THE PROMISE OF SUCCESS:
ACADEMIC WRITING IN A BASIC WRITING DISCOURSE COMMUNITY

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the
Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

Cheryl Conrad DoBroka, B.A., M.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University

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Dissertation Committee:
Maia Pank Mertz
Anna O. Soter
George E. Newell
E. Ojo Arewa, Sr.

Approved by:

[Signature]
Co-Adviser
College of Education
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Cheryl Conrad DoBroka
1993
To Sarah DoBroka, my beloved daughter,
and the prophetic voices of her generation
whose research will contribute significantly to humanity
not by its might, nor because of its power,
but through the Spirit of the Lord.
Zechariah 4:6
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Soli Deo Gloria.
VITA

February 6, 1956 ........................................ Born -- Marysville, Ohio

1977 ................................................................. B.A., The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

1977 - 1985 ................................................................. Sales and Educational Resource Consultant, Augsburg Publishing House, Columbus, Ohio

1985 - 1988 ................................................................. Graduate Teaching Associate, Department of English, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

1988 ................................................................. M.A., The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

1988 - 1989 ................................................................. Lecturer, Writing Workshop, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

1989 - Present ................................................................. Graduate Teaching Associate, Department of Educational Studies, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio
FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Education

Studies in Language/Composition Theory/Research Methods
Dr. Anna O. Soter, Dept. of Educational Studies

Studies in Writing/Pedagogy
Dr. George E. Newell, Dept. of Educational Studies

Studies in Language/Culture/Research Methods
Dr. E. Ojo Arewa, Sr., Dept. of Anthropology

Studies in Literature/Literary Theory
Dr. Maia Pank Mertz, Dept. of Educational Studies
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Nature of the Problem

Academic writing is a unique type of discourse that is used and taught within university and college classrooms. Even though it assumes diverse expressions in various disciplines, it functions overall as an "approved channel" for communication within and among the various discourse communities that exist at the college or university level (Porter, 1986). The ability to write according to "approved" formal conventions, to know what constitutes "evidence" and "validity" in written discourse, and to recognize community assumptions about what objects are appropriate for examination and discussion are all necessary to any writer seeking to identify with a particular academic discourse community (Bizzell, 1992; Harris, 1989; Porter, 1986). As students come into contact with various college or university level academic discourse communities, they are faced with the fact that each has its own way of knowing and writing about that knowledge. In addition, they are faced with the task of learning how to think in certain ways and represent those thoughts in writing, within conventions that are acceptable to each particular discourse community.
Freshmen, who come from various high school backgrounds with various levels of exposure to any kind of academic writing, often receive their initial exposure to college or university level academic discourse communities and academic writing in entry-level or basic writing courses, which they are advised to take as part of their initial coursework. Such introductory level writing courses are designed to introduce novice writers to the ways of thinking, speaking, reading, and writing that are part of the culture of the university academic community. While some freshman writers experience success during the introductory process they undergo in these courses, others experience difficulties. Some find that they have either not been sufficiently immersed in any kind of academic discourse that may aid them in producing competent or successful writing within their particular classroom communities, or they have not been sufficiently exposed to the wider culture that permeates academic literacy.

Achieving success in academic writing demands that a writer be able to know the kinds of issues that may and may not be addressed (Herrington, 1985), to adopt a certain voice, register, and tone (Elbow, 1991), to fictionalize both author and audience, creating a written piece that can stand by itself autonomously by means of a logical order internal to the text (Farr, 1993), to demonstrate a certain logic in presenting evidence and organizing text (Applebee, 1984), and to form and edit portions of text in accordance with specific rules of grammar and punctuation (Shaughnessy, 1977). In order to produce a work of "successful" academic writing, a freshman writer needs to negotiate the cognitive, social, and linguistic demands that an academic writing task imposes -- in essence, he or she needs to "invent the university" for each writing occasion by evaluating, concluding, reporting or arguing according to
the discourse of a particular academic community (Bartholomae, 1985).

In general, freshmen enrolled in entry-level university writing courses bring with them vastly differing experiences and abilities to deal with the demands of academic discourse. Patricia Bizzell (1982) sums up the current situation of many college freshmen writers and their preparation for academic writing in her observation that more and more students are entering the university at a very elementary stage of their initiation into any academic discourse community, unable to produce "Standard" written English, sustain an argument in an essay, or adopt the relatively objective persona academics prefer. Mike Rose (1985) describes such students as "underprepared," possessing knowledge that is either incomplete, fragmented, or not organized in ways that can be readily accessed in academic writing situations.

Several explanations have been offered as to why students come to the university underprepared. The work of Arthur Applebee (1981; 1984) with high school students' writing suggests that students may leave high school without having been offered adequate opportunities to analyze, synthesize, and argue by means of extended prose -- strategies that prove vital in the writing of university level discourse. The differing abilities of college freshmen to write academic discourse may also stem from their previous exposure to language within their own culture and/or social class (Heath, 1983). In another study of high school age students, Basil Bernstein (1975) found that upper- and middle-class students are better suited by their socialization in language to deal with the formality and abstraction of academic discourse than are working-class students. In addition, other studies have found that students whose home language does not closely resemble "Standard" English are distanced even more from the academic discourse of classrooms (DiPardo, 1993; Farr, 1993;

Within many university writing programs, basic writing courses have been implemented to serve those students who come to the university underprepared for the kinds of writing the academy expects of them. Often among the ranks of the "underprepared" are students who represent diverse cultural backgrounds and ethnicities. Research that explores how these underprepared students from diverse cultural backgrounds fare in university writing classrooms, and how they negotiate entry into specific university classroom discourse communities, can offer valuable detail about both the processes these students undergo and the kinds of written products they produce as they become acquainted with the demands and culture of university level academic writing.

Rationale for the Study

My research interest in the connections between culture and writing (Soter, 1992; Purves, 1988; Purves & Takala, 1982) has influenced me to examine issues related to the culture and ethnicity of underprepared students in introductory level university writing courses. Having experienced teaching such introductory level courses myself, I have seen first hand the kinds of writing that underprepared students from non-mainstream cultures produce in response to classroom writing assignments, and I have witnessed the struggle that often exists for them in the process of producing academic writing that conforms to university level standards. In the course of my teaching, I have become familiar with one widely used curriculum for helping underprepared writers approach academic writing tasks at the university level, found in David Bartholomae and
Anthony Petrosky’s *Facts, Artifacts, and Counterfacts* (1986). This curriculum addresses underprepared students as a single entity, based on their lack of preparation for university level academic writing; in so doing, it does not specifically address the influences that culture and ethnicity may bring to bear on a student’s academic writing. Likewise, many of the recommendations for classroom instruction that follow from this approach focus on acquainting underprepared students with the language and the methods of the university -- while not accounting, again, for individual student differences that may be related to culture and ethnicity.

In my study, I wanted to explore beyond the boundaries of the term “underprepared,” with all its accompanying images, to look at the ethnicity and culture of student writers within a university level basic writing classroom community. It was my intent to sit on the other side of the teacher’s desk, with the students, and observe how the members of one particular ethnic group conducted themselves in class, how they approached the academic writing tasks they were faced with, and how they felt about their place within the classroom community. Within the particular basic writing program that I had taught and had chosen to conduct my research, African-American and Hispanic students most often comprised the non-mainstream cultures represented in the classrooms. I chose to focus on African-American students, based on my past experience with students of this particular ethnicity who had been placed in the writing classes I had taught. I planned to follow members of this one particular ethnic group through a basic writing sequence, in order to learn how they perceived discourse community and how they chose to deal with the relationships and the coursework associated with the class. I wanted to see how a particular group of African-American students negotiated the many facets
of entry into a particular discourse community, how they worked toward achieving “success” in their introductory level basic writing courses.

Research has identified African-American basic writers within the group of students that has experienced difficulties meeting standards for “success” that operate within introductory academic writing courses (Bruffee, 1988; Farr & Daniels, 1986; Weis, 1985; Campbell & Meier, 1976). These difficulties of African-American basic writers in academic writing courses have been accounted for in various ways, ranging from dialect interference (Farr & Janda, 1985; Gray, 1975), to rhetorical differences in black and white styles of oral and written communication (Kochman, 1981; Noonan-Wagner, 1980; Smitherman, 1977) to problems associated with learning to think and feel in a language that belongs to a culture other than one’s own (Mellix, 1989; Delpit, 1988; Weis, 1985). In addition, much of the research dealing with African-American students as academic writers highlights their lack of preparation for the types of writing required in universities, emphasizing "what they are not and do not possess" (Ney, 1986, p. 22). Less attention has been given to their position as "outsiders" who must gain an "insider's" familiarity with academic language and culture in order to write successfully in academic settings (DiPardo, 1993; Mellix, 1989).

A few researchers have recently begun to focus on how students from diverse cultural backgrounds fare in academic settings in which their writing is expected to conform to certain standards that may differ both linguistically and culturally from those to which they may be accustomed (Ball, 1992; Dean, 1989; Rose, 1989; Bizzell, 1982). In her study of the culturally related ways students used the African-American linguistic code in their academic expository writing, Arnetha Ball (1992) highlighted African-American adolescents’ stated
preferences for choosing vernacular-based textual patterns. She reported that seventy-one percent of the African-American high school students she surveyed and interviewed “felt they had to change their words and language use in order to produce academically successful compositions” (p. 517). Other recent studies that appear to be similar to my work in both goals and methodology include those of Zeni and Krater-Thomas (1990), who employed ethnographic case study techniques in a high school setting toward the goal of better understanding “the learning processes of African-American basic students and the journey through which they can become successful writers” (p. 26); Cleary (1991) who triangulated data from many sources in her exploratory study of the writing experiences of forty “successful” and “unsuccessful” eleventh grade writers; and DiPardo (1993) who case studied four students of color in a freshman-level university basic writing class in order to uncover the tensions inherent in teaching “ethnically underrepresented and academically underprepared students” (p. 4).

In exploring how the African-American basic writers “fared” in the particular classroom community I studied, I wanted to examine their academic writing as a process as well as a product. In looking for these students’ processes of negotiation in becoming part of the culture of a university level writing classroom, I studied them within the context of the many relationships that exist among the participants in a discourse community. I focused specifically on how the African-American students enrolled in the class defined "successful" academic writing, and how they interacted with their peers, the tutor, and the instructor in ways that helped or hindered their processes of becoming "successful" academic writers within their classroom community. I studied their written products and listened to them tell their stories of who and
what influenced those products.

I chose a qualitative, ethnographic approach for my study of African-American student writers in a basic writing discourse community. The in-depth data that can be gathered using ethnographic techniques is extremely helpful for understanding students' developmental processes within a specific context. The image of a classroom and its writers that can be conveyed through the "thick description" (Geertz, 1973) of ethnographic methods appears more thorough, undeniable, and less limited than that which quantitative measures of written products alone can yield. A strength of ethnography is the empirical data base that is obtained through the researcher's first-hand immersion in the classroom (Heath, 1982, p. 43). Martha Ward (1971) aptly describes this kind of contact with context and data as "the day by day, month by month familiarity of close contact which breeds a certain intuition" or a "feel" for informants and their culture that can later be assessed in the light of more sophisticated methods and theories (p. 14).

Within an ethnographic approach my chosen unit of analysis was microethnographic, as opposed to macroethnographic (Berreman, 1968; Erickson & Mohatt, 1982). In the sense that my encounters with my informants occurred for a few hours each day for a few months, my study cannot be included within the parameters of traditional ethnography, which centers on total immersion in a culture through participant-observation throughout a complete cycle of events (Lutz, 1981, p. 52). My focus on who and what influenced "successful" written communication within a particular classroom discourse community was within the narrow parameters of microethnography or the ethnography of communication (Saville-Troike, 1982); influenced by Hymes' (1974) theory of the ethnography of speaking, I explored the content of the oral
communicative behaviors and the written products of students in contexts related to academic writing, and I discussed these behaviors and products within a larger cultural context.

Within my micro-ethnographic methodological approach I conducted case studies, similar to the type of ethnographic case study approaches used by Zeni and Krater Thomas (1990) in the high school setting and DiPardo (1993) in the university level basic writing setting. I use "case study" to mean a study of a system with outlines or boundaries (i.e., a classroom), under natural conditions, so as to understand it in its own right and to emphasize its unity and wholeness (Stake, 1988, pp. 256-8). While I looked holistically at the culture of the classroom community and its emphasis on "successful" academic writing as part of the larger university culture, I also, at the same time, focused my attention on those aspects of the basic writing classroom system that were specifically relevant to my research questions -- i.e., talk and behavior associated with producing a product that was deemed "successful" academic writing within a particular classroom discourse community. Case studies enabled me to look specifically at the talk and behavior of five African-American freshman writers within their particular classroom community as they negotiated the definitions of "success" they applied to their academic writing.

Focus of the Study

My study focuses on a two-quarter basic writing sequence that is offered in the English department of a large midwestern university as an example of one type of "formal" initiation into university level academic writing that African-American freshman writers may receive. The study looks at one
specific basic writing classroom as a discourse community, focusing on how African-American students enrolled in this class define "successful" academic writing and interact with their peers, instructor, and tutor in ways that help or hinder their processes of becoming "successful" academic writers. Since students enrolled in this sequence were together for two quarters with the same instructor, these classes offered a unique opportunity to study a university-level freshman basic writing discourse community for a length of time greater than a single ten-week quarter. In addition, since the instructor who taught this course sequence used a modification of the Bartholomae and Petrosky curriculum mentioned earlier in this chapter, these classes offered a glimpse of a particular ethnic group within the context of this modification.

The particular freshman basic writing class I observed for this study is run on a two-quarter sequence, designed to give additional support to underprepared freshman writers who have been determined "at risk" on the basis of standardized test scores and diagnostic writing samples, and who have volunteered for the class. In addition to classroom instruction, these students were provided with additional academic support from academic tutors assigned to help them. Within such a population, I identified five students for case study who were motivated to work to achieve "success" in their academic writing. While I cannot claim that the African-American student population enrolled in this specific basic writing class was representative of all African-American students in introductory-level university basic writing classes, I feel that the processes these students engaged in as they became part of a basic writing classroom discourse community and produced what the community deemed "successful" academic writing would be similar to those experienced by other African-American students in other introductory level writing courses.
Some instances within university basic writing classroom discourse communities in which freshman writers may negotiate notions of "success" with each other include both full class sharing sessions of their writing and smaller divisions of the class into peer editing groups. These types of interaction provide students with peer support as they explore how to use the language of the academic discourse community they are trying to join (Bruffee, 1988). Group work within the classroom has the potential to provide rich collaborative learning situations in which students can shape each others' written discourse by interacting with the meaning of each others' texts (Cazden, 1988). Students responding to each others' writing have been observed to negotiate meaning by posing a variety of questions, comments, and criticisms (Gere & Stevens, 1985; Trimbur, 1985).

Research has shown that younger African-American students respond favorably to group efforts and cooperative learning, as opposed to independent learning activities (Hale-Benson, 1986; Scott, 1981). However, the existing body of research does not specifically describe and analyze cooperative learning experiences of African-American basic writers in the university classroom. In addition, where past research in university classrooms has focused on how students negotiate meaning within their peer editing groups, it does not specifically detail the process by which they negotiate the linguistic, rhetorical, and cultural forms that house that meaning. It seemed fruitful, then, to study the talk and actions within group learning situations in a particular basic writing classroom discourse community in order to gain insight into how African-American students' negotiations within that community may have influenced their production of writing that was determined to be "successful" by community standards.
In order to study how African-American basic writers individually or collectively determined the many facets that contributed to the "success" of a piece of academic writing, I identified and explored several issues connected to how they negotiated the types of academic writing that were acceptable within their particular classroom discourse community. The core questions that guided my inquiry are as follows:

1. What kinds of group learning situations are available to the students in a particular two-course university basic writing sequence? Are notions of "successful" academic writing discussed within the context of the classroom community? If so, how, by whom, and to what extent?

2. What are the specific definitions of "successful" academic writing that operate within this basic writing classroom community? How are these definitions set, and by whom?

3. How do African-American students in this specific basic writing classroom respond to the available group learning situations? To what extent are the community notions of "successful" academic writing reflected in the oral and written feedback given from peers, the instructor, and the tutor about these students' writing? Similarly, to what extent do these students revise their writing according to what their peers, the instructor, and the tutor consider "successful" academic writing?

4. To what extent may the group learning situations available in this specific basic writing classroom influence the success or failure of these
African-American students in composing written products that meet their classroom community standards of "successful" academic writing? What other influences are present in this classroom community that may account for these students' successes or failures?

In order to examine these core questions, I studied a two quarter freshman basic writing sequence at a large midwestern university from September, 1991, through March, 1992. I used participant observation techniques within the classroom to gather data that was triangulated through observations, questionnaires, written essays, and interviews. The details for the design of the study, along with the background of the site and the students selected, are described in Chapter III.

Scope and Significance of the Study

Research studies dealing with African-American student writing have often examined their written products to show how they deviate from a "standard" and to suggest remediation strategies. While part of my task in defining "successful" academic writing is to include a brief discussion of writing that is not "successful" according to classroom community standards, I focus on the processes by which five "successful" African-American student writers negotiate their community standards of "success" and the products they deem "successful." I highlight what their ideas of "success" are, how they incorporate these notions of "success" into their own writing, and how they help each other meet "success" in collaborative learning situations such as peer editing groups. I also explore the talk and behavior in interactions with the instructor, peers, or
the tutor that these students find to be most helpful in their quest for "success." By looking at five African-American students' written products within the context of their writing and revising processes, I examine to what extent they perceive the classroom discourse community and its component peer editing groups have influenced their "successes." In addition, I explore what the instructor did to define and foster "successful" academic writing, and I discuss general implications of the instructor's role in helping students produce competent, useful discourse that is acceptable not only within their community's standards but also acceptable within the dialogue of the larger academic community.

It is also important to note the contributions that individual case studies can make to our overall knowledge of a specific culture or system, in this case African-American culture. Individual case studies within traditional anthropology (also referred to as a "single ethnographies") describe a single entity and focus on knowing it well. Such detailed, single studies lay the groundwork for comparative ethnological study, which focuses on comparing, interpreting, and generalizing from individual cases. Without single ethnographies, ethnologists would have no firm basis upon which to form generalizations across systems, societies, or cultures (Berreman, 1968). Thus, even though one cannot generalize from a single case study of an individual or a classroom, the information gathered from such case studies is vital to the comparative perspective of ethnology. In the same manner, my description of a classroom discourse community that influences African-American students' abilities to produce "successful" academic writing can form the basis for ethnological study of "success" stories among African-American basic writing students, opening the way for generalizations about how these students can successfully enter university level academic discourse communities. In
essence, my study highlights African-American students' successes rather than failures at the university level, in much the same spirit that Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines' *Growing Up Literate* highlighted success rather than failure at the preschool level.

By using ethnographic case study methods to study and describe "successful" African-American student writers' processes in negotiating the culture, language, and form of academic discourse within an introductory-level basic writing classroom community, I uncover some of the means by which they are introduced to and experience university-level academic writing. A case study approach enables me to describe, in detail, the writing processes of a representative portion of the students in a particular class, as they engage in what basic writing teacher Susan Wall refers to as an often "long and difficult struggle" in achieving academic voice and authority in their writing (1986, p. 106). It is my belief that a large part of writing academic prose that is deemed "successful" by the members of one's discourse community is related to developing such an academic "voice" that conforms to community standards. I also suspect that the negotiation processes in which students come into contact with certain university community standards for "successful" academic writing require of them both cognitive growth and some type of socialization or acculturation. Through case studies of five students, I will share my discoveries as to who and what influenced these students' social and cognitive growth and change as they gained experience with university-level academic writing and negotiated "success" as academic writers.

Thus, my micro-ethnographic study of a university level basic writing classroom community and the academic writing of the five African-American freshman basic writing students whom I selected for in-depth case study should
provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that contribute to these students' "successes" in academic writing at the university level. In addition, in its focus on a particular ethnic group in a basic writing class, this study adds to the current dialogue concerning how to best tailor introductory-level writing programs to the needs of culturally diverse groups of underprepared freshman.

Limitations

Scholars have long debated issues of what makes writing "good" or "successful." This study adds to the ongoing dialogue. It was the intention of this research to discover what the members of a particular classroom community defined as "successful" writing and to uncover, as much as possible, how they arrived at their definitions and how those definitions played out in their writing classroom. Such student perceptions and experiences, while not universally applicable, can nonetheless prove useful to inform the practice of teachers and the focus of researchers. Thus, while five case study students cannot speak for all African-American basic writing students in introductory university writing courses across the nation, they can tell teachers and researchers enough to inform their practice and guide their inquiry about introductory level writing courses, connections between language and culture, and the inter-personal politics of teaching and learning "successful" academic writing.

In addition, the experiences of these five African-American case study students cannot speak, except perhaps in a broad sense, for other students of color. Each ethnic group represents its own "case"; as such, each ethnic group
must be studied on its own terms and thoughtfully considered within the context of the interaction between the culture of its members and the culture of a particular discourse community in which its members find themselves.

Within my chosen methodology, there are limitations inherent in listening to individual persons' perspectives on the particular situations in which they find themselves. In ethnographic research, the researcher is presented with one perspective from "key informants" that is the product of an act of interpretation. In my study, specifically, the students who participated in case studies performed an act of interpretation each time they talked with me about who or what influenced their applications of definitions of "successful" writing. To try to balance this act of interpretation, I have triangulated their interview data with questionnaires and classroom observations. While a completely "accurate" representation of the talk and action related to issues of "successful" academic writing within this classroom community was not my goal, the multiple perspectives present in student, instructor, and tutor input provided me with the information I sought.

It is also well understood that in addition to the students', tutor's, and instructor's perceptions of "successful" academic writing, the basic writing program's evaluation and grading standards and the expectations of the larger university academic community all contributed to classroom notions of "success" that are described in the pages that follow. Such constraints from outside the classroom community influenced and perhaps limited, in subtle ways, the latitude that classroom community members had in establishing definitions of "success" in the writing that they did and shared.
Summary

This chapter has provided a brief overview of my study, its methodological orientation, the theoretical and pedagogical issues it explores, and its scope and significance. In Chapter II, I will review the current literature related to the areas of academic writing, discourse communities, and basic writing, and I will emphasize how my work builds upon previous theory and research in these areas. In Chapter III, I will outline the methodology, procedures, and instruments I used in this study. I will give an account of the approaches I used to analyze the data, which will serve as an introduction to the next three chapters in which I discuss data analysis in detail. In Chapter IV, I will introduce the five African-American case study students and provide thick description that places them within the context of their classroom discourse community. In Chapter V, I will detail the definitions of “successful” academic writing that were gathered from the instructor, tutor, students, and the basic writing program that housed the class. In Chapter VI, I will explore how such definitions of “successful” academic writing operated in the classroom community and in the writing and revisions of five case study students. In addition, I will detail to what extent the learning situations in the classroom community influenced the “successful” writing of these five case study students, and I will explore issues surrounding peer response and community-building within their writing classroom that will help explain their drafting and revising of their assigned essays. Chapter VII will summarize my findings and discuss implications for further research.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Overview

In examining the definitions of "successful" academic writing that operated in a particular basic writing discourse community, and in exploring how African-American basic writers interacted with members of their classroom community to negotiate definitions of "success," this study addresses issues of composition, community, and culture within the basic writing classroom. In this chapter, I will review the literature related to the areas of academic writing, discourse communities, and basic writing. I will define "academic writing," "discourse community," and "basic writing," situating them within the current dialogue of research, theory and practice.

Academic Writing

Academic writing is an important part of the culture of a university level academic discourse community -- often, a part of culture that is transmitted by those who "know" and assimilated by those who are novices within the community. These novices are often freshman students who need to learn how to write according to "approved" formal conventions, to recognize what
constitutes evidence and validity in written discourse, and to familiarize themselves with a particular academic community's assumptions about what objects are appropriate for examination or discussion.

Within the university classroom, academic writing can function to introduce students to "conceptual activities" central to a given discipline, to expected structures and styles of professional writing, and to social roles and purposes for writing within that discipline. In learning academic writing, freshman student writers face certain cognitive, linguistic, and social demands of a discourse with which they may be unfamiliar. They interact with peers and teachers who communicate various assumptions about "successful" academic writing. Within the context of these many influences, novice writers at universities must make choices about the form and content of their written texts as they attempt to sort out and internalize the demands of academic writing, which grow out of the demands of the academic discourse community as a whole.

Cognitive and Linguistic Demands of Academic Writing

In order to examine the demands of academic writing, it seems fruitful to begin with a discussion of the links between cognition and writing. Joseph Williams (qtd. in Porter, 1986) believes students come to introductory-level university writing courses in "pre-socialized cognitive states," without sufficient experience with academic discourse to produce competent academic writing: many students do not know what may be presupposed, they are unfamiliar with the intertextuality of the community, and they are unfamiliar with many of the explicit conventions of academic writing (p. 42). Arthur Applebee's empirical
studies of high school student writing (1981; 1984) confirm Williams' assertion that students do not receive adequate exposure to certain types of academic writing, while his *Writing Report Card* points out that students need to learn to think more effectively, using a process approach, as they write for school contexts (1986, p. 12). An underlying assumption here appears to be that certain types of experience with certain types of writing facilitate cognitive growth.

One way to look at the links between cognition and writing is to focus on the writing process, more specifically on the conceptual activities entailed by different kinds of academic writing assignments. Writing begins with conceptualization, which entails the coming together of basic intellectual functions in complex activity (Vygotsky, 1962, p. 58). Theoretical studies in composition have identified conceptualization as "the structure of thinking that leads to writing" (Rohman, 1965, p. 3); more plainly rendered, "people learn to write by practice in conceptualizing" (Moffett, 1981, p. 43). Within this complex activity of conceptualization, the writer engages in continuous operations of naming, defining, renaming, and redefining experience (Berthoff, 1982, p. 86). In discussing the patterns writers impose on experience in order to code it into language, Lindemann (1982) writes that "in conception, the mind relates those patterns to other patterns, enlarging, re-interpreting, and giving meaning to our experiences and observations" (p. 66). These kinds of cognitive activities take place, then, as part of an individual's writing process.

It is the case that specific types of writing within specific contexts may pose specific demands on a writer's ability to make meaning out of experience, devise patterns in what is perceived, and present that experience in a way that conveys information to a particular audience. Empirical researchers Applebee,
Durst, and Newell (in Applebee, 1984) have found that specific rhetorical contexts pose different demands on writers. Underlying their study of the functions of writing in high school classrooms were the following assumptions:

... various uses of writing involve different "logics" or rules of evidence and organization; these, in turn, pose different cognitive and linguistic demands for the writer, requiring the exercise or orchestration of different combinations of skills (p. 55).

As students move through the grades in school, they are required to deal with more abstract material and use more complex types of writing, analyzing and interpreting experience and information rather than simply describing it within a narrative framework (Durst, in Applebee, 1984). The cognitive demands of school writing tasks increase with the move from summary formats (which are organized chronologically) to analytic formats (which are organized around a set of critical issues). Cognitive growth occurs in students as they mature and gain experience within a wider range of writing formats. Applebee, Durst, and Newell (in Applebee, 1984) propose that growth in writing abilities also involves a gradual differentiation of the more sophisticated uses of writing. They conclude that effective writing programs are those that provide students with a range of different kinds of writing tasks to foster this differentiation (p. 55).

It can be argued that the cognitive demands of writing vary according to the particular use to which the writing is put and the particular contexts in which the writing occurs. In their empirical research among the Vai in Liberia, Scribner and Cole (1981) found that certain literacy practices (i.e., reading) influenced cognitive skills (p. 258). In discussing Scribner and Cole's 1981 study of the Vai in Liberia to illustrate the connection between cognition and language use, Farr (1993) points out that the Vai, Arabic, and English literates in the study outperformed non-literates on certain cognitive tasks that were closely
related to the specific ways in which the literates used writing or reading: for example, the ability to write letters in Vai script seemed to increase "audience awareness" as a cognitive skill among the literates (p. 11). Farr extends this discussion of reading and writing to argue that the ways in which one is accustomed to using written language go hand-in-hand with one's cognitive style or "way of thinking" (p. 11). In addition, learning to use written language in school contexts can influence individuals' thinking processes. In his research of schooled and non-schooled residents in a small rural town, Russian psychologist Alexander Luria found that sociocultural changes (such as the introduction of schooling) formed the basis for the development of higher memory and thinking processes and more complex psychological organization (in Scribner & Cole, 1981, p. 10). These kinds of findings suggest a strong connection between school literacy and certain types of cognitive growth.

The current form of "formal" essays required in Western schools reflects the influence of the British essayist tradition, which used extended, logical essays to formulate original theoretical knowledge (Olson, 1988, p.182). Farr (1993) quotes Scollon and Scollon's 1981 study of interethnic communication to argue that such "essayist literacy" (i.e., literacy characterized by a fictionalization of author and audience, along with emphases on a piece of writing standing by itself autonomously and on a logical order internal to the text) may be viewed as both a set of discourse patterns and a cognitive style (p. 12). Participation in this kind of literacy, which is necessary to the practice of certain literate behaviors (including academic writing), invokes a certain cognitive style that may be prevalent in some cultures but not in others. Olson (1988) looked at the consequences of literacy associated with mastery of the "schooled" language of written texts and wrote of the "bias" literacy imparts to a
culture and to individual’s psychological processes (p. 175). It is this academic requirement for formulating original knowledge, as opposed to reflecting popular knowledge, that may contribute in part to some students’ problems with writing; in contrast to the “ready-made” orientation to life and thought reflected in oral culture, writing in a literate culture requires selecting, rejecting or accomodating ideas and attitudes (Goody & Watt, 1988, p. 25). Students from diverse cultural backgrounds may experience a “gap” between the literate traditions of school and the oral traditions of their families and peer groups. Cross-cultural research has looked at the cognitive consequences of schooling and literacy in contemporary societies (Olson, 1988; Scribner & Cole, 1981). Similarly, it can be argued that issues of culture and cognition in writing also need to be addressed in any discussion of novice writers from diverse cultural backgrounds who engage in producing written academic discourse.

