TOWARD SEAMLESS TRANSITION?
DUAL ENROLLMENT AND THE COMPOSITION CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT

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Since their inception nearly twenty years ago, Dual Enrollment Programs (also known as Post-Secondary Enrollment Programs or PSEOs) have been touted in the state of Ohio and elsewhere as avenues of “seamless transition” for students as they segue from secondary to post-secondary education. Specifically, participants in these programs can obtain both high school and college credit for college coursework taken in either a high school or college setting. However, scant data exists as to the effectiveness of PSEOs as transitioning agents in Ohio and nationwide; furthermore, data regarding PSEO writing classes is nearly non-existent.

Given the historically tenuous nature of the relationship between high school and college writing instruction, this research study delved into the purported “seamlessness” of PSEOs and assessed the program’s claims. First, the study explored the history of Dual Enrollment Programs in Ohio and particularly at The University of Findlay, a private university in Northwest Ohio. Written surveys and oral interviews of teachers and students were then conducted at three places of PSEO composition instruction affiliated with The University of Findlay: the traditional college writing classroom, the UF-USA (high school campus) site, and the non-traditional setting (high school students grouped homogeneously on college campuses). In all, 24 respondents participated, and their responses yielded information regarding PSEO teacher pedagogy, impact of place on PSEO writing instruction, and PSEO’s claims of seamless transition.

Findings here conclude that high school and college composition instruction do not necessarily flow seamlessly, one to the other, as PSEOs suggest. Moreover, this study’s sampling proves that secondary and post-secondary writing instruction are rarely aligned given the current curricular, state, and national mandates public schools operate under, and as such,
“seamless transition” cannot occur amidst the differing agendas of high school and college writing instruction. Furthermore, this study posits that the issue of “place” of PSEO instruction is pertinent to the program’s claims and argues that “place” of PSEO writing instruction may actually serve to re-inscribe already established gaps, assumptions, and misconceptions between writing instructors at secondary and post-secondary levels.
For Greg, Gabe, and Luke
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER I. SURVEYING THE THRESHOLD BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE WRITING EXPECTATIONS</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The Historical Disconnect Between Secondary and Post-Secondary Writing Instruction</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The “Conversation” Regarding High School V. University Writing Expectations</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Dual Enrollment/Post-Secondary Options as Transition</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Growing Concerns Regarding Dual Enrollment’s Accountability</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Implications for Research on Dual Enrollment in the Composition Classroom</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The Issue of Place</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Defining “Writerly Identity”</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Research Questions and Methodology</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Conclusion</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER TWO: THE UNIVERSITY OF FINDLAY (TRADITIONAL) POST-SECONDARY ENROLLMENT OPTIONS PROGRAM FOR COLLEGE WRITING I</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Research into Post-Secondary Enrollment Options and College Writing</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- An Overview of the History of Ohio’s Post-Secondary Enrollment Program</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Benefits and Risks of PSEO Participation</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The Post-Secondary Enrollment Program at The University of Findlay</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- College Writing I and the PSEO Student</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONSENT FORM FOR MINOR STUDENTS ........................................ 241
CONSENT FORM FOR INSTRUCTORS ........................................ 242
## LIST OF FIGURES/TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure/Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1   Number of PSEO Enrollees at UF’s Sister-Universities Per Fiscal Year</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2   Rankings of “Good” Writing Among Traditional PSEO students</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3   Rankings of “Good” Writing Among UF-USA students</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4   Rankings of “Good” Writing Among Non-traditional PSEO students</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5   Rankings of “Good” Writing (Composite)</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TOWARD SEAMLESS TRANSITION?
DUAL ENROLLMENT AND THE COMPOSITION CLASSROOM

INTRODUCTION

Over eighty years ago, the National Council for the Teachers of English was formed, in part, to empower high school educators against the top-down demands of university English programs (EJ Forum 13). Today, that relationship between secondary and post-secondary English programs remains a tenuous one—most particularly in the area of composition studies. Arthur Greenburg underscores the importance of the interrelationship between high schools and colleges in High School-College Partnerships: Conceptual Models, Programs and Issues, when he states that “The future of each is dependent on the performance of the other” (xv). Furthermore, David Foster and David R. Russell in Writing and Learning in Cross-National Perspective argue that “In most national education systems, students’ writing development plays an important—though often unacknowledged—role in the crucial transition from secondary school to university” (1). To borrow from author and teacher, Larry Weinstein, this transitional movement might be also seen as an intellectual “threshold” which secondary students are challenged to cross as they enter into the demands of post-secondary composition courses (xi).

Unfortunately, this threshold is not easily traversed, due, in part, to the uneven juncture where the paths of both secondary and post-secondary writing expectations meet. Parties on both sides of the high school/college juncture concede that (traditionally) a gap has existed between the goals and realities of high school to college writing. Likewise, instructors’ personal experiences as well as research data corroborate these claims. As a result, both parties acknowledge the need for increased and more fruitful dialogue regarding options for improving student performance in the composition classroom, whether that classroom is situated in a high school or in a college setting.
This notion of seamless transitioning, K-16, is not unique to composition studies, though. In the mid-1980s, a nationwide trend of dual enrollment—high school students attending college for both high school and college credit—came into existence with claims of providing, among other features, a mode of transition for students from the familiarity of secondary education to the demands and challenges of the post-secondary environment (McCarthy, par. 5).

Postsecondary Education Options (PSEOs) also known as dual enrollment or concurrent enrollment, grew exponentially in the 1990s, and according to researcher, Hans Andrews, all fifty states currently have some form of dual-credit opportunities for eligible high school students. In fact, during the 2002-03 school year, 71 percent of public high schools nationwide participated in post-secondary enrollment options (Postsecondary 8). Also, according to a 2007 report entitled The Promise of Dual Enrollment: Assessing Ohio’s Early College Access Policy, “As of August 2006, 47 states had state policies related to dual enrollment. Of those states, nearly all have statutory language while 15 have established policy through the state board of education and/or higher education board” (38).

However, the laws governing these programs and their implementation vary from state to state. The Jobs for the Future/Knowledge Works Foundation acknowledges this and notes that while policymakers are increasingly interested in using dual enrollment and other college-level learning opportunities for high school students as a concerted means of raising student achievement

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1 A 2004 survey from the U.S. Department of Education states that “dual enrollment refers to high school students who earn college credits for courses taken through a postsecondary institution. Different institutions have different names for dual enrollment, including ‘dual credit,’ ‘concurrent enrollment,’ ‘joint enrollment,’ etc.”

2 Recent definitions differentiate “concurrent enrollment” from “dual enrollment” by noting that “concurrent enrollment” options are taught on the high school campus by high school faculty or university adjuncts rather than taught on the college campus (“About Concurrent Enrollment”).

3 Despite the attempts to standardize definitions, the Education Commission of the States’ 2001 report delineates a wide variety of subtleties among state definitions of dual enrollment and concurrent enrollment; thus, in order to be completely accurate in defining these terms, one must refer to the particular state in question.
and improving the secondary to postsecondary transition, the variation in how such programs are implemented is considerable (Postsecondary 8).

In addition, the U.S. Department of Education, in a September 2005 report cautions that “local interpretations of state policy may lead to programs operating differently than state policy intends” (Karp et al. “Update” 2). For example, wide variation exists as to who pays for dual/concurrent enrollment option tuition: a sampling of states reveals that in Alabama, Arkansas, California, Hawaii, Iowa, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Tennessee, the student shoulders the cost; however, in Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, and Minnesota, the state pays (Karp et al. “Update” 4-7). In Michigan, North Carolina, and Ohio school districts must absorb the amount, while in Texas, Virginia, and Wyoming, each individual school district decides who will pays (Karp et al. “Update” 5-7).

In sum, according to The Promise of Dual Enrollment: Assessing Ohio’s Early College Access Policy, “Of the 28 states that address the issue [of paying for dual enrollment courses] in state statute, six pay, eight have the school districts pay, eight have students pay, and six have other special arrangements” (40). Policy variations also exist among target population, admission requirements5, location of instruction, instructor credentials and training, student mix6, and funding7 (Karp et al. “Update” 4-9).

As a result of both the relative “newness” of dual enrollment programs as well as the arbitrary nature of their rules and funding, little research exists regarding the effects of these options and

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4 The Education Commission of the States views this variation on “who pays” as a potential, though, unintentional, “barrier” to the success of dual enrollment since states that hold students responsible for tuition costs “might exclude low-income students” (2).

5 Admission requirements include both requirements regarding student age as well as academic requirements (Karp et al. “Update” 4).

6 “Student Mix” refers to the make-up of the postsecondary enrollment classroom. Those dual enrolled students in a “mixed” class “must take the same classes as regularly matriculated college students.” Some states allow mixed or “high school only” sections of PSEO. In such cases, “students may take their classes with regularly matriculated college students or in classes consisting only of high school students” (Karp et al. “Update” 9).

7 Funding differs from tuition in that in some states, high schools lose state funding when students participate in PSEO. Likewise, in some cases, the colleges lose funds or both the high school and colleges lose funding. In some cases, “neither institution loses funds—both are funded at their full rates” (Karp et al. “Update” 9).
whether or not dual enrollment provides the seamless transition it aspires to. And while “many states have done extensive studies on the use of PSEO,” if not its outcomes, such is not the case in Ohio (OAGC). In fact, a 2007 joint publication by KnowledgeWorks Foundation and the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education claims that “Ohio does not fare as well compared to other states on one critical criterion . . . reporting and accountability” (The Promise 38). Moreover, the research that does exist regarding Ohio’s PSEOs “is limited or nonexistent for students who enroll at private . . . institutions” (The Promise 17). Furthermore, according to a May 2006 report on Ohio PSEOs by Jobs for the Future/KnowledgeWorks Foundation “sufficient data regarding PSEO student and institutional participation and success [in Ohio] is generally unavailable and not used to drive policy and program decisions” (Postsecondary 5). The Jobs for the Future/KnowledgeWorks Foundation also concludes:

No overall K-16 structure appears to guide PSEO implementation.

Instead, it tends to be viewed as a standalone program, rather than as a part of the state’s high school reform strategy to build a more seamless transition into pathways leading to a postsecondary degree or certificate (Postsecondary 4).

Most notably lacking is research into the efficacy of dual enrollment’s composition programs—programs which are arguably a common choice for many post-secondary enrollees. As of 2006, composition ranked number one in Ohio PSEO’s “Top 15 Courses” with 2,571 students—nearly 700 more students than psychology, which ranked number two (The Promise 22). The overarching aim of this study, then, is to research dual enrollment’s claims of

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8 According to Boothe and Flick, the earliest Ohioan PSO enrollees were most likely to choose courses in social studies. “Next in order of preference were English, mathematics, science, foreign languages and the fine arts” (20).
9 Of course, this data is incomplete in that it does not include figures for enrollment at private institutions. (See previous page).
providing a means of seamless transition from high school to college writing instruction. In particular, this study will focus on the effects of post-secondary instruction at The University of Findlay, a four-year private institution that offers composition to students in three diverse settings: a) on the college campus in a traditional composition classroom, b) on the students’ high school campus, and c) on the college campus in a classroom exclusively populated with high school students. Integral parts of this equation include the students’ perceived and actual ability to cross the “threshold” from high school to college writing expectations as well as the instructors’ philosophical and pedagogical contributions to the “transitioning” factor.

The results of these findings could play a significant role in 1) ascertaining what part instructors’ backgrounds as well as philosophical and pedagogical leanings play in guiding students across the secondary/post-secondary writing threshold; 2) concluding if a specific “place” (or “places”) impacts students’ identities as college-level writers; and 3) assessing whether or not PSEOs are or can be utilized as an effective means for transitioning students from high school to college-level writing expectations. In other words, at least in the case of composition instruction, can or do PSEOs live up to the seamlessness they purport? And how might such instructional programs function to possibly ameliorate or even re-inscribe decades-old tensions that characterize the secondary to post-secondary (composition) threshold?

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10 Granted, given the narrow focus of this research (three sets of PSEO composition classrooms at one particular private university), findings from this study should be considered a snapshot of useful information regarding the transition from high school to college writing expectations.
CHAPTER ONE

SURVEYING THE THRESHOLD BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE WRITING EXPECTATIONS

THE HISTORICAL DISCONNECT BETWEEN SECONDARY AND POST-SECONDARY INSTRUCTION

According to Greenburg, the strength of high school-college partnerships has dwindled since the 1920s, prior to which post-secondary institutions such as the University of Michigan worked with “public schools to establish mutually agreeable academic standards” (xv). These partnerships gradually eroded, though, as in 1892, the Committee of Ten recommended that secondary schools adhere to college prep curriculums. This mandate was followed by the introduction of the SAT in 1926, which was designed to determine student preparedness (8). In both cases, high schools were to defer to the guidelines of colleges, and as a result, the top-down approach began to drive a wedge between the two levels of educational instruction. That schism deepened when, in 1930, the Progressive Education Association Appointed Commission on the Relation of School to College conducted its Eight Year Study. The results of this study proved that “students who had learned under a non-traditional curriculum (i.e. public school rather than preparatory school) were superior to their college preparatory counterparts in nearly all matters under study . . . “(9). In other words, the commission concluded that high schools could develop their own successful curriculums without college “direction” (9).

From this point, Greenburg’s history shows that the gap between high schools and colleges has continued to widen in the past eighty years despite repeated attempts to ameliorate the situation. He calls the split “a kind of San Andreas Fault, with schools and colleges on either side of the fault line” (7). Thomas Bailey and Melinda Mechur Karp, in “Promoting College Access,” reiterate the disconnect (and possibly re-inscribe it) by stating “There is . . . widespread
debate about the ability of high schools to prepare students, both academically and developmentally for colleges,” and the two cite the gap between K-12 and postsecondary systems as the root of the problem. Undoubtedly, a lack of communication between the two sides furthers the gap as well, along with stereotypical “ivory tower” notions positioned against an “in the trenches” mindset. The positions of both camps lead Greenburg to conclude that:

In almost every aspect, the act of and environment surrounding college teaching contrasts sharply with the experience of the typical high school teacher. These differences, unfortunately, often can be the wellspring of feelings of envy, jealousy, insecurity, superiority, mistrust and misunderstanding . . . (21).

While Greenburg may, arguably, overstate the problem, the fact remains that a disconnect does exist, and no where is that more apparent than in the gap between high school and college writing expectations.

In 1975, the Newsweek article “Why Johnny Can’t Write” alerted the American consciousness to apparent problems in the K-12 writing curriculum. The onus of failure was placed upon the public schools, and the controversy that ensued led to the creation of the National Writing Project, which has chosen to approach the task of improving American students’ writing as “a challenge rather than a crisis” (Nagin 2-3). The NWP traces the high school/college writing gap back to 1874 “when Harvard University began requiring a written entrance exam” (1). Poor writing skills among Harvard’s upperclassmen drove the implementation of this assessment, and in its earliest instances, the exam revealed that more than one-half of Harvard’s perspective candidates (prep school trained, no less) were ill-prepared to enter the university’s writing program (1). Later, according to Mary Traschel, the 1894 National
Conference on Uniform Entrance Requirements in English instituted a two-part entrance exam in English, and as the 19th Century came to a close, a heavy emphasis was put on prescriptive rules and formal correctness in writing (especially among East Coast schools) (58). However, when Stanford followed suit instituting entrance exams similar to the Berkley model (based on Harvard’s model), it concluded that such exams “encouraged students to concentrate on the study of literature at the expense of the practice in composition” (68). As a result, Stanford instituted separate literature and composition entrance exams with increased emphasis on practicality; for example, Stanford’s composition requirements included proficiency in writing business letters as well as narratives (69).

In time, many of Stanford’s West Coast counterparts followed Stanford’s lead, while most of the East continued to emulate Harvard in its English entrance exam practices. Consequently, different goals regarding English studies began to emerge, which left in-coming college students in a quandary:

Making the transition [from high school to college writing] was often difficult if not impossible, since entrance examinations of the private eastern schools tended to enforce certain fixed requirements—primarily ancient language requirements and the reading of a narrowly prescribed list of literary works—that public school education had not prepared the student to meet (71).

Despite the pragmatic leanings of the West, the initial prescriptive notions of the East maintained a heavy hand over secondary/post-secondary composition studies throughout much of the 20th Century and helped re-inscribe the notion that “colleges know best” when it comes to writing instruction.
Still, “knowing best” has remained a point of debate and “communicating best” an even bigger one. According to Katherine Nolan of Project Alignment, “'Colleges have rarely defined what students need to know and be able to do in order to be successful writers’” (qtd. in Nagin 64). Likewise, Greenburg muses that “It is ironic that higher education institutions don’t plant the seeds for the high quality students they desire!” (xv). These statements highlight the problem of the disconnect in two ways: 1) If colleges are to dictate curriculum goals, then those goals should be clearly articulated to secondary writing instructors; 2) If colleges are to dictate writing curriculum goals without consulting and/or collaborating with secondary instructors, the gap between high school and college writing programs will most likely continue to re-inscribe itself.

Foster and Russell concur:

New articulations of writing development must take into account the profound mismatch in expectations of teachers in secondary and in higher education . . .

if teachers, examiners, and policymakers on either side of the secondary/higher education divide do not talk to each other, directly and/or indirectly, about student writing and writing development, then the mismatch will continue—and may grow as specialization in higher education increases (42).

THE “CONVERSATION” REGARDING HIGH SCHOOL V. UNIVERSITY WRITING EXPECTATIONS

In the 1980s, a study by Arthur Applebee found infrequent writing and narrow genre use in public schools’ composition instruction. Since research indicates that the more often students write, the better writers they become, it should not be surprising then that Alan Vanneman, in his report for the National Center for Education Statistics, found a “negative linear trend” in students’ writing performance over the years 1984-1996. Similarly, Chris Jennings and Jane Hunn in “'Why Do I Have to Take Remedial English?'” state that “Educational reports reveal
that high school students are graduating with deficient writing skills” (182). As a possible explanation for the growing lag or gap in student performance, the ACT’s Newsroom website outlines differences in high school and university writing expectations: college instructors find mastery of grammar/usage most important for incoming freshman writers, while these same elements are considered least important to high school writing instructors (par. 1). In fact, high school English teacher and textbook author Jim Burke writes of the “renewed emphasis on the teaching of grammar” as a result of frustration in both the workplace and in college writing programs (qtd. in Nagin 37). However, many high school teachers view this call for increased grammar instruction at the secondary level as an impediment to their larger goals in the composition classroom—simply put, the call for grammar reform widens the schism, since it can be interpreted then that secondary teachers should teach grammar and leave true writing instruction to the colleges. In addition, according to Herb Budden, et al., “ . . .many college composition faculty berate secondary school teachers, blaming them for college students’ inability to punctuate, to cite, to synthesize” (75).

To further complicate the matter, writing theorists such as Linda Flowers and John Hayes suggest that college writing instructors should ignore some issues in students’ writing to reduce students’ cognitive load; this often translates into instructors advising student writers to leave grammatical “clean up” for last, and as a result, those same instructors may have less time to devote to intervention regarding their students’ grammatical errors and inconsistencies. However, such an approach may unintentionally contribute to the aforementioned frustration at both college and workplace levels when students (and writing teachers for that matter) are not sure which writing conventions should merit the most attention and emphasis.
Gregory Shafer’s article, “Student Writing Performance,” underscores the discrepancy between “practice and preaching”, in that Shafer, a high school teacher, urges his peers to teach beyond the “simplistic notion that we [merely] reject the double negative, the first person narrative, the contraction, or the sprinkling of vernaculars” (67). Shafer’s resistance against the perceived college/high school hierarchy delineates the “catch 22” of many high school teachers who face top-down pressure to rely on prescriptive pedagogies for instruction. High school teachers Roger Shanley, in “Reforming Writing Instruction,” and Priscilla Abrahamson, in “Between a Rock and a Soft Spot,” recognize Shafer’s frustrations regarding the “squeeze” put on secondary instructors who often must sacrifice expressive writing pedagogies in order to prepare students for “academic” writing. Shanley states: “While working with students to reform their writing in both conventional and more unique or creative structures, teachers ponder how to make their instruction serve as the natural segue from high school to . . . university writing programs” (14).

Similar to the criticisms of Shanley, Abrahamson, and Shafer are the comments of Thomas Newkirk who chides composition theorists for, in his words, the “divorce” between writing (expressive works) and composition (academic works) (104). Carl Nagin also ponders the secondary/post-secondary writing disconnect in the 2003 National Writing Project where he describes the current state of composition instruction in the United States and reiterates the NWP’s call for university-school collaborations for “achieving quality and excellence in our classrooms and disciplines” (5). Lesley Roessing makes a similar call in her article, “Toppling the Idol,” where she discusses the struggle of teaching “high school” concepts such as the five-paragraph essay while still fostering her students’ ability to have voice, choice, and style (41); in other words, traditional college-level requirements, in their writing. Furthermore, high school
teachers such as Roessing must traverse a minefield of curriculum issues, state standards, and proficiency test preparation (among other issues) in their journey to prepare some students for college writing and others for general workplace writing. A standing-room only session of the NWP at the 2005 Convention of the National Council for Teachers of English suggests the composition community’s desire for conversation and collaboration in improving the high school to college writing transition; it seems the two communities have come to what Greenburg would classify as a point of dissatisfaction where those involved decide to take action (15).

**DUAL ENROLLMENT/POST-SECONDARY OPTIONS AS TRANSITION**

University-school collaborations are supposedly at the heart of dual enrollment programs—programs which allow high school students to enroll in college courses for college and high school credit simultaneously. Thus, proponents of the program argue that dual enrollment acts as a threshold to segue students from high school to college writing conventions. After all, the endorsements for dual enrollment tout seamless transition as one of the program’s highest selling points. According to the National Center for Education Statistics 2002-03 report, dual enrollment provides “a pathway for students to move seamlessly between K-12 and postsecondary systems” (1). Demaree Michelau and Evelyn Burg argue the same in their respective articles regarding dual enrollment options; likewise, Piedad Robertson, Brian Chapman, and Fred Gaskins state that “education as a continuum” is the tenet behind the dual enrollment trend. Katherine Boswell concurs, and adds that dual enrollment provides challenging educational opportunities, reduces the need for remediation of in-coming students, ensures a competitive workforce, and fosters “collaborations between high schools and colleges” (13).
Furthermore, Greenburg dubs dual enrollment a cure for “senioritis” stating that “Research shows that left to their own devices, secondary and postsecondary institutions often develop curricula that overlap especially for the last two year of high school and the first to years of college” (4). A similar claim is made in a document published by the Ohio Association of Gifted Children (OAGC), which cites findings from the Pew Charitable Foundation’s national study of dual enrollment programs: “The study found that dual-credit programs can blur the line between high school and college by integrating the two systems and thereby create a continuum of learning high school to college” (par. 3). Even more specifically, the OAGC goes on to tout PSEOs as “one of the most effective forms of school choice in Ohio for over a decade. . . PSEO is not just about additional coursework for enrichment, it is about delivery of a service in a way that resonates with students who need something different, something more, and something faster” (par. 5).

In addition to the assertions of transition and enrichment by dual enrollment proponents, the NCES notes that another aim of dual enrollment is the retention of high school students in post-secondary programs after graduation. Chapman also notes the benefits of dual enrollment for participating colleges by suggesting that PSEOs provide an increased means of visibility while meeting the educational needs of the high school students in the community (qtd. in Robertson, Chapman, and Gaskin 22). Furthermore, both parents and students may be lured by dual enrollment’s cost-effectiveness. As stated in Ohio Governor Bob Taft’s January 2006 State of the State address: “Families could save up to $4,000 on the cost of a college degree by completing a semester’s worth of college credit before they graduate high school” (7). And according to Susan Kapanke and Melissa Westemeier, the option of “offering dual credits in high
schools keeps students on high school campuses, thereby minimizing the liability, money, and
time involved in commuting” (153).

It is not surprising then that research by Andrews cites dual enrollment numbers approaching
500,000 in 2003 (“Enrollment Trends”), and according to Bailey and Karp, “nearly half of all
juniors and seniors in U.S. high schools participate in at least one form of credit based transition
program” (this includes Advanced Placement credit) (9). In Ohio alone, 10, 810 students
participated in PSEO courses in 2004\(^\text{11}\) (Chart of Participation), and the Ohio Board of Regents
reports that number grew to 12, 635 in 2004-2005\(^\text{12}\) (The Promise 20). Compare that to statistics
from 1995 which list Ohio total enrollment as 3, 615 (Chart of Participation). Furthermore,
small private institutions, such as the University of Findlay, have benefited from this statewide
increase in dual enrollees. Statistics from the Ohio Department of Education show that 109
public and non-public post-secondary students were enrolled in University of Findlay dual-credit
programs in 2001; 171 students took advantage of UF’s dual enrollment program in 2004.

With that said, it seems that dual enrollment must inevitably be a win-win situation.
However, according to the U.S. Department of Education in its report, “Dual Enrollment:
Accelerating the Transition to College,” more research is needed in order to determine whether
or not dual enrollment “efforts [truly] support the transition and persistence of students in
postsecondary education.” Bailey and Karp concur with this assessment, and argue that few
reports exist that measure the effects of dual enrollment. They explain that in their literature
review of 45 articles and reports “only 21 discussed program outcomes” and “of the 21 that did
attempt to report on outcomes few attempted to take account of confounding factors such as

\(^{11}\) A 2007 publication from the KnowledgeWorks Foundation and the Western Interstate Commission for Higher
Education puts this number at a negligibly higher, 10, 819.
\(^{12}\) This statistic is for students “from public and nonpublic schools” that “took courses at public institutions” (The
Promise 20).
student characteristics” (10). As a result, Bailey and Karp conclude that while the studies that they “have reviewed generally come to positive conclusion, [regarding dual enrollment’s effectiveness] those conclusions “can only be considered tentative” (11).

In Ohio, the OAGC is also calling for further research and collaboration. Their document “Post Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO)—History, Issues, and Solutions” includes the following criticism and suggestion:

While PSEO should ideally be a program jointly administered by Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Board of Regents, the two agencies have not, in the past, worked closely together on this issue, and the program has largely escaped the kind of review and analysis that is necessary to improve any education initiative . . . . Many states have done extensive studies on the use of PSEO. Ohio should do likewise (pars. 5 and 14).

Ohioans can see how their state stacks up to others in terms of PSEO programmatic features in the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Vocational and Adult Education issued its Update to State Dual Enrollment Policies: Addressing Access and Quality in 2005; the matrix therein, though, is designed to provide a visual means for assessing and comparing the varied dual enrollment program features utilized among the fifty states. It does not provide a specific assessment of each state’s program effectiveness.

Not surprisingly, no complete data currently exists on the nationwide number of those participating students in regard to their specific enrollment in post-secondary composition studies either; however, at least in Ohio, “Of the top PSEO courses in which students enrolled in 2006, more than half of the enrollment (6, 692 students13) was in an Arts and Humanities course” with composition at the top of this list (The Promise 22). A survey of university

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13 Again, this number is incomplete in that it does not include participation at private universities.
websites also reveals composition as a selection in many dual enrollment programs nationwide (see U. of Idaho, Florida, Chattanooga State). Moreover, at the University of Findlay (Ohio) alone, the number of high schools participating in its PSEO College Writing I and II courses has jumped from five in 2002 to thirteen in 2006, and in the past year, 194 high school students\(^{14}\) were enrolled in University of Findlay on-campus or off-campus composition courses (“UF-USA Fall 2006 Enrollment”). Still, despite the apparent influx of PSEO students on college campuses and, as a result, in composition classrooms, scant research exists regarding the effectiveness of such programs and whether or not they truly “ease the transition” from high school to college.

The PSEO element notwithstanding, whether or not students in Ohio or their counterparts across the nation even can or should expect to transition seamlessly from their high school to college writing environments is a question generating noteworthy discussion. For example, at the 2000 NCTE Annual Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Janet Alsup of Purdue University of Michael Bernard-Donals of University of Wisconsin challenged the notion of “seamless transition” in their presentation entitled “Toward a Seamless High School to College Writing Curriculum”. According to Alsup and Bernard-Donals: “One of the things we discovered during this presentation is that ‘seamlessness’ may not be an appropriate or realistic goal” (117). Furthermore, they state that “One reason the seamless transition from high school to college writing is a fantasy is that there’s no such thing as ‘college writing’” (117). Others, such as Doug Hesse, who believes “college writing” can be defined, are still “‘wary of revising high school standards to align with college expectations’” (qtd. in Bauman 9). While the points of

\(^{14}\) UF’s dual enrollment numbers for college composition are slightly higher than projections from the Ohio Department of Education. Because UF is a private institution, it is able to enroll high school students through an alternate dual enrollment program entitled UFUSA (University of Findlay’s University-School Articulation). This program allows schools, students, and parents to deal directly with UF in an alternative approach to dual enrollment. Therefore, numbers of dual enrollees in the UFUSA program are not reported to ODE. The UFUSA program will be explained in detail in Chapter Three of this dissertation.
Alsup and Bernard-Donals and Hesse, respectively, present a potent challenge to the claims of “seamless transition,” a discussion on the possibly “where” or “how” of composition instruction (“seamless” in intent or not, at the college or on the high school campus) has yet to be fully and adequately addressed or evaluated.

**GROWING CONCERNS REGARDING DUAL ENROLLMENT’S ACCOUNTABILITY**

The lack of research into dual enrollment’s effectiveness as a transition method, not to mention the implications of “where” and “how” that instruction takes place, has left university and high school instructors and administrators with numerous concerns about the current state as well as the future of PSEO programs. Kenneth Barnes, in “Does Dual Enrollment do the Job?,” questions the validity of programs that allow high school teachers to provide college instruction on the high school campus and calls PSEO programs a possible “threat” to academic integrity.

Of particular interest is the fact that many secondary English teachers have no formal training in the teaching of writing (Atwell 11). According to NCTE, “very few states require specific coursework in the teaching of writing for certification”; Missouri, Delaware, and Idaho are the exceptions (qtd. in Nagin 59). Nolan reiterates the ramifications of this lack of training by arguing that neither teacher preparatory programs nor schools and school districts have clearly delineated what they want teachers to do in the writing classroom (qtd. in Nagin 64). Karp, Bailey, Katherine Hughes, and Baranda Fermin in their **CCRC Brief** share this concern stating “who is allowed to teach dual enrollment programs has implications for their perceived quality” (2). In an interesting twist, (reminiscent of the aforementioned high school/college writing schism) OAGC points to the colleges as the problem in dual enrollment accountability. Examples include parental and public complaints such as: “college instructors aren’t highly
qualified teachers” and “PSEO coursework isn’t as rigorous as that offered in high schools” (par. 8).

The criticism of teachers on both sides of the high school/college divide seems especially problematic in light of the 1996 report of the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future which cites “that teacher qualifications account for 40 percent of the difference in overall student performance and that teacher quality is more powerful than a student’s socioeconomic background in student learning” (qtd. in Nagin 64). Sarah McCarthy in *Journal of Secondary Gifted Education* notes similar concerns and warns that many colleges are cautious of accepting transfer credit from dual enrollment because of uncertainties regarding standards (par. 27). Bailey and Karp echo McCarthy’s caveat, and Daniel Duffy quoting R. A. Greenberg states: “During these times of accountability and reform, secondary and post-secondary educators need to examine ‘a number of factors that have combined to an active audience for the debate on how well our “system” of secondary and post-secondary education works’” (4).

In explanation, Bailey and Karp cite the aforementioned historic disconnect between K-12 and post-secondary programs as at least one factor in this debate of effectiveness, while Evelyn Burg makes a call for “better communication” between high schools and colleges in an effort to strengthen post-secondary instruction (3). Specifically in the case of writing instruction, Foster and Russell see this need as well and warn that “. . . it is easy for us as teachers in secondary and higher education to talk past each other and miss the crucial role that writing plays in students’ work and in the transition from secondary to higher education” (44). Michelau also suggests a means for ameliorating the disconnect by arguing that individual PSEO state legislation should “require cooperation between the school districts and post-secondary institutions,” and explains that because formal structures for fostering cooperation “usually do not exist, these relationships
are often distant, sometimes making cooperation and agreement difficult” (6). Michelau’s suggestion, similar to Greenburg’s is one of “Teacher to Teacher partnerships” where high school and college instructors collaborate in an effort toward professional and pedagogical development. Furthermore, a number of researchers agree that technology, in particular, interactive learning networks, may provide a future avenue for facilitating better cooperation and communication among these partnerships.

**IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH ON DUAL ENROLLMENT IN THE COMPOSITION CLASSROOM**

Fertile ground awaits researchers in the area of dual enrollment composition studies. Since most current research focuses on public community colleges, a need for inquiry into the effects of dual enrollment at four year private institutions (estimates say 40% nationwide admit dual enrollees) seems in order. Furthermore, the debate between high school and college writing performance coupled with questions of dual enrollment’s ability to transition students seamlessly from high school to college points to a field ripe for study. Thus, the aim of this particular research project—to examine dual enrollment’s effects on composition students in three diverse classroom settings—combines issues of transition, place, and instruction in forming students’ identities as writers. In addition, this project also posits questions of who should teach what and where.

Rhonda Catron, in one of the few studies of the effects of dual enrollment in English courses, poses similar questions and underscores the need for high school and university cooperation in the process (3) if programs are to measure up to transitional goals and academic standards. Her study outlines the Virginia Plan for Dual Enrollment, and, true to her call for cooperation, includes the perspectives of administrators, faculty, and students regarding the effectiveness of Wytheville Community College’s Dual Credit English Program—a program with instructors at
both the college and university levels. Her findings conclude that (at least at Wytheville) the community college and high schools that took part in the study were “committed to providing dual credit English courses that are of comparable quality to the college’s regular freshman composition courses”(3). However, whether that data is indicative of other programs (at public or private institutions) is currently unknown. In addition, Carton’s study does not delve into questions of “writerly identity” among dual credit writers.

THE ISSUE OF PLACE

In her introduction to Geographies of Writing, Nedra Reynolds retells Plato’s story of Phaedrus for the purpose of illuminating the importance of place “in conversations, persuasion, and learning” (1). Reynolds also refers to the clichéd notion of education as a journey, but subverts the cliché by taking it from its metaphorical form to a literal, spatial one when she writes: “the journeys we take to ‘expand our horizons’ cannot happen without other journeys, like the daily ride on the bus to campus” (10). Similarly, when writing about “rhetorical space,” Roxanne Mountford states that, on one level, it can be defined literally as “rooms, lecterns, auditoriums, platforms, confession booths, and classrooms, all of which are interpreted by participants through social expectations but which also have material dimensions that affect what we do there” (17); furthermore, she argues that “rhetorical space is a significant dimension of rhetorical performance deserving of further research and critical attention” (39). What Reynolds’s and Mountford’s theories of place suggest is that where we are affects what we do, which can arguably be extended to include the possibility that where we are affects what we do and how we perceive ourselves. In the case of PSEO writing instruction, then, place may play a part in not only what students write but how they write as well as how they perceive of themselves as writers. Gesa Kirsch and Joy Ritchie also acknowledge the importance of place
(“location”) in composition research as does Kristie Fleckenstein who contends that “We are always placed,” and our identity is subject to that placement (303).

Jonathan Mauk, in his College English article, “The ‘Real (E)states of Being, Writing, and Thinking in Composition,” tackles the idea of place and student “displacement” in terms of composition instruction on the community college campus when he asks: “What happens to writing pedagogy, and the practices of learning to write, in the absence of traditional university geography?” (369). To apply Mauk’s question, then, to PSEO is to extrapolate how the separate and diverse classroom writing environments in the dual enrollment program affect students’ identities as writers and their ability to produce college-level work. Are these students, too, “unsituated in academic space” (ibid) as are their community college counterparts (per Mauk’s argument)? And if so, how does this “unsituated-ness” shape their identities as writers? Ellen Lavelle and Nancy Zuercher stress that “it is important to help writers gain a positive identity in writing as a precursor to acquiring increased skills” (15). Couple that with Bailey and Karp’s assertion that student identity is impacted positively when dual enrollment students take classes on the college campus, and one could conjecture that PSEO composition students in an on-campus setting will be likely to have a more positive experience in the dual enrollment program than those instructed at off-campus sites. However, the research to support that claim does not currently exist.

Truthfully, that conjecture may seem too simplistic a view in that it must be acknowledged that no space is ideologically, politically, or culturally neutral; instead, all spaces are inevitably classed, gendered, and raced. This is especially true of the writing classrooms and writing programs which vary from university to university—a fact which truly challenges the notion of “seamless transition.” As stated by Alsup and Bernard-Donals: “... socioeconomic status,
race, ethnicity, gender—future goals are all so varied as to impact first year composition classrooms as students from these differing backgrounds are joined together” (118). Still, the high school classroom as a site of university instruction may be (relatively) more homogeneous than the typical college composition classroom, and Kapanke and Westemerier suggest the “safety” of such a place in terms of college writing instruction:

These students can take the risk of attempting college-level work without all of the other new experiences first-year college students go through on campus. Finally in the nurturing environment of a high school classroom, a college-bound senior can prepare for the transition with the safety net that time, instruction, and experiences allow” (166).

In the case of The University of Findlay where high school students may choose from three diverse settings of instruction—on the high school campus, on the college campus in a high school-only class, and in a traditional composition class (each arguably and respectfully less homogeneous than the last)—the place of instruction may indeed factor into this notion of transitioning writers from high school to college writing expectations.

Of further possible inquiry is concluding if one or more of the PSEO instructional sites can serve as a transitional setting or a “third space”—to borrow a term from Edward Soja. Similar to the “border work” of postcolonial feminists, Soja’s theory of “third space,” when applied to the PSEO situation, would constitute a place outside the traditional educational setting where students could transition safely from their lives as high school students to college students, from adolescents to adults, from novice writers to college writers. In addition, in regard to the particular question of dual enrollment composition courses taught in three diverse places, Soja’s
theory could also provide a justification for the continuation of college courses taught on the high school campus—rather than the aforementioned proposed “on-campus” theory suggested by the juxtaposition of Mauk’s work with that of Lavelle and Zuercher as well as Bailey and Karp. At the very least, Soja’s idea of “third space” provides a framework for analyzing and discussing the purpose and value of both the at-high school and on-campus PSEO-only composition classrooms. Whether or not these students assimilate their identities as college writers more readily, less so, or on par with their peers (both on the college campus and at their respective high schools) is also a question worthy of discussion and analysis.

DEFINING “WRITERLY IDENTITY”

Since current research has yet to examine student writerly identity in the various places of PSEO college composition instruction, a starting point may be the aforementioned theories on place as well as an application of thoughts from David Bartholomae’s “Inventing the University,” which argues that students struggle with entering academic discourse because of preconceived notions of what it means to be a “college writer.” This struggle is made even more difficult by the fact that no universal definition clearly delineates what it means to be a “college level writer” or what even constitutes “college-level writing” for that matter. Each individual concept elicits differing ideas and responses depending upon one’s experience, background, and particular predilections. Patrick Sullivan and Howard Tinberg in What is “College-Level” Writing, suggest that “there are no simple answers to the question, ‘What is college-level writing?’” (xiii) due to any number of variables; however, at the same time, their edited collection strives to define and problematize that question from the points of view of college instructors, high school teachers, students, and administrators.
While the result is no singular, clear-cut explication of “college-level writing”, a number of consistent factors surface repeatedly in the pages of their text—among them a student’s ability to read and think and on the college level. In Sullivan’s words, “Good writing can only be the direct result of good reading and thinking, and this . . . is one of the foundational principles of college-level work” (16). In a concurring response, Alfredo Celedon Lujan adds “Good writing is a student thinking on paper, using words unique to her or him—voice, a rhetorical stamp, citing the text, attributing quotes, answering the question thoughtfully, creating intelligent prose, poetry, or poetic prose” (55-56). Similarly, Budden, et al. argue that despite differing opinions and biases among university writing professors, all appear to stress analytical thinking and have students write what they know—from their own experience (82). Thus, for the purposes of this research, one element of a student’s writerly identity on the college level will be to exhibit the ability to think independently as well as critically and experientially and then translate those thoughts into written form.

Other elements of college-level writing, according to Sullivan, include “the ability to shape and organize material effectively”; “the ability to integrate some of the material from the [classroom or research] reading skillfully”; and “the ability to follow the standard rules of grammar, punctuation, and spelling” (17). In addition, “developing a voice” and “choosing and audience” (Davies 34) are essential components of college-level writing according to a number of contributors to the Sullivan and Tinberg text (see Lujan; Harris; Lunsford; Schorn; Kearns), in that an awareness of both voice and audience contribute to a student’s ability to “join” any particular on-going academic or professional “conversation.” Here, too, is where a college-level focus on argument comes into play, since to truly “join a conversation” one must have a new point or perspective to contribute to the discussion. To this point, Alsup and Bernard-Donals’
belief that college-level writing should involve some degree of argument “as a process of inquiry” (119) and Kathleen Blake Yancey and Brian M. Morrison’s assertion that college-level writing typically includes a focus on argument (268) help reiterate Sullivan’s and Lujan’s (among others) respective calls for the cultivation of critical thought among college-level writers.

Taken cumulatively, then, “voice”, “audience”, “joining the conversation”, and “argument” may be, at least in part, some of the elements Foster and Russell are describing in their call for an increase in college students’ “academic literacy”—a type of literacy where writing is not “a set of generalizable skills” nor “an unteachable, natural part of entering a discipline,” but instead, “an immensely variable, developing accomplishment that is central to the specialized work of the myriad disciplines of higher education and to the professions and institutions students will enter and eventually transform” (14).

