked up"

Khan: What inspired you guys to write this?

Ian: Umm… it's how the beat goes. We listen to the beat and decide what is that beat made for. If the beat goes smooth and stuff we think about something soft to say to the world like think about a love song or something like that a soft song.

Khan: So the beat determines what you are feeling?

Ian: Mm Hmm..

Khan: You chose to write about survival instead of like butterflies and you know daisies. Right?

Ian: Because this like what's really going on. It's like true stuff. We out here trying to survive living off food stamps, first of the month check. It's hard out here trying to survive in (name of town left blank). Not only me but him too, the one I did the rap song with. He has kids and everything and what he does for a living is sell drugs. And he thought about the song "how to survive" he came up with the chorus, I just came up with my verse. (Truth of Lived Experience)

Khan: What role does writing play in your life?

Ian: Yeah I think about in the morning, day, night, everywhere I go, I think about a song something to write about. And once I get home I look for a beat that can go with it.

Through the passion of his song lyrics and the depth of his responses, it is apparent that writing plays a prominent role in his life. At the end of the interview, Ian and I were walking from the interview room located at the rear of the college's library. As we entered the hallway, Ian said I came by the other day to this classroom (pointing to a classroom near our vicinity) and he said he shot a music video in there. Why? I asked. And, with gentle laughter he said because I want to write music about things that matter (paraphrase). From the lyrics above and his revelation post interview, it is apparent that the truth underlying his lived experience and the idea that a classroom that is representative of education is Ian's equation for where life is and where life can go.

Messages of resolve are shown in two writing artifacts of Pax and Leena. According to Pax, "having a child has changed me… I have very high standards for myself which is a great thing." Pax writes uses his child as a catalyst for his resolve. He also unlike any other student, recognizes himself as a strong writer. Penn on one occasion, absent of any students, expressed to me that he found Pax to be good writer. Relatively early in the semester, he was casually rating the writing skills of students while voluntarily making mention of this. Leena writes in her reflection letter "School is something I will never give up on because that is what is going to get me to where I want to be in life. As long as I have my daughter and God on my side I can succeed in anything I want."

Chapter Summary

As a researcher I had some suppositions of what Developmental Writing English 100 would be like, instructionally. My instructional predictions of what this Developmental Writing class might emphasize were actually validated early on and during the study. The explanations for researcher suppositions were evidenced through

two major codes Externally Influenced Disengagement and Partial Writing Experience.

What I did not have an idea of, primarily because I had not had the chance to investigate

student expectation and reactions to writing affordances at a two year college prior to this

dissertation study, I learned the expectations and perceptions adult students held toward

writing were deeply insightful. The participants of this study as shown above hold

relatively high regard for writing. Some study participants view writing as an academic

hurdle needed for professional entry. They perceive writing success through structural

mastery, such as paragraph transitioning and written cohesion. Others realize writing to

be a part of their being. Most all participants view writing as a social obligation,

specifically in reference to writing for the understanding or benefit of others. Despite the

variance in student expectation and perception of writing, in commonness all of the

participants wanted more from the Developmental Writing English 100 writing

experience then what they were afforded. This idea is elaborated on in the next chapter.

V. DISCUSSION

Overview of Chapter Five

The simplicity and straightforwardness of the research questions employed in this study have given me clear insight into one developmental writing setting within a two - year college that is part of a large urban community college district. The developmental writing setting for this study is best described as complex. It is important that the term complex be unpacked. Complex refers to the interplay of complexities; such as Penn's outlook on Developmental Writing Instruction, his position as the instructional authority in the classroom, and the complexity of students. No single student was alike, however, by mere placement in a developmental writing class students were given instruction that fared each one of them as similar when in fact their social backgrounds and greater aims in life were no less than similar. Adding to this mix were the demands of the English Department, particularly student writing outcomes and the stipulation from district office that retention rates in the developmental education program improve.

To assume that this writing class was just a *developmental writing class* with singular goals aimed at *elevating the basic writing skills* of the writers enrolled in this setting is in itself *restrictive*. However, in instructional observation, interviewing and writing sample analysis this is the exact notion that was made apparent to me. Despite the complexities I noted, this class was *just a developmental writing class* with *singularized goals* loaded with *good instructional intent*. At stake were the students who were just partaking as spectators expected to absorb the information that was made available to them and then in turn translate what I consider basic writing expectations into

acceptable forms of college writing.

In thinking about everything that took place over a period of sixteen sessions, spring 2015, I am reminded of my entry and stay in a space of complexity. The next section continues to explain this notion of complexity. In an effort to make sense of the complexities, I engulf the above explanations into three categories: 1). Developmental Writing Setting 2). Students 3). Historical Writing Practice (HWP). The most latter of the categories was a factor not easily noticeable, however, as explained later in this chapter there were times when HWP entered the instructional scene both in terms of expectation and student writing experience. HWP is the primary motivator for this study.

Entry into a Complex Space

The reason I entered this writing space as the place for my study is because I knew, that this particular writing setting did not acknowledge what I identify as Historical Writing Purpose. This was a supposition because I had not conducted any formal observation before spring 2015. Post study, it has been made evident to me that indeed a contrast exists between Historical Writing Purpose and what is manifested in Developmental Writing Instruction. As stressed earlier the space of this study is imbued in different complexities competing with one another, some more actively than others. For instance, the complexity of instruction and its more authoritative stance leaving students otherwise internally active having to take on the position of inactivity because of the type of instructional expectation and experience they were met with. Because I had the opportunity to dialogue with the students on an average of sixty minutes per each interviewee, I gained a deeper understanding of the participants. It is safe to assume that the instructor, Penn, did not have the awareness that the students in his developmental

writing setting had so much to offer, ranging from experiences at other institutions to accolades in life. The following statement runs the risk of coming across as rather simplistic, but when the impetus of the statement is carefully weighted – when using HWP as the instructional core the resulting writing advantages outweigh the disadvantages for students. HWP gives students a writing context to capitalize individual specialties even while pursuing knowledge that extends beyond the parameters of their individualism. Because HWP is not yet openly recognized in adult writing programs, the writing instruction in Developmental Writing English 100 followed a one directional approach to Developmental Writing Instruction (DWI) hinged on an *official definition*.

> *Official definitions*, purposes, and histories legitimate notions of a common culture and operate within an established institutional power structure that supports normative views while silencing alternative histories. I have also attempted to demystify the common sense notion of the naturalness and homogeneity of literacy development within individuals, groups, and the nation. This common sense myth accepts uncritically that historically literacy has been defined for all, and equally accessible and obtainable for all people, without addressing the situational contexts or the roles of privilege and power that operate in ideological, social, cultural, and economic settings. (Willis, 1997, pg. 394/395).

By nature DWI is so simplistic in aim, the simplicity narrows the affordances of writing. Developmental Writing Instruction has fallen victim to the self - serving tactics of those in institutional authority. By officializing pedagogical definitions, students enrolled in DWI end up experiencing only partial benefit of writing. Not meeting the expectations in official definitions places the student in a vulnerable situation. When a student, especially an adult student enters post secondary education on her/his accord, s/he does not begin the semester with the goal "I am going to fail writing composition because I have set this particular goal before me." That is unequivocally false. Instead students want to feel successful, they want experiences that will build them and direct

them in the direction of success. It is for this reason, legitimatizing a one - way approach to writing instruction in a developmental education writing class requires reconceptualization.

More generally, interest in reforming developmental education programs is accelerating mainly because of high attrition rates (Bailey, 2009). Revisiting this notion of developmental writing instruction as simplistic suggests that these courses cater only in improving the rudiments of writing, thereby, restricting what students can accrue from writing. While it is no argument that students who are enrolled in courses labeled developmental are in need of strengthening writing basics or also known as writing skills, a focus on just this alone imperils all else that can be done in the writing setting. Another argument I make is that these students while in need of basic writing improvement were actually far from basic or fledgling in life's aspiration, goal setting and importantly, writing expectation. The stark contrast between developmental writing instruction and dismissal of minds and potential of students enrolled in such a course further problematizes developmental writing instruction in its current form.