Along with certain cognitive demands of academic writing, there are also certain linguistic demands that may be either unfamiliar to students or perceived as extremely difficult to meet. One such demand is reflected in the common university requirement for essays to be produced in "Standard" or "Edited" English. Studies have found that students whose home language does not closely resemble "Standard" English find themselves distanced from the academic discourse of university classrooms (DiPardo, 1993; Farr, 1993). The differing abilities of college freshman to write the "Standard" English required of academic discourse may stem from their previous exposure to language within their own culture and/or social class (Heath, 1983; Bernstein, 1975). This consideration will be explored within a discussion of the social contexts of academic writing.
Another way to look at the demands of academic writing is to focus on the context of writing, i.e., the intellectual and social conventions of a given academic community within which the writing is done. These conventions include the kinds of issues that specific disciplines address, the lines of reasoning used to resolve those issues, and the shared assumptions about the audience's role, the writer's ethos, and the social purposes for communicating (Herrington, 1985, p. 332). Connecting these kinds of concerns with academic writing casts it as a rhetorical act in which a writer "giv[es] reasons and evidence ... but doing so as a person speaking with acknowledged interests to others -- whose interest and position one acknowledges and tries to understand" (Elbow, 1991, p. 142). Not only, then, does academic writing require the cognitive strategies of integrating information from sources with one's own knowledge, but it also requires the social ability to interpret one's reading and adapt one's writing for an audience and a purpose.

Viewing writing as a social construct will lead to questions about the role writing plays for students as they learn to think and act like members of particular academic communities. Based on the findings of her naturalistic study of writing in college chemical engineering classrooms, Herrington (1985) argues that "writing can function as a way of introducing students to what it means to think and act in various disciplinary forums" (p. 354). As students learn the ways of a particular disciplinary forum, they learn the kinds of knowledge claims that may appropriately be made, the kinds of reasons required to support such claims, the accepted writer and reader roles that must be assumed, and the purposes that are served by writing (Herrington, 1985,
This kind of learning permits students, in the words of David Bartholomae, to "invent the university" for each writing occasion: to evaluate, conclude, report, or argue according to the particular discourse of a particular academic community (1985, p. 134).

Such learning, however, may not come easily for some students. Elbow (1991) argues that "it is definitely alienating for many students to be asked to take on the voice, register, tone, and diction of most academic discourse" (p. 148). He further points out that many students "get seduced or preoccupied" with the way academic discourse looks and sounds, and they "learn only to mimic it while still failing to engage fully the intellectual task" it entails (p. 148).

For students who come to the university from diverse cultural backgrounds, sounding "academic" on paper may involve yet more complex issues of acculturation. An African-American researcher, Barbara Mellix (1989), points out that some African-American students face the task in university writing of learning to think and feel in a "Standard" dialect that belongs to a culture other than their own. Basic writing teacher and theorist Ken Bruffee (1988) describes this situation as involving students from diverse cultures who talk, write, and behave 'incorrectly' in terms of a cultural community of the 'literate' and 'liberally educated' that they have not yet joined. For such students, success in taking on the discourse of the academy may first entail an ability to imagine themselves a part of the culture of academic language, therefore freeing them to take liberties with it in their writing (Mellix, 1989). Bartholomae casts this issue as one of insider vs. outsider: writers need to feel "the privilege both of being inside an established and powerful discourse and of being granted a special right to speak" (1988, p. 143). Further explorations of how discourse communities come into being, along with what it means for
teachers and students to be part of an academic discourse community, follow.

**The Academic Discourse Community**

James Porter (1986), a rhetorician, offers a definition of "discourse community" as being

... a group of individuals bound by a common interest who communicate through approved channels and whose discourse is regulated. A discourse community shares assumptions about what objects are appropriate for examination and discussion, what operating functions are performed on those objects, what constitutes 'evidence' and 'validity,' and what formal conventions are followed (pp. 38-9).

It is possible to conceptualize each college classroom as representing a discourse community in its own right, situated within the larger framework of a disciplinary community and the academic community as a whole. Linguist John Swales cautions that "an academic class is unlikely to be a discourse community at the outset. However, the hoped-for outcome is that it will form a discourse community" (1990, p. 32). To borrow from Hymes' (1974) sociolinguistic theory, the classroom community may be viewed as a place within which individuals negotiate common understandings of the social aims they are trying to accomplish, the roles they assume in various situations, and the ways they use language to accomplish their social aims. Patricia Bizzell (1992) bridges these rhetorical and sociolinguistic views in her definition of a discourse community as "a group of people who share certain language-using practices," practices that are conventionalized in ways similar to the rhetorician's notion of interpretive communities that regulate how group members interpret experience on the basis of certain canonical knowledge, and
the sociolinguist’s notion of speech communities that regulate stylistic conventions that may be used in various social interactions (p. 222).

There are many facets involved in the process of integrating individuals who are scheduled together for a university class into corporately becoming what may resemble a discourse community. Swales (1990) describes this process as involving teacher and student agreement on goals for the course, roles of the participants, and appropriate forms that the information exchange (both oral and written) should assume (p. 32). Often proceeding with the teacher in the role of "expert" and the students in the role of "novice," the participants of a classroom discourse community explore the rationale for and gain facility with appropriate genres (i.e., how things will be communicated, and by means of what kind of language); in addition, participants gain control of any technical vocabulary in both oral and written contexts, as they work to increase their levels of expertise and their critical thinking abilities (Swales, 1990, p. 32). In essence, students must learn to "borrow the traces, codes, and signs" which are part of the academic discourse community, in an attempt to establish their identities within the community (Porter, 1986, p. 41).

Some Problems With the Notion of Discourse Community

Within academia, there are arguments about the usefulness of the concept of "discourse community." Joseph Harris discusses the notion of academic discourse community as "hypothetical, suggestive, powerful, yet ill-defined," suggesting it is a "nowhere...tied to no particular time or place" (1989, p. 14). Linguist John Swales corroborates this view that there is a definitional problem with the term "discourse community": rather than a "settled notion," he
says it suggests "the center of a set of ideas" that originate from a "social view" of the writing process which emerged from the sociolinguistic concept of "speech community" (1990, p. 22). In using the term, Swales calls for differentiating a sociolinguistic "speech community," with its "naturally occurring membership," from a sociorhetorical "discourse community," with its "deliberately chosen membership" (p. 24). Harris traces the term "discourse community" as coming from both the sociolinguistic "speech community" and the literary "interpretive community," with the latter suggesting intertextuality (i.e., shared references and allusions) in the tradition of E.D.Hirsch's Cultural Literacy (p. 14).

Not only do scholars disagree as to how to define "discourse community"; the debate also encompasses issues of membership and authority. Harris rejects the notion of being "initiated" into membership in an academic discourse community, arguing that students may belong simultaneously to more than one speech and/or discourse community; he emphasizes that students' task is not to leave one community in order to enter another one, rather it is to reposition themselves in relation to several continuous and conflicting university discourses (p. 19). The very notion of "community," according to Harris, reflects the community of those in power, "those who know the accepted ways of writing and interpreting texts" (p. 13). As such, it becomes an elitist entity that requires conformity to defined standards. Accepting the notion of "discourse community" means accepting the notion that professors, teachers, "insiders" become the mentors of "outsiders" -- students who are novices (Bartholomae, 1985). Harris argues that this view misrepresents the realities of academic discourse and fails to recognize that it is not a coherent, well-defined entity that can be transmitted to others; he points out that "we might be better off viewing [academic discourse]
as a polyglot, as a sort of space in which competing beliefs and practices intersect with and confront one another" (p. 20).

Another problem with the notion of discourse community is reflected in many scholars' failures to address multi-cultural issues that affect classroom discourse. If one buys the notion of entry into university discourse communities, one must also account for the diverse backgrounds students bring with them, and the diverse ways in which they perceive the tasks set before them. Bizzell (1992) emphasizes the power of a freshman English classroom discourse community in shaping the identities and world views of novices as it prepares them for other written work they will encounter in academia; she points out that students' initiation into an academic discourse community entails assimilation into ways of thinking and doing that reflect a particular culture (p. 230).

One must also consider the teacher's role in inducting students into membership, including the adjustments many teachers must make in order to know where to begin the task, to wrestle with what it means to have students from diverse cultures together in a single classroom working toward prescribed goals. As much as some teachers would like to acknowledge and accept the diversity represented in their students' work, they often feel constrained by the preferences of the larger academic community which fosters certain ways of thinking and presenting those thoughts. Thus, a classroom discourse community formed within the greater academic discourse community cannot be said to have total freedom of self-determination; each classroom discourse community is birthed within certain external constraints and attended to by a teacher who must function within these constraints.
The Teacher's Role in the Classroom Discourse Community

In her empirical study of college chemical engineering classes, Herrington (1985) found that "teachers do have a good deal of influence over the nature of the community that is created in a given class," and they exercise this influence in the roles they assume and the expectations they project as audience (p. 356). One of the teacher's major roles is often that of gatekeeper. Indeed, we may view the teacher's role as the evaluator of academic writing (hence, the perpetrator of certain standards) as one of the chief "constraints" that may exist in a classroom discourse community.

An important issue that arises concerns whether the teacher should function as a gatekeeper or a facilitator. Langer and Applebee (in Applebee, 1984) suggest that students can be helped to accomplish more sophisticated purposes in their writing if the teacher shifts an emphasis from evaluating what the student has learned (which is often a gatekeeping function) to collaborating with the student in an exploratory capacity (p. 179). It may also be possible for teachers to acknowledge the existence of their gatekeeping function within the context of "teaching students the ropes" of academic writing. Bartholomae and Petrosky (1986) define the teacher's task as one of empowering students to compose "within the conventions of the highly conventional language of the university classroom" (p. 5); they exhort teachers to give students access to the language and ways of thinking that are valued at the university level (p. 9).

How can this access to academic discourse be successfully offered to students? Applebee and Langer (in Applebee, 1984) suggest support by instructional scaffolding, a method of providing students with appropriate models and strategies for addressing new problems (p. 176). As students
internalize these strategies, a process which may be likened to learning a type of cultural knowledge, they gain resources to use in negotiating similar, but more difficult tasks. As students show proficiency with new tasks, the teacher removes the "scaffold" and permits the students additional latitude in focusing and developing their academic writing (p. 177). In teaching students to think through problems associated with particular writing tasks, teachers aid students' cognitive growth. Elbow (1991) supports this kind of pedagogical focus in his call to teach students about the intellectual practices of academic discourse and the required stylistic conventions by teaching them to differentiate writing for different audiences and purposes (p. 152). It can be said that both Applebee and Elbow portray the teacher as a facilitator of growth.

An alternate view of the teacher's task is offered by Harris (1989), who frames this task as one of adding to or "complicating" students' uses of language, rather than helping students enter or move from one discourse community to another. He argues against the notion that students should be working toward mastering some particular well-defined sort of discourse, and he argues for an awareness of the various competing discourses that come together in any university classroom (p. 17). This type of argument may support more radical ones offered by theorists (such as James Sledd) who decry what they perceive as on-going standards for academic discourse that shut out persons of other cultures who do not or cannot conform to its standards. Again, the teacher's task may be complicated by conflicting goals -- a desire to encourage students to explore their own feelings and voice must often be subjected to the social reality that students in academic settings need to master the language and ways of thinking of the academy.
The Student Writer and Academic Writing

If we accept academic writing as a social construct, then part of learning to write in academic settings for academic audiences involves being socialized into doing what is expected --into learning the proper ways of thinking and sounding on paper. Bartholomae (1983) writes that "the struggle of the student writer is not the struggle to bring out that which is within; it is the struggle to carry out those ritual activities that grant our entrance into a closed society" (p. 300). To university students, teachers and professors represent "those who know"; in turn, students want to know what their teachers and professors expect. They become confused when teachers send mixed signals about such things as audience and purposes for writing. This confusion is well illustrated by a situation Herrington found in her study of college chemical engineering classes, in which the professor attempted to create a hypothetical professional forum for the work required in his class, but resorted to evaluating this written work as if it were done in a school forum with the teacher as sole audience (1985, p. 356).

If we accept that students perceive writing as one of the "ritual activities" to which Bartholomae refers, then we need to recognize how familiarity with that ritual may be transmitted from teacher to student. Curriculum theorist Nell Keddie (1971) argues that students who are perceived within school settings as being the most able are those who have access to or are willing to take over the teacher's definition of the situation. Ultimately, this means being able to work within the categories and framework that the teacher constructs. It is those students who are willing and able to operate within faculty-imposed categories that ultimately "succeed" in school; students who fail cannot or will not work within teacher categories. This concept may be linked with Applebee's
instructional scaffolding -- teachers who scaffold may help students learn better by teaching them the accepted ways of approaching tasks and constructing and sustaining academic arguments on paper.

There may be problems with this type of learning, however. Durst (in Applebee, 1984) found that once high school students learned how to successfully use different patterns of organization in their writing, they adhered to these formats closely because of the "safety" the formats afforded them (p. 102). He discusses the students' developmental pattern that he observed as one that may be limited by the structures imposed on the students' writing. Durst suggests that there may be problems with structures for writing that appear too rigid: there is the possibility that students will learn to "plug in" information and neglect to think about issues the structure does not appear to call for (p. 104). Elbow (1991) also recognizes that some college students learn to mimic the surface dimensions of academic writing while failing to internalize the intellectual demands of academic writing tasks (p. 148). It is possible, then, that university students may be learning academic writing as a set of procedures instead of a way of thinking. In addition to looking at the writing students produce and measuring how it conforms to certain standards, it may also be necessary to look at what students are not learning within the context of their classroom communities.

**Basic Writing**

In her "Call for Articles" in the Fall 1986 issue of *The Journal of Basic Writing*, editor Lynn Troyka offers the following insights into the terminology of basic writing:
The term "basic writer" is used with wide diversity today, sometimes referring to a student from a highly oral tradition with little experience in writing academic discourse, and sometimes referring to a student whose academic writing is fluent but otherwise deficient.

Patricia Bizzell (1986) suggests that "basic writers" are those who are least prepared for college; they may be defined by features of their writing or by their placement in the university freshman composition sequence, but either way their salient characteristic is their "outlandishness" as students who appear "alien" in the university setting (p. 294). Their writing is often filled with "errors" of various types that render their prose "unacceptable"; in comparison to the usual components of academic prose, the prose of basic writers has been described as too short, too dense, illogical, or immature. Yet some suggest the prose of basic writers may be viewed as "more vital, more engaging, and more true to the students' experiences than the impersonal, strangely disengaged prose often produced by our more skilled students" (Lunsford, 1980, p. 287).

Apart from the contention that we do not yet have an adequate consensus among teachers and scholars as to the type of writing that should be termed "basic" (Bartholomae, 1980), it is still possible to identify many of the characteristics of student writers who fill our university basic writing classrooms. When Mina Shaughnessy was in the process of coining the term "basic writing" she was careful to distinguish basic writers from those students previously termed "disadvantaged" or "handicapped" (1977, p. 4). She defines basic writers as a group comprised of persons who come from neighborhoods where other languages or variant, non-prestigious forms of English are spoken. They often come to university classrooms without much experience with academic writing. Even though they recognize differences between their ways of speaking and writing and those required in the university classroom, they are
unable to sort out or reconcile these differences with "the key academic tasks of learning to read and write in Standard English" (Shaughnessy, 1976, p. 139). In this sense, the argument can be fostered that teaching basic writing is synonymous with teaching standard written English (Shaughnessy, 1975, p. 1).

The term "basic writing" is not only used to describe something students do or produce (Bartholomae, 1980, p. 313); it is more often used to describe programs and courses at colleges or universities for students who are underprepared for the kinds of writing the academy expects of them. The argument can be made that teaching standard written English within these programs and courses, i.e., teaching academic writing, often involves teaching culture as well as written convention. Academic writing has been described as a vehicle for encoding and transmitting cultural information -- information that comes from the culture of white middle- and upper-class persons. Each time non-native English speakers or speakers of nonstandard dialects of English engage in academic writing tasks, they are faced with negotiating the cultural as well as the cognitive and linguistic demands of academic discourse.

In the research that focuses on theoretical and practical issues in basic writing, issues concerning such things as the interaction of students' cultural backgrounds and the culture of academic writing within the university writing classroom appear to be inadequately addressed. My discussion will explore this seeming lack of emphasis on cultural issues that affect student writing, especially the writing of those students who come from diverse cultural backgrounds. In addition, it will examine some implications for pedagogy that cultural differences in the writing classroom carry with them.
Outline of Some Major Issues in Basic Writing

With the goal of teaching students to produce writing in standard edited English, basic writing teachers (many of whom are also theorists) have approached their task from several standpoints. The basic writing literature up through 1976 dealt with describing how "remedial" writers wrote, detailing programs and methods that had proven helpful in improving student writing (Shaughnessy, 1976, p. 142). A major focus was on error and how to eradicate it; the premier issue of the Journal of Basic Writing in 1975 highlighted many of the social and pedagogical issues that were related to error in articles such as D'Elica's "Teaching Standard Written English" or Quint-Gray's "Dialect Interference: A Tripartite Analysis." (This latter article dealt with nonstandard dialect features in freshman writing as deviations from expected, accepted patterns of writing -- deviations that inhibit a reader from concentrating on the writer's message.) Mina Shaughnessy's landmark Errors and Expectations (1977) redirected thinking about errors, challenging teachers to view them as efforts of intelligent persons who misapplied rules. Her influence is evident in David Bartholomae's 1980 article, "The Study of Error," which challenged researchers to systematically study what basic writers do when they write, shifting the focus from the written product to the writing process.

Within basic writing research, a focus on the writing process, along with a somewhat broader focus on literacy and pedagogy, began the 1980's. Patricia Bizzell (1986) outlines three approaches to basic writing research that were "current" in the 1980's: studies of clashes between standard and nonstandard dialects; studies of clashes among competing discourse forms; and studies of clashes among ways of thinking, (in which she also pointed to cultural bases of
differences in thinking) (p. 295-6). In the literature, emphasis was placed on students' inexperience with the rules, conventions, and "sound" of academic discourse; appropriate instructional strategies which focused on drafting and "intervening" in students' composing processes were explored. In the literature that dealt with the writing of speakers of nonstandard English, issues of dialect interference, which focused mainly on written products, continued to be debated. In a posthumously published article, Shaughnessy points out "how we have argued, puzzled, and struggled over the issue of mother-tongue interference, over whether to change, how to change, when to change those nonstandard features of a student's language that distract the general reader" (1980, p. 113). The important issue in the dialect interference debate, according to Shaughnessy, existed in the fact that teachers continued to grapple with the phenomenon of diversity and the phenomenon of linguistic convention.

One example of the dialect issues that were debated concerned the writing of African-American students. Farr and Janda (1985) found that oral dialect interference problems accounted for some, but not all, student problems in writing standard English. Farr and Daniels (1986) found that proficiency in a standard dialect encompassed more than knowing the grammar or becoming bi-dialectal; in involved a shift of the basic linguistic system toward standard features, a shift that involved social, cultural, and linguistic factors. Wilson (1985) found that African-American students' problems in writing went beyond the simple transfer of non-standard dialect to paper; she described the prose of these student writers as "a black dialect/standard English/hypercorrect melange" which also included traditional "errors" made by freshman writers (p. 46). Royster (1985) also attributed most problems of African-American student
writers to inexperience in written forms of communication. As recently as 1990, studies have been undertaken to examine dialect (among other things) as a possible influence on the writing of African-American students (see Zeni and Krater Thomas, 1990). Within these studies, one can also detect a move to recognize issues other than dialect for the problems that nonstandard dialect speakers experience in writing standard English.

Inquiry that focuses on dialect interference as a contributing factor to difficulties faced by African-American student writers has begun to be challenged by study that recognizes the cultural influences that underlie the surface differences in the writing of these students. There appears to be a call issued from a small group of researchers (e.g., Bizzell; Hartwell; Rose) for a movement away from studying linguistic differences between "standard" English and the disparate varieties students bring with them into the college classroom toward studying related cultural issues. (An example of this movement would be Patrick Hartwell's "Brief Reply to Daniel Hibbs Morrow" which criticizes Morrow's recent work done on dialect interference as passe). Such thought regards academic discourse as a "culture" in and of itself; it compares print literacy to learning a complex cultural code (Hartwell, 1986).

The word "culture" is bandied about in different ways in basic writing literature. In the Fall/Winter 1980 issue of the Journal of Basic Writing, E.D. Hirsch Jr. speaks of the "cultural dimension of writing" as an "invisible base" of tacit cultural knowledge that lies beneath the surface features of syntax, rhetoric, coherence, or spelling; this cultural knowledge reflects what others know and expect about the topic, the form, the writer, and the world (p. 28). It has been said that "what is 'basic' about basic writers and readers is not simply their lack of control over the conventional rules of written discourse; it is a kind of naivete
born of their inexperience with what it means to try to sound educated" (Wall 1986, p. 105). In addressing the "special" conditions of the remedial situation, which require the student "to develop within a short time a style of writing and thinking and a background of cultural information that prepare the student to cope with academic work," Shaughnessy recognizes a type of cultural incongruence students may feel in a university writing classroom (1976, p. 152). Hirsch cautions that no training in grammar or in the writing process can convey the additional cultural information he feels is "missing"; basic writers must be immersed in the literature and ideas of the dominant culture (Hirsch, 1980, p. 43). Thus, there is a body of scholarship that views the ability to compose an academic essay as a reflection of a particular form of cultural sophistication (in addition to some form of cognitive "maturity") that basic writing students do not possess.

In contrast to those who view basic writing students solely within the context of being unacquainted with the dominant culture valued at the university are those few teachers and theorists who see the need to recognize the culture that students bring with them into the writing classroom. Mike Rose (1985) contends that basic writing students... tend to have learned more about western culture through their twelve years of schooling than their papers or pressured classroom responses demonstrate... The problem is that the knowledge these students possess is often incomplete and fragmented and is not organized in ways they can readily use in academic writing situations. But to say this is not to say that their minds are cultural blank slates (p. 353).

Rose argues that a narrow focus on test scores or types of errors committed neglects basic writing students' personal histories -- thus failing to account for the cognitive and social demands of the academic culture that these
underprepared students face (1989, p. 187). Rose calls for looking beyond
Hirsch's "canonical orientation to educational achievement" to "the complex ties
between literacy and culture" that may shed light on issues such as why basic
writing students come to the university underprepared, or how their class or
ethnicity contributes to their status as "marginalized" persons (1989, p. 8). In
order to recognize the complexities of culture in the basic writing classroom,
Bizzell (1986) suggests studying such writing classrooms as cultural
communities in their own right. She challenges researchers to develop a
broader perspective of what occurs in basic writing classrooms by viewing the
writing classroom as a community of language users who mediate between
their home cultures and the academic culture (1986, p. 300). Such research
holds promise of tapping the "cultural incongruence" that basic writing students,
particularly those of diverse cultural backgrounds, face in the university writing
classroom.

**Discussion of Cultural Issues in the Writing Classroom**

An underlying problem with defining writing classroom "culture" solely
within the confines of the culture of academic discourse (or a canonical system
of belles lettres) is that it fails to look at the culture students bring with them into
the writing classroom. A sole focus on academic culture fosters a deficit model
of student writing, as it emphasizes the culture of academic language of which
students are not yet a part. Rose (1989) cautions us concerning "How much we
don't see when we look only for deficiency, when we tally up all that people
can't do" (p. 222). Such a narrow focus does not account for the writers who
produce the writing -- it ignores the individuals who are attempting to cross what
are often class and cultural boundaries.

Students of diverse cultural backgrounds who enter college, are, in a way, committing themselves to pursue membership in a linguistic and cultural community that differs significantly from the ones to which they may be accustomed. While they enter college classrooms talking, writing, and behaving in accordance with the norms of their own culture, they are often perceived as talking, writing, and behaving "incorrectly" in terms of a cultural community of which they are not yet members (Bruffee, 1988). These students are often keenly aware of the difference between the language that is theirs by birth and the language they are expected to produce in the college classroom, for they have encountered such a difference in their college preparatory studies. In her study of African-American high school students, Arnetha Ball (1992) found that almost three quarters of the African-American adolescents she interviewed felt that they had to change their words and language use in order to produce "academically successful compositions" for their high school English classes (p. 517).

Acquiring proficiency with the academic language of the university often involves learning that is above and beyond language learning. Anne DiPardo (1993) offers the following perspective on the many challenges that face linguistic minorities in a university setting:

... when students from nonmainstream backgrounds experiment with academic discourse, they are doing more than trying on a linguistic disguise; they are experimenting as well with new identities, new ways of thinking and being (p. 7).

Basic writing teacher Terry Dean (1989) describes this learning in terms of cultural transitions; she writes that "how students handle the cultural transitions that occur in the acquisition of academic discourse affects how successfully they
acquire that discourse" (p. 23).

In contrast to the typical college freshman writing "struggles," student writers from diverse cultural backgrounds often find themselves caught in a more complex web of difficulties. For example, in mastering academic discourse, speakers of the many varieties of Black English face greater tasks than those students who are already part of the dominant culture, who are involved in acquiring or polishing written conventions. These African-American student writers are faced with tasks that often require them to think and feel in a "standard" dialect that belongs to a culture other than their own. Barbara Mellix (1989), an African-American English professor, shares the following remembrances of her initiation into academic writing:

When I came face to face with the demands of academic writing, I grew increasingly self-conscious, constantly aware of my status as a black and a speaker of one of the many black English vernaculars -- a traditional outsider (p. 180).

Mellix asserts that for many African-American students, success in taking on the language of the academy entails learning first to imagine themselves a part of the culture of that language, and therefore someone free to take liberties with it (p. 180).

It is also necessary to look at the social as well as the linguistic ramifications of cultural differences in the writing classroom. Rose (1989) raises the issue that asking students to acquire the language of academic discourse may be asking them to undergo a personality change and pull away from their community. In this manner, he questions whether "failures" in college may be social in origin rather than intellectual. Rose challenges research that looks at students' linguistic or cultural "deficiencies," calling instead for researchers to look into what he terms the politics and sociology of failure:
We seem to have a need as a society to explain poor performance by reaching deep into the basic stuff of those designated as other: into their very souls, or into the deep recesses of their minds, or into the very ligature of their language. It seems harder for us to keep focus on the politics and sociology of intellectual failure, to keep before our eyes the negative power of the unfamiliar, the way information poverty constrains performance, the effect of despair on cognition (p. 222).

Lois Weis' (1985) empirical study of African-American basic writers, *Between Two Worlds*, supports much of what Rose says. Weis found that those students who succeed "are also willing to change aspects of their own culture" such as learning to come to class on time, doing homework, and resisting the company of friends who do drugs (p. 120). She outlines the social "risk" that she found was involved when individual students "break with the collective" student culture to adopt mainstream values and learn associated skills (p. 124). Weis feels "success is thus linked to the degree to which individuals are able and willing to operate within the dominant cultural categories" of college (p. 122). Pulling away from one's own community, linguistically and socially, may be a significant part of the cultural transitions that success in academic writing, even in college itself, requires.

It is imperative that we do not automatically equate African-American student writers with basic writers, nor their difficulties with academic writing as identical to those difficulties faced by all basic writers. Yet, in speaking broadly of African-American student writers as a cultural entity, it can be argued that there are many points at which they may feel cultural incongruence in university writing classrooms -- an incongruence that may be reflected in their written prose.
Implications for Writing Pedagogy

When we teach composition, we are teaching culture. Depending on students' backgrounds, we are teaching at least academic culture, what is acceptable evidence, what persuasive strategies work best, what is taken to be a demonstration of "truth" in different disciplines. For students whose home culture is distant from mainstream culture, we are also teaching how, as a people, "mainstream" Americans view the world. Consciously or unconsciously, we do this, and the responsibility is frightening (Dean, 1989, p. 24).

If basic writing teachers view teaching as carrying with it a responsibility toward students of diverse cultures, then they will explore ways in which their writing instruction can be more meaningful and relevant to the needs of their students. How can this be done? To begin with, teachers must recognize that they need to learn from their students. Mina Shaughnessy encourages teachers who have discovered that they do not share a universe of discourse with their students to "look with different eyes at [the] subject matter, much as a traveler begins to discover the assumptions and features of his own culture by observing someone else's" (1976, p. 153). Basic writing teacher Terry Dean (1989) advises teachers to "structure learning experiences that both help students write their way into the university and help teachers learn their way into student cultures" (p. 23). Mike Rose (1985) believes teachers can take cues from their students concerning how to best initiate, orient, or otherwise socialize them into the academic discourse community (p. 358).

Another, more traditional way for teachers to make writing instruction more meaningful and relevant is to learn from students' written texts. A starting point for this approach is found in the work of Bartholomae and Shaughnessy, who model how to search for patterns and logic in students' errors and how to
tailor instruction accordingly. But again, teachers need to move far beyond their students' writing to listen to the students themselves, as Mike Rose has done. At the very least, teachers need to understand how their students think about writing, as Anna Soter (1992) has found in her research among African-American basic writing students. As a result of his research with second language learners in the basic writing classroom, Carlos Yorio (1989) suggests that teachers listen to their students and find out how they think and feel -- then help them understand why they are asked to write as they are in academia (p. 33). Teachers cannot know how particular youngsters learn, or fail to learn except by listening to them.

Ann Murphy (1989) reminds teachers that basic writing students in an introductory writing course “arrive already knowing far too well that language is elusive and complex; we need to help them see that it is also accessible and empowering” (p. 180). For students from non-mainstream cultural backgrounds, accessibility to the discourse of the university academic community is crucial to their ability to reach for success in their academic writing.

Summary

Basic writing, historically, is tied to pedagogical issues which emphasize the practical, concrete aspects of teaching and learning academic writing. The literature in basic writing explores how students learn to write in academic contexts and details what pedagogies and curricula best aid learning. It also explores what basic writer's texts look like, comparing them to what is required in university-level academic discourse. Such a comparison finds the student
texts wanting, at best. Remediation, rather than facilitation, has been the order of the day.

In the basic writing literature, the impact of cultural difference on students' written texts is taken into account infrequently. The few times culture is mentioned often fall within the parameters of "cultural literacy" or the culture of academic discourse. Defined chiefly by their writing skills, basic writers have been regarded as "deficient" academic or culturally literate entities; however, they have not been observed as cultural entities to be listened to in their own right.

Studies of high school classroom writing instruction such as Applebee's (1981; 1984) do not address complex issues associated with culture, such as the rhetorical community in the classroom as a culture, the students within that classroom as cultural entities, or the connections between academic discourse and culture. In addition, such studies fail to account for the fact that learning to read and write in American schools is embedded with mainstream cultural values which teachers do not consciously acknowledge. The possibility that the culture of the classroom discourse community may, in itself, seem alien to student writers from diverse cultural backgrounds is widely ignored.