Alongside calls for strong organizational skills, the ability to synthesize sources, mechanical accuracy, and a goal of “joining the conversation,” Yancey with Morrison cites “writing, process, revision, and peer review” (268) as additional elements indicative of college-level work. Student/author Kimberly L. Nelson echoes Yancey and Morrison when she states: “I have learned that college-level writing is as much about process as it is about product” (293). A gloss may be made to this point since the process-laden approach indicative of college-level writing instruction stands in contrast to the typical impression of high school writing as “formulaic.” Such an impression includes, with varying degrees of accuracy, the belief that secondary teachers “have too many students and too little time for grading” (Mosley 58). To be fair, whether or not process is an integral part of secondary composition classrooms certainly varies by school and by individual teacher; however, that assumption may have merit given the wide range of standards (beyond those in writing) that secondary teachers must address in their
classrooms. Furthermore, the equating of high school-level writing with formulaic structures (such as the five-paragraph essay) may be traced to the belief that “the principal exigence for writing instruction [at the high school level] . . . is test preparation” (Yancey with Morrison 269).

When Yancey and Morrison’s beliefs are coupled with Mosley’s observations, the two yield an understanding of high school writing instruction as “less oriented to process and more oriented to literature” (Yancey with Morrison 268). In regard to testing, Yancey and Morrison go onto explain, citing data from Ketter and Pool, that “some thirty-eight states assess students’ writing with an essay” and “the focus of the writing in both classroom and test is on literature” (269). Such is the case in Ohio where three of the five “Writing Applications” benchmarks aligned with grade-level indicators for passing the Ohio Graduation Test have a literature or narrative component (ODE Academic Content Standards 44-47). With these thoughts on process and testing duly noted, some arguable generalizations regarding high school-level writing as compared to college-level writing can be made. To borrow from teacher Milka Mustenikova Mosley of Sequoyah High School: “High school-level writing is usually very predictable,” and “High school students typically write mainly to conform”, while college writers demonstrate individual ideas and voice (59).

Obviously, one generalized definition of all high school-level writing is just as unlikely to prove satisfactory (or entirely accurate) for all students, instructors, researchers, and administrators just as no one definition of college-level writing proved completely cogent among those in Sullivan and Tinberg’s query. In truth, shades and nuances exist on both levels; however, a review of the Ohio Department of Education’s Writing Standard for K-12 Language Arts reveals the state’s education system’s strong bent toward the formulaic, mechanics-driven,

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15 These standards include, in Ohio, benchmarks for vocabulary; informational, technical, and persuasive texts; literary texts; research; and communications (ODE Academic Content Standards 10-12).
“predictable” writing conventions described in the previous paragraph, and these conventions are the charge of secondary writing instructors. According to the ODE:

> Writing conventions include spelling, punctuation, grammar and other conventions associated with forms of written text. They [K-12 students] learn the purpose of punctuation: to clarify sentence meaning and help readers know how writing might sound aloud. They develop and extend their understanding of the spelling system, using a range of strategies for spelling words correctly and using newly learned vocabulary in their writing. They grow more skillful at using the grammatical structures of English to effectively communicate ideas in writing and to express themselves (12).

Noteworthy here is the constant reiteration of grammar and mechanics as well as vocabulary/spelling acquisition as benchmarks of K-12 public school writing instruction. Furthermore, to Yancey’s comments on testing, the writing skills of Ohio’s public school students are tested in grades 4, 7, and 10 (ODE “What’s Expected”, “Ohio’s Statewide Testing: OGT”). Those students who do not pass the tenth grade test, known as the Ohio Graduation Test or OGT, do not graduate from high school (ODE, “Ohio’s Statewide Testing: OGT”). So although one, blanket definition of “high school-level writing” may not suffice, the standards set down by the Ohio Department of Education and the testing climate in which Ohio’s secondary writing teachers and their students must function certainly suggest a different set of values exist for judging writing on the secondary versus the post-secondary level.

Via a melding, then, of these somewhat differing approaches to, theories about, and definitions of “college-level writing” as contrasted against “high school-level writing”, this particular research study borrows its definition from Budden et al. in order to explain that
“college-level writing” is that which challenges and meets “students’ diverse needs” through discussion “about ideas” that “generate theses about topics of interest that they then defend and support with specific details and concrete examples—skills that will be essential no matter where they attend college” (Budden, et al. 76). Included in this definition must be student awareness of audience as well as cognizance of college-level writing as a form of student entry into academic/disciplinary conversations. Finally, a nod to process must be included in the definition, too, in that an understanding of the elements of process writing is one proven and firm step across the threshold from high school to college writing expectations.

In short, thesis development and support, audience awareness, an understanding of writing as contributing to the “conversation”, and the utilization of the full writing process all factor into this researcher’s working definition of “college-level writing”, and by extension, a student’s “writerly identity” on the college level. Inherent in this definition and in this study (to elaborate on a point made be Alsup and Bernard-Donals) is the belief that high school and college writing courses should not be the same (131); instead, this research seeks to reveal what current representative elements of the high school to university curricula may be compatible or incompatible as demonstrated among the instructors and students in The University of Findlay Post-Secondary Enrollment College Writing I program. Furthermore, this research may then provide additional guideposts in navigating the secondary to post-secondary writing threshold.

All this cannot be done, though, without clear recognition of the study’s limitations. As noted earlier, to assume that singular, clear-cut definitions exist for either high school-level or college-level writing is a presumptuous and naïve notion. Perhaps Sheridan Blau put it best when he argues:

every experienced teacher who has taught in a range of secondary schools
and colleges knows that any attempt to define the boundary between college and high school writing instruction or student writing, without reference to the particular schools and classes to which the definitions apply, is likely to yield misleading generalizations...” (364).

With that caveat in mind, this research goes forth on one level under the auspices that, indeed, a boundary exists between secondary and post-secondary writing instruction—even if (and perhaps because of the fact that) no perfect understanding of those exact boundaries has yet to be determined. Moreover, this researcher also acknowledges that these boundaries and definitions will always remain in flux given the ever-evolving nature of composition studies; however imperfect these definitions, though, they provide a point for expanding the current conversation.

Further relevant to Blau’s remarks is the fact that this research study does “reference particular schools and classes to which the definitions apply” (364), in that three specific places of PSEO college-level writing instruction comprise the sites of data collection.

Finally, with Blau’s points duly noted and with the assumption that even imperfect definitions can provide a starting point for a discussion on PSEO students’ ability to achieve college-level writerly identities, this study examines how and in what ways high school students in PSEO programs are being challenged to cross the boundary(ies) between their high school writing expectations and those of their particular post-secondary institution (in this case, The University of Findlay). According to Foster and Russell (writing about secondary students as a whole), this boundary high school students must traverse may also be seen as a “threshold”; a place where students “are between worlds and their writing reflects this transition” (14-15). For Weinstein, the threshold consists “of that which, at any age, leads from doing slavish or derivative thinking to doing real, engaged thinking of one’s own. It is also that which
leads—eventually—to prose that is lucid and coherent even when its subject is elusive or complex” (xi). As such, Weinstein’s words provide an, albeit, circuitous return to the roots of this discussion on writerly identity: at its best, college-level writing should demonstrate a student’s ability to compose original, relevant, thoughtful, and thought-provoking works. More eloquently put by Nelson, college-level writing “requires giving yourself over, as a student and writer, to the desire to create meaningful and elegant connections between texts, ideas, and readers” (295). What remains to be seen is if, how, and/or to what degree such a transition takes place when high school students enroll in post-secondary composition courses.

**RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY**

In order to establish or refute a baseline pattern of validity in Catron’s research and to expand the scope of that research, further inquiry into transition, place, and instructional continuity in dual enrollment composition instruction is needed. This can be done by posing three specific questions for research. First, what are the implications of teacher experience and pedagogy in the dual enrollment composition classroom? Second, does the place of post-secondary instruction impact student learning, and in particular, students’ writerly identities? Third, how, if at all, might enrollment in PSEOs impact high school students’ abilities to cross the threshold from secondary to post-secondary writing expectations?

The University of Findlay provides an optimum setting for a pilot study into such research in that it offers its dual enrollees three options for college composition instruction. The three share a number of similarities but at the same time maintain their own unique characteristics—differences that lend themselves to the aforementioned research questions. For example, all three settings—on-campus self-contained, on-campus mixed population, and high school campus—follow the same general syllabus for UF’s College Writing I course. The instructors
teach from the same text and utilize a uniform handbook; likewise, all students respond to the same prompts for the final in the same format and time frame. Unique to each situation are the obvious physical surroundings as well as who does the teaching and how. In the on-campus self-contained classrooms, the instructor is (most often) a former high school teacher turned college instructor, while in the on-campus mixed population, the instructor may be either a faculty member or an adjunct. On the high school campus, the instructor is a high school English teacher who has received training from UF in rhetoric and composition. The student population has a possibility of diversification as well. Although all are high school junior or seniors, the majority of students taking composition classes on UF’s campus are rural or suburban students who live in close proximity to the university. On the other hand, those students enrolled in the high school setting are most likely to be from urban areas (such as Toledo) or extreme rural areas (such as Danbury High School near Lake Erie). Thus, despite the efforts at consistency by UF (and other public and private universities like it), the diversity of settings, instructor experience, and student population suggest that all dual enrollment composition classrooms may not be equal.

Reynolds, in “Composition’s Imagined Geographies,” argues that “attending to the politics of space can begin with simple observations about where writers and writing instructors work” (13); thus, an ethnographic bent seems a suitable means of inquiry for eliciting answers in regard to questions of transition, place, and writerly identity in PSEO writing instruction. With that idea noted, Catron’s dissertation provides a wonderful model for research design. She frames her work historically, but then adds both qualitative and quantitative measures to achieve strong triangulation in her study. Education researchers, Robert Bogdan and Sari Knopp Biklen state that qualitative research strategies are “rich in description of people, places, and conversations
and not easily handled by statistical procedures” (2). Bogdan and Biklen also underscore the importance of location and context in research, through the insistence that “human behavior is significantly influenced by the setting in which it occurs”; thus, it is important that researchers observe the day-to-day process of their research subjects (5-6). Catron’s interviews with administrators, faculty, and students fall firmly into this camp as does her partially auto-ethnographic stance.

Visiting the actual setting and rituals of the disparate locations of dual enrollment composition instruction is a key element of this research; therefore, I have conducted case studies at each of the various UF dual enrollment composition settings. Each study consists of student and teacher surveys and face-to-face interviews at each teacher/student’s site of instruction. Specifically, my goal per site case study included two classrooms, two instructors, and three students from each of the two classrooms for a total of six students per setting group. In explanation, I worked with three students as well as one teacher at each of the two off-campus sites I visited for a total of two teachers and six students at the high school-on-campus sites. As much as possible, I replicated the same measures for The University of Findlay on-campus high school-only College Writing I courses as well as The University of Findlay traditional College Writing I courses which include dual enrollees\(^\text{16}\). In total, I observed two composition classrooms (not including my own), surveyed/interviewed six teachers (not including myself), surveyed seventeen students, and personally interviewed fifteen of those seventeen students. During the multi-site visitations, I acted as, in Bogdan and Biklen’s words, a “loosely scheduled traveler” whose “plans evolve as [she] learn[s] about the setting, subjects and other sources of data through direct examination” (49). That is not to say that my research had no destination—

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\(^{16}\) Due to a small number of high school students in the traditional College Writing I courses, I was able to secure just five survey respondents and three interview respondents rather than the six-six ratio I had hoped for.
those goals have been previously delineated—however, I strived to keep my research design flexible and instead, let “the study itself structure the research” (49). With this in mind, I employed Bogdan and Biklen’s “constant comparative method” in order to collect and assess data from both the on-campus and off-campus sites. The model calls for data collection; inspection for key issues or recurrent events; creation of categories of focus; further data collection; and ultimately, sampling, coding, and writing all in an effort to elicit “findings that can be used directly to make practical decisions about, or improvements in” (209) the current dual enrollment program.

Along with my observations of each setting, I included the voices of both the students and the teacher in each case-study site. Those voices are heard in a layer of forms—most specifically through survey questionnaires and face to face interviews. Rosanna Hertz stresses the importance of voice and includes a multitude of authors in her book, *Reflexivity and Voice*, who concur that researchers should distinguish between their own voices and the voices of their subjects when compiling ethnographic studies. Therefore, I let my respondents’ voices speak for themselves as much as possible. Hertz’s poststructuralist/feminist position also legitimizes the inclusion of my own in the research process, and thus, as a former high school English teacher turned College Writing I instructor, I have included observations from my own classroom as well as my own responses to the survey and interview questions in this study. In regard to the inclusion of such reflexive information in one’s research, Hertz writes:

> Drawing on self knowledge as a central source of data, personal experience—a “forbidden pool of data” . . . is increasingly becoming another acceptable scholarly basis of understanding social life and human behavior. In this way, the self becomes both the subject of the
study and the narrator. Multiple voices also mark new frontiers as do studies that juxtapose self-discovery with the research participant’s narrative” (xii).

A similar approach can be seen in Cindy Johanek’s Composing Research when, through narrative, one teacher reflects on her own experiences by explaining the “intuitive drive” of her study (qtd. in Johanek 125). This methodology helps provide a framework for researchers, such as myself, who may study others while at the same time participating as a subject in their own study. Such an approach warrants a caveat from Hertz, who reminds researchers to practice caution when revealing themselves through their design method in order to avoid self-indulgence instead of self-revelation. In response to such a notion, Johanek’s sample teacher explains her decision to “balance” her abundant qualitative information with a quantitative approach, which includes the coding of data (124). Likewise, while my study is primarily qualitative and (auto)ethnographic—a quantitative element emerges in that the written data is also coded for analysis of students’ writerly identity. This approach is similar to that of Duffy, who, in his own research on dual enrollment, uses a balance of the quantitative and qualitative by employing sample surveys and questionnaires to generate material that at times serves as enthographic narration and at other times as coded data. Likewise, in Ethnographic Writing Research, Wendy Bishop not only lauds the benefits of qualitative research design but also includes detailed information regarding how to best interview subjects, construct surveys and questionnaires, and code data. Janet Emig’s The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders stands, too, as justification of how this particular research project can be approached from both qualitative and quantitative angles.
Ultimately, the examples of researchers such as Catron, Oliver, Bogdan and Biklen, Hertz, Johanek, Duffy, Bishop, and Emig suggest a mix of historical, qualitative, and quantitative research methods as appropriate to the question of dual enrollment’s effect in the composition classroom. Such triangulation, driven by my particular “intuition” (to borrow from Oliver) and experience, calls for a contextualization of the transition issue, the coding of observational data from the study’s diverse places of composition instruction, and the voices of instructors and students—all in an effort to better evaluate the outcomes of high school to college dual enrollment options.

CONCLUSION

Yearly, as high school students prepare to cross the threshold from secondary to post-secondary writing expectations, dual enrollment’s promises of seamless transition may seem like a siren’s song happily promising students and instructors safe passage over decades-old rocks and crevices. Still, as a former high school teacher who has stood at the end of one process and a current college writing instructor standing at the beginning of another, this researcher knows the path across that threshold is anything but smooth and much less than seamless. Still, the words of Alsup and Bernard-Donals provide good thought for the journey: “we may not want to smooth out all the bumps, even if we could. Being pushed out of one’s comfort zone and challenged intellectually can be frightening but also conducive to personal growth” (130). As this study shows, the realities of this venture have very interesting implications for such growth, not just for transitioning composition students but for their instructors as well.
CHAPTER TWO

THE UNIVERSITY OF FINDLAY
(TRADITIONAL) POST-SECONDARY ENROLLMENT OPTIONS PROGRAM
FOR COLLEGE WRITING I

RESEARCH INTO POST-SECONDARY ENROLLMENT OPTIONS AND COLLEGE WRITING

The discussion to follow of Ohio’s postsecondary enrollment options program, its history, and its place at The University of Findlay provides a means for contextualizing the unique and various “situations” of the Post-Secondary Enrollment Options student—a student who (at least at The University of Findlay) may choose to take PSEO courses at the college campus with “regular” college students (traditional), at the high school campus with their peers (UF-USA), or at the college campus in post-secondary-only sections (non-traditional) of a particular course. For the purposes of this research, then, those students who choose to take their postsecondary courses on the college campus with “regular” college students will be referred to as “traditional” post-secondary enrollees, since, the Ohio Board of Regent’s original guidelines for PSEO “state that high school students should be enrolled in regular college class sections with regular college students” (OBR The Ohio).

Furthermore, this chapter relates findings from surveys, interviews, and classroom observations conducted with current traditional PSEO students and instructors in UF’s College Writing I course, all in an effort to preliminarily address the questions previously outlined as integral to this study: 1) the impact of teacher/professor background and pedagogy in the instruction of high school-age writers; 2) the significance (if at all) of place in writing instruction; and 3) most specifically, whether or not PSEOs (admittedly limited to those taught through UF) live up to their reputation as “seamless” transitioning agents—particularly when it comes to the teaching of writing. Subsequent chapters (Three and Four) also delineate initial
research findings from the other two locales of investigation (UF-USA and non-traditional).

Finally, a more in-depth analysis as well as a detailed synthesis of overall findings can be found in Chapter Five.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF OHIO’S POST-SECONDARY ENROLLMENT PROGRAM

In December 1989, Franklin B. Walter, then Ohio’s Superintendent of Public Instruction, unveiled to Ohio’s presidents of higher education a plan for “award[ing] high school credit to students enrolled in college courses”. Walter’s letter contained a synopsis of the program as well as a draft of seven proposed rules for its governance and implementation. That same year, the Ohio General Assembly enacted the Postsecondary Program into law by passing Senate Bill 140. This program, known as the Ohio Postsecondary Enrollment Options Program, “permit[ed] high school juniors and seniors to complete college or university coursework for high school and/or college credit . . .” (OBR The Ohio). Formal adoption of the program’s rules occurred in early 1990, and these rules were then delineated in a document from the State of Ohio’s Department of Education—a document which included the participatory responsibilities of students, school districts, and colleges:

The program is intended to provide expanded opportunities for appropriately qualified high school students to experience coursework at the college or university level. Any high school student admitted to a course by an institution of higher education will be expected and required to perform at the same level as the institution’s regular students. High schools continue to be responsible for providing a comprehensive and challenging college preparatory curriculum,

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17 Sections 3365.01 through 3365.09 Ohio Revised Code (ODE Area #3).
including advanced placement and other advanced level courses, for their students. College courses should either contribute to or supplement the broad academic preparation needed by high school students.

Thus, with this plan in place, eligible eleventh and twelfth grade Ohio students in participating school districts could enroll in the program\(^{18}\), which according to the Ohio Board of Regents PSEO report, could “ease the transition from high school to college,” as well as “provide challenge to the most able high school students.”

At the time of the program’s enactment, Ohio’s State Board of Education established nine rules (reflective of the original seven from Superintendent Walter’s advisory committee) to provide standardized guidelines for the implementation of the program statewide (Dept. of Ed. 1). These rules included the defining of key terms, a statement of purpose, the provision of information and counseling to students and parents, notification of appropriate parties by participating institutions of higher education, and enrollment options A and B for student. Specifically, Option A permitted “eligible students to enroll in college courses for college credit” with the students incurring the cost of “tuition, books, materials, and fees” (Dept. of Ed. 3). Those students opting for plan “B” would “enroll in college courses for college and high school graduation credit” and would “not be required to pay for tuition, books, materials, or fees associated with such courses” (Dept. of Ed. 3). The state’s remaining four rules included guidelines for awarding high school/college credit, methods for calculating enrollment, financial

\(^{18}\) In the first year of the program’s enactment, students had until April 15 (1990) to express interest in enrolling (OBR The Ohio).
responsibilities of participating parties, and nonpublic school participation\(^{19}\) (Dept. of Ed. 2-6). Additionally, per the 1990 guidelines, colleges and universities would be responsible for determining acceptance standards, and participating students could expect to “be enrolled in regular college class sections with regular college students” taught by “regular college faculty . . . in a place where students can avail themselves of the college’s library, computer, and other academic resources” (OBR The Ohio).

According to James Boothe and T. Michael Flick in their August 1992, Ohio School Board Association Journal article, 556 Ohio public school students from 179 public high schools participated in the in Ohio’s Postsecondary Enrollment Options Program during its inaugural year\(^{20}\) (20). An additional thirty-seven students from twenty private high schools took part in this initial venture, and forty-seven colleges and universities provided the higher education link in this experience (Boothe and Flick 20). Among participating postsecondary institutions, Ohio University led the way with an enrollment of 113 students, while The Ohio State University placed second in terms of enrollment with forty-five students (Boothe and Flick 20). Public schools suffered a net loss of $455, 076 during PSEO’s first year, an amount which Boothe and Flick state “had little impact on school budgets” (20). To conclude their review of the program’s first year, the authors predicted an upsurge in participation and heralded the program’s impetus to provide a better, more challenging education to students both in the high schools and on college campuses. They write:

This program has prompted some school administrators to enrich and expand their academic programs to keep students at home.

\(^{19}\) As per the rules in 1990, the State of Ohio’s Department of Education would set aside one million dollars annually to finance nonpublic school student participation in PSEOs. Those seeking funding had to apply through the state, and participation was based on funding availability (Dept. of Ed. 7).

\(^{20}\) The Buckeye Institute for Public Policy Solutions puts Ohio’s initial student participatory number slightly higher at 630.
Advanced placement courses are one such strategy. If the high school curriculum cannot meet the specific needs of talented students, the cooperative arrangement with higher education could be an advantage. Thanks to the ODE’s leadership plus the cooperation and support of school officials and college administrators, the program had a good start and is sure to grow in interest and quality (Boothe and Flick 20).

And grow it did. According to statistics from The Buckeye Institute for Public Policy Solutions, Ohio’s PSEO program enjoyed steady growth from 1991 to 1998—jumping from 1,907 students in 1992, to 4,889 students in 1996, all the way to 6,786 students in 1998. As a result, by 1998, 535 participating school districts dispersed $8.4 million dollars in funds to cover PSEO costs. By the year 2004, the number of participating students had ballooned to nearly 11,000, and state spending on PSEOs totaled $17.1 million (OAGC). Furthermore, these numbers represent a jump in total PSEO enrollment among Ohio high school juniors and seniors from 2.9% in 1999 to 3.7% in 2005 (OBR The Performance 18). Still in review of those numbers, a 2007 joint publication by KnowledgeWorks Foundation and the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education suggests that more students in Ohio could and should be taking advantage of post-secondary options; they write: “Although participation has increased every year since the policy began, the percentage of Ohio’s high school students taking advantage of PSEO in recent years has remained at well below 5 percent” (The Promise 3).

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21 The Ohio Board of Regents and the Ohio Department of Education cite this number as 6,646 students in 1998 (Postsecondary 9). However, this number may exclude non-public students; the explanation was not clear in this particular source.

22 According to a 2005 report from the Ohio Association of Gifted Children, 9,781 public students and 1,144 non-public students were enrolled in postsecondary enrollment options during the 2004 fiscal year. Combined, these numbers indicate that 10,925 students statewide were enrolled in PSEOs in 2004.
Regardless of one’s perception regarding those statistics, the fact remains that, “Between 1998 and 2004, more than 55,000 students [in the state of Ohio] earned credit that could be applied to college degrees”\(^{23}\) (The Promise 3).

Along with growth in participation came some changes to the Ohio PSEO program during what has been its nearly two decades in operation. In 1997, Ohio legislators passed House Bill 215 that “provided nonpublic non-chartered school pupils” participation in the program\(^ {24}\), and additional legislature in 1997 “afforded 9\(^{th}\) and 10\(^{th}\) grade pupils the opportunity to attend PSEO Program[s]” as well (ODE Area #3).\(^ {25}\) By 2002, Ohio legislators instated the requirement that participating high school students earn a 3.0 GPA or better “in high school in the subject matter they wish to take at the postsecondary” level; however, individual postsecondary institutions may continue to mandate students’ “overall GPA as to acceptance in PSEO Program[s]” (ODE Area #3). Undoubtedly, continued growth and changes will occur in the PSEO program as it nears its twenty year mark. Concerns regarding equal access to the program, award and transfer of credit, shared governance\(^ {26}\), lack of data, and funding are among the “growing pains” being felt among Ohio PSEOs at this time (Postsecondary 5).

**BENEFITS AND RISKS OF PSEO PARTICIPATION**

Along with growth and change, a review of Ohio’s PSEO history also reveals a steady continuum of discussion regarding the benefits and risks of PSEO participation. Earliest

\(^{23}\) It is important to note that this data is not entirely accurate because of data-sharing problems between the Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Board of Regents. According to Knowledge. Furthermore, of particular interest to this study is the fact that “data is limited or nonexistent for students who enroll at private or out-of-state institutions” (ODE The Promise 17).

\(^{24}\) The current Ohio Revised Code does not permit “home schooled” students to enroll in PSEOs. There are, however, “alternative ways that such home schooled students may participate” (Ohio Dept. of Ed. Area #3).

\(^{25}\) This expansion of the program to include younger students caused initial concern in 1998 and prompted some university officials to question whether or not freshmen and sophomore high school students possessed the maturity to participate in college-level learning. See Chapt 4 for further discussion on this subject.

\(^{26}\) Jobs for the Future/KnowledgeWorks Foundation suggest that many existing trouble points with the program may be ameliorated if postsecondary and secondary institutions “collaborate effectively in managing PSEO” (Postsecondary 5).
proponents heralded the program for its ability to challenge high school students whose academic needs were not being met in their home schools, and student anecdotes over the past seventeen years corroborate this claim. The words of Kacee Cunningham of West Unity, Ohio, may very well speak for other postsecondary enrollees: “‘I was kind of bored in high school. I needed something to challenge me’” (qtd. in Dugger). Beyond rigorous academics and providing “greater academic opportunities for students at small rural schools”, other benefits attributed to PSEOs include saving “students time and money on a college degree”, “enable[ing] greater collaboration between high school and college faculty”, “increase[ing] student aspirations to go to college”, and “build[ing] closer ties between colleges and their communities” (Education Commission of the States). Margaret Bonesteel and Sharon Sperry in their article “Building a Better Bridge,” also note that dual or concurrent enrollment programs can help combat the problem of “duplicated curricula” between high schools and colleges (39). Furthermore, participants in such programs are afforded an early “introduction to the college environment” (Scoles), which, according to Cunningham, is “‘a great way to meet so many people and learn so many things’” (qtd. in Dugger). Additional incentives include the growth of individual responsibility among students as well as higher expectations among students and educators (Scoles)—whether on the secondary or postsecondary level.

However, if PSEO were the perfect bridge between high school and college, then why has participation in AP (Advanced Placement) 27 courses grown more rapidly in the same time period (1999-2005) as postsecondary enrollment options (OBR The Performance 18)? And why do some students remain uninformed about the “availability and requirements of postsecondary

27 According to the OBR, “The AP program offered by the College Board allows students to take advanced courses while still in high school. Students may take a comprehensive exam at the end of the course. Most colleges give credit for courses in which the student has earned a 3, 4, or 5 on the AP exam” (OBR The Performance 18). Popular subject areas include English literature and composition, US History, calculus, and US Government (OBR The Performance 18).
options programs” (Education Commission of the States 2)? A number of “risks” associated with PSEOs may help explain these discrepancies. First, travel, distance, and time (Scoles, Borgelt A1) have long been considered negative factors in postsecondary instruction; thus, some students (and their parents) may opt for AP courses instead of dual enrollment since rigorous content and potential college credit are promises of that package just as they are with PSEOs. Other students may forgo the postsecondary option for fear that it may negatively affect their GPA or high school class rank; plus, failure of a course has serious implications in that the student may not graduate from high school and “must reimburse the school for tuition and fees” (Scoles). And while some students, such as the aforementioned Cunningham, may see the new social opportunities of PSEO as a benefit, those same social “opportunities” may seem intimidating or unappealing to less confident or less outgoing students (Borgelt A1).

As for why students in some Ohio school districts are less informed about PSEO than others, funding may be the cause. Here the adage, “Nothing is ever really free” comes into play. Although “the education is completely free for high school students receiving high school and college credit” (Dugger), someone has to pay the bill, and in Ohio, that “someone” is the school districts. According to Dr. Larry McDougle of Northwest State Community College: “‘The way the state funds high schools and colleges, there’s a lack of incentive [to encourage students] from the high school’s perspective. When the students come [to the college setting], they take their funding with them’” (qtd in Dugger). To put in simply, “The PSEO policy provides payment for dual-enrollment courses by transferring a portion of the state per-pupil allotment for public schools—the district’s state foundation payment—to the college” (The Promise 11).

Even more specifically, according to a report entitled The Promise of Dual Enrollment: Assessing Ohio’s Early College Access Policy, “In 2004-05, the state redirected $17.8 million
dollars in state foundation funds from local school districts to postsecondary institutions to pay for courses taken by PSEO students” (4). Moreover, as this same report notes, “These are not additional expenses in the budget, but funds that would have been expended at the high school and now are going to support dual credit” (4). Consequently, it does not always behoove a school district, financially, to “sell” postsecondary enrollment options to its students. The Education Commission of the States also cites “the possible loss, in some states, of per-pupil funding either by the school district or the college” as one of the “unintended consequences or present barriers” to postsecondary enrollment option participation (2-3).

As a result of this financial loss, it is no surprise that some school districts have gone as far as to implement “incentives and restrictions” in order to circumvent future financial drain (The Buckeye). According to The Buckeye Institute for Public Policy and Solutions:

Some schools have offered more Advanced Placement (AP) courses and honor course offerings. Other schools have sought to count high school courses as equivalent to multiple college courses. Other school districts have restricted extracurricular activities for participating students . . . The Ohio Education Association, a labor union that represents school bus drivers, janitors, food service workers, and teachers, has opposed allowing students to take college courses that are already available in the high school (The Buckeye).

While these “incentives and restrictions” might explain, in part, Ohio’s surge in AP offerings, their implementation also indicates that—at least on behalf of Ohio’s school districts and where funding is concerned—the current PSEO program makes for a less than perfect bridge.

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28 PSEO cost Ohio school districts $17.1 million dollars in 2005 (OAGC).
In addition, on the opposite bank of that less than perfect bridge sits the universities who provide the dual enrollment opportunities and absorb some of the program’s cost as well. Per Ohio’s statues, “the college initially bears the cost of tuition, books, and fees” for dual enrollees (The Promise 11). However, “At the end of the school year, the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) reimburses the institution a portion of the tuition, books and fees cost for these courses” (The Promise 11). The state bases this amount of reimbursement upon “what portion of the student’s education took place at the institution,” and the amount is then deducted from the participating student’s school district foundation monies (The Promise 11).

Unfortunately, the reimbursement received by the post-secondary institutions is not always equivalent to the funds “paid out”. As stated in The Promise of Dual Enrollment, “PSEO reimbursements from the state do not appear to replace the total revenue postsecondary institutions usually generate through student payments for tuition, books, and fees” (4). And although the available estimates of monies “paid out” and/or “lost” are only in reference to public institutions, the figures represent a snapshot of what also may be occurring at Ohio’s private universities. Again, according to The Promise of Dual Enrollment, “While Ohio paid $19.3 million in PSEO reimbursements in 2004-05, institutions reported that the expected revenue for tuition, books and materials for those students totaled $28.6 million, leaving a gap of $9.3 million” (4). Overhead costs, which include administration and maintenance of facilities cost post-secondary institutions affiliated with PSEO an additional $32.6 million in 2004-05,” which was off-set, somewhat, by “State Share of Instruction (SSI) allocations estimated at $10.9 million” (The Promise 35). Combined funding, then, from the State of Ohio compensated for “all but approximately $2.4 million of the institutions’ costs” (The Promise 35). Still, the cost of Ohio’s PSEOs remains exorbitant whatever side of the bridge one is on.
THE POST-SECONDARY ENROLLMENT PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF FINDLAY

Founded in 1892, The University of Findlay is a private institution located in the small, Northwest Ohio city of Findlay. Accredited by both The Higher Learning Commission and The Ohio Board of Regents, UF has “a total enrollment of more than 4,000 full-time and part-time students” that may choose from sixty-five undergraduate degrees as well as eight graduate degrees (“President’s Welcome”, “Who We Are”). Likewise, since Spring 1991—the beginning of Ohio’s PSEO program—UF has offered a number of dual enrollment options to interested high school students (Riffle). An undated report from Ed Erner of The University of Findlay indicates discussion regarding Ohio’s postsecondary enrollment program soon after its enactment into law. In the report, Erner states: “The Minnesota program on which Ohio’s is modeled, is working well with self-selecting students (those that apply seem to be good material). Lancaster Campus of Ohio University has had 48 students apply and only one out of the 37 seniors applying failed the college reading test.” Erner goes on to suggest that “Findlay should probably begin using its entry tests for early entry students immediately. Beyond that, we need to examine or devise appropriate recruiting strategies for the new option.”

Obviously, UF officials took Erner’s suggestions seriously, because by early June 1991, a UF committee was drafting procedural elements for registering high school students (Salis Memo to Boguski et al.). Initial registration guidelines restricted “Early Entrance/Postsecondary Options Program” students to one course per semester and mandated that these students enter UF via its Community Education Office. At the time, The University also decided that, “those who truly want to begin college full-time” could “be screened by Admissions to prove they are capable of college level work” and then “apply just as any other potential first-year student” (Salis Memo to Boguski et al.).
Initially, the PSEO program—at least in the local vicinity of The University of Findlay—drew “little student interest” according to reports from that time period. A 1991 article from The Courier states that “seven or eight students” from nearby Findlay High School had “submitted forms indicating their intention to participate”; however, then Findlay High School Principal Robert Shamp cautioned that since “a student could choose to opt out of the post-secondary enrollment program. ‘You just never know’ if everyone will follow through” (qtd. in Borgelt A1). Commitment to the program at the time was equally lukewarm among the county schools, with one student from Van Buren, two from Vanlue, and three from Cory-Rawson expressing interest in enrolling (Borgelt A1, A3). Additionally, nine students from Liberty-Benton High School “received the required counseling” to attend, “but all decided against participating . . . Among the reasons [according to their guidance counselor] were concerns about grade point average, the college atmosphere for younger students, and how college courses would fit with the students’ high school schedules” (Borgelt A3). Despite these early misgivings about PSEO, Ray Elbin, Guidance Counselor at Liberty Benton High School during the 1991 school year, suggests in The Courier article that “the program may pick up momentum for 1992-93” (Borgelt A3).

Obviously, the program did indeed “pick up momentum”, because by 1997, The University of Findlay had a PSEO enrollment of eighty students, and according to reports at the time, those numbers were “growing annually” (Taylor). Additional information gathered on UF’s PSEO program in 1997 revealed that The University enjoined some retention from the program as it “enrolled full-time each year a few students who started out as PSO/early entry students”; however, that same UF report was also careful to note that “State regulations for the program prohibit any types of activities that are recruitment related” (Taylor). In other words, while the state permitted and even encouraged universities to orient high school students to the personal as
well as academic growth needed to participate in dual enrollment, those same universities were not to encourage “integration with . . . campus life” (Taylor).

Still, while many students received the necessary information regarding the campus during registration, when it came to UF policy, The University of Findlay PSEO coordinators determined that an Orientation Day might best acclimate high school students to the campus and still allow UF to stay within the recruitment boundaries mandated by the state. Thus, an Orientation Day was implemented, and on June 17, 1997, a total of 61 students and 10-15 parents attended UF’s first PSO/Early Entry Orientation. Because of its success, committee members recommended that the orientation be held again the following July for those students entering the program in Fall 1998, with the condition that students participating in the July 1998 Orientation be required to attend the full day in order to register for classes (PSO/Early Entry).

Despite the possible retention of PSEO participants as full-time UF students as well as The University’s efforts to better transition the high school students to postsecondary instruction via on-campus orientation, UF officials voiced some concerns about growing PSEO numbers as well as potential PSEO problems during that same summer of 1997. While acknowledging the public relations “benefit” of PSEO, The University of Findlay’s Doris Salis also cautioned that “The remuneration given to us by the state is minimal (about $250 for a 3-credit course) and we foot the bill for the books as well. Given the demand for classes from full-paying regular students, it seems prudent that we establish some policies that will limit the growing number of PSO students” (Salis Memo to Barnett et al.). Among Salis’s suggestions included an increase in the GPA requirement, a class limit of two per semester for PSEO students, registration of PSEO students after regular freshman orientation\textsuperscript{29}, and a May 1\textsuperscript{st} application deadline (Salis Memo to

\textsuperscript{29} This later registration was to allow traditional UF students the chance to fill available courses first without losing seats to PSEO students.
According to Salis, such measures might “serve to self-limit the number of PSO students to a manageable number (under 100).”

Ironically, another memo from Salis dated just one day earlier notes that 18 PSEO students had committed to attending The University of Findlay in Fall 1997 as first year students (Salis Memo to Erner). Such a retention number may have given committee members pause in regard to Salis’s suggested measures for restricting postsecondary enrollment numbers. True, the program in and of itself would not benefit the institution financially; however, the possibility of PSEO acting as a “coincidental” recruiting tool that might off-set some of dual enrollment’s initial costs must have occurred to UF officials as well as other postsecondary institutions across the state. Thus, the first decade of PSEO ended with The University of Findlay reflecting on the present state of the program as well as its future implications.

A summary of an e-mail survey of private college admission directors prepared by Sarah Bates of Defiance College in August 1999, suggests that UF did not stand alone at that time in its concerns about the efficacy (at least on the part of universities) of dual enrollment programs. Like UF, some postsecondary institutions such as Heidelberg and Marietta College, in an effort to “protect” its “own” students’ ability to get into the classes they wanted, waited to enroll PSEO students after traditional students had registered. In contrast, other institutions, usually with a consistently small number of enrollees, allowed PSEO students “to register at the same time as continuing students” (Bates 2). Still, this issue of registration sometimes had less to do with actual course or seat availability than it did with the aforementioned financial drain of PSEO. According to the 1999 Admissions Director at Ohio Northern University, “It’s not fair to give a psop [postsecondary enrollment option pupil] special attention and not our own students . . . and as you know we sure aren’t making any money on these kids” (Bates 4). Mount Union’s
Admissions Director at the time echoed this same concern and stated: “as long as we are turning away paying students whom we’d love to have here, we don’t plan to open up Post-secondary any further than it already is. While it may not be the fairest situation, it is practical” (Bates 4). Furthermore, one of the twelve private institutions (College of Mount St. Joseph) indicated that although it had participated in PSEO “since its inception”, “It was just not worth administering any longer” (Bates 1, 4).

Despite these statewide concerns and the misgivings shared by Salis in her July 1997 memo, UF (as of 1999) continued to register PSEO students based on class availability (Bates 4). However, the minimum GPA for eligibility among dual enrollees had been raised by UF from the state’s suggested 3.0 to a slightly higher 3.25 cumulative average, and furthermore, freshmen and sophomore high school applicants had to “maintain a 3.8 cumulative GPA, successfully complete all required proficiency exams and provide 3 letters of recommendation from school personnel to be eligible for enrollment” (Registration Information). These increased requirements indicate a tightening of restrictions on the part of the university at that particular time, which one may think might have affected the number of future enrollees as well as the overall future of PSEO at The University of Findlay.

Regardless of UF’s intentions in changing its academic eligibility requirements, these new measures did not deter area students from continuing to enroll in the program. In 1999, a total of 69 public and nonpublic school students attended The University of Findlay as postsecondary enrollees; that number was down slightly from the eighty students enrolled in the program during 1997. However, the number of participants grew substantially from 1999 to 2001 when enrollment increased to 109 students (ODE FY99, FY01). A year later, PSEO students

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30 Although this information comes from an undated UF handout, the author has surmised an approximate date of 1997-99 by reviewing documents dated near the beginning of UF’s PSEO program and documents current to the program.
numbered 127, and by 2003, participation reached its to-date peak of 176 (ODE FY02, FY03). Fiscal years 2004, 2005, and 2006 demonstrated a pattern of continuity in the program with 171, 162, and 176 students enrolled respectively (ODE FY04, FY05, FY06). Also as of 2006, the participants in UF’s PSEO program represented twenty-one local school districts\(^{31}\) (Pearl). In addition, an assessment of enrollment numbers from throughout the Northwest Ohio region reveals that The University of Findlay’s PSEO program has consistently experienced a larger number of enrollees than other private universities comparable in size. Figure 1 below (created with statistics garnered from the Ohio Department of Education) delineates the number of PSEO enrollees at UF’s sister-universities per fiscal year\(^{32}\). Obviously, UF’s participatory numbers dwarf those of other area private institutions.

<table>
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<th>#Students FY 2002</th>
<th>#Students FY 2003</th>
<th>#Students FY 2004</th>
<th>#Students FY 2005</th>
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<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ohio Northern University</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiffin University</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The University of Findlay</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1

And while the reasons for that imbalance in enrollment cannot be simplistically attributed to one cause—location, proximity of other postsecondary institutions, admissions requirements, course availability, and dispersal of information regarding the program may all play a part.

Specifically, Heather Riffle, Director of Graduate and Special Programs at The University of

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\(^{31}\) Participating school districts include Ada, Arcadia, Arlington, Bluffton, Carey, Cory Rawson, Elmwood, Findlay, Fostoria, Hardin Northern, Kenton, Liberty Benton, McComb, Miller City, North Baltimore, Ottawa-Glandorf, Pandora Gilboa, St. Wendelin, Upper Sandusky, Van Buren, and Vanlue (Pearl).

\(^{32}\) See ODE Office of School Finance Report of Public and Non-public Students by College FY01, FY02, FY03, FY04, FY05, FY06.
Findlay, attributes UF’s comparatively “high” PSEO enrollment rates to two factors: location and promotion. She states: “We [UF] have a lot of high schools around us, and a lot of local schools. I think it’s just our location. Plus, the guidance counselors at the high schools around us promote postsecondary [options]; other areas don’t promote it as much.”