Making Sense of <u>experience</u> vs. <u>Experience</u>

The writings that emanate from the pen of African American writers of the nineteenth century communicated commitment and cognizance. These writers wrote with purpose. The purposes revealed in their writings were targeted with a mission. They wanted to accomplish something through their writing, whether be self – affirmation in identifying their role in society. Even more, they took a stand to announce national membership. They wrote to encourage and inform others in the community.

They wrote to prove their resilience in the harshest of conditions, not only for the sake of reassuring themselves of personal strength, but more so to send a message to the readers that their efforts would sustain all hurdles. The point of my HWP recap is to show that these writers albeit writing under conditions of abolitionism wrote with particular aims and commitment. They did not just write to write. They wrote powerfully with reason.

As I go through this study I keep seeing these complexities that I am trying to make sense of. I want to know if rethinking what Developmental Writing Instruction can take on if another conceptual framework served as the foundation for this course. By reconfiguring DWI, the new conceptualization is made of three entities: 1) student 2) HWP 3) DWI (see Figure 1). Positioning of these three entities will help shape writing pedagogy. Centered in this reconfiguration is the student. In close parallel to the student are Historical Writing Purposes. In the shadow, while not forgotten, but deliberately in the background are the ideas currently undergirding Developmental Writing Instruction. By placing Developmental Writing Instruction in the shadow emphasizes the notion that DWI is relevant, but it should not be given the authority to engulf centered position in the circle of instruction. If DWI were in the center of instruction as was observed in this study, then instruction easily results in the undermining of expectation, therein, thinning the writing **E**xperience. Writing **E**xperience is defined as writing affordances across the academic terrain and beyond. For instance, **E**xperience encompasses *skill based writing experience* while still supporting transferability in subsequent courses and perhaps even strengthening persistence. For the most part, the **E**xperiences afforded to students in a Developmental Writing course can steer a student toward garnering writing benefit (this idea of writing benefits is an extensive idea to be explained in a subsequent section).
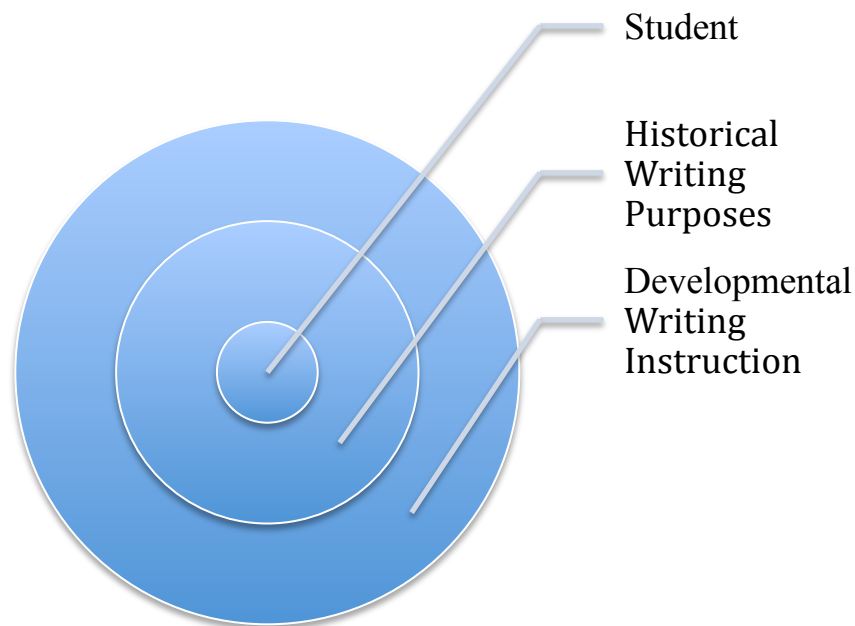
Figure 2   Reconfiguring Developmental Writing Instruction

There was noticeable desire from Penn that his students write insightfully. In spite of this because **e**xperience dominated instruction, adult writing capacity was more confined. Writing **e**xperience sat at the hub of this study's setting. Again, there is no arguing that students enrolled in a course of this nature require strengthening of basic writing skill and students themselves were not blind to this notion. However, overemphasis on **e**xperience not only partialized writing (providing a one-sided approach), but inadvertently influenced the types of writing assignments given to students. On the other hand, **E**xperience affords students writing benefit across academic terrain and beyond. **E**xperience is intended to give students epistemic satisfaction while working on the basic conventions and technicality of writing. **E**xperience is quality based. It honors students' historical writing lineage. This does not mean that students are confined to writing within historical parameters on issues commonly addressed by their predecessors. Instead students are afforded the chance to write about issues deemed

relevant within current context given an appropriate band of support (namely in the form of readings and dialogic exchange). When looking back at the Historical Writing Purposes of nineteenth century African American writers, they wrote with appeal on issues that were central to their existence. They wrote with commitment and authenticity. **E**xperience in a developmental writing setting should nurture commitment and authenticity in writing. Students entering these writing spaces should also be given ample time to read in depth, be read to and dialogue their reading findings. By neglecting or divorcing epistemic pursuit in a developmental writing setting limits writing expectation and overall **E**xperience. In fact, participants as in the case of this study actually expected **E**xperience, but as they admit they did not experience it. Although conceptually different, the idea of writing e/Experience, lowering the e in experience and capitalizing the E are drawn from Gee's work on d/Discourse (as cited in the 2008 publication).

Penn meant well, he was sincere. His academic background and overall insight on a variety of topics was nonetheless impressive. But, just by virtue of the course's label – Developmental Writing, Penn's take on the course confined students to what I consider a Partial Writing Experience. My study aligns with MacDonald's (1991) notion on developmental instruction in writing. MacDonald posits less skilled writers most often receive harsher criticism while urging a change in "traditional patterns of developmental writing instruction." Current developmental writing instruction evidenced in this course focused on writing skill development while asserting partial writing expectations. While the instructor wanted students to excel in writing, instructional factors constrained student written development. Collectively, when first entering the

course students had heightened expectations of writing. However, when I began to look at my observations and data those expectations were not realized for a number of factors. Namely, the instruction that took place did not yield student experience especially for those who came in with appreciation for writing.

MacDonald (1991) professionally urges the need for knowing more about developmental student writing, so that students can better express themselves and their surrounding world. This is an argument made nearly two decades ago; it still remains relevant at least in the case of this study. More recently, MacArthur et al (2015) conducted a study measuring the writing motivation with basic college writers. In this study the researchers were interested in student writing efficacy and motivation. There was mention of instruction in the study and the researchers went as far as measuring adult writer affect pre and post instruction to see if any changes in motivation had occurred. While these researchers understand instruction as germane to the basic writing setting, their focus was more on writing strategies, self - regulatory writing behavior and transforming negative writing belief to positive. Federally funded studies such as MacArthur et al's are methodologically planned and statistically sound. Despite this, such studies continue to miss the mark.

Clash: Sincerity and Instruction

As noted in the previous section, Penn was sincere in wanting to transcend his students writing abilities. I observed and heard within the interviews the expectations that the instructor had for his students. He spoke of writing as not just an academic rite of passage, but as a necessity for civic agency and participation. Students passionately

communicated the value they placed in writing and the particular expectations they had for a course such as the developmental college composition course they were enrolled in. Despite what I define as "good intention" there were instructional misses that resulted in an underdeveloped writing experience for students participating in this course. The remainder of this chapter highlights the noticeable factors contributing to the underdeveloped writing **e**xperiences afforded to students enrolled in English 100 Developmental Composition Writing.