These gaps in research have led researchers in high school classrooms to continue to pose fundamental questions concerning why African-American students' academic achievement lags behind that of their European-American counterparts. Zeni and Krater-Thomas (1990) studied why so many African-American adolescents score poorly on NAEP writing assessments. Ball (1992) studied the link between African American adolescents' classroom performance and their ability to use organizational patterns associated with successful academic discourse. Such studies represent a few voices crying in the
wilderness, as it were, calling for a shift in research focus to the culture the students bring with them to the basic writing classrooms -- voices preparing the way for a wider consciousness among basic writing teachers and theorists of the cultural incongruence that may exist for students from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Questions that reach beyond Zeni and Krater-Thomas' fundamental "why do so many black writers write poorly?" (1990, p. 25) include inquiries into the larger cultural forces at work in the instruction that students receive in basic writing classrooms and in the texts they produce in conjunction with that instruction. Research that accounts for the cultural context of the classroom would entail shifting focus beyond the image of a basic writer that error counts and dialect interference analysis can construct, to highlight findings of naturalistic inquiry that details the kinds of acculturation experiences into the academic discourse communities of basic writing classrooms that African-American students may have. Naturalistic inquiry conducted in the university basic writing classroom makes provision for basic writers from all cultures and ethnicities to construct themselves, by presenting what they say and do as they negotiate the standards for academic discourse within the context of their particular classroom communities.
CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

Overview

This micro-ethnographic study of African-American basic writers in an introductory-level basic writing class provides insight into issues of teaching and learning by addressing the following questions:

1. What kinds of group learning situations are available to the students in a particular two-course university basic writing sequence? Are notions of "successful" academic writing discussed within the context of the classroom community? If so, how, by whom, and to what extent?

2. What are the specific definitions of "successful" academic writing that operate within this basic writing classroom community? How are these definitions set, and by whom?

3. How do African-American students in this specific basic writing classroom respond to the available group learning situations? To what extent are the community notions of "successful" academic writing reflected in the oral and written feedback given from peers, the instructor,
and the tutor about these students' writing? Similarly, to what extent do these students revise their writing according to what their peers, the instructor, and the tutor consider "successful" academic writing?

4. To what extent may the group learning situations available in this specific basic writing classroom influence the success or failure of these African-American students in composing written products that meet their classroom community standards of "successful" academic writing? What other influences are present in this classroom community that may account for these students' successes or failures?

I have chosen to look at how African-American freshmen writers think and feel about learning university-level academic writing, including what they feel is required for "success," by moving beyond the errors and patterns in their written products to listen to what they themselves said about their writing and their learning, as researchers Mike Rose (1989), Linda Cleary (1991), Elizabeth Chiseri-Strater (1991), and Anne DiPardo (1993) have done in their research with student writers. Microethnography has allowed me to contextualize students' experiences within their basic writing classroom by looking at the culture of their writing classroom, as it is situated within a basic writing program with a certain philosophical orientation, which is in turn situated within an English department and a university with certain expectations for academic writing.

In this chapter, I will provide the context for my study of "successful" academic writing, including descriptions of the setting, the class, the instructor, and the curriculum. I will describe how and why I selected the five case study
students who participated in my study. I will provide a description of the kinds of data I collected and the techniques and instruments I used, including how data were coded and analyzed.

**Context**

In order to explore my research questions, I employed the ethnographic participant-observation technique to study a two-quarter university basic writing class sequence at a large midwestern university. I selected five "successful" African-American freshman student writers for case study, three males and two females, who were enrolled in this particular two-quarter basic writing class sequence. Within the context of a narrative description later in this chapter, I will provide a detailed discussion of the methods I used to study this classroom community and the procedures I used to select these five case study students.

**Research Site**

I gained entry into a particular classroom site through personal contact with the classroom instructor, a Caucasian female Ph.D., whom I knew from my previous teaching experience in this particular university's basic writing program. The instructor is an experienced teacher of basic writing who has had many years' experience teaching the various writing courses offered by the program. I also received permission from the director and the assistant director of the basic writing program to do my study in the particular English department basic writing sequence and with the particular instructor I had requested.
Basic Writing Program

The course requirements sheet passed out to all basic writing students in this particular basic writing program at the beginning of each quarter informs them that they are enrolled in a college writing course that has no more than fourteen students working with a teacher who is committed to helping students “get the best start possible” in their college career. They are promised an “intensive introduction to college writing” that may be quite different from their writing experiences of the past because of its emphasis on sharing ideas, comparing experiences, negotiating perceptions, and talking about writing with classmates, the instructor, or an undergraduate tutor. Students are told to expect to write daily during the quarter and turn in several drafts of each assigned essay after they have received “advice” from their peers, the instructor, or the tutor. Collaboration with others and revision of written work are emphasized as important contributors to each student’s ability to write and think like a college student.

The basic writing courses offered in this particular basic writing program are promoted as an introduction to the language and the methods of the university. Students are given opportunities for additional support during this introductory process if their standardized test scores for verbal ability and university English placement essay scores fall below certain norms set for reading and writing proficiency. Such students are recruited for two-quarter “support” sections of basic freshman English; students and their parents make the choice for enrollment in a “support” section. The support program provides a wide variety of academic counseling opportunities and learning skills workshops and programs. The program also assigns graduate student tutors to
each basic English “support” section to provide the students with additional one-on-one instruction. English teachers of such sections receive additional training in providing a multi-faceted approach to learning that takes students from “where they are” when they begin the course to “where they need to be” in order to function successfully in the wider academic community.

The curriculum for the particular two-quarter “support” section of basic freshman English that I observed has the goal of providing students many opportunities to develop their ideas in detail through a variety of reading and writing assignments. The kinds of thinking and research required begin with the individual student’s experiences and branch out to embrace other kinds of experience and authority, with the goal of complicating students’ thinking and getting them to move beyond writing down and being satisfied with the first thoughts that come into their heads. In the required writing, grammar and mechanics are not stressed initially so that students will not fear putting their thoughts down on paper and elaborating on them. Such an approach seeks to de-mystify the university writing experience while introducing students to the kinds of writing that will be required of them at the university level.

**Course Sequence**

The instructor’s course description of the two-quarter basic writing sequence I observed was in line with the basic writing program’s curriculum. Her syllabus described the courses as an “introduction to the language and methods of the university” through a guided exploration of the theme of “Growth and Change in Adolescence,” an adaptation of David Bartholomae and Anthony Petrosky’s basic writing curriculum that is outlined in their book *Facts*. 
Artifacts, and Counterfacts. The course offered numerous opportunities for students to read, write, report, interpret, and discuss ideas and theories about adolescence. Students were encouraged to share and reflect on their own and their peers' writing, which was published in a classbook at the end of the first quarter of the two course sequence and used for theory-building during the second quarter. In this way, students' written texts became an integral part of the course content.

The five major writing assignments in this two course sequence built upon personal autobiographical writing and theory-building that was based on the personal narrative stories that the members of the classroom community chose to make public. Students were asked to complete three of these major writing assignments during the first quarter and two of them during the second quarter. The first assigned essay asked students to describe a change they experienced during adolescence and discuss why and how they changed. The second assigned essay asked students to explore what the instructor termed an “intentional change,” an instance in which they tried to change and succeeded. In the third assigned essay, students were asked to explore an experience that could be termed a “non-change,” in which they attempted to change something and did not succeed. These first three essays were compiled in a collection that the students titled “Coming to Terms With Internal Exposure,” creating a classbook which was duplicated and made available for each student to purchase. The fourth major writing assignment given the second quarter asked students to write an autobiography consisting of “key” stories that gave their reader a sense of who they were and where they had come from. In the fifth and final major writing assignment, students were asked to find patterns in the experiences they and their classmates had written about in the previous four
essays. By summarizing the stories of classmates who fell into the particular patterns they found, students could build their own theories of the growth and change that adolescents experienced.

**The Students**

From those who signed up for the two-quarter “support” section of basic freshman English, the university had randomly scheduled fifteen students into the particular basic writing class that I chose to observe. There were eleven males and four females in the class. Five of the males were Caucasian, and six were African-American; all four females were African-American.

I chose five case study students, two females and three males, from among this group of fifteen students. In keeping with the focus and purpose of my study, all case study students were African-American. How and why I selected these particular students is detailed within the narrative of my data collection procedures section, later in this chapter.

**Research Design**

**Prior Ethnography**

In the academic year 1990 - 1991, the year prior to my dissertation study, I conducted a pilot study in a two quarter basic writing sequence, with the same teacher and within the same basic writing program that I used for my actual study. In piloting my research methods and my questionnaires, I gained perspective concerning the kinds of data my design would yield as well as
practice in data analysis. In addition, I was able to begin honing myself as the primary research “instrument” that would be used in my microethnographic study (Wax, 1971; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1985).

During the first quarter of my pilot study, I gained entry into the field site and began to define my role as participant-observer in the classroom. I developed and administered a two-part questionnaire that probed students’ attitudes toward and practices concerning “successful” academic writing. Toward the middle of the quarter, I began observing classes twice weekly on days when writing was being done or talked about, studying closely peer editing groups and student talk about and participation in editing activities. Toward the end of the quarter, I began to study ways to talk about the changes between students’ written drafts that I was seeing; in addition, I began talking with the students to get a feel for who or what was influencing those changes.

During the second quarter of my pilot study, I chose two African-American students, one male and one female, to case study. I observed and audiotaped many of the peer editing group sessions which these two students attended; in addition, I interviewed them after each draft of the essays they wrote for class that quarter. I studied their essays for patterns in their revisions, experimenting with multiple ways to think and talk about what I was finding. I talked with the instructor several times, forming a close working relationship with her that carried over into the next year’s study. Initial attempts were made at audiotaping and transcribing class and interview sessions; initial coding categories for the data I gathered were hammered out, discarded, re-thought, and re-envisioned. Lastly, I devised a final questionnaire, revised it several times (partially as a result of the instructor’s helpful input), and administered it to the entire class. I conducted audiotaped “exit” interviews with the two case
study participants, to explore the similarities or differences in their initial and final questionnaire answers concerning "successful" academic writing that may have emerged over the two quarter class sequence.

Overall, the pilot study proved useful to me in evaluating my proposed methodology. I was able to negotiate entry into a field site that could be used for my actual study, and I found an instructor who was committed to working with me. I was able to experience the ambiguities and the possibilities of participant-observation methodology and the ethnographic interview; I became more aware of how self acts as a filter for information. I began to develop strategies for making contact with students and resources for gaining and maintaining their trust. I gained practice in sifting through data to see how categories emerge. Finally, as I became aware of the enormity of the task I had proposed to undertake, I began to understand why experienced researchers warned us novices about the potential of "drowning in data" (Lather, 1991).

Based on my experiences with my pilot study, I made several decisions to adjust my dissertation study in an attempt to make it more manageable and facilitate my data collection and analysis. I revised all questionnaires to more closely reflect issues that dealt with "successful" academic writing. In addition, I made certain that the initial two-part questionnaire was distributed during the first week of class, so that I could tap the attitudes and practices concerning "successful" academic writing that the students held upon entering the university. I had found that the students' responses during my pilot study reflected six weeks' of influence of the university's and the teacher's language arts philosophy. I also realized that I needed to begin establishing individual, one-on-one contact with students from the first day of class fall quarter, in order to get to know them reasonably well so that I could make informed decisions in
choosing case study participants. After observing classroom interaction during my pilot study, I found I needed to account for the influence of the tutor who was assigned to each basic writing section. I devised ways to debrief case study students after each session with him, even though I did not attend many of those tutoring sessions. In addition, I expanded the focus in one of my research questions to cover the influences of the instructor and the tutor on students' written revisions, in addition to the peer influence that I observed.

In summary, the pilot study solidified my interest in the academic writing of African-American freshman writers. The pilot experience confirmed my belief that these students have a story to tell about their processes of negotiating entry into a university-level discourse community where certain standards for “successful” academic writing are in operation. The experience also lent support to my chosen methodology as the most appropriate way to permit students to teach me about how they learn.

**Data Collection Procedures**

Data collection for this study covered a six-month period beginning in September, 1991 with the fall quarter of a two-quarter basic writing sequence and extended through March, 1992 with the winter quarter of the same sequence. Sources of data included daily fieldnotes, audiotapes of class sessions and interviews with students, the instructor, the tutor, and the program director, questionnaires, samples of case study students' written essays, and artifacts such as course syllabi and textbooks. These data permitted me to triangulate my view of the definitions of “successful” academic writing that were operating in the classroom by providing me with multiple sources of talk, action,
and written products.

**Subject Selection and Data Collection for the First Quarter**

A summary of the sequence of my data collection procedures during the first quarter of my study is provided here. A narrative description that details subject selection and data collection follows this summary.

**The first day of class.**

I established initial contact with members of a particular basic writing class, explained my study, defined my role as participant-observer in the classroom, and gained written consent from students who wished to participate.

**The fourth day of class.**

I administered a two-part written questionnaire, which covered students' previous experience with, attitudes about, and behaviors concerning "successful" academic writing.

**The first month of class.**

I conducted initial audiotaped interviews with student volunteers to gain information about personal background and experience with academic writing.

**The seventh week of the first quarter through the end.**

On the basis of questionnaires, initial interviews, students' written assignments for the class (two essays and a midterm), classroom observations, and the teacher's input, I identified five "successful" African-American student
writers, three males and two females, for subsequent case studies.

For the final four weeks of the quarter, I focused on the five case study students, observing their peer editing groups and recording their participation and interaction.

I studied case study students’ drafts of assigned Essay #3 and the instructor’s comments and interviewed these students about their revisions, looking for evidence of changes made according to notions of “successful” writing.

Throughout the first quarter,

I attended class regularly on days when writing was discussed, recording observations in field notes and audiotape.

I transcribed, from the class and interview audiotapes, all student and instructor talk that dealt with notions of “successful” academic writing.

I interviewed the instructor after she collected the final drafts of each essay and at the end of the quarter (four interviews).

This summary of the first quarter will now be followed by an elaboration of the above sequences and processes of data collection. Such a description will offer a fuller image of the classroom community and the part I played as participant-observer.

On the first day of class during the first quarter, the instructor introduced me to her students as a graduate student in Education who wanted to study students’ writing processes. After a brief personal introduction, I handed out an introductory letter and consent form (see Appendix A). I read through this letter
and consent form with the students, answered their questions, and asked them to sign and date their consent if they choose to participate. I emphasized to the students that once they gave consent, they had the right to drop from my study at any time, for any reason. I also emphasized that all interview transcripts, copies of their written essays and drafts, and test scores and grades they may share with me would remain confidential. I received one hundred percent compliance, with all students choosing to participate in the study.

On the fourth day of class, before I settled into a routine of classroom observations, I administered a two-part writing questionnaire that I devised (see Appendix B; Questionnaires #1 and #2). The first part consisted of open-ended questions designed to elicit student responses about individual definitions of "successful" academic writing and individual writing behaviors they considered "successful." The second part contained multiple-choice assertions about "successful" academic writing that were written in a way that enabled me to cross-check individual students' responses for consistency. The items on both questionnaires helped me identify prominent attitudes and beliefs that guided these student writers in both the choices they made about their own writing and the advice they were willing to receive from their peers in class.

During the second through fourth weeks of the quarter, I scheduled and conducted initial audiotaped interviews with students enrolled in this particular basic writing course who volunteered to talk with me. All students were encouraged to sign up for a twenty minute "chat"; thirteen of the fifteen chose to do so. In an effort to access information about the definitions of "success" they had brought with them to the college writing classroom, I asked background questions about their experience with and attitudes about reading and writing. (see Appendix C: Initial Interview Questions). This information gave me a
profile of each individual, as well as a composite picture of the attitudes towards
and experiences with reading and writing that operated in the class as a whole.
When all initial interviews were transcribed, I made copies available to each
student to “member check” the accuracy of the information I had gathered
(Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It was at this point that I also asked each student in the
class to choose his or her own pseudonym and write it on the interview
transcription.

In an effort to gain a standardized, outside measure of predicted
"success" in college, I also asked all students in the class for permission to look
at standardized test scores (e.g., ACT) that they took prior to being admitted. I
had obtained written permission for access to test scores in the introductory
letter and consent form these students signed on the first day of class. However,
I asked this second time to make certain that these students understood the
consent that they had given me previously. All students in the class confirmed
their consent.

Toward the middle of the first quarter, when I felt I had sufficient
background data on class attitudes and practices as a whole, I began to focus
my attention on the African-American student writers in the class. With my
research focus of “successful” academic writing in mind, I went through the
writing folders of all the African-American students in the class to study their first
two essays and revisions. I studied not only their written work, but also their
answers to the two questionnaires, the transcripts of information they gave me
in their initial interviews, and the observations I had recorded in my fieldnotes. I
asked for the instructor’s input on each student (i.e., her perceptions of each
student in terms of “success”). I sought students for case study who showed
potential as “key informants” (Wax, 1971) who could provide “rich data” (Lather,
1991), i.e., students who appeared to freely speak their minds (as opposed to saying what they thought the instructor or the researcher wanted to hear). Through a balance of intuition and method, I selected five students whom the instructor and I identified as potentially "successful" writers (a judgment sample of two females and three males). All five students gave me their permission when I approached them about participating in case studies. As in the beginning of the quarter, I assured them that they could choose not to participate at any time during the study for any reason. I wanted to begin with five case study students in the event that one may not be able to finish; during the second quarter, even though it looked as though one female was going to drop out, all five remained throughout the study. A detailed description of these five case study students as individuals will be given in Chapter IV.

During the final weeks of the first quarter, I spent a great deal of time outside of class talking with the five case study students. I conducted audiotaped discourse-based interviews with each of them after each draft of their third assigned essay, in order to probe issues of what they revised, why they revised, and who influenced their revisions (see Appendix C: Discourse Based Interview Questions). At the end of the first quarter, I made copies of Essay #3 and any accompanying drafts that these five students had written. These essay drafts and the accompanying student interviews about the changes they made between drafts helped me document the kinds of revisions they made.

Throughout the first quarter, I attended class on those days the instructor had planned for writing or discussion of writing. For each class I observed, I took field notes and audiotaped the class. As the quarter progressed, I joined peer editing groups on class days when they were in operation, audiotaping
and taking notes on group interaction and editing procedures, asking questions as I felt the need arose. I was not a full participant in these editing groups for the obvious reason that I did not bring a piece of writing to be critiqued; but in addition, in an effort to intrude as little as possible into students' editing decisions, I refrained from offering students advice for revision, restricting my comments to ones that called for clarification of the writer's intentions or meaning (i.e., "Did I hear you say X?" or "Is X what you mean?"). I wrote up my field notes each night after my observations, and my notes were open and available to the class members each time I visited their classroom, in order to invite their feedback. I also conferenced weekly with the instructor to access her views on the class and on the definitions of "successful" writing that she saw operating.

Data Collection for the Second Quarter

A summary of the sequence of my data collection procedures during the second quarter of my study is provided here. A narrative description that details data collection follows this summary.

Throughout the second quarter,

I attended class regularly on days when writing was discussed, recording observations in field notes and audiotape.

I selectively observed and audiotaped peer editing group sessions to which the five case study participants belonged.

I studied case study students' drafts of assigned essays #4 and #5 and the instructor's comments, and I conducted audiotaped discourse-based interviews with these students about their revisions, looking for evidence of
changes made according to notions of "successful" writing.

I interviewed the instructor after she collected the final drafts of each essay and at the end of the quarter (three interviews).

I transcribed, from the class and interview audiotapes, all student and teacher talk that dealt with notions of "successful" academic writing.

At the end of the second quarter,

I conducted exit interviews with all case study students and any other members of the class who agreed to participate.

I conducted one formal interview each with the director of the freshman basic writing program and with the tutor who was assigned to the class I studied.

The final day of class,

I administered a written, open-ended questionnaire to all students which covered their attitudes about and behaviors concerning "successful" academic writing.

This summary of the second quarter of data collection will now be followed by an elaboration of the above sequences and a fuller description of the processes of data collection. Such a description will offer a more thorough image of the classroom community and the part I played as participant-observer.

During the second quarter of my study, I continued to employ participant-observation techniques for data collection, to audiotape class and peer editing sessions, and to transcribe any references to community standards for
"successful" academic writing. However, my focus had shifted from a global one of the whole class and its components to a more local one of five individual writers and their drafting and editing experiences. I spent time establishing relationships with these five case study students -- observing, writing fieldnotes, and audiotaping individual discourse-based interviews and selected editing group sessions.

After each editing group session I observed, I conducted individual, audiotaped, discourse-based interviews in which each case study participant discussed actual and potential changes in his or her drafts, including comments about who or what influenced those changes. At the end of each interview, I verbally highlighted the main points I wrote down in my notes and asked the students if I had correctly represented their viewpoints. Individually, I conducted audiotaped discourse-based interviews with the five case study students after each draft of their fourth and fifth assigned essays to probe issues of what they revised, why they revised, and who influenced their revisions (see Appendix C: Discourse-Based Interview Questions).

When the instructor collected final copies of Essays #4 and #5 and all accompanying drafts (at the end of the sixth and tenth weeks in the second quarter of the study), I made copies of the essays and accompanying drafts written by the five case study participants. Over both quarters of the study, I secured a record of classroom interactions and selected editing sessions, written drafts and revisions, instructor's written comments, and oral discourse-based interviews for all case study participants, covering Essays #3 - 5 that they composed during the two quarter class sequence.

As another way to help me determine whether or not the five case study participants perceived they had received useful feedback from the members of
their classroom community, I also looked at the final grades on Essays #3-5 and talked informally with each of them to record any comments concerning who or what contributed to the grades they received. I also noted whether these students felt that the instructor applied mutually negotiated community standards of "successful" writing as she graded, or whether they felt she devised her own idiosyncratic criteria to which they had no access. Additional indications of these students' "successes" in academic writing were their final course grades.

I also conducted audiotaped "exit" interviews with the five case study participants and any other students in the class who chose to talk with me, to focus on their answers to the questionnaires I had administered and prompt them to talk about any similarities or differences in their attitudes towards and experiences with writing across time. Eleven of the fifteen students in the class participated in these exit interviews (see Appendix C: Exit Interview Questions).

On the final day of class, I administered to the entire class an open-ended questionnaire that I designed to help me compare what students initially said about their beliefs, attitudes, and practices concerning "successful" academic writing with those beliefs, attitudes, and practices that emerged over the two-quarter sequence (see Appendix B: Questionnaire #3). While the questions on this final questionnaire were not identical to those posed in the first open-ended questionnaire given during the first week of the fall quarter (in order not to appear redundant), they did ask for the same kinds of information so that student responses could be compared across questionnaires. This gave me one reflection of how the classroom community's notion of "successful" academic writing may have emerged and/or changed over the two-quarter sequence.
Throughout the study, I conducted formal and informal interviews with the instructor and tutor at times that seemed appropriate, noting any references they made to "successful" academic writing. Information about the instructor's and tutor's perceptions of "successful" academic writing was also accessed through talk recorded during class editing sessions. After my classroom data was collected, I conducted an audiotaped interview with the director of the basic writing program to access departmental and personal perceptions of "success" in academic writing, and discuss how the particular basic writing courses I researched may or may not have reflected those perceptions. In addition, documents such as departmental courses of study, syllabi, textbooks, and instructional handouts have been considered as influences on this particular classroom community's perceptions of "successful" academic writing.

Methods of Analysis and Procedures for Interpretation

Beginning data analysis occurred in the field during data collection in accordance with guidelines for ethnographic inquiry set by Hammersley & Atkinson (1983). Initial, broad categories that emerged within the questionnaire and interview data reflected "successful" academic writing as a process (i.e., what students must do to write a "successful" essay) and as a product (i.e., what the essay must contain in order to be deemed "successful"). Preliminary categories that were present in the case study students' written drafts and the instructor's comments reflected particular student responses to particular instructor comments (i.e., a "why" or a "what" written in the margin would most often elicit a student response of adding to the text, a "tighten" or "repeats" would most often elicit a student response of deleting from the text,
and a "who" or a "which one" would most often elicit a student response of substituting within the text.)

Decisions about data coding and analysis were guided by the focus of the study, the research questions, and the categories that emerged from the data. I was interested in definitions of "successful" academic writing that operated in the classroom community, who and what fostered and influenced those definitions, and how African-American students in that classroom community may have been influenced by those definitions as they worked toward "success" in their academic writing. I was not measuring any perceptible gain in writing ability of these students or linking ability to who and what influenced revisions on drafts. To do so would necessitate evaluating or rating final written products gathered from both the beginning and the end of the two quarter class sequence, which I did not do. Neither did I control for a variable, such as peer or instructor influence on drafts and look for improvement. Rather, I looked at peer, tutor, and instructor influence on the case study students' writing as part of the naturalistic setting of the basic writing classroom community. I traced the development of notions of "success" among members of the classroom community in conjunction with the written drafts of five case study students, as part of the whole story of the choices these students made concerning their academic writing for the class.

**Coding**

After data were collected I sorted, coded, and categorized them for intensive analysis. Care was taken to establish coding categories that permitted the data to tell their own story instead of conform to prearranged slots
(Lincoln & Guba, 1981; Patton, 1984). I did this by consulting classification schemes that other researchers had used with students' written revisions, attitudes towards writing, and perceived components of good writing. Two groups of data were coded: the first group included all case study students' written drafts of Essays #3 - 5, along with the instructor's written comments; the second group included written questionnaires and transcripts of interviews, class sessions, and peer editing sessions in which "successful" writing was mentioned.

In choosing a coding system for student writing and instructor comments on that writing, I needed an instrument which would measure or reflect actual surface structure changes between the students' written drafts. My purpose was to match the actual physical changes in drafts with what students told me about who and what influenced those changes. Especially pertinent were specifics such as who told them to do what particular things in their essays, what advice they decided to accept or ignore, and why they did so. I was interested in whether the actual record of change lined up with students' perceptions of the changes they made; whether they accomplished what they intended to accomplish with their revisions; whether they intended to make changes and found they did not get around to making them, and their perceptions on why this may have happened.

Students' drafts and written products, including the instructor's comments on these documents, were classified and coded on the basis of items students added, deleted, substituted, or permuted to conform with a notion of "successful" writing. By allowing the data itself to suggest an appropriate coding instrument, I devised a revision classification scheme that was based in part on the work of Sommers (1980), Bridwell (1980), and Witte and Faigley
was influenced more by the broad categories found in the revision work of
Sommers (1980) and Bridwell (1980), as it was not my purpose to distinguish
between structural and surface revisions in order to track changes in meaning,
per se, as did Faigley and Witte (1984).

The instrument I used for classifying and coding the revisions between
case study students' written drafts had seven parts that reflected seven
categories of change that I saw emerge as I studied these drafts (see Appendix
E: Revision Classification Scheme). These parts are as follows: 1) surface level
changes (spelling, punctuation, abbreviations, tense, number, format,
aesthetics); 2) additions to text; 3) deletions from text; 4) substitutions within text;
5) permutations (rearrangements) within text; 6) substantial changes in text
(partial rewrites); and 7) interlinear and marginal notations related to change. A
detailing of these categories, with examples drawn from the data, will be
provided in Chapter VI. Revisions were tallied within the revision classification
scheme as self-directed unless written evidence (comments, corrections)
exists on the page that indicated the revision was suggested by a source other
than self (i.e., instructor or peer). Three separate tally sheets were used to
record the coded revisions according to whether these revisions were
suggested by self, instructor, or peers (see Appendix E: Coding Tally Sheets).
In addition, a tally sheet that provided space for coders to detail each written
suggestion that fell into the category of interlinear and marginal notations within
the revision classification scheme (i.e., category #7) was filled out for each draft
of each essay that contained such notations.

In order to classify and code information from classroom observations,
interviews, and questionnaires that dealt with why students wrote and revised
as they did, I devised a classification scheme that highlighted the components of “successful” academic writing that operated within the classroom community (see Appendix D: Classification Scheme for Components of “Successful” Academic Writing). This scheme details “what” influenced the definitions of “success” that students (particularly the case study students) applied to their writing; in doing so, it highlights what the members of this classroom community felt were necessary components in their written products by bringing together the various components of successful academic writing that were mentioned or enacted by the instructor, the students, or the tutor.

Within this classification scheme, references to the components of “successful” academic writing in students’ questionnaires and students’, instructor’s, and tutor’s oral comments in class and interviews were coded into categories that emerged from the data, categories similar to the ones Soter (1992) devised for coding writing perceptions and habits inventories. Specifically, the coding scheme I employed focused on the following areas concerning “success” in written products that emerged from the data:

1) Language/Usage (including grammar, punctuation, spelling, vocabulary, diction); 2) Style/Aesthetics (including creativity, feeling, honesty, voice); 3) Ideas/Topic (good, strong, clear, organized); 4) Detail/Development (including length, support); 5) Rhetorical Concerns (introduction, conclusion, paragraphing, topic sentence, structure, form); 6) Reception by Audience (teacher, grades); 7) Genre (differentiation of one type of writing from another, necessary ingredients for a particular type of writing); 8) “Other” (general category for items mentioned only once). A detailing of these categories, with examples drawn from the data will be provided in Chapter V.
Reliability of Coding

The classroom instructor and I piloted the applicability of the revision classification scheme with samples of Essay #2 that had been written by the case study students early in the first quarter of the study. After making adjustments to better define what we meant by “substantial changes in text” in category #6, we found that we could account for changes between drafts within the seven categories the instrument provided. After the initial pilot run, the instructor and I classified every revision we identified in the sets of drafts that the five case study students wrote in response to Essays #3 - 5. The number of drafts varied per essay according to each student writer, as did the number of words in each draft. To take these differences into consideration, all quantification of individual students’ changes between drafts is represented within proportions.

The instructor and I identified, classified, and tallied all revisions between drafts separately, at times and places independent of one another. Reliability coefficients were run for the overall correlation between the ratings of the instructor and the researcher. Across all categories, there was 99% agreement out of all possible chances for agreement, using the equal length Spearman-Brown split halves correlation for reliability (Miles & Huberman, 1984).

Coding categories for components of “success” present in questionnaires and all interview and classroom transcripts were piloted on a sample of the questionnaire data, then expanded and applied to this portion of the data as a whole. Categories and coding were validated independently by the classroom instructor and an English Education doctoral student who has had several years' language arts teaching experience. Through using frequency counts
that were weighted proportionately within the six categories related to “success” that were established by the data, I was able to identify patterns in perceptions of “success” that existed for the community members as a whole and for each of the five case study students.