Another element contributing to UF’s high PSEO enrollment numbers may be The University’s “vision” of postsecondary enrollment as well as PSEO’s place in the life and growth of the university as a whole versus its sister-universities’ collective embracement of the program. According to Jobs for the Future/KnowledgeWorks Foundation, often the “PSEO experience seems to reflect the personality and vision of individual secondary and postsecondary administrators more than substantive state policy direction” (Postsecondary 5). Thus, UF’s solid, consistent core of PSEO participants suggests a commitment on the part of area high schools and The University to serve this population of students. Furthermore, UF’s implementation of non-traditional postsecondary students-only courses (see Chapter Four) as well as its University of Findlay-University School Articulation Program (which allows high school students to remain on their own campus while taking courses for college credit—See Chapter Three) indicate a forward looking “vision” among university administrators that includes local high school students.

In 2002, that vision of UF included expanding the reach of its PSEO program by scaling back its admissions standards from the 3.25 GPA for juniors and seniors and 3.8 for sophomores and freshmen to Ohio’s standard mandate of 3.0 cumulative GPA for all interested high school participants (Postsecondary Guidelines). Additionally, any “high school junior or senior with a 3.6 cumulative GPA or above” could “enroll at The University of Findlay full time, taking up to 18 credit hours per semester” (UF Postsecondary). As stated in a January 2002, UF
Postsecondary Options report: “we [UF] are in a position now to offer a quality educational experience to a greater number of high school students. . . . these minimal changes will strengthen our program and encourage new students and school districts to participate” (2). The jump in PSEO enrollment from 109 students in 2001 to 176 students in 2003 arguably reflects the impact of these changes in standard—standards which have stayed consistent from 2002 until the current time (Guidelines).

While the drop in GPA requirement(s) may have opened The University’s doors for more students, some restrictions have remained in place to ensure equity of admissions among postsecondary enrollees and their traditional counterparts. According to 2007, Postsecondary Enrollment Options Guidelines: “Students are registered for courses on a space availability basis and are subject to course prerequisites”; furthermore, “All students must maintain a minimum of a 2.0 GPA in all course work to continue in the program” (Guidelines). And these students must not only comply with UF’s guidelines to participate (as is the case with other Ohio high school/postsecondary partnerships), they must also adhere to additional state and local guidelines for PSEOs. Among those guidelines are specific dates for notification of intent to the school district (March 30), and commencement of the enrollment procedure (after April 1), as well as a number of “paperwork” deadlines that must be met by both the school district and the participating university (Flow Sheet).

Amidst the deadlines of notification, enrollment, and paperwork comes the high school student’s decision between the two traditional postsecondary enrollment options as set down in 1990 by the Ohio Legislature.33 To review, these include Option A where students receive college credit only for the course(s) they take and are required to pay tuition costs as well as any costs associated with books, materials, and/or fees (ODE Area #3, Guidelines). The University

33 The University of Findlay also offers an “Option C”—its UF-USA program—to be discussed in Chapter 3.
of Findlay helps off-set some of this cost by providing “a scholarship equal to one-half of the current tuition to each eligible student” (Guidelines). Students who choose Option B enroll in courses for both high school and university credit. While these students are not required to pay for their tuition, books, or materials, they are expected to cover the cost of any “additional fees” such as those incurred through art or music courses (Guidelines). Then, in addition to meeting admissions requirements and choosing an enrollment option, students must attend an orientation session and take placement exams for some courses before they can officially register for classes (Scoles 4).

In terms of scheduling, high school students must be cognizant that “graduation requirements come first” before PSEOs, and “PSEO classes used for graduation requirements must be approved by the home school” district (Scoles 3). Also, when scheduling, high school students should note that “some college classes fit with the high school schedule” more easily than others and “Spring classes must fit in the same periods as Fall classes!!!” (Scoles 3). These are necessary cautions in that the typical public high school offers classes in a year-long format versus postsecondary institutions’ semester-long (or quarter-long) courses. Finally, when registering for classes, high school students should possess an awareness of the issue of credit transfer. Since “Colleges and universities are not obligated to accept transfer of credit taken at another institution” (Scoles 3), some students (upon enrolling in another postsecondary institution following high school graduation) may find it necessary to repeat coursework at the institution from which they wish to complete their degree.

The aforementioned cautions notwithstanding, students may choose courses based on need, availability, course reputation, and how well a particular course fits into their high school

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34 At The University of Findlay, this may be due in part to “high school only” sections of PSEO. These classes will be discussed in Chapter 4.
academic/extra-curricular schedule. Also worthy of note is the fact that high school students are not bound by one post-secondary institution for their post-secondary enrollment options. In fact, it is not unusual for a student to take classes from more than one college or university; those courses could be taught on a college campus, on the student’s high school campus, or even in a virtual setting. With that said then, the typical, traditional high school student who attends The University of Findlay is enrolled in courses populated by “regular” college students and possibly other PSEO students. Furthermore, this typical, traditional PSEO student most often chooses Option B (dual credit), and usually elects to take courses in either psychology (PSYC 100), statistics (MATH 123), speech (COMM 110), “wellness”/health (HPE 100), and/or English (ENGL 104, ENGL 150) (Riffle). Occasionally, a traditional PSEO student may pursue an interest such as art, music, or language; however, the majority of students prefer to take courses that substitute well for their high school requirements. For example, many PSEO students elect to enroll in the ENGL 150 Literature Appreciation (Fall Semester) and ENGL 104 College Writing I (Spring Semester) sequence, because, when combined, the two courses count for one full year of high school English credit.\(^{35}\)

**COLLEGE WRITING I AND THE PSEO STUDENT**

According to The University of Findlay Post-Secondary English Classes handout, ENGL 104, also known as College Writing I, emphasizes

Writing processes appropriate for narrative and expository essays.

The course helps students to express their own ideas in lively prose that conforms to conventional standards of style and usage. Some of the writing assignments will require responses to assigned readings, but the focus throughout most of the course remains on each student’s

\(^{35}\) The State of Ohio requires each high school student to earn a minimum of four English credits for graduation.
expression of his/her own ideas.”

To ensure continuity of instruction, all College Writing I classes are limited to an enrollment of no more than twenty students, and College Writing I faculty are expected to adhere to similar guidelines in regard to course construction and implementation. Thus, the course description listed above suggests that students enrolled in any given section of ENGL 104 will be exposed to a variety of writing genres all emphasizing critical thought, self-expression, and most importantly, writing as a process. Typically, College Writing I faculty assign one or two narrative pieces, a summary and/or critical analysis, and some type of research-based work to be completed during the semester. And while instructors are not required to use a particular text, many junior faculty as well as adjuncts, rely on the most current version of St. Martin’s Guide to Writing as the text of choice in their courses.

These slight nuances aside, all sections of ENGL 104 must utilize “The UF English and Writing Program’s special edition of Keys for Writers,” which is also used for “upper-level writing courses” (The College of Liberal Arts 5). The relative continuity among assignments and texts in College Writing I is further complemented by a common final exam given to all sections of ENGL 104 and a common grading scale with firm guidelines regarding the distribution of points for major papers, minor assignments, and the aforementioned final. All students in the course must “earn a ‘C’ or higher” and “submit all major assignments” in order to earn course credit. Furthermore, “Students must take the final exam in order to have an opportunity to pass the course” (The College of Liberal Arts 6, 8). Passing grades include “A,” “A-,” “B+,” “B-,” “C+,” “C” (The College of Liberal Arts 6).

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36 Additional discussion regarding College Writing I guidelines can be found in Chapter 3.
COLLEGE WRITING I INSTRUCTORS OF TRADITIONAL PSEO STUDENTS: THEIR VOICES

Three UF College Writing I instructors lent their opinions and insight to the research for this study. Two respondents completed both the survey (Appendix C) and the interview (Appendix D) portions of the study; the other respondent completed the survey but not the interview. Combined, their voices give an overview of their impressions regarding the College Writing I experience for traditional PSEO students. Furthermore, their comments reveal much about their own teaching philosophies as well as their thoughts on postsecondary education as a transitioning factor—at least in terms of College Writing I at The University of Findlay. The respondents include a full-time UF faculty member and two UF adjuncts. The full-time UF faculty member (who has no high school teaching experience) and one of the adjuncts (who has taught at both the high school and the college level) have taught College Writing I for a number of years, and in that time, have instructed numerous postsecondary students. The remaining instructor participant taught her first three sections of College Writing I during Fall Semester 2006 and currently teaches at both the secondary and post-secondary level. For the purpose of clarity in explanation, and to protect the anonymity of the respondents, they will be referred to by pseudonyms for the remainder of this discussion.

STUDENT PREPAREDNESS

All three participants in the survey portion of the research indicated that their College Writing I sections met three days per week, and they each described the PSEO students they have encountered (who only number a few per section) as “well prepared” or “adequately prepared” for taking a college-level writing course. “Pam”, the UF faculty instructor, elaborated on the high school students’ preparation by commenting: “Most of the time they’re [PSEO students] really, really good. They’re on par or above their freshman contemporaries.” She also went on
to state, “Every once in awhile, I’ll get one and wonder, ‘how did you get here?’—but that’s true of typical freshman too.” Pam’s comments regarding her students stand as a challenge to the work of researchers such as Chris Jennings and Jane Hunn who state: “Educational reports reveal that high school students are graduating with deficient writing skills” (182). However, to be fair, if PSEO’s are operating as initially intended\(^37\), academically strong students are those who should constitute the make up of the typical PSEO population, and thus, one would expect PSEO students to be, as Pam states, “on par” with or even above the skill level of the average freshman enrollee. Furthermore, Susan Kapanke and Melissa Westemeier, describe a “seriousness” among high school students in PSEO classes (160) that may also explain Pam’s perception of her secondary students’ work as of an acceptable level.

**STUDENT GROWTH AS WRITERS**

Another similarity in survey responses could be found in the changes Pam, “Sheila” (Adjunct 1), and “Janet” (Adjunct 2) have each witnessed in their PSEO students’ understanding of college-level writing expectations as a result of taking the College Writing I course. All three instructors indicated that students displayed “marked improvement” in this understanding; furthermore, all explained that, at least in their view, the PSEO students grew in their own respective estimations of themselves as writers during the semester. “They stop writing five paragraph essays—as do the college students,” stated Pam in her interview; “they’re [the PSEO students] more mature and more confident writers [by course end].” This ability of students to move beyond the five paragraph essay stands, among many university educators, as a benchmark of a student’s internalization and understanding of college-level writing conventions. As

\(^{37}\) Upon inception, one reason Ohio PSEOs were initiated was to prevent overlap in instruction; in addition, these options promised to challenge the top tier of high school students beyond what they may have experienced in their high school classrooms. However, recent PSEO literature suggests a wider call for student participation in the program—not just PSEO “for the ‘select few’” (The Promise 44).
explained in a handout from The Writing Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: “Writing a five-paragraph theme is like riding a bicycle with training wheels; it’s a device that helps you learn. That doesn’t mean you should use it forever. Once you can write well without it, you can cast it off and never look back.” Advice, such as this, to first-year writing students implies that once student writers can utilize the conventions of the five-paragraph essay and “go beyond” those conventions, then they have, indeed, arrived as college-level writers. One may reasonably assume, then, that the students in Pam, Sheila, and Janet’s classes displayed the capabilities to “go beyond” the structured writing formats that many of them may have previously relied upon.

**TEACHER PEDAGOGIES**

All three participants’ responses regarding pedagogical choices in the college writing classroom also reveal similarities of instructional approaches: “Not a lot of lecturing. [We do] question and answer, discuss articles and writing techniques; we work in class drafting, pre-drafting, etc. We do group work—a smorgasboard of stuff,” said Pam. Likewise, Janet described her College Writing classroom as full of discussion: “I like the connection between talking and writing,” she stated, calling this work “verbal brainstorming.” Similar to techniques utilized by Pam, Janet also engages her class in group work and in-class essay writing as well as peer evaluation; she even has students engage in collaborative writing exercises.

In terms of pedagogy, Pam, who has never taught in the high school setting, cited “no difference” in her methodology for teaching high school students versus college students, although she did concede that “At times PSEO students do need a bit more encouragement in the area of development, mainly because of hesitation to express themselves—but then again, so do regular college students . . .” A “slight difference” in approach was noted by Sheila (the former high school English teacher) on her survey in regard to varying her pedagogical approaches from
high school students to college students. Here Janet differed most dramatically from the others in her response when she described her approach to teaching PSEO College Writing I versus high school writing as “measurable.” In explanation she writes, “Naturally, my expectations of high school juniors would be different from my expectations of college freshmen.” Although Janet does not indicate specifically that she equates PSEO students as “college freshmen” in this particular statement that interpretation is implied in her survey response. Moreover, as Janet’s later explication of this “measurable” difference in instruction shows, the disparity between the two levels goes beyond mere “expectations” to more pointed curricular concerns.

Consequently, while the three may have utilized a number of similar pedagogies in the College Writing I classroom, the overall experience of teaching College Writing I (with traditional PSEO students) combined with the respective instructors’ overall teaching experience in general revealed some of the existing gaps between high school and college writing instruction. Not surprisingly, those gaps were most readily visible to Janet who is currently teaching in both worlds. When asked to describe the impact teaching College Writing I has had on her instruction in other writing courses, Janet remarked, “I don’t know where to begin . . . there were gray areas, weaknesses in my teaching that have been strengthened . . . I’m learning so much.” She reiterated this point on her survey by describing the impact teaching in the PSEO classroom has had on the pedagogies she employs to teach writing in other situations; she writes: “I have sharpened and up-graded my teaching strategies for my high school English classes.”

NOTED DIFFERENCES IN HIGH SCHOOL/COLLEGE WRITING INSTRUCTION

Among areas of renewed and/or increased focus, said Janet, are thesis, audience, and MLA documentation techniques, especially in regard to citing online sources. And she has taken these elements back to her high school writing classroom: “I go back into the high school with new strategies from the college-level . . . I took what I had from [ENGL] 104 and then expected more
from my high school juniors—[I decided to] bring it up a notch.” Not only have Janet’s high school students been impacted as a result of her College Writing I teaching experience, but her colleagues have as well, since she shares with them the new ideas, information, and techniques she has garnered in her position at the post-secondary level.

To pause for a moment, it should be noted here that Janet’s responses indicate the possibilities for post-secondary-to-secondary partnerships to foster increased and/or improved communication between the two levels. A host of researchers suggest that such dialogues are among the best approaches to mending discord between high school and college writing instruction. For example, Herb Budden, Mary B. Nicolini, Stephen L. Fox, and Stuart Greene in their article, “What We Talk about When We Talk About College Writing,” argue that secondary and post-secondary English teachers do not talk to each other enough about college writing expectations (78). In fact, Budden et al. note that collaborative dialogues between instructors from both sides may yield answers to important questions such as “What separates first-year college composition faculty from high school English teachers?” (74). Richard E. Brantley and Diana R. Brantley also stress the fruitful possibilities when high schools and colleges collaborate in their efforts and these same researchers even ponder the possibility of co-teaching between college and high school faculty in a sort of “teacher exchange” (220)—an venture that might serve to “open eyes” on both sides of the divide. Specifically, Janet’s experience mirrors one-half of such an “exchange” and suggests the validity of that enterprise to improve communication across the secondary/post-secondary writing threshold. However, in order to be truly collaborative rather than yet another “top down” mandate, a give and take of information-sharing must occur between the two camps. In other words, it is not enough for the “Janets” of post-secondary writing education to experience “enlightenment” as the result of their
participation in these programs; their own insights and circumstances as secondary writing instructors should also inform their university colleagues. Then a true dialogue may exist.

**FIVE-PARAGRAPH ESSAY**

With this on-going lack of true dialogue duly noted, it may seem ironic that Janet expressed confidence that the high school where she is employed is “right on track” in terms of preparing its students for the demands of college writing. “At high school, they’re *learning* the essay form,” Janet stated, “at college they’re *using* the essay form. They’re expected to think outside the box and do more with it [the essay form].” She described this move from high school to college-level writing expectations as a “natural progression” and admitted that while some “lower functioning” students never get past the five paragraph essay format, others “bleed out of it”—an explanation reminiscent of the aforementioned advice from The Writing Center at North Carolina at Chapel Hill that first-year writers should strive to move beyond that limiting five-paragraph structure once its usefulness has been exhausted. Information from the Writing Center warns: “in a five-paragraph theme, form controls content, when it should be the other way around. Students begin with a plan for organization, and they force their ideas to fit it. Along the way, their perfectly good ideas get mangled or lost.”

And while the advice from the Writing Center points out the limitations of the five-paragraph model, this advice is also careful to underscore the initial benefits of the form by describing it as “a good way to learn how to write an academic essay. It’s a simplified version of academic writing that requires you to state an idea and support it with evidence. Setting a limit of five paragraphs narrows your options and forces you to master the basics of organization.” Thus, Janet’s perception that her high school is adequately preparing its student writers via, in part, through instruction in the five-paragraph essay as well as variations beyond it seems warranted when juxtaposed against the suggestions from The Writing Center.
In describing how she facilitates her students’ transition from writing a five paragraph essay to something more in-depth and meaningful, Janet explains:

I coax them out of the box, and let it happen naturally. It’s part of the progression of writing. Also, high school is more literature-based. However, the OGT [Ohio Graduation Test] has had an impact on instruction to include more non-fiction based [readings]. It’s moving us out of the literature realm.

Janet’s words of (arguably faint) praise for one of the residual effects of the OGT may come as a surprise to those who have long attributed some of the gaps between high school and college level writing expectations to the numerous state testing and curricular restrictions placed on secondary teachers. And while tests such as the OGT may help to expand students’ writing options and experiences through a push to examine the non-fiction genre, the fact remains that this test and others like it place value on grammatically clean, formulaic writing. The authors of The Writing Center handout obviously recognize this as they continue their justification of five-paragraph writing instruction on the secondary level with these words: “. . . many state-mandated end-of-grade writing tests, AP exams, and the SAT II writing test reward writers who follow the five-paragraph theme format.” Full-time university writing instructors, such as Pam, are also aware of the limitations state mandates put on secondary writing instruction. She explains: “I feel sorry for high school teachers, because they’re restrained by so many rules, regulations, and testing restrictions.”

All blame aside, Janet’s words suggest the secondary teacher’s ability to work within and beyond the system by first providing parameters such as the five-paragraph theme and then

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38 The impact (real or imagined) of such tests and restrictions on high school writing instruction is teased out more thoroughly in the cumulative analysis found in Chapter Five.
pushing students outside that proverbial “box.” Furthermore, as one teacher stated in the October 2006 UF-USA Conference at The University of Findlay, most students by their junior or senior year (and presumably all students in PSEO courses) have passed the OGT; thus, writing instruction during students’ last two years of high school can be open to increased experimentation and exploration in form (Payne et al.).

Before moving on, it should be noted that some researchers, such as Howard Tinberg, co-editor of What is “College-Level Writing?” conclude (via his conversations with high school teachers) that the five-paragraph theme may not be as prevalent in current secondary writing instruction as some might assume. According to Tinberg, secondary teachers “want college faculty to ‘jettison old and inaccurate notions of what writing is being assigned in high school (e.g. the five-paragraph themed essay)’” (qtd. in Bauman 9). However, Tinberg also notes that “even high school teachers admit that high school writing instruction is ‘formulaic,’ in larger part because of the vast range of student ability” as well as “pressure” of the No Child Left Behind Act (Bauman 9). As was suggested in the previous paragraph, in an effort, then, to combat that pressure and impart strong writing skills at the same time, instructors such as Janet may teach both within the constraints of the five-paragraph theme and outside those constraints. Lesley Roessing describes such an approach in her essay, “Toppling the Idol,” and Kenneth Lindblom suggests the same in “Teaching English in the World.” Lindblom writes:

... writing formulas lead to one thing: boring swatches of writing intended to do nothing other than result in a high score on a test of writing that tests nothing real about writing. But if the people who assess the writing expect to see school-writing mythrules followed,

39 According to Lindblom, “mythrules” are what author Edgar H. Schuster “calls unhelpful writing prescriptions” (104).
not following them can have serious consequences for students (105).

Lindblom’s advice, then, is that high school teachers must “teach students to follow school-writing mythrules” and “assist them in developing portable writing skills that will help them succeed beyond school systems and state exams” (105). Roessing has done just that in her classroom by focusing on “voice, choice, and style” (41), while Janet challenges her students to “do more” with the traditional writing formulas they may be familiar with. Thus, it may be argued that the generalization of all high school teachers prescribing solely to the five-paragraph format is unfair. In truth, instructors on the high school level often use and stretch the form in an effort to best serve their pupils.

THE TRADITIONAL POST-SECONDARY EXPERIENCE

Moving to the issue of “place”, a final question regarding the impact of where the College Writing I instruction occurred was posed to each of the respondents to ascertain their perceptions regarding the traditional PSEO students’ ability to assimilate into a regular college class. No problems were noted. In fact, Pam explained that she often does not know which students are postsecondary and which are regular students unless she makes a point to find out. As a result, she treats every student the same and does not change her content or approach to teaching the class: “Since the students are in with college students, they blend into the college classroom and receive the same instruction as college students.” However, she also stated that the students’ high school status “eventually comes out” often to the chagrin of the regular students who may not be excelling as readily as their high school-level counterparts in the course. According to Pam, an additional benefit for high school students in the college setting is that “[attending as a PSEO] proves to them they can fit in. Some feel like geeks or freaks at high school. They sometimes have a higher intelligence and seem to fit in better at the college level.” She has found this to be true especially among some young women and some students from the home-
schooled population. For such students, Pam concluded, that “[PSEO] is a much better experience than their high school situation. More than that, they get a head start on their college career.”

**COLLEGE WRITING I TRADITIONAL PSEO STUDENTS: THEIR VOICES**

Five students participated in the survey (Appendix A) portion of the research on traditional post-secondary students in the College Writing I classroom. Of those five, three consented to face-to-face interviews (Appendix B) as well. All were high school juniors when they enrolled at The University of Findlay, and all described their parents as “very involved” in their decision to participate in the PSEO program. In fact, all five indicated that a family member (either parent or sibling) played a significant role in either informing them or influencing them in regard to participation. In reflection, three of the five students surveyed found the College Writing I course more challenging than previous high school English courses they had taken; the other two students found College Writing I to be “on par” with its counterparts at the secondary level.

**STUDENT PREPAREDNESS AND GROWTH**

A similar breakdown could be seen in the students’ perceived level of preparedness upon entering the course. Three of the five felt well prepared, while the remaining two felt “somewhat prepared.” On average, these students spent anywhere from four to nine hours per week working on assignments for College Writing I, and all reported a “noticeable” improvement in their respective writing abilities after taking the course. Likewise, all but one student described themselves as “confident” about their ability to write at course end, while the remaining student described himself as “somewhat confident”. These responses of “confident” and “somewhat confident” represent a positive improvement in perception of writing ability for all students but one who indicated that she was confident about her ability to produce sound written work prior to taking the course. In addition, four out of five respondents noted a “moderate” change in their
approach to writing as a result of taking the course. One student described her change in approach as “significant”.

**ELEMENTS OF “GOOD” WRITING**

When asked to rank the elements of good writing in order of importance (see Figure 2), nearly all respondents (4 of 5) ranked Thesis as number one, and the respondent who did not rank Thesis first, ranked it number two with Organization taking the top spot, because (in this student’s words) “Once you are organized, finishing an essay is simple.” Despite this number one ranking for Organization, three other students placed Organization fourth, and one student put it at the bottom of the list in terms of importance. Interestingly, though, all students responding included Organization (outlining/focusing the argument) as one of the elements in their explanatory paragraph about how to write a three-five page paper. For example, Student A⁴⁰ writes: “I would first determine the topic and supporting points. I would then research the topic more in-depth. I would form an outline for the thesis and main points . . .” Likewise,

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⁴⁰ Since respondents’ surveys were anonymous, I have assigned an alphabet letter to each student in order to distinguish respondents from one another.
Student B explains her process as follows: “Pick credible sources and read through them. Pick specific points to emphasize in the essay. Make a Web and outline . . .” Student C states: “I would gather info to help argue and support my specific point. Then, I would research the info and organize the info to begin writing . . .” Thus, even though the respondents did not always overtly recognize organization as an important writing element, their comments suggest that it factors significantly into the early stages of their respective writing process(es).

The same four respondents who marked Thesis as the most important element of good writing indicated that Development of the thesis was next on their list of writing priorities. According to Student A, “I thought a strong thesis is extremely important, and that the supporting details are of secondary importance.” In addition, the same student who ranked Organization as one and Thesis as two followed his choice of Thesis with Development just as his peers had. As a whole, Style ranked consistently near the bottom of the list with all students placing it at either number 5 or 6, while Grammar hovered somewhere the middle/lower end of the rankings with marks of 3, 4, 5 (two students chose five), and 6 respectively. From there, some disparity in ranking occurred as 80% of the students marked Audience number three or four, while one student indicated that audience awareness is the least important element in writing a good paper.

AUDIENCE

Interestingly, in the interview portion of this research, two of the three interviewees returned to this notion of audience and commented that the College Writing I course increased their understanding and awareness of audience—a point Kapanke and Westemeier see as an important element to stress among young writers (160). Patrick Sullivan, co-editor of What is “College Level” Writing?, has also placed audience on his “short list of attributes for good college-level writing” (Bauman 1, 8), and David Foster and David R. Russell in Writing and Learning in Cross-National Perspective note that a “shift in audience” is often a difficult move
for students in first-year college writing courses, since first-year students tend to write solely for their teachers or classmates (15). The words of one interviewee, Kelly\textsuperscript{41}, reflect this bent toward a narrow view of audience: “In middle school, we just wrote for the teacher.” Foster and Russell note that such a view is problematic since “They [high school students] are on the threshold of entering a professional world in which they are preparing to write for other professionals in business, industry, government, and nonprofit sectors” (15).

According to Janet Alsup and Michael Bernard-Donals, one way to transition young writers across the audience threshold is to teach students that their arguments need to change minds (125); in other words, students need to envision their audience as a larger community—not just their classroom (130). With that in mind, then, the consequences of a student’s argument are what help to make it real (130). Alsup and Bernard-Donals also suggest that students be exposed to a wide variety of “textual arguments” such as television, newspapers, books, radio, and the internet in order to increase their understanding of audience (128). Roessing suggests the same, and states: “The best device I have found for demonstrating the importance of purpose and audience in choosing format and mode [of writing] is analyzing advertisements” (44). Such advice warrants merit in that one respondent, Luke, attributed his early understanding of audience and tone not to his previous high school writing experience but to reading—especially the reading of magazines.

**INCREASED INTENSITY AND DEMANDS**

An additional common theme among the interviewees was increased intensity and demands in their college writing experience as opposed to the previous expectations that had been asked of their high school writing. “[ENGL] 104 definitely took a lot more work,” explained Luke, “high

\textsuperscript{41} In order to distinguish respondents in the interview portion of the data collection and to protect their anonymity, pseudonyms will replace the students’ actual names for the remainder of the chapter.
school papers I could write the night before and get an ‘A’”. These responses corroborate the claim of one PSEO instructor who shared that students in College Writing I are “stretched to their limits” even to the point of “parental complaints about grades at times” (Payne et al.). Luke admitted that the course did “lower his GPA a little”, but he still found the experience to be worthwhile; likewise, according to the PSEO instructor quoted above, these same students are then “much better prepared for the grade shock in college” (Payne et al.). Foster and Russell also note the increased intensity and likelihood of change in writing instruction in first-year composition courses. And because of level of this intensity and change, the authors argue that the move from high school to college writing is akin to learning a new language: “In much the same way people learning a foreign language experience what has been called ‘interference’ from their first language, students carry unconscious habits of writing into the university environment—until they experience the shock of difference, and often failure” (15-16). If what Foster and Russell say is true, then Luke’s experience regarding grades in College Writing I (as with that of his peers) suggests that PSEO students (and their parents) have the opportunity to weather that “shock” earlier than their typical first-year counterparts, and as a result, be better prepared for college-level expectations once they enroll full-time. Furthermore, Foster and Russell’s words indicate that that “shock” goes beyond just grades and includes a shift from the writing “habits” and foci of high school to those of college.

THE ISSUE OF “CHOICE”

In a discussion regarding high school writing assignments, the students revealed at least one of the reasons why their college writing assignments challenged them in new ways as writers and took more effort and time than their high school assignments is because these assignments forced them to think and work “outside the box.” According to Greg, “in high school, we followed somewhat of a pattern,” and Kelly explained that as high school students, she and her classmates
basically wrote in the same style or format year after year: “we just wrote more pages [each year],” she noted. Furthermore, unlike many of their high school writing assignments which (according to the respondents) encouraged them to “report” information (in research form or otherwise), the college writing assignments they were given challenged them to choose and defend a position—something they were unaccustomed to doing as writers. As a result, says Kelly, “It [college writing] was more difficult. It was argumentative, and I had to pick a side; that was harder.”

Roessing discusses this notion of “choice” in her essay and explains that “Choice returns the power to the writer. Students who exercise their choices write what they like and what others like to read” (42). However, for students who have never been afforded choice in their writing or have been afforded little choice, this independence can be an overwhelming thing. In addition, the element of choice does not necessarily have to mean “choice of topic”; it might also mean choice of form, style, or tone of a piece of writing. “High school helped with grammar, set up, and writing the beginning, middle, and end of an essay,” said Kelly. In other words, Kelly’s high school writing instruction did exactly what Janet indicated sometimes happens at the secondary level: the instruction related the form for writing but did not elaborate on how that form could be individualized, stretched, or altered for best use.

**PROCESS**

As with the students’ somewhat rocky transition from “reporting” information to arguing effectively about it, none of the three students interviewed seemed to have internalized the notion of writing as a process by semester end. Granted, each saw personal growth in themselves as writers over the course of the semester and each demonstrated a cognizance of the need for process (at least when it came to writing “English” papers); however, whether or not these same students would fully incorporate the writing process in future writing assignments appeared
unlikely as evidenced in their responses. Greg stated that there is a “different approach to writing an English paper than a science paper” and explained that the English paper required topic, structure, outline, research, introduction, body, conclusion, rough draft, grammar checks, professor check, and finally full rough draft. In contrast, Greg commented that he might write “more than one draft [of a science paper]; it depends on the assignment.” Still, his response suggests that “process” is just for English class.

Similarly, Kelly explained that she did not like rough drafts and outlines—“no bubbles and clusters.” Furthermore, she stated that “even if you try to organize, you may have to try to do it [the assignment] all at once because of time restraints.” The possibility of utilizing process seemed a bit more likely in the comments of Luke when he described how he typically would approach writing a paper (after taking College Writing I): “[I’d] split it up—do a little bit every day instead of all at once. Sometimes I get a peer review or go to the writing center.” Overall, though, the students’ responses indicate that they did not make the transition from what Ellen Lavelle and Anthony J. Guarino call “surface writing” and “deep writing.” Lavelle and Guarino explain that “deep writing” is “based on taking a proactive position geared towards making a new meaning and using strategies such as complex revision”, while “surface writing” consists of that “which is primarily reproductive, involving a listing strategy and a linear outcome or presentation of facts” (296). And while the students’ writing may (or may not) have gone beyond a “listing strategy”, the combined effect of their descriptions of the writing process suggests a decidedly more linear than recursive approach.

**PARTICIPATION IN TRADITIONAL PSEO**

Despite any overarching questions regarding the “success” of each student’s transition from high school to college-level writers, all three described their participation as traditional PSEO students in College Writing I in positive terms. In general, though, these positive reviews had
more to do with the post-secondary experience overall than the students’ respective specific experiences in the College Writing I course. For example, Kelly enjoyed the “feel of college” and the opportunity to meet others. She stated: “It made me feel good to be in with a mixed [regular and PSEO students] group. I liked it [PSEO], because I came from a smaller school, and I got away from the cliques.” This ability to “fit in” better at the college level than at the high school level is one that College Writing I instructor Pam saw as relevant, too. Kelly also noted that there was “more exchange, more talk in the mixed group” than in her high school classes, which may have been due in part to the pedagogical choices indicative of the three PSEO instructors in this survey—all who cited “discussion” among the integral elements of their teaching methods.

And maybe it was that discussion, the attention to argument, the affordance of choice, a combination of the three or even some other factor that students found compelling about the course. Whatever the case, Greg commented that he “was more motivated,” in the traditional PSEO classroom than he had been during his high school writing instruction. In addition, Luke acknowledged an extra dividend to participation in the post-secondary enrollment program when he stated: “taking college courses here is what made me attractive to the school I’m going to. I wouldn’t be going to the school I’m going to now [in the future] if I didn’t have college classes.” Such benefits are evident to the instructors as well. Pam shared the story of one student who entered college at Miami University as a first-semester junior thanks to his post-secondary enrollment courses. “It clearly helped him,” Pam stated. She went on to mention the financial benefit for parents (and/or students) who must contemplate the cost of paying four years worth of college tuition, and she also suggested that the experience gives students insight into whether or not they really want to attend the particular university at which they do their PSEO work. Thus,
when taken as a whole, these comments clearly indicate that the participants in this particular section of the research study consider there to be many potential benefits for students enrolled in a post-secondary experience.

CONCLUSION

In reflection, a number of initial observations relevant to the central study questions of this research can be made thanks to the findings gleaned from the student and instructor survey and interview responses. And while it must be acknowledged that the findings in this chapter represent a very small sampling of students and teachers in the traditional PSEO College Writing I setting and, thus, may not be indicative of a larger population, the initial data gathered here includes particular points that merit attention in that these points either serve to contribute much needed data to the discussion of PSEO writing instruction. Furthermore, while Chapter Five provides a more thorough analysis and delineation of these findings as well as a cumulative synthesis of the data collected from all three places of study, some preliminary thoughts are in order here.

First, in review, the questions posed in the both the surveys and interviews were designed to elicit responses regarding 1) the impact of teacher/professor background and pedagogical choices in the instruction of high school-age writers; 2) the role “place” plays (if at all) in writing instruction; and 3) the ability of a post-secondary enrollment writing class to live up to PSEO proponents’ claims that the program, overall, provides students a means of “seamless transition” from high school to college.

Pertinent to question number one is the finding that, despite differences in experience and background, all three instructors utilized teaching methodologies in their College Writing I course(s) that included group work and discussion. Furthermore, all reported a high level of
expectation for their post-secondary enrolled students, and Janet, who continues to teach at the secondary level, reported that those expectations now affect how she teaches composition to her high school students. In particular, the instructors’ responses indicate the college-level agenda of fostering students’ critical literacy through discussion. The instructors’ claims of “high expectations” were then corroborated by the students participating in this study, who each cited the intensity and demands of the College Writing I course as elements of difference from their high school writing experiences. Part of that “difference” may lie in the pedagogical methodologies, since college writing instructors, to borrow from Budden, et al., “ask [students] to analyze, and to analyze is to question, to wonder, to empathize, and to understand” (83). In other words, this emphasis on analytical thinking or “thinking outside the box” may contribute to the PSEO students’ perception of increased intensity in their college writing course as opposed to their general high school writing instruction.

In terms of “place” of instruction, the instructors as well as the students noted a number of benefits to participating in a PSEO on the college campus. As a whole, the students revealed no awkwardness or unease in being “mixed” with “regular” college students, and many of the participants shared what they perceived to be positive aspects of such an arrangement—from leaving behind high school cliques to engaging in more lively debate and discussion to meeting new people and getting a head start on their college careers. In effect, it might be argued that students in these settings experience their first opportunities at joining “disciplinary conversations . . . within not only the social system of the classroom, among peers and teachers—as in secondary school—but also within the system of disciplinary debates, entering a conversation between and with experts” (Foster and Foster 17). Thus, students’ positive views of their post-secondary place of instruction might also reflect their own growing sense of
academic self; in other words, the traditional PSEO experience affords students the opportunity to be “challenged intellectually” while at the same time contributing to “personal growth” (Alsup and Bernard-Donals 130). Worthy of attention, though, in these responses is the fact that none relates directly to particular elements of college-level writing instruction. Instead, each of the responses reflects an overall satisfaction with post-secondary enrollment options in general.

In terms of PSEO as a transitioning agent, several elements of interest surfaced, among them the fact that the instructors described the PSEO students as “on par” with their first-year college counterparts while nationwide reports indicate that high school students “are graduating with deficient writing skills” (Jennings and Hunn 182) and “high schools are failing students by not preparing them for college” (Alliance for Excellent Education). Granted, PSEO students are expected to be an astute bunch, since PSEOs were first initiated, in part, to “provide expanded opportunities for appropriately qualified high school students to experience coursework at the college or university level” (ODE The Promise 8). Thus, it may come as no surprise that the students also perceived themselves to be “well prepared” or at least “somewhat prepared” by their high schools for the demands of college-level writing (a level of cognitive-dissonance may be occurring here as well).

At first glance, then, these findings seem to indicate perhaps less of a gap between high school and college writing instruction than may have been previously thought. However, disparity in instruction surfaced when Janet explained that College Writing I’s emphasis on thesis, audience, and documentation represented a different focus than that which she and her colleagues at the secondary level currently espoused. The students, as well, noted the increased attention to audience and process, in particular, as relatively “new” elements introduced into
their writing repertoire—areas that many researchers (see Foster and Foster) have previously indicated as probable disconnects between the two levels of instruction.

Finally, the findings from this chapter suggest that while “seamless transition” does not occur across the high school to college writing threshold via traditional PSEOs (at least at The University of Findlay), one positive residual effect of the program is its likelihood to foster dialogue between the two sides of the divide. Specifically, Janet, who alternately dwells on both sides of the writing “gap”, represents one-half of that potential dialogue. And while Kapanke and Westemeierer, among others, “agree that . . . collaboration between high school and university is instructive not only for students but also for teachers” (167), true collaboration requires an effort from both sides to understand parameters within which the other operates. As a result, Janet’s explanation that her instruction at the high school-level informs what she does at the college-level and vice versa seems particularly relevant, since it suggests that each side could conceivably learn something from the other. Furthermore, Janet’s ideas also reveal that high school writing instructors can and some even do teach writing skills that can meet state standards as well as prepare students for college-level writing. Still, these words point out one of the underlying disconnects between the two levels—a disconnect that both warrants genuine dialogue and disabuses any notion of “seamless transition.”
CHAPTER THREE

THE UNIVERSITY OF FINDLAY-UNIVERSITY SCHOOL ARTICULATION (UF-USA) PROGRAM FOR COLLEGE WRITING I

RESEARCH INTO POST-SECONDARY ENROLLMENT OPTIONS AND COLLEGE WRITING ON THE HIGH SCHOOL CAMPUS

While Chapter Two delineates the traditional post-secondary enrollment options program at The University of Findlay, this chapter delves into one of its counterparts—a post-secondary program that allows students to enroll in classes for college credit without ever leaving their high school campus. Known as The University of Findlay-University School Articulation Program (UF-USA), this option brings post-secondary instruction to the secondary environment via the training of high school teachers to function as UF adjuncts. This chapter begins with a discussion of a history of the UF-USA program—a program, it should be noted, not solitary in its aim and venture, since similar programs exist in Ohio and throughout the United States. The discussion then narrows to the specifics of the College Writing I course being offered in high school classes through UF-USA. This information is followed by a synthesis of the findings from surveys, interviews, and classroom observations conducted at two UF-USA high schools where the College Writing I course is currently taught.

Specifically, the purpose of the synthesis section is to draw preliminary conclusions regarding the main foci of this research: 1) the impact of teacher experience and pedagogy on writing instruction; 2) the perceived impact of “place” on writing instruction; and 3) the transitioning factor post-secondary enrollment options may play in aiding students across the threshold from high school to college writing expectations. Chapter Four to follow, then, examines these same questions among teachers and participants in The University of Findlay’s non-traditional post-secondary enrollment options program where high school students are grouped homogenously on
the college campus in order to receive writing instruction. The final chapter of this work provides a synthesis and analysis of findings regarding the research questions as applied to all three “types” of PSEO writing instruction offered by UF: traditional, UF-USA, and non-traditional.

**HISTORY OF THE UF-USA PROGRAM**

During Fall Semester 2001, ten years after initiating its first Post-Secondary Enrollment programs, The University began its UF-USA program with the participation of thirty students from four high schools (“UF-USA Early Entrance Program”). The program, which allows students to take college courses taught by UF trained instructors on their respective high school campuses, is considered a form of “concurrent enrollment.” Slightly different from dual enrollment, which allows students to receive credit for both high school and college courses simultaneously, concurrent enrollment refers to “high school/college collaborations that allow qualified high school students to earn college credits by taking college courses taught in their high schools” (“About Concurrent Enrollment”). According to concurrent enrollment guidelines, colleges and/or universities “select and prepare outstanding high school instructors to teach the college courses”, and participating college faculty members provide on-going support to the high school instructors in order to maintain consistency in the delivery and rigor of instruction (“About Concurrent Enrollment”, “Welcome to the NACEP”).