Throughout the study, I could hear in the voices of the students their sincere desire in wanting to get somewhere with their writing and beyond. For instance, they openly suggested they wanted particular structural aspects of their writing improved. They also wanted their writing to serve as representations of them, so that they could some day progress to higher forms of college learning with ease ultimately followed by securing employment as a result of their written abilities. Despite seemingly good intention from both Penn and his students, there still remained something unaccounted for possibly resulting in student attrition and open student communication of dissatisfaction because of unmet writing expectation. I describe this as tension between instructional offering and student expectation. This study tells me that the instructional affordances in this particular English 100 Developmental Writing course did not entirely match the expectations of students. These experiences and expectations are encompassed in two dominant categories across the data: Externally Influenced Disengagement and Partial Writing Experience. Externally Influenced Disengagement is an autonomous code. Partial Writing Experience has seven subcodes: student confusion, student discontent with writing experience, audience awareness, bottom up approach, writing

quantity, writing as progression and writing as freeing . The remainder of this chapter will discuss the implications of the overall findings.

It has been my experience that teachers of developmental education prefer taking an "expert control approach" to classroom instruction mainly out of good will. Often, there is the notion that students must rapidly repair what they have missed and as a result students are bombarded with skill overload. Typically, within the "expert control approach" delivery format, knowledge dissemination takes place in the form of the teacher serving in the role of knowledge distributor and expert, limiting student involvement. In the case of English 100 Developmental Writing, it was made apparent that Penn believed writing instruction should be delivered a certain way and that manifested in the form of teacher talk and verbal instructional explanation. This is not suggesting that he did not welcome "newness", I think he would if he found relevancy in it he would adopt another approach to teaching writing as he voluntarily expressed during the interview that he was open to other ways of teaching writing. During the time of the study, Penn explained most instructional ideas came from a specific publisher. I also presume his perception of writing instruction could possibly be the result of years of writing experienced in graduate school and perhaps personally. It is hard to undo our lived experiences and this applies to our learning experiences as teachers of writing, especially. Since there is not an exact prescription to teaching writing, often writing teachers follow the approach: *this is what worked for me and could possibly work for you*.

Mastering the Rudiments of Writing

The idea that a writer and in many cases the "struggling" writer must first master the rudiments of writing prior to graduating to more advanced systems of rhetoric is a common approach used both in the American past and present. Because of the rapid pace of the course I observed (rapid in the sense that students met twice a week over an eight week period. Due to inclement weather, some weeks were reduced to just one in class working session). Because this course is the third course in a sequence of developmental writing classes, the teacher did not overtly emphasize word, sentence and paragraph practice, but these topics were certainly touched upon in a particular developmental order (importance of word choice, emphasis on sentence structure as the basic building blocks for more complex thought, and paragraph formation). Berlin's (1984) reviews English Composition as a Mode of Behavior. Berlin's examination suggests that Scott, who himself issued his own decisions on writing instruction, influenced partly by his own thought on writing, assimilating to the needs of dominant paradigms on writing of that time and also having to succumb to the pressures of publishers – he exerts his opinion on writing instruction as destructive to the student.

> Perhaps the best place to start examining Scott's rhetoric is found in his statements about language. In "English Composition as a Mode of Behavior"(1922), Scott attacks the destruction of the student's desire to communicate by the methods used to teach writing, especially the brutality of theme correction. For Scott, students bring with them to school the inherent ability to use language: It is a mode of behavior like leaping, running, or tossing the arms. (Berlin, 1984, pg. 78).

Written theme is a phrase common to nineteenth century writing instructional manuals (Nunes, 2013). It is safe to assume that theme as understood in the past is equivalent to the written topic or purpose. In the excerpt above, Scott criticizes teachers for in turn criticizing students choice of theme because it narrows naturalness in communication and writing. Placing the notion of themes aside, the larger issue in

Scott's quote is the idea of criticism. Modern day student writing criticism embraces the idea of weighing or noting both student strength and areas needing improvement. In most realistic situations, the latter is emphasized more than the former.   Penn recognized the dyer implication that might have on his own students. During my fifth observation, Penn explained I will correct your work, but I'll refrain from overcorrecting as that might have negative implications on you. At least, Penn was honest that he did not want to completely depress student writing potential, but as their developmental writing teacher he felt obliged to correct student writing with the sincere interest in improving and preparing students for credit college writing classes.

Documented records on writing from earlier periods before the 19th century show that writing was originally used as a means of social embellishment. Writing adorned situations as it was regarded as ornamenting social gatherings. With increased colonization that led to economic allure, language, communication and writing took upon a more persuasive tone. In many ways the influences of writing instruction popularized during the 19th century continue to govern writing today. Noticeably, excluded are the influences of African American scholarship on writing instructional manuals of this time. African American scholarship from the 19th century did not mechanical – ize writing as some writers of instructional manuals at this time eagerly proposed. I raise the question: if African American writings from the 19th century were valued and awarded influential authority, would writing instruction today differ?

As part of the writing **e**xperience, grammar was viewed as a prerequisite to writing.   Penn emphasized the importance of grammar for academic and professional success. Devet (2002) posits the need for grammar inclusion in composition classrooms,

but necessitates the need for new approaches to grammar inclusion. Over recent decades

view on grammar instruction in composition classrooms have varied. An isolated direct

grammar focus has undergone reprimand from the field of composition. This is mainly

because grammar is perceived as restrictive perhaps can even distract the writer from

his/her fluidity in thought and writing (Pursar, 1996). Proponents of grammar inclusion

like Skretta argue that grammar instruction is critical minus the complicated labeling and

futile terminology (1996). Findings from this study show that grammar is reverent to

writing instruction in this developmental composition class. Moments when you have

imposed disengagement then there are other moments when students reap benefits.

Diminished benefits, you can be in an environment that you have diminished benefits.

One example, of diminished experience are playing out in topics and isolated grammar

skills. There are greater benefits that can be given through writing. One has to

understand the power it has held historically. Some factors were internal and external. In

this writing environment you will see students reaping some benefit, but when looking at

historical writing there is so much more that is offered.

Not Entirely Problematic but Intellectually Confining

The writing prompts assigned in class were not entirely problematic, but confined

space in which students wrote. While unintentional and inadvertent, the writing

assignments originally aimed at elevating student writing have in my opinion

dehumanized student intellect. For example, writing about making a peanut butter and

jelly sandwich or classifying your friends is not exactly intellectually challenging. I

consider this type of writing expectation experienced by students as having a diminished

domino effect. When students and in this case adult students enter a writing atmosphere

really on their own accord and are then presented with diminished writing expectation

then they are bound to react with lowered value for the writing experience. That lowered

expectation then influences a lessened writing experience resulting in weakened writing.

This idea of weakening writing is far different than the role writing played historically.

Writing of the nineteenth century had purpose undergirded with intellectual and

explanatory prowess. In an academic environment such as the setting of this study,

English 100 Developmental Education Composition, writing has to meet purpose that is

shared by the instructor and the adult student writer. Writing instructors of

developmental writing courses should consider designing writing experiences that help

strengthen writing skill, more simply and more broadly writing experiences should be

designed in a way that will meet transferability across several settings. One way to

accomplish this is by aligning immediate and broader writing goals to the written purpose

that captures and honors long – storied traditions of writing that emanate from cultural

groups. Even more important is that beyond this single developmental writing course,

courses on the spectrum of college writing sequence should access a full writing benefit

model while instituting adequate support. In this course mainly because of the

undervalued writing assignments students did not benefit from full writing benefit.