Summary

In order to uncover and unpack the definitions of “success” that were operating within a particular two quarter sequence of basic writing, I gathered data as a participant observer within the basic writing classroom. As described, data were collected in the form of field notes, audiotaped interviews with students, the tutor, the instructor, and the director of the basic writing program, drafts of student writing and discourse-based interviews on those drafts, and artifacts such as the curriculum used by the basic writing program. Analysis consisted of transcribing, sorting, coding, and interpreting the data, using guidelines for qualitative data analysis found in Lincoln & Guba (1981), Bogdan & Biklen (1982), and Hammersley & Atkinson (1983). Inter-rater reliability coefficients were obtained to validate coding on student changes between drafts (Miles & Huberman, 1984). Research findings and general themes that grew out of this analysis will be presented in Chapters IV through VI, which discuss the classroom community as a whole and situate the five case study students within its influence of “success” in academic writing.

In order to address the issues raised in my research questions, my analysis is divided among three chapters. As I stated previously in Chapter I, the first analysis chapter, Chapter IV, introduces the members of the classroom community, including the five case study students, supplying demographic and
other background information in order to detail who applied the definitions of “successful” writing that existed in this classroom community. The second analysis chapter, Chapter V, outlines the personal definitions of “successful” academic writing gathered from the sources of students, instructor, tutor, and other university influences. It also adds another dimension to these classroom community definitions of “successful” writing by specifically highlighting definitions gathered from the five case study students. In focusing on definitions of “successful” academic writing, Chapter V supplies a detailed view of what definitions of “success” the case study students applied to their drafting and revising, and raises issues of how the definitions represented in each individual’s responses to questionnaires or interview prompts represent or differ from the definitions present in the responses of the other members of the class.

In the third analysis chapter, Chapter VI, I will show how the case study students applied the classroom community definitions of “success” to their writings and revisions, by using the revision classification scheme I devised and employed to describe the changes these students made between their written drafts. This final analysis chapter will also outline with whom the case study students collaborated in order to effect the changes that were made in the drafts of their written essays. It will draw on data for recommended/factual changes that were tallied in each draft of the three assigned essays being studied for each case study student; in addition, it will relate stories from within the classroom community that relay the perceptions of these case study students toward the advice of their instructor, peers, and tutor.
CHAPTER IV
VOICES IN THE CLASSROOM COMMUNITY

Think of a young pheasant. Vulnerable, but at the same time thrives on being fed and wanting to fly. It wants to fly, but yet it doesn’t know exactly where and why it wants to fly. It’s not very strong at first, but gets stronger each day. It has a very strong will and struggles to grow and become a part of society. It lives primarily to survive and fulfill all it can. This is the image that I see when I look at myself. I am young and unsure about my growth, but I have the strength, will and determination to succeed in life. (Todd, 1/92)

Becoming part of a society. Thriving and growing. Worrying about vulnerability. Succeeding in spite of uncertainty. Such thoughts of themselves, of how they will “fit in” and whether they will “succeed,” are ever-present in college students’ minds. But their journey to “become” and to “succeed” does not take place in isolation; many influences from many sources surround them. Many voices are eager to give advice, correction, encouragement, or criticism. Many paths open up, many possibilities emerge for relationship and belonging. Self is negotiated within interactions with others. Choices become crucial.

Many such choices face freshman college students as beginning writers who find themselves negotiating entry into the discourse community of an entry-level English classroom. The same uncertainties about success are present;
the same worries about vulnerability exert influence in subtle ways. The same myriad of voices offers advice and correction, encouragement and criticism. The same struggles with self and other, with "my" way meeting and often conflicting with "their" way, are present. Some of these "other" voices become internalized, while others are tolerated for a season or completely ignored. The voices of "self" and "other" often found within an entry-level freshman writing classroom are reflected in the following student voices that come from the basic writing classroom community that I studied:

Todd: "If I like it, it's O.K. I write to please myself."

William: "See, I write it this way because this is what Jan [the instructor] wants."

Renay: "Philip [the tutor] has really helped me write. I took his advice, and used it."

Raycha: "My mother is on my back. She's an English person who knows where every comma and colon and everything should go. She's got me!"

Craig: "I have this girl on my floor read over my papers. Like, she finds my mistakes."

These voices speak of freshman students' experiences listening to themselves, their instructor or tutor, their parents, and their peers. They represent the many sources of influence on these students' academic writing, influences that are revealed in their perceptions, preferences, and practices concerning writing.

As such, these voices speak of the community that surrounds these students and the academic culture in which they become immersed in their introductory level writing classrooms. Students find "success" in academic writing within a process of forging relationships that gives them access to these other voices within their particular classroom community. For these students,
finding a path of “success” in the writing associated with this academic culture necessitates familiarity with the social as well as the cognitive aspects of academic writing. They find that they must familiarize themselves with the context of the writer/audience relationship on a university level, as well as with the demands placed upon them to produce certain types of written products.

Overview

This chapter will give background information that will aid the reader in tracing the paths of “success” in academic writing chosen by five African-American students who were part of the basic writing classroom community I studied. It will outline how they entered into this community with certain preconceptions they had brought with them from high school about the culture of introductory level academic writing classes. It will introduce the sources to which they looked for their definitions of “success” in academic writing. Within the stories it tells, it will highlight some of the attitudes, knowledge, and practices that the members of this classroom community perceived were necessary for students to be familiar with, in order to embark upon the process of writing “successfully.”

The first section provides a broad introduction to the members of the classroom community: instructor, tutor, and students. The next section first introduces the five case study students and explains how they were chosen, then supplies demographic and background information on each of these students. The final section provides some illustrations of the interaction among members of the classroom community as a whole, by sharing stories and quotes from interviews and observations. Within these illustrations are voices
that speak of the process of negotiating "success" within the community. The three sections in this chapter are arranged to provide a portrait of these individual voices as community members who influenced and applied the definitions of "successful" writing that existed in this classroom.

The Voices Introduced

Within the basic writing classroom community that I studied, there were seventeen individuals who interacted within situations of teaching and learning, conferencing and negotiating, writing and revising. The following discussion will provide an introduction to these individuals, who functioned in the roles of instructor, tutor, and student.

The instructor in this basic writing classroom community was a Caucasian female in her late forties who chose the name Jan Fox for the purposes of this study. Jan had earned her doctorate in Education in the early 1980's. She had eleven years' teaching experience at the university level, and she was in her ninth year of teaching in this particular university's basic writing program. Jan was a veteran at teaching the particular syllabus she used in this class; she explained to me that each time she taught the series of growth and change in adolescence essays, she fine-tuned her focus and modified her approach and emphases to be responsive to the needs of the students in her class.

Jan often teased her students that her introductory level class was like "boot camp." It was here that they received their first taste of the kinds of reading and writing they would be required to do at the university -- here that they became responsible for reading a syllabus, wrestling with making the
assignments their own, and handing in those assignments on time. The following conversation from an exit interview I conducted with some of the students in the class gives a perspective of Jan and the class, from a grouping of student voices:

Raycha: “Jan is a very good instructor. She is a very good instructor.”
Craig: “She acts like she cares.”
Raycha: “But she’s not acting, she does care. She’s not asking like anything you can’t do.”
Raycha: “She knows we can do it. She just kind of pushes it out of us. That’s what it is.”
Cheryl: “She’s there prodding you?”
Raycha: “She gets that lazy point in you. And you can’t be lazy in that class!”
Roger: “I feel sorry for the ones who have her next year!”
Craig: “Jan is a good teacher. Like, she did get a lot out of everybody.”
Cheryl: “So do all you guys have a lazy point you need pushed past?”
Roger: “See, you can’t push the first quarter, because you don’t know everyone’s ability. See, Jan had us write and do work for her so she was capable to understand what problems we’re having. But everyone may not have the same problems we were having. So she can’t do that the first quarter. First, you have to get to know the students. Then when they take the second quarter, push them to strive for the best.”
Craig: “Yea, the push came in the second quarter.”
Raycha: “You think the push came in the second quarter? I think it came in the first quarter.”
Craig: “In the first quarter, she had us doing a lot of work.”
Raycha: “Yea, she poured it on.”
Craig: “I think she was getting to know us.”
Raycha: “She really got to know us after all those pages we wrote!” (3/92)

Jan made herself available to answer her students’ questions after class and during office hours, but she did not coddle them by over-explaining assignments or indulging them when they whined that the workload was heavy. However, the hard work these students did for the class did not go unnoticed. Jan consistently praised them for “putting the pedal to the metal” and working hard on their assigned essays. Every time she collected final drafts, she walked
around to each student and praised some aspect of the essay -- its cover, its typing, its length, its illustrations -- something to encourage the student. Jan's attitude was perceived by the students in ways such as the following:

The teacher, she's not nonchalant about anything. I think the students can tell that she is really excited about our work, and about helping us to become good writers. And the students see that. (William, 12/91)

As she gave her students opportunities to read, write, and respond, Jan included a variety of hands-on activities and opportunities for peer interaction in the class:

You never knew what to expect from Jan. Never. But I liked the way she went about having us do the work. I liked the way she did it. I mean, everything was routine in my other English classes in high school. This was like, well, we did weird stuff. A lot of different stuff. But it really has helped me. (Todd, 3/92)

In addition to providing two or three peer editing days in class for each of the five major essays the students in this class composed during the two quarter sequence, Jan required all her students to sign up for an appointment to conference with either her or the tutor to discuss each essay.

The tutor who had been assigned to work with the students in this writing class was an African-American doctoral student who was working with an appointment of a graduate teaching associate. Philip King, as he chose to be called, was gathering data for his dissertation on formal and informal language use from some of the students he tutored. In the details of Jan's class that Philip discussed with me in our informal chats, he consistently voiced a submission to Jan's way of doing things. Philip was conscientious about guiding students' written assignments in the way he perceived Jan wanted their writing to go. He described his role in the class as follows:
Sometimes I'm asked to participate more, and other times I'm not even asked, so I don't take liberty ... I'll take a group, and she'll take a group, and I'll respond. And I think she expects me to pretty much be held accountable for how they're directed and guided in their responses to their papers, and in the things they do with their papers upon receiving responses. But, in terms of discussions, I don't feel that I have the liberty. I may have it, but I just never have assumed it ... I pretty much see myself as the one who is responsible for responding to their writing in some way or another. Another voice to sort of give feedback or response to whatever they've written. (2/92)

Philip was one of many voices in this classroom community, one who may be described as having some responsibility for guiding students' written products toward "success" without assuming the accompanying authority to make any substantial contributions to those definitions of "success."

In addition to the instructor and the tutor, there were fifteen freshmen in the basic writing classroom community that I studied. Four were African-American females, who chose the names of Bridget, Jasmine, Raycha, and Renay for the purposes of this study. Five were Caucasian males, who chose to be called Bob, Jack, John, Ralph, and Sam. Six were African-American males, who named themselves Craig, Leroy, Roger, Todd, Wayne, and William. All of these students had signed up for a two-quarter support section of Freshman English, which indicated that they (usually in tandem with their parents) were committed to working hard and succeeding at the university level.

From among this group of fifteen students I chose five "key informants" (Berreman, 1968; Wax, 1971) to case study. These five African-American students, whom I contacted privately outside of class to make my request of them, consented to share their academic writings and their thoughts about those writings with me throughout both quarters of the two course basic writing sequence. In the narrative section of Chapter III, I briefly described how I chose
these five students, from among the other members of the class, as showing potential of being “successful” academic writers, based on classroom observations, questionnaires, interviews, written assignments, and peer and teacher input. I explained how my choice of these students was a judgment sample of those African-American students who appeared to be most representative of “successful” freshman writers, and who committed themselves to talk with me regularly, in detail, about their writing and their thoughts about themselves as writers and members of their writing class.

Another factor that contributed to my choice was these students’ self perceptions. When I compiled data from Questionnaire #2 (see Appendix B) for all the students in the class, I noted that these students’ responses to the questions of “Do you like to write?” and “Are you currently able to produce academic writing you would call ‘successful’?” fell into interesting patterns, which are displayed in Figure 1. The information in Figure 1 falls into four divisions that represent four possible combinations of attitudes towards writing and perceptions of self as a writer. I had planned to choose at least one case study student from each of these four divisions; however, no African-American students placed themselves within the division of “likes to write, does not perceive self as successful writer.” This suggests that for these particular students, their perception of an “unsuccessful” writer was someone who also had a negative attitude towards writing in general. One case study student, Craig, fit this description; he did not like to write and did not perceive himself as a “successful” academic writer, even though his written work and the opinions of peers and the instructor indicated otherwise as the course sequence progressed. Along these lines, it is interesting to note that four of the five students I chose to case study perceived themselves as “successful” academic
writers, regardless of whether or not they liked to write.

In Figure 1, I have placed the pseudonyms of all fifteen students in this classroom community in the appropriate division that corresponds with their attitudes towards writing and perceptions of themselves as writers. The pseudonyms of the five African-American case study students I chose appear in three of the four divisions; they are in boldface type, listed first within each appropriate division that corresponds with their self perceptions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ATTITUDES TOWARDS WRITING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIKES TO WRITE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAYCHA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WILLIAM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEROY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JASMINE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOHN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOES NOT LIKE TO WRITE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RENAY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TODD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERCEIVES SELF AS SUCCESSFUL WRITER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RAYCHA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WILLIAM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEROY</td>
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<td>JASMINE</td>
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<td>JOHN</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DOES NOT PERCEIVE SELF AS SUCCESSFUL WRITER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CRAIG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RALPH</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| ROGER                                       |
| WAYNE                                       |
| BRIDGET                                    |
| JACK                                        |
| SAM                                         |

Figure 1

Class Composite of Students’ Attitudes Towards Writing and Perceptions of Self as Writer
It is interesting to note that at the end of the two-quarter writing sequence, the five case study students responded to interview questions about attitudes and perceptions within the same categories they did at the beginning; none of these case study students’ perceptions of themselves as “successful” writers at the end appeared to be altered from their initial perceptions. Raycha and William continued to like their writing, and their experiences in the class reinforced their initial attitudes and perceptions. Renay and Todd still claimed they did not like to write, even though they perceived their writing as “successful.” Craig, as I have mentioned, was not influenced by either his grades or his experiences, as if six months’ time in a university writing class was not sufficient to alter the perceptions he had brought with him from twelve previous years of schooling.

Another perspective of these five case study students can be gained by looking at their ACT verbal scores as a dimension of standardized measurement that was applied and used to predict “success” in university level academic performance. The following table contains a composite picture of these five students’ ACT scores on the verbal component and their final course grades for both courses in the two-course university basic writing sequence.
Table 1
Composite of ACT Verbal Scores and Final Freshman English Course Grades for Case Study Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>ACT Verbal Score</th>
<th>Final Course Grade</th>
<th>Fall 1991</th>
<th>Winter 1992</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raycha</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td></td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Todd</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renay</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craig</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Maximum possible ACT verbal score = 36.

It is telling to examine these students' ACT scores, juxtaposed with their final course grades. Raycha, who scored the lowest on the ACT verbal portion, received the highest course grades among the five case study students (and the highest grades in the class) for both quarters. William, another one whose ACT verbal scores were on the low end, received the second highest course grades among the case study students (and in the class). Todd's course grades do not reflect his "success" (or lack thereof) in writing as much as they reflect his refusal to do much of the assigned reading and complete his reading journals. Renay and Craig both performed steady "B" work the first quarter and added a "plus" to that grade the second quarter. Craig, who claimed he was not a "successful" writer, scored better than any of the other case study students on the ACT verbal portion and received course grades that were comparable to all
other students except Raycha. These students’ final course grades reflect the instructor’s judgment that the academic writing they completed for this particular basic writing class was above average ("B" range) or excellent ("A" range).

Having examined the five case study students’ perceptions of themselves and their writing, along with the predictors the university used for their “success” and their final course grades, I will now introduce each case study participant individually. I will make all references to these five students by the pseudonyms they chose: the females are Raycha and Renay, and the males are William, Todd, and Craig. My discussion will include demographic and anecdotal information that will give the reader an idea of how these particular African-American freshman writers fared in their introductory level university writing course.

The Case Study Students: Individual Introductions

Raycha

Raycha was a nineteen-year old African-American female who came to this midwestern university from the suburb of a large eastern city. Her intended major was engineering. In high school, she had attended a science and math magnet school that was administered by a local university program. Raycha recalled that there were approximately six hundred students in her graduating class; she said most came from college educated families like her own. Both of her parents, as well as her stepmother, had university degrees.

Raycha said that her English classes her senior year were advanced placement classes. She added, however, that since most of the students “were
into basically physics and stuff like that" that they "weren't really into the English, they didn't really like it that much" (3/92). She admitted that she liked her British Literature class her senior year; she also admitted that her "downfall" in writing was her punctuation, something her English teacher mother was always "on her case about." Raycha's test score on the verbal portion of the ACT was 10. This score, along with a diagnostic essay she wrote during the university's summer freshman orientation program, placed her into a required two-quarter basic writing sequence. Even though Raycha felt her academic writing was "successful" for her own purposes, she acknowledged that "it must be unsuccessful to their standards. If it was successful, I wouldn't be in the lowest English class at [university name]" (9/91). These words reflected her feeling that she had been judged by university standards, and had been found wanting. She resolved to work hard to succeed in her basic writing class, a resolve she followed through.

Where she began class with a guarded caution towards the instructor and the class in general, Raycha soon gained favor as one of the instructor's favorites. As the quarter progressed, her remarks often garnered more of Jan's attention and verbal feedback in class. Likewise, Jan's written dialogue with Raycha on her essays was often more extensive and personalized than the dialogue she included on other students' essays. (Let the reader understand the extent of Jan's comments for Raycha by knowing that Jan commented extensively on all students' drafts of their essays.) Jan was clearly pleased with Raycha's hard work, with her dedication to improvement.

Only the males who were on the upper end of the social strata in the class dared to sit next to Raycha. She was the queen. Self-confident and poised, she declared one day before class that she preferred to date men who
took the trouble to have their nails professionally manicured. William appeared to be her favorite at the beginning of the fall quarter class, and he sat with her each day for about two weeks and signed up with her for initial interviews with me. But William's place at Raycha's side was soon assumed by Roger, who retained her favor for the remainder of the course sequence. When I asked Roger one day why he preferred to peer edit with Raycha, he told me the following:

I choose Raycha to work with because I know she's going to tell me how my paper is. She's not going to sit there and try to make me feel, 'Oh, Roger, your paper is good.' And she will break it down, 'Roger, what's going on? You're not doing the job!' I mean, she will get on me about it. I want someone who will get on me about the paper, who will tell me where I'm wrong, not someone who is going to tell me I'm doing a good job when in reality I'm not. So that's why I always choose her.

(3/92)

The writing that Raycha shared with the class consistently received positive feedback and constructive criticism from those students who were not intimidated by her abilities and would speak out to comment or challenge her. I did not observe that any of the other three females in the class ever paired up with her to peer edit, or even to "girl talk."

Even though the females in the class kept a social distance from Raycha, they respected the responses to their writing that she gave in class. Because of her pointed questioning of her peers' drafts and her ability to listen for key ideas as they read them aloud for the class, Raycha was sought after as a peer editor. Early in the first term, the students in one of her editing groups teased her for being "Miss Red Pen" because they noticed the way she marked up her own texts for revision; Raycha often dialogued with herself in the many notations she made to herself in the margins of her paper, which were often accompanied by drawings of some sort. These students associated her practice of using a red
pen with their prior experiences of teacher's grading practices in high school. Overall, Raycha was honest and thorough in the feedback she gave her peers; her security in herself enabled her to speak her mind freely.

In the essays she wrote in class, Raycha also spoke her mind freely, revealing in detail those instances she chose to share with the other members of the classroom community. Her third essay, comparing her bedroom at home to the Bermuda Triangle, was celebratory in its revelation of her status as her mother's "junkiest child." In this essay, Raycha took charge to explore and make meaning in her writing; her "voice" came through as one of delight as she analyzed her favored status as her mother's youngest, in spite of (or perhaps even because of) her shortcomings. In her autobiography, Raycha sorted through her personal feelings about her father's divorce and revealed her attitude towards her "bitch" of a stepmother who stole her father's affections. She plunged in draft after draft, for a total of nine drafts, immersing herself in a quest to come to terms with the "turmoil" she had felt in the relationships within her family for the past five years. Her final product was over five thousand words; within those words were some fresh, brilliant, gut-wrenchingly honest descriptions and images she created as she came face to face with what she termed her "horrible" attitude about her father's divorce and remarriage.

Raycha's final essay for the course, which couched her personal theory of growth and change in adolescence within the metaphor of a flashlight, climaxed with key questions that summarized the significance of her thoughts and looked ahead to related issues. Jan had the following to say about Raycha's chosen way of proceeding through her final essay:

She just keeps asking questions and attempting to answer them throughout. And that's the way she proceeds, that's the way she develops her thinking. She is obviously writing to discover. She is on the track of something and she is so restlessly trying to find answers.
She is really using writing heuristically. (3/32)

Raycha chose to engage herself fully in the task of writing her final essay and explore herself in the context of how adolescents grow and change. Her final written product contained her voice of confidence in her ideas, a voice that was not present in her writing at the beginning of the two quarter class sequence. By the end of the second term, the guard she had come in with towards other members of the classroom community appeared to be diminished.

Craig

Craig, a nineteen year old African-American male, came from a suburban midwestern city that was in the same state as the university he attended. He had been a football star at his suburban high school; he recalled that there were approximately three hundred and fifty students in his graduating class. Craig lived in a single parent home. Neither of his parents had attended college; besides an older sister who attended a technical college in their hometown, Craig was the first in his family to leave home and attend college. He mentioned that one of his greatest motivations to succeed in college was his mother’s expectations for a good return on her hard-earned money. Craig had plans to become an engineer; he had a reputation among the members of his basic writing class as being a math whiz.

Craig said he took all college preparatory classes throughout his high school career, and he took advanced placement English during his senior year. Craig’s test score on the verbal portion of the ACT was 17. This score was borderline for placement in the two-quarter basic writing sequence; however, the diagnostic essay Craig wrote during the university’s summer freshman orientation program indicated to the assessment staff that he needed the two-
course sequence. Craig's placement was acceptable to him, for reasons he gave in the following words:

I thought I needed the class. I knew I couldn't write and stuff. I've never liked English. So I really had no problem with it [the placement]. Some people I talked to, they were wondering, they were worried about being set behind two quarters and stuff, they'd have to make them up. But I wanted to take the class because I wanted to learn how to write. I never learned in high school. (3/92)

Craig expressed a feeling of comfort with the other students in his university basic writing class because he perceived them as friends who worked side by side with him. This feeling of community in the university English classroom was unlike his high school English classes, in which he had felt awkward among strangers whom he perceived looked down on him. Craig felt he was a "weak" writer who needed a great deal of help; he came into his college basic writing class determined to work much harder than he had worked in high school English classes. His determination remained consistent, leading Jan to describe him as a "steady" student who accepted challenges and worked hard.

Craig was confident in his social status in the class. His easy-going manner and his shy grin won him friends easily. He could sit anywhere he wanted in the classroom and strike up a conversation with anyone. At times when he arrived early for class, Craig would relax with the sports page of the school newspaper. He could jump in any conversation from behind those pages and not miss a beat.

Craig could raise issues of a controversial nature or share stories about experiences that the average student had not yet had. In character with this "man of the world" image he cultivated, he also brought into the classroom his reputation as a ladies' man, a reputation he relished. Craig titled his third essay "Pimpin' Ain't Easy," an essay that contained a philosophy handed down to him
from his father and his uncle that proclaimed, "it's a poor rat that only has one hole to run into." When Craig read this line in class one editing day, it became the focus of controversy in a heated discussion of sexism and double standards. Some students were offended by Craig's stories about his sexual escapades; some openly admired him. Todd was appalled at Craig's apparent lack of morals, putting him in the category of "rotten bananas" when he wrote his final theory of adolescence essay. Raycha and William kept a polite distance from Craig throughout the first quarter; however, it did appear that these two "warmed up" to him during the latter half of the second quarter, perhaps because of their common interest in an engineering major.

Craig peer edited with many combinations of students, never sticking with the same group. When I asked him why he edited with many different people, he told me that "I just worked with a lot of different people, because when Jan told us at the beginning to, I would just go somewhere else. It don't really matter to me, like, they just give you a little insight, and that just helps you. It doesn't matter who I work with. I'm used to working with everybody" (3/92). Craig appeared comfortable with almost anyone in the class, even Bridget and Renay, who kept to themselves most of the time. At times, he even joined the editing group of predominantly white males that included John, whom Jan identified as the strongest writer in the class. The group John usually worked with included serious workers and serious students. Craig always came to class with his readings and assignments completed. He fit in with the serious workers in the class: like the males he often worked with, his experience with team sports had instilled in him a work ethic about getting the job done when group work was assigned.
As a peer editor, Craig earned the nickname “Mr. Fine Tooth Comb” from some of the members of his editing group. He showed skill in picking out gaps in logic or confusion in organization; his spelling and mechanics, however, were poor. Craig listened carefully as his peers read their essays aloud in class. He had an ear for wording and diction that enabled him to tell if something sounded awkward or not quite right. Craig was consistent in offering feedback to anyone in class who read their essays aloud, and he freely shared his comments and suggestions with anyone who asked for his advice.

When it came to his own writing, however, Craig was not confident. He did not perceive himself as a good writer, either at the beginning or the end of the two course sequence. His initial focus in talking with me about his essays was on mechanical and surface error, a focus he brought with him from high school:

In eleventh grade English, we had to write every week. And I always got a four. It was like the scale was 2/4/6/8/10. We had three chances to get it right, to hand it back in and get another grade. The highest I ever got was a six. He would tell us what to do, but still I always...most of the time it would just be grammar and spelling that he'd put on the end why I got a six. That's why I always hated writing, because I just knew I was going to get marked off for that kind of stuff. And I knew that I didn't really know the correct way. (11/91)

From such experiences in past English courses, Craig felt that he had problems in his writing that he could not overcome; in addition, he felt that his essays were never long enough to suit the teacher. He spent a good deal of energy in his interviews with me both quarters reinforcing this image of himself as a writer that he had brought with him from high school, even though there was evidence in his written work that spoke to the contrary:
Cheryl: “When you got your paper back from Jan, what was the first thing that went through your mind?”
Craig: “There wasn’t a lot that went through my mind. I basically looked at the grade.”
Cheryl: “O.K. That’s normal. What did you think?”
Craig: “I thought it was pretty good. I didn’t think I was going to do that great.”
Cheryl: “You didn’t?”
Craig: “No.”
Cheryl: “How come?”
Craig: “I don’t know, I just... I always either get “B-” or “C+”, so I thought that’s what I’d get.”
Cheryl: “So you thought this paper was of the same caliber as the others?”
Craig: “Yea.”
Cheryl: “You didn’t see anything better, or different, or more...”
Craig: “No.”
Cheryl: “So where do you go from here? Now that you’ve achieved an “A” paper? Does that make you feel any different about the next one?”
Craig: “No.”
Cheryl: “It changes nothing?”
Craig: “Nope.”

Even though Craig received a “C+” and two “B’s” on his essays the first quarter, and an “A-” on his autobiography and a “B” on his theory of adolescence the second quarter, he still did not perceive himself as a “successful” writer at the end of the two-course basic writing sequence. He told me that “my writing is the same now as it was in the beginning. I still don’t like it. If I was a master writer, I still wouldn’t like to write” (3/92). When I asked him about his “A-” on his autobiography, he claimed he did not know why Jan gave him that grade, as if grades were something teachers gave for unknown reasons instead of something students could earn fairly consistently by fulfilling certain expectations of purpose and audience in their writing. Craig’s attitude assumed that “A’s” were for other writers, but not for him.
William

William, a nineteen year old African-American male, was a product of an urban school system in a midwestern state. Like Craig, he had also been a high school athlete, starring on his school’s baseball team. He recalled that there were eight hundred students in his high school, and two hundred students in his graduating class. William’s parents were both college educated. His father was a social worker whom William admired greatly. William’s goal was to earn a master’s degree in engineering. His interest in an advanced degree was influenced by his father’s example that a bachelor’s degree alone brought long hours of work and little pay.

William’s test score on the verbal portion of the ACT was 13. This score, along with a diagnostic essay he wrote during the university’s summer freshman orientation program, placed him into a required two-quarter basic writing sequence. William’s idea of “success” in college writing was very pragmatic: success came “when you support your main idea” in a piece of writing, and failure came “when you could not” (9/91). He single-mindedly pursued this concept of “successful” writing as something he needed to learn to do, consistently, in order to earn good grades.

In class, William was reserved and well-mannered. Socially, he related appropriately to the other members of the classroom community. He usually arrived at class just as the bell rang; therefore, he did not get to know other students in the daily rapid-fire exchange of pre-class chatter. He appeared to be the kind of man who would be a loyal friend, one who could be trusted. William had a good sense of humor -- he could make jokes at his own expense and laugh at himself. His self image was healthy. By the kinds of stories William shared in his essays, he was clearly a wanted and loved child who lived with
two parents who took the time and energy to teach him about his culture and instill in him the values they believed he should have. His work ethic was apparent in his performance in this writing class; he worked hard to live up to his parents’ expectations.

In his writing, William chose to keep many of his personal experiences and feelings about those experiences private. He was guided by a very clear inner sense of what should be talked about in public and what should not. William chose to write his essays on topics such as sports, cars, role models, and his father’s influence on his life. One could hear his father’s voice in his essays, reminding William to keep faith with his family even though he was away from home, to be proud of his culture and become a credit to his people.

William appeared comfortable being around anyone in the class, but he usually chose to work with other African-American students in peer editing groups. In peer editing situations Raycha was William’s first choice to work with; however, after she worked with him for the first few weeks of Fall Quarter, she did not continue to work with him regularly. In class, William was a careful, logical thinker and a thoughtful responder. He gave feedback to his peers when asked; however, he was usually not the first to offer comments in a group, and he perceived his editing abilities as weak.

William engaged the most in his writing for this class when he wrote the final essay, his theory of growth and change in adolescence. Jan interpreted his interest in this essay as his connecting with a more “academic” task after being asked to do a great deal of personal writing. Originally, William planned to explain his theory within the vehicle of a coaches and players metaphor that contained a “twist.” However, when he read his first draft in class, he was unable to explain the uniqueness of his metaphor in a manner that Jan could
understand. After being frustrated by her extensive questioning and apparent lack of understanding, he abandoned his coaches and players metaphor. What followed for William in writing his theory paper was a series of abandoned metaphors, until he settled upon talking about role models for adolescents as “child-pickers” who must teach adolescents how to choose wisely between polar opposites such as “candy and vegetables” or “ripe and rotten fruit.” However, these food metaphors never quite worked for him the way he wanted them to. He struggled with the categories of comparison he was using in his theory paper, because they were not the categories of his first choosing. In this struggle, William experienced the tension between writing to please himself and writing to please Jan. He resolved the conflict by settling for a fruit metaphor that he hoped would satisfy her even though it did not satisfy him: “I wish Jan would have understood the first metaphor that I used. But since she didn’t, I changed my metaphor” (3/92).