The University of Findlay developed its UF-USA concurrent enrollment program in response to “frustrations” that many high school students, parents, teachers, and administrators had with traditional post-secondary enrollment options. Those frustrations include the fact that traditional PSEOs take top-notch students away from their high school campuses, which can leave classrooms “leader-less” and high school teachers without those coveted students who foster
strong debate and “raise the bar” for high school campuses as a whole. Furthermore, state funding is dependent upon student time spent on the high school campus; therefore, when students leave their high school for an extended period of time (in this case, to attend classes on a college campus), that school district loses money. Additional challenges for school districts with traditional PSEOs include the high school’s “ability to operate a uniform class schedule that meets the needs of all students throughout the class day” and still allows for needed flexibility within the PSEO enrollee’s schedule (“UF History”). This particular challenge includes the factor of “travel time” for students who might otherwise miss needed classes on their high school campus while traveling to or from the university setting for their post-secondary enrollment option classes. Travel also poses another concern in that the safety of these young high school drivers is a notable worry as they trek from their high schools to the university campus and back again in temperamental Ohio weather (“UF History”). Overall, the UF-USA Program, by design, has strived to address and alleviate these frustrations and challenges.

The dialogue for discussing these frustrations began when UF College of Education faculty members met with superintendents, principals, and teachers from local school districts to develop “an alternative approach” to existing PSEO programs (“UF History”). The result was the UF-USA program, which has been touted as an answer that “meets the challenge of providing seamless education while addressing educational issues faced by participating districts” (“UF History”). The genesis of UF’s concurrent enrollment program began, though, in 1997 when a course in general psychology was offered at Van Buren High School in Van Buren, Ohio (Taylor). While this pilot course was taught by UF faculty, its implementation was clearly an effort to take “a PSO class to a high school instead of having the students come here [to UF]” (Taylor). Several years earlier in 1994, UF faculty member N. Susan Bakaitis had traveled to
Edgewood College in St. Louis where she had seen this option of offering college courses “at the school, in the school day” and suggested that UF “emulate their program”. In a memo to then UF President Kenneth Zirkle, Bakaitis writes:

The school district wins because now it can say that within its regular offerings there is an opportunity for their students to earn college credit.

(Target county or smaller schools.) We win by hiring adjuncts, collecting the money, and having Findlay become a familiar and friendly name in more schools . . .

Thus, the initial concept of UF’s concurrent enrollment program called for UF faculty or adjuncts to provide the instruction in these courses. However, under the direction of Dr. Judy Wahrmann and due in part to her collaborative efforts with area high school administrators and teachers, the UF-USA program was born and took on a slightly different bent than the one Bakaitis first reported on when she returned from Missouri. Instead of full-time UF faculty or adjuncts, the UF-USA program—like its sister programs in Ohio at Oberlin, Kenyon, and elsewhere—would train qualified high school instructors to teach the courses and, in effect, become university adjuncts. The program quickly flourished, and what began as courses in calculus and writing has expanded to include biology, chemistry, political science, history, and Spanish with the promise of more changes, additions, and growth as needed (“UF History”).

According to founder and current UF-USA director Wahrmann, “Today [2006] the program encompasses twenty-six high schools and [services] more than 660 students.” Compared to the four high schools and thirty students of just five years ago, this program has demonstrated phenomenal growth most notably due in part to its goal of meeting the various needs of the participating high schools and their students.
The University of Findlay does not stand alone in its effort to ameliorate the challenges of providing solid, affordable, and accessible educational alternatives to its post-secondary enrollment population. As early as 1978, Kenyon College, also in Ohio, began exploring the prospect of teaching entry-level college courses on high school campuses and in 1979-82 began its “three-year pilot implementation phase” of its Kenyon Academic Partnership (KAP) (Westfall and Rutkoff). Today, KAP boasts a consortium of twenty affiliates, an annual KAP Convocation for professional development among its educators, and a yearly three week Summer Seminar for its student participants. Considered a “pioneer in ‘concurrent enrollment’ programs nationally” with student enrollees number over 1, 000, KAP strives to provide a “more seamless progression” of “study from school to college” (qtd. in Westfall and Rutkoff). Oberlin College, in Ohio, offers a similar concurrent enrollment program known as OCEAN (Oberlin College Educational Alliance) to the high school students in its region. Like its counterpart programs at The University of Findlay and Kenyon College, “OCEAN courses are supervised by . . . faculty members and taught by carefully selected and trained high school teachers” (“OCEAN”). Furthermore, “OCEAN courses are kept to the same rigorous standards as the rest of [the college’s] curriculum” (“OCEAN”)—a goal shared by all reputable concurrent enrollment programs. Outside Ohio, similar programs can be found in other states including Indiana and New York. Indiana University’s Advance College Project (ACP) and Syracuse University’s Project Advance (SUPA) have long established concurrent enrollment partnerships—ACP since 1982 and SUPA since 1972, and both “go to considerable lengths to ensure that courses offered

42 Although this particular chapter focuses on private universities in Ohio that provide post-secondary enrollment options on the high school campus, similar programs have been implemented in both private and public universities across the United States. For example see the University of Idaho’s Dual Enrollment Program and Chattanooga (Tennessee) State’s program.
through concurrent enrollment programs are equivalent to those offered on campus” (Bonesteel and Sperry 41).

In an effort to regulate and enforce “rigorous standards” among the burgeoning number of colleges and universities offering concurrent enrollment programs over the past twenty years, the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnership (NAECP) was founded in 1999. Today, the NACEP serves as an accrediting body that “supports members by providing standards of excellence, research, communication, and advocacy” (“Welcome to NACEP”). The organization includes partnerships not only within the USA but also in Japan and offers “critical assistance to both established and newly formed concurrent enrollment partnerships” (“NACEP Membership”). According to Wahrmann, The University of Findlay’s UF-USA Program currently holds provisional status in the NACEP and is seeking full NACEP accreditation. In order to be eligible for full accreditation status, the post-secondary institution must, first, have a concurrent enrollment program that has been in existence for a minimum of five years. In addition, the petitioning institution must also undergo “an assessment of [its] program’s ability to meet the evidence of NACEP standards” (“Membership Categories, Fees, and Privileges”).

Since evidence of course rigor and accountability is such a vital element of any successful concurrent enrollment program, Margaret Bonesteel and Sharon Sperry in “Building a Better Bridge” suggest “five specific safeguards” as “minimum requirements that concurrent enrollment programs should meet” (41). Based on criteria being developed by the NACEP, these safeguards include assurance of content rigor, college departmental supervision of the program, instructor selection, ongoing professional development, and program assessment (41-42). According to the authors,

Concurrent enrollment programs . . . when they can meet the quality
standards . . . have been able to successfully bridge that unfortunate
gap, bringing high school and college closer together academically
and connecting college faculty members to high school teachers for
the common purpose of helping high school students make a
successful transition to college (43).

Thus, Bonesteel and Sperry view concurrent enrollment as having the unique potential of
facilitating a common ground on which high school and university instructors can build a better
rapport that just might benefit themselves and their collective students as well.

DESCRIPTION AND RATIONALE

Similar to the common ground suggested by Bonesteel and Sperry, The University of Findlay
hails the UF-USA Program as one of its “points of pride” in that it fosters real partnerships
between the university and high schools (Wahrmann). As one of three early entrance options
available at The University of Findlay, the UF-USA Program, known as “Option C”, “provides
high school students the opportunity to take college-level general education courses in their
home school environment and obtain college credit for the course” (“UF-USA Early Entrance”).
Thus, UF-USA enrollees are afforded the “opportunity to get a ‘jump start’ on their college
careers” alongside their high school classmates “at their home site” while “avoiding the hazards
and saving the traveling expenses of driving to a college campus” (“UF-USA Program”).
Furthermore, since the courses are taught in the students’ “home environment”, student leaders—
who are among those most likely to participate in PSEOs—remain on their high school
campuses, and as a result, school districts are not forced to sacrifice their most valuable role
models in order to provide those same role models with the best educational opportunities. Also
benefiting from concurrent enrollment programs, such as UF-USA, are school districts which do
not have convenient access to post-secondary institutions. Such programs afford students in remote or isolated rural districts the same opportunities for post-secondary instruction as their peer at more urban or centrally located high school campuses.

Not only do the students benefit from the UF-USA Program, but according to The University of Findlay’s website, the high school on-campus instructors do as well since this high school/university collaboration exposes instructors to “professional opportunities through the sharing of collaborative teaching and learning strategies” (“History and Rationale”). In addition, since “local teachers are paired with a University of Findlay professor”, the potential for increased teaching exchanges between high school and university faculty is increased (“UF-USA Early Enrollment Program”, “History and Rationale”). The result, says The University of Findlay is a “win-win” situation for all involved:

Through school-based post-secondary options (UF-USA), high school students can earn college credits without having to drive to university campuses. High school teachers find learning to teach college-level courses stimulating, especially when they have the support of faculty mentors. High schools benefit when student leaders are not away for several periods of the day. Everyone wins! (“Points of Pride”).

PARTICIPATION, GUIDELINES, AND FUNDING

Student participants in the UF-USA Program must be of high school status (grades 9-12) and must have a cumulative grade point average of 3.2 or higher. Previous guidelines admitted students with a 3.0 GPA or higher, but these guidelines were recently amended by UF-USA directors in order to “assure the success” of all participants (Wahrmann). A further measure of “assurance” is UF-USA’s requirement that participating students only enroll for a maximum of
eight credit hours per semester (Wahrmann). UF-USA’s maximum credit hour rule is similar to that of Kenyon’s KAP program which restricts students in the number of credit hours in which they can enroll due to the “rigor” of the courses (Westfall and Rutkoff). Furthermore, in addition to UF-USA’s requirements, participating schools may also implement their own standards above and those of The UF-USA Program in order to ensure the success of their particular students.

After meeting the academic requirements of both UF-USA and their school district, student participants must then sign an agreement that acknowledges their financial responsibility to The University of Findlay in return for college credit they will earn. That agreement reads as follows:

I understand that a $250 fee will be charged by The University of Findlay to cover the cost of the 3-credit course ($300 for 4-credit course). My family will be responsible for paying this fee prior to the completion of the course unless the school district has made arrangements with the University of Findlay to cover this expense. I also understand that I am responsible for this tuition charge once I submit the application form and will abide by all University of Findlay financial and registration policies and procedures (Application for Admission/Registration).

This $250 student cost per credit hour is sometimes wholly or partially absorbed by the school district. Likewise, in most cases, participating students are not charged for “books, materials, or service fees associated with the courses” as the participating school district is responsible for meeting these costs (“UF-USA Early Entrance”). Thus, even if a participating student must foot the cost of his or her tuition, at $250 per three credit-hour course, the student is paying well
below a traditional UF student’s cost of $481 per semester hour for a course (“Undergraduate Charges”) that carries transferable college credit.

As with its students, interested school districts must enter into a partnership agreement with The University of Findlay in order to participate in the UF-USA Program as well. This partnership agreement states that:

Each participating school district must contribute $1,200 per teacher partnership ($600 renewal) to participate in the program. Each high school student will pay $250 per 3 credit-hour course or $300 for a 4 credit-hour course. The student fees will be invoiced to the individual students, but the district may contribute all or [a] portion of the student fees” (“History and Rationale”).

UF-USA’s $1,200 first-time yearly fee and $600 renewal for participation provide an attractive draw to Ohio school districts, since traditional Post-Secondary Enrollment Options cost districts upwards of $1,000 in state funding per student (Wahrmann). In explanation, “part of a school district’s state aid travels with each student taking early college classes” (“Students Benefit from Early Access”); said another way, “depending on how much time a student is out of school, the school gets that much less subsidy” (Wahrmann and Riffle). Therefore, when high school students leave their district’s building for even a portion of the school day, that district loses money. However, because concurrent enrollment options allow students to take college classes on their own high school campuses, “local school districts do not lose state funding, since the students do not leave their local school for classes” (“UF-USA Early Entrance”).

According to the article, “Gardner pushes funding boost for higher education,” Eastwood (Ohio) school district “spent about $100,000 for PSO classes in 2004-05, or $350 per class” and
“the state does not reimburse school districts for money spent on PSO classes” (Thomas 2). To remedy this funding loss and still meet student academic needs, Eastwood recently partnered with UF-USA (Thomas 2). In the same article, Ohio Republican Senator Randy Gardner touts the cost-effectiveness of concurrent enrollment programs and argues that “it makes sense financially and academically to provide college-level credit through classes held on high school campuses. Not only will it save families in future tuition costs, it also saves districts money by keeping students in their classrooms” (Thomas 2). Thus, for a mere $1,200 per teacher partnership per school district per year, any number of qualifying students in that particular district may participate in concurrent enrollment at The University of Findlay. Such partnerships can often save a district thousands of dollars per year if that district has a large population of students that may otherwise elect to enroll in post-secondary courses at college campuses within a convenient driving distance of the high school campus. It should be noted that Oberlin’s fee of $1,500 per district for single course participation, as well as Oberlin’s subsequent charge of $50 per semester hour per student (“OCEAN”) are commensurate to the UF-USA participation costs for both student and district.

Aside from funding issues, those electing to teach in concurrent enrollment programs are yet another crucial element of the partnership. UF-USA, and its respective counterparts, (Oberlin, Kenyon) claim that involvement in concurrent enrollment programs affords high school teachers a method of advancement in their careers as educators. According to UF-USA’s “Invitation to Participate,” “qualified teachers “from a participating school district’s “existing staff will be trained to become adjunct faculty for The University of Findlay.” Thus, while teaching the concurrent enrollment course(s), the high school teacher is considered The University of Findlay faculty and consequently abides by The University’s rules, guidelines, and expectations for that
Training for participating teachers is done at a Summer Training Institute held each year during the third week of June on The University of Findlay campus. The training varies in length from two to five days “depending on the course and past participation of teachers in the program” and is “specialized to the specific content area” the teacher will be instructing (“History and Rationale”). A University of Findlay faculty member from the specific content area teaches and directs the training, and participating teachers receive one to three graduate credits for successfully completing the institute requirements which include “teaching their courses, and coordinating them [their courses] with their University mentors” (“History and Rationale”).

This training, according to UF-USA, ensures the quality and rigor of instruction in the concurrent enrollment classroom, and thus addresses the concerns of dual enrollment detractors who question whether such programs are truly “college level given the enormous range of academic standards in higher education” (Wahrmann). To further ensure “rigorous” standards, the high school instructors are trained to teach “duplicates of the courses taught at The University” and “receive support throughout the year” through email, Blackboard, and telephone calls. Wahrmann considers the training and subsequent follow-up “really good, embedded professional development” and tells participating teachers who have successfully completed the institute’s training: “When you teach, you become a University of Findlay adjunct; your students are University of Findlay students.”

**UF-USA COLLEGE WRITING I COURSES**

As of October 2006, more than 660 students from twenty-six high schools were involved in the UF-USA Early Enrollment Program, and of those 660 students, 188 were enrolled in UF College Writing I courses (**UF-USA Fall**). What started in Fall Semester 2003, as a small group
of thirty-one writing students has now grown to encompass fifteen UF-trained teachers at fourteen participating high schools (UF-USA Summary, UF-USA Instructors). Thus, from remote rural areas such as Danbury High School on the shores of Lake Erie in Marblehead, Ohio, to urban settings such as Start High School in Toledo, Ohio, students and teachers are utilizing The University of Findlay’s concurrent enrollment option for college writing instruction (“UF-USA Partnership Schools”).

To be eligible to teach ENGL 104 in the UF-USA program, high school English teachers must have a minimum of a Master’s degree and must earn at least a “B” in UF-USA’s EDUC 546: Teaching College Composition taught during the UF-USA Summer Institute (UF-USA Guidelines). Theirs is a five-day seminar, much like a full graduate course, and is considered to be some of the most intensive training at the program’s Summer Institute (Wahrmann). Requirements include active class participation as well as successful completion of a portfolio of materials that demonstrates the high school instructor’s ability to build a functional syllabus; construct quality, major writing assignments; rationalize course design and pedagogy; and respond correctly and convincingly to take-home exam questions (Payne “UF-USA English Institute”). Laden with “current theories, issues, and debates concerning both the processes of writing and the teaching of writing in the classroom”, UF-USA’s English training challenges participants to “not only become familiar with various arguments about writing but also be able to begin to critically evaluate such arguments and form [their] own arguments in response to ongoing debates within composition studies” (Payne “UF-USA English Institute”).

Once a teacher has successfully completed the initial requirements of the Summer Institute for training in College Writing I, he or she receives graduate credit and then must attend a yearly “refresher” in order to continue teaching in the UF-USA program (Payne, et al). For English
teachers, this “refresher” or “recertification workshop” typically consists of a one day seminar where veteran UF-USA teachers enter into a conversation with the class of “in-coming” teachers regarding the expectations of the program. In addition, veteran UF faculty member, Dr. Scott Payne, who organizes and facilitates the English Summer Institute, uses these one-day refreshers to address any concerns or questions the returning English UF-USA faculty may have. Payne also utilizes this time to discuss with the teachers any patterns or areas of concern he has noted when reviewing samples of their students’ writing over the course of the semester(s) in which the teachers and their students participated in the UF-USA program.

Payne’s periodic review of student writing samples is one mode of assessment aimed at ensuring UF-USA’s integrity in providing challenging, college-level instruction to its concurrent enrollment students. Furthermore, UF-USA College Writing I students take the same, uniform final exam given to traditional College Writing I students on The University of Findlay campus. As an additional measurement of on-going standards, the concurrent enrollment students’ final exams are read and scored (along with the “regular” students’ exams) by on-campus University of Findlay English College Writing I instructors, and Payne conducts a yearly “brief, evaluative update” on each teacher’s performance (UF-USA English Guidelines). Again, according to UF-USA’s director Wahrmann, these checkpoints have been put into place in order to ensure a standard means of instruction, implementation, and assessment within the program. As stated in the UF-USA Early Entry Program Conference call for papers, the “UF-USA Early Entry program provides, by its very nature, a complex system that considers multiple sources of data from both teachers and students in the program; to collaborate with each other; and form articulation partnerships.” In other words, organizers of The University of Findlay’s concurrent enrollment program are cognizant of the criticisms lodged against early entry options and are
striving to alleviate those worries by fostering solid high school to university alliances in their College Writing I offerings as well as their other course options.

GUIDELINES FOR THE UF-USA COMPOSITION CLASSROOM

To ensure a homogeneous environment, each UF-USA College Writing I class (also known as ENGL 104) can have no more than twenty enrollees as per The University of Findlay guidelines; as a result, concurrent enrollees are guaranteed a similar per-pupil to teacher ratio as their University of Findlay on-campus counterparts. And while the syllabus for each particular UF-USA College Writing I class may display some slight variation in design per instructor and setting, all College Writing I sections (whether on the high school campus or in the college setting) contain similar course objectives and “require roughly the same amounts and types of writing and reading” (The College of Liberal Arts 8). Among course objectives are the aims that students will cultivate “the ability to use writing for personal expression,” polish their “analytic and critical-thinking skills,” and learn to utilize “flexible composing processes that are well suited to a variety of occasions for narrative and expository writing” (The College of Liberal Arts 3). Specific major assignments include, but are not limited to, autobiographical narratives; summary, analysis, and response writing; and expository essays. Students are not required to write a traditional “research paper” in the course; however, students are introduced to MLA documentation techniques as well as proper techniques for quoting and paraphrasing, and are thus required to incorporate sources into their writing (The College of Liberal Arts 8).

As with the objectives and the assignments, the grading system for the College Writing I program is also set up to foster uniformity across the course’s various sections. Major papers may total no more than 70% of the course grade, while minor assignments (“journal entries, in-class assignments, homework exercises, letters and memos, quizzes”) may account for no more
than 30% of a student’s overall grade. In every case, the final examination for the course counts
for 10%. Again, in an attempt to ensure consistency of instruction, all ENGL 104 classes take
the same final exam (prepared by the English faculty and Writing Director) and are allotted the
same amount of time (110 minutes) to complete the exam (The College of Liberal Arts 5). In
regard to final grades, all students, regardless of section, must earn a “C” or higher (73-79%) and
“must submit all major assignments” to receive course credit (The College of Liberal Arts 6). In
the case of concurrent enrollment students that “C” or higher stipulation carries added weight in
that the credit they earn counts not only as college credit, but also fulfills one of their graduation
requirements for high school English.

Although the syllabus and grading scales are commensurate among the concurrent- enrolled
and traditional ENGL 104 courses, one element that cannot be leveled across this playing field is
that of time. While The University of Findlay’s traditional as well as on-campus PSEO College
Writing I courses are generally taught three days per week, fifty minutes per class session for
sixteen weeks, the concurrent enrollment students’ ENGL 104 schedule varies by school district.
Typically, though, concurrent enrolled students in College Writing I receive instruction five days
per week for eighteen weeks (two high school nine-week grading periods); some schools even
stretch the course out over an entire year (Payne). Thus, the average concurrent enrollment class
meets 85 times versus 40 class sessions in the college setting. However, high school individual
class sessions may meet for as few as 42 minutes (public school state minimum) compared to the
average 50 minute three-day-per week on-campus College Writing I course. Still, when
computed in minutes, there is the possibility that any particular concurrent enrollment student
will receive over 1, 500 more minutes of instructional time than his/her counterparts in the
college setting. One may question whether or not this additional instructional time gives
concurrent enrollees an advantage over their more traditional College Writing I freshman cohorts or even the typical PSEO student taking College Writing I in the on-campus setting. Still, this discrepancy in instructional time could arguably be seen as one of concurrent enrollment’s transitional benefits; in other words, this built-in extra time may act as the needed element in ensuring students the ability to cross that threshold from high school to college-level writing expectations.

**UF-USA INSTRUCTORS: THEIR VOICES**

During the 2006-2007 academic year, fourteen high schools and fifteen instructors participated in the UF-USA College Writing I Early Enrollment Program. For the purposes of this pilot study, two veteran UF-USA College Writing I instructors were chosen from two of UF-USA’s charter member schools to add their voices to this research. The rationale for choosing these particular teachers includes their respective levels of experience, knowledge, and involvement in the UF-USA College Writing I program as well as their availability and interest in this particular study. Each teacher-participant provided a copy of her particular syllabus, completed a written survey (see Appendix C), and consented to an on-site face-to-face interview (see Appendix D). This data was gathered in January 2007, and will be shared here and explicated further in Chapter Five of this dissertation. Furthermore, for the purposes of this study and to protect the anonymity of the subjects, the high school teacher respondents (both female) will be referred to as “Sharon” and “Kay” for the remainder of this discussion.

**STUDENT AND INSTRUCTOR “GROWTH”**

Many similarities surfaced when comparing the survey results of the two respondents; for example, both have taught numerous semesters of College Writing I (Sharon= 7+ semesters; Kay= 4-6 semesters) and both were currently teaching a section of the course during the time of the data collection. In addition, both teach and have taught their sections of College Writing I on
a five-day per week, 18 week schedule. During these teaching experiences, both have seen “marked improvement” in their students’ writing and their students’ views of themselves as writers as a result of taking the course, and each believes that her respective experience in teaching College Writing I has had a “moderate impact” on the pedagogies she uses in teaching writing in other situations. An additional similarity can be seen in each respondent’s communication and professional development patterns with UF-USA liaison, Dr. Scott Payne. Both rely on email exchange as their most common form of communication with Payne, and the respondents also exchange emails with one another as well as other UF-USA English instructors in order to answer questions, give advice, share teaching ideas, and offer support.

**PEDAGOGY AND STUDENT PREPAREDNESS**

However, in response to the survey questions regarding how each respondent teaches her traditional high school writing classes versus her concurrent enrollment classes some divergence emerged. While Sharon noted a “slight difference” in how she teaches writing to her concurrent enrollment students versus her traditional high school students, Kay described her approach to the two groups of students as “measurably different.” Still, Kay’s explanation suggested a move to a more homogeneous approach to teaching the two groups, she writes: “Now that I am totally aware of what is expected in a college writing class, I push my high school students to aspire to the same level.” On the other hand, Sharon justified her similar approach to teaching both the high school and the College Writing I students and states: “expectations need to be high at all levels of instruction.”

Sharon’s comment regarding high expectations at all levels of instruction connected directly to her frustrations with student preparedness for the course. Describing her incoming concurrent enrollment students as “somewhat prepared,” Sharon wrote that “if lower grade level teachers do not have high-level standards,” then it is difficult to follow through with high-level instruction in
the upper grades. In contrast, Kay described her students as “adequately prepared” for the challenges of College Writing I but indicated in her interview responses that students “were better prepared in the past.” Kay, like Sharon, attributed the change in student preparation to teachers in the lower grade levels; however, Kay thought since most of the lower level teachers in her district are novices that they “will get better” with time. Still, she went on to stress that these same teachers “need to have students do more writing.”

**DIFFERENT TYPES OF WRITING**

A slight gloss may be added to this point in order to flesh out what exactly might lie behind this response. While Kay suggests that English teachers (at least in her district) need to require “more writing” of their students, what was not clarified in the interview is the *types* of writing the students are being asked to do prior to coming to Kay’s class. Joseph M. Williams and Lawrence McEnerney argue that one of the reasons high school students often struggle with the transition from secondary to post-secondary writing instruction is that university instructors are often asking students not just to write “something better, but something different.” Specifically, Williams and McEnerney acknowledge the predominance of analytical and argumentative writing at the college level as “crucial differences between high school and college writing.” In addition, Wendy Strachan notes that since secondary teachers face the influence and pressure of standardized tests, they often emphasize format writing with their students as well as a “need to know the rules to break the rules” approach to writing instruction (138-9). Thus, Kay’s call for an increase in writing assignments in her peers’ lesson planning may reflect something even larger in the high school to college writing gap as a whole—not necessarily just *more* writing assignments for college-bound high school students but perhaps *different* writing assignments to better prepare these students for the demands of the college-level composition classroom.
DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE WRITING INSTRUCTION

Like Williams and McEnerney and Strachan, respectively, who find clear differences between high school and college writing instruction, Sharon noted in her answer to Survey Question 12 that “the degree of difference . . . between high school and college writing instruction in terms of focus, emphasis and/or requirements” is “measurable.” In contrast, though, Kay described the difference as “slight.” Each respondent’s reply to this question may seem curious or even contradictory when compared to Sharon’s aforementioned “slight” difference in approach to teaching her high school versus her college-level writing students and Kay’s aforementioned “measurable difference” in approach to teaching the two groups. In explanation, it seems perhaps that the respondents’ individual interpretations of the question vary from the question’s intent, which was to elicit a reply regarding what is an important focus for secondary writing teachers (i.e. perhaps, “narrative”) versus what is important to post-secondary writing instructors (i.e. perhaps, “argument”). Instead, each respondent focused more on the “how” rather than the “what” factor in terms of the difference in instruction.

With that thought in mind, Sharon’s “slight” difference may be attributed to her strong stance that teachers should challenge all students to write at high levels, while Kay may already be emphasizing similar techniques to both sets of students but doing so in different ways and to different degrees. In her interview, Kay explained that her own children were in college when she became an instructor for the UF-USA Program; thus, she “knew what different schools were doing [in regard to writing] at the time . . . I knew what was needed, and I was doing it. UF seemed right on track with the other college’s requirements.” However, despite her awareness of college writing requirements and her efforts to “push” her “high school class to aspire to the same level” as her college writing students,” Kay writes that “Perhaps the biggest difference between my classes is I tend to be more lenient with my high school class.” Sharon’s responses
echoed her need to be attentive to “raising the bar” for all her writing students: “I have to be more stringent; [teaching College Writing I] has forced me to make my expectations higher.” The differences, though, in those expectations between high school and college-level writing instruction are not clearly delineated in either teacher’s survey response.

JOINING THE CONVERSATION

Since that gap between college versus high school writing requirements and expectations is the central question of this research study, it provided the focal point for much of the dialogue that ensued during the interview process. To begin the interview, the first question asks that the respondents define the terms “high school-level” and “college-level writing.” In her interview, Sharon described the former as a “learning process”; Kay gave a similar response and called high school-level writing “teaching the how to do.” In contrast to these somewhat rote descriptions of high school-level writing, both the respondents’ definitions of college-level writing indicated the need for increased awareness, description, detail, and depth not only in students’ writing but also in their ability to converse critically about their writing topics. David Foster and David R. Russell in Writing and Learning in Cross-National Perspective acknowledge this demand upon college writing students entering the university to “join the conversation”, and they note that many of high school students are not ready to create strong arguments: “This is a tall order for students entering higher education, something for which their secondary school has not often prepared them” (17-18).

One element prohibiting students from more fully “joining the conversation” may be the stark difference in pedagogical approach between the secondary and post-secondary levels. According to Sharon, “In high school we spoon feed them [the students] step-by-step. In College Writing I, students are expected to be able to do things—they’re going to have to find out how to sink or swim on their own.” Thus, the “hands-off” approach of many college-level writing instructors
may come as quite a surprise to high school students who are accustomed to a more prevalent atmosphere of guidance, guidelines, and boundaries in their typical high school writing classroom.

**FIVE-PARAGRAPH ESSAY AND THE “PAPER-LOAD”**

In an echo of Strachan’s comments mentioned earlier, Sharon also cited lower level English teachers’ emphasis on format writing as a distinctive element of high school writing instruction. She explains that since a five-paragraph essay typically allows students to pass the 10th grade Ohio Graduation Test (OGT), it can be difficult, in her words, “to get [students] beyond that point. They have a hard time with that.” Furthermore, the typical high school student has fewer opportunities and requirements to write, because of the sheer volume of writing assignments that would accumulate for an individual high school English teacher to assess. Sharon explains:

> In high school, the focus, emphasis and requirements are not as high, usually. It depends on less time, more students, and the individual teacher’s expectations . . . When dealing with 65-85 students per day in regular high school classes, assigning lots of writing becomes basically impossible (at least not too often). Grading becomes overwhelming and conferencing individually is nearly impossible.

In the meantime, Herb Budden, Mary B. Nicolini, Stephen L. Fox, and Stuart Greene argue that “If high school English teachers (and teachers in other disciplines) have students engage in frequent writing . . . they will have gone far toward preparing those students for college writing and for lifetime writing” (83). While arguably true and solid in theory, when juxtaposed against Sharon’s words, the practicality of Budden et al.’s suggestion can be called into question. The dilemma, then, raised here is one all good high school English teachers have faced: how to
provide students with sound and vigorous writing instruction without personally drowning in the paperwork that that same “sound and vigorous” instruction creates.

“SMOKE AND MIRRORS” AND THE ISSUE OF GRAMMAR

As a result, at least in part, of this disconnect between opportunities to write on the high school level and the demand to write on the college level, the shift between high school and college writing expectations does not come easily for some students. In fact, according to Kay, some students “had to step back and evaluate how much of themselves they were going to put into this [class].” Sharon saw this hesitation as well and stated: “some semesters are a jolt; [this course] made them realize they have to do their work at the college level all the time.” This transition can be especially difficult for some students who have been labeled “great writers” by their former teachers. Williams and McEnerney speak to this frustration when they tell incoming freshmen not to be surprised by the lower grades they may receive in their university writing courses: “Only months earlier your writing was winning praise; now your instructors are dissatisfied, saying that the writing isn’t quite ‘there’ yet, saying that the writing is ‘lacking something.’” Williams and McEnerney go onto explain that “higher standards” and more effort may be part of what is being asked of these students, and Kay’s response seems to corroborate this claim: “They [the former ‘great writers’] want to write a big paper, but they don’t want to read the articles or follow the examples from the book. They just want to write.”

Unfortunately, states Kay, these “great writers” have often earned their label largely in part to writing grammatically “clean” essays rather than essays that display a clear focus and well developed, complex arguments. Kay described the result as a kind of, “smoke and mirrors with no substance that other teachers have bought into.” The words of Amanda Winalski, in her essay “Bam”, further explicate the point: “During high school, I operated under the assumption that
what I wrote was much less important than how I wrote\textsuperscript{43} . . . I realized that teachers concentrated so intensely on revising dangling modifiers and comma splices that they tended to ignore the actual ideas embodied in the essay” (303).

Specifically, Kay’s “smoke and mirrors” scenario exemplifies the problem that occurs when a young writer lacks the understanding of what it means to join or contribute to an academic conversation. And no fault or blame is being placed here. In general, high school students and their writing instructors have not been required by their curricula to consider the possibility of entering academic discourse. Still, Kay’s comment (and Winalski’s insights on the same point) clearly demonstrates another disconnect between high school and college writing expectations: rewarding grammatically clean, well organized, clear writing versus rewarding writing that may take a risk in claim or thought in an effort to contribute something new to an on-going discussion or debate. As Janet Alsup and Michael Bernard-Donals state, “Talking and arguing a position requires that you know how your fellows may arrive at the same or a very different, position and how what you advocate affects members of your own community and—perhaps more profoundly—those outside it” (121). To put it simply, college writing requires students to be more rhetorically savvy than they have had to be on the high school level; at the same time, students must prove themselves capable on the basic sentence-level. A student’s ability to write effectively at college, then, requires what Foster and Foster call “a chameleon rhetorical capacity” (43). While Kay did not use such terms, she suggested that the so-called “good writers” in high school had not developed such an ability because they had not been challenged to do so, and furthermore, it may be surmised that these particular students did not receive such a push since “joining the conversation” is not typically a goal or curricular requirement of high school writing.

\textsuperscript{43} Italics added.
DONNING THE IDENTITY OF “COLLEGE WRITER”

While some high school students may feel as if the “rules” of writing have arbitrarily been changed as they move from secondary to post-secondary writing instruction, Kay believes the transition sometimes simply comes down to whether or not students assimilate their roles as college students; “You’re a college student now,” she tells them. “You get the choice. If you don’t want to write the paper, fine. It’s my choice to give you a ‘0’”. While some students may embrace this challenge and take on this new role as “college student”, Sharon noted that others may shy away from the changes they face upon entering a college-level writing course because of the increased workload and additional responsibilities. She also stated that others admit to having avoided taking a college level writing course for fear that a possible poor grade would affect their GPA and class rank—caveats repeated often by high school guidance counselors as students contemplate signing up for PSEO.44 As a result, commented Sharon, those high school seniors that do wish to enroll in College Writing I often opt to wait to take the class until the second semester of their senior year at which point GPA’s have already been averaged for graduation and scholarships.

Despite the initial and various disconnects between high school-level and college-level writing expectations noted by both instructors as well as the concerns of their student participants, Kay and Sharon saw measurable growth in their students’ work as a result of taking the College Writing I course. Kay stated that she sees “a lot more thought, organization, and interest in the writing assignments” because her “expectations for them are higher, and as a result, their expectations for themselves are higher . . . Passing this course is a feather in each person’s cap.” Similarly, Sharon shared that her students “comment that it’s so much easier to do writing in other classes” after taking the College Writing I course, because “they know what

44 See Chapters 1 and 2 for further discussion on this point.
depth to go into . . . those that used to whine at writing three pages [now] have no problem and even apply what they’ve learned to other classes.” Furthermore, the feedback from College Writing I “alum” suggests to both Sharon and Kay that the course has a measurable impact on—if not their students’ abilities to write—then definitely on their understanding of standard college-level writing conventions and expectations. According to Sharon, many students return from their first year of college to comment that they have “applied what they’ve learned” or “were not quite as intimidated” as they might have otherwise been when entering a college writing class. Likewise, the mother of a former student told Kay that the UF-USA writing course helped her daughter “more than any other class.” The bottom line, according to Sharon, is that “most of them feel it [College Writing I] helps them make the transition [from high school to college] better.”

**UF-USA COLLEGE WRITING I STUDENTS: THEIR VOICES**

As did their teachers, six students from the two high schools participating in this pilot study completed surveys (see Appendix A) and face-to-face interviews (see Appendix B) during January 2007. All six of the subjects participated in the study upon instructor request, and all six identified themselves as “Seniors” by rank. All but one respondent participated in the UF-USA College Writing I course during Fall 2006; the remaining respondent was currently enrolled in the College Writing I course at the time of the data collection. Furthermore, the respondents indicated a wide array of personal influences that impacted their respective decisions to take the course—from parents and teachers to guidance counselors and friends. Parental involvement in each student’s decision to enroll did not seem to play a major factor in that 67% of the respondents described their parents as either “somewhat” or “not involved” and just 33% of the students indicated that their parents were “very involved” in their decision to enroll in the
College Writing I course. A majority of respondents (83%) looked at the College Writing I course as “more challenging” than their typical high school English classes; however, one student responded that the College Writing I course was “on par” with the demands of a typical high school English course.

STUDENT PREPAREDNESS

Likewise, 83% of the respondents considered themselves “somewhat prepared” for the rigors of college-level writing, while just one student described himself as “highly prepared.” By the end of the course, 50% of the students indicated a noticeable change in their abilities as writers compared to 33% that indicated a slight change and 16% (one student) that indicated no change in writing ability as a result of taking the College Writing I course. While responses varied from slight, to moderate, to significant, all student participants noted a change in their approach to writing in general, and all attributed those changes to enrollment in the class. However, despite these changes in student approach to writing, only two respondents experienced an improvement in their confidence as writers from the beginning to the end of the semester.

ELEMENTS OF “GOOD” WRITING

![Rankings of "Good" Writing](image)

*Figure 3*
When asked to rank six elements of writing (see Appendix A, page 4) in order of importance (1=highest; 6=lowest), the students displayed little uniformity in response. However, “Awareness of Audience” and “Style” consistently ranked near the bottom of the students’ list. In fact, one student rated Style an “X” for “unimportant” and commented that “style doesn’t determine whether or not a piece of writing is good or not, but it has an effect on the readers’ opinion.” Grammar ranked anywhere from 1-5, as did Supporting points, and Organization. In terms of Thesis, 67% of the respondents rated it as either third or fourth in order of importance, while the other 33% said it was nearer the top of the list. Two students commented on the complexity of ranking these elements because of the elements’ interrelatedness in producing solid essays. According to Student X:

It’s hard to rank these particular elements of writing when in the overall picture, all elements are necessary in writing a good paper.

The thesis statement is what grabs the readers [sic] attention, making him or her wanting [sic] to read more. However, without the supporting points to prove the thesis, the paper is incomplete. Yet in order to write a good thesis and give good supporting points, the paper must also be well organized so that the point of the paper is clear. One must also understand his or her audience when writing a paper . . . Grammar and mechanics are also important because if the paper has to [sic] many grammatical errors it can become difficult to read. That is why the style in which the paper is written is also important . . .

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45 Since respondents’ surveys were anonymous, I have assigned an alphabet letter to each student in order to distinguish respondents from one another.
Student Y, also cognizant of the many complexities inherent among the elements of good writing, stated, “All of these elements are important to me when it comes to writing a paper. Not one of these elements was more important than the other. I just ranked them according to previous experiences.” Despite this awareness between two of the students of the dependency of one writing element upon another, Student Z insisted that “Grammar and mechanics are most important because no matter how well the paper is written, if the grammar or mechanics are poor, then the paper will not be good.” This same student further suggested that “supporting details are more important than the thesis because the supporting details are the major points without them you do not have a paper.”

Student Z’s comments seem to suggest that his thinking, despite having completed the College Writing I course, remains aligned with the perception that clear, clean, organized writing equals “good writing.” Specifically, his lack of emphasis on thesis and deference to grammar and mechanics indicate a writer more attentive to the details than to the “big picture” of how his writing might contribute to an on-going conversation or influence others. In contrast, Student Y’s orderly delineation of elements of what she considers to be “good writing” suggests a slightly higher level of internalization of college writing expectations. For example, her response reveals her understanding of the importance of each element on an individual level, while at the same time she also demonstrates her cognizance of the interrelatedness of the elements. However, that crucial step of entering a discourse community does not appear in her explanation, which suggests that perhaps she fell short of internalizing that particular concept in college-level writing instruction.

According to Bauman, in “What is College-Level Writing?: Moving the Conversation Forward,” college-level writing “is part of a continuum of knowledge-building—a continuum
that affects not only one’s education but one’s entire life, as well as the shared life of our
culture” (1). Bauman’s words suggest the importance of “joining the conversation” as a college-
level writer, and while Student Z and Student Y arguably only offer brief explanations regarding
the importance of various elements of good writing, neither response reflects an awareness of the
importance or empowerment afforded a student when he or she utilizes writing as a tool for
entering an on-going academic conversation.

**PROCESS AND REVISION**

Although these discrepancies regarding the importance of the various elements of writing
arose as a result of the survey responses, all respondents, when asked to describe their approach
to writing a 3-5 page argument paper, described a similar “process” to complete this task. Steps
listed included researching the topic, analyzing both sides of the argument, choosing a side,
organizing/outlining, supporting the main points, drafting, and editing or peer editing. While
these steps were not completely uniform among respondents, each respondent did list a minimum
of five separate tasks he or she would complete in order to arrive at a suitable final copy of the
assignment. Of particular note is the importance the students placed on outlining their work and
supporting their argument points: 67% of the respondents included outlining and supporting the
main points in their list of writing steps. However, only 33% of the students included revising as
one of the necessary steps to writing a good argument essay—although it should be noted that
one of these students indicated the need to revise a draft at least twice: “I would write the paper
and then revise it and [have] at least one other person read [it]. Then I would revise it again.
Then I would write the final draft.” This need for an outside review was noted by just one other
respondent who stated “Once I have that [rough draft] finished, I would ask my teacher or a
classmate to read over it and to state their opinion on whether or not I firmly stated my point.”
The students’ overall lack of emphasis on revision comes as no surprise given Sharon’s earlier reminder that high school English teachers often face an insurmountable paper-load: grading one draft of 65-85 students’ work presents a challenge in itself; grading more than one draft would take a time commitment many teachers could not commit to. As a result, many high school students are not accustomed to drafting various versions of a writing assignment; furthermore, the students’ responses here indicate that all did not “buy into” the premise of drafting multiple versions of a writing assignment. In addition, since peer reviews at the high school level represent unique challenges for teachers who must account for a diverse range of writing abilities, it is also not surprising that only one student included a possible peer review as an important step in the writing process. While it is true that students who follow a checklist or rubric in peer review situations may provide some helpful guidance to one another—Alsup and Bernard-Donals underscore the usefulness of such direction (130), many high school peer review situations have the potential of degenerating at best into grammar checks, and as such, these activities contribute little if any constructive criticism to an essay that warrants global revision. A “Catch-22” situation emerges here as well, because if students have not internalized the idea of writing as “meaning making” and “joining the conversation” instead of “meaning reporting” or “relaying the conversation,” then peer reviews would be an exercise in futility anyway, because they would simply reinforce the notion that “clean writing” is “good” writing.