While the idea of classifying might sound rather simplistic especially for adult

writers, I find that its broad simplicity is what makes it so captivating. The writing

assignment originally asked that students classify friends or stores at a mall. What is

interesting is that both require thought and planning. Classifying friends can be somewhat

similar to Gee's social and affinity spaces (2005). If students think about classification

this way, then they might even have to create special subgroups within the social and

affinity spaces. However, the assignment was not delivered in an intellectually captivating way.

MacDonald (1991) says less skilled writers are more likely to receive negative teacher feedback and therefore less apt to having their writing potential unleashed.   In addition to the elementary writing prompts (how to make a peanut butter jelly sandwich, classify your friends or stores at a mall and write an argument on what you would like changed in the town you reside in, just to name a few formal writing assignments), reported feedback provided to students participating in this dissertation study was in no way intentionally negative, the tone of the feedback was matter a fact: "here is what requires improvement."   Perhaps if feedback used a more dialogic tone, that is, feedback that made specific comments/reactions to a student's writing then perhaps a student might be open to reading teacher commentary. According to Bakhtin's Dialogic Pedagogy (Morrell, 2004) understanding or more commonly referred to as meaning making is best established when two or more participants engage in discussion about particular content. Dialogue of this type can possibly influence student thought and writing. Moreover, it can prepare students to engage in civic matters through the form of activism and engagement. For instance, elaborate reciprocated exchange is often required before meaning making is reached. This can be in the form of either consensus or even disagreement. Nonetheless, even if disagreement is reached between a teacher and a student regarding his/her writing, then at least dialogue has taken place rather than one sided dialogue or deliberately neglecting teacher feedback. It is easy to argue that writing teachers are most often overburdened with heavy teaching loads, countless student

grading, growing assessment demands and other non-teaching related duties to the institution.

One striking confirmation I have had a result of this dissertation study is that students want to learn and perhaps especially more so adult students want to experiences that are meaningful and transferable. Students demand reasonably high expectation, but only if these high expectations are properly enacted. A glaring way to support high writing expectations is by providing *responsible thought - through writing tasks* along with thorough and meaningful feedback to student writing. This is certainly something that did occur in the class, telling a student where he or she did well in the writing. Continuing that conversation in a gradual, build – up manner is important. In other words, treating each writing that has been produced in the class on a continuum of progress is critically important. And this should not just be done through the lens of the "expert" teacher, but students should also be able to gauge how their writing has flourished over the course of 16 weeks (the average length of the semester).

Seeking An Alternate Paradigmatic Approach to Writing Instruction

In attempt to rethink practice, researchers are beginning to realize the importance of recognizing historical literate ways of communities past. Gutierrez (2008) implies by historicizing literacy experiences researchers revisit history to grasp an understanding of what the literacy climate of the past was like. Theoretically, historicizing literate experiences is defined as linking historical and contemporary literary practices. It is believed by considering the rich social, cultural and historical literacy practices of historically non-dominant populations, the field can begin to understand the conceptual

impetus and activity underlying historic populations (Gutierrez, Hunter & Arzubiaga, 2009). The confluence of Guiterrez and Cole's ideas serve as impetus for post study discussion. In a metaphoric sense, the social-cultural-historical qualities of nineteenth century African American writings are laden in value.

- African American literate experiences epitomize **_writing as a social act_** especially because writings were publicized and documented for collective betterment.

- African American male and female writers offered **_intellectual motivation and moral guidance to the mass_**. Participation in **_political resistance writing_** and discussion gave rise to a sense of solidarity among African Americans.

- Historical and contemporary African American writings radiate powerful messages of **_liberation, self - sustenance, faith, and collective movement through dialogic interaction._** These were all examples of the type of writings that were created socially and collectively. These often led to resilience and resolve.

- Literary Activity: speaking and even debating were done to **_nurture the individual mind and nurture kinship._**

- As shown through this varied selection of African American writings, writing was commonly as way to benefit others or dialogue with others. However, writing was also used to **_define and affirm self_** especially during times when external efforts demised African American identity.

- Writings did not just communicate to a self - contained audience. Instead, the writings were deeply **_profound and uniquely multi – purposed_**. Early African American writings had the power to **_dialogue with multiple audiences all through just a single piece of text_**. For example, Douglass communicates dual **_messages both to the African American community at large and directly to federal constituencies_**.

What made the writings of these writers living and breathing in tenuous social and political climate so well crafted? With so many odds positioned before them they wrote with a remarkable understanding of what effective writing entailed. Absent of direct instruction in writing, these writers were still able to write with lexical precision or as Penn might put it, diction. They knew what they wanted to convey and to whom they

wanted to convey their written message. Interestingly, they wrote confidently while addressing at times multiple topics strung so eloquently in a neatly compiled writing. The writings made sense. The complexness of writing purposes (writing for self, others and expressions of resolve) were written cohesively and not tangential expressions. Whether referred to as Sankofa or the like, examining artifacts of the past is a necessity for fueling current day writing instruction.

While not commonly recognized as physical tools, African American written artifacts from the nineteenth century are intellectual tools with intangible and tangible qualities. Intangibly, the writings of this time reveal the writer's sense of self - recognition an affirmation of identity in the United States. In spite of not always being given a place in white dominated literate society, still tangibly these writings awarded African American writers a position of literate status in society at large. Below is a juxtaposition of African American writing from 2015 and 1859.

> Dear Penn,
>   This semester has been a rocky one for me, and I'm trying everything I can to finish the class. Writing has been a way for me to get my frustrations out on paper since a young child. But this semester was kind of boring to me that's why I would lose of track of work or not even come to class. It's been a learning experience though because missing days all I did was miss out on important information that I needed for the next class session. Knowing that I need this English 100 class in order to get to 101, so I can get my college credits to transfer is very important to me. I think I should pass this class because I think I am ready for 101, and I know I can work harder.
>   Writing has always been a strong point for me all my years that I've been in school because I felt it came easy to me. Somethings I struggled with this semester is writing about topics that we were given or having to write about something I didn't really have a lot of details or ideas about. A way I got through it was by elaborating on the little detail I had and making it fit the criteria that was required. The process essay was a struggle for me because I didn't know what to write about even though it was up to us I couldn't really think of nothing I could describe and explain it to someone else. I actually scored well on the essay with an 80%.

Finally, this class has helped and has had its differences but nothing is easy in college you have to really focus and be on top of your game. Going into 101 I know that I will have to be way more serious than I was this semester and not let my grades drop anymore. I would like to thank Penn for letting me take this course and being an understandable person. Writing is something I am willing to get better at and it's time to get serious.

Sincerely, Pax

MY DEAR FRIEND GARRISON: Up to this time, I have given no direct expression of the views, feelings, and opinions which I have formed, respecting the character and condition of the people of this land. I have refrained thus, purposely. I wish to speak advisedly, and in order to do this, I have waited till, I trust, experience has brought my opinions to an intelligent maturity. I have been thus careful, not because I think what I say will have much effect in shaping the opinions of the world, but because whatever of influence I may possess, whether little or much, I wish it to go in the right direction, and according to truth. I hardly need say that, in speaking of Ireland, I shall be influenced by no prejudices in favor of America. I think my circumstances all forbid that. I have no end to serve, no creed to uphold, no government to defend; and as to nation, I belong to none. I have no protection at home, or resting-place abroad. The land of my birth welcomes me to her shores only as a slave, and spurns with contempt the idea of treating me differently; so that I am an outcast from the society of my childhood, and an outlaw in the land of my birth. "I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were." That men should be patriotic, is to me perfectly natural; and as a philosophical fact, I am able to give it an intellectual recognition. But no further can I go. If ever I had any patriotism, or any capacity for the feeling, it was whipped out of me long since, by the lash of the American soul-drivers.