In all, William revised his theory of adolescence essay six times. He was not afraid to go back into the text time and again to make major shifts in the ideas and examples he used as he changed from metaphor to metaphor. During the last two days before the essay was due, William was still revising. He even shifted a large chunk of text from the beginning to the end, in order to make a particular point more clearly. William shared with me that he slept twenty minutes the night before he turned in his final draft of this essay, because he was still not satisfied with his metaphor or his examples. He tenaciously worked on that essay until it was arranged the way he wanted it to be arranged, until it said what he wanted it to say, within the limitations he felt were attached to the task.
In discussing the successes of William’s final essay, Jan remarked that “William did a good job of analyzing the cases in the classbook, to find what he wanted. He was able to break the narrative, he was able to go in and find the material he needed and he left the rest behind” (3/92). In class, Jan referred to such practice as making a “surgical strike” on a text and taking out just what was needed to support a particular point in an essay. Jan perceived William as being in control of this final essay he submitted, in which she heard his voice come through loud and clear:

William clearly was the author of that paper. The paper wasn’t writing itself. William was directing the way that paper was going. He also, importantly, was able to keep in his head his purpose, all the way through from the first line. It wasn’t a picaresque; it didn’t go from one thing to the next. He kept in mind what it was he wanted to talk about. (3/92)

In Jan’s estimation, William’s final essay was “a fairly sophisticated piece of writing,” especially coming from a student who “didn’t start out that strong last quarter” (3/92).

**Todd**

Todd, an African-American male, came to the university from a suburb of a large city that was in the same midwestern state as the university. His high school served about two thousand students. At eighteen years old, Todd was the first in his family to attend college. As the youngest of three brothers, Todd said he could not remember a time when he did not want to go to college. His parents, especially his mother to whom he was particularly close, supported his decision to work toward a degree in psychology.

Todd’s high school background contained college preparatory English courses. Todd felt that he knew how to write successfully for those English courses, even though he didn’t like much of the writing he was required to do.
On the ACT test, Todd received a score of 13 on the verbal portion. This score, along with a diagnostic essay he wrote during the university’s summer freshman orientation program, placed him into a required two-quarter basic writing sequence. Todd’s thoughts about being placed into a basic writing class reflected a ‘wait and see’ attitude. He admitted that “I don’t do much writing unless I have to, and I haven’t really fully understood the correct form” (9/91).

“Success” in academic writing, to Todd, meant “doing a good job on my writing” (9/91), something he felt he could not do if he did not know what was expected of him.

Todd was painfully shy and unsure of himself socially. He usually walked into class just as the bell was ringing, giving him little time to interact with the other students in the class. If he did arrive early, he would sit and listen to the other students’ conversations. Todd did not initiate conversation with other students; rather, he sat and kept his own counsel. In class, he always responded when Jan called on him, but his answers were brief and sometimes vague. There were several Monday mornings during Fall Quarter where I overheard other African-American males in the class, especially Roger, ask him where he was over the weekend, why he was not with them at their parties; then there was the Monday morning at the end of the quarter when these same males were giving Todd high fives as he relayed a tale of his first hangover.

That morning was somewhat of a social breakthrough for Todd, as it was the first time he was thrust into the center of attention during the morning “chatter” that preceded each class session.

Todd was usually the last one to find a partner or join an editing group on peer editing day. There was not a particular group or partner he worked with; he joined whomever he was near, or whomever invited him. At times he worked
with Sam, a shy Caucasian male; these two appeared to work comfortably together. At other times, he could become invisible by joining the more boisterous editing group usually comprised of Bob, Leroy, and Wayne, who were the class clowns. During the latter part of the Winter Quarter, Todd worked with Renay and Bridget consistently throughout the final essay. I observed him to be somewhat more relaxed with these two females than he was at any time with males. Bridget told me she valued Todd’s feedback on her essay; I do not know whether or not she ever told him that she did.

As I mentioned earlier in my description of Craig, Todd displayed strong likes and dislikes toward certain people in the class. In discussing Todd’s final theory of adolescence essay, which he had titled “The Theory That Went Bananas,” Jan observed that

Todd never made any bones about his negative feelings about some of the people in the class. He was always rather expressive about not getting along with some people, and getting along with some people. And it kind of came out in his theory of adolescence, in contrast to Renay, who saw the theory paper as an opportunity to make amends. Todd came right out with his bananas theory, which was humorous, and ridiculed the people in the class, in some way (3/92).

Todd’s voice in this final essay reflected a mixture of humor and introspection. As such, it reflected an honest attempt to place himself within the social “pecking order” of the class. Jan was pleased with this revelation of voice in Todd’s writing:

There’s a lot that’s coming out about how he feels. And that wasn’t true at the very beginning of the course. His feelings were absent. Even if he intends to dump on his classmates, there’s feelings that he’s allowing to come out. And that’s O.K. with him (3/92).

Jan observed that the way Todd “carried over some of the underlying feelings about himself” and worked it into his theory was intriguing, because he placed
himself in the category of “rotten” bananas along with Craig, whom he despised (3/92).

Todd’s first three essays dealt specifically with issues of social interaction, especially interaction with former girlfriends. In these essays, he revealed the problems he experienced talking with girls and keeping girlfriends. He shared how heavily he relied on his mother’s advice to coach him through awkward situations. In his writings, Todd portrayed himself as the kind of friend who was too kind to say no to people who took advantage of him. The way he described himself led me to believe that who he was, in his own estimation, was still being formed. Yet when it came to what he wanted out of life, Todd appeared to be more secure. He told me that he and a friend of his had planned to attend college, ever since they were in Junior High School. He spoke with me about the many jobs he had held in order to finance his education. The psychology degree he was earning was important to him.

In his writing, Todd loved to draft and revise. He told me that being able to write different drafts was his favorite part about academic writing. Rather than merely adding on to the end of a previous draft to make it longer, Todd also revised by doing a great deal of substituting new stories or ideas for old ones, or discarding details that he judged didn’t fit and adding new ones. (When Jan and I coded the case study students’ revisions between drafts, Todd’s revisions were the most complex to code, because they were difficult to place into any one category.) Even though by the end of the second course of the sequence Todd knew his academic writing was “successful” according to the standards of the class, he still claimed he did not like to write.
Renay

Renay, an eighteen year old African-American female, was a commuter student from a single parent household. She had graduated in a class of two hundred students from an urban high school, located in the same midwestern city that housed the university she attended. Renay was the middle child of three sisters; her other two sisters each had babies, and Renay shared the daily responsibility of looking after her nieces. Renay said she was the first in her family to attend a four year college. Her mother had attended a two-year technical college. Renay worked with a quiet determination toward completing her assignments for her writing class; her goal was to become a doctor, which she said meant an additional eight to twelve years of schooling beyond her bachelor’s degree.

Renay had mentioned that she took college preparatory English courses in high school, but her grades were not very good. Her test score on the verbal portion of the ACT was 14. This score, along with a diagnostic essay she wrote during the university’s summer freshman orientation program, placed her into a required two-quarter basic writing sequence at the university. She did not choose to share with me her thoughts about being in a basic writing class in college. Throughout the two-course sequence, I observed Renay to set her mind to do what she perceived was required of her.

During the first days of Fall Quarter, Renay kept to herself and kept others in her basic writing classroom at arm’s distance. Her body language was closed and guarded, as if she were signaling that she neither wanted to be in this class nor cared to trust the other people who were there. Other students appeared to pick up on her attitude. When asked to write about their initial experiences with peer editing groups, Jasmine sniped at Renay in her journal
with a comment about "nasty, fat girls who act mean" towards others in the class (10/91). But Renay did not remain a total outsider. At the end of the second quarter of class, Jan speculated about Renay's social position in the class:

She's reticent to speak at some points, always has been. Renay obviously had some problems relating to people in the class. I guess it's my feeling that she doesn't want to speak out or get too involved for fear of some ridicule. Anyway, there's that tension between Renay and the rest of the class, except for Bridget (3/92).

By the end of the Fall Quarter, Renay had forged a friendship with Bridget that helped her relate more to others in the class. Renay found a way in to the community through Bridget's contacts, by entering into Bridget's conversations with other classroom community members.

Renay had a great deal of peer editing experience in her high school, which included writing workshop as part of the English curriculum. Since she had come to college familiar with the protocol of reading essays aloud and giving oral feedback, Renay was able to attend to whatever task Jan set for the day's editing session. Once she established a working relationship with Bridget, she entered into editing groups more readily. Renay and Bridget became an inseparable editing group during the second course of the sequence, usually preferring to work by themselves unless Jan specified group size. However, by the end of the Winter Quarter they had "adopted" Todd into their editing group and their pre-class chatter as a couple of mother hens would adopt an orphan chick. As Bridget gave Todd a daily update on the progress of her theory of adolescence essay, Renay was actively involved in the conversation. It was during these last few days of class that Renay incorporated some of the stories of her classmates she had read in the course classbook "Coming to Terms With Internal Exposure" into her theory of adolescence essay,
using the collective "we" as she described herself and her peers as a "garden of flowers" who needed the right kind of "water" to mature and grow into adults. It was a transformation for Renay to move from her "me vs. them" attitude of the first days to her perception of "we" in the final days of class.

Renay was conscientious about doing her work and coming to class. However, sometimes she refused to answer Jan's questions or share her writing when she was called on, even though she usually completed the assignments. I observed her at times sharing a response with Bridget privately, after Jan had moved on to call on someone else in the class. Renay came to enjoy playing games with me toward the end of Fall Quarter, initially declining my requests for interviews only to break out in a sly grin and agree a moment later to a meeting time. She wanted relationships on her terms, indicating that it was difficult for her to trust by giving others any control.

Renay blended metaphor and humor skillfully in her writing. Her third essay contained a description of an indiscreet cousin who "had a mouth like an open refrigerator, it never stopped running." For her fifth essay, she attempted to combine humor with her theory of growth and change in adolescence by using a metaphor of "toilet paper" to portray the struggles of adolescents. Renay struggled to make this metaphor work for her, rearranging her sentences several times and color coding material that fell into two major themes to give her a sense of the direction her writing was heading. When she found she could not extend this metaphor through the experiences of her peers that she had chosen to include in her essay, she ended up discarding the three drafts she had begun with this original metaphor. Retaining her examples from her peers' experiences that she had chosen to talk about, Renay altered the frame of her essay to a metaphor that portrayed adolescent growth as a garden of
flowers. In doing so, she performed some sophisticated revisions in the last three days before the essay was due. Jan praised this final essay as Renay’s finest effort, emphasizing that “Renay clearly, clearly worked very hard at this theory paper” (3/92).

The Voices in Community

In the previous section, I have highlighted the voices of five individual members of the particular basic writing classroom community that I studied. In this final section, we will hear these voices speak, from within the context of interview and classroom situations, about the processes they associated with “success” in academic writing. The particular way I have chosen to present data in this section is inspired by the work of John Van Maanen (1988), who has stressed the importance of presenting “the culture member’s point of view,” and Merry Merryfield (1992), who has outlined a method of compiling “scenes” to display findings in case study reporting. I will show interaction among the members of the classroom community by sharing selected stories and quotes about the attitudes that members of this community deemed important to foster “successful” academic writing, the knowledge they believed students needed to have, and the practices they believed students needed to partake of that promised to contribute to the overall “success” of a piece of their academic writing.

The following pages are filled with illustrations of these kinds of attitudes, knowledge, and practices that the members of this classroom community believed were important to “successful” academic writing. If all the voices that are represented in these illustrations could come together to utter a single
statement about “successful” academic writing, it would sound as follows:
Success in academic writing is found in an attitude, based on knowledge
gained through experience, that comes forth in certain practices. Such a broad
statement may be broken down into specific assertions that highlight the
attitudes, knowledge, and practices concerning “success” that were valued
within this particular classroom community.

Success is related to confidence.

At the beginning of the two-quarter basic writing sequence, lack of
confidence in their academic writing was a concern expressed by several of the
students. Confidence appeared to be a two way street connected with grades.
Students felt that if they were not confident in their writing to begin with, they
would not get good grades; alternately, if they did not get good grades, they
could not feel confident:

William: “That first grade, it’s like the pace. Like if you get an “F” on your
first paper, that might bring you down. You can rebound from that,
but it will be hard. It depends on how strong you are, mentally.
Now, if you get an “A” you’d be high and you’d think ‘I can do the
work in here’ and you’d have confidence.”
Craig: “I don’t really feel confident about my writing. I guess if I get good
grades on my writing in this class, it would be more like a
confidence booster. I wouldn’t be that afraid of writing.” (10/91)

Toward the end of the two-quarter sequence, students were openly connecting
confidence with their images of themselves as writers and their abilities to do
what was required in university level academic writing. Comments they shared
with me about their increased confidence included the following:

Cheryl: “How do you think you’re going to do in the next writing course
you take?”
William: “Pretty good. I have more confidence in my writing now.
Confidence is believing in yourself that you can do the work.”
Raycha: “I’m more confident now in what I put down: the details, the spelling, the form. I think I’m a better writer now. I feel strong about my writing -- I will continue to strive for success.” (3/92)

Success comes from trusting your readers enough to let your feelings flow.

At the beginning of the two-quarter sequence, Raycha talked about her struggle with permitting herself to put her feelings on paper:

Cheryl: “So you’re working on letting the reader know your feelings about these things?”
Raycha: “Yea.. the feelings I had, and the feelings that I perceived my friends had.”
Cheryl: “How are you doing that? You said earlier that you didn’t write feeling as much as you’d like to in your papers.”
Raycha: “I’m not used to it. I’m getting better at it, but I still haven’t come to grips with it, that I have the ability to write how I feel in a paper.”
Cheryl: “Do you mean you don’t have the ability, or ...”
Raycha: “Like I’m hesitant to do it.”
Cheryl: “Have you pinpointed where that hesitancy comes from?”
Raycha: “Four years in high school.” (11/91)

Like many of the other students in this classroom, most notably Jack, Raycha had come from a high school experience that did not encourage her to express her feelings and opinions in the writing she completed for her class work.

Toward the end of the two-quarter university writing sequence, Raycha reported the following change in her perceptions of herself and her writing: “I just feel like I can compose better now. My thoughts and feelings flow.” (2/92)

Success entails knowing how much to disclose yourself in your writing.

Students linked writing about their feelings with trust, expressing concerns about how much to disclose to Jan and their peers in their essays. At the beginning of the two quarter sequence, their concerns were similar to the following ones voiced by Todd:
On the essay we wrote in class, there’s a lot more now that I didn’t think I said. There’s some things that I could have said that I wanted to, but didn’t. I kinda held back, because I wasn’t sure how far I should have went. I don’t like sharing my personal stuff, personal writing, with other people. But if it’s something like an open topic, that everybody can relate to, then I think it’s fine. What I write has to be what I want them to know.

(Todd, 10/91)

The following excerpt from a classroom transcript during the second quarter illustrates one instance of some decisions that members of the class made about self disclosure in their autobiographies:

Roger: “I could have done ten pages on my autobiography. But I had stuff in there that was personal, so I deleted it.”
Jan: “You don’t trust your classmates?”
Roger: “I’m a very private person. I don’t want everyone knowing my business. The only person who know a lot about me is Raycha.”
Jan: “Maybe we need to hear Raycha’s version of Roger’s essay!”
Roger: “I didn’t want everyone reading my essay, so I had to break it down. I told you I was sorry on the paper.”
Jan: “Oh, Roger! Craig spilled his guts.”
Craig: “No I didn’t!”
Roger: “No, Craig didn’t tell everything either.”
Jan: “He told enough!”
Craig: “I covered it up.”
Jan: “You did?”
Craig: “Yea.”
Jan: “Awwwwww......”
Roger: “I know Raycha told everything.”
Raycha: “I told you enough about my stepmother so everybody could get the point!”
Roger: “But you told everything!” (2/92)

Success is found within an atmosphere of comfortable social interaction.

As they spent more time together in class, students felt they could share their opinions and feelings more freely in their writing classroom. Students gave me comments such as the following, toward the end of the two quarter sequence, when I asked them about how comfortable they felt with the kinds of
interaction that occurred in groups within their classroom:

William: “You know now how we talk in groups? Everyone comes forth. In high school it was different. Usually in high school, no one would come forth.”

Cheryl: “So there’s a kind of closeness, or you trust each other? Is that what you would call ‘coming forth?’”

William: “Yea. I guess it’s maturity.”

Craig: “In this class, I guess the reason we can get personal is because we were all with each other last quarter. Next quarter in [name of class deleted], we probably won’t write down personal stuff like we did in this class. It took us a quarter to get to know everybody, and this quarter we write whatever we feel.” (3/92)

Jan framed these students’ perceived level of comfort within issues of trust, self-disclosure, and self-confidence:

Their social lives with each other have developed to the point where they understand how to trust strangers, how far they can go, what they can disclose, and to whom they can disclose things so that they can open up their linguistic capacities further ... they’ve built up callouses, so that when they go to [the next course in the writing sequence] they’re going to have some confidence they’re going to feel that they can speak their minds, and if somebody gives them a negative response it’s not going to make them wither and die. They’ve had good give and take. They’ve been able to disagree with one another without feeling that they didn’t have a right to say what they said, just because someone disagreed with them. So they’ve learned how to open, they’ve learned how to be, to use talk, to use writing to learn. (Jan, 3/92)

Success comes with honesty in your writing.

Students found that as they shared freely and wrote honestly, it helped them in building a feeling of community within their classroom:

Cheryl: “What kinds of things in this class have helped you get to know the others in the class?”

Raycha: “Working on our stories -- asking questions about adding content and detail. That helps you get to know people, to get to know their strengths. They tell you stuff about their story, and it’s not the exact same as yours, but you’ve been through the same types of things.”
Cheryl: “Does knowing the people in your class help you in your writing? Raycha: “Knowing people helps you to be honest. You all share your experiences, everybody can be honest because their experiences are similar to yours. Everybody can share and learn from everybody else.” (12/91)

Honesty that led to discovery in writing was also valued by the instructor. As students wrote to discover meaning, they connected such honesty with the good grades that accompanied it:

Cheryl: “How have you found that Jan responds to honesty in your writing?”
Raycha: “Honesty in my writing brings me a good response, because she [Jan] likes more of the honesty. Details and honesty bring a better grade -- your grade is better when you put more details that explain more about really what happened. And the more you do that, the more she is impressed by the facts you have. When you go deeper into yourself, you really realize like why did you really do this, what was the cause. And I think the purpose of all this writing is to figure out, O.K., why did we do that in our past? I don’t think we have actually sat down and thought about that.” (12/91)

*Success entails knowing how to “survive” by making the grade.*

At the beginning of the two course sequence, grades as a mark of “success” were of prime importance to the students in this classroom community. By the end, they had not diminished in importance; however, where how to achieve certain grades had previously mystified them, students seemed to have emerged with a clear idea how to achieve the grades they desired:

Raycha: “... you have to work your hardest in here to get the grade you want. It’s not what the instructor is going to give you, it’s what you deserve to get. Because, if you work hard, you get a good grade. And if you don’t, you don’t get a good grade. If you’re more honest and tell the needed facts, then you’ll get the grade.”

Cheryl: “So what about the tension with grades and honesty you’ve talked about?”

Roger: “I still want the grade!”
Raycha: “You want it bad enough, you work hard enough! In high school English teachers didn’t know if you worked hard, because you
could work real hard and get like a "C" or something. You'd be like "How did I get that?"

Craig: "For me, I never worried, because I didn't like English, and I knew when I wrote my papers that I was going to get a 'C.' I mean, I knew that the paper didn't matter, 'cause when we got the test, I was going to do better. High school never challenged me like the work does here."

Raycha: "English, to me, was like the hardest. Because I didn't really like it that much. Well, I liked it a lot, but it was just too, sort of deep in a way that I didn't understand the writings and technicalities of it."

Craig: "That's how I was in my high school. We never really wrote in English. I had a teacher that everybody dreaded in 11th grade. They said, 'You got Mr. Hard, you gonna flunk out of that class, you gonna flunk out of that class!' First quarter, I got a 'D.' I was like 'Oh, this is the first time I ever got a D.' I was all upset. And then we had to read a lot, and I don't like to read. But his class, like after I got out of his class, I saw he was a good teacher. It's just like when we read and we had quizzes, and the quizzes were easy because we got to use our notes that we took, and he only quizzed us on colors, names, numbers, and things that stood out. So I always did good on the quizzes, and I didn't have to worry about my writing."

Cheryl: "But did you read those books..."

Craig: "I skimmed them. I didn't read them. It's like, if you look for a color or a name... you just look through the book, and that's all you had to remember was names, colors, ages, and numbers."

Cheryl: "So you learned it like a game? Was it a game?"

Craig: "Well..."

Raycha: "It was a game!"

Craig: "I copied somebody's notes, that's how I got by."

Raycha: "You was playin' along!"

Cheryl: "He learned how to survive."

Craig: "Yea, that's it."

Cheryl: "What's the difference here at [university name deleted]? Are you learning to survive, or what are you learning?"

Raycha: "You're learning to do it."

Craig: "For me... it was like I was coming to college, and everybody's on me to do good, because I'm like the first. So it was like I had my priorities straight. That's why I read that first book, I was like 'I gotta do it. I can't let them down. And that's why it's just different here. In high school I knew that I could make it. Here, I try hard so I can make it and succeed."

Cheryl: "Succeeding is more than your grade, isn't it?"

Craig: "Yea. I think it's more than my grade. My mom would never pressure me about my grade like some people's parents do. In
high school I always got like a 3.2. Here I got a 3.0. She says she wants better, but she won't get mad if I go down to a 2.5 or something. I do it for myself, because I want better for myself.”

Raycha: “Mine is the opposite. Mine is like, for the grade. They don’t want to hear ’I learned it, but I got a “C”.’ They want to see a “B” and an “A” on it. They think that a grade is like if you know it. You know it if you got that grade. It’s a lot of pressure and stuff, but I guess I’ve learned to deal with it as I get older.” (3/92)

Success comes through choosing to “seriously” participate in the classroom community.

In their talks with me, students stressed the importance of coming to class, talking their ideas over with their peers, and trying their best on each draft they wrote. They gained this perspective, at least in part, through repeated exposure to the behaviors Jan stressed in class:

William, from the very beginning, has been serious about doing the work of the class. He has attended regularly, he has made an effort to get his work in on time, and he always makes an effort to do the major assignments well, as thoroughly as he can. (Jan, 3/92)

Students believed that their peers who chose not to do some of these basic things would not meet with success at the university level:

Cheryl: “Do you see peers or friends or things in the dorm as being a roadblock to success? I’ve heard you guys talk about things ...”

Craig: “Some people on my floor actually don’t even care about school. They just come here to party. But you can’t let people like that influence you. I look at it like it’s you -- you have to have your own goals and your own things, so no one can stop you from doing what you want to do. That’s how I feel.”

Cheryl: “So you don’t see anybody else throwing roadblocks in your way?”

Craig: “Nope! Because my roommates, they don’t do their work. I seldom see them do their work. They don’t do it, but I be like, I’m going to do mine. It’s like I don’t have any roadblocks, because I’m here to do it for me. What their grades are like doesn’t affect me. So, I have to do what I want to do, and not care about them. I mean, because I won’t get a good grade just because they’re not doing it. I guess I don’t go to class because they’re doing it or not doing it. I
focus on me, not them. They might have something to fall back on, like my one roommate, if he flunks out he has something to fall back on. But me, I’d have to go get a job and work hard.”

Cheryl: “You’ve got motivation. But do you see anything that could roadblock people, maybe make them drop out, maybe make them not be as successful as they want to be?”

Raycha: “Not doing the work.”

Craig: “If you do it, you will learn something. Definitely. You will learn something. You might not ... some people might learn a lot, some people might learn less, but you will learn something.”

Raycha: “Just listening and being in the class room, and doing what is expected of you.”

Craig: “Be part of the class. Don’t just sit there.”

Raycha: “Don’t procrastinate. ‘You know you’ll have to do a lot of work. ‘Cause if you don’t do it, you’re gone!” (3/92)

If you don’t do it, you’re gone -- these words speak a warning as well as imply a promise that those who are able to do the work will be the successful ones.

**Summary**

In this chapter I have introduced the members of a particular basic writing classroom community and have provided sketches of the interactive processes within this community through which definitions of “successful” academic writing are negotiated. This focus on “success” in academic writing as a process of negotiation among individuals is one way to contextualize the definitions of “successful” writing that will be outlined in the next chapter, for these definitions come forth from a myriad of voices.

The next two chapters will provide information on the definitions of “successful” writing that existed in this basic writing classroom community and will show how these definitions were applied by the case study students within certain academic writing situations. Chapter V, specifically, will focus on the definitions of a “successfully” written product that operated in this classroom community as students drafted, negotiated, and revised their academic writing.
A thorough examination of these definitions will provide the necessary context for the analysis of case study students' written products and the discussion about influences on these products that is contained in Chapter VI.
CHAPTER V

COMMUNITY IMAGES OF “SUCCESSFUL” ACADEMIC WRITING

Traditionally in our composition classrooms, students’ essays have been written for a single audience, the teacher, with a single overriding focus, correctness. Instruction, as well as evaluation, has centered upon what makes academic writing “good,” mainly reflecting concerns with the surface features of a piece of writing. As a descriptive word applied to academic writing, “good” usually indicates correct mechanics and usage, impeccable spelling, and proper diction. All these considerations for “good” academic writing focus on the written entity -- the product of the writing.

With composition research over the past thirty years and the dialogue it has opened concerning theory and practice in the teaching of writing, composition instruction and evaluation have expanded their focus beyond the traditional surface level considerations for “good” academic writing to embrace considerations for the overall “success” of a piece of academic writing. Such a focus, which in part reflects a re-emergence of classical influences, is more rhetorical; it stresses the writer’s self, voice, intention, purpose, and ability to get a message across to an audience wider than the teacher. This additional emphasis on broader rhetorical concerns has rendered the process of writing itself as something to be taught and studied, in addition to the product of
writing. As such, "success" in academic writing can be studied within a process, as the action of one element or situation on another, as well as within a product, the outcome of that action.

Overview

A definition of "success" in writing that encompasses writing as both product and process is highly applicable to this study of "successful" academic writing in a university level basic writing classroom. In the previous chapter, Chapter IV, I highlighted the knowledge and attitudes that fostered certain "successful" practices perceived to be necessary components of "successful" writing within the classroom community. In this chapter and the next, I will identify, define, and describe the many components of "successful" academic writing that I found in the talk about writing, the drafting, and the revising that occurred within the context of my study. My focus in Chapter V on defining the components of "successful" academic writing and discussing how they were established within the classroom community is based on my study of what community members perceived as necessary to students' final written products. My discussion of definitions of "successful" writing will continue into Chapter VI, where I will look closely at how five case study students applied these community definitions of "successful" writing to their drafts and revisions of three assigned essays. In addition, I will focus in that chapter on who or what influenced the writing and revising processes of these five case study students.

In order to identify the definitions of "successful" academic writing that operated within this classroom community, and to explore how and by whom these definitions were set, Chapter V is divided into two main sections. In the
first section, I will show what definitions of “successful” academic writing were operating in the classroom community I studied, and I will outline and describe a classification scheme of components of “successful” academic writing that emerged from the data. Subsequently, in the second section, I will discuss perceived sources of these definitions, i.e., to discuss how these definitions were set, and by whom, and I will identify and discuss sources of these definitions within the following categories: student, instructor, tutor, and other university influences.

**Definitions of “Successful” Academic Writing**

The operational definitions of what comprised “successful” academic writing in this particular classroom community came from a multitude of voices -- student, instructor, tutor, program director -- and a multitude of curricular sources including the textbook and master syllabus for the university's basic writing program. While those individuals directly involved in the classroom community were the major contributors to the definitions of “success” that operated within their classroom, it is also important to note that the more subtle influences of curriculum or textbooks should not be discounted. In an attempt to account for the complexity of the many influences on “success” present in the classroom, I used multiple sources of information to triangulate student, instructor, tutor, and university opinions about and experiences with “successful” academic writing. Information about students' opinions and experiences was gathered through questionnaires, open-ended and discourse-based interviews, written drafts of essays, and talk recorded during class sessions. Information about the tutor's opinions and experiences was gathered through talk recorded during class
sessions, informal conversations with me, and a final formal interview.
Information about the instructor's opinions and experiences was gathered through talk recorded during class sessions, comments written on students' essays, interviews, and documents such as the class syllabus and weekly classroom handouts. Information from the university's basic writing program was gathered from the master course syllabus and an interview with the director of the basic writing program. This triangulation of data is summarized in Table 2, which illustrates my sources of definitions of "successful" academic writing.

Table 2

**Triangulation of Data That Yields Definitions of "Successful" Academic Writing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Tutor</th>
<th>Other Influences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaire #1</td>
<td>Open-ended Interviews</td>
<td>Open-ended Interviews</td>
<td>Interview with Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaire #3</td>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>Observations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial and Exit Interviews</td>
<td>Class Syllabus</td>
<td></td>
<td>Master Course Syllabus</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Textbook</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data from students' questionnaires, all classroom observations, and interviews with all members of the classroom community were coded according to categories dealing with "successful" written products that emerged, and then
tallied. As mentioned in Chapter III, coding categories that represented the components of “success” present in questionnaires and all interview and classroom transcripts were piloted on a sample of the questionnaire data, then expanded and applied to this portion of the data as a whole. Categories were validated independently by the classroom instructor and an English Education doctoral student. Frequency counts within each category were converted into percentages that represent a proportion of the total answers given, the kinds of talk recorded, or the actions observed. These proportions of the total answers given, talk recorded, or actions observed within particular categories will be represented within tables throughout Chapter V and discussed where appropriate. This coding and subsequent tallying permitted the major components concerning “success” in academic writing, found within community members’ oral and written responses and their practices, to be condensed so that they could be linked in Chapter VI with students’ changes between their drafts.