VOICE

Although many of the responses in the survey section of the data collection suggest lingering gaps in the transition from high school to college-level writing expectations for UF-USA students, the more in-depth comments generated from their interview responses indicate that the potential for at least some transitioning does occur among some of the students. For example, in
an interview response, Andrea, in reflection of how her writing developed as a result of taking the College Writing I course, stated: “I’m a lot more organized and have a stronger voice—I can actually hear my voice. I’m not just rewording someone else’s opinion.” Andrea’s acknowledgement of both voice and her own original ideas (“not just rewording someone else’s opinion”) are good indicators that she is at least beginning to realize her potential to contribute her own thoughts to an on-going discussion. Another respondent, Shelley, also commented on the development of her own voice as a writer and shared that the course allowed her to grow in confidence in her writing ability: “I’m no longer nervous; I can hear my own voice. I have no problem with any topic given—I can find a way to write about it no matter what.” Her response seems to indicate that she feels comfortable with the tools for writing that she acquired during the course as well as her ability to utilize those tools in future writing assignments. In other words, Shelley’s experience helped her to enter into Bauman’s “continuum of knowledge-building” that impacts one’s entire education (1).

**PROCESS APPROACH**

The responses of nearly all the UF-USA students interviewed suggest that those “tools” for writing may include a heightened awareness of the usefulness of a process approach to writing an essay. When asked to describe how their writing technique had changed, if at all, as a result of taking the College Writing I course, the replies ranged from “more outlines and process work” to “more organization of research and more focus” to “more planning and organizing of the paper.” Tonya explained that she learned to “think and pre-write more” before composing an essay, and she added: “Before I’d write the whole paper in one night. Now I pre-write, plan, and think about what needs to go where . . . [I] slowly write more over a longer period.”

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46 In order to distinguish respondents in the interview portion of the data collection and to protect their anonymity, pseudonyms will replace the students’ actual names for the remainder of the chapter.
Likewise, Miriam noted that “instead of going right to it” she now has her “ideas ready before writing her paper.” Josh, too, described a similar approach and admitted: “I try to organize myself more before I start to write—or at least I see why it’s important even if I don’t do it.” While Josh’s response shows he may not have totally internalized the importance of process, he does possess an awareness of the usefulness of a process-approach to writing.

Furthermore, to return briefly to the discussion of process, the answers, overall, reveal the students’ lack of exposure to a process-writing approach in their typical high school writing instruction. As with drafting multiple versions of a paper, this lack of process in secondary English classrooms can be traced (at least in part) back to the grading conundrum so many high school writing teachers face (Strachan 139). In addition to the grading juggernaut, it should be noted that secondary English teachers, unlike the typical college writing instructor, must cover a curriculum that includes more than just composition. In the words of Milka Mustenikova Mosely, in her article, “The Truth about High School English”:

. . . it is important for college educators to understand that our English classes are not composition classes, but are surveys of literature classes, mainly surveys of different genres of literature, but also surveys of World Literature, American Literature, and British Literature. We also cover study skills, grammar, and vocabulary (61).

As a result, while “process” is hardly a new approach to writing, it might be regarded as a novel tool for the transitioning high school writer, since his or her writing experience has heretofore largely been incorporated among a myriad of curricular foci—foci that may work to constrain the typical secondary English teacher from devoting much instructional time to recursive writing practices.
REPORTING V. EVALUATING

Also novel to these students was the *types* of writing assignments they faced in the College Writing I course. According to their own accounts, “research papers” and “reports” were the dominant genres they had been exposed to prior to taking the College Writing I course. Andrea stated that she had completed book reports and biographies; Shelley cited reports on “controversial issues” as well as “lab reports” as her main experience in writing; Tonya said she had completed “mostly research papers” with little or no guidance in documentation since “the teacher assumed students would know the guidelines”; and Nathan recalled writing persuasion as well as comparison/contrast papers in one of his prior English classes. College Writing I, however, “was very different” according to Andrea. For this course, she completed “evaluations of articles” and had to “come up with an argument.” Like Andrea, her peers in the course, regardless of place of instruction, also were required to write (at minimum) an analysis, an argument, and a narrative, because of the consistency demanded of UF-USA College Writing courses. The types of assignments described here are indicative of those found in most college writing courses and are in place to help cultivate both critical thought as well as—to borrow from Douglas Hesse—a student’s “ability to contribute to ongoing debates or discussions in ways that reflect both the writer’s understanding of others’ perspectives (what has been said before and is being said now) and of current rhetorical situations” (qtd. in Bauman 8). Thus, College Writing I asked of the students, for the first time, to add their voices “to the conversation.”

INTENSITY OF COLLEGE WRITING

Whether it was fully utilizing process-writing for the first time, adapting to new types of writing, struggling to find a voice, or a combination of these and other factors—nearly all the respondents commented on the time demands and increased accountability of participating in a college-level writing course. Andrea called college writing “a lot more involved” and stated that
she “needed more preparation” in order to achieve “a decent grade.” “With high school writing I could get away with a lot more,” she added. Shelley described the course as “time consuming” and claimed she had “second thoughts at first. I wasn’t sure I could get to that level of writing. . . [In the past] I was lackadaisical, never proof-read—just threw them [essays] together and hoped for the best. I got away with a lot then.” Tonya also noted time and effort as factors: “It [College Writing I] takes a lot of time and hard work,” she stated, “you can’t do half the work, you have to go all the way. It’s a lot harder but a lot more beneficial to you.”

Similarly, Nathan and Justin described the course as “more difficult” and “more time consuming” respectively, and Miriam called the course as “one of the hardest” she had taken; although she also commented “It wasn’t as bad as I thought.” While the increased work load and new demands of a college-level writing course were obvious challenges to the UF-USA students, it should be noted that another factor might be impacting these students’ responses: in high school, writing instruction is often layered amongst the teaching of literature, grammar, and vocabulary. At the post-secondary level, however, freshman composition is most often an entity in and of itself. Thus, College Writing I with its sole focus on writing may have led to an intensity of instruction, that the secondary students were not accustomed to.

THE UF-USA EXPERIENCE AND INSTRUCTOR-STUDENT BOND

Despite (or maybe because of) the hard work, effort, and time put into the College Writing I course, the UF-USA students, as a whole, described their experience as a positive one. Specifically, Shelley admitted that she as well as some others in the class were “clueless at first,” but eventually “found out how mediocre our writing really was [before taking the course]!” Andrea said she “couldn’t think of a disadvantage” to taking the College Writing I and would “highly recommend” it to other students searching for “instruction to prepare for college.” Tonya also stated that she would recommend the course and added: “Overall, it [College
Writing I] can only help you for the most part, as long as you try—you can only become better.” Nathan explained the benefits he gained in slightly more personal terms: “I’m not that strong of a writer. I didn’t feel prepared, but as I went through, I felt like I knew what she [the instructor] expected and what I expected from myself.”

This connection to the instructor, described by Nathan, surfaced as an underlying theme in many of the students’ responses. In fact, Nathan shared that it was his high school English/College Writing I teacher who “persuaded him” to take the course in the first place. Furthermore, various other interview responses also suggested a pattern of a strong student-instructor bond in the UF-USA program. Shelley said her instructor offered her home phone number and email address so students could contact the instructor readily if they had questions or needed help. At the same time, both Andrea and Tonya expressed a perception of college professors as distant or unapproachable. “Professors are different than most high school teachers,” Andrea commented. “At the college-level, there is no hand-holding,” stated Tonya, “you have to keep up. They’re not going to walk you through every step.”

This bond seemed to be appreciated and valued by the instructors as well. Kay described her approach to the students as a “grandmotherly” one and explained that she feels “vested in their [the students’] success. I’ve had them all before.” Likewise, Sharon shared that her students often come back wishing she could teach their next college-level writing course. “I get them through the stress levels,” she explained, “I help them deal with this.” Consequently, it must be noted that the student-instructor bond cannot be overlooked as an important factor in students’ perceived positive experience in the post-secondary enrolled College Writing I course.

PLACE

The student-instructor bond in the UF-USA program is closely tied to place of instruction, and this question of “place” of instruction and its impact also received uniformly positive
comments from the students and their instructors as well. According to Tonya, taking a post-secondary course in the high school environment is a plus, because “you already know the teacher and the students in the class. It doesn’t seem so much like a college class. The pressure’s not all there. [It] seems comfortable.” Tonya added that she “probably wouldn’t take [the course] at the college setting” since such a setting would make her feel more vulnerable and “not as confident to participate in discussion.” Nathan, Josh, and Miriam all commented that a benefit of having the class on their home campus was that they “knew everybody” and “felt at home.” Likewise, Shelley described the atmosphere on the high school campus as “more comfortable. . . [You’re] around friends and in an area you’re familiar with.” She and Andrea both noted, though, that the classroom took on a slightly different tone during College Writing I instruction as compared to a typical class session in high school English. “When you walk in the [College Writing I] classroom it’s a different atmosphere—serious—more mature than usual,” stated Andrea. Similarly, Shelley noted, “When it comes down to working, it got pretty serious.”

These student statements reflect the comments of the panel of UF-USA instructors who shared their thoughts on the challenges of teaching a college-level course in a high school setting. During that October 2006 discussion, one instructor shared that a student once told her “you have a whole different attitude in this class [College Writing I] than the other” (Payne et al.) This might not always be the case, though, in that another instructor on the panel admitted that she sometimes had to remind students on the high school campus that they were actually in a college course (Payne et al.) Yet another instructor added, “You have to adhere to the criteria that UF gives you. Students have to know that’s what applies. Students don’t always get that” (Payne et al.). When taken as a whole, the responses of both students and instructors suggest—
along with some positive elements—possible concerns about high school campuses as places of PSEO instruction.

**CONCLUSION**

Bringing college courses to the high school campus lessens many problems faced by high school administrators, counselors, teachers, students, and parents of those students interested in enrolling in post-secondary options classes. Offerings such as The University of Findlay’s UF-USA program save school districts money; keep academically strong students in their home schools; eliminate travel time, risks, and costs to and from a participating college campus; and provide professional development opportunities to participating instructors. However, such programs must continue to be scrutinized in regard to the rigor, intensity, and demands of the courses offered as well as the qualifications of those who teach the courses. The findings from the data collected for this chapter speak to some of those concerns; furthermore, specific to The University of Findlay’s situation, the research here indicates that while UF-USA adjunct English instructors are well prepared for and competent in their roles, the off-campus setting of PSEO instruction serves to re-inscribe a number of secondary writing classroom norms.

To this study’s question of teacher experience and pedagogy—both teachers interviewed for this chapter are veterans in their field and have been duly trained through The University of Findlay’s UF-USA English Summer Institute. Both cited either a raised or increased personal awareness of college-level writing expectations as a result of having taught the College Writing I course, and in particular, Sharon noted the necessity of increased writing instruction and writing assignments among all secondary levels of English instruction in order to rectify students’ lack of preparedness for the rigors of college-level writing. However, whether Sharon’s call includes *just more writing* or *different types of writing* is a question of note, since the student participants
described a marked divergence between the “reports” they had been expected to produce on the high school level and the argumentative essays they were asked to compose as PSEO students. Kathleen McCormick, in her essay, “Do You Believe in Magic”, notes these differences between secondary and post-secondary instruction as well, and explains that “most students come to college having learned standards writing forms”; however, “fewer come having learned to express their own ideas” (201)—a notion which is corroborated by Sharon’s explanation that high school writing instruction often focuses on the “how” of writing, such as the five-paragraph formula needed to pass the OGT rather than the building of students’ ability to “join the conversation” of a particular topic via the written word.

Furthermore, responses from students in this portion of the study indicated that, although their respective instructors described a “measurable” growth in their abilities as writers, most of the students seemed to fall short of internalizing the importance of writing as a tool that would enable them to enter a discourse community. This finding suggests a limited success among students in achieving a “writerly identity” in their UF-USA College Writing I courses.

In terms of place, the UF-USA students indicated that all appreciated the comfort and convenience of receiving college instruction on their home campuses among peers and teachers with whom they shared familiarity. The instructors noted these strong bonds as well and described themselves as “hands on” and “available” to the students; the instructors also admitted to seeing themselves as somewhat “lenient” at times with their PSEO students most likely because of the history and subsequent relationship they shared in their place of instruction. A point of caution may be noted here in that this “familiarity”, while comforting to these student participants, must be recognized for its disadvantages as well, especially since part of the supposed transitioning powers of PSEOs lie in their ability to provide students with “the same
level of responsibility and independence” as regular college students (Ohio Board of Regents). Moreover, according to these UF-USA instructors, students often return to them during their regular college tenures to offer thanks as well as to ask for additional help in their writing courses.

The increased reliance of these students upon their former high school/College Writing I teachers suggests at least two possible concerns: 1) students enrolled in College Writing I on their home high school campuses do not achieve a level of independence demanded of first-year college writing students; 2) a re-inscribing of the high school/college divide occurs as a result of the reliance of high school students upon their high school English/College Writing I instructor, since these students may believe (with or without merit) that their former instructor is more approachable or sympathetic than their college professors. Thus, for all the accolades heaped upon high school PSEO instruction by any number of proponents, a thoughtful examination of possible outcomes (some heretofore unmentioned in PSEO research) seems warranted at The University of Findlay and at other institutions that provide off-campus instruction for PSEO students.

Thus, from perceived “higher standards” in the college writing classroom that often result in lower grades for PSEO students to the tendency of high school writing instructors to reward organized, grammatically clean compositions—the responses from the UF-USA participants expose the inaccuracy of the “seamless transition” claim. Most notably incongruities between high school and college writing instruction include the disparate foci on report versus argument writing and a lack of revision or process-work at the high school level. Specifically, as Sharon’s comments suggest, less emphasis on revision and process at the secondary level can be attributed

47 These concerns of “place” are juxtaposed against the other “places” in this study and analyzed more completely in Chapter Five.
to the sheer number of students high school teachers encounter as well as the demands upon those same teachers to cover “. . . World Literature, American Literature, and British Literature . . . study skills, grammar, and vocabulary” (Mosley 61). In other words, these findings corroborate Alsup and Bernard-Donals’ claim that seamless transition is a “myth” when it comes to writing instruction simply because, while labeled “English”, both sides of the divide are challenged by differing constraints and goals.

Granted, these findings represent the views of just a portion of the instructor and student participants in the UF-USA College Writing I program at one private university in Ohio. Still, the information generated here is worthy of notice in that it provides additional avenues for understanding and discussing the current state of the high school/college writing instruction divide as well the part PSEO writing instruction on high school campuses plays in re-inscribing gaps between writing expectations on the two levels.
CHAPTER FOUR

THE UNIVERSITY OF FINDLAY (NON-TRADITIONAL) POST-SECONDARY ENROLLMENT OPTION PROGRAM FOR COLLEGE WRITING I

RESEARCH INTO POST-SECONDARY ENROLLMENT OPTIONS AND COLLEGE WRITING IN THE “HIGH SCHOOL-ONLY” SETTING

This chapter begins with a history and rationale of The University of Findlay’s third “place” of post-secondary writing instruction: PSEO held on the UF campus in “high school-only” contained classrooms. For the purpose of this research, these “high school-only” sections will be referred to as the “non-traditional” approach to PSEO instruction, since the original intent of post-secondary enrollment in Ohio was “to allow high school students to experience college work/life realistically” (Dept. of Ed. 10) by allowing them to enroll “in regular college sections with regular college students” (Ohio Board of Regents). As with Chapters Two and Three, Chapter Four first contextualizes the place of writing instruction before sharing and synthesizing the study’s findings regarding teacher pedagogy and experience, place of instruction, and level of student transition from high school to college-level writing. Also consistent with the previous chapters is the method of data gathering utilized: survey responses and interviews with participating teachers and students as well as classroom observation provide the evidence for discussion and analysis. In a slight contrast to the previous chapters, though, is the inclusion, here, of an auto-ethnographic/reflexive stance to the methodology, since this particular researcher is currently an instructor of a non-traditional PSEO College Writing I course at The University of Findlay. Furthermore, while this chapter offers preliminary hypotheses on the data yielded from this specific portion of its research, a deeper analysis of these findings as well as those in Chapters Two and Three can be found in Chapter Five of this study.
THE UNIVERSITY OF FINDLAY’S NON-TRADITIONAL POST-SECONDARY ENROLLMENT PROGRAM—“HIGH SCHOOL-ONLY” SECTIONS

As Chapter Two indicates, the University of Findlay enjoyed steady growth in the number of participants in its traditional post-secondary enrollment program from 1999 through 2002. In that three-year period, enrollment burgeoned from just 69 students in Fall 1999 to 127 in Fall 2002; that population would increase by another fifty students in Fall 2003 (ODE FY99-2003). As a direct result of the program’s popularity, scheduling soon became a concern as an increased number of high school students on campus consequently impacted the number of available course opportunities for UF’s traditional freshman undergraduates. In particular, post-secondary enrollment growth put a strain on UF’s College Writing I courses, which often filled quickly with high school students. According to UF’s Writing Director, Dr. Scott Payne: “...the sheer number of high school students taking ENGL 104 [College Writing I] in the fall still filled up our sections and increased demand for sections of ENGL 104 by one or two sections. The conflict between our campus needs and postsecondary needs was really increasing.” Those on the post-secondary end wanted the university to “open up an additional section of ENGL 104 at 8:00 AM in the fall (that would be open to all students, college or high school)” (Payne). However, Payne struggled to find a feasible solution to that request since “demand for ENGL 104 [during Fall Semester] is so high, and since it’s not always easy to find enough qualified part-timers to staff all our ENGL 104 sections, and since 8:00 AM is not a good time for many teachers with kids...” Simply put, creating additional fall sections of ENGL 104 did not appear to be the best solution to PSEO’s and Payne’s scheduling dilemma.

In time, a much easier solution occurred to Payne, and he, along with the help of Heather Riffle (UF’s Director of Graduate and Special Programs), began funnelling a large number of PSEO students into Spring Semester “high school-only” sections of College Writing I. Payne
explains: “Somewhere along the line I think I said that it would be much easier to be accommodating if high school students took ENGL 104 in the spring, and then someone asked about literature—and thus began the current all-high-school sections.” The decision to add a literature course for post-secondary students helped fulfill many students’ need for a full-year English credit, since Ohio’s academic standards require each high school student to earn a minimum of four units from the English/Language Arts curriculum in order to graduate (ODE What it Takes). In other words, for a post-secondary enrollee, a Fall Semester literature course combined with a Spring Semester writing course would be the equivalent of one full unit of secondary English/Language Arts credit. Thus, in the end, the route to simplifying UF’s ENGL 104 scheduling problem was serendipitous for post-secondary enrollees in that they gained the opportunity to earn credit for one full year of high school English with the addition of ENGL 150 Literature Appreciation in Fall 2002 and the move of ENGL 104 to Spring Semester in 2003. Payne writes:

ENGL 150 was designated as an all-high-school section because we did not want the course to be open for [traditional] college students. It would then compete with our upper-level lit courses and reduce enrollment in those courses. Since we made that an all-high-school section, the spring ENGL 104 just naturally became an all-high-school section, though I don’t think that was part of any grand plan—just a natural result of barring college students from the Fall ENGL 150.

Five years later, UF’s continued placement of post-secondary enrollees into high school-only sections of its English offerings indicates that Payne and Riffle’s solution has (at least to this point) ameliorated the issue of overcrowding in the university’s Fall Semester College Writing I
courses. Furthermore, to accommodate an ever increasing number of enrollees, The University of Findlay raised the single classroom cap of ENGL 150 students from thirty in 2003 to forty in 2005, which suggests that the literature course truly meets a need of post-secondary students as well. In a domino effect, this increase in the literature cap also perpetuated the need for an additional high school-only section of ENGL 104 in the spring, since College Writing I courses can have an enrollment of no more than twenty students. As a result, The University of Findlay currently offers two high school-only sections of ENGL 104 each Spring Semester. This is not to say that post-secondary students cannot or do not enroll in traditional post-secondary College Writing I courses; however, most of those who wish to take the literature component make a fluid movement to one of the high school-only sections of College Writing I in the spring due to the fact that both the literature course and the College Writing I courses are offered at 8 AM. This early and consistent time slot affords high school students the ability to maintain a somewhat concrete academic schedule for the year. In addition, since the English courses are offered at 8 AM, post-secondary students have the time and opportunity to enroll in other college or high school classes or attend high school meetings/events as needed after 9 AM. The 8 AM class time benefits the university, too, in that fewer traditional classes are held at that time; thus, classroom space and faculty availability generally are not issues.

With the addition of the high school-only sections of ENGL 104, UF currently offers three distinct ways for post-secondary enrollees to participate in a College Writing I class: however, only one of these three settings—the traditional setting—fully complies with the original intent of post-secondary enrollment as explained in the Ohio Board of Regents’ April 1990 guidelines. These guidelines “state that high school students should be enrolled in regular college class sections with regular college students” in order to “allow students to acclimate to the college
environment earlier” (Bailey and Karp 15). Obviously, though, both the UF-USA program (with its on-site high school instruction by trained high school teachers) and the high school-only sections of ENGL 104 at UF pose a direct challenge to the OBR’s original intent for students to have a “full” post-secondary experience. Still, Payne endorses this non-traditional PSEO offering and suggests that the rationale for continuing high school-only sections extends beyond just finding a sound means for ameliorating the scheduling dilemma. In particular, one additional reason for purposefully creating non-traditional PSEO sections has its roots in a nearly two decade conversation/debate among those with some vested interest in the post-secondary enrollment program. That on-going debate is one of PSEO student maturity.

**THE “MATURITY” FACTOR**

Early in Ohio’s PSEO inception, some educators “questioned the wisdom of high school students attending college classes” (Boothe and Flick 20), and much of this initial concern was rooted in the “maturity” issue. According to a 1992 *Ohio School Board Association Journal* article by James Boothe and Michael Flick, at least a portion of educators, parents, and interested individuals “believed high school students could not compete with the older and more mature college students. Furthermore, many felt that high school students lacked the maturity to deal with campus life” (20). Despite such concerns, PSEO policy in Ohio “was expanded in 1997 to include students in grades 9 and 10”48 (*The Promise 8*), which, in turn, fueled the debate regarding student maturity. A 1998 article from *The Blade* quotes Dr. Henry Moon, then dean of the University of Toledo’s University College, as saying: “We have to spend a lot of time nurturing and encouraging our 11th graders, more than we would with a traditional student, because they have so many needs” (qtd. in Troy 10). Moon goes on to state: “ninth graders

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48 According to the publication, *The Promise of Dual Enrollment: Assessing Ohio’s Early College Access Policy*, “Of the 47 states with policies on dual enrollment, Ohio is one of only six states that specifically open dual enrollment to 9th and 10th graders . . .” (5).
might be gifted academically, but not socially” (Troy 10). An April 2001 report from the National Conference of State Legislatures issues a similar caveat, and cautions that one of the challenges of implementing a successful PSO program is that “students may not be ready . . . emotionally for college-level work” which can then “set them up for failure” (Michelau 5). Even more specific to the college-level writing issue are the comments of an instructor in The University of Findlay’s UF-USA program who noted that some high school students may not be emotionally mature enough to handle the criticism of a college writing course. She explains, “It’s a process. Some get offended—it’s a maturity issue—about continual improving and revising. It’s a much harder grading process compared to what they usually get at the high school level” (Payne et al.)

On the other side of the debate, many educators view the question of maturity as a moot point, since a number of variables inevitably co-exist when student maturity is discussed. In particular is the argument that age and maturity do not necessarily go hand in hand. Again from the 1998 The Blade article, then Assistant Superintendent of Toledo Public Schools, Dr. Sheila Kendrick argues: “We cannot put maturity on a grade or an age. We have students who are able to handle that [college coursework]” (qtd. in Troy 10). Similar to Kendrick, Dr. Larry McDougle of Northwest State Community College in a 2002 article from The Blade, states that the concern that “freshmen, might not be mature enough to handle the coursework and college atmosphere . . . hasn’t turned out to be a problem” (Dugger). Moreover, according to a 2007 report from KnowledgeWorks Foundation and the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education “. . . seniors comprise the wide majority of students who take part in PSEO” and “In 2004-05, 9th and 10th grade students made up only 4 percent of all PSEO participants [in the state of Ohio]”
(The Promise 27, 45). Applied to the most current data available on statewide PSEO enrollment, that 4 percent, then, can be assumed to represent some 440 students.49

Still, despite the claims that maturity cannot be aligned with age as well as numbers that suggest ninth and tenth graders constitute a small percentage of overall PSEO enrollment, the question of grade level and maturity of high school students is one that continues to concern many educators—in particular, high school guidance counselors and university directors in charge of PSEO student placement. Such is the case at The University of Findlay where Payne acknowledges that

with the increase in high school students coming to college we did
find that more and more of those students weren’t fully ready just to
be immersed into college—that it, less mature students were now
coming to campus, and by “less mature” I don’t mean they behaved
badly, just that they were lacking a certain level of maturity that most
college students have and that some of high school students have.

Thus, although UF’s high school-only sections of ENGL 104 began as a practical answer to a scheduling problem, the rationale for continuing to offer such sections rests, in part, on the grouping of high school students with their peers in order to avoid “maturity” issues that may surface when high school students are “mixed” with traditional college students in the average college classroom.

49 According to a 2005 report from the Ohio Association of Gifted Children, 9,781 public students and 1,144 non-public students were enrolled in postsecondary enrollment options during the 2004 fiscal year. Combined, these numbers indicate that 10,925 students statewide were enrolled in PSEOs in 2004. It should also be noted that these statistics may or may not accurately reflect the number of PSEO students enrolled in private institutions such as The University of Findlay
Unfortunately, no sound data exists as to if other private or public universities, regionally or nationwide, offer similar “high school-only” sections of PSEO. In fact, according to KnowledgeWorks Foundation and the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, there is a “paucity of data concerning students enrolling” at private institutions (ODE The Promise 19). Furthermore, at The University of Findlay, only the ENGL 150 and ENGL 104 courses are offered in such a manner; all other on-campus courses populated with PSEO students are traditional in nature. Simply put, no viable quantitative or qualitative data currently exists (aside from opinion or anecdote) as to whether or not “high school-only” sections of PSEO serve to alleviate the “maturity” issue.

In addition, what seems to be noticeably missing in the maturity debate is how various parties define and assess “student maturity.” For example, Payne’s explanation suggests that one definition hinges on a student’s “readiness” to be “immersed into college”, while Kendrick’s view of student maturity seems more focused on an individual’s ability to successfully manage the challenges of college coursework. While these definitions represent just two viewpoints, and the differences between the two may appear minute, these views suggest an understanding of student maturity that includes an academic element but may or may not include a social/emotional element. And even if a “working definition” of maturity could be agreed upon for the sake of this case, just how, when, and by whom should a high school students’ maturity be assessed before the student enrolls in post-secondary coursework? Given the on-going concern voiced by many in regard to maturity and PSEO, an obvious need for further research and discussion about “student maturity” and “high school-only” sections seems warranted. And while these points will be glossed more thoroughly later in this chapter, a larger study and
subsequent conversation on these issues might yield interesting insight into the implications of PSEO high school-only courses—whether in the English classroom or in other disciplines.

**NON-TRADITIONAL TEACHERS FOR A NON-TRADITIONAL APPROACH**

Since 2003, when the schedule was changed to add high school-only sections of PSEO College Writing I, the courses have been taught by just two educators who, collectively, have much experience dealing with the varying maturity levels of high school students. I was the initial instructor of the pilot program in Spring 2003, and when another section of the course was added in Spring 2004 (during the same 8:00 AM time slot), a second instructor joined me and taught the additional high school-only section. Both my colleague and I seemed well suited to the task of teaching these non-traditional PSEO sections as we each came to The University of Findlay from established careers in secondary education in Ohio’s public schools. Although neither one of us had terminal degrees or had acquired (at the time) extensive schooling in rhetoric and/or composition, we each, respectively, brought to our task years of experience in teaching writing at the high school level. Furthermore, since each of us had prior experience teaching writing on the college level, we felt “well-equipped” to face the challenges of teaching the basics of college-level writing to groups consisting entirely of high school students. Granted, as instructors, my colleague and I may have been (and continue to be) non-traditional in that our routes to college writing instruction followed circuitous paths through the public school systems to the university campus; however, our unique backgrounds coupled with the PSEO students’ unique “place” of instruction has proved (at least to this point) a logical and unquestioned match.

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50 I taught high school English full-time from 1989-2002. My colleague had thirty years of teaching experience in Ohio’s public schools prior to adjuncting at The University of Findlay.

51 My prior college teaching experience included adjunct work at both Owens Community College (Findlay) and Bluffton University. My colleague has six years of experience as an adjunct instructor at The University of Findlay.
A BRIEF JUSTIFICATION OF AUTO-ETHNOGRAPHIC/REFLEXIVE METHODOLOGY

With only one other instructor aside from myself to choose from to gather data on the non-traditional College Writing I PSEO courses, I weighed the methodological risks of adding my own voice to the fieldwork portion of this research. Without my voice, I might certainly appease some scholars who equate objectivity with a researcher’s distance from his or her subject of study; thus, one choice would be to engage in standard ethnographic methodology and report the findings from my colleague’s responses and the responses of her PSEO students. Still, I had a wealth of experience and practical knowledge on the high school/college writing divide, and I believed my sojourns in both these “worlds” as well as the “bridging world” of PSEO warranted a forum for sharing my reflections. With this in mind, as well as the argument of Deborah Reed-Danahay that the later half of the 20th Century has seen the notion of a truly objective-observer stance in ethnography “called into question” (qtd. in Moore 1), I explored the possibility of incorporating my own experience into this research study.

The positioning of self within one’s own research finds legitimacy in the closely related auto-ethnographic and reflexive theories. Robert C. Bogdan and Sari Knopp Biklen explain that auto-ethnography occurs in research where the primary researcher becomes “the object” of his/her own study (271), and Philip Moore argues that “The notion of ‘autoethnography’ makes explicit a commitment to a self-reflexive way of knowing” (1). Thus, to be truly auto-ethnographic in nature, the incorporation of my own experiences teaching high school writers at both the secondary and post-secondary levels into this research study would require much more than a simple unpacking of memories; instead, it would require reflection, interpretation, and perhaps some uncomfortable revelations regarding the teaching abilities, strategies, and practices of
myself and my peers to whom I hold a strong allegiance. Rosanna Hertz, in *Reflexivity and Voice* asserts that the reflexive ethnographer “does not simply report ‘facts’ or ‘truths’ but actively constructs interpretations of his or her experiences in the field and then questions how those interpretations came about” (viii). Such research, says Hertz, requires an “ongoing conversation about experience while simultaneously living in the moment” (viii), and the subsequent introspection allows scholars to draw on the richness of their own experiences (xiii). Furthermore, in “A Feminist Revisiting of the Insider/Outsider Debate,” Nancy Naples describes the fluidity reflexive methodology affords researchers and further legitimizes its utilization in scholarly studies. She argues that since ethnographers are never fully inside or outside the community they are researching, their relationship with the community is always being “renegotiated” and consequently results in “shifting community relationships” (71). In other words, the notion of a divide between “‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ research” and “objective’ or scientific knowledge and indigenous knowledge” is a false one (Naples 89); instead, it is possible, and perhaps probable that the ethnographic researcher is continually moving among a variety of avenues of “knowing.”

Gesa Kirsch and Joy Ritchie also discuss the movement of research into a more personal realm in their article “Beyond the Personal: Theorizing a Politics of Location in Composition Research”, and as such give further credence to an auto-ethonographic/reflexive stance as part of this research. They write, “. . . we propose that composition researchers theorize their locations by examining their experiences as reflections of ideology and culture, by reinterpreting their own experiences through the eyes of others, and by recognizing their own split selves, their multiple and often unknowable identities” (8). Again, as with the reflexivity espoused by Hertz and Naples, Kirsch and Ritchie’s proposal calls for the researcher who includes “self” to scrutinize
and fully “own” his or her individual contributions, musings, and findings before incorporating this information into the study. Not only is such a personal, reflexive, auto-ethnographic “angle” proposed for composition research, but Bogdan and Biklen’s *Foundations of Qualitative Research in Education* also suggests a similar long-standing approach in education’s approach to research. According to Bogdan and Biklen’s definition, the five features of qualitative research in education consist of 1) observing the natural, actual setting of the research subject; 2) describing the data in all its “richness” through pictures and words; 3) witnessing the day-to-day interaction of the subject(s); 4) allowing any theorizing to emerge *after* collection of data, rather than looking for data to support a preconceived theory; and 5) making meaning through dialogue between researcher and subjects (4-7). All five features surface in the auto- ethnographic/reflexive methodology employed here in that, as an instructor, I have observed the setting, can fully describe it, and have spent years mentally and physically compiling data via experience without any prior scholarly agenda. In addition, the interviews and surveys conducted with my own students also allow for meaning making and dialogue between me and my subjects. With that said, I add my voice to that of my colleagues and our collective students as part of this study.

**COLLEGE WRITING I INSTRUCTORS OF NON-TRADITIONAL PSEO: THEIR VOICES**

**DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE WRITING INSTRUCTION**

Similar to Janet, whose views are discussed in Chapter Two of this study, my colleague “Kim” and I have seen “worlds” of difference between the approaches to and foci of high school and college-level writing instruction. In response to survey question twelve (Appendix

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52 Janet currently teaches writing at both the secondary and post-secondary levels.
53 For purposes of anonymity, my colleague in teaching the high school-only sections of College Writing I will be referred to by the pseudonym of “Kim” in this research.
C): “Describe, if any, the degree of difference you see between high school and college writing instruction in terms of focus, emphasis, and/or requirements,” we each indicated a “marked difference” between the two. In explanation, Kim writes:

It appears that high school focus often is on a specific assignment that does not show relationships between ideas. The students want to find the one “right answer” and leave it at that. Rarely do I find a student relating their ideas or experiences to an issue. They provide facts, lifeless statements of facts.

Part of my written response to question twelve mirrors Kim’s in that I note the tendency for high school-level writers to pen what they think others want them to say or feel—not what they actually think. Both replies hearken back to Larry Weinstein’s discussion of a writing “threshold” which high school students must cross “from doing slavish or derivative thinking to doing real, engaged thinking of one’s own” (xi). Kim often sees her PSEO students traversing this threshold about “a month or so” into the class when they “find they do have something to say.” Perhaps it is at this point that students have experienced a shift in audience from writing for their teacher and/or classmates to writing for a more specific group (Foster and Russell 15), or maybe they have begun to internalize the importance of finding and contributing their own voice to the on-going scholarly conversation (Budden et al. 91). Another possibility is that, in passing over the threshold, high school students gain an initial “understanding that writing is a process of inquiry”, and furthermore, the liberation that comes through writing empowers these students to function as “critical citizens” (Alsup and Bernard-Donals 123-124).

Along with an increased emphasis on audience, voice, and critical thought, another element that may very well prove crucial in the transitioning process is the argumentative, thesis-driven
nature of college-level writing. Kim cites the attention to thesis as one of the noticeable differences between secondary and post-secondary writing instruction, and I note both thesis and more argumentative, rhetorically grounded work as important factors in college-level writing that were less prevalent in my own previous teaching of high school writing. Joseph M. Williams and Lawrence McEnerney in “Writing in College, Part I” caution high school writers that, upon entering college, they will not just be asked to do “something better, but something different”: they will be asked “to make a worthwhile claim . . . that is not obvious (state a thesis means almost the same thing), to support [their] claim with good reasons, all in four or five pages that are organized to present an argument.” To underscore what they believe to be a clear division between what high school writing and college writing instructors expect, Williams and McEnerney add: “If you did that [made a claim and presented an argument] in high school, write your teachers a letter of gratitude.”

**PAPER-LOAD DILEMMA**

Admittedly, Kim and I did much less of “that” as high school writing teachers than we do now as college writing instructors. In my survey, I state that at the high school level just motivating students to write and to organize their thoughts looms as a great challenge, especially in the typical high school classroom where students exhibit such varying levels of competence. Plus, the paper-load can be crushing; one year alone, I taught 170+ high school English students every day. As Milka Mustenikova Mosley puts it in her essay, “The Truth about High School English”, “We [high school English teachers] have too many students and too little time for grading . . .” (58). The result, according to Mosley is that “teachers avoid assigning much writing because they have very little time to grade it” (63). In her interview, Kim notes similar frustrations and suggests that current state curriculum mandates and tests serve to reinscribe the gap between high school and college writing expectations. “You have to understand,” she says,
“that high school teachers have literature, vocabulary, and a lot more students to teach; in other words, there’s not enough time [to teach writing thoroughly]. We did four-five major writings per year. I fault the education system . . . I fault the state mandates.”

**PROCESS**

Another element compromised in high school writing, according to both my experience and Kim’s, is that of process. Overburdened with crowded classrooms and students of varying ability level, the average secondary teacher has little (if any) time to view multiple drafts of individual student work. As a result, Kim states that very few high school students admit to revising their work and often procrastinate until the night before the assignment due date, since they “work better under pressure.” In still another section of her interview, Kim explained that while teaching high school she would give students a writing assignment and a due date; in between she incorporated virtually no pre-planning pedagogy and required very little revision upon the part of her students. “It’s a lot more methodical now [teaching at the college level],” she says for the sake of comparison. “I try to take them step by step and then build.”

Furthermore, applying Janet Alsup and Michael Bernard-Donals’s notions of process to Kim’s approach may explain, at least in part, why college-level writers “buy into” process a bit more readily than their high school counterparts: it all comes back to challenging students to take a stand in their writing. Alsup and Bernard-Donals write:

> One of the advantages of seeing writing as argument, as a process of critical inquiry that moves students from claims and data to warrant and grounds, is that students don’t see “the process” as something forced. In fact, it’s something they have to do in order to successfully argue a point” (Alsup and Bernard-Donals 125).
As her PSEO students progress through the semester, Kim often sees them exhibit the growth in understanding that Alsup and Bernard-Donals describe here. The result, says Kim, is that her students engage in “more pre-planning and are more willing to change the entire focus if the paper is not going in the direction they want; they start over; change topics; I see a lot more interest and effort.”

In my response, I equate this internalization of process among PSEO students with a heightened probability of risk-taking in their writing, and both Kim and I note that our PSEO students gain even more confidence in themselves as writers after working in one-on-one instructor-student conferencing sessions. For my students, these sessions occur once for every paper of the semester; therefore, generally four times (or more) per semester, PSEO students in College Writing I have the opportunity to receive very specific and pointed oral feedback to their work. This feedback coupled with written and oral suggestions from their peers as well as additional written instructor comments provides students with direction for revision. A happy residual effect of these conferencing measures is often increased student awareness of audience and an urgency to truly “speak” to that audience through one’s writing. Thus, through process, revision, time, and individual instruction, PSEO students begin to dare to reveal their individual voices and views in a relevant, meaningful, and sometimes vulnerable manner.

The catch-22, of course, is that secondary English teachers, as a whole, do not have the luxury of incorporating process writing instruction and conferencing to their full extent—curricular constraints as well as class make-up and time considerations all act as barriers. In “Talking about the Transition: Dialogues between High School and University Teachers,” Wendy Strachan reports that her roundtable discussion with high school English teachers also revealed the difficulty of adequately teaching and grading process writing at the high school level (139).
Consequently, I am quick to acknowledge that the relative “success” I have enjoyed while teaching composition to PSEO students would be difficult to replicate if I were to return to my former high school classroom.

Moreover, Kim and I both cringe to think that some of our high school teaching counterparts meet with an unfortunate “ripple effect” caused by the differences in pedagogical approaches (as well as affordances) between secondary and post-secondary writing instruction. Kim states, “It worries me because I don’t want them [PSEO students] to go back to their high school teachers and say ‘we’re doing things all wrong at the high school level’”. I harbor similar concerns. High school English teachers bear heavier instructional, curricular, and assessment responsibilities than many of their counterparts at the post-secondary level. Therefore, those “in the trenches” often view the “advice” of those “in the tower” with suspicion. In other words, the practicalities of secondary writing instruction often do not meet neatly with the ideals espoused by college composition professors. Such disjointedness suggests the reality of Arthur Greenburg’s analysis of the traditional tensions between high school and college faculty (21)—a tension whose pull I have felt from both sides of the divide. Most unsettling to me personally, though, is the notion that non-traditional PSEO College Writing I may (unintentionally) contribute to or re-inscribe this tension.54

**THE QUESTION OF ALIGNMENT**

An even more subtle element of this divisiveness is the notion that high school writing instruction should mimic college writing instruction *at all*. At one level, they are two different entities based on the instruction of two very different populations of students: one has traditionally shouldered the responsibility of imparting competency in writing among the masses while the other has been equated with offering a select group the composition tools necessary to

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54 A further explication of this point can be found in Chapter Five.
survive in academia as well as to create and compete in the world at large. On another level, they are both working toward the goal of adequately preparing and encouraging students to produce meaningful texts. The question, then, is—how can secondary and post-secondary writing instruction maintain the integrity of their combined charge while simultaneously meeting the individual responsibilities of their respective levels of education? And to that point, does high school-level writing instruction necessarily have to mirror college-level writing instruction?