In thinking of America, I sometimes find myself admiring her bright blue sky, her grand old woods, her fertile fields, her beautiful rivers, her mighty lakes, and star-crowned mountains. But my rapture is soon checked, my joy is soon turned to mourning. When I remember that all is cursed with the infernal spirit of slaveholding, robbery, and wrong; when I remember that with the waters of her noblest rivers, the tears of my brethren are borne to the ocean, disregarded and forgotten, and that her most fertile fields drink daily of the warm blood of my outraged sisters; I am filled with unutterable loathing, and led to reproach myself that anything could fall from my lips in praise of such a land. America will not allow her children to love her. She seems bent on compelling those who would be her warmest friends, to be her worst enemies. May God give her repentance, before it is too late, is the ardent prayer of my heart. I will continue to pray, labor, and wait, believing that she cannot always be insensible to the dictates of justice, or deaf to the voice of humanity.

-- Douglas, 1855 – My Bondage My Freedom

A Prominent Historical Writing Purpose Seen in English 100: Writing for Others
(This is an idea that is central to this writing course, writing for others)

> Writers who can successfully manipulate an audience (or, to use a less pointed
> language, writers who can accommodate their motives to their readers'
> expectations) are writers who can both imagine and write from a position of
> privilege. They must, that is, see themselves within a privileged discourse, one
> that already includes and excludes groups of readers. They must be either equal to
> or more powerful than those they would address. The writing, then, must
> somehow transform the political and social relationships between basic writing
> students and their teachers. (Bartholomae,1986 page 9).

The study was an organic observation of English 100 Developmental Writing. As

a researcher I did not manipulate the instructional routine or writing assignments in any

way. In fact, in order to maintain complete methodological integrity, I even refrained

from communicating with any of the participants outside of the interview. What I mean

is, even if I were to cross paths with a student partaking in the study in campus corridor I

exchanged only a greeting "hi, how are you?" In terms of dialogue with Penn, we had a

single post observation conversation. On few other occasions, I asked Penn outside of

class if I could view student journal writing and via email I asked Penn to elaborate on a

comment he made about his philosophical and intellectual tradition of choice. As a

researcher I certainly knew what I was looking for, however in no deceiving way the

participants were not aware of the nuances of my analysis. Despite this, I found it

incredibly interesting that the second HWP: Writing for Others was a prominent code

throughout the duration of the study. Penn openly spoke of the importance of

considering "another", "reader" or "audience."   He continuously reminded students of

the importance of writing for someone else. He went as far as expressing during the

interview that writing in most cases is not intended for self. During the interview

students remarked that writing was a way of expressing self, documenting self progress as in the shape of a memoir, and writing as cathartic. However, students also suggested that writing was meant for the understanding and growth of others. Daniella said that she wrote as a record of self, but also revered writing as a benefit for others. When she emphasized the latter, I asked her during the interview if the idea of writing for others was self invented or had it been the result of participating in this course, she explained it was a self motivated thought. I conclude that some students arrived in this course with the understanding that writing serves others while Penn's explicit overemphasis that writing must consider and benefit the reader was a revolutionizing thought for others, like Gabe and Sadie. While some students like Andrew, Ian, Pax, Sadie and Danielle might not entirely agree with his stance on writing – collectively they agree that writing is meant for another. Ian specifically showed interest in writing about history, so that *others* can learn from mistakes of the past and refrain from committing them.

Needed Change in Writing Research and Writing Practice

More recent studies on secondary and college composition research are narrow, with a focus on African American students center mainly on issues related to dialect, communication and perception of self. Student retention and persistence especially in developmental education classes are of central concern at the two - year college and where the study takes place. As shown in this particular Developmental Composition, by mid semester, a large number of students withdrew from class. Since there is no exact way of knowing the reasons for student initiated withdrawal, it remains important to consider that if instructional writing affordances differed from current practice would that provide some students more impetus to remain in the course from start to end. At the

opening of this section writing research with a focus on dialectical, communicative and self perception were emphasized. Absent in the literature on African Americans in community college writing settings is the examination of writing instruction with a connection to students' identities and histories. Importantly, student identities as participants of research especially in the form of student voice lacks in community college writing research studies on African Americans. Understanding how the participants of these studies responded to and received writing instruction is lacking. Furthermore, the students' voices were absent on the research findings. Several of these studies, report superficially on what is commonly observed at the level of speech, particularly when it comes to African American students. While many of these studies do not use language or references that can be taken as overtly deficient views of African American students, just the mere simplicity and superficiality of topics explored in these research studies communicates that capitalizing on African American intellect is not worthy. This is what I call a blind perception of African American students. While no longer openly admitted, students of African American heritage enrolled in developmental education writing courses at the two year college, run the risk of being seen as less able in comparison to peers of non African American heritage. The view I withhold is illustrated in the experiences and expectations afforded to the participants of my writing instruction study. There was not a single expectation mirrored in the form of experience that championed intellectual growth within the participants of my writing instruction study. Instead student participants were afforded opportunities to build basic writing skills attached to basic writing expectations. It is the result of those exact simplistic expectations and experiences that arrested students from fully partaking in this course.

This dissertation contends when adult's enrolled in a two year college write with particular investment and purpose the resulting written product is thereby unquestionably influenced. The study afforded me the opportunity to engage in perhaps the most worthwhile research I have participated in yet. The context of the classroom, Penn's instructional organization and commitment to the course, the participants (despite the early semester faltering in attendance) were all factors that synchronously developed this research story. I entered the study with two specific questions: What are writing experiences and expectations of African American students at a two - year college and How do the writing experiences among African American students at a community college classroom compare with historical purposes of writing from nineteenth century African American writers?

Implications

The complexity of a Developmental Writing Instructional setting needs to be examined closely, so that DWI both in terms of experience and expectation do not inadvertently confine the breadth of student writing. This study examined HWPs resulting from one historical literate tradition. Resulting from this study is the idea that reconceptualizing DWI with an emphasis on HWP can afford students writing context that capitalizes on individual specialties, all while widening instances for epistemic growth and human efficacy (efficacy specifically refers to the overall awareness of accomplishment received after effectively communicating something of importance through writing). By singularizing DWI to a one directional approach with central emphasis on the rudiments of writing and as explained earlier with writing assignments

that were not entirely problematic but intellectually confining, restricts the benefit

students could accrue from writing **e**xperience and **E**xperience.

Limitations

Although this is a powerful case, I recognize this was one study with one class.

Because this DWI experience is so individualized the study's findings and analysis

cannot be transferred to other Developmental Writing settings at the two - year college.

A selection of African American writings from the nineteenth century were examined for

the sake of this study, reading all publications during this time period would surpass the

time and scope afforded by the dissertation. Despite that, this can be seen as a research

limitation.

Moving Forward

Even though the singularity of this Developmental Writing setting cannot be

transferred to other settings, there remains important information that comes from this

study that should not be left unrecognized. To begin, what must not be mistaken, is the

naïve notion that students' of African American heritage partaking in developmental

writing need to be taught writing in a particular way. Instead what deserves recognition

is the idea that writing instruction that consciously includes HWP because of the richness

in literate tradition of communities past needs space in the circle of writing instruction as

shown in Figure 1. Safely the argument can be made that this is already happening in

writing classrooms sparingly or serendipitously. However, the argument remains that

this is not happening deliberately, as perhaps it should. Overpowering writing **e**xperience

over writing **E**xperience confines writing affordances, but reconceptualizing writing

pedagogy centralizes the student and HWP within the sphere of Developmental Writing Instruction. Injudiciously, suggesting that HWP only affords students written authority within a narrative sense is an incomplete view. Alternately, what should be noted, is that conscious integration of HWPs within the developmental writing setting can broaden writing capacity in the following ways:

Writing to Affirm Identity

- Students can identify the context they want to write within because of particular impetus' they have as members of this writing setting. More importantly, they can write on issues resulting from widened funds of knowledge that are made available to them as participants in this writing setting.