Since the focus of Chapter V is on definitions of “successful” academic writing found within one particular basic writing discourse community, I will draw from what the members of this community emphasized in their interactions with each other and their written and oral answers to my questions that discuss their perceptions of the components of a “successful” piece of academic writing. These emphases are represented in the next section in a taxonomy or classification scheme, that classifies the definitions of “successful” academic writing that emerged out of questionnaire, observation, and interview data, coupled with a brief description of each category within the scheme.
Classification Scheme

When all the questionnaire, observation, and interview data were gathered, sorted, and analyzed, the components of the following "Classification Scheme for Components of Successful Academic Writing" had emerged (see Appendix D for full text of the scheme and its accompanying tally sheet). This coding scheme was devised along lines similar to the ones Soter (1992) used to code the writing perceptions and habits of African-American freshman writers. Eight categories which reflect writing as a product outline the following components of "successful" academic writing which were found in the data:
1) Language/Usage; 2) Voice/Style; 3) Ideas/Topic; 4) Detail/Development; 5) Rhetorical Concerns; 6) Reception by Audience; 7) Genre; and 8) Other (category for items mentioned only once). What follows is a brief definition of the kinds of responses coded and tallied within each category, using examples drawn from the data as illustrations.

1. Language/Usage

This category contains responses that identify the elements of grammar, punctuation, spelling, capitalization, vocabulary, word choice, and overall "correctness."

Most data that fell into the category of Language/Usage (1) can be aptly described by such student responses as "using proper English" (Wayne, 9/91), "not making many mistakes" (Jasmine, 9/91), and "everything that's right" (Leroy, 3/92). Mentions of grammar, punctuation, and spelling were fairly straightforward on both questionnaires. "Words that are misspelled" and "punctuation errors" were to be avoided in a "successful" piece of writing:
"proper grammar and punctuation" were necessities for "success" (Craig, Roger, 3/92). Some students recognized their own shortcomings in mechanics and usage: "I have trouble staying in the present, past or future" (Bridget, 9/91); "I don't use commas in the right places. I don't use colons where you should use colons. Sometimes, I have run-on sentences" (Raycha, 3/92). In terms of "successful" vocabulary, it seems that the axiom "the bigger the better" was applicable. Statements such as "I need to work on bigger words and how to use them" (Craig, 9/91), and "I like to play around with words. I like to use big words that mean something very small" (Raycha, 9/91) give flavor to the types of concerns these students displayed. Students were also conscious of correct diction or "how to word everything that I say on paper" (Renay, 9/91).

2. Voice/Style

This category reflects responses that speak of creativity, feeling, honesty, tension, earnestness, and excitement. Responses that spoke of discovery in writing, voice, and perspective on the subject of the essay were also included in this category.

The category of Voice/Style (2) includes such responses as "how it sounds," "if I like it," and "discovery in writing" (3/92). Students described voice in terms of "you write and put your heart in it" (Raycha, 10/91); they expressed sentiments such as "you have to be honest as a writer" (Todd, 3/92) in connection with success. One student even boasted, "I use feeling, which is not so boring as some others" (John, 9/91).
3. Ideas/Topic

This category includes such responses as good topic, strong main idea, and clear ideas. It reflects the “head work” that goes into beginning to think about ideas and topics and how to represent them within a piece of writing.

The category of Ideas/Topic (3) was important in that the subject of a piece of writing needs to be “interesting” to a student (Ralph, 9/91). According to one student, a recipe for an unsuccessful piece of writing includes “not being able to pick your own topic” (Bob, 9/91). Why? “If the subject is boring you are less likely to do it” (Renay, 9/91). Being able to “put ideas down on paper” (Sam, 9/91), focus on a “main idea,” and “support” those ideas (William, 9/91) were mentioned as important to success. Also, there was some consensus that the initial organization of ideas needs to be well thought out; “keeping ideas together” was mentioned as important to success (Raycha, 9/91). Students had found that “when you don’t organize things on paper” to begin with, then incidents like “repeating yourself” and “getting off the topic” occur (Bridget, Jasmine, 9/91). A piece of advice for success that was included in this category: “I try to make the ideas in my paper as clear as possible” (Raycha, 3/92).

4. Detail/Development

This category includes such considerations as length, support, facts, content, telling “why” or “how,” description, covering the subject, and using dialogue as detail.

Instances of “success” mentioned within the category of Detail/Development (4) could be found in concerns such as knowing “how long my paper has to be” (William, 9/91). Detail and explanation were mentioned often; however, there was an expressed need for a balance in knowing how
much detail is enough so that a piece of writing “gets to the point and doesn’t
drag on” (Jasmine, 9/91). Detail was viewed as support: “it’s not just simply tell
a story, support your story” (William, 9/91). A piece of writing that is
unsuccessful doesn’t “cover all the points you need to cover” (Jack, 9/91); it may
be “too short or too long, with too many unnecessary details” (Ralph, 9/91).
Detail, reflected within length, was an important consideration to the students, a
reflection of the emphasis the instructor put on self-revelation through detail and
complexity of thought shown through development. The influence of both the
instructor and the textbook can be seen in the following student’s statement
about academic writing: “good writing needs both a ‘how’ and ‘why.’ Basically, I
mean it needs opinions or facts and then examples to support it. The examples
might need quotes” (John, 3/92).

5. Rhetorical Concerns

This category deals with elements of rhetorical form and structure:
introduction, topic sentence, paragraphing, transitions, “hook,” and conclusion,
as well as whether or not the writing is responsive to a particular assignment or
prompt.

Success in the category of Rhetorical Concerns (5), according to the
students, was gauged by “how you put your sentences together” (Jasmine,
9/91). Paragraphing was a major concern: “developing a good paragraph”
(Roger, 9/91) was important, with “good” described as “starting off with main
ideas in a paragraph and ending with a concluding sentence” (Raycha, 9/91).
Problems in paragraphing included “trouble changing paragraphs” (Craig,
9/91) and “not starting off new paragraphs when needed,” or “poor paragraph
form” (Raycha, 9/91). Challenges were perceived in “coming up with a good
beginning and ending” (Renay, 3/92) and “writing a good conclusion” (Ralph, 9/91). General ingredients for a “successful” essay included the following: “Introduction; main body and conclusion; a hook between the beginning and the end” (Sam, 3/92).

6. Reception by Audience

This category encompasses the audience component of rhetorical concerns, such as what to say to whom, when, and how. As such, student responses in this category often reflected their perception of how the instructor as audience responded to a piece of writing, including what grade she gave it.

General audience concerns within the category Reception by Audience (6) included “how the paper sounds” (Bridget, 9/91), “if I get my points and ideas across to the reader,” and “if the work is keeping their attention” (Raycha, 9/91). Most of the time, however, the greatest audience concern mentioned was the instructor, the one who evaluated the piece of writing for a grade. Components of success often cited were the grades given by the instructor/reader, evidence of whether the instructor/reader likes it, if it sounds professional, or if it sounds like college. Some students perceived academic writing as something their teachers and professors could do and model for their students: “I describe successful academic writing by saying, ‘things that are written by my college professors’ and ‘high school teachers’ academic writing” (Leroy, 9/91). However, academic writing was often something, especially at the beginning of the two course sequence, that the students in this class felt they hadn’t learned how to do yet: “I never really learned how to write in high school” (Bridget, 9/91). In talking about her academic writing, one student said “if it was successful I wouldn’t be in the lowest English class at [school name deleted], so
I feel it must be unsuccessful to their standards" (Raycha, 9/91). Success in college writing came to those who could “learn to write the correct academic way that academic writing is written” (Todd, 9/91), who were considered to be “an academic writing person” (Wayne, 9/91) and who could “us[e] college technique” (Sam, 9/91). Students felt that these types of writers were rewarded with the high grades, which were the badges of “success” to most students in this basic writing classroom community.

7. Genre

Within this category are community notions that “good” or “successful” writing belongs to a certain genre, expository essays, as opposed to other genre such as narrative, poetry, or short story. Student responses such as “I feel that I can write stories better than reports or essays” (Jack, 9/91) and “my best writing is questions about personal experiences” (Sam, 9/91) reflected a preference for writing that seems less “academic” and more “personal.” In addition, responses concerning “necessary ingredients” [the instructor’s term] that were to be contained within a piece of academic writing were coded within this category. Student responses that contained references to “necessary ingredients” reflected the belief that if the right parts are present in a particular genre of academic writing, the writing would be “successful.”

8. “Other” (general category for items mentioned only once)

Responses coded in this category varied widely. Some items mentioned included laser printing the essay to make it look “nice” and taking care with aesthetics such as font or type size. One student asserted that “the way it looks on the page” contributes to an essay’s success (Bob, 9/91). Another claimed
success if there was enough “time to do it right” (Sam, 9/91). Another student
argued that in essay writing “it’s all important. It’s not just like I don’t care about
one thing after putting the time in all the other things” (John, 9/91).

In my data analysis, behavior, talk and interaction that identified
“success” in connection with a piece of writing was coded within the preceding
eight categories. What follows is a discussion of the sources within the
classroom community that influenced the operations of these definitions for
“success” within students’ written products.

Sources of Definitions of “Successful” Academic Writing

The preceding section has briefly described the vehicle for considering
the details of how this classroom community defined “successful” academic
writing and condensing these details into a classification scheme or taxonomy
(Spradley, 1980; Spradley & McCurdy, 1972). Now that a sense of the
definitions and components of “successful” academic writing that were
operating in this particular basic writing classroom community has been
established, it will be fruitful to compare and analyze these categories to
examine what was found to be significant to the discourse community
participants: Are any categories mentioned more or less often? By whom?
What are the trends? Were there any changes across time? Why or why not? I
will use tables to show proportions of responses or observed behaviors in each
category that suggest who or what contributed to the operational definitions of
“successful” academic writing, arranging my discussion around four sources of
definitions mentioned earlier in this chapter: student, instructor, tutor, and other
university influences.

Observations of the Classroom Community

Before I proceed to look at each individual source of definitions for “successful” academic writing, I will look holistically at the sources of student, instructor, tutor, and other within the context of the daily classroom observations that I made. Having studied the actions, responses, and influences of these sources over a six month period, I will highlight the trends in what components of “successful” academic writing were mentioned and in what proportions. Thus, this section will present a brief overview of the definitions of “success” within the classroom community by examining components of “success” that were present in classroom talk and actions that I observed daily.

The following table, Table 3, represents these overall classroom trends within the eight categories for “successful” academic writing that have been discussed in the previous section as operating in the classroom during the two quarters I observed, Fall 1991 and Winter 1992. Using transcripts from classroom observations, I coded and tallied the presence of components of “success” in classroom talk and actions from all students, the tutor, and the instructor.
Table 3

Components of Successful Academic Writing Mentioned by All Classroom Community Members During Classroom Observations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Proportion of Total Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fall 1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n=145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Language/Usage</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Voice/Style</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ideas/Topic</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Detail/Development</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Rhetorical Concerns</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Reception by Audience</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Genre</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Other</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. n = total number of times all components were mentioned.

As a whole, classroom conversations and behaviors that I observed from all sources together showed the following trends and patterns within each category over the two quarter sequence. For Language/Usage (1), the higher proportion in the second column reflects slightly more emphasis on mechanics and grammar in the classroom during Winter Quarter. The instructor distributed rule sheets containing punctuation and basic grammatical rules such as subject/verb agreement, assigned practice exercises in the textbook, and administered a fifteen question punctuation quiz that required students to correctly punctuate model sentences. Subsequently, students were asked to apply what they had learned about grammar and punctuation to their own
writing, by working with the three essays they had composed during the Fall 1991 class. All students were instructed to make an appointment with the tutor to individually identify the "hallmarks of error" in their own writing, to make a list of their most common mistakes, and to refer to these lists as they edited their essays. The instructor's rationale for the added emphasis on grammar and mechanics was "you're going to be expected to go out of here knowing this. Because in [next course in freshman writing sequence], you're likely to get counted off or fail a paper, because of errors. O.K.? They're sticklers over there" (1/92).

For Voice/Style (2), the slightly higher proportion in column two reflects the added emphasis given to honestly expressing feeling and showing perspective in the autobiographical writing done for the fourth assigned essay during the Winter Quarter. The instructor encouraged the students to explore situations from multiple perspectives; a student described this as an ability to

... make a reader see it through your eyes. Like how you felt when you saw it and heard it. Because when you're younger, you see things different. If you write like that, you can make the reader see the same thing (Jack, 1/92).

Slightly less classroom emphasis was given during Winter Quarter on Ideas/Topic (3). The instructor initially worked with students at the beginning of winter quarter to help them "find a way in" to their topics for their autobiographies (1/92). It was not that the component of Ideas/Topic became less important during the second class of the sequence, but rather that students in this class had come to automatically consider it, perhaps without consciously thinking or talking about it, as they started each new writing task.

It is significant that the proportions for Detail/Development (4) remained constant across both quarters, in that the instructor stressed detail and
development more than any other component in both courses of the sequence. Students and the tutor responded to this emphasis. In response to the instructor’s directions, such as “you want lots of detail, because your autobiography is going to be at least ten pages long” (1/92), students’ class discussions about their writing included such statements as “this is what I worked on to make my story longer so everybody else will understand” (Raycha, 1/92). For the category of Rhetorical Concerns (5) there was a slight gain in emphasis during the Winter Quarter because of lessons and textbook assignments on introductions, conclusions, and transitions. The decrease in the second column for the category Reception by Audience (6) indicates less emphasis in the classroom community on grades during Winter Quarter. Proportionately, students mentioned grades less often in questions directed to the instructor and in conversations with each other. As grades received less attention, concerns about the “necessary ingredients” of a particular genre received increased attention, marked by a slight increase Winter Quarter in the category of Genre (7). References to additional influences in the category marked Other (8) remained relatively the same proportionately.

Within the portrait of the classroom community offered by observation data, it appears that the instructor had a great deal of influence on what the other members of the community perceived and talked about concerning “success” in academic writing. With the previous discussion of the proportions of responses and actions drawn from the context of the entire classroom community in each of the eight categories of “success” for a piece of academic writing in mind, I will discuss separately the four sources within the community that yielded these definitions of “success:” student, instructor, tutor, other. I will begin with a discussion of the students.
Students

The fifteen students in this basic writing classroom community comprise the first source of definitions of "successful" academic writing that I will isolate from the class as a whole and examine. Student definitions of "successful" academic writing that are discussed in this section have been gathered from questionnaire and interview data. I will first discuss student definitions of "successful" writing as a whole, referring to questionnaire and interview data from all fifteen students in the classroom community. I will then continue my discussion of student definitions of "success" by narrowing my focus to examine those definitions present in the five case study students' responses coded from questionnaire and interview data.

Data from Questionnaires #1 and #3 were triangulated with data from initial and exit and interviews to give a more comprehensive picture of the definitions of "successful" writing that came from all fifteen students in this particular basic writing classroom community, both at the beginning and the end of the two quarter basic writing sequence. In looking at students' composite responses to selected questions in Questionnaires #1 and #3 and to initial and exit interview questions, I have coded, described, and compared those details these fifteen students gave concerning successful writing in September 1991 and March 1992, using the eight categories for "successful" written products that have been previously defined. The following table represents such a comparison within these categories for definitions of "successful" academic writing that were reflected in responses given by all students in the class, as a whole, to questionnaire and interview questions. The complete text of both questionnaires may be found in Appendix B; text for interview questions may be found in Appendix C.
### Table 4

**Compilation of Components of Successful Academic Writing from Questionnaires #1 and #3 and Initial and Exit Interviews: Student Composite**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Proportion of Total Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Q #1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n=215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Language/Usage</td>
<td>.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Voice/Style</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ideas/Topic</td>
<td>.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Detail/Development</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Rhetorical Concerns</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Reception by Audience</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Genre</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Other</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** n = total number of times all components were mentioned.

The responses students gave in their initial and exit interviews highlights some components of "successful" academic writing that did not stand out in the questionnaire data as being quite so important. This importance did not necessarily show up in the proportions of students' answers given that fell into a particular category; rather, the importance is in the quality of the responses students gave, in the insight it gives into what they thought was necessary to a piece of academic writing, and why they thought so. Therefore, after a brief discussion of trends in the proportions for components of "successful" academic writing that were coded within categories 1, 3, 5, 7, and 8, I will spend the majority of my discussion exploring the connections that emerged in the interview data.
between the components of Voice/Style (2), Detail/Development (4), and Reception by Audience (6).

Within students’ interview data, the slight increase in proportions of responses in the category of Language/Usage (1) reflect the instructor’s increased emphasis on grammar and mechanics in the class sessions the second quarter. The decrease in emphasis on Language/Usage (1) in the responses students gave in their questionnaires at the end of the second quarter may reflect issues mentioned earlier in this chapter, notably an increased emphasis in the classroom on other categories such as Detail/Development (4), rather than a diminished emphasis on usage or mechanics. Similarly, while the category of ideas/Topic (3) was seldom mentioned in the final questionnaires and mentioned in a smaller proportion in interviews, this could again reflect an increased emphasis in class on other components of “success” during the second quarter. Overall, a smaller proportions of responses within category three at the end of the second quarter reflects a lesser emphasis in class on components of “success” such as clear ideas and focused topics, components which students perhaps came to consider unconsciously and automatically before going on to wrestle consciously with other components of “success” in their writing.

More students mentioned concerns that fell into the category of Rhetorical Concerns (5) in their final questionnaires as opposed to their initial questionnaires. However, the category of Rhetorical Concerns (5) received less responses proportionately the second quarter in interview data. The lesser emphasis students gave this category could be attributed to the open-ended interview situation, in which they chose to stress other components that were more important to them at the time of the interview. The proportions of student
responses in category five for the second quarter may also reflect that students either did not make connections with or did not internalize the instructor's added emphasis in the classroom on rhetorical issues, especially effective introductions and conclusions, during this second quarter. For these (and perhaps other) reasons, proportions from interview data stand opposed to the proportions from the more structured written questionnaires in category five, in which students gave rhetorical concerns a greater emphasis at the end of the second quarter.

Categories of Genre (7) and Other (8) showed slight decreases in proportion from Fall to Winter quarter in both questionnaire and interview data. Responses within the category of Genre (7) were coded at the beginning of the two course sequence in Questionnaire #1, but not at the end in Questionnaire #3. At the end of the second quarter, students were no longer perceiving success as being able to write a particular type of essay, per se; rather, they were looking deeper into the components of each genre. The proportion of total responses for the category of Other (8) in the second quarter was zero for questionnaires and one for interviews; students gave few responses during the final days of class that could not be coded in the previous seven categories.

In the remainder of this section, I will explore the connections that emerged among categories two, four, and six -- those dealing with voice, detail, and gearing a piece of writing to an audience consisting of the instructor, for a grade. The kinds of answers students offered within these three categories when talking about components of "success" in their written products appeared to be interconnected within their perceptions that the instructor wanted honesty and detail in their writing, above all else.
Students' references to the category of Voice/Style (2) as a component for "success" were in identical proportions for both questionnaires and remained stable proportionately across both interviews. However, in studying their responses that fell into the category of Voice/Style (2) in the interview data, I found that some students' past experiences with high school teachers had led them to believe that their own voice and feeling had to be omitted from a piece of academic writing in order for it to earn a successful grade:

Honesty gets a 'C' from the teacher, and 'cushion' or 'B.S.' gets an 'A.' When you're honest, and you take so much time and patience with your writing, you're like getting a 'C' or 'D'... but when you fill it up and cushion it up, it's like the teacher says, "That's good, you get an 'A.'" (Raycha, 10/91)

This same student relayed a story about a particular essay she wrote in high school where she "put my heart into it and came out with a bad grade" (Raycha, 10/91). In speaking about the honesty/grade connection, high school experiences tended to influence the students I interviewed to negatively correlate the two. Students shared such experiences as "I may have been real honest in my paper, and it came back with a 'C' or 'D' or something. And it shocked me" (William, 10/91). In such instances, cushioning an essay, or "B.S.," would become appealing to a student as a mode of self-protection, adding another dimension to teacher-pleasing for grades.

Students appeared surprised at first that college writing would allow them to express their own opinions and their feelings. One student spoke of his high school writing experiences as "back then when I really didn't write with my personal feelings in the paper" (Wayne, 11/91). Students appeared somewhat guarded about this seemingly new found freedom as they talked about it in their interviews at the beginning of the first quarter of the sequence. The college
writing classroom community they were a part of was different from what they were used to: "basically in here, we’ve just been writing our feelings, and if that is what it takes to ... [long pause] ... what you have to do in college, then I don’t know." (Jack, 10/91). By the end of the second quarter, however, many students spoke of how they had internalized the instructor’s encouragement to write in their own voice and develop their own particular style, without worrying about including extra verbiage they would classify as “B.S.” in their writing to please her:

[Students] may be used to writing what they think the teacher wants. And that’s not the case, I don’t think, up here. She wants, like, they want how you feel about it and what you think, not what they think. (Todd, 3/92)

Still, what students perceived the instructor wanted in an essay seemed to remain a consideration for most of them as they composed their written products. Emphasis on grades and audience, within the category of Reception by Audience (6) remained constant in questionnaire data across both quarters. In examining student responses to interview questions that fell within this category, items that the instructor wanted and items that would bring a good grade were mentioned as necessary components. The instructor was viewed as the main source for comments and feedback that would enable students to develop essays that contained the many components of “success.” The simple advice of one student is indicative of such views: “Do what [Jan] asks for the papers” (Bridget, 10/91). Some students deferred to the instructor as the sole authority within the classroom to respond to their essays, because they viewed her function as “giver of the grade” as the bottom line. To many students, the main indicator of “success” in their essays was the final grade, as illustrated in the following student comment:
Students measure success by grades almost 100% ... the grade is the bottom line. There’s no question about it. It’s just the bottom line. If you get a “C” out of a class, it’s a “C”. You can say, “I learned how to write.” But, if you get a “C” someone’s going to question if you really learned how to write. Why did you get a “C”? So the grade is the bottom line. (William, 10/91)

This line of students' thinking about their written products extends into the area of self-defense mentioned previously in the discussion of “B.S.” Here, the thought is that “you’re judged by your grades, so do all you can to be judged favorably” (William, 3/92). However, some students felt torn between writing to please the teacher and to get good grades and writing to please themselves: “I want to get a good grade, but I also want to do it right. I want to do it my way, too. Like ... [pause] ... but ... [pause] ... I don’t know” (Jasmine, 10/91). By the end of the second quarter, students had come to recognize Jan as a careful reader and responder, in addition to being “the giver of the grade.” Because of her emphasis on honesty and giving the reader enough information through developing ideas, students came away from the class with changed opinions concerning their former connection between “B.S.” and good grades: “If you cushion, it’s like you’re going to be downgraded. But if you’re more honest and tell the needed facts, then you’ll get the grade” (Raycha, 3/92).

Where the presence of “B.S.” and “cushion” in a final draft would not gain a student a favorable grade in this classroom, the presence of detail and development within the essay would. Components of “success” that students mentioned within the category of Detail/Development (4) were emphasized much more in their questionnaires and interviews at the end of the second quarter of the two course sequence, after they had been exposed to six months of the instructor’s continual prodding for “more.” Interview data coded into the
category of Detail/Development (4) reflects what the students in this classroom community learned about the importance of detailing their ideas for the sake of their audience.

In comparing high school and college experiences relating to detail and development of his essays, one student mused “back then, everything wasn’t so in-depth” (Wayne, 11/91). The following student exchange, transcribed from a classroom observation at the end of the second quarter, illustrates students’ perceptions of the importance of detail in college writing:

Todd: “The thing that sticks out for me this quarter is “more detail!”
Leroy: “Jan just asks questions like crazy. WHY. Why and details!
Todd: “WHY, WHY, WHY…”
Renay: “WHY. Every time I hear “why” I’m going to think of Jan.” (3/92)

The levity of the previous exchange was sobered somewhat by the reflection shown in the following comment from an interview, which conveys the same thoughts:

Jan’s responses were helpful. In her negative responses, she might ask well, you didn’t support this or say ‘why’ this happened. And you get this back so many times it sticks in your head that you have to support this and give detail, tell ‘why’ this and ‘why’ that. (William, 2/92)

Results of students’ quests for more detail in their written products, in response to Jan’s ever-present questions of “why” on their drafts, was evidenced by student remarks such as the following:

I’ve learned to go deeper, so then I can get more stuff. That’s how it gets longer. Before, I guess I just tried to give a general overview, without going deep into it. But now I know that if you go deeper into it and explain so they don’t have any questions about what happened, then you learn that it will get longer with the process. (Craig, 3/92)
Detail became extremely important to the “success” of a finished piece of university level academic writing:

I explain now, where I didn’t before. This is the difference in being able to write good papers -- giving detail. (Raycha, 12/91)

In this particular classroom community, as we have seen, students tailored such detail to fit their perceptions of what the instructor required to be in their written products. A portrait of “successful” academic writing that emerges from the composite picture of all students’ questionnaire and interview data could be reflected in the following statement: Writing was considered “successful” if it contained appropriate detail, coupled with honesty, couched within products written for the instructor as audience.

I will now narrow my discussion from the larger group of the fifteen students in the class to a subset of five African-American students whom I studied. I will represent these case study students’ responses to questions I posed in questionnaires and interviews. In previous discussion, these students’ responses about “successful” academic writing were discussed within the context of the community of students as a whole, and presented within Table 4, which compiled all fifteen students’ definitions of “success” according to the eight categories for “successful” written products that emerged from interview and questionnaire data. I will continue my discussion by isolating the definitions for a “successful” written product that each of the five case study students applied individually to his or her academic writing.

Proportions of the individual responses that were given by these five case study students to initial and exit interviews and Questionnaires #1 and 3, within the eight categories for definitions of “successful” academic written products that emerged from the data, are provided in separate tables. As
mentioned before, six months’ time elapsed between Questionnaire #1 and initial interviews at the beginning of the Fall Quarter 1991, and exit interviews and Questionnaire #3 at the end of Winter Quarter 1992. A brief discussion of patterns in each case study student’s responses follows each table, in which I offer insight as to why certain categories were mentioned more or less.

Table 5

Case Study Student: Raycha

Compilation of Components of Successful Academic Writing from Questionnaires #1 and #3 and Initial and Exit Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Proportion of Total Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Q #1) n=13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Language/Usage</td>
<td>.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Voice/Style</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ideas/Topic</td>
<td>.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Detail/Development</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Rhetorical Concerns</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Reception by Audience</td>
<td>.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Genre</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Other</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. n = total number of times all components were mentioned.
Q#1 indicates Questionnaire #1; Q#3 indicates Questionnaire #3.
Q #1 and Initial Interview reflect responses from September 1991.
Q #3 and Exit Interview reflect responses from March 1992.
Raycha’s responses to interviews and questionnaires at the beginning of the two quarter basic writing sequence indicated that she valued Reception by Audience (6) and Ideas/Topic (3) as important components of a “successfuily” written product. These responses reflected her high school training to come up with good ideas that would be received well by the teacher as audience and decorated with a good grade. Receiving equal emphasis in her responses the first quarter were Language/Usage (1) and Voice/Style (2), reflecting the influence of years of her mother’s stressing the importance of correctness, as well as her latent desire to write about her own feelings and opinions.

Raycha retained, and even increased her primary emphasis on the component of Reception by Audience (6) by the end of the second quarter in the sequence. However, this emphasis reflected a changed perception; rather than tailoring her final product to please a teacher as the giver of the grade, Raycha had embraced the idea of writing with an honest voice to discover her own meaning in the past experiences she chose to share with the class. She felt that in doing so, she would create a final product that would be received well by the classroom instructor as the audience who read her work. This shift in emphasis links with another of Raycha’s major emphases at the end of the two quarter sequence, in the category of Voice/Style (2). Where she had come into this basic writing class desiring to be able to write with her own voice and express her own feelings, she had learned that such writing was welcomed and rewarded as “successful.” Of equal mention in Raycha’s data for the second quarter was her belief that concerns reflected in the category of Language/Usage (1) were important components of “successful” essays; however, she admitted mechanics remained her weak point, one she said she would have to deal with at some future time.
Table 6
Case Study Student: Craig
Compilation of Components of Successful Academic Writing from Questionnaires #1 and #3 and Initial and Exit Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Proportion of Total Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Q #1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n=18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Language/Usage</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Voice/Style</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ideas/Topic</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Detail/Development</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Rhetorical Concerns</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Reception by Audience</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Genre</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Other</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note.  n = total number of times all components were mentioned.
Q#1 indicates Questionnaire #1;  Q#3 indicates Questionnaire #3.
Q #1 and Initial Interview reflect responses from September 1991.
Q #3 and Exit Interview reflect responses from March 1992.

Craig’s responses to interviews and questionnaires at both the beginning and the end of the two quarter basic writing sequence emphasized, in general, the categories of Language/Usage (1); Reception by Audience (6); Detail/Development (4); and Rhetorical Concerns (5). Both quarters, Craig consistently mentioned items such as correct grammar, mechanics, and spelling as being of primary importance in a piece of “successful” academic writing. Craig shared that his high school senior composition teacher graded weekly,
assigned essays on a ten point scale according to various measures of
correctness; he said that his initial written attempts usually earned him a “4” and
his revisions sometimes brought him up to a “6.” Craig carried his high school
teacher’s instructions about correctness and form with him into his university-
level writing. In his opinion, grades were a major indicator of success in a
piece of writing; they reflected what the teacher as audience thought of an
essay. Having enough detail to make an essay long enough, and having that
detail housed in correctly formed paragraphs were of equal importance to him
in the first quarter. Several times, Craig expressed concern the first quarter over
what he perceived as his inability to break up his writing appropriately into
paragraphs.

By the second quarter, detail had emerged in Craig’s mind as something
readers in general (and Jan as the instructor, in particular) paid more attention
to for the sake of its own merit, not just for the length it lent to the essay. At this
point, Craig had begun to see the connection between detail and discovery in
writing; he even admitted in his final interview that even though he perceived
his writing was the same as it was at the beginning of the sequence, “it may be
getting better because I’m putting detail into my writing” (3/92). However, Craig
had trouble believing he was capable of writing a successfully detailed and
well-sequenced essay, even when he earned a grade of “A-” on his
autobiography. Since he retained his initial emphasis on Language/Usage (1)
as the primary component of a “successfully” written essay, followed closely
again by the component Reception by Audience (6), he did not show much
evidence of having diverged from his original views of the components of a
“successful” essay.
Table 7

Case Study Student: Todd

Compilation of Components of Successful Academic Writing from Questionnaires #1 and #3 and Initial and Exit Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Proportion of Total Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Q #1) n=18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Initial Interview n=23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Language/Usage</td>
<td>.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Voice/Style</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ideas/Topic</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Detail/Development</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Rhetorical Concerns</td>
<td>.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Reception by Audience</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Genre</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Other</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note.  n = total number of times all components were mentioned.
Q#1 indicates Questionnaire #1; Q#3 indicates Questionnaire #3. Q #1 and Initial Interview reflect responses from September 1991. Q #3 and Exit Interview reflect responses from March 1992.