Doug Hesse argues that

“There are developmentally appropriate kinds of writing that should happen in high schools that should be valued in their own right. I’d rather we articulate very clearly what kinds of writing are age-appropriate and not be consumed with trying to replicate what can and should happen in a freshman or sophomore level college writing class among fifteen and sixteen year olds in a different setting” (qtd. in Bauman 9).

At least three points relevant to this study can be gleaned from Hesse’s words. First, conversation, an on-going dialogue, collaboration—call it what you will—needs to occur between high school and college writing instructors, and Hesse is not alone in this call as a number of researchers suggest its possible benefits as well (see Alsup and Bernard-Donals, Budden et. al, Jennings and Hunn, and Strachan). However, crucial to this point is that the conversation truly be a dialogue, because of the aforementioned underlying tensions that often characterize high school and college writing faculty relations. In other words, a one-way conversation, such as college instructors explaining to high school teachers how better to prepare students for college writing, might re-inscribe the gap between the two levels rather than ameliorate it. With that said, Kim and I see our roles in this two-way conversation as
particularly useful since we have experienced the rewards and frustrations felt on both sides of the divide.

A second point from Hesse’s quote that relates directly to this study is that of writing expectations being “age appropriate” for students. Although Hesse was not speaking of PSEO students in this specific passage, his note of caution ties directly back to many of educators’ concerns that some high school students (especially freshmen and sophomores) may not be mature enough to adequately handle the rigors of college instruction. Hesse’s caveat is paramount in that it speaks directly to writing instruction among high school-age students, which leads to point three: Hesse warns that high school teachers should not be expected to “replicate what can and should happen in a freshman or sophomore level college writing class among fifteen and sixteen year olds in a different setting” (qtd. in Bauman 9). However, that is exactly what PSEO writing instructors are asked to do. Granted, when PSEO was first implemented, its purpose was “to give ‘qualified’ high school students a chance to try college work,” and as such, PSEO students have typically been the “cream of the crop”; however, “changing demands of the workplace in the 18 years since have broadened the field of those who could share in its benefits” (ODE The Promise 13). In other words, the pool of potential PSEO students is ever changing and expanding to the point where the writers of The Promise of Dual Enrollment argue “the need has grown for all students to prepare for, attempt, and succeed in postsecondary education” (13). While such an assertion may be debatable, Hesse’s suggestion that educators “’have a real conversation about what’s appropriate at each developmental level’”(qtd. in Bauman 9) seems to be one that PSEO writing instructors (in all three settings) as well as the faculty who train them need to take seriously.
NON-TRADITIONAL PSEO COLLEGE WRITING I STUDENTS: THEIR VOICES

Six non-traditional PSEO students participated in the survey (Appendix A) portion of this study, and those same six also participated in the face-to-face interview (Appendix B) sessions. Three were juniors and three were seniors in high school at the time they participated in the PSEO College Writing I course. As a group, these students learned about the post-secondary enrollment option through a variety of means: from high school guidance counselors to friends, parents, and siblings. The involvement of these students’ parents ranged from “not involved” to “very involved”, and all respondents except for one found the college writing course to be “more challenging” than their corresponding high school writing component. The remaining student described her experience in College Writing I as “on par” with the tempo and rigor of writing instruction she had received at the secondary level.

Four of the six respondents viewed themselves as “somewhat prepared” for the demands of College Writing I, and the other two claimed to be “well prepared” for the course. All students experienced a positive improvement in both their writing abilities and their approaches to writing by semester’s end; likewise all grew in confidence as writers. As for study time, on-half of the respondents spent one to three hours per week on coursework, while the other half devoted slightly more time at four to six hours per week.

ELEMENTS OF “GOOD” WRITING

When asked to apply rank order to the provided five elements of “good writing”, all but one of the subjects placed Thesis at the top of the list. Development followed uniformly as number two among these same five respondents, and then 50% of the subjects listed Organization as third. Less consistency was shown in what placed fourth—two subjects placed Grammar fourth on the list while another two chose Style. Grammar also ranked third, fifth, and sixth respectively. One student who gave Grammar a “four” explained that “[You] Must have good grammar to give
your paper credibility and respect.” Style and Audience trailed closely behind Grammar with one-half of the students marking Style as fifth and one-half marking Audience as sixth.

**Figure 4**

As these findings demonstrate, most variation could be found in students’ rankings of Grammar, Audience, and Style. In particular, one respondent noted the interdependence inherent among these elements with the comment that “A lot of these elements are similar. For instance, ‘style’ and ‘awareness of audience’ coincide to make the piece engage its reader.” This student (Student L55) as well as another (Student M) both referred to the entire list of elements as “vital” or “important.” In explanation, Student M writes:

... I think the thesis is the most important because it tells the readers what you are going to cover in your paper. Then, the writer must include facts or details to support the thesis. Organization is also important in writing a paper so that it flows well. When writing your paper, you must

55 Since respondents’ surveys were anonymous, I have assigned an alphabet letter to each student in order to distinguish respondents from one another.
use the correct style. If it is an argument/persuasive writing you need to make sure you are writing it that way. Last but not least is grammar. Grammar is important, however, it should be saved for last, after you have completed your paper.

Student M’s description, as well as the early ordering of Thesis and Development near the top of nearly all respondents’ lists suggests that he and the others internalized the thesis-driven nature of college-level writing as commonly taught at the post-secondary level. Furthermore, Student M’s response—again coupled with the majority of his peers’ rankings of the writing elements—also may reflect his professor’s pedagogical leanings to the Linda Flower and John Hayes model which, in an attempt to ease student cognitive overload, places grammatical clean-up at the end of the composing process. Still, the students’ ordering of grammar at the end of the writing process might also indicate their individual professor’s college-level expectation that students should prove capable of rectifying their own sentence-level and grammar issues once they have reached the post-secondary stage. Yet another possibility is that the professor may have (unawares) passed along an assumption that grammar is of less import simply by affording it scant pedagogical attention or by addressing it only after the bulk of a composition had been completed (as is proposed above). Whatever the case, this particular response from Student M does not indicate an overt understanding of the rhetorical implications of strong or poor grammar in a person’s writing. Unsurprisingly then, the respondents’ overall cognizance of the purpose(s) of grammar in writing, as well as those of Style and Audience appeared murkier than their comprehension of Thesis, Development, and Organization.

See Chapter One for more discussion on this particular point.
As suggested in the reflections Kim and I provided, “process” joined “thesis” as one of the most internalized composing tools students took with them from the course. When asked to explain the best approach to writing a three-to-five page, argumentative paper, each of the six respondents describe a “process” for completing the task. And while these processes varied, distinct steps surfaced to indicate a recursive nature taking hold in the students’ individual composing practices. Student L writes: “I understand now that it helps to plan ahead my thesis and to come up with my research and valid points before I started [writing]. By doing this, I had to research less and I wasted less time on writing my first draft.” Student L’s comment of a “first draft” suggests other drafts to follow; furthermore, the additional explanation she provides reveals an awareness of the benefits of multiple drafting: “By writing my first draft, I could better understand what I was trying to say and (sic) able to compose a better argument . . .” Similarly, an approach that includes multiple drafting steps is also evident in Student N’s explanation:

I would first begin with an outline. Then I would get my thesis and my supporting points for my thesis. Next, I would get my thesis map with the exact point I need to have in my essay. I would then write out my rough draft; peer editing and teacher editing would come next. Then I would approach the final draft. 

Student O provided an even more detailed and layered response that suggests, perhaps, a deeper, more critical engagement with college-level writing. She begins by stating: “I would first research a topic of interest to me. I would then use all of the information and form my opinion. With my opinion I would form my thesis statement.”
This section of Student O’s explanation reflects two pertinent elements inherent to what is understood as college-level writing: first, finding a conversation to join and second, finding something worthwhile to say in that conversation. According to Susan Kapanke and Melissa Westemeier, “Encouraging students to pick topics . . . honors their world . . . This allows them to write about their own experiences in a formal context, making the format, not the topic, the focus of their attention” (161). Student O, obviously, sees the value of this as she begins her hypothetical task by choosing a topic of “interest”. In addition, she recognizes the need to thoroughly inform herself regarding the topic before taking a stand on the issue. Her decision illustrates the point Alsup and Bernard-Donals make when they write: “In order to take a position on an issue about which reasonable people disagree, a writer needs to understand the foundation of the argument, the more general claims—. . .in order for the argument to proceed” (120). Thus, via the early portion of her explanation, Student O demonstrates essential elements, such as the attempt to contribute to the “conversation”, that is indicative of college-level writing.

After forming her thesis statement, Student O notes that she would choose specific points and form a thesis map to organize her writing; she then recounts how she might begin to develop support for her argument: “I will need to use multiple facts and then follow the facts with strong opinion,” she writes. “I also need to use direct quotes and paraphrases to give my paper sources.” Here Student O’s response suggests the incorporation of what David Foster and David R. Russell consider to be crucial elements in transitioning secondary students from high school to college-level writing: that of properly paraphrasing, citing, and documenting their work (42). Student O finishes her explanation by stating:

My paper will need to be grammatically correct in order to give it credibility. The overall paper should be presented in a mature,
reliable manner. The conclusion should restate my thesis and
further back my opinion. Using all of this correctly will create a
good opinion/argumentative essay.

The focus seen here on “credibility” and “reliability” indicate that, at least in some form, Student O recognizes the role ethos plays in constructing a sound argument. Furthermore, her answer reveals a critical understanding of grammar’s rhetorical purpose that the responses of her peers lack.

**DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE WRITING ASSIGNMENTS**

Moving to the interview portion of the data collection, additional responses surfaced regarding differences in the “types” and “requirements” of writing assignments between high school and college classrooms as well as the attention given to thesis and revision on the secondary level versus the post-secondary level. Nearly all the respondents reported being introduced to, in the words of Jack,57 “Research papers, creative writing, poetry, and some essay questions” as part of their high school writing instruction. Only one student, Kristie, described having done an “argument” paper in high school, and another student, Mark, shared that he had done “little writing at all” due to the high turnover of English teachers in his school district. “For the past two years, we didn’t really have an English teacher. Our [English] teacher was fired at the beginning of the school year, so we went through a bunch of subs [substitute teachers]; the French teacher eventually became our English teacher”, he explained. Requirements of and exposure to formal documentation with these writing assignments varied as well with Jean stating she had been required to use APA documentation on her research papers, while Jack and Gabe (who came from the same high school) had been introduced to both APA and MLA

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57 In order to distinguish respondents in the interview portion of the data collection and to protect their anonymity, pseudonyms will replace the students’ actual names for the remainder of the chapter.
documentation in junior high. Kristie had also been taught formal MLA and Works Cited techniques, but Mark had not been required to use documentation at any time in his high school writing assignments—an unsurprising revelation given the inconsistent environment of his high school English classroom.

As with their PSEO instructors, during their interview sessions, the majority of these students shared that the element of “thesis” garnered more attention at the college-level than in their high school writing instruction. For example, in response to Question 9, Appendix B: “Without naming your teacher, please describe what differences, if any, you saw in elements that were stressed in your college-level writing experience versus in your high school writing instruction,” Gabe responded, “Thesis, definitely thesis.” Likewise, Jean stated: “I only had it [thesis] one time in high school . . . [College Writing I] introduced me to thesis” and still another student, Kasey, shared that while she had learned about thesis in high school, “college was stronger on thesis and development.” Jack also received some exposure to the importance of thesis in writing; however, this only occurred after his regular English teacher resigned. “The substitute English teacher,” explained Jack, “stressed thesis—[that] hadn’t been done before.” According to Kristie (in words that bear similarity to other student and instructor responses in this study) “High school focuses more on grammar and presentation [than thesis].” The assumption here is that Kristie’s definition of “grammar and presentation” may refer to the tendency for some high school writing instruction to focus on “grammatically clean” essays and/or essays that follow a particular format or formula of organization.58 As an interesting side-note, in their individual replies, both Gabe and Jack each viewed “thesis” as providing them a type of “formula” for writing. Gabe stated, “[Using a] thesis made it a lot easier to write; it gave me guidelines.” He added that thesis allows “more of a theorem to follow.” Similarly, Jack said having a thesis in

58 Additional discussion on this point may be found in Chapters Three and Five of this study.
his writing “was easier, because you know what you’re going to write about. It keeps you from going off on a tangent.”

**PROCESS AND REVISION**

As with their student counterparts in Chapters Two and Three of this study, the participants in the non-traditional PSEO College Writing I classes also collectively noted “revision” as an element of their college-level writing instruction seldom evident in their high school work. In explanation, for the purposes of this discussion, revision and process are viewed in tandem, since revision is part of the writing process. Furthermore, as Ellen Lavelle and Anthony J. Guarino write, “From an instructional perspective, it is imperative that comprehensive revision be taught as an integral part of all writing activities rather than as a finishing or polishing process! Separating out processes such as planning, translating and revision (Hayes and Flower, 1980) may not be in line with the function of writing as a tool of thinking” (302). Thus, according to Lavelle and Guarino, revision as a part of process signals a student’s ability to engage in “deep writing” where the writer sees himself as “a maker of meaning” (302), and as a result, must carefully weigh what he says and how he says it in order to obtain the best rhetorical effect in his composition. With that said, on the point of revision/process in her particular section of PSEO College Writing I, Kasey commented that the course “took a lot of writing and revising . . . I didn’t do process steps [in high school]”; however, she did state that she had previously written rough drafts of her work. Overall, though, she claimed, “I didn’t get much direction in revision in high school.” Mark, too, cited “process work” as a relatively new concept in the writing instruction he had experienced prior to College Writing I, and Kristie admitted that she “never thought about rewriting things, [but] I found out it’s better if you rewrite.” In contrast, Jean stated she had “already been doing process work” on the high school level; however, she described the process as “more chunked up” than in college, since, at the high school level, she
was required to do “a little bit each night, because the work was due the next morning.” Described as such, Jean’s “process work” suggests an act more linear than recursive, and as such, may indicate “steps” in the writing process rather than “process” as part of the act of revision.

To gloss this point a bit—if, as Lavelle and Guarino claim, “Active, comprehensive revision is the defining element of deep writing”, and deep writing functions as a “tool of thinking” (302), then process and revision stand as integral elements for transitioning students across the threshold from high school to college level writing. In the words of Chris Jennings Dixon, who has educated students from middle school to the collegiate level, “‘Writing is a way of putting your thinking on paper . . . It helps move students to different levels of thinking” (qtd. in Bauman 8). To put it simply, then, since engaging in process can help students think more deeply about what they are communicating in their writing and how they are communicating, then it is reasonable to assert that process may act as a tool that enables students to more effectively “join the conversation” in an academic discipline. As Lavelle and Guarnio state, “Reflective-revision strategies involve taking charge in order to create meaning when writing. Writing is viewed as a tool for creating meaning and exploring ideas rather than for just telling what is known” (298). Lavelle and Guarnio’s words on process and revision seem especially pertinent in that the students in this study described their writing experience prior to taking College Writing I as mainly in the area of “research” and “reports” (“just telling what is known”) rather than in a more argumentative, thesis-driven vein (“creating meaning”). Again, what may be further extrapolated is that writing instruction that utilizes process has the likelihood of increasing student awareness of and ability to compose work that creates rather than reports information. As such, Lavelle and Guarnio suggest that “Teaching and modeling revision, as opposed to
editing, is key both in college and earlier\textsuperscript{59}, as is empowering students through choice and range of assignments and assessments” (302).

Along with the connection between process and “deep writing” that Lavelle and Guarnio’s comments suggest, a number of additional points relevant to the aforementioned statement warrant discussion. First, as this chapter and Chapter Three of this study note, process work (and multiple revisions of drafts) often presents a vexing conundrum for high school teachers who are required to provide instruction not only across a wide spectrum of study but also to an amalgamation of students. As a result (and understandably so), process may not “get its due” among all levels of high school writing instruction. Second, although Lavelle and Guarnio were not studying high school writers as part of their research, their discussion of “editing” instead of revising conjures peer review exercises (on the high school and/or college level) that sometimes degenerate into simple “grammar checks” rather than true revisionary efforts. And given the students’ own admission that grammar is often a vital part of their high school writing instruction—“the teacher focused one-half the year on grammar,” Gabe observed—then Lavelle and Guarnio’s words are definitely worthy of note, since it may be reasonably assumed from the results in this study that “editing for grammar” arguably constitutes much of high school students’ typical “revision work”.\textsuperscript{60} Furthermore, Lavelle and Guarnio conclude that deep writing and the revision it requires “suggest[s] a global focus involving attention to theme, voice, and audience as opposed to microconcerns such as grammar, rewording, and rules” (302). Thus, the words of the PSEO students in this study along with Lavelle and Guarnio’s observations help illuminate a clear disconnect between high school and college writing instruction as revealed in the PSEO College Writing I courses: one typically focuses on “surface writing” (high school),

\textsuperscript{59} Italics added
\textsuperscript{60} This idea of secondary writing instruction’s focus on the production of “grammatically clean essays” and thus editing for such is also discussed in Chapter Three
while the other, in general, gives merit to “deep writing” (college). The problem is that neither one on its own constitutes “good writing”; instead, good writing is only achieved when the two work in tandem.

**“CHOICE” IN ASSIGNMENTS**

The final part of Lavelle and Guarino’s point that students are “empowered” as writers when they are given “choice and range of assignments and assessments” (302) is also corroborated by the non-traditional PSEO student respondents as well as the comments of Kpanke and Westemeier.\(^{61}\) For example, Jack stated that he became “more interested in writing” at the post-secondary level, because of his ability to choose his own topics. Gabe provided a similar response and added that “presented topics breed a sense of loathing.” He went on to explain that it is sometimes easier to write about something that is given to you; however, if students had more experience in choosing their own writing topics on the high school level then it would be “easier to do in college.” Furthermore, he added: “If you enjoy what you’re doing, you’re going to put more effort into it.” The assumption that Jack’s and Gabe’s individual responses suggest is that, in some cases, high school students may be given prescribed topics to write about (granted, this may true in some college-level writing classes as well). However, if Lavelle and Guarnio’s claims can be applied to high school PSEO writers, this limiting of student choice can have a negative effect on students’ abilities to transition from secondary to post-secondary writing expectations. In her article, “Toppling the Idol,” Lesley Roessing shares her realization of how prescribed and formulaic writing instruction was limiting her high school writers:

> In my most effusive voice I would announce that we were “going to write,” and groans would fill the classroom. Going to the dentist came to mind.

> After dutifully drafting to my specifications, the students did not seem to

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\(^{61}\) See page 152 of this chapter.
want to revise, nor did they edit carefully. Students would make cosmetic changes to their papers and be satisfied. They were finished with their writings. I told them it was like sending “your child to school in a torn dress with dirt on her face.” But these writings were not their children; I know that now. They were my children . . .” (42).

Thus, Roessing’s words help explain how prescriptive writing assignments (on the high school or the college level) can not only prevent students from “owning” their writing but also dissuade them from doing the revisions necessary to move their work beyond the surface to the deep writing that empowers them to “join the conversation” of academic discourse.

**LIMITATIONS TO INSTRUCTION**

In addition to prescriptive writing topics, responses from the students revealed two other elements of writing instruction that, in analysis, may be perceived as “limiting” their ability to transition smoothly between high school and college writing expectations. The two are in-class writing assignments and teacher “hand-holding.” According to Jean, in an effort to thwart plagiarism, her high school writing instructor “had us compose on the spot. I’d rather write at home.” Mark experienced similar scenarios, as did Jack, who stated: “At high school, in some classes, all the writing has to be done at school, so time is an issue for doing rough drafts and final drafts.” And while their respective writing instructor’s concerns about plagiarism are most certainly warranted, the students responding here each found this approach to teaching writing incompatible with producing their best work. Furthermore, in regard to limitation two, noted above, Jean said she viewed the “hand-holding” she had received in her high school writing instruction as a detriment to her current college experience. She stated: “[High school writing] is similar to college, but College Writing I, overall, was harder because in high school the teacher does each step with you. In College Writing I, we did what the teacher wanted but in our
own way. This [change] will be a shock for some students when they get to college.” “We’re not being challenged enough [at high school]. There’s too much hand-holding,” she added, “we need to work at our own pace.” Jean concluded her point by saying, “More people taking PSEO would help the transition. In the meantime, CP (College Prep) classes [at the high school level] should be more hands-off.” To be fair, Jean’s words on “hand-holding” represent just one opinion in this portion of the study; however, her words are worthy of note in that they are reflective of concerns raised in Chapter Three (and analyzed further in Chapter Five) regarding not only high school writing instruction but also the implications of the student/teacher reliance found in UF-USA PSEO College Writing I classrooms.

**INTENSITY OF COLLEGE WRITING INSTRUCTION**

Jean’s claim that the relatively “hands-off” approach of college instruction will come as “a shock” to her peers aligns closely with the PSEO respondents’ collective perception that College Writing I challenged them, in part, because an increase in instructional intensity as well as demands. Gabe, for example, stated that although he had “a general idea of what was expected [at the college level],” he “needed to put in more work” than in his high school class; “I had to steadily revise.” “High school spoiled us,” he added, “it wasn’t that hard. I didn’t have to exert myself.” His experience was similar to that of Jean who admitted she “could slack off in high school and still get ‘A’s’. I couldn’t do that here. I had to work harder here. After the first assignment, I realized the standards were higher and more was expected of me.” For Jack it was the “accelerated pace” of college instruction that challenged him as a student; likewise, Kasey deemed the course, “more challenging [than high school writing]. I never had that much experience writing . . . I learned more from this college class than writing other papers in high school.” Whether Kasey actually learned more or perhaps learned different elements in her college writing instruction is open for debate; still she seemed appreciative of how the demands
of the course helped her to grow as a writer: “I’m more confident now. I have an idea of what professors expect.” In contrast to the others, Kristie was that lone student who responded that, although she “anticipated it [College Writing I] to be really difficult,” she “thought it was actually pretty easy.” She did add that “the argument paper was the most difficult”—a point well noted by students in nearly all areas of this particular study.

**STUDENT “GROWTH”**

Even with Kristie’s comment noted, it seems evident that each of the student participants experienced some change (slight or otherwise) in their writing instruction on the college-level as opposed to their previous high school instruction; furthermore, they also experienced change in themselves as writers. Some, such as Kasey, whose comments are mentioned above, grew in confidence. Kristie had a similar experience and shared that while she “had always felt pretty confident as a writer,” successfully completing College Writing I, made her “even more confident.” Others such as Jack described themselves as “[a] better [writer] than what I was,” and Gabe, too, called himself “a better writer” as a result of the course. Meanwhile, Kasey said her ability to write a “thesis is better . . . I grasped that more.” These responses mirrored the students’ survey responses and the instructors’ perceptions (mine, of course, included) that the non-traditional PSEO students did, indeed, make strides as college-level writers over the course of the semester.

**THE NON-TRADITIONAL SETTING AND PLACE**

What effect place had (if any) on the perceived “success” of this instruction elicited a number of interesting and varied responses from the students. Overall, PSEO courses, in general, were described by students as valuable for a number of reasons. First, in response to the general nature of PSEOs, Jack explained that saw the opportunity as valuable, because it is “easier to go in to [talk] a professor that doesn’t know you”; in addition, “it helps you get away from
preconceived opinions by high school teachers.” Kristie, too, enjoyed taking courses on a
college campus and described the atmosphere as “awesome . . . I loved the environment”;
furthermore, both she and Kasey appreciated the opportunity to, in Kasey’s words, “get to know
professors.” Citing yet another “plus” to PSEO instruction, Mark noted how his post-secondary
classes “broke up the day,” while for Jean, it was the transitioning factor of PSEOs that stood out
as a positive: “Emotionally, PSEO has prepared me a lot more [to go to college full-time],” she
stated. She went on to explain: “I’m not as close, now, to my classmates at high school. I don’t
depend on my high school friends as much. I’m ready to leave and go to college. Some people
will be so shocked [when they get to college]. Some people are so sheltered.”

While the consensus seen here lauds PSEOs, when the discussion turned to the non-traditional
setting in which these students experienced College Writing I, opinions were mixed. For
example, Kasey enjoyed being grouped with PSEO students from other high schools; in her
experience “interacting with students from other schools pushes you out of a box.” Kristie also
stated that taking College Writing I on the college campus was “more of a college experience”
since she was “forced to interact with others . . . a PSEO class at high school is not different
people from different schools.” She also felt that “it [PSEO] wouldn’t feel like a college class at
high school.” Worthy of note here is Kristie’s admission that her non-traditional PSEO College
writing I course was “*more* of a college experience,” 62 than the high school option. The use of
the word “*more*” suggests that the course, and arguably its setting, may not have afforded Kristie
a *full* college experience as expressed in the Ohio Board of Regents’ original guidelines for
PSEO instruction, which state that “high school students should be enrolled in regular college
class sections with regular college students.”

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62 Italics added
The assumption made here is validated by the responses of several of Kristie’s peers, among them, Gabe. He explained that he did not “get the college feel” in his non-traditional PSEO classroom, since he and the other students had been grouped together in Fall Semester’s ENGL 150 Literature Appreciation course and were placed together again in Spring Semester’s College Writing I. “I knew everybody,” he stated. “It was just like a high school class except being on a college campus.” Jean’s comments echo Gabe’s remarks: “It [the non-traditional PSEO setting] seems the same as a high school class, but it’s taught by a professor.” She added that “more of the college experience would help with the transition,” and noted that in her other PSEO experiences, she enjoyed how she had been “integrated with [other] college students.” Mark shared similar a similar view: “With all PSEO students, too, it’s almost like a high school class.” Furthermore, for Jack, this “high school feel” led to a level of discomfort and embarrassment in peer review—perhaps reminiscent of previous secondary peer review experiences. Thus, while PSEOs, in general, enjoyed kudos from the non-traditional enrollees, the same could not be said, overall, for the non-traditional setting in which the enrollees’ College Writing I instruction occurred.

CONCLUSION

Initial findings from this chapter corroborate some earlier points discussed in Chapters Two and Three, especially in regard to Research Question number one, which considers what part instructors’ backgrounds as well as philosophical and pedagogical leanings may play in guiding students across the secondary/post-secondary writing threshold. At the same time, several new points of discussion also emerge that are specifically pertinent to Research Questions Two and Three, which ponder the effects of “place” of writing instruction along with PSEO’s claims of providing “seamless transition” for participating high school students. Combined, these findings
suggest a layer of supporting data as well as some nascent developments in need of further inquiry and discussion.

First, to review the point of teacher experience and pedagogy as examined in this chapter: both teachers in the non-traditional PSEO classroom (myself included) share roots as English teachers in public high schools prior to teaching at The University of Findlay and both described a “marked difference” between high school and college-level writing instruction. These differences could be found mainly in the areas of audience, thesis, and argument. The student participants’ responses echoed a similar perception and also suggested that their prior writing instruction included much focus on grammar and conventions of “reporting” rather than “creating meaning” through the written word. In general, these responses are indicative of those shared in Chapters Two and Three of the study. Furthermore, as was true with the majority of their counterparts in the earlier phases of this study, most of the instructors and the students in the non-traditional College Writing I course described the approach to writing instruction on the college level as more “intense” than what they had experienced in high school. Interestingly, it may be safely assumed that at least several of the students in this portion of the study relished this increased activity, since they commented on the limiting nature of some high school instruction they experienced that espoused prescribed topics and “hand-holding” pedagogies to step them through writing assignments.

Also similar to earlier findings were the instructors’ and students’ comments in this chapter regarding the increased use of process and revision as part of college-level writing. Once again, the instructors, here, noted that process is often compromised during high school level writing instruction because of a number of constraints facing the typical secondary English teacher. However, some new, tangential points worthy of note arose in this area of discussion as well,
including the role teacher-student writing conferences play in helping students engage in process writing and how revision may transition students from what Lavelle and Guarnio call “surface writing” to “deep writing.” To put it simply, findings here suggest that the aims of high school writing often align with surface writing, while those of college-level writing often reflect Lavelle and Guarnio’s definition of deep writing. The trick is to provide instruction on both sides of that high school to college writing gap that afford students the tools to do both, in that each cannot stand alone. Evidence suggests that one avenue for empowering high school writers and encouraging them to engage in the process that will take them from surface to deep writing is to allow them more choice in topic.

On the question of place and its impact on writing instruction, the students in the non-traditional PSEO setting, while advocates of PSEOs overall, posited mixed reviews when it came to the “high school-only” section of their College Writing I course. In general, the students collectively enjoyed coming to campus and experiencing college life as well as the independence they gained by taking courses away from their high school setting. However, only two of the six students in the study saw their “high school-only” grouping as a positive factor in their PSEO writing instruction. Several complained that the homogeneous atmosphere did not equate to the full college experience, while others described the setting as being too much like a “regular high school class.” To be fair, two students did cite their integration with students from other high schools as a positive aspect of College Writing I; still, the negative voices indicated that instructors, coordinators, and administrators (at The University of Findlay and elsewhere) may want to revisit their reasons for funneling PSEO students into non-traditional on-campus groupings.
Finally, just as the students in this section of the study appeared to desire a distinction between their high school and college experiences, findings in this chapter, when juxtaposed against the words of Hesse and others suggest “seamless transitioning” may not be the goal PSEOs or even high school/college writing instruction should necessarily be chasing. While the possibility lies that instructors may threshold students from high school to college-level writing via more focus on the aforementioned movement from surface writing to deep writing, the real conundrum is whether or not high school and college-level writing instruction should be the same thing. Furthermore, as evidence from this research and the work of others, such as Williams and McEnerney argue, instructors on the two sides of the high school/college writing divide often have very different goals for their students. As a result, Hesse cautions against trying to perfectly align high school and college writing instruction for a number of reasons, one of which is the differing levels of maturity among high school-age and college-age writers—a point especially pertinent to PSEO writing instruction. Instead of alignment or replication of instruction on both levels, Hesse suggests that the best method for ameliorating gaps between high school and college writing instruction is dialogue, and he is not alone in that call. My colleague Kim and I see the need as well, and like Hesse, acknowledge that the conversation must be a two-way dialogue between high school and college writing instructors in order to be truly effective.

At this point, Chapters Two, Three, and Four of this study indicate that PSEO writing programs may prove prime places for opening a valuable dialogue between high school and college writing instructors. In addition, to take the suggestion of Hesse and others one step further, initial findings from this research project suggest that students should be a part of such conversations as well, since they, too, are participants and stakeholders in this discussion.
CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, SUMMATION, AND SUGGESTIONS

REVIEWING THE RESEARCH FOCUS AND QUESTIONS

The previous chapters of this research study strive to do the following: establish the existence of a persistent gap between high school and college writing instruction; discuss the efforts of Ohio’s post-secondary enrollment options program to provide students a smooth academic passage from high school to college; and pose the query of whether or not PSEOs—with their claims of “seamless transition”—may, in the case of composition classrooms, act as conduits for rectifying the aforementioned secondary/post-secondary writing disconnect. In an effort to tease out these gaps and claims, this research includes written surveys and oral interviews of teachers and students at three places of PSEO composition instruction affiliated with The University of Findlay: the traditional PSEO setting where high school students participate in College Writing I with college freshmen; the high school setting where students are instructed by secondary teachers acting as university adjuncts; and the non-traditional setting where PSEO students from various schools are grouped in “high school-only” sections of College Writing I on the college campus. While the findings from each individual place of instruction can be found in Chapters Two, Three, and Four, this chapter provides additional analysis as well as a synthesis of pertinent points relevant to the study’s questions on how teacher experience, teacher pedagogy, and place of instruction may impact PSEO students’ ability to transition from high school to college writing expectations.

LIMITATIONS

A number of specific areas of disconnect between current high school and college writing instruction surfaced as a result of the surveys, interviews, and observations conducted for this
study. Before these are discussed more thoroughly, it should be noted that the data collected throughout the previous chapters constitute a pilot study and as such represent the opinions and perceptions of a small sampling of Ohio PSEO students and their instructors affiliated with The University of Findlay. Specifically, I observed two composition classrooms (not including my own), surveyed/interviewed six teachers (not including myself), surveyed seventeen students, and personally interviewed fifteen of those seventeen students. In all, twenty-four participants constituted this study. And while that is a decidedly small sampling of teachers and students, the findings from this population bear attention from a number of perspectives. First, many elements of this study’s findings serve to corroborate, clarify, or even contradict previous research; thus, the research found here contributes nascent information to several circles of discussion—from the composition classroom, to PSEO programs, to the relationships between those in secondary and higher education. In addition, while a significant number of pertinent discoveries will be delineated in the sections to follow, it should also be noted that for the sake of efficacy, some findings—more tangential in nature—will merely be footnoted, and consequently, may warrant further analysis, inquiry, and consideration at a later time. Moreover, future research at additional private universities in Ohio (and nationwide) among larger populations would also serve to verify (or disprove) this study’s findings.

**ORGANIZATION AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS**

With that said, the headings to follow in this chapter organize the relevant findings of the study into categories which coincide with the core areas of this research: teacher experience and pedagogy; place of instruction; and relevance to the PSEO claim of “seamless transition.” Subheadings under each category are also provided as a means of organization and clarity.

63 In total, I observed two composition classrooms (not including my own), surveyed/interviewed six teachers (not including myself), surveyed seventeen students, and interviewed fifteen of those seventeen students.
Furthermore, for the purpose of contextualizing this study’s findings within the “seamless transition” debate, the overarching discussion of “seamless transition” will foreground the analysis/synthesis portion of this chapter.

Finally, included within the delineation of findings are concerns regarding how programs, such as PSEOs, in their respective places of instruction, have the potential to both raze and re-inscribe decades-old divides between secondary and post-secondary writing classrooms. The chapter concludes, then, with suggestions for additional, specific research into PSEO composition classrooms—especially those at private institutions—and in particular voices a call for an on-going, concerted dialogue among those parties affecting and affected by high school/college writing concerns.

POST-SECONDARY ENROLLMENT OPTIONS AND THE CLAIMS OF “SEAMLESS TRANSITION”

OF BOUNDARIES AND BRIDGES

In his essay, “Whistling in the Dark,” Merrill J. Davies writes, “Having taught high school English for thirty-one years, the one thing that I have learned is that there is no guarantee that students who do well in high school composition will automatically do well in college composition” (31). The crux of Davies’ well worn lament—that high school and college composition instruction do not necessarily flow seamlessly, one to the other—is familiar to writing teachers on both sides of the secondary/post-secondary divide. Because of this disconnect (which can be traced to a number of factors directly related to as well as cogent to the act of writing instruction itself), Davies and arguably others like him in high school and university classrooms often find themselves, to borrow his words, “‘whistling in the dark’” when it comes to the teaching of writing. In other words, what students “should know and be able to do” (Davies 31) is often a mystery not only to high school instructors who must prepare students
for college-level writing expectations, but also to post-secondary instructors who often have little understanding of the rationale and emphases of their incoming students’ previous writing experiences.

In the meantime, while these decades-old boundaries confound and separate those who instruct young writers, the PSEO program has emerged with claims of “seamlessly transitioning” students across the threshold that connects these two educational “worlds”. Specific to Ohio, PSEO proponents write:

> An opportunity is before our state to forge a model for dual enrollment
> that bridges old education boundaries and increases access and
> preparedness for all students. PSEO is one of the few policies in place
> that allow students to move across the invisible walls between high
> school and college (ODE The Promise 48).

Moreover, proponents of PSEO applaud its potential to promote an “efficiency of learning” among secondary and post-secondary students through “reduced repetition of courses in grades 11-14”, since eligible high school students “can take introductory college courses for dual credit” (ODE The Promise 13). Inherent, though, to the PSEO concept of “seamless transition” is an assumption that high school and college courses already share similar goals and foci, and as such, the journey from high school to college consists mainly of moving through “invisible walls.”

However, as this and various other studies and observations prove, secondary and post-secondary writing instruction are rarely aligned given the curricular, state, and national mandates public schools operate under. In fact, to borrow the words of Foster and Russell, a “profound mismatch in expectations” exists among “teachers in secondary and in higher education”
regarding “student writing and writing development” (42). Such a “mismatch” can be assumed to negatively impact all but the most specific efforts at alignment; furthermore, the question of whether or not both sides should even strive to align writing instruction is one seemingly overlooked by those who view PSEOs “as a way to help bridge the gap between high school and postsecondary education” (ODE The Promise 8).

Consequently, then, PSEO’s claim of seamless transition rests on a number of misadvised and under-assessed notions. First, the claim suggests a glossing of secondary/post-secondary academic tensions and an over-simplification of the alignment issue. The claim also suggests a lack of awareness of the often disparate goals of each camp or even perhaps an inordinately optimistic view of the prospects of a K-16 education system. Finally, while the ideal of “seamless transition” may be ascribed to any one or a combination of these notions (or more)—it remains particularly problematic for high school and college writing instructors who, themselves, struggle not only with the challenges of their particular academic station but also with various perceptions regarding “college-level” writing that cause the term to function more like a moving target than a definable entity. In other words, to borrow from Patrick Sullivan: “without a stronger shared sense [on both sides] of what college-level and precollege work is” (12), those walls or boundaries that divide high school and college writing instruction will likely persist—invisible or not. To take this further, achieving a “shared sense” of “college-level and precollege work” alone is not enough, though, either. These boundaries will also persist until an increased understanding of the challenges and constraints unique to each level of instruction is recognized on both sides of the divide. As such, PSEO’s current claims of “seamless transition”, at least when it comes to the composition classroom, seem dubious at best; to put it another way: it is difficult task to navigate any “wall” when one is “whistling in the dark.”
Not to appear contradictory, but just because PSEO’s purported “seamlessness” cannot, at this time, be assumed true for composition studies does not mean that PSEO writing classrooms do not or cannot contribute to a better understanding of the current state of composition studies at both levels. In fact, as this study demonstrates, PSEO composition courses—via the students and teachers that inhabit them—provide rich sources of data for understanding and exploring the boundaries and bridges that exist between high school and college writing instruction. Moreover, once these boundaries and bridges have been better defined and acknowledged (as this study strives to do) then perhaps PSEO students as well as instructors (on both sides) along with writing students in general will enjoy easier passage across the high school/college writing threshold.

TEACHER EXPERIENCE AND PEDAGOGY

CURRICULUM, STANDARDS, AND THE GRADING DILEMMA

In the words of Peter Kittle: “. . . the circumstances and contexts of high school and college writing classes are very different, and those circumstances and contexts strongly impact pedagogy” (140). With that said, a firm understanding of these “differing practices” or better yet, “specific characteristics” that bind and drive high school English instruction provides a context in which to examine the responses of teachers who instruct post-secondary enrollees in The University of Findlay’s College Writing I courses. First, since all the instructor-participants in this study have taught numerous sections of College Writing I populated with high school students, the sheer level of experience each brings to this research suggests that their responses are worthy of merit. Second, since all instructor-participants in this study but one are current or former high school English teachers who also presently teach college-level writing, it may be assumed that these individuals are in the prime position to ascertain any distinctions that may exist between secondary and post-secondary composition instruction. Third, although it is also
safe to say that each instructor brought her own individual notions to the table regarding how the course should be taught or what elements should be stressed, each instructor was also bound by the requirements of the College Writing I course as set down by The University of Findlay; thus, the elements they stressed as those indicative “college-level writing” share a marked uniformity throughout this discussion.

With that said, the responses of the instructor-participants in this study revealed three factors, in particular, as significant to defining the situation of the typical secondary English teacher as opposed to that of the typical college composition instructor. Those factors include the large curricular scope public school English teachers are challenged to cover, the state and national standards to which that same instruction must adhere, and the consequential paper-load/grading dilemma that accrues from meeting the aforementioned mandates. Individually and in combination, these three factors (as explained by the experienced teachers in this study) have a marked effect on the pedagogical choices high school writing teachers make, and in turn, impact the relationships that characterize the current writing divide—not to mention the nature of high school writing instruction as a whole.

In her essay, “The Truth about High School English,” Milka Mustenikova Mosely makes clear the myriad elements the typical high school English curriculum encompasses: “. . . our English classes are not composition classes, but are surveys of literature classes, mainly surveys of different genres of literature, but also surveys of World Literature, American Literature, and British Literature. We also cover study skills, grammar, and vocabulary”(61). More specifically, in the state of Ohio, secondary English teachers must educate their students to meet benchmarks or indicators tied to the state’s academic content standards in the following areas:
vocabulary, reading process\textsuperscript{64}, reading applications\textsuperscript{65}, writing process\textsuperscript{66}, writing applications\textsuperscript{67}, writing conventions, research, and communication\textsuperscript{68} (ODE Academic Content Standards 10-12).

In contrast, the typical college composition class is just that: a composition class, and as is noted in Chapter Three\textsuperscript{69}, this distinction is of important note both in terms of instruction and in terms of impact on students as seen in the PSEO participants’ responses. Furthermore, in general, high school English teachers can expect to teach upwards of five forty-five minute (plus) classes per day five days per week while their full-time post-secondary counterparts, depending on the university’s tier, will probably teach no more than four classes three-to-four times per week.\textsuperscript{70} The result of such lopsided agendas and loads can be seen in Kim’s comments from Chapter Four: “You have to understand that high school teachers have literature, vocabulary, and a lot more students to teach; in other words, there’s not enough time [to teach writing thoroughly]. We did four-five major writings per year. I fault the education system . . . I fault the state mandates.”

Kim’s words bring the discussion to factor number two: state and national standards to which high school writing instructors must adhere. While it is true, as Mosely states that: “Preparing our students for standardized tests does not mean that we [high school English teachers] strictly teach to the tests” (61); the fact remains that “high school English teachers have to conform to and cover the curriculum approved by [their] school boards because everything [they] do is

\textsuperscript{64} The “Reading Process” standard aims to help “students develop and learn to apply strategies that help them to comprehend and interpret informational and literary texts”; there is also a “self-monitoring” element to this standard where “students learn to self-monitor their own comprehension by asking and answering questions to the text, self-correcting errors and assessing their own understanding” (ODE Academic Content Standards 10).