- Identity is not restrictive; students are motivated to take on the identities of historians, scientists and social scientists in their writing.

- In an effort to take on a specific identity through writing, students can broaden the reading and dialogic sphere.

Writing for Social Collectivism

- Students can write on issues that they deem purposeful for the sake of someone else's epistemic, social or personal growth.

Writing for Resilience and Resolve

- Historically as emphasized in this study, African Americans communicated messages of resilience and resolve in their writing. This

study supports the idea that current day writing instruction with HWP can instill perceptions of resilience, resolve and efficaciousness in the writer possibly transcending the walls of a two - year college.

Final Stance

This research study will remain with me, always. This is not solely because of the personal sentiment that extends from completing this study, but because of the intellectual affordance I have gotten as a researcher of Developmental Writing Instruction. This study has opened opportunities to broader humanity in two ways, particularly. First, by understanding that the HWPs in this study are less than narrow affords others groups benefit from this writing model. Issues of writing about identity, social collectivism and writing with resilience and resolve are notions that all human beings can find relatability in, again disregarding the falseness that this is just a writing program for African American students. Second, this study opens doors for discovery of other historical cultural literate tradition, thereby, accentuating the accrual of writing benefit across cultural lines.

I have now firmly identified one of my professional causes and the line of scholarship for which I am now indebted to. Furthermore, from this study, I have learned what I naively failed to recognize before and that is that the participants partaking in this Developmental Writing English 100 were uniquely principled. By principled, I mean, they were aware of what they wanted from a course of this type and were by no means blank or underdeveloped in ability as the label of this type of course might mislead one to think. Even myself, prior to this study I supposed that students enrolled in this course

would probably navigate the course simplistically and mechanically. Instead their interview responses proved otherwise. The ten active participants were well aware of what they wanted from a course of this type – strengthening foundational writing skills and thought provoking experiences.

I thought the experience would be one that would just give me enough reason to pass the complicated hurdle of dissertation writing. Neither of the students or instructor participating in this study were absent of aim, noticeably there were times when instructor aim clashed with student writing aim. Despite the discord, students were conscious participants with particularized writing investment, in a few cases ideas that might extend the sometime stringent parameters of an academic institution. I saw in each of them the capacity to contribute to the world in uniquely important ways. Each participant was not just partaking in the study, rather each participant created for me, the researcher, an **E**xperience that I am grateful for having had the chance to embark on. In ending, academic institutions must undo deficit labels (developmental writing while a soft label and much less harsh then remedial, still sends off a message that students are not quite there). When the focus is placed "on not quite there" then the totality of written benefit is sometimes overridden or lost. Deficit labels only lead to deficit perception and expectations by those in authority thereby resulting in dissatisfied student writing experiences. I am not irresponsibly suggesting undoing the benefit of skill driven instruction because that is a necessity in itself. However, re-shifting focus on what a developmental writing course can offer in terms of skill and knowledge while completely undoing deficiency perception is important.

Appendix A

Historical Document Coding Chart

Research Question for Historical Literature Review:

What is purpose for writing this piece?

1. Title of Archive (Attach archive copy)	Harriet Jacobs (Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl)
2. Year	1861
3. Source (published)	Jacobs, H. A. (2009). *Incidents in the life of a slave girl: Written by herself*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.
4. Author (if provided)	Harriet Jacobs
5. Research Source	The Prentice Hall Anthology of African American Women's Literature
6. Description of Archive (if in primary form)	(not original form)
7. Genre	Personal Narrative

8. Context (political, social, economic, educational, religious, or institutional histories):

Dred Scott Case (1857): Supreme Court decided African Americans could not be citizens of the United States (Low & Clift, 1984; Ploski & Marr, 1976)

John Brown Raid (1859): Brown attempts to secure weapons for slave revolt, Brown's attempt unsuccessful – he is hung for the attempted raid (Low & Clift, 1984; Ploski & Marr, 1976).

National division over slavery increases.

She writes with duality of being black and female during the time. She also wrote under a fictitious name for protection. McHenry (1999) suggests authorship by anonymity during this time was a way of making known one's brilliance, savviness, and awareness of the world while not subjecting one self to harm because of the abhorrent state of the nation. Writing under a mask so to say was a way to write freely without surrendering experience and feelings. Braxton (1986, p. 379) explains the experience of being black and female so eloquently, "we have been as invisible to the dominant culture as rain; we have been knowers but we have not been known." Despite knowing rejection by dominant culture, still Jacob's wrote poignantly and called out to women to refuse immoral subjection.

9. Intended Audience It is safe to assume that the intended audience is an inclusive society. Jacob has a story to tell and she wants her story known. She wants others to know the ills of slavery and wanted to bring this message to the attention of women abroad.
10. Purpose for Writing (open coding) Writing to identify self.
11. Text Excerpt **I was born a slave; but I never knew it till six years of happy childhood had passed away**. **My father** was a carpenter, and considered **so intelligent and skillful in his trade**, that, when buildings out of the common line were to be erected, he was sent for from long distances, to be **head workman**. On condition of paying his mistress two hundred dollars a year, and supporting himself, he was allowed to work at his trade, and **manage his own affairs**. His strongest wish was to purchase **his children**; but, though he several times offered his hard earnings for that purpose, he never succeeded. In complexion my parents were a light shade of brownish yellow, and were termed mulattoes. **They lived together in a comfortable home; and, though we were all slaves, <u>I was so fondly shielded that I never dreamed I was a piece of merchandise</u>, trusted to them for safe keeping, and liable to be demanded of them at any moment.**
13. Researcher Memos: Jacob writes in first person perspective. She speaks fondly of her childhood. A childhood so fond because of the efforts of her parents. In the excerpt her father is described as skillful, intelligent, and a head workman. The excerpt conveys an uncontested sense of self. She opens the excerpt with "I am a slave" although given the designation of slave, she does not identify as a slave as a young child. She writes with clear direction and there is no ambiguity in her message. The sentence at the end negates her being recognized as merchandise. Jacob explains that even as a child she was the primary owner of her identity because of the comfort provided by her parents. Though simply written, this excerpt by Jacob is none less than powerful. The simplicity in word choice and sentence structure makes this writing so beautiful. Jacob makes evident that she has something to say and she refuses to shade her message with the overuse of words or expressions.

Appendix B

University of Illinois at Chicago
Observation Protocol

A Qualtiative Study Exploring the Writing Experiences and Artifacts of Two Year College Students

http://ed.fnal.gov/trc_new/program_docs/instru/classroom_obs.pdf

<u>CLASSROOM FLOW Teacher:</u>   <u>Date:</u>

Introduction to Lesson: provides introduction/motivation/"invitation"; explains activity and how it relates to previous lessons; assesses students' prior knowledge

Student Grouping _____ Duration _____

First Phase - Content; nature of experiences, what are students doing, what is the teacher doing; interactions

Student Grouping _____ Duration _____

Second Phase - Task: Content; nature of experiences, what are students doing, what is the teacher doing; interactions.

Student Grouping _____ Duration _____

Final Phase - Task: Content; nature of experiences, what are students doing, what is the teacher doing; interactions.

Student Grouping _____ Duration _____
State whether activities are sequential or are different activities/tasks done at the same time:

(OTHER OBSERVATIONAL DATA)

Teacher: **Date:**

1 - Description of the classroom:

_____

_____

_____

2 - Teaching aids/materials (per activity/task if appropriate):

_____

_____

3 - Assessment strategies used (per activity/task if appropriate):

_____

_____

_____

4 - Time not devoted to teaching and nature of non-academic or procedural activity (e.g., management, announcements, discipline); description of non- instructional event:

_____

_____

_____

STUDENT DATA

1 - Number and gender of students; number of African American students, Hispanic students, Asian students, etc.:

_____

2 - Describe the content of a student's journal or notebook for the class:

_____

_____

Student On/Off Task Behavior:

_____

_____

_____

Student Verbal Contributions:

Observation Protocol (continued)

Number of Students Actively Participating in Discussion:

Nature of writing experience

What is the ultimate writing goal of the session?