Todd began the two quarter basic writing sequence with a primary emphasis for “successful” writing, which he had brought with him from high school, that centered on the component of Rhetorical Concerns (5), specifically essay structure and form. This emphasis was reflected in his expressed concern that he did not know how to properly end his essays, therefore they were not totally “successful.” He placed an almost equal emphasis on the component of Voice/Style (2), stressing both his desire and his practice of
putting his feelings and opinions into his writing. After an essay clearly stated his own opinions and reflected his own voice, Todd's first quarter responses next included his concerns about Reception by Audience (6), and finally Detail/Development (4). Todd mentioned more than once that he was more interested that his writing contain elements that pleased him, rather than please a teacher; however, he also acknowledged that his written product must comply with what was expected so that he could earn a passing grade.

Todd's major emphases on the components for a “successfully” written academic product at the end of the two quarter sequence fell within the categories of Detail/Development (4), Voice/Style (2), and Rhetorical Concerns (5) and Reception by Audience (6), to a lesser degree. Todd's primary emphasis on the component of Detail/Development (4) in his responses the second quarter clearly reflected the influence of the class and the instructor. This emphasis was a marked shift from the primary concern about form that he had exhibited the first quarter to a concern about content and development. A reflection of this shift is shown in that Todd did not mention Rhetorical Concerns (5) as much in his responses the second quarter. Evidence of Voice/Style (2) remained his secondary emphasis as a necessary component for a “successful” essay. By the end of the second quarter, Reception by Audience (6) had become even less prominent a factor in Todd's responses as well as in his written products, as he continued to fashion his written products to please himself first and foremost.
Table 8
Case Study Student: William
Compilation of Components of Successful Academic Writing from
Questionnaires #1 and #3 and Initial and Exit Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Proportion of Total Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Q #1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n=15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Language/Usage</td>
<td>.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Voice/Style</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ideas/Topic</td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Detail/Development</td>
<td>.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Rhetorical Concerns</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Reception by Audience</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Genre</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Other</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. n = total number of times all components were mentioned.
Q#1 indicates Questionnaire #1; Q#3 indicates Questionnaire #3.
Q #1 and Initial Interview reflect responses from September 1991.
Q #3 and Exit Interview reflect responses from March 1992.

William's responses at the beginning of the two quarter basic writing sequence indicated that he valued Reception by Audience (6) and Ideas/Topic (3) equally as primary components of a “successfully” written product. As with Raycha, these responses reflected his high school training to come up with good ideas that would be received well by the teacher as audience and decorated with a good grade. William felt that the grade he received on an essay was the “bottom line” that determined “success”; he told me that “students
measure success by grades almost 100%" (10/91). Components that were of secondary importance to William fell within the categories of Detail/Development (4) and Language/Usage (1). Again, he felt these components of detail and correctness needed to be present in students' written products in order for these products to be judged "successful" by the teacher as audience.

William's major emphases at the end of the two quarter sequence were in the categories of Detail/Development (4), Reception by Audience (6), and Language/Usage (1). His initial, primary concentration on good ideas had been replaced the second quarter by an overriding emphasis on detail, which he had picked up from his involvement with the other members of his classroom community. William had it figured out, in his mind, that stacking details to support his major arguments in his final two essays would bring a favorable response from the instructor. As in the first quarter, Reception by Audience (6) remained an important component of a "successfully" written essay in William's responses. He continued to stress that evidence of "successfully" applying the component of Language/Usage (1) was necessary to a finished written product. Some influence of the classroom community was also evident in William's responses to the final questionnaire, in which he mentioned, for the first time, the component of Voice/Style (2) as being important to a piece of academic writing. He had seen an opportunity in this class to voice his opinion on issues of his choice, and he had experienced his opinions being received by classmates and the instructor in proportion to his ability to back them up with evidence from the class texts or his classmates' experiences.
Table 9

Case Study Student: Renay

Compilation of Components of Successful Academic Writing from Questionnaires #1 and #3 and Initial and Exit Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Proportion of Total Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Q #1) (Q #3) Initial Interview Exit Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n=10 n=7 n=14 n=8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Language/Usage</td>
<td>.30  .28  .07  .12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Voice/Style</td>
<td>.10  .00  .00  .12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ideas/Topic</td>
<td>.50  .00  .29  .13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Detail/Development</td>
<td>.00  .28  .21  .25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Rhetorical Concerns</td>
<td>.00  .43  .21  .00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Reception by Audience</td>
<td>.10  .00  .21  .38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Genre</td>
<td>.00  .00  .00  .00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Other</td>
<td>.00  .00  .00  .00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. \( n = \) total number of times all components were mentioned. Q#1 indicates Questionnaire #1; Q#3 indicates Questionnaire #3. Q #1 and Initial Interview reflect responses from September 1991. Q #3 and Exit Interview reflect responses from March 1992.

Renay's responses at the beginning of the two quarter basic writing sequence indicated that she valued the component of Ideas/Topic (3) as having primary importance for a "successfully" written academic product. Her emphasis on the component of Language/Usage (1) indicated her belief that these ideas needed to be encoded correctly with appropriate grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Next in importance for Renay came the component of Reception by Audience (6), which she believed was reflected in the grade the
teacher assigned to the essay. The component of Detail/Development (4) carried slight importance for Renay at the beginning of the first quarter; basically, she viewed detail only as it related to supporting her ideas, not as an important component of a “successful” essay in and of itself.

However, a shift appeared for Renay at the end of the two quarter sequence when the major emphasis of her responses concerning components of “successful” writing fell within the category of Detail/Development (4). As with William, Renay’s initial, primary concentration on good ideas had been replaced the second quarter by an emphasis on detail, which she had picked up from the instructor and her involvement with the other members of this classroom community. Next in emphasis in Renay’s responses were the components of Rhetorical Concerns (5) and Language/Usage (1). Renay had internalized the instructor’s and the textbook’s emphasis on effective beginnings and endings, and her last two essays evidenced her attempts to incorporate a “hook” that tied an image from the beginning of her essays to one at the end. Renay retained her emphasis on the component of Language/Usage (1) as a reflection of the “correctness” she felt an essay needed to earn a good grade. To a lesser but still significant degree, she retained the value she had placed earlier on the component of Reception by Audience (6) because she knew she needed a favorable final course grade to keep her grade point high and contribute to her chances to get into medical school. For Renay, as for William, the grade on the final product was the “bottom line” that reflected “success” in academic writing.
From the previous discussion of student interview and questionnaire data, for the class as a whole and for the case study students individually, the instructor emerged as a major source for definitions of “success” that operated in the classroom community. It is to this instructor, Jan Fox, that my discussion now turns.

Instructor

The second source of definitions of “successful” academic writing I will isolate from the class as a whole and examine is the instructor in this basic writing classroom community, Jan Fox. Jan’s definitions of “successful” academic writing that are discussed in this section have been gathered from interview data. Examples of her emphases in class concerning the components of “successful” academic writing have been qualitatively described earlier in Chapter V with the classroom observation data. Similarly, quantification of any components of “successful” academic writing that she mentioned in class has been recorded earlier in the same section with all members of the classroom community together.

I conducted several interviews with Jan during both courses of the two-quarter sequence. We often chatted informally after class; in addition, I conducted formal interviews after she graded each set of essays to gain insight into what she was looking for and what she found in students’ written products. Table 10 shows the components of “successful” academic writing the instructor claimed she emphasized in her dealings with students. Jan’s responses within each category are represented as proportions of the total responses she gave that reflect definitions for “successful” academic writing. Responses given in interviews for Fall 1991 have been grouped together, as have responses given

Table 10

Components of Successful Academic Writing Mentioned in Instructor Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Proportion of Total Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fall 1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Language/Usage</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Voice/Style</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ideas/Topic</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Detail/Development</td>
<td>.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Rhetorical Concerns</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Reception by Audience</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Genre</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Other</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall 1991</th>
<th>Winter 1992</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n=101</td>
<td>n=95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. n = total number of times all components were mentioned.

Jan's perception of her emphasis within the category of Language/Usage (1) matched the level of emphasis she gave in class to items in this category as contributors to "successful" written essays. In the interviews I conducted with her during Fall Quarter 1991, she did not mention spelling, mechanics, or grammar issues very often. It is not that she felt such issues were unimportant; rather, she put them in perspective with her discussions of the other components for "success" that she felt she needed to stress in the Fall Quarter class before she moved on to emphasize language and usage issues. Jan's lesser emphasis on mechanics, grammar, and spelling the first quarter of the
sequence was balanced by a greater emphasis on Ideas (category #3), Voice (category #2) and Development (category #4), as her words in the following statement show:

I'm not so worried anymore, and maybe I should be, about correctness. A lot that we do here, it seems to me, is thinking on paper. And a lot we do in this class seems not to need perfection or polishing. I'm trying to have them think through problems, and to use language heuristically. And that means that you use it roughly. Every once in a while you have to write a report that really should be edited carefully. But not all that much university work needs to be perfect. The problem with university work is that it often looks better than it really is. It may look good, but it's vapid, the ideational content is undeveloped, it's depersonalized, decontextualized, it doesn't work -- an idea doesn't get developed through a document so that it starts one place factually and ends up the other place generally. We're working with using writing as an instrument of critical thinking rather than an end in itself, and I think it needs to reflect that. I want to support their focus on their ideas, on trying to communicate those ideas, and trying to put those ideas together... If they're going to be able to do this stuff at the freshman level, they're going to have to get dirty doing it. And the papers are going to look dirty. And I don't care any more, that some of these drafts don't reflect mechanical correctness the way I'd like to see it. I think I'm more and more just stepping back and relaxing about the first term of this sequence. We will get into polishing next term -- that's what it's for (11/91).

In looking ahead to Winter Quarter 1992, Jan set her goals for instruction that fell within the category of Language/Usage during her final interview with me for Fall Quarter:

... it's going to focus more on surface error, and that I'm real serious with getting square with the kinds of spelling and punctuation errors that they've been making, without hitting it too hard. We will continue to work on tightening and sharpening. There's still a lot of verbiage that doesn't need to be in their sentences. So we are going to work more on polishing, although I'm certainly not going to be a perfectionist. They are going to go out of this course, they are going to continue to have some mechanical problems in their writing (12/91).
During Winter Quarter, Jan emphasized sentence level revision, using Macrorie's terms of "tightening" and "sharpening" from the textbook. She instructed each student to become familiar with the kinds of error he or she consistently made in punctuation or grammar. She stressed eliminating surface error in her consistent reminders to edit, use spell check on the Macintosh, and proofread final drafts before submission. Even though Jan enforced no firm policy on taking off for errors in final drafts, she emphasized that proofreading affected students' grades.

Within the category of Voice/Style (2), items Jan mentioned such as self-disclosure, honesty, feeling, and voice appeared regularly in her interviews Fall Quarter and prominently in her interviews Winter Quarter. She emphasized students' ability to "personalize" a piece of writing, balanced against their skill in coming across with perspective and proper "distance" from the personal narratives they wrote for class assignments (12/91). The honesty/detail connection was consistently underscored through statements such as the following:

I'll be looking for disclosing, rather than overgeneralizing to the point where you really don't know what's going on, opening up experience versus keeping it private ... part of the challenge is in giving voice to our impressions of our personal history (10/91).

Jan consistently emphasized that her students had a choice in the personal stories they told or the incidents they disclosed; once they made such a choice about what they wanted to make public, she urged them to include plenty of relevant detail in their writing. When she found such evidence of self disclosure and detail in the final personal narrative essays the students wrote for Fall Quarter, Jan was pleased:
They have tended to pull out all the stops. Roger and Bob talked about really alarming problems that they've had with drug use and alcohol. They haven't pulled back on their discussing these things, either. They seem to be disclosing very fully, and trying to talk about the kinds of steps they've gone through that have compelled them to reflect on their problems ... and that's reflected in their writing (12/91).

In explaining why she gave Roger an “A” on his final essay for Fall Quarter, Jan commended it as “a very complete and earnest paper that really taps some feelings and some insight” (12/91).

The category of Voice/Style (2) was emphasized the most, proportionately, along with Detail/Development (4) in Jan's interview data for Winter Quarter. The interconnection of these two categories can be seen again in the examples she gave when contrasting essays that were “successful” with those that were not. Jan's comments for a less successful essay would include remarks such as “he stopped being reflective ... he avoided the very kinds of things he was talking about last term ... he was getting into some very interesting territory, and he just stopped ... he didn't get any more explicit ... there's a mask there” (2/92). In reflecting on the components of “successful” writing she emphasized in class, Jan admitted “I guess it's clear I'm rewarding honesty” (2/92); “It's a matter of telling what's significant, and why. And it's a matter of giving examples to support your generalization about 'why.' I want them to say 'it was this way because ...'” (12/91).

In discussing components of “successful” writing that fell into the category of Rhetorical Concerns (5), Jan commented that “the first thing they have to do is to learn how the question or the prompt for the paper structures the assignment” (10/91). Students need to find and develop an appropriate topic and structure their information in a meaningful way. Jan noted that “successful” essays
“maintain their structure” throughout and do not digress into “lumps in the paper that don’t belong” (2/92). They contain “a beginning and an end that are distinct” and that may contain a “hook” that “pulls a key detail out of the body of the paper that they can use to begin and end the paper, so that they have a sense that they’ve completed a cycle of some sort” (10/91). She also looked for a sense of connectedness within the essay:

The ones that are more self-aware are always looking back over what they’ve said before and they take it another step further. You keep seeing these semantic kinds of dependencies in the story. It keeps looping back to the beginning, looping back to other episodes, looping back to themes. Those are the strongest ones (2/92).

Students achieving that connectedness would be “cycling from the end back to the beginning in their essay ... so that they can circumscribe in a rough way the universe of discourse that they’re going to be talking about” (12/91).

In her interviews, Jan made several connections among components for “success” that fell into the categories of Detail/Development (4) and Reception by Audience (6):

They need to remember when they’re writing that it’s uncharted territory for their reader ... they have to establish ‘signposts’ for the reader ... and they can’t assume too much on their reader’s part. So they have to find a sense of not giving too much information, and not giving too little, but to develop a sense of what’s necessary for the reader to understand, and let it go at that (12/91).

She stressed using dialogue in narrative writing as a way to add detail for the reader’s sake:

... Dialogue ... it’s another way of putting the reader there, making it more immediate. Not distancing the reader. I’m trying to get the readers into the paper. They’re going to have to work on immediacy. So detail does that. And dialogue does that (10/91).
Connected with "successful" use of detail was a higher grade. Jan admitted that I guess it must be true, that revelation and detail came with a good grade. But I think it was more that they were relaxed in talking about their topics, so that they were able to get the information out and do artful things with it. And they didn't waste so much energy in keeping us from knowing what it was they didn't want to say (2/92).

She was also very firm in asserting that "I didn't give 'A's' for papers that didn't have why" (11/91). In her grading, Jan said she valued work that was "very audience aware" (11/91). She was pleased when she found evidence students could "begin to tailor to an audience, rather than coming up with a generic kind of writing that would be good for just a teacher" (12/91).

Grades were also connected to the presence of what Jan called "necessary ingredients" for each essay, which she led students to inductively work out as a whole class for each essay, during the final week the essay was due. In the Winter Quarter, there was a slight increase in the proportion of times Jan mentioned the presence of "necessary ingredients," components of "success" that fell within the category of Genre (7). Jan noted that students' grades on the first essay "depend on how many of the elements that I've talked about can be orchestrated" (10/91). By the time the second essay was due she remarked "I generally took off for elements that were missing" (11/91). Jan mentioned at the end of the term, in grading the third essay, that "there are so many elements to orchestrate, that I give them credit if they orchestrate some very well" (12/91). Jan explained that her emphasis on "necessary ingredients" for a particular genre of writing was meant to provide a guideline rather than a "formula" for success.

Components of "success" in students' writing Jan mentioned that were included in the category of Other (8) spanned such features as aesthetics and
evidence that the students had taken care to produce a “finished” copy. They also included evidence Jan noted in the final draft that indicated the student had been to see the tutor. I will next examine the tutor as a source of definitions for “successful” academic writing that were operating within this classroom community.

Tutor

The third source of definitions of “successful” academic writing I will isolate from the class as a whole and examine within this classroom community is the tutor, an African-American doctoral student who chose the name Philip King. Philip’s definitions of “successful” academic writing that are discussed in this section have been gathered from interview and observation data. I will qualitatively describe his involvement with and influences on the definitions of “successful” writing operating in the classroom; quantification of any components of “successful” academic writing that this tutor mentioned has been recorded earlier in Chapter IV with all members of the classroom community together.

During the first quarter of the two quarter class sequence, Philip visited class when invited by the instructor, usually every other Friday for peer editing days. Jan divided the class into two groups when Philip was present, giving him one group and taking the other herself. I observed that rather than contribute new definitions of “success” to the groups he joined, Philip reinforced those definitions of “success” he observed operating within the teacher’s instructions and emphases. Sometimes he would ask students to fill him in on what they had been working on in class, or recount to him the “necessary ingredients” they perceived Jan was looking for in a particular draft of a
The components of a “successful” essay that Philip fostered were in line with those the instructor mentioned. He helped students define writing tasks, explore ideas, and choose topics that would be responsive to the assignment (Ideas/Topic, category #3). He assisted students in exploring and choosing relevant detail for their essays by using a careful line of questioning (Detail/Development, category #4). He gave feedback on organization and structure by prodding students to defend a particular pattern of organization or explore alternate ways of organizing (Rhetorical Concerns, category #5). In all his classroom interactions with students, Philip appeared to take great care to remain within the definitions of “success” he observed Jan to set.

During Winter Quarter, I observed the same patterns in Philip’s interactions with students in the class and the same caution in reinforcing definitions of “success” he perceived to be operating within the classroom community. Jan required all students to attend a tutoring session with Philip early on in Winter quarter to discuss the error patterns in their first three essays. Much of this tutor’s interaction time with students during the first month of Winter quarter revolved around issues of grammar and mechanics reflected in the component of Language/Usage (1). In the middle of Winter quarter, Philip taught class by himself on one editing day, where he led a sharing session that focused on students reading their initial drafts aloud and listening for repetition, a lesson Jan had picked from the class text Telling Writing. The remainder of his interaction time with students during Winter quarter was spent helping them individually with any questions they had on any of their written drafts.

Many of the ideas about “successful” academic writing that Philip shared with me privately in interviews did not show up in his talk with students in class.
or in tutorials. In our discussions, he emphasized his belief that African-American students needed to come out of a freshman writing class with a metacognitive awareness of how they use language. He desired to foster within these students an ability and a willingness to apply what they learned, in working through one or two paragraphs with him in a tutoring session, as they revised their academic writing. Philip expressed concerns that students were not getting detailed enough (category #4) in their talk with one another in their editing groups. He said he would have liked to see students engage more in questioning each other in ways that challenged thinking and fostered revision, rather than stopping at the level of “that’s nice, I like it” (2/92). Philip also raised issues that touched on the component of Genre (category #7) as he questioned the value of assigning personal, narrative writing in a university academic writing class.

Most students in this basic writing class attended tutoring sessions with Philip only when Jan made it mandatory to do so; if they had a choice, some of them chose to conference with Jan instead. Philip told me that students perceived him as “a person who is needed only in times of difficulty” (2/92). As such, I did not observe Philip in his role of tutor to be a significant influence on definitions of “successful” writing that were formed within this basic writing classroom community; rather, he reinforced definitions that were already operating.

Other University Influences

The fourth and final source of definitions of “successful” academic writing I will isolate from the class as a whole and examine contains a collection of “other” influences on this basic writing classroom community. The definitions of
"successful" academic writing that are discussed in this section come from either the writing textbook the teacher used or the basic writing program’s curriculum. These definitions have been gathered from observation and interview data.

Textbook

Ken Macrorie’s text entitled Telling Writing influenced all the members of this basic writing classroom community by providing the terminology they used to talk about writing. On the first day a reading assignment from the Macrorie text was discussed in class, Jan expressed her attitude towards it in her comment “I love this book!” (9/91). Macrorie’s terms were consistently used throughout both quarters in this classroom community by the instructor, tutor, and students to talk about “success” within a piece of writing. The eight categories that emerged as components of “successful” academic writing within this classroom community are reflective of many of the descriptions and instructions Macrorie uses at various points in his textbook. The following discussion of these eight categories is based on community members’ discussion and use of Macrorie’s text and terms that were gathered during classroom observations.

Components of “success” that fall within the category of Language/Usage (1) were mentioned in Telling Writing in various ways. Rules and exercises for mechanics and grammar were part of class assignments at the beginning of the second quarter. Diction was stressed in emphasis on effective word choice, and in advice to avoid a “dull buzz” in repeating words unnecessarily. Guidelines were given concerning when to “tighten” a piece of writing by deleting unnecessary words or “sharpen” by substituting for empty words. Components
for “success” that fall within the category of Voice/Style (2) reflected an emphasis on “honesty” in writing and avoidance of “Engfish,” or textbook language. Help on starting a piece of narrative writing, which reflected the component of Ideas/Topic (3), directed students to think about a “once” in their lives that would be potentially interesting to a reader.

The category of Detail/Development (4) was addressed in several ways. “Telling Facts” were emphasized as a way to establish details such as size or intensity, the kinds of details that could lead the reader to a generalization about the event or thing being described. “People Talking” was introduced as a way to incorporate dialogue into a piece of writing to show the reader detail instead of telling about it. “Opposites” were stressed as an alternate way to describe something by telling what it is not or by contrasting it to something. Gathering detail in written responses to literature was suggested by means of a “two-fold response” in which students were instructed to quote specific passages from a text and talk about how they add up to meaning.

Components that reflected Rhetorical Concerns (5) dealt with beginnings and endings of essays. Students were instructed to use “Telling Facts” at the beginning of an essay to draw a reader into their writing; they were likewise warned to avoid “dribbling an ending” by going beyond the place where they should have stopped. The component of Reception by Audience (6) could be found in Macrorie’s instruction to use “fabulous realities” to lead the reader on a journey of delight and surprise, one that avoids repetition and overstating the obvious. Components that reflected the category of Genre (7) dealt with recognizing and including the “necessary ingredients” for a particular written genre.
These components of “successful” writing from the Macrorie text were present in the assigned readings and in class and editing group discussions. Jan used them consistently; in turn, students followed her example and incorporated these terms into their everyday talk about writing. Terms such as “telling fact” or “tighten” and “sharpen” were in most of the students’ vocabularies by the time they finished this two quarter basic writing sequence. In this way, Macrorie’s emphases in his textbook, along with his terminology, both influenced and reinforced the definitions of “success” that were operating in the classroom community.

Curriculum

The curriculum that framed the everyday learning situations in this basic writing classroom community was an adaptation of the writing curriculum laid out in David Bartholomae and Anthony Petrosky’s book Facts, Artifacts, and Counterfacts. Bartholomae and Petrosky’s curriculum centers around reading and writing tasks that deal with the topic of “growth and change in adolescence” as it exposes students to autobiographical and personal narrative writing. Influences from this curriculum were explored through interviews with the classroom instructor, Jan Fox, and with the director of the university’s basic writing program, Lillian Wood. The master course syllabus for the basic writing program at this university incorporated autobiographical and fictional readings as a springboard for critical writing assignments, which drew from students’ personal experiences as well as from assigned readings. Jan Fox’s syllabus for her class modeled the contents and the philosophy of this master course syllabus.
Both Jan and Lillian emphasized that the Bartholomae curriculum was modified in this particular university’s basic writing program. Students at this university were exposed to a certain type of critical inquiry through writing about “growth and change in adolescence,” in which they learned to do the following: reach beyond ordinary perceptions or commonplace descriptions in their writing to explore ideas and constructs that were more complicated; generalize from specific cases to find patterns; generate theory and support that theory with relevant examples; incorporate other voices in their writing. One goal that appeared to be central to this basic writing program’s approach to teaching underprepared freshmen was that all students in the program learn to value their own thoughts and gain some sense of voice and authority in their writing. Lillian defined students’ authority in thinking and in writing as “trusting their own perspective on writing ... so that they can sustain a dialogue within their writing, they can get into their writing and tussle with it” (5/92). Jan described such “tussling” as desimplifying or “complicating” ideas, something she pushed students to do by keeping the question “why” in the forefront of their writing: she believed that “the most valuable tool we can send them out with, I think, is that one word, ‘why,’ so that they can keep writing to discover” (3/92).

Both Lillian and Jan emphasized that classroom instructors needed to be “respectful, non-judgmental, or non-canonical in their acceptance of students’ views” if they were to foster the development of the kind of voice and authority in students’ writing that they desired (5/92). But beyond functioning in the “support role” of helping students adjust to academic writing and feel good about themselves as writers, Lillian stressed that classroom instructors also needed to realize they fulfill a “social role” as well, as intermediaries between the individual students and the demands of the larger university community (7/92).
Both Jan and Lillian agreed that students faced a complex task in internalizing a particular community's standards for "successful" writing. Jan placed this task within the context of components of "success" she felt operated within the larger academic community, which included such concerns as being good "consumers" of education, knowing how to ask appropriate questions, and taking reading notes that re-shape a written text into a personalized version (2/92).

Keeping in mind the picture that has emerged in this chapter concerning what components of "successful" academic writing and what sources for definitions of "success" the freshman basic writers valued, we can see some of the complex issues that surround teaching and learning in an introductory level university writing classroom. There were tensions operating between the goals the instructor expressed and the message that the students received daily through the practices of the members of their classroom community. The instructor's goal of fostering students' voices and authority as they learned to use writing to discover appears problematic within the constraints of a system which requires ultimate accountability to an authority figure who is required to assign letter grades to a final product.

**Summary**

Within Chapter V I have classified and examined the definitions for "successful" academic writing that operated within this particular basic writing classroom community, and I have provided the classroom context for how these definitions came to be by exploring the sources of students, instructor, tutor, and
other university influences. In addition, I have narrowed my focus within the larger classroom community concerning the source of "student" to examine definitions of "success" from the viewpoints of five individual students. In Chapter VI, I will explore how these five case study students applied definitions of "successful" academic writing to their own work and examine what these five students said about who or what influenced how they selected and applied particular definitions of "successful" writing.
CHAPTER VI
DEFINITIONS OF “SUCCESSFUL” ACADEMIC WRITING APPLIED:
COMMUNITY INFLUENCES ON THE WRITINGS OF
FIVE CASE STUDY STUDENTS

When we talk about our papers in class, I thought it was just going
to be something like, we read our papers, and the teacher makes a
few comments. But I'm glad it wasn't like that. It's like, we read our
papers and the teacher makes a few comments, and the students
make a few comments, and therefore you get a broad view from
someone like your peers or someone on your level, and someone
on a different level, like the teacher. (William, 12/91)

Students in basic writing classroom community I studied found that they
were offered a "broad view" of feedback on their writing, both through group
learning situations and appointments for individual conferences offered within
their class. "Success" in their academic writing was negotiated, to some extent,
within the context of these students' interactions with the instructor, the tutor, and
their peers. Based on the oral and written feedback from these sources,
students drafted, revised, and edited their essays to in accordance with certain
notions of "successful" academic writing that operated within their classroom
community.
The definitions of "successful" academic writing that were provided in Chapter V showed the diversity of perceptions about and experiences with academic writing that were present among students, the instructor, and the tutor in this particular basic writing classroom community. Where Chapter V highlighted these definitions of "successful" academic writing that operated within the classroom community and detailed the influences that various sources had on these definitions, it is the purpose of Chapter VI to discuss the written products that emerged as these definitions of "successful" academic writing were applied by individual students within the classroom community. Information from the five case study students' drafts of their academic writing will be valuable, at this point, to relate how selected students in this class chose to apply these definitions of "successful" academic writing to the written drafts and revisions of their assigned essays. In addition to examining case study students' applications of definitions of "success," this chapter will also focus on the sources of influence that these students looked to as they chose to make the applications that they did.

**Overview**

In this chapter, I will show how the definitions of successful" academic writing that were important to the members of the basic writing classroom community that I studied were applied within selected pieces of assigned writing. I will examine, specifically, what actions case study students took in response to peer, tutor, and teacher oral and written feedback on their drafts. In addition, I will use a revision classification scheme to detail changes between
drafts. These changes will be juxtaposed with the definitions of “success” that case study students applied to these written products, as evidenced in their revisions and their talk about their revisions. Finally, I will look at sources of influence on these revisions to explore to what extent the group learning situations available in this specific basic writing classroom may have influenced these students in composing written products that meet their classroom community standards of “successful” academic writing.

Chapter VI is divided into three main sections. In the first section, I will show how the five case study students applied the classroom community definitions of “success” to their writings and revisions, by discussing the revision classification scheme I devised and employed to describe the changes these students made between their written drafts. In the second section, I will outline with whom the case study students collaborated in order to effect the changes that were made in the drafts of their written essays. I will draw on data for written recommended/actual changes that were tallied in each draft of the three assigned essays being studied for each case study student. In the third section, I will draw on questionnaire, observation, and interview data from within the classroom community that relays the perceptions of these case study students toward the influences of their instructor, their peers, and the tutor.

Definitions of “Successful” Academic Writing:

Individual Applications

The preceding chapter highlighted individual definitions of the components of “successful” academic writing that the five case study students
said they applied to their final written products for this particular basic writing class. For that discussion, I referred to eight categories of “successful” academic writing that had emerged from interview, observation, and questionnaire data; these categories of the components of “success” had been detailed in Chapter V for the class as a whole, before being discussed for the case study students in particular. I will now turn to examine the five case study students’ academic writing that was produced within the classroom community where these definitions of “success” were operating. In so doing, I will explore how students applied these definitions of “success” to their academic writing.

Within this section, I will provide an explanation of the categories in a revision classification scheme I used to code changes between students’ written drafts. This detailing of categories will be followed by an examination of case study students’ revisions that were coded and tallied within each revision category, including a table that displays the proportions of revisions that each case study student made within each revision category. I will conclude this section with a discussion that juxtaposes the definitions of “successful” academic writing with the revisions that were coded and tallied in the five case study students’ written essays.

**Revision Classification Scheme**

During data collection, I had gathered all written drafts for three major assigned essays that the five case study students had composed over the two course sequence. Using a revision classification scheme that I adapted from several existing schemes (Sommers, 1980; Bridwell, 1980; Faigley & Witte,
1984), I coded and analyzed all changes between drafts in these three assigned essays that had been made by each case study student. In analyzing changes between drafts, I was looking for evidence in their writing of those things that students felt were important to change; in addition, I was looking for evidence of whether these students’ changes in their written drafts were based on their own preferences or input from the instructor, their peers, or the tutor.