\textsuperscript{65} The reading applications standard includes “informational, technical and persuasive” texts as well as “literary texts” (ODE Academic Content Standards 11).

\textsuperscript{66} “Writing Process” as defined by the Ohio Department of Education will be discussed in the pages to follow.

\textsuperscript{67} “Writing Applications” as defined by the Ohio Department of Education will be discussed in the pages to follow.

\textsuperscript{68} This standard includes interpretation of oral as well as visual images (ODE Academic Content Standards 12).

\textsuperscript{69} See page 112 of Chapter Three

\textsuperscript{70} Obviously these are generalities, but having taught at both the high school and college levels, I believe these estimates are valid and as such may be used for argument’s sake.
closely monitored by standardized testing” (Mosely 60). For English teachers in Ohio, that means preparing students for the writing portions of the Ohio Achievement Tests (OATs) given in grades four and eight\(^{71}\) and the Ohio Graduation Test (OGT) given in grade 10 (ODE “What’s Expected”). For example, according to benchmarks for the tenth grade level, students should be able to “formulate writing ideas... appropriate to purpose and audience”; organize, revise, and edit their writing; “apply tools to judge the quality of writing”; and prepare writing that is “legible,” correctly formatted, and demonstrates the writer’s ability to utilize “techniques such as electronic resources and graphics” (ODE Academic Content Standards 41).

Furthermore, these same students are required to employ the aforementioned writing processes in composing appropriately documented narratives, responses to literature, conventional letters, and persuasion (ODE Academic Content Standards 45, 47). And while the content of these standards will be discussed a bit later in this chapter, the sheer scope of these standards—which represent only two of the total ten standards for English/Language Arts—provides convincing evidence that Ohio’s high school English teachers face weighty challenges in preparing students to meet state writing mandates (alongside the other standards), especially when those standards are coupled with prepping students for what may be fairly deemed the amorphous demands of “college-level writing.”

Factor number three, then, the high school English teacher’s paperload/grading dilemma\(^{72}\), is the natural outgrowth of factors two and three; in other words, an all-encompassing English curriculum for high school students coupled with state mandates and the pressures to adequately

\(^{71}\) The Ohio Academic Content Standards benchmarks for grades four and seven are not included here, since this particular study deals with high school/college writing instruction. However, in order for any significant alignment of K-16 writing expectations to occur, one would obviously need to include an analysis of these benchmarks. That said, this study also posits the question as to whether or not the issue of such alignment should even be broached.

\(^{72}\) This is not to say that university writing professors do not have large grading demands. Instead, this point is to contend that secondary English instructors have not only copious amounts of grading but also differing grading demands since they are required to teach a variety of standards which are under the English “umbrella.”
prepare students for the demands of college equals a full “inbox” for the majority of secondary
English educators. And that is not to say that there are not English teachers out there who can
take on that challenge and more; there certainly are. Still, as Sheridan Blau explains, first-year
composition instructors often “complain that the students in their various first-year English
classes [are] not ready for the course” (368). Such complaints coupled with the view that “high
school students are graduating with deficient writing skills” (Jennings and Hunn 182)
undoubtedly weigh heavily on many public school English teachers who feel the fingers of
judgment pointing at them (it certainly did for me). As Mosely states,

   Many college professors and especially English instructors seem
   frustrated by the poor quality of work students produce in their classes,
   and they often wonder whether high school English teachers are aware
   of their students’ incompetence in writing and, if they are, what they are
   doing to prepare young adults for college (59-60).

Mosely’s tongue-in-cheek reply to such a query is “yes, high school English teachers are
somewhat familiar with college-level writing expectations”, since “[a]fter all, teachers are
college graduates” (60). However as Mosely and countless other former and current secondary
English teachers (myself included) have discovered, “college theory and high school practice
differ greatly” (60). As such, it may be argued that high school and college-level writing
instruction, then, are two very different entities with curriculum, mandates, and paper-load
residing at the fulcrum of each entity’s “differing practices”.

ARGUMENTATIVE THESIS AND HIGH SCHOOL “REPORTING”

With a cognizance of the current climate in which secondary writing instruction takes place in
the state of Ohio and how that climate differs from its college counterpart, this discussion now
turns to the specific elements, or the “what” and “how” of each level of instruction. To begin,
the survey and interview responses from the instructors in this study as well as the PSEO students-participants help provide a template of writing elements stressed on either side of the divide. For example, pedagogically, the instructors as a whole employed discussion as a main teaching method in the College Writing I, and each followed The University of Findlay’s College Writing I guidelines for instruction that stress the importance of argumentative thesis and a recursive writing process as integral elements of the course. However, it was in the teaching of these two specific elements that those participants who had taught at both levels experienced the most “disconnect” in how they had/have approached the teaching of writing at high school versus college. Similar discrepancies in approach and/or focus between levels of writing instruction were also noted among the PSEO student-participants in this study; responses to this effect were revealed most readily through the students’ rankings of the characteristics of “good” writing as well as their explanations of such as shared in earlier chapters.

As the interview responses of the participating instructors and students suggest, college-level writing’s intense focus on “thesis” is one element that differentiates it from typical high school writing instruction (See Figure 5 next page). And to better understand how attention to “thesis” demarcates the two, one must first back up and discuss the different approaches taken to writing essays at both levels. As this study (and others cited in this research) suggest, high school writing instruction generally focuses on analyzing literature or reporting information rather than creating thesis-driven works meant to “join a conversation.”

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73 Given the arbitrary nature of the definition of “college-level writing”, the “college-level” writing elements discussed here refer to those stressed by The University of Findlay in its College Writing I syllabus template.
74 See Chapter Two, pages 67-68; Chapter Three, pages 104-107; and Chapter Four, pages 138-141.
75 Elsewhere in this study it has been noted how difficult it is to define both “high school-level writing” and “college-level writing” since some core elements and certainly subtleties of each vary greatly from instructional institution to instructional institution. However, for the sake of this study and due to the credentials of the instructor-participants, who (with the exception of one) have taught or currently teach in secondary and post-secondary writing classrooms, some assumptions are made here regarding the characteristics of writing taught at each level.
Figure 5

For example, the tenth grade OGT writing requirements mentioned earlier include composing narratives, responding to literature, writing letters, and crafting “a persuasive piece that states a clear position, includes relevant information and offers compelling evidence in the form of facts and details” (ODE Academic Content Standards 45-47). Also to this point, the final Ohio 12th grade Writing Process indicator requires that prior to graduation students exhibit the ability to compose persuasive pieces that “articulate a clear position” and display the development of “arguments” (ODE Academic Content Standards 124).

At first glance, the OGT benchmark as well as the 12th grade Writing Process indicator, which are both aligned with persuasive writing seem to suggest the need for a “thesis-driven” stance in student writing, since each, respectively, calls for work that “states a clear position.” However, the benchmark does not delineate whose position that might be—that of the student? the teacher? the writer of the source(s) the student happens to be using? Furthermore, the lone high school grade-level indicator for thesis writing (tied to the OGT) requires students to demonstrate the
ability to “Establish and develop a clear thesis statement for informational writing or a clear plan or outline for narrative writing” (ODE Academic Content Standards 107). In other words, these particular benchmarks/indicators may indeed suggest or even directly speak to the development of thesis. However, given the responses from this study, it may be argued that the type of thesis being described here is one that “reports” information rather than one that argues a position or strives to add something new to an on-going conversation. To apply the words of Kathleen McCormick from her essay, “Do You Believe in Magic?”, “. . . [high school students] have been asked to write research reports, which are basically summaries, rather than researched essays—that is, carefully integrated arguments in which student writers enter into genuine conversation with a group of experts” (211). McCormick goes onto call such an approach to research the “report task definition” (211).

To put it simply, secondary writers are often required to report information in their writing assignments or on state tests, such as the OGT, rather than research information or argue a position: therein lies the thesis “rub”. This particular finding indicates that high school writing, then, by design, is inherently different from the writing expected of those on the post-secondary level—a point made, too, by Joseph M. Williams and Lawrence McErnerney in their work, “Writing in College, Part I” and corroborated by the PSEO students in this study. Moreover, this finding also leads to the argument that, in general, high school and college-level writing instruction may exist on parallel planes: while each strives to equip its students with the abilities

76 Italics added
77 Chapter Three, page 111
78 According to student respondents in this survey and per my own experience as a high school teacher, this statement generally holds true for disciplines on the secondary level outside of English as well. For example, the student respondents noted history and science as other courses in which they had been required to write “reports”.
79 Duly noted that this claim is, at this point, limited to writing instruction in the state of Ohio.
to write strong essays—the goals of these essays may be inherently different. As a result, student (and instructor) attempts to transition from one plane to the other may be tricky at best.

**GRAMMAR AND THE FIVE-PARAGRAPH ESSAY**

To tease out two additional elements of these “parallel planes”, it may be argued that the “reporting” of information requires attention to grammar/mechanics as well as format and organization since the general goal of any report is to successfully relate information to an audience. Such a hypothesis coincides with the responses of a number of instructors and PSEO students in this study who cited emphasis on grammar along with the five paragraph essay as characteristics of high school writing instruction as opposed to college-level writing instruction.

First, to the emphasis on grammar, the responses garnered from this research corroborate the arguments of writers such as Mosely, a high school teacher herself, who contends that “Most high school teachers think that a grammatically correct piece [of writing] is what is needed for college” (65).

While Mosely is not suggesting that secondary teachers view grammar alone as the route to adequately preparing student writers, the point she makes is akin to that of Kittle who admits of his earliest attempts at secondary writing instruction:

> . . . I’m certain that on more than one occasion, I overvalued papers with marginal insights simply because they were relatively error free. Some students even revised their work to make it less complex—filled with simple vocabulary and safe sentence structures—to assure that it had fewer errors. While this in itself was bad enough, what is worse is the mistaken impression that I’m certain many of my students gained

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80 See Chapter Three, pages 100-101 and 105-106; Chapter Four, pages 139-141, 143-144
81 See Chapter Two, pages 62-65
82 Also see Davies and Winalski, respectively.
from my instruction: clean presentation trumps smart, complex argument (137).

Notions such as Mosely’s and Kittle’s are reminiscent of Kay’s “smoke and mirrors” comment in Chapter Three where she claims that some PSEO students have difficulty transitioning from high school to college-level writing due, in part, to the fact that their “grammatically clean” and well organized essays had garnered accolades from some secondary teachers who did not look beyond the surface to evaluate the deeper aspects (sometimes lacking) in these same students’ works.

True, chagrin may be apparent in the reflections of Mosely, Kittle, and Kay, however, if the aforementioned assumption that the style of typical high school writing lends itself to details such as grammar and mechanics, then secondary teachers who focus much instruction on grammar are actually just tending to the business of high school writing are doing their job. Moreover, according to Ohio’s Academic Content Standards, students grades eight through ten should master writing conventions that “include spelling, punctuation, grammar and other conventions associated with forms of written text” (ODE Academic Content Standards 48-49). So in effect, the report style indicative of high school writing is essentially driven, then, by the standards set down by the State Department of Education. And while this is not to say that all high school writing is inevitably free of grammar errors, to go back to Mosely’s point, one would be hard pressed to find a college writing professor who would not or does not welcome grammatically clean work from his/her first year composition students.

As far as the five-paragraph format goes, it, too, lends itself to report writing, since students “need to be able to organize the material (in such a way that the reader can separate one idea from another)” (Davies 33). According to Merrill Davies, “The often-berated five-paragraph essay is an attempt to teach students how to do this [organize material]” (33), and as Ellen
Andrews Knody explains, many secondary teachers utilize the five-paragraph format because of its usefulness “for beginning writers who have little sense of organization. They [the teachers] also point out that it is a quick way to organize an essay exam answer in history or psychology or other such courses.” These words echo those of Janet in Chapter Two who shared the benefits of five-paragraph instruction among her high school writers.

However, not all secondary teachers are content with the five-paragraph essay as an ending point of writing instruction. For example, Janet attempts to teach the format and then coax her students out it. Similarly, Davies speaks of “moving” his students “beyond” this organizational tool as do Jeanette Jordan, Karena K. Nelson, Howard Clauser, Susan E. Albert, Karen M. Cunningham, and Amanda Scholz in their essay “Am I a Liar? The Angst of a High School English Teacher.” Jordan et al. write: “We value nonformulaic writing and struggle to push our students beyond the very limiting five-paragraph structure that they find so comforting and familiar. Am I doing a disservice to my low-level writers, however, if I throw out the scaffold that they are still trying to master?” The first part of this statement suggests that some high school English teachers acknowledge that “moving beyond the box” is a necessity for growth among their young writers. At the same time, the statement also indicates, as did Janet in Chapter Three, that some high school writers may never quite acquire the capabilities to stretch outside the five-paragraph structure. This desire to “stretch” student learning while still serving student needs results in a tension felt among many secondary teachers who bear the responsibility of instructing all their students in writing conventions—those who are college-bound and those who are not.

With that said, it may be argued, then, that to privilege or even expect an agenda tailored to college-level writing requirements in a generalized secondary writing environment is unfair to

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83 See footnote 78
both the teacher and the student. A question Blau poses in “College Writing, Academic Literacy, and the Intellectual Community” comes to mind here: “Can colleges and universities reasonably expect that students will acquire college-level competency while they are still in high school?” (368). To take this one step further, if Blau’s thoughts are applied to this particular research, the above-mentioned questions could be rephrased as follows: should high school instructors be expected to teach to both high school and college-level writing goals? As a former high school English teacher, I take the liberty to answer that question with what I consider to be an obvious “no”—not at least in the current climate of Ohio high school writing instruction.

Blau, then, goes on to pose yet another question—this time, specifically, to those who teach writing at the post-secondary level: “If students could do all of these things [required of college-level writers] at the time they entered your class, why would you need to teach them?” (368). In light of the findings from this study, one might argue that although Blau is calling university writing instructors to task, his words may also (unintentionally) evoke the aforementioned theory of “parallel planes.” In other words, since each plane of instruction has differing goals and purposes, then specific, intense, pointed instruction to those goals and purposes is warranted on both sides. And one side cannot be expected to teach it all.

**“SURFACE”AND “DEEP”WRITING**

An application of Ellen Lavelle and Anthony J. Guarino’s theories on “surface” and “deep” writing, first broached in Chapter Two, help to further delineate the notion of high school and college writing instruction as existing, at least in part, on parallel planes. According to Lavelle and Guarino, “The emphasis on minimal involvement and sticking to the rules is suggestive of a surface approach [to writing]” (298). In light of the findings from this study, a report stance in

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84 Granted, Advanced Placement (AP) and College Prep writing courses at the high school level would warrant a decidedly college-level approach.
thesis writing would, indeed, involve “minimal involvement” on the part of the student writer, since he or she would not have to risk the vulnerability of posing a new perspective to the ongoing conversation regarding the topic being written about. Likewise, secondary writing instruction’s attention to grammar and its incorporation of writing “formulas” such as the five-paragraph theme smack distinctively of “sticking to the rules.” To be fair, “report” writing definitely has its place and its own usefulness, especially at the high school level. Still, surface writing also lends itself to a re-inscription of its own elements: report writing needs to be informational, clear, and concise, and, in turn, informational, clear, concise writing lends itself to “reporting” about a topic instead of grappling with the complexities or intricacies of an issue.

In other words, many of the current elements of high school writing instruction do not challenge students to get beyond the “surface” and its issues—evidence of this could be seen in this study’s PSEO student responses. For example, many times the PSEO students individually recalled instances where they composed their high school essays “the night before” a due date and still would “get an ‘A’” If one assumes that the piece submitted by the student was relatively organized, clear, and focused to the assignment then one might also reasonably argue that since “the-night-before” approach could garner a good grade, students would be likely to utilize the same approach for papers to follow with similar guarantees of success. Furthermore, it may be surmised that students who engage in “the night before” approach are unlikely to incorporate process strategies beyond proof-reading in terms of revision due to the time constraints. Looked at still another way, these students’ actions epitomize the “I work better under pressure” adage. These notions gain additional credence upon examination of the

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85 This research fully acknowledges that secondary English instruction includes emphasis on critical thought, especially in the area of literary analysis.
86 See Luke’s response, Chapter Two, page 69-70
In contrast to surface writing stands the “reflective-revision” strategies of “deep writing” where “Writing is viewed as a tool for creating meaning and exploring ideas rather than for just telling what is known” (Lavelle and Guarino 298). Lavelle and Guarino’s definition of “deep writing” clearly aligns with the working definition of “college-level writing” from Chapter One: “. . . thesis development and support, audience awareness, an understanding of writing as contributing to the ‘conversation’, and the utilization of the full writing process all factor into this researcher’s working definition of ‘college-level writing’ . . .” (30). As such, each of these elements of “college-level” or “deep” writing asks students to analyze, interpret, question, and offer “new” insights to a particular audience rather than to “report” given information to a generalized audience.

A hypotheses of surface level writing instruction as indicative to high school and deep writing as indicative to college expectations helps explain why students, such as those in PSEO classrooms, are surprised when their writing that was once “winning praise” from their secondary instructors is now deemed to be “‘lacking something’” in the eyes of their college professors (Williams and McEnerney). Student-author Amanda Winalski found herself caught between such planes and writes:

The transition from high school to university writing is not as simple as the memorization of a few grammar handouts; rather, it consists of a student’s willingness to learn, understand, and modify the rules that govern language in order to communicate ideas. One can easily write five pages of nothing that sounds lyrical or
drainingly intellectual or fill five pages with brilliant thoughts that are presented in bullet statements. To achieve a balance between the Two is to be a successful college writer . . . (307).

Winalski’s words suggest that students must gain a rhetorical awareness (“rules that govern language in order to communicate ideas”) in order to don the “writerly identity” of a college student. This point calls to mind David Foster and David R. Russell’s contention that, ultimately, at the college level “. . . students must develop a chameleon rhetorical capacity” to tailor their word choice and writing style to suit the needs of different contexts and/or disciplines (43).

Furthermore, Winalski’s particular example evokes the need to meld surface and deep writing as called for by Lavelle and Guarino, who emphasize the necessity of both skills when they state: “We are not suggesting that surface skills are not important: only that alone they do not constitute deep writing and that mastery alone is not enough” (302-303). The problem, though, as evidenced in Winalski’s response is that the onus of transition is ultimately on the student. Simply put, in the current climate of writing instruction, it is often the student who must navigate a means for moving from surface to deep writing, and as such, it is the student who must ultimately (for better or worse) provide his or her own bridge between high school and college writing expectations.

To pause for a moment, caution must be taken here in order to avoid the impulse some readers may have to interpret this discussion of “surface level” elements and “deep writing” instruction as yet another binary in the on-going writing debate—a binary that will merely serve to re-inscribe the tensions between the two camps. Not so. Instead, as Winalski’s comments coupled with those of Lavelle and Guarino imply, the key to good writing instruction is a balance
of the two. Furthermore, as revealed in this study, it is likely that instructors exist on either side of the divide who do possess an understanding of each level’s differing foci. For example, to build on points made earlier by Jordan et al. as well as Davies and Janet, some secondary English teachers obviously see (if not name) these separate “surface” and “deep” strands, and as a result, push their students (sometimes successfully, sometimes not) from the surface to the deep—even if this is not their particular charge. It is also likely that some university writing professors may, as Lavelle and Guarino write, “adjust their instruction to capitalise on well-honed” surface skills as well as “offer appropriate remediation” (303) to students who have not been exposed to deep writing assignments.

Still, if such a cognizance of each level’s writing expectations were uniformly true on the part of secondary and post-secondary writing instructors, there would be no need for this discussion. Until then, there will continue to be high school writing teachers who overvalue and over-reward surface elements just as there will continue to be university professors who perceive their students’ struggles with deep writing as an indication of inadequacies in previous instruction. As a result—since neither group of instructors can appropriately address that which they are not aware of—writing students, whether PSEO or first-year freshmen, often find themselves stranded somewhere between what they know and what they are supposed to know.

The transition, then, from high school to college writing can be quite a jolt for some students as evidenced by the PSEO students’ comments regarding the intensity and demands of College Writing I versus their typical high school instruction. As noted in Chapter Three, though, this perception of increased intensity might be more accurately attributed to a difference in end-goal between the levels rather than actual rigor of instruction. In addition, one must also note (as discussed here and in Chapter Three) that high school writing instruction is typically
incorporated among other elements housed in English, such as vocabulary; reading processes and applications; research; and oral and visual communication (ODE Academic Content Standards 10-12). Therefore, entire class instruction devoted solely to writing (as done in college-composition courses) may lend itself to an interpretation of “increased intensity” among high school students who have never experienced this approach to writing instruction.

With that said, it may seem contradictory that, overall, both the instructors and the students in this study described the overall PSEO student preparation for College Writing I as “adequate”. In other words, how could one feel or appear “adequately prepared” as a secondary writer yet at the same time acknowledge one’s post-secondary writing environment as different in focus and/or expectation? The answer is that it is likely these PSEO writers were adequately prepared through their high school writing instruction—it was just a different type of instruction that they mastered or aspired to master in order to achieve success on the high school rather than on the college level.

Moreover, a possible re-inscription of the writing divide may be evident in the PSEO students’ overall description of themselves as “better” writers at the end of the semester. In explanation: if the students interpret the foci of college-level writing as superior to that of high school writing instruction—read “I am a better writer, because my college composition course stressed different elements of writing that my secondary writing instruction never did and now I am privy to those elements”—then better fails to acknowledge the existence of different, and, as a result, one plane is privileged over the other. In Chapter Four, Kim and I voice the fear of such a scenario and worry that our work with PSEO students in College Writing I may contribute to rather than mend secondary/post-secondary writing divisions. Here is where the importance of being well informed on the part of the instructor is crucial. If instructors on either side of the
writing divide could conceivably recognize the importance and value of elements on both levels of instruction, then they might more readily guide as well as make transparent students’ transition from one plane to another. However, this cannot be done until each side understands and respects how the other’s overarching goals differ from their own. Furthermore, while one might conjecture that PSEO writing classrooms, such as the ones in this study, should serve as perfect bridges since these are spaces where high schools and colleges come together, the fact remains that the two sides to be joined need to have a firm area of overlap as well as a cognizance of the other side’s end-goal(s) in order to precipitate a transition. Unfortunately, that is not currently the case.

**PROCESS AND TOPIC CHOICE**

One point of possible overlap and awareness-building to emerge from this study is that in the area of “process” or “revision” in writing instruction. First, inherent in Lavelle and Guarino’s definition of deep writing is the belief that deep writing only occurs through the use of “reflective-revision strategies”, which, according to the authors, “implies an agentic position, seeing oneself as a maker of meaning, with respect for the powerful role of revision, and an awareness of revision as a tool for reshaping thinking via writing” (302). However, as this study reveals, “revision” as currently viewed and taught on the high school level generally consists of developing editing strategies among students for more local rather than global alterations. The second possible point of overlap and awareness-building has to do with topic choice among student writers. Lavelle and Guarino among others (see Herb Budden et. al) contend that “empowering students through choice and range of assignments and assessments” is “key in college and earlier”(302), and these comments were echoed and complicated by the student-participants in this study. A more in-depth discussion of these two elements reveals additional
points of connection or overlap between surface and deep writing instruction that may be fostered in the future to better prepare and transition young writers.

“Reflective-revision” as theorized by Lavelle and Guarnio evokes both the recursive nature of process writing as well as the academic call for writers to “join the conversation” or to “contribute to the on-going discussion”. To look at it one way, then, “reflective-revision” is unlikely to happen among writers at the secondary-level given the current instructional stance which favors informational, organized, and grammatically clean work over elements of deep writing. That is not to say, though, that some form of “process” does not occur in high school writing instruction. In fact, at least in the state of Ohio, K-12 English Language Arts teachers are required to instruct students as early as kindergarten in “writing processes.” According to Ohio Department of Education’s Academic Content Standards:

Students’ writing develops when they regularly engage in the major phases of the writing process. The writing process includes the phases of prewriting, drafting, revising and editing and publishing. They learn to plan their writing for different purposes and audiences. They learn to apply their writing skills in increasingly sophisticated ways to create and produce compositions that reflect effective word and grammatical choices. Students develop revision strategies to improve the content, organization and language of their writing. Students also develop editing skills to improve writing conventions (96).

In keeping with these standards, the ODE requires that students be exposed to all stages of the writing process throughout their entire public school education (ODE Academic Content Standards 96-112). Specifically, process, as defined by ODE, is broken into the three following
stages: prewriting; drafting, revising, and editing; and publishing (ODE Academic Content Standards 107-108).

This “process”, however, differs markedly from the “process” that elicits the “deep writing” espoused at the college-level and may be explained as specific to the secondary context. In other words, “process” for public school writers is akin to what would be considered “editing” for post-secondary writers. Note the ODE emphasis on “effective word and grammatical choices” as well as “organization and language” and “editing.” Furthermore, state mandated tests such as the writing portion of the OGT are timed; as a result, these types of tests lend themselves mainly to proof-reading and editing processes.

However, in the case where both secondary and post-secondary instruction does define process as recursive and global in nature\(^\text{89}\), then the disjointedness of how process is approached at each level may be best explained by borrowing the words of Susan Kapanke and Melissa Westemerier who write:

> The stress [on the high school level] is on revision and editing, not perfection the first time around. This is the writing practice that makes my students successful writers in college, but it is also the writing practice that many of my colleagues cannot or do not make time for when they teach a mixed-ability group of twenty-eight students a curriculum overflowing with standards and requirements” (156).

These same words could have been written by any of a number of the instructor-respondents in this study. Furthermore, the PSEO students’ noting of multiple drafts, revisions, and re-writes of

\(^{88}\) My own experience as well as teacher and student responses from this study corroborate the claim that process work in high school often consists mainly of editing elements.  

\(^{89}\) Recursive and global processes as defined here would indicate a “rethinking” or “re-visioning” of the text being worked upon, which may or may not result in conceptual changes to a particular piece of writing.
their work in their College Writing I course as a “difference in instruction” clearly suggests that
the majority of students had not been exposed fully to “reflective-revision” practices prior to
their post-secondary enrollment experience. This is also a point broached in Chapter Four
where I explained that, while I currently incorporate a reflective-revision approach in my PSEO
instruction, I would be hard pressed to replicate such an approach if I were return to my former
high school classroom: the sheer number of students (with diverse abilities) along with the
curricular responsibilities would make the utilization of such an approach overwhelming.

To this point, two of the instructors in this study—Kay in Chapter Three and Kim in Chapter
Four—discussed how the average high school English teacher’s workload often prohibits them
from incorporating many writing assignments in their classes. For example, according to Kim,
she only assigned “four or five papers” per year in her high school English courses because of
grading and the other curricular demands she faced. And as stated by Mosely: “Oftentimes
teachers avoid assigning much writing because they have very little time to grade it” (63). I, too,
noted the lack of time for grading as well as the time for process work in my own survey
responses, and I admittedly viewed “process”, at the time, in very linear terms.

While concerns regarding paper-load and interpretation certainly have merit as Kay, Kim and
I would most likely agree, it is a later, yet connected statement by Mosely that is most relevant to
this discussion on process: “. . . without a chance for revision and improvement of formal
papers, extra writing opportunities will not help out young writers . . . . My student feedback
confirms my belief that writing and revising is what will help students become competent
writers” (63-64). What Mosely suggests here can be readily applied to this discussion as a
possible point of overlap for the two writing planes in general: perhaps the answer is not more

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90 For more study findings on process see Chapter Two, pages 71-72; Chapter Three, pages 109-110; and Chapter
writing assignments on the high school level but fewer assignments with more depth, more process, more “reflective-revision.” In addition, perhaps a dialogue about recursive versus linear approaches to process would prove beneficial to both sides. Such a dialogue might enable post-secondary instructors to better understand why reflective-revision strategies are not often utilized among their first-year college writers prior to specific instruction in their college composition courses. Likewise, this dialogue may explicate to secondary teachers why college writing instructors value recursive over linear approaches to writing.

Briefly, also of interest to this point, are the findings of Lisa Scherff and Carolyn Piazza as reported by Kathleen Blake Yancey and Brian M. Morrison: according to a study by Scherff and Piazza, “based on the responses of 2,000 high school students to a survey inquiring into their writing curricula . . . of all high school students reporting on their school writing activities, the only students who engaged in peer revision and editing were the dual enrollment students” (268). Such information indicates that a PSEO student’s exposure to process work in a college composition course may translate to the understanding of or even the utilization of process in a deeper context when these same students return to undertake their high school writing assignments. Still, the findings from this research study (granted a much smaller study than that of Scherff and Piazza) contrast sharply with the aforementioned findings in that the PSEO students surveyed gave very little indication that they would continue to replicate the recursive process when composing papers for courses or writing assignments outside their college composition course.91 This finding also suggests that if a recursive writing process is not stressed or even necessary at the high school level then use of such an approach declines among PSEO students when they return to their secondary classrooms.

91 See Chapter Two, page 72 and Chapter Three, page 110
As with the topic of “process”, the notion of increased student “choice” in composition assignments may also serve as a point of overlap between the planes of surface and deep writing. Traditionally, researchers suggest that high school writers often encounter limitations of topic-choice when approaching a writing assignment. Given the emphasis on literary response in secondary classrooms coupled with the foci of, at least in Ohio, mandated writing tests, this assumption of a rather restrictive topic-choice environment at the secondary level seems warranted. Mosely’s words serve here as explanation: “. . . the application of certain rules and regulations [K-12] protect and guide young students as they begin to develop into writers and thinkers” (59). Such an attitude could be seen in this study in the response of Kelly, quoted in Chapter Four, who maintained that choice complicated her task as a writer: “I had to pick a side; that was harder. . . High school helped with grammar, set up, and writing the beginning, middle, and end of an essay.” Jack, also in Chapter Four, noted in his interview that “Sometimes it’s easier to write about something that’s given to you.”

To put it simply, restricted not restrictive may better describe the typical high school writing assignment, and for some writers, these boundaries may serve as a type of “safety net” (as do formulas such as the five-paragraph theme) during the composing process. In addition, McCormick, recalling the words of Michael W. Smith and Jeffrey D. Wilhelm, suggests that limitations on choice might also be warranted on the post-secondary level, since “giving students freedom’ is often perceived by the students as a failure to provide them guidance” (214). This point might be especially true for PSEO students and first-year college students who, depending on their prior writing instruction, may be unaccustomed to such autonomy.

92 It should be noted that student-respondents in this study cited creative writing assignments as ventures in high school that afforded more freedom in choice of topic.
In contrast to a prescribed approach to topic-choice, Kapanke and Westemeirer suggest a less insular view and argue that “Encouraging students to pick topics close to home also honors their world” (161). Similarly, Lesley Roessing explains that “Choice returns the power to the writer. Students who exercise their choices write what they like and what others like to read (42).

Furthermore, in “The Recursive Character of College Writing”, Chris Kearns shares the thoughts of a college student who found topic-choice to be an empowering experience: “’I felt like my writing became a lot more personal in college, because the topics I chose to write on were usually my own.’” (346). The student goes onto describe a paper she had written for a recent Shakespeare class: “’That paper was the first time I felt like I made connections that were really mine . . . And even though I finished the course, I’m still not done with the paper; I’m still working on it. I think it may become my senior thesis’” (Kearns 346). Similarly, in this study, student-respondents Jack and Gabe individually discussed the benefits of choosing their own writing topics at the college level, and their comments reflect an increase in interest and ownership when students are afforded the opportunity to be in charge of their own topic selection.

With that said, it seems obvious that prescribed writing topics such as reports on a common class text, essay responses on tests, biographies, five-paragraph themes, or summaries of class readings might often result in surface-level work, since such assignments call for the reporting of knowledge. And to apply the argument from above, these restrictions make for a “safe place” since students know what kind of writing is then expected of them—report the knowledge; make sure it is organized and the content is clear; proof-read for grammar errors; turn in for a grade. The teacher is the audience, the entire process takes relatively little time, and the parameters as well as the outcome of the assignment are generally known and predictable based on previous.

93 See Chapter Four, pages 148-149
experience. In contrast, independent topic-choice (arguably present if not the goal or rule in college-level writing instruction) opens a Pandora’s Box for transitioning writers who have not experienced the freedom of choosing their own topics. Not only are these students asked to choose a topic, but they are also expected to inform themselves of the on-going conversation surrounding that topic and then find a relevant entry point into the discussion. In addition, they must also “anticipate the reader’s response” (Winalsinski 307). As a result, choice, voice, and audience complicate the writing task for transitioning students whose work has heretofore existed mostly on the surface plane. In the words of PSEO student-respondent, Jack, “More experience choosing topics in high school would make it easier to do in college.”

To be fair, Jack’s lack of topic-choice in his high school writing assignments may not be indicative of all transitioning writers, and general parameters did apply to the College Writing I assignments completed by the students in this study. However, instructor and student responses, as noted in Chapters Two, Three, and Four, indicate increased awareness of and growth in voice and audience considerations for the PSEO students in College Writing I—considerations that may arguably have pertinent connections to the topic-choice issue. Moreover, since increased awareness of voice and audience are integral elements of “contributing to an on-going conversation”, it may be reasonably argued that increased opportunities to choose writing topics may enable writers who have already mastered surface concerns to begin transitioning to the deeper aspects of composition. Note here the limitation: “writers who have already mastered surface concerns.” As Mosely and Smith and Wilhelm, respectively, suggest, some students—whether at the high school level or the college level—are

94 Per The University of Findlay’s College of Liberal Arts College Writing I course packet, College Writing I students complete essays that are narrative, analytical, and argumentative in nature. Additional writings may be assigned by the individual instructor.
95 See Chapter Two, pages 68-69; Chapter Three, pages 108-109; and Chapter Four, pages 131, 142, and 149
still in need of parameters. Whether it is organization, sentence structure, grammar issues or combination of these and more, some young writers, who struggle to achieve mastery of surface elements, cannot be expected to journey successfully and independently toward an academic essay on “topic of their choice.” An analogy applicable here may be that of training wheels: some student writers—high school, PSEO, or college—need them; some don’t. The best possible approach to topic-choice that high school and college writing instructors can employ then is one that acknowledges and respects the restrictions or the freedoms typical of each level as well as the abilities and limitations of each individual writer. Doing so will ultimately enable instructors on either side to adjust topic-approach and pedagogy to best meet student-writer needs.

BEFORE MOVING ON . . .

Before moving on to this study’s findings in regard to place of PSEO College Writing I instruction, a reflection from Michael Dubson seems appropriate. In his essay, “Whose Paper is This, Anyway?” Dubson writes: “Obviously, the best way to deal with student writing is to help each and every student find and develop their own ideas, ideas we know are their own, and to work closely and individually with each student to develop a piece of writing through its various stages . . .” (108). And while the findings in the section above suggest the problems inherent in (not to mention the messiness of) achieving the enterprise Dubson proposes, the findings and subsequent analyses of this study also indicate that increased awareness of, conversation about, and respect for each level’s unique contributions to and goals for writing instruction may serve to ameliorate some of the current gaps. Moreover, an increasingly open dialogue may also allow both parties to realize that the energy currently channeled into discussions of and efforts toward alignment might be better used to ponder how and why writing instruction inherently must differ.
on the two levels. Putting aside assumptions, generalizations, and stereotypes about high school and college-level writing is crucial to this dialogue as is putting the needs of student-writer at the forefront. Until that effectively occurs, one may expect the “whistling in dark” to continue, and as a result, any number of high school writing students will be left to “feel their way” across the college writing threshold.

THE ISSUE OF PLACE

POINTS OF INTEREST AND PERCEPTIONS

This study’s findings in regard to transitioning young writers denote the current complexity of that venture, and as a result, problematize research question number two of “place”. Simply put, if, as this research suggests, seamless transitioning of PSEO writing students cannot and may not feasibly occur then the question of which “place” optimizes seamless transition appears a moot point. Still, the information garnered from this research does yield some insights into how each group of students and their instructors perceived changes in the students’ growth as writers as well as how “place” of instruction may impact that change and growth with both positive and negative repercussions. In addition, the responses elicited from this study may also serve to help assess PSEO place of instruction in general—not only for those participating in, instructing, or administering these courses through The University of Findlay, but also for PSEO programs across Ohio and the nation at large.

Jonathan Mauk, in his article, “Location, Location, Location: The ‘Real (E)states of Being, Writing, and Thinking in Composition,” argues that “the physical geography of an institution, and the human geography which surrounds and constitutes it, have an impact on the topography of composition courses—and ultimately influence the success (or failure) of pedagogical strategies” (374). In other words, the where of composition instruction affects the what and the how of that instruction. Similarly, in Geographies of Writing, Nedra Reynolds discusses the
impact place of instruction may have on the production of writing when she states: “Writing’s materiality begins with where the work of writing gets done, the tools and conditions and surroundings . . .” (167). Reynolds’s “where”, like Mauk’s later in his discussion, includes both a physical and a conceptual situatedness on the part the writer and further suggests that one’s place of writing and/or writing instruction may influence writing outcomes. To extrapolate the point a bit more, place might also affect the perception of those outcomes.

With these theories of physical and conceptual situatedness noted, it may not be surprising, then, in terms of perception, that all the student-respondents in this study but one described improvement in their confidence and/or abilities as writers by the end of the course, and their instructors’ responses posited the same view. The laws of cognitive-dissonance seem arguably at play here as perception and reality undergo individual mental-alignment. In addition, an early assumption (given the rigor of UF-USA adjunct training and the uniformity of UF College Writing I instruction) might be that post-secondary students, regardless of place, share a similar experience and outcomes upon successfully completing this entry-level writing course. However, a glossing of both the instructors’ and the students’ interview responses indicates that the where of instruction may, indeed, affect the how as Mauk and Reynolds, respectively, attest, and as a result, the PSEO writing students may have been less “situated” in their academic space than a first glance might indicate.

For instance, PSEO students who completed College Writing I on their individual high school campuses noted the safety of such a venture and even commented that the place of instruction “felt like home” since they already “knew everybody.” In addition, the bond students shared with their English teachers-turned-university adjuncts also proved influential in the PSEO

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96 One student perceived no positive or negative changes in her writing abilities as a result of successfully completing College Writing I.
experience. From recruiting students into the course, to providing academic and instructional support, to following up with students after they had enrolled full-time in college—the teacher-to-student relationship appears to play an integral role in PSEO College Writing I instruction. In addition, this College Writing I setting also afforded its students considerably more instructional time than its on-campus counterparts, which may, in turn, have contributed to the teacher-to-student bond and to the student as well as teacher perception of students’ growth as writers.

Still, when juxtaposed against Reynolds’s contention that “homes are comforting but reproduce the gendered politics” of the culture, PSEO programs such as UF-USA must be viewed with caution and introspection; if not, these places may re-inscribe outdated attitudes and convictions. To borrow again from Reynolds, “On one hand, placemaking and ‘nesting’ are deeply satisfying human activities . . . on the other hand, the more that people are occupationally and residentially segregated, the more that boundaries harden.” Applied to this research, Reynolds’s words explain that, while PSEO students and instructors collectively embrace their off-campus site of instruction, the insularity of the place may also be its most glaring shortcoming.

**RE-INSCRIPTION**

A possible re-inscription of attitudes regarding the high school/college hierarchy in high school on-campus instruction became evident via responses garnered both from the UF-USA participants as well as from the non-traditional PSEO students. Perhaps not surprisingly, in both cases, individual respondents suggested that more “hand-holding” (i.e. “teacher assistance and guidance”) occurs in the high school setting than it does at college. Whether that perceived

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97 See Chapter Three, page 101
98 As argued elsewhere in this study, high school English classrooms rarely focus instruction just on writing for an extended period of time. Thus, enrollment in a semester-long course, such as College Writing I may lead both students and teachers to perceive positive growth in student writing abilities (per the laws of cognitive dissonance). Whether or not that perception of growth is substantiated was not determined by this study; further research with a larger PSEO College Writing I population would be needed to assess the point more accurately.
“hand-holding” is actually that or a reflection of the more prescriptive and “homey” atmosphere of secondary instruction is unclear. Either way, though, such a notion serves to re-inscribe old suspicions that secondary instructors do not challenge their students as vigorously as do their university counterparts. Such a re-inscription occurs, too, when college-age writers return to their former UF-USA instructors for assistance instead of approaching their university professors for help.

Obviously, the bond fostered through the students’ initial high school English instruction and the UF-USA experience is one that is reliable, consistent, and known. Unfortunately, it is a bond that may also prevent students from crossing from their old lives as high school students and high school writers to a new experiences and identities on the college level. To apply yet another theory from Reynolds,

“... a body becomes marked with the residue of a place, but places are also changed by the presences of bodies. Those changes can’t happen, however, if people won’t cross borders, won’t engage with a new place, or can’t overcome their fear or aversion to a particular location” (143).

An application of Reynolds’s words opens the argument that students who remain in their high school “place” with their familial group of peers and simultaneously enroll in college writing instruction may find themselves returning to high school writing mores and attitudes (read “college professor as unknown, unapproachable, strict”; “high school teacher as known, helpful, student-centered”). These students remain in the same classrooms with the same peers and the same teachers. Yes, the instructional material changes and intensifies; still, the safety of the “known” remains as does the admitted added attention of the UF-USA instructors who are vested in their students’ success, because ultimately, students in College Writing I are dual-
enrolled. If students fail College Writing I, they may not have enough high school credits to graduate. And while this point is not to suggest that UF-USA instructors would make unethical choices or give unfair advantage to their “home-grown” high school-turned-college students, it does propose the potential for additional “hand-holding” of students to ensure success. Overall, then, the argument implies that, while off-campus programs such as UF-USA provide much appreciated and lauded college-level instruction, these programs do not readily and in general foster the movement or “transition” of participating students across high school-college “borders.”