Are students provided in-class writing time?

How is the written experience conditioned?

Are texts used to help stimulate thought/experiences within students?

Is student social, cultural and historical identity valued within the writing experience? If yes, how?

Who does most of the talking the teacher/students? (will get a general sense)

What aspect of writing is emphasized during the session? (grammar, sentence structure, paragraph formation, etc.).

What variables are influencing writing instruction? (variables – context, teaching, cognitive orientation, socio cultural orientation, and/or socio cognitive orientation)

Appendix C
University of Illinois at Chicago
Semi-Structured Interview Protocol Questions
A Qualtiative Study Exploring the Writing Experiences and Artifacts of Two Year
College Students
Interview Protocol #1

General Writing

1. Describe yourself as a writer.

2. Why is writing important?

3. What do you expect to get from this composition writing class?

4. What does writing allow you to do?

5. Where do you write? School? Outside of school?

6. What issues or topics do you want to communicate through your writing?

7. What role does writing play in your life?

8. Why do you think writing is necessary?

9. What are your views on participating in writing groups?

10, What would be the purpose of taking part in a writing group?

11. What are the benefits of writing alone? With others?

12. What does writing do for you? In other words, what are the benefits of writing?

Writing Experiences at the Community College

1. Describe your college writing experiences within your composition writing course.

2. What are some issues or topics you write about within your writing course?

3. What do you like the most about your writing course?

4. What do you like the least about your writing course?

5. What feedback do you receive from your writings in class?

6. How do you use feedback?

7. If you could make some changes to the way the writing instruction is delivered, what would you suggest?

8. Do you want to add anything about writing in your courses?

Semi-Structured Teacher Interview Protocol Questions
A Qualtiative Study Exploring the Writing Experiences and Artifacts of Two Year
College Students
Interview Protocol #2

1. Describe yourself as a writing instructor. Are you going to ask about the instructor's own writing history, experience? Where they went to school, etc?

2. Why have you chosen to teach composition writing at a two-year college?

3. What are you trying to accomplish with your writing instruction?

4. Tell me how your students' identities influence your writing instruction.

5. Why is writing important?

6. Which types of writing do you teach in your instructional practice?

7. How do you teach students to write these types of texts? What are examples of activities or strategies that you have used?

8. What do you want students to ultimately gain from your composition writing course?

9. Which theories support your writing instruction?

10. What writing strengths or proficiencies do you expect your students to arrive to class having?

11. How do you integrate reading in your composition writing class?

12. If you had to change your instruction to best support your students, what would you change?

APPENDIX D: Coding Scheme

Code	Code Abbreviation	Code Definition	Code Example In Field Observation	Code Example in Written Artifact	Code Example in Teacher and Student Interviews
Externally Influenced Disengage-ment	EID	Students show physical signs of disengagement. Students express boredom and reasons for disengagement during writing class.	Teacher over talking, student disengagement is evident, tone of classroom is low energy. Teacher over talking about defining words in an explanatory form, begins to lose student attention. Teacher overtalking about topic sentence pg. 28	Pax: But this semester was kind of boring to me that's why I would lose track of work or not even come to class	Kendra: Yeah…if a teacher is talking a lot, then we just sitting there listening, we gonna become bored. Jacob: Because… he just sits there and talks about stuff the whole time. And we just look at a powerpoint and talk about what we're gonna be doing next week or what we're going to be doing today. If we do activities, we would probably understand it a lot better than him just explaining it. We don't do enough activities. Sadie: Like…to me, he just be talking. It's not really teaching anybody anything. To me personally like some of the stuff he's saying like my high school teacher told

					me the same thing. He saying.... Like but like I expected like more since it's college. So, I just I really don't know what I'm expecting out of this now because I didn't really learn anything from it at all. Gabe: Well…he lectures. You know. He tries to get his point…he tries to get his point across. And then it's sometimes, he goes…like when he's lecturing to you and maybe you're not grasping what he's saying you know at that point…you know, don't just cut it off and then go somewhere else on another subject

Partial Writing Experience	PWE	A writing experience that affords some benefit but not full affordance of experience. (the following sub-categories fall under this major code)			
Writing is Freeing (Student Expectation)	WF	Writing frees the mind. It frees emotion. It allows self to use words/expressions that cannot be spoken aloud.			Kendra: Well…I like writing…I write just to write sometimes. I just overboard write but sometimes just to free myself. Just like writing in my composition book. Daniella: Free yourself like free your mind. Like it get you a clearer vision of like…writing. Just clear my brain. Sadie: Writing allows me to express my feelings in words that I can't…that I can't say out loud. That's what writing does for me. Sophie:

					Umm… it's important because it helps you communicate with others and it also helps you be umm… free to write umm… anything you want, well the way you want to write. Yeah, it basically just helps you communicate and write freely. Ian: It's important because you can say many things, that you really can't say out your mouth. Like umm… you can say what's it's like to live in (location hidden), other people don't know about it. So it's important for you to like write about it, tell a story about how it is. Write a song about it. And people who aren't from there, they know about it. They'll know the goods and the bads about it. You can just spread your words and feelings about it (referring to writing).
2. Bottom Up	BA	Isolated grammar	My Writing Lab	Student 5:	Sadie:

| Approach (Student Experience) | | skills instruction focused on the basic foundations of English language grammar defines IGSI. | (electronic grammar program) will be reviewed to identify student error.

"When you catch an error, add it to your list"

"Understand writing basics, then improve flaws"

(Grammar Lesson Examples)
ESL Concerns: Sentence Structure

Grammar – Correcting Fragments and Identifying Topic Sentences Predicates, Subjects, Transitive Verbs, Linking Verbs and Subject Compliments, Indirect and Direct Objects

Maintaining Verb Tense

Prepositions, Subject Verb, Subject Verb Direct Object, Subject Verb. Compliment Adverbs, Modifying Verbs, Adjectives, Prepositions | identifies personal writing

Student 11: "I still get nervous because as I write I just keep writing and my sentences become run on's, that has always been an issue with my writing

Student 6: My Writing Lab was also something that helped me because it taught me about sentence structure, and how an appropriate paragraph is suppose to be set up

Student 7: Writing I always had a problem with having the correct grammar and using the correct point of views in my essays | Yeah like or change some words around. Like if I misuse a word, he'll tell me to change it or something.

Penn: Umm…I want for them to feel confident about their writing ability. Umm…I want them to know that they have the ability to make the changes in their own writing. Umm this is especially true for native speakers. There have been many studies that shown that even if their grammar is not strong, they do know it. Just by virtue of existing in our society. And so kind of breaking down kind of those self walls that exist. Umm, I think some are like "I don't know commas" and that's their position so they put commas wherever. If they just stop for a second and thought about what they're doing, they can make |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

					those changes. But…I think it's kind of getting that confidence. But it's also being critical about what they put down on paper.
Writing As Academic and Professional Requirement (Student Expectation)	WP	Writing as means of moving to credit English or professional entry.			Saleha: Is just something I have to do. I treat like that. I just have to get to Eng 101. Gabe: Well…it don't do nothing for me (laughs) I'm just doing it because I gotta pass this class, to tell you the truth. Mike: It's emphasized if you think about it right throughout your schooling like for many of us…like say for instance you want a job, you gotta do an application, you just have to know how to write, period. I expected to get just, you know, basic writing style…not style but like how you write. Like professional. Like basically helping you write