Furthermore, findings from this study indicate that, similar to UF-USA off-campus instruction, non-traditional PSEO sites, too, may carry possibilities for re-inscription. In these non-traditional composition courses, PSEO students are homogeneously grouped in order to expedite registration, avoid “maturity” issues, and provide balancing dual high school/college English credit to those students enrolled in UF’s Literature Appreciation course. However, the “high school-only” population of these courses replicates, to some degree, the safety and familiarity of secondary writing instruction. Moreover, these courses, at least in the case of The University of Findlay, are currently taught by former high school English teachers (I, myself, being one)—a fact which further complicates this place. If, as Mauk argues, a composition class is a “knowable place—that is constituted by geographical elements, which would suggest (to a student) that there is a here here” (374), then what kind of composition class is the non-traditional PSEO? Is it the “knowable place” of high school writing instruction since it is filled with high school students and taught by veteran secondary teachers, or is it the here of the university composition classroom: a college course filled with college students taught by a college professor or adjunct? And what happens when the PSEO student (or the instructor for
that matter) anticipates the “knowable place” of high school writing instruction (given the circumstances) yet encounters much different parameters and expectations? Surely, these questions merit further investigation and discussion on the part of those involved in the conceptual and administrative framework of PSEOs; in the meantime, this problematizing of place serves to explain, at least in part, the dissonance among the non-traditional PSEO respondents’ perceptions of their particular College Writing I place of instruction.

In “On Gender and Rhetorical Space,” Roxanne Mountford argues that one’s “rhetorical space” determines appropriateness of argument, action, and even being (16). In addition, says Mountford, these literal places carry “social expectations” and “material dimensions that affect what we do there” (17). When layered with the theories of Reynolds and Mauk, Mountford’s words further corroborate the notion that PSEO non-traditional and UF-USA settings may hinder students’ overall abilities to transition the secondary/post-secondary threshold and may even re-inscribe former habits and attitudes. In other words, the social expectations of those places are arguably “high school social expectations” versus the “college expectations” of the traditional PSEO College Writing I classroom.

IDENTITY AND PLACE

This point seems especially evident when comparing respondents’ study time for the course. Those participating in a traditional setting reported, on average, devoting four to nine hours per week on their College Writing I coursework. In contrast, a majority of non-traditional and UF-USA PSEO student-respondents spent just one to three hours per week on what may assumed to be comparable work. Granted, this incongruity in study time may be attributed to a number of individual factors, and furthermore, hours devoted to course work do not necessarily denote the successful donning of a “writerly identity.” Still, place may play a role in this discrepancy of study time if traditional PSEO students viewed the social expectation of that place to be one
where increased effort, time, and attention to studies are the norm. With this same thought in mind, the fewer hours of study indicative of the UF-USA or high school-only sections may reflect the social expectation of the secondary setting as well, where it may be safely assumed (based on other responses in this research) that students set aside less out-of-class time for composition study and practice.

The understanding and conversation regarding this differential of study time gains even more depth with yet another application of Mauk’s theories on place. What may be happening is that UF-USA and non-traditional PSEO contexts lead students to find themselves “unsituated in academic space” (Mauk 369). Per Mauk’s definition, students “unsituated in academic space” are typically “first-generation college students; they are commuters; they are part-time community college students; they are ‘nontraditional’”; as a result, “academic space is not an integral part of their intellectual geography” (369). While Mauk does not include post-secondary students in his list, they arguably fit among these academic transients who do not necessarily epitomize the average “college student.” Nowhere is this truer than in the case of UF-USA and non-traditional PSEO students whose “college places” are inarguably physical replications if not duplications of their high writing atmospheres.

This slightly untethered experience of PSEO students is also captured in the words of Reynolds in her work on the “geographies of exclusion” which explains that “people feel excluded from certain places because of the landscape, the built environment, the inhabitants, or the force of their own preconceptions and expectations” (9). To say it another way, since PSEO students are still high school students and because their instruction (in the case of UF-USA and non-traditional PSEO) occurs within borders other than that of the typical college classroom, their college “experience”, then, cannot be fully equated with that of the quintessential college
student—or even with that of the traditional PSEO student. When applied to this particular research, then, Mountford’s, Mauk’s and Reynolds’s words collectively belie the contention that all places of PSEO College Writing I instruction are equal.

As a result of this “unsituatedness”, the UF-USA students and the non-traditional PSEO students in this research did not necessarily and uniformly “experience a certain college ‘vibe,’” (Mauk 370) in their College Writing I courses as was evidenced in UF-USA instructor comments (“On the high school campus we have to remind students they are in a college course”) and non-traditional PSEO student comments (“it felt too much like a high school class”). Consequently, it may be assumed that at least some PSEO students in these particular places of instruction did not readily “buy (into) academia (and its attendant postures, behaviors, and perspectives)” because they did not “buy (into) a particular conception of the terrain” (Mauk 368). This was further evidenced by the inconclusive findings regarding students’ individual acquisition of a college “writerly identity” upon completing the College Writing I course. While some students seemed to make strides in this direction (as might be hoped), others, as suggested by their various responses, fell far short of this goal—even while they perceived themselves to be “better” or “more confident writers” by the end of the course..

To be fair, the scant population of this study warrants additional future investigation on this point; furthermore, a baseline comparison of “regular” college students’ abilities to grow in their writerly identities during College Writing I would also provide a much needed pool of data for comparison. Until then, the current findings indicate that non-traditional and UF-USA PSEO students, in particular, did not completely “buy into” the “terrain” of their College Writing I place of instruction as that of a truly “college” place, nor did they necessarily “buy into” the elements imposed in that instruction, as could be seen in responses regarding, in particular, thesis
and process. This inability or unwillingness on the part of some PSEO students to “buy into academia” calls to mind Reynolds’s assertion that “it’s important to understand the ways in which writers feel alienated from certain discourses or institutional practices” (6) even, arguably, when they are in the “homey” environment of the high school or high school-only sections of College Writing I. To borrow from Kristie Fleckenstein: “We are always placed; yet we are always on the verge of new placements that disrupt and reconfigure materiality and discourse” (303). The problem with the high school and non-traditional places of College Writing I instruction, though, is that—while they intend to serve as “new placements that disrupt” the students—the overall lack of change in student environment leads to “unsituatedness” instead of true “reconfiguration” of “materiality and discourse.”

Moreover, Mauk’s assessment that his “unsituated” students “seemed as though they were merely passing through campus to some other destination” (372) succinctly sums up the journey of many PSEO students who report back to their College Writing I instructors from campuses other than The University of Findlay—an indication that they never felt a recognizable connection to academic environment. I, too, see this “unsituatedness” first-hand as I am often asked by my PSEO students for letters of recommendation so that they may enroll in their “real” colleges following their time at UF. Furthermore, while much of this particular argument has pointed to the shortcomings of off-campus and homogenous on-campus PSEO groupings, this “unsituatedness” or “alienation” hearkens back to Winalski’s earlier discussion of having singularly navigated the high school/college writing terrain.

Said another way, if PSEO students encounter “unsituatedness” or “alienation”—whether due to disjointedness of high school/college writing instruction or place of instruction—the result remains the same: the students, themselves, must become the agents of transition. Granted, to
borrow the words of Alsup and Bernard-Donals, such a journey is not always a bad thing since “Being pushed out of one’s comfort zone and challenged intellectually can be frightening but also conducive to personal growth” (130). Still, for those students and parents expecting “seamless transitioning” to occur via PSEOs (and for those university administrators hoping for retention via the same), the theory of “unsituatedness” reveals the truth: transitioning often falls to the individual student, and there is no magic involved.

THIRD-SPACE

To close this discussion on place, an arguable assertion may be made that, of the three places of PSEO College Writing I instruction, the traditional setting seems most favorable for “seamlessly transitioning” students at least to a “college mind-set” since the current climate of writing instruction does not lend itself to students’ smooth transition across composition planes. In Thirdspace, Edward W. Soja writes of “thirdspace” as a place where “real-and-imagined places” meet (6); it “generates possibilities of acting and of knowing; it associates individuals with others, with particular locations, and with the possibilities of acting therein . . .” (Mauk 378). To the point of PSEO instruction, an application of Soja’s theory suggests that a place may be achieved where the “materiality and conceptuality” (Mauk 379) of affording secondary students a college-level writing experience can effectively merge. In explanation, then, the on-campus setting for College Writing I instruction may arguably provide the reality of the university experience even as the secondary student imagines and perhaps consequently images himself in the post-secondary writerly role.

Although current data and the findings from this research cannot conclusively attest to the accuracy of such a theory, future research into the possibilities of the PSEO traditional College Writing I setting as a “thirdspace” venue for high school-to-college writing instruction is warranted—both for scholars of composition studies and for PSEO proponents. In addition,
though she is speaking directly to spatial theories, Reynolds’s words still prove applicable to the possible agency of the traditional PSEO College Writing I classroom: “—acts of writing—are enacted not in stable, always-the-same places but within shifting senses of space, in the betweens, in thirrdspace” (5). Thus, while confluence does not currently exist between the planes of high school and college composition instruction, there is the possibility of a place, an “in the between” ripe for future transitioning.

SUGGESTIONS FOR MOVING FORWARD

Amidst the various calls for further research as proposed by this study dwell a number of possibilities for immediate action and future discussion that may enable sojourners and their guides on the high school-to-college writing path better navigate the terrain. These suggestions encompass individual, local, and state efforts as well as efforts on both sides of the divide and include discussions regarding teacher preparation, information sharing, and overall cognizance regarding PSEO programs. Furthermore, while the suggestions to follow are by no means exhaustive, they do provide opportunities for moving the aforementioned conversations forward, not just at The University of Findlay but also in all circles where writing “gaps”, dual enrollment ventures, and the act of transitioning students are examined and pondered.

THE CALL FOR COLLABORATION AND CONVERSATION

By all accounts, these “conversations” about writing, PSEOs, and transitioning need to be just that—real conversations among students, teachers, administrators, and researchers in these fields. The success of collaboration and conversation is evidenced in efforts described in the works of Wendy Strachan, Kittle, Budden et al. and Blau, respectively. Furthermore, a host of educators and scholars either acknowledge the need for or explicitly call for increased communication across the high school/college writing divide (see Sullivan, Davies, Mosely, Kittle, Alsup and Bernard-Donals, Kapanke and Westemeirer, Jennings and Hunn). However, the caution here is
in regard to what constitutes those conversations and how those conversations evolve. Specifically, these must be two-way dialogues among affected parties at both levels—a point not uniformly noted by those lobbying for such conversations. As Kittle argues, unless participants from both sides of the discussion bring the proper attitudes and introspections to the table, such conversations may serve to re-inscribe rather than to ameliorate old tensions between the two camps. He warns:

I fear that, without being able to establish the kinds of professional relationships that are predicated on mutual respect for teaching abilities, subject matter knowledge, and academic values, any ideas being propounded by college writing teachers will be seen as just another mandate from above (143).

Since Kittle has (as have I) resided on both sides of the writing fault, we are sensitive to the assumptions and suspicions that may cloud these needed dialogues.

With that said, these collaborative conversations must be broached with a spirit of openness and a genuine yearning to understand the unique charges and constraints inherent to each level of instruction. Again, to borrow from Kittle, “Writing teachers need to avoid assigning blame for the level of student work, and instead collaboratively describe what we do, why we do it, what our struggles are, and how we might serve our students better” (143). Here is where PSEOs may play a key role. For example, The University of Findlay’s October 2007 University-School Articulation Conference afforded participating UF-USA high school English teachers and UF college writing instructors the opportunity to discuss frustrations and triumphs in a congenial atmosphere. Similarly, Yancey describes a summer program at The University of North Carolina at Greenboro where dual enrollment teachers from high school campus sites “gather on
the college campus to think about how they teach composition, to share assignments and response strategies, and to compare what they do with practices in the college writing program” (274).

I posit, too, that student writers should populate these high school/college writing discussions as well, since their experiences and perceptions will yield valuable information and insight to both levels of instruction; after all, it is their instruction that we are purportedly striving to improve. Furthermore, the inclusion of student representatives to these discussions would enable high school and college writing instructors to make transparent their motives and goals. Perhaps, then, students (as well as their instructors) could more readily discern the differences between high school and college writing expectations and take those differences for what they are without the assumption that “different” equals “better.”

**PREPARATION OF ENGLISH TEACHER EDUCATORS**

Agenda items for future conversations might also include topics such as the merits/pitfalls of instructional alignment and the preparation of future teacher educators to be effective writing instructors. To the point of alignment—this study delineates the sundry obstacles on both sides that currently prevent such a venture. Curricular differences; student population and maturity differences; differences in mandates, outcomes, and assessments—all these imply that perhaps alignment and efforts at “seamless transitioning” are not realistic goals at this time, if ever. Instead, as Doug Hesse suggests, the first step toward effectively meeting student-writers’ needs is to “‘have a real conversation about what’s appropriate at each developmental level’” (qtd. in Bauman 9). However, the phrase “And then act on it” might round-out Hesse’s suggestion, since discussion without action only serves to mire distances instead of circumvent them.

With Hesse’s message (plus addendum) in mind, one might look to teacher-educator programs as sites where conversations about “developmental appropriateness” might take place
and then lead to action or change. According to Richard E. Brantley and Diana R. Brantley, “In order to attract good people to this highly interactive, deeply personal, and labor-intensive profession, we need to make changes, to train a new generation, and *to talk to one another*” (220). While Brantley and Brantley’s call for discussion here is one that has been duly noted, it is their voiced need for “training” teachers that provides the real follow-up “action” to the conversation. Take for example, Peter Smagorinsky and Melissa E. Whiting’s book, *How English Teachers Get Taught*. In this text, the authors’ compilation and study of the syllabi from English Methods courses reveals a nearly complete absence of any writing pedagogy. This lack of training in writing is exposed, too, by Davies who argues: “colleges need to have teacher education programs that give students specific help in the teaching of writing” (35). Simply put, many English teacher educators enter the profession without specific training in the teaching of writing (Atwell 11). My own training as an English educator further corroborates this notion, since, although my undergraduate and graduate degrees are in English, it was not until my doctoral coursework in Rhetoric and Composition that I encountered pedagogies for the teaching of writing. Presently, then, one “action” for bridging high school to college writing instruction would be the implementation of “Teaching of Writing” courses in English education undergraduate programs.99

**SEPARATE HIGH SCHOOL WRITING COURSES**

While increased attention to teacher preparation might be one action yet another possibility arose in Kim’s interview when she stressed the need for high schools to designate their writing courses as separate entities from English classes. This same thought occurred to me often during my decade of secondary teaching as I frantically tried to juggle the myriad responsibilities of

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99 Obviously, to be most effective, the instructor of such a course would need to possess a cognizance of goals, needs, demands, etc. of both high school and college writing instruction.
instructing students in literature, grammar, writing, and beyond. That is not to say that such high school writing courses would or should duplicate the instruction of college-level writing courses. Instead, these places of secondary instruction would focus on the goals, standards, and agendas pertinent to their context. As such, these courses might also permit more student “reflective-revision” as well as increased chances for students (to borrow from Janet in Chapter Three) “to bleed out” of prescriptive writing patterns. To be fair, I acknowledge the cost and complexities this proposal would generate for school districts; however, the recognition and support of this need, first on local levels, might also impact or generate necessary discussions among administrators and educators on state-levels who wield the power (and funding) to affect change.

THE QUESTION OF PLACE

Moving to the issue of place, Rhonda Catron in her work on the Virginia Plan for Dual Enrollment, indicates that “the high school setting influences student behavior and teacher reaction” (75), and this study corroborates that claim. With that said, PSEO administrators and instructors, such as those at The University of Findlay, need to carefully weigh and consider the impact place may have on their college-level courses taught in high school or high school-only settings. Changes in groupings and physical environment may be starting points for addressing the noted problems. Furthermore, research into how technology might act as a “thirdspace” for PSEO writing students is also a possibility in that tools such as Blackboard or (monitored) Internet sites, may serve to help “situate” students in a more academic space—especially if those students are able to converse with, share essays, and review and/or comment on the work of their peers in other College Writing I courses. In addition, instructors in each place of PSEO College Writing I instruction could also utilize technology to share plans and assignments or to provide an outside audience response to student work.
INFORMATION SHARING AND INCREASED RESEARCH INTO PSEOS

Simply put, this research and that of Catron constitute much of the relatively small body of work into PSEO writing programs that currently exists. Moreover, a 2007 study by the KnowledgeWorks Foundation and the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) indicates the need for increased examination of PSEOs in general—particularly in Ohio. Unfortunately, the current breakdown in information sharing between the Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Board of Regents prohibits a clear view of Ohio’s present PSEO climate. As stated in The Promise of Dual Enrollment,

Tracking of students between Ohio’s K-12 and postsecondary systems is not consistent and data is not easily shared. This makes it impossible to track students from one system to another—though it is precisely at the juncture between the two systems, students’ transition from high school to higher education, that this policy aims to have effect (3).

This inadequacy of information sharing is even more significant in terms of PSEOs at private institutions such as The University of Findlay, since according to the KnowledgeWorks/WICHE study “data is limited or nonexistent for students who enroll in PSEO at private institutions . . .” (3). These findings beg the question, then, of how advocates of PSEOs can purport the program’s ability to “seamlessly transition” students when current data and dialogues cannot confidently provide clarity as to the program’s operation in public or private university settings not to mention high school settings. Thus, increased information sharing and additional studies into PSEOs—directed to writing or otherwise—in public, private, and high school locales are certainly needed and warranted.

In addition, administrators and teachers on both sides of the PSEO exchange should take a more active role in discussing and building awareness of PSEO implementation and policies by
examining similar programs at neighboring universities or districts (both public and private). Although present data is scant, dialogue, in the meantime, may provide a rough starting point for assessing how specific school districts and universities implement PSEOs and track student-participants. This need for information sharing is amplified by the fact that agencies such as KnowledgeWorks/WICHE are lobbying for increased and younger participation in PSEO programs even while “the verdict is out” on PSEOs abilities to do what they claim. Consequently, it is crucial for those who administrate, teach, and participate in PSEO programs to add their voices to the debate. This cannot be done effectively, though, without an awareness of the current program, its successes as well as shortcomings, its future trajectory, and in the case of writing instruction, its potential to re-inscribe the high school/writing divide.

CONCLUSION

In High School-College Partnerships: Conceptual Models, Programs and Issues, Arthur Greenburg writes that “the future” of high school and college writing instruction “is dependent on the performance of the other” (xv). Unfortunately, though, a persistent lack of open communication across the two planes has served to perpetuate decades-old misconceptions and assumptions on both sides. As a result, each side often works at parallel purposes even while “depending” on the other. Moreover, that “dependence” upon one another occurs despite factors of not knowing exactly what the other side is doing. In the meantime, organizations such as the Alliance for Excellent Education claim that high schools need to “revamp instruction” in order to “be aligned to the expectations of colleges.” Such moves evoke the “top-down” theory of education that groups such as NCTE have long fought against and, as a result, may only serve to re-inscribe tensions.
A better answer, to borrow from Kittle, is to “‘[lessen the divide] in material ways’” (qtd. in Bauman 9), through candid, reciprocal conversation among students, high school teachers, and college instructors. And perhaps, as this study suggests, the post-secondary enrolled composition classroom may be a place to start, since it is in this space that high school teachers, college instructors, and students all have a stake in the learning outcomes. Consequently, increased attention to their voices, needs, concerns, and observations may prove valuable when it comes to the creation of action from dialogue. The PSEO places of instruction, too, provide rich information into how writing is taught and perceived as well as how attitudes toward writing are currently shaped, disabused, or re-inscribed. What remains to be seen is whether the findings indicative of The University of Findlay’s PSEO writing programs hold true at similar universities among like populations.

Finally, while the notion of “seamless transition” is certainly alluring and idyllic, a view of classroom experience, pedagogy, and curriculum across high school to university channels reveals a charlatan claim. Students do not transition “seamlessly”, and often the politics across the transitioning divide are messy. Still, secondary and post-secondary writing instruction can maintain their individual integrities while simultaneously meeting the individual responsibilities of their respective levels of education. Furthermore, this can be achieved without a top-down approach and without a goal of seamless transition. What it takes is conversation, understanding, and appreciation of the tasks and goals indicative of each level of writing instruction. May this research stand as a starting point for that conversation, understanding, and appreciation—three elements that will hopefully continue in other places, and as such, foster a mutual, respective dependence between the two sides.
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Appendix A

Survey Questions for The University of Findlay’s College Writing I
Post-Secondary Enrollment Students

Instructions: Please answer the following questions honestly. Most questions just require you to circle the appropriate response(s). If a more in-depth response or explanation is needed, please use the space provided to write in your response. If you need more space to write than is provided, please use a separate sheet of paper. To remain anonymous, please do not write your name on this survey. Also, please do not identify your school, other students, teacher, or other school personnel by name. Information from this survey will be reviewed only by the researcher and her research advisory committee at Bowling Green State University. Reports on the survey will not identify specific students or schools. The questions in this survey are designed to help identify and better understand how post-secondary writing instruction on high school and university campuses can be a resource for preparing high school students to be college-level writers.

1. How did you learn about the Post-Secondary Enrollment composition courses?
   Please circle all that apply:

   parent/guardian  guidance counselor  teacher  friend  other

   If “other”, please specify without using the person’s name.

2. Who, if anyone, influenced your decision to enroll in a Post-Secondary Enrollment composition course?
   Please circle all that apply:

   parent/guardian  guidance counselor  teacher  friend  other

   If “other”, please specify without using the person’s name.

3. How involved were your parents/guardians in your decision to enroll in a Post-Secondary Enrollment composition course?
   Please circle one:

   not involved  somewhat involved  very involved
Appendix A, page 2

4. What was your high school rank when enrolled in a University of Findlay College Writing I course? Please circle one:

Sophomore    Junior    Senior    Other

If “other”, please explain.

5. During what semester did you take a University of Findlay College Writing I course as a post-secondary enrolled student? Please circle one:

Fall 2005    Spring 2006    Fall 2006    Spring 2007

6. Approximately how many hours per week do you spend (outside of class) working on Post-Secondary Enrollment composition work? Please circle one:

Less than 1 hour    1-3 hours    4-6 hours    7-9 hours    more than 9 hours

7. Based on your experiences in other high school English courses you have taken, how does the Post-Secondary Enrollment composition course compare? Please circle one:

easier than high school    on par with high school    more challenging

8. Based on your prior instruction and training in composition, describe your level of preparedness for the Post-Secondary Enrollment composition course. Please circle one:

highly unprepared    somewhat unprepared    somewhat prepared    well prepared
Appendix A, page 3

9. Describe the setting in which you are taking your Post-Secondary Enrollment composition course.  
   Please circle one:

   high school campus     college campus     Post-Secondary only     college campus

10. Describe any positive changes you have seen in your abilities as a writer or the level of your writing as a result of your enrollment in a Post-Secondary composition course.  
    Please circle one:

    no change                   slight improvement          noticeable improvement

11. How, if at all, has your approach to writing changed since taking the College Writing I course?  
    Please circle one:

    no change                  slight change              moderate change          significant change

12. How would you rate your overall confidence in your abilities to write successfully at the college level at the beginning of this course?  
    Please circle one:

    lack of confidence       slight lack of confidence  somewhat confident    confident

13. How would you rate your overall confidence in your abilities to write successfully at the college level at the conclusion of this course?  
    Please circle one:

    lack of confidence       slight lack of confidence  somewhat confident    confident
Appendix A, page 4

14. In your opinion, which of the elements of writing are most important and which are the least important in good writing? Rank the following elements of writing in order of importance from least important (6) to most important (1). If you believe any or some of the elements are unimportant, please indicate with an “X” in the blank. If you would like to comment on or explain your rankings, you may do so in the space provided below.

_____ grammar and mechanics

_____ thesis

_____ supporting points (development of the thesis)

_____ organization

_____ awareness of audience

_____ style

Comments:

15. In your own words, please explain how you might approach writing a 3-5 page essay where you argue and support a specific point. If you need more space than is provided, please attach another sheet of paper.
Appendix B

*Questions for Interviews of Post-Secondary Enrollment Students*

1. Please discuss and define the following two terms: high school-level writing, college-level writing.

2. What qualifications did you have to meet in order to enroll in a Post-Secondary Enrollment composition course?

3. What, if anything, had you heard about the course before you enrolled?

4. If you considered not taking the course, what were the reasons you hesitated?

5. Describe your strengths and weaknesses as a writer as well as your views on writing prior to taking the College Writing I course.

6. Describe the types of high school writing assignments you completed prior to enrolling in the College Writing I course. Please include typical assignment lengths and requirements.

7. Describe the types of assignments you have to complete in the Post-Secondary Enrollment composition class. Please be as specific as possible. List the types of assignments and the specific requirements for these assignments.

8. Without naming your teacher, please describe the types of activities you have done during class such as discussions, group work, in-class writing assignments, or other activities.

9. Without naming your teacher, please describe what differences, if any, you saw in elements that were stressed in your college level writing experience versus in your high school writing instruction.

10. Referring back to Question 7, if you did (or do) see a difference in the elements of writing stressed at the college versus the high school level, describe the process of shifting from one way of writing (and thinking about writing) to the other. If you experienced such a shift, what particular challenges did you face as a writer in making this (or these) change(s)?

11. Based on your prior instruction and training in composition, describe your level of preparedness for the Post-Secondary Enrollment composition course.

12. Explain what you think are the advantages and/or disadvantages of taking a Post-Secondary Enrollment composition course.
13. What are the advantages, if any, of taking a Post-Secondary Enrollment composition course in a high school setting? What are the disadvantages of this setting, if any?

14. What are the advantages, if any, of taking a Post-Secondary Enrollment composition course in a college setting? What are the disadvantages of this setting, if any?

15. Based on your experiences in other high school English courses you have taken, how does the Post-Secondary Enrollment composition course compare?

16. How often is your class time in the Post-Secondary Enrollment composition course interrupted or canceled? What are the reasons for interruptions or cancellations?

17. How has your approach to writing changed as a result of taking this course, if at all?

18. Describe the approach you might take to writing a 3-5 page paper that takes a side on an argumentative issue and supports that side.

19. Describe your strengths and weaknesses as a writer as well as your views on writing after completing the College Writing I course.

20. How, if at all, has your College Writing I experience changed your views regarding high school versus college level writing expectations?
Appendix C

Survey Questions for The University of Findlay’s College Writing I
Post-Secondary Enrollment English Faculty

Instructions: Please answer the following questions honestly. Most questions just require you to circle the appropriate response(s). If a more in-depth response or explanation is needed, please use the space provided to write in your response. If you need more space to write than is provided, please use a separate sheet of paper. To remain anonymous, please do not write your name on this survey. Also, please do not identify your school, other students, teacher, or other school personnel by name. Information from this survey will be reviewed only by the researcher and her research advisory committee at Bowling Green State University. Reports on the survey will not identify specific students or schools. The questions in this survey are designed to help identify and better understand how post-secondary writing instruction on high school and university campuses can be a resource for preparing high school students to be college-level writers. **For purposes of this survey, Post-Secondary Enrollment Option is sometimes abbreviated as PSEO.

1. How long have you been teaching Post-Secondary Enrollment composition courses for The University of Findlay?
   **Please circle one:**
   1-3 semesters  4-6 semesters  7 or more semesters

2. What teaching experience do you bring to your role as a Post-Secondary Enrollment writing instructor?
   **Please circle all that apply:**
   high school teaching  some college level teaching  all college level

3. How many sections of Post-Secondary enrolled College Writing I are you currently teaching?
   **Please circle one:**
   1  2  3  4
Appendix C, page 2

4. How many days per week does your College Writing I class meet?
   Please circle one:
   
   1  2  3  4  5

5. Describe the classroom setting in which you teach Post-Secondary Enrolled College Writing I students.
   Please circle one:
   
   High school setting college campus PSEO only college campus mixed

6. Based on your work with PSEO students, describe your PSEO students’ overall level of preparation in regard to enrollment in a college-level writing course.
   Please circle one:

   unprepared somewhat prepared adequately prepared well prepared

7. Describe, if any, the impact teaching the Post-Secondary Enrollment composition course has had on the pedagogies you use in teaching writing in other situations.
   Please circle one:

   no impact slight impact moderate impact major impact
Appendix C, page 3

8. If you teach both a Post-Secondary Enrollment composition course and traditional high school composition classes OR a Post-Secondary Enrollment composition course and traditional college composition courses, what difference, if any, do you see in your approaches to teaching each population of students?
   **Please circle one:**
   - no difference
   - slight difference
   - measurable difference
   - noticeable difference

9. What kinds of contact/professional development, if any, do you engage in with full-time English faculty at The University of Findlay?
   **Please circle all that apply:**
   - no contact
   - email exchange
   - faculty meetings
   - summer seminar
   - other
   
   **If “other,” please specify.**

10. Describe any positive changes you have seen in your PSEO students’ understanding of college level writing expectations as a result of their enrollment in a Post-Secondary composition course.
    **Please circle one:**
    - no change
    - slight improvement
    - some improvement
    - marked improvement
Appendix C, page 4

11. Describe any positive changes you have seen in your PSEO students’ views of themselves as writers as a result of their enrollment in a Post-Secondary composition course.

Please circle one:

no change slight improvement some improvement marked improvement

12. Describe, if any, the degree of difference you see between high school and college writing instruction in terms of focus, emphasis, and/or requirements. Then please explain your answer in the space provided. (You may also record your answer on another sheet of paper and attach to this document).

Please circle one:

no difference slight difference measurable difference marked difference

Explanation:
Appendix D

Questions for Interviews with Post-Secondary Enrollment English Faculty

1. Please discuss and define the following two terms: high school-level writing, college-level writing.

2. Do you see any philosophical differences between elements that are stressed in high school writing instruction versus college writing instruction? Please explain.

3. What differences, if any, do you see in your approaches to teaching high school-level writing versus college-level writing?

4. What criteria must students meet before enrolling in a University of Findlay Post-Secondary Enrollment composition course?

5. How involved are the parents of Post-Secondary Enrollment students involved in the program, particularly in the students’ decision to enroll?

6. Describe the population of your Post-Secondary Enrolled composition classroom(s). If you are teaching on the college campus does your classroom consist of Post-Secondary students only or are traditional college students mixed in with Post-Secondary students? If you are teaching in the high school setting, are Post-Secondary students and general population students being taught at the same time within the same classroom?

7. How do you think teaching the Post-Secondary Enrollment writing course in the high school setting affects the course, if at all?

8. How do you think teaching the Post-Secondary Enrollment writing course in the college setting affects the course, if at all?

9. How do you believe a “mixed” population of students (Post-Secondary Enrolled with traditional college students or with general population high school students) affects the course, if at all?

10. Based on your work with students, describe your students’ overall level of preparation in regard to enrollment in a college-level writing course.

11. Describe the methods of instruction utilized in this course. What modes of instruction might be used within a typical class period or series of class sessions, and what elements of writing are stressed within this particular course?

12. Describe the types of assignments required for your College Writing I course. Please be as specific as possible. List the types of assignments and the specific requirements for these assignments.
13. What changes, if any, did you see in your students’ approaches to writing as a result of taking this course?

14. Regarding Question 2 above, if you do perceive a philosophical difference between high school and college writing instruction, how were your students impacted as they made the shift from one framework to the other? How do you know this?

15. Have you talked with graduates of the Post-Secondary Enrollment composition program, and if so, how has the course prepared them for subsequent college-level and career writing?

16. What do you believe are the benefits and/or weaknesses of the Post-Secondary Enrollment College Writing I program?

17. Describe, if any, the impact teaching the Post-Secondary Enrollment composition course has had on the pedagogies you use in teaching writing in other situations.

18. If you teach both a Post-Secondary Enrollment composition course and traditional high school composition classes OR a Post-Secondary Enrollment composition course and traditional college composition courses, what differences, if any, do you see in your approaches to teaching each population of students?

19. Do you think there should be opportunities for contact and/or professional development between full-time University of Findlay writing faculty and Post-Secondary Enrollment writing faculty? Why or Why not?

20. How, if at all, has teaching in the Post-Secondary Enrollment program changed your views about high school and college level writing expectations?
November 2006

Dear College Writing I Student:

As a writing teacher with experience in both the high school and university setting, I am conducting a study about writing instruction for post-secondary enrolled students in The University of Findlay’s College Writing I courses. I want to work with a group of approximately eighteen students, so I am looking for post-secondary enrolled students to participate in this project. My purpose is to better understand how post-secondary writing instruction on high school and university campuses can be a resource for preparing high school students to be college-level writers. As a teacher, I bring a range of experience and interest to this project, including twelve years of teaching high school English and five years of college writing instruction.

As part of this project, you would complete a survey about your post secondary writing experience. I would then talk with you individually to ask some additional questions regarding your transition from high school to college-level writing. This interview would be conducted at your location of instruction; for example, if you are taking College Writing I at your high school, I will travel there to conduct the interview. If you are enrolled on campus at The University of Findlay, I will conduct the interview on campus. Each individual interview will last approximately twenty to thirty minutes, and the responses will remain anonymous. All surveys and interviews will be conducted during December 2006 through May 2007.

I hope you can participate in this study, and I would be happy to answer any additional questions you might have at this time. If you are interested in learning the results of the study, I would also be happy to share those findings with you. Please feel free to contact me for more information.

Not only do I believe the study will provide insight into the questions I have about preparing high school students to become college-level writers, I also believe that future post secondary enrollees will benefit from the findings of this project. If you agree to participate, please sign and return the attached consent form.

Sincerely,

Christine Denecker, Doctoral Candidate
Assistant Professor of English
The University of Findlay
419-434-6661
denecker@findlay.edu

Dr. Sue Carter Wood, Dissertation Chair
Associate Professor of English
Bowling Green State University
419-372-8107
carters@bgsu.edu
November 2006

Dear Parent:

As a writing teacher with experience in both the high school and university setting, I am conducting a study about writing instruction for post-secondary enrolled students in The University of Findlay’s College Writing I courses. I want to work with a group of approximately eighteen students, so I am looking for post-secondary enrolled students to participate in this project. My purpose is to better understand how post-secondary writing instruction on high school and university campuses can be a resource for preparing high school students to be college-level writers. As a teacher, I bring a range of experience and interest to this project, including twelve years of teaching high school English and five years of college writing instruction.

As part of this project, your son or daughter would complete a survey about their post secondary writing experience. I would then talk with your son or daughter individually to ask some additional questions regarding his/her transition from high school to college-level writing. This interview would be conducted at your son/daughter’s location of instruction; for example, if your son/daughter is taking College Writing I at his/her high school, I will travel there to conduct the interview. If your son/daughter is enrolled on campus at The University of Findlay, I will conduct the interview on campus. Each individual interview will last approximately twenty to thirty minutes, and the responses will remain anonymous. All surveys and interviews will be conducted during December 2006 through May 2007.

I hope you can include your son or daughter as part of this study, and I would be happy to answer any additional questions you might have at this time. If you are interested in learning the results of the study, I would also be happy to share those findings with you. Please feel free to contact me for more information.

Not only do I believe the study will provide insight into the questions I have about preparing high school students to become college-level writers, I also believe that future post secondary enrollees will benefit from the findings of this project. If you grant permission for your son or daughter to participate, please sign and return the attached consent form.

Sincerely,

Christine Denecker, Doctoral Candidate
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November 2006

Dear University of Findlay College Writing I Instructor:

As a writing teacher with experience in both the high school and university setting and a current graduate student at Bowling Green State University doing research for my dissertation, I am conducting a study about writing instruction for post-secondary enrolled students in The University of Findlay’s College Writing I courses. I want to work with a group of approximately six instructors, so I am looking for instructors of post-secondary enrolled students to participate in this project. My purpose is to better understand how post-secondary writing instruction on high school and university campuses can be a resource for preparing high school students to be college-level writers. As a teacher, I bring a range of experience and interest to this project, including twelve years of teaching high school English and five years of college writing instruction.

As part of this project, you would complete a survey about your experience in teaching post secondary writing. I would then talk with you individually to ask some additional questions regarding your thoughts and opinions on writing instruction among post secondary students. This interview would be conducted at your location of instruction; for example, if you are teaching College Writing I at a high school, I will travel there to conduct the interview. If you are instructing post secondary enrolled students at The University of Findlay, I will conduct the interview on campus. Each individual interview will last approximately twenty to thirty minutes, and your responses will remain anonymous. All surveys and interviews will be conducted during December 2006 through May 2007.

I hope you can include you as part of this study, and I would be happy to answer any additional questions you might have at this time. If you are interested in learning the results of the study, I would also be happy to share those findings with you. Please feel free to contact me for more information.

Not only do I believe the study will provide insight into the questions I have about preparing high school students to become college-level writers, I also believe that future post secondary enrollees and those that instruct them will benefit from the findings of this project. If you agree to participate, please sign and return the attached consent form.

Sincerely,

Christine Denecker, Doctoral Candidate
Assistant Professor of English
The University of Findlay
419-434-6661
denecker@findlay.edu

Dr. Sue Carter Wood, Dissertation Chair
Associate Professor of English
Bowling Green State University
419-372-8107
carters@bgnet.bgsu.edu
Informed Consent Form

Bowling Green State University
Department of English
Study Title: “Toward Seamless Transition: Dual Enrollment and the Composition Classroom”
Investigator: Christine Denecker
Informed Consent: Student-Participants 18 years of age or older

I give my consent to participate in the research study “Toward Seamless Transition: Dual Enrollment and the Composition Classroom.” The purpose of this study is to survey and interview a group of approximately six instructors in various University of Findlay post-secondary enrollment (also known as “dual enrollment”) settings to better understand how post-secondary writing instruction on high school and university campuses can be a resource for preparing high school students to be college-level writers.

As part of this project, I will complete a written survey and will meet in my instructional setting for one fifteen to twenty minute face-to-face interview with the investigator during the months of December 2006 or January 2007.

My input will be treated confidentially, and any reports of research will not employ real names.

If at any time or for any reason I wish to withdraw my consent or discontinue my participation in the study, I may do so. In addition, the decision regarding whether or not I will participate in this study will not impact my grades or standing at The University of Findlay. I have been informed that if I am unable to attend my face-to-face interview, my participation may be discontinued.

I may contact Christine Denecker at 419-434-6661 or Dr. Sue Carter Wood at 419-372-8107 regarding this research. At any time, I may also contact the Chair, Human Subjects Review Board, Bowling Green State University, 419-372-7716, if questions arise during the course of the study.

Signature_________________________________     Date________________________
Informed Consent Form

Bowling Green State University
Department of English
Study Title: “Toward Seamless Transition: Dual Enrollment and the Composition Classroom”
Investigator: Christine Denecker
Informed Consent: Parental

I give my consent for my son/daughter to participate in the research study “Toward Seamless Transition: Dual Enrollment and the Composition Classroom.” The purpose of this study is to survey and interview a group of approximately eighteen students in various University of Findlay post-secondary enrollment (also known as “dual enrollment”) settings to better understand how post-secondary writing instruction on high school and university campuses can be a resource for preparing high school students to be college-level writers.

As part of this project, my son/daughter will complete a written survey and will meet in his/her instructional setting for one fifteen to twenty minute face-to-face interview with the investigator (Christine Denecker) during the months of December 2006 through May 2007.

My son/daughter’s input will be treated confidentially, and any reports of research will not employ real names. If at any time or for any reason I wish to withdraw my consent or discontinue my son/daughter’s participation in the study, I may do so. In addition, the decision regarding whether or not my son/daughter will participate in this study will not impact his/her grades or standing at The University of Findlay. I have been informed that if my son/daughter is unable to attend his/her face-to-face interview, his/her participation may be discontinued.

I may contact Christine Denecker at 419-434-6661 or Dr. Sue Carter Wood at 419-372-8107 regarding this research. At any time, I may also contact the Chair, Human Subjects Review Board, Bowling Green State University, 419-372-7716, if questions arise during the course of the study.

Signature_________________________________     Date________________________
Informed Consent Form

Bowling Green State University
Department of English
Study Title: “Toward Seamless Transition: Dual Enrollment and the Composition Classroom”
Investigator: Christine Denecker
Informed Consent: Instructor

I give my consent to participate in the research study “Toward Seamless Transition: Dual Enrollment and the Composition Classroom.” The purpose of this study is to survey and interview a group of approximately six instructors in various University of Findlay post-secondary enrollment (also known as “dual enrollment”) settings to better understand how post-secondary writing instruction on high school and university campuses can be a resource for preparing high school students to be college-level writers.

As part of this project, I will complete a written survey and will meet in my instructional setting for one fifteen to twenty minute face-to-face interview with the investigator during the months of December 2006 through May 2007.

My input will be treated confidentially, and any reports of research will not employ real names. If at any time or for any reason I wish to withdraw my consent or discontinue my participation in the study, I may do so. In addition, the decision regarding whether or not I will participate in this study will not impact my standing at The University of Findlay. I have been informed that if I am unable to attend my face-to-face interview, my participation may be discontinued.

I may contact Christine Denecker at 419-434-6661 or Dr. Sue Carter Wood at 419-372-8107 regarding this research. At any time, I may also contact the Chair, Human Subjects Review Board, Bowling Green State University, 419-372-7716, if questions arise during the course of the study.

Signature ___________________________     Date ___________________________