					professionally. And I think I could of got it but feel I didn't put that much effort in trying to achieve that goal. So, it was basically on my part. But as far as like teaching, he did a great job. But on my part, I didn't just give as much effort (inaudible).
Objective Writing (Student Experience) Make note, this led to teacher and student dissonance. (subcategory under Audience Awareness)	OW	Writing instruction where students are encouraged to remove excess personal perspective and emotion from writing.	Teacher says: remove emotion, because emotion is not objective Teacher says: Some of you might think why does he harp on avoiding I? He (referring to general example) adds I to the year round school argument and adds I think… I feel … How strong of an argument is that? Not very, if I take a third person approach, I appear rhetorically to be somewhat objective	Student 7: I think the reason I do this is because I sometimes may get off topic and too personal with the prompt and get carried away with what is on my mind	Penn: I want for them to relish in the experiences that they've had but not uhh…not wallow in them. I think that you know it's important for them to kind of, you know, look to their experiences and I think a lot of my writing assignments allow them to do so. But keeping in mind, what's the larger picture? Probably something I get, probably flack from students about and…only because I read it in reflection essays that they write for their portfolio, you know is

					that, I'm tired of them getting one me about this idea of thinking about the reader. Umm… writing isn't for the self. Umm…and I believe that to my core. If I'm thinking about you can graduate from higher ed. That can be a responsible stance but it can also come in conflict, while you do not think it, but some students might see it. How do you honor mulitiple stances? You can take an additional stance academic stance, but you're removing the student. Historically, that advanced peolple while currently others might not view that as important in a dev ed writing class. Conflicting expectations – in this enviroment you might have conflicting expectations.
Student Confusion (Student	SC	Students display non verbal or verbalize confusion.	Pg. 27 observation		Jacob: Uhh, they've been okay.

Experience)					It's like some of the stuff he goes over, he doesn't get very detailed and sometimes I'll be lost. But in the end, I understand it after I do more research on it myself. Gabe: Well…he lectures. You know. He tries to get his point…he tries to get his point across. And then it's sometimes, he goes…like when he's lecturing to you and maybe you're not grasping what he's saying you know at that point…you know, don't just cut it off and then go somewhere else on another subject. That's why I think a lot of people was asking you know, they ask you…if he feel they crazy questions. But they actually asking you questions about what are you actually talking about because I don't understand. They not just gone come out and say it because you

					know, if you do, he gone cut you down. Yeah…he gone cut you down. You know 'cause a lot of the times, when he made a statement about they way I wrote, that's why I got quiet. And I took that attitude of I'm not gone say nothing else. I'm going to keep my points no more…I'm not gone say…I'm not going to have this discussion no more. And that's how I took it. So, I think if you actually take a person and I feel, that's why they took the class to learn…but don't criticize them so much that they don't wanna say nothing. You know what I'm saying. I think that's why a lot of folks, a lot of the people say "Aw man, he be trippin'". Why they laugh at things he says. 'Cause they feel he's a trip.
Audience Awareness (Student	AA	Teacher encourages students to be aware of an audience when	Connect with Reader	Student 7: Being an English 100	Gabe: Says this class forces him to

| Experience) | | writing. Students develop awareness of audience when writing. | Envisioning a Reader

Be mindful of reader

Have control over writing for reader's comprehension

Avoid colliquilism, because readers might not understand it – he gives examples of "coke being referred to as soda in certain states"

Teacher: You have to understand how words work, if you use the word you then I'm speaking to you. You have to be very conscious of that, words matter because. Because as a reader I might become distant from it because how does it apply. How do I make something like this matter? How does this match my particular life? Or maybe that this is interesting, or this is interesting information to know about it. | writer learned whenever writing I always have to grab my reader's attention because if I give the paper away it will get boring and make the reader not want to read the rest of the paper. | apply intelligence in writing for the purpose of informing others.

Sadie:
I usually just reread my essay and try to see what…see some points where I can be more descriptive about you know, some people like details. They like visual picture of what you trying to say

Mike:
The reader, you gotta like know that another person will be reading your essay, you have to be sure that you are like precise, it can be a rough draft but you try your hardest. You need be precise like you have to grab the reader's attention…like give me a reason why I have to read this paper…like umm what's your purpose, why should I read this. Um let them be interested in why did you write this paper. |

					Mike: Right, like I want to make the reader feel like oh this is good. I'm not trying to impress anybody, but I'm trying to impress the reader. Let them know that this is what this is and I believe that you can be interested in this subject or topic.
Discontent with Writing Assignments (Student Experience)	DWA	Students feel disconnected with writing assignments.		Student 8: I wish I would've been more engaged in the material taught by the teacher. Instead of just doing what it takes for the sake of the grade Destiny: I managed to stay on top of all my writing assignments and journal entries that was assigned. Even though, some topics did not matter to me, I still tried my best to get the writing done	Andrew: Umm, well initiating that you don't need to know all that stuff. Just be like, if you want to like…like if you're going to school for English, okay then you teach that. But as far as like for a grade or for a class, just teach the what's more important. Umm…so far it's pretty good. I mean it's a writing class so there's going to be a lot of writing. Andrew: But like more…like everything's not going to be to your leisure. Like every prompt isn't going to be like something

					you like. You're going to have to write about something that's boring. But I want the class to be like something that going to prepare me for those boring prompts. How to work through it. Pax: I feel more comfortable with it (referring to Chicago vs. LA instruction). Like the writing styles are the styles I was brought up with, that I knew since I was little like the outlines and stuff. I'm familiar with it, it makes it kind of easier. Pax: I just didn't like the process essay. On the grade I did good, I got a B, but I feel like I didn't do well. Researcher: How come, why did you feel this? Patrick: It was like I had a hard time of what to do. At first it was like I didn't want to write about how to make a peanut butter and jelly

| | | | | | sandwich. Then I tried to do like preparing for a game and I couldn't get anything out of it. Then I did a typical day, but I still didn't feel I did good, but he said I did.

Sadie:
I don't really like writing at all. My specialty is math. Writing to me…writing to me is kinda complicated. Like the way the professor or the teacher want you to write it, it's not my type of skill. I would…I know you have to have some type of uhh structure and stuff like that. But at the same time, I feel as if, when they give you a topic…it be like topics you never thought about not a day in your life. Like topics like you just clueless about…I feel like if you gone give a topic, give a topic that you know…like you experienced in and something like that so me and writing it |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

					never really worked out. I mean I wrote a few things. It was okay I guess. But the only time I get to write like…is like…well that's when I do my best at writing. Daniella: Like some of my writing…I can see that some of my writing…like from the topics, he give us, it be like…I don't know…I cant really engage in that because it be boring topics. Sometimes I can't engage in what somebody else wants to talk about and then they want me to specifically say it how they want..how they want you to say it or whatever. I can't do that. I like to write how I write Jacob: The classification, the stuff he's doing now. Where you're breaking it down. I kind of don't see why we're doing that.

Students Want to Lengthen Writing (Student Expectation)	WQ	Perceived writing experiences and expectations of students. Desired writing experiences and expectations of students.	Nickie: expressed in class, that she wants to know how to add more to her writing. (Student Desired Expectation)		Kendra: Writing about things that they wanna know. And find out the interests in the students and go from there. Probably like more discussion. I would say more discussion instead of just like teaching it then essay. Go deeper with it, have an activity or something. (Desired Student Expectation, Writing with Purpose) Sadie Umm…I would say to be more like engaging. Giving us assignments and not make them boring and to not want to go to sleep (Desired Student Experience and Expectation) Andrew: Yeah, just be able to write more…I don't know how to write more…I don't know how to describe it…just like 'cause like I feel like at

					first I was a good writer. But, like actually learning how to write could, you know…and then practicing it, would you know change how I write. You know, I just wanted to be better. (Desired Student Expectation) Pax: Just being able to write more.

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