The revision classification scheme I devised to code changes between case study students’ written drafts contains seven categories; six of these categories reflect actual changes these students made in their drafts, and the seventh reflects recommended changes noted in the margins or between the lines of the text. These seven categories I used to code students’ revisions were as follows: 1) Changes on Surface Level; 2) Additions to Text; 3) Deletions from Text; 4) Substitutions within Text; 5) Permutations (rearrangements) within Text; 6) Substantial Changes within Text; and 7) Interlinear and Marginal Notations Related to Change. The full text of this revision classification scheme I used and all accompanying tally sheets is found in Appendix E. I will next provide definitions of each of these seven categories of revisions, with brief examples drawn from the data to illustrate how these categories describe the changes between drafts found within the case study students’ academic writing.

1. Changes on Surface Level

The first category of surface level changes includes changes in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and abbreviation from one draft to the next; changes in verb tense, number, and modality; changes in singular and plural forms of nouns and pronouns; changes in formatting such as single or double spacing, adding headings, or changing paragraphing; and changes in aesthetics such
as typeface or size and style of printer font.

**Examples of coding within category #1.**

1.1 Spelling: “varriable” changed to “variable”
1.2 Punctuation: “fathers” changed to “father's”
1.3 Abbreviations: “Here's” changed to “Here is” or “Cincy” to “Cincinnati”
1.4 Singular vs. Plural: “three day” changed to “three days”
1.5 Verb Form: “should have happen” changed to “happened”
1.6 Format: addition of headings, such as Craig’s “Inner Rose” and “Outer Rose” or Raycha’s “Positive” and “Negative”
1.7 Aesthetics: found in Todd’s triple spacing for effect, or Raycha’s using italics to set off interior monologue

2. Additions to Text

The second category encompasses all additions students made to their texts, at the word, phrase/clause, or sentence level.

**Examples of coding within category #2.**

2.1 Word: Renay’s emphasis on the other new girl in the class, by adding the word “also” in her sentence “This girl named Keeshia was [also] new.”
2.2 Phrase/clause: Raycha’s addition of the phrase “he might as well say” after a quote to mark that the quote belonged to her father.
2.3 Sentence: Craig’s addition of the sentence “But now we’re in Junior High” to explain a time change in his narrative.

3. Deletions from Text

The third category encompasses all deletions students made within their texts, at the word, phrase/clause, or sentence level.
Examples of coding within category #3.

3.1 Word: Todd deleted the preposition “to” in his change from “My second to oldest brother helped me” to “My second oldest brother helped me.”

3.2 Phrase/clause: Raycha deleted the repetition in her sentence “I felt strongly against her, I felt that she was a bitch” to make it read “I felt strongly against her, she was a bitch.”

3.3 Sentence: William deleted the sentence “And they both did” from the end of one of his stories about his friends because he felt it was repetitious.

4. Substitutions within Text

The fourth category encompasses all substitutions students made within their texts, at the word, phrase/clause, or sentence level.

Examples of coding within category #4.

4.1 Word: Raycha’s substituted “bitch” for “chick” to add force to her description of her new stepmother.

4.2 Phrase/clause: Renay’s substituted “Some of us claim we never need ...” for “Some think they never need ...”

4.3 Sentence: Craig substituted a sentence that more fully disclosed his meaning in the following revision of an exchange:

first draft: “Finesse the girls? What do you mean?”

“Never mind. I’ll tell you later.”

revision: “Finesse the girls? What do you mean?”

“I mean that it’s a poor rat that only has one hole to run into.”

5. Permutations (Rearrangements) within Text

The fifth category encompasses all permutations or rearrangements that students made within their texts at the word, phrase/clause, or sentence level.
Examples of coding within category #5.

5.1 Word: William's rearrangement of "Me and Wesley" to read "Wesley and I" [This change also involved substitution].

5.2 Phrase/clause: Raycha moved her phrase "he had a lot of unsupervised time" from the middle of a description of a classmate to the end, as a summary statement for the evidence she had presented.

5.3 Sentence: William moved his sentence "Always keep pride in yourself, your history, and never be afraid to ask an intelligent question" to the end of a story he told about a confrontation with a high school history teacher, in order to emphasize the point he was making more strongly.

6. Substantial Changes in Text

The sixth category is divided into two sections: substantial changes that are reflected in a partial rewrite of the essay, and substantial changes that are reflected in a total rewrite of the essay. Partial rewrites included large sections of change (1/3 to 1/2 of the essay) by addition, deletion, substitution, or permutation. Total rewrites had few or no one to one correspondences with material from a previous draft.

Examples of coding within category #6.

6.1 Partial Rewrite: William rewrote Essay #4 after his second draft, when he perceived the instructor could not grasp his original twist on a "coaches and players" metaphor that he wanted to incorporate. He retained some of his examples about adolescence that he wanted to use, but he settled on using a "candy and vegetables" metaphor that he did not like as well.

6.2 Total Rewrite: Lena abandoned her original metaphor for her Essay #5 after three drafts, when she felt she could not extend her comparison of adolescence to a roll of toilet paper being unraveled. She chose a new metaphor describing herself and her classmates as a garden of
flowers, retaining nothing from her original start.

7. Interlinear and Marginal Notations Related to Change

The seventh category reflects comments and notations found in students’ written drafts relating to the first five categories for revision mentioned above (i.e., Surface Level, Additions, Deletions, Substitutions, Permutations), and a sixth one of general/non-specific notations. This seventh category was used to code students’ comments and notations addressed to themselves, or the instructor’s comments and notations, or their peer’s notations.

Examples of coding within category #7.

7.1 Surface Level: comments and notations that recommended changes in grammar, mechanics, capitalization, spelling, paragraphing, and formatting

7.2 Additions to Text: comments and questions such as: what, what else, why, how, how so, more detail, what happened, where

7.3 Deletions from Text: comments and notations such as “tightly” or “repeats”; deletion also suggested by bracketing words or drawing lines through text

7.4 Substitutions within Text: comments and questions such as: sharpen, clarify, which ones, how, how old, who

7.5 Permutations within Text: usually suggested by brackets or arrows drawn within text

7.6 General/Non-specific Notations for Change: a catch-all category for unique comments and notations, including instances of student self-talk (which probably only made sense to the student); underlined or circled words that had no other indication of recommended change associated with them; question marks in the margin; or non-specific directives such as “read this aloud”
The seven categories of the Revision Classification Scheme that have just been outlined were used in this study to describe changes between drafts in the five case study students’ academic writing. The discussion now turns to these changes between drafts as evidence of these students’ applications of definitions of “successful” academic writing.

**Case Study Students’ Revisions**

As part of my data analysis, I coded and analyzed all case study students’ changes between drafts in Essays #3, #4, and #5 within the preceding seven categories of the Revision Classification Scheme. Categories one through six were used to code actual changes that appeared in the texts of these students’ drafts as I compared them side by side; category seven was used to code recommended changes that were “penciled in” between the lines or written in the margins of each draft. What follows is a detailing of each case study students’ actual changes, or revisions, between drafts that were coded within categories one through six of the Revision Classification Scheme. A discussion of the recommended changes that were coded in the seventh category, interlinear and marginal notations related to change, will be provided in the final section of this chapter.

The actual changes that the five case study students chose to make in their written drafts, which were coded within the first six categories of the Revision Classification Scheme, are represented in Table 11. Revisions coded in the category Changes on Surface Level (1) include any changes students made in grammar, punctuation, spelling, or format. Revisions coded in Additions to Text (2) represent additional material students generated, while
those coded in Deletions from Text (3) represent material that they edited out. Revisions coded within the category of Substitutions within Text (4) represent students' rethinking of material, while those coded in Permutations within Text (5) represent their efforts to rearrange existing material. The category of Substantial Changes in Text (6) represents partial or total rewrites of material. In the following table, proportions of total revisions that were coded in each category are provided for each case study student.

Table 11
Proportions of Changes in Case Study Students' Written Drafts Coded Within Categories of Revision Classification Scheme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Proportion of Total Changes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Raycha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n = 878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Surface Level Changes</td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Additions</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Deletions</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Substitutions</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Permutations</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Substantial Changes</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. n = total number of changes within all categories.

Some notable patterns emerge in the data displayed in Table 11. For all five case study students, the category of Additions to Text (2) contains the greatest proportion of total changes made between drafts. Likewise, for all five
students, the category of Changes on Surface Level (1), which includes changes in spelling, punctuation, and grammar, contains the second greatest proportion of total changes made between drafts. Such total agreement among first and second proportion rankings for the changes between drafts for all five case study students’ revisions reflects a prominent emphasis in the classroom community on sufficient detail and surface level correctness in academic essays.

The ranking of proportions of changes made by the five case study students differs slightly among the remainder of the revision categories. For Todd and Renay, the category of Deletions from Text (3) contains the third greatest proportion of total changes they made between their written drafts, and the category of Substitutions within Text (4) contains the fourth. For Raycha, Craig, and William, the opposite is true; the third greatest proportion of total changes between their drafts exists within the category of Substitutions within Text (4), and the fourth exists within the category of Deletions from Text (3). This difference indicates that Todd and Renay were somewhat more inclined to delete material that did not seem to fit in their essays, rather than alter it; the opposite is indicated for Raycha, Craig, and William, who were somewhat more inclined to alter existing written material than delete it altogether.

The smallest proportions of case study students’ changes between drafts fell in categories five and six of the Revision Classification Scheme. Fifth in proportion of total changes between drafts were the categories of Permutations within Text (5) for William and Renay, and Substantial Changes in Text (6) for Raycha, Craig, and Todd. These proportions were reversed for the sixth place ranking; William and Renay made the least amount of changes that fell within the category of Substantial Changes in Text (6), while Raycha, Craig, and Todd
made the least amount of changes that fell within the category of Permutations within Text (5). Renay and William showed a greater willingness than the other three students to shift existing material and try it out in a different location within their texts. Raycha, Craig, and Todd showed a slightly greater preference than the other two students for rewriting material rather than shifting it within their texts.

The proportions of case study students' changes between drafts that fell within the various categories of the Revision Classification Scheme indicate that certain types of revisions were more prevalent than others in their written texts. The types of revisions that these students performed more often in their writing reflect the emphases within their classroom community on certain components of a "successful" academic essay. At this point, it will be fruitful to examine the interplay between the components that defined a "successful" essay within the classroom community I studied and the applications of these definitions that are highlighted within students' changes between drafts and reflected in the categories of the Revision Classification Scheme. Such an examination will juxtapose the revision classification scheme I used with the definitions of "success" that were operating in the classroom community, in order to broaden the picture of the definitions of "success" these case study students applied to their written products.

Student Applications of Definitions of "Successful" Writing

Highlighted by Revision Classification Scheme

The seven categories of revision that have been outlined in the previous section reflect the five case study students' applications of definitions of
"successful" academic writing to the drafts of their assigned essays. These definitions for success, reflected in the eight components of "successful" academic writing that were discussed earlier in this chapter for each individual case studied, can be traced within the changes these students made between drafts of their essays. In further examining how these five case study students applied the classroom community definitions of "success" to their writings and revisions, I juxtaposed the categories in the "Classification Scheme for Components of Successful Academic Writing" with those in the "Revision Classification Scheme" in Figure 2. This figure offers added perspective on students' applications of community definitions of "success" by juxtaposing five of the eight Components of "Successful" Academic Writing with the seven categories of the Revision Classification Scheme. The components of "successful" academic writing that emerged as important in this classroom community, which are listed in the left column of Figure 2, were reflected in the revisions these case study students made in their written texts, which fell within the categories of revision listed in the right column of Figure 2. The components of "success" in the left column are linked with student revisions in the right column by means of lines that bracket each revision application with its corresponding component of "success."
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components of &quot;Successful&quot; Academic Writing</th>
<th>Revision Classification Scheme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Language/Usage</td>
<td>1.1 Changes in Spelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.2 Changes in Punctuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.4 Changes in Singular vs. Plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.5 Changes in Verb Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Deletions from Text</td>
<td>2. Additions to Text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(&quot;tightening&quot;)</td>
<td>4. Substitutions within Text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(&quot;sharpening&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Voice/Style</td>
<td>2. Additions to Text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Substitutions within Text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Detail/Development</td>
<td>2. Additions to Text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Partial Rewrites by Addition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Rhetorical Concerns</td>
<td>2. Additions to Text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Deletions within Text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Substitutions within Text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Permutations within Text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(any of these four employed to change introductions or conclusions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Reception by Audience</td>
<td>1.6 Changes in Format</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(paragraphing, headings)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Substantial Changes in Text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(partial or total rewrites)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Notations for Change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2

Student Applications: Categories of Components of "Successful" Academic Writing Juxtaposed with Categories of Revision Classification Scheme
The categories represented within the “Components of Successful Academic Writing” and the “Revision Classification Scheme” that are juxtaposed in Figure 2 are all replicated with their original names and category numbers, which I will use in my discussion (cf. Appendices D and E). As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the revision category of Additions to Text (2) contained the greatest proportion of changes that all case study students made between the drafts of their assigned essays. This category can be linked with definitions of “success” that reflect concerns about having enough detail and development in the body of an essay, about being “honest” and disclosing enough about a particular incident mentioned, or about adding material in the introduction or conclusion. The revision category of Changes on the Surface Level (1), which contained the second largest proportion of changes that all case study students made between drafts, reflects definitions of “successful” academic writing that require mechanical and grammatical correctness, along with evidence of proper form. Students’ revisions within this category included changes in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and format.

The revision category of Deletions from Text (3) was reflected in students’ “tightening” text by removing unnecessary words, or ending their narratives at appropriate points instead of dragging out their stories. The revision category of Substitutions within Text (4) can be linked to students’ “sharpening” text by substituting more lively or appropriate words or descriptions in the introduction, conclusion, or body of their essays; such substitutions often reflected students taking risks to expose their own feelings or voice more in their written texts. The revision category of Permutations within Text (5) reflects students’ rhetorical concerns with the way their written texts sounded and their willingness to experiment with words or chunks of text in different places within their essays.
Substantial Changes in Text (category #6) were most often produced in response to the instructor or a peer’s request for “more detail” in the essay. Students’ changes between drafts that were coded within this revision category, along with the category of Notations for Change (7), reflect the influence of the members of the basic writing classroom community (most notably the instructor) as “audience.”

In summary, the components of Detail/Development (4) and Language/Usage (1) that reflect definitions of “successful” academic writing that were operating in this basic writing classroom community were applied by the five case study students in the greatest proportions, as they added to their written texts or revised for mechanics or grammar. In the next section, I will build on this discussion of applications of definitions of “successful” writing by providing a detailed look at evidence in these students’ written texts concerning who influenced their applications.

**Influences on Individual Applications of “Successful” Academic Writing**

As a next step in my examination of the five case study students’ written products and the definitions of “successful” academic writing that they applied to these writings, I will discuss additional evidence of influence on these students’ applications of classroom community definitions of “success.” In this section, I will place these students’ revisions that have just been analyzed back within the context of their classroom community. I will do so by looking at the instances in which these five students responded to the written suggestions for change that
were offered by members of their classroom community by applying those suggestions within their written texts. I will discuss with whom the case study students collaborated in order to effect the changes that they made in their written drafts by drawing on data that reflects recommended/actual changes, which were tallied within category #7 of the Revision Classification Scheme (see Appendix E, "Interlinear and Marginal Notations Related to Change") for each draft of three assigned essays they wrote. As explained earlier in this chapter, the six divisions of revision category #7 of the Revision Classification Scheme reflected notations for change that were inserted into a text by a student himself or herself, the instructor, or peers. The focus of this discussion will remain fixed on evidence of student applications of recommended changes in their written drafts; it will highlight the sources of these recommendations that were coded within the six subdivisions of interlinear and marginal notations, which comprise category #7 of the Revision Classification Scheme. The case study students' perceptions toward the recommendations they received from their instructor, peers, or tutor will be the subject of discussion in the next section.

During data analysis, three sources of the changes that were recommended between case study students' written drafts were coded and tallied: self, instructor, and peer (see Appendix E for full text of Revision Classification Scheme Tally Sheets). Since most of the peer feedback in this classroom community was oral, there were few instances during the two course sequence in which peers noted written recommended changes on each others' drafts. For this reason, there is no peer data in Table 12 for two of the case study students, Craig and Todd. The tutor was not considered as a source for tallying recommended and actual changes between drafts, for he did not
provide students with written feedback on their drafts at any time during the two course sequence.

In Table 12 and the discussion that follows, sources for recommended changes between drafts will be paired with corresponding proportions of actual changes students made that could be traced to a particular recommendation in a subsequent draft. The proportions in Table 12 were obtained by dividing the total number of written recommendations from each source for each individual case study student into the number of changes made in a subsequent draft that could be attributed to that recommendation. My sense of these attributions was cross-checked with the case study students during discourse-based interviews and with the instructor during interviews and data analysis.

Table 12

Proportions of Recommended Changes That Became Actual Changes in Case Study Students’ Drafts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Source of Recommended Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raycha</td>
<td>.75  (n=127)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craig</td>
<td>.72  (n=79)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Todd</td>
<td>.59  (n=56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William</td>
<td>.44  (n=275)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renay</td>
<td>1.0  (n=52)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. n= Total recommended changes from each source (raw count).

* No written peer recommendations were received.
In looking at proportions for specific students, Raycha, Craig, and Renay all fall into the same pattern of following through with their own interlinear and marginal recommendations the most and with the instructor’s recommendations the second most. Renay made every change she recommended to herself in her written texts; Raycha and Craig made three fourths of the changes they suggested to themselves. In contrast, Todd and William show a slightly higher proportion of actual changes in their drafts in response to the instructor’s interlinear and marginal notations, as opposed to their own. William, as shown by data discussed previously, placed a high emphasis on grades and including the components of an academic essay that he perceived the instructor required. While Todd claimed he wrote mainly to please himself, he, too, understood the importance of grades at the university level and accepted the instructor’s “expert” status in the classroom.

Peers seemed to have the least status with each other in terms of written suggestions for change that were followed through. It is important to note that within this classroom, peers did not spend much classroom time responding to each others’ drafts by making notations on the drafts themselves. Raycha and Renay responded to their peers’ written recommendations in the lowest proportions when compared to their responses to self and the instructor. Renay did respond to almost half of her peer editor’s written recommendations; she worked with Bridget, who became a close friend to her in this class. William’s responses in the peer column are proportionately high because Raycha was his peer editor on the days students gave each other written feedback; however, where he thought very highly of her feedback and changed several items in his drafts accordingly, she did not reciprocate by making many changes in her written drafts in response to his feedback. Overall, Raycha and Craig enjoyed
the status of being regarded as the most effective peer editors in the class.

These descriptions of peer, instructor, and personal influence on students' changes in their written drafts provide a lead into the next section, which focuses in detail on these students' perceived influences that the sources of self, peer, instructor, and tutor had on their applications of community definitions of "successful" academic writing.

Perceived Influences on "Successful" Academic Writing: Community Building

In the previous sections, I detailed changes in case study students' written drafts and, through comparing recommended changes with actual changes in their drafts, discussed how they applied the definitions of successful academic writing that operated in their particular basic writing classroom community. This final section details students' perceived influences that the sources of self, peer, instructor, and tutor had on their applications of community definitions of "successful" academic writing. Within this section, I will explore who influenced how these definitions of "success" were applied by the five case study students within the daily context of their basic writing classroom. In so doing, I will highlight relationships within the classroom community as part of the "successful" processes that were deemed instrumental in fostering a "successful" product of academic writing.

While the elements of the classroom context described in Chapter III were similar for all fifteen students in this class, each student experienced this classroom context in different ways. One way that each individual perceived the
influences of classroom context was in terms of who influenced their academic writing, and the changes they made between drafts of this writing. Within this classroom community, case study students' perceived influences on their writing processes, reflected in part in their applications within their written products of definitions of "successful" academic writing, were also visible within their written responses in questionnaires, their oral responses in interview situations, and in their talk and action within their classroom setting.

Influences that these students mentioned and that I observed consistently included themselves, their peers, the instructor, the tutor, and other outside sources such as parents. These perceived sources of influence carried different amounts of "weight" with different students, regarding the changes they made between drafts in their written products. In addition, students' perceptions changed, over the six months' time they were part of this particular classroom community, regarding which source of influence they valued as primary.

The following table, Table 13, contains proportions that represent case study students' perceptions of who influenced the changes between their written drafts, calculated from a simple tally of these students' responses within the above categories of self, instructor, tutor, peer, other, to selected questions in Questionnaires #1 and #3. By comparing proportions of student responses within Questionnaire #1, administered the fourth day of class during Fall Quarter and Questionnaire #3, administered the last day of class during Winter Quarter, we can gain an idea of the influences that these sources within the community either gained or lost over a period of six months.
Table 13

Case Study Students' Perceived Influences on their Academic Writing, from Questionnaires #1 and #3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence</th>
<th>Case Study Student</th>
<th>Raycha</th>
<th>Renay</th>
<th>Todd</th>
<th>Craig</th>
<th>William</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Q#1</td>
<td>Q#3</td>
<td>Q#1</td>
<td>Q#3</td>
<td>Q#1</td>
<td>Q#3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutor</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. n = total number of influences mentioned.
Q#1 refers to Questionnaire #1, administered Fall 1991.
Q#3 refers to Questionnaire #3, administered Winter 1992.

The questionnaire data represented in Table 13 shows how perceptions of sources of influence changed for the five case study students from the beginning to the end of the two course basic writing sequence. At the beginning of the two-quarter sequence, proportions of responses to selected open-ended questions from Questionnaire #1 show that all students named "self" as the primary influence on the success of their academic writing. These students' responses fall on a continuum reflecting self as their sole influence (Todd), self as the primary influence among other lesser influences (Raycha and Renay) or self as equal influence with one other source (Craig) or two other
sources (William). Neither Raycha, Renay, nor Todd mentioned the instructor at the beginning as a perceived influence on the success of their academic writing; Craig placed the instructor as a source co-equal with self, and William indicated a three way equal split among influences of self, instructor and peer. These proportions for sources of influence in responses to Questionnaire #1 also display interesting gender-related patterns. Neither female student included the female instructor as a potential source of influence in her open-ended responses at the beginning of Fall Quarter; two of the three male students included the female instructor as having equal influence with themselves in the “success” of their academic writing. Neither Todd nor Craig indicated peers as having any influence; Raycha’s and Renay’s responses indicated their perception that peers had a slight influence.

For the second questionnaire administered at the end of the two course sequence, there was a change in that all five case study students gave responses that included the categories of self, peer, instructor as influences on their academic writing. The three students who had not named the instructor as a perceived influence on their academic writing in their responses at the beginning of the two course sequence mentioned her at the end in Questionnaire #3, with Raycha noting her influence in the highest proportion. Again, Craig and William noted the instructor’s influence in the same proportions that they noted self influence. Proportions of William’s responses were distributed among all members of the classroom community. In her responses Renay, even though she retained herself as her primary influence, also mentioned all members of the classroom community. Trends for all students moved towards more of a balance in their perceptions of who influences the “success” of their academic writing.
In addition to the references students made to sources of influence in their questionnaire responses, they also talked at length with me in interviews about sources of influence, and I observed them interacting with various sources within their basic writing classroom. However, the picture of sources of influence represented in the questionnaire data in Table 13 is representative of the kinds of information each of the case study students gave me in our conversations and the kinds of interactions I observed within the classroom.

Throughout both quarters in the basic writing sequence, influences from the sources of tutor were slight. No students included mention of a tutor in their initial open-ended responses to Questionnaire #1 in the first days of class. In their final questionnaires, Renay and William both mentioned that Philip had been helpful. Renay had asked Philip for individual help during Winter Quarter on two separate occasions, at the insistence of her editing partner Bridget, who was one of Philip's "regulars." William expressed his satisfaction during Winter Quarter that Philip helped him find patterns of error in his grammar and punctuation that alerted him to be able to look for such errors himself: "Philip also can give me some insight. Instead of just being in my room, trying to figure it out by myself, I ask" (1/92). Craig worked closely with Philip the first quarter, and not at all the second quarter. Raycha had kept only her first two required appointments with Philip Fall Quarter, skipping the others; she claimed that he didn't help her at all because he was too indirect in his suggestions -- she did not perceive him to be the "take charge" type of person she desired to challenge her thinking in her academic writing. Todd did not choose to initiate any contact with Philip, or even to keep his required appointments beyond the first one. Like Raycha and Craig, Todd preferred to conference with Jan, whose status they recognized as giver of the grade.
In speaking of self as the greatest source of influence, Renay and Todd both told me that they wrote to please themselves first and foremost:

Some of my things that are successful to me may not be successful to everybody else. If I like them, I think they are successful. (Renay, 10/91)

If I think my writing is good, then it is successful. Success resides in myself ... you have to first be at ease with yourself and the way you write. I have to feel right about my work myself, before I worry about what others say. The writing won't be right if it's not what I want it to be. It's a mistake to write and try to please someone else before you please yourself. (Todd, 10/91)

These two students were on the margins of the social structure of the class at the beginning of the Fall quarter. Todd, especially, preferred writing as a solitary act:

Other students can help me in some ways, but in some things, it's left up to me. I have to correct certain things. But sometimes... there are certain things I take in from a student if they try to help me. And other things, I think I'm all right doing it alone, going at it alone by myself. (Todd, 10/91)

Renay and Todd did, however, come to respond to certain people in the classroom community, to receive input on their drafts from peers. Renay had established a comfortable working relationship with Bridget by the end of the first quarter, that extended outside the classroom doors; Todd remained a loner until the last four weeks of class Winter Quarter, when Renay and Bridget began including him in their editing groups and Bridget asked his advice on her theory of adolescence essay. Todd's attitude towards peer editing changed by the end of the two course sequence, even though he told me that group work, at first, made him "kind of blocked in the brain" and "tongue-tied," because his words "didn't come out right" (10/91). As Todd learned to become somewhat comfortable in the class as a whole, his conversations with me included such
statements as “We all are in a group. We all together. We’re all in this together. We do everything together. I like that.” (12/91). By the end of the second quarter, he was telling me that “I just like working in groups. I don’t really like working that much as individuals. I like to, but I work better with people to help me” (2/92). This change in attitude marked social growth for Todd. Renay, on the other hand, did not seem to risk herself in a relationship with anyone else in the class besides Bridget. She seemed to watch other peers from a distance, desiring to be included but not daring to initiate contact. When I asked Renay who her number one pick for a peer editor was, she named Raycha without a moment’s hesitation, even though she had only worked with her twice in six months when Jan had assigned them to the same editing group. Next on Renay’s list of peer editors was Bridget, with whom she worked consistently, then Roger, then Craig. Renay remarked that these people knew what they were talking about; she looked for “serious” students to give her feedback that she could use to improve her essays.

Renay and Todd also expressed the value they placed on the instructor’s input, even though they were not as vocal about it as Raycha or William. Todd valued Jan’s feedback and the chance to change his writing in response to her comments:

The comments helped a lot, to get feedback. In high school, we didn’t get a lot of feedback of what was right. We just wrote it and got a grade right then, we didn’t get a chance to improve it. I like the chance to get to go over it, going through drafts. (12/91)

Renay looked at Jan as someone who gave the grade; to her, succeeding in her academic writing entailed knowing how to respond to what the instructor wanted in an assignment:
It's important to comprehend the assignment that the teacher wants you to do. If you don't understand what she want you to do, then I guess you can't do it. (Renay, 3/92)

Renay was conscientious to make all the changes that Jan suggested on her written drafts: “If Jan made any comments, I'd try to fix it. So I tried to do that. Her comments were helpful to me, to make me write better papers (3/92). Improvement in writing and getting better were the ways these two students expressed their striving for “success” in the academic writing.

William and Craig were more comfortable socially in the classroom community. They both appeared balanced in their approach to giving and receiving feedback with their peers. Craig said that his main criterion for choosing peer responders was proximity; he asked whomever was the closest, perhaps because he perceived that anyone else in the class would know more than he knew. Since Sam lived in his dorm, Craig asked him questions most frequently. Like many others in the class, William preferred Raycha as a peer responder:

‘Cause she’s up front. She’ll tell you like it is. She’ll tell you what you need done, and what not. I've been in some groups where I read my paper, and it would be like a second draft, and ‘Oh, it’s fine,’ that’s the response I’d get. I'd be thinking to myself, I don't feel comfortable about this paper, so I don't think it’s fine. But if you hand a second draft to Raycha, or read it to her, she would tell you what was the problem with it. You hand her a final one, she’d tell you what was wrong with it)” (12/92)

William saw value in peer editing because of the learning opportunities it provided:

It's helpful, 'cause it's easy for you to see someone else's mistake, before you see your own mistake. 'Cause if I'm criticizing someone else, then I could look at my own paper, then it's easier for me to see that mistake that I made, just by criticizing someone else's mistake. Usually you make the same mistake that the person you're criticizing made. (11/91)
However, William also felt that success in writing was found in knowing what peer advice to take and what to discard:

Last Friday in groups, I had a lot of comments. But they didn’t tell me anything bad about my paper. I don’t know if students are capable of bringing up those kinds of comments or not. The teacher, see, she’s experienced in that. So peer comments can help, but it’s best for the teacher to say. (William, 10/91)

Even though he valued peer input, William acknowledged that the instructor had the final say:

Cheryl: “Did you have any preference for a peer responder?”
William: “Jan!” [laughter]
Cheryl: “So the teacher is your number one pick!”
William: “Yes!” (3/92)

Just like the other members of this classroom community, William and Craig understood that the ultimate definitions for “success” resided in Jan.

Raycha, who started out with a perception that self was the prime influence on successful academic writing, came to view the instructor as the prime influence. As an “authoritative” source of influence on her writing, Raycha preferred Jan over Philip. Raycha claimed, “When I fix my drafts, I only read the one Jan puts comments on. Then I fix it” (3/92). For peer editors, Raycha called Craig “good” because he was honest with her. She thought William was “cautious” editor because he was afraid she would be mad if he said there was something wrong with her paper. Raycha preferred Roger over all others for the same reason:

He’s honest. He’ll tell me what’s wrong and what’s right. Some of the others won’t tell me what’s wrong, they just say ‘that’s good.’ But there’s always something to fix in a paper. (2/92)

Raycha also mentioned outside sources of influence on her writing. Toward the beginning of the first quarter, she relied on long distance phone calls with her
mother to brainstorm because “she gives me great ideas” (11/91). For her final essay, Raycha also mentioned talking her ideas over with her father, who helped her think through her metaphor that linked adolescent growth with the positive and negative charges within a flashlight. Overall, Raycha exhibited an awareness of the classroom community and how the individuals within it interacted to learn and grow; in musing over the previous six months in her final interview she observed that “Knowing people helps you to be honest ... everybody can share and learn from everybody else” (3/92).

It is clear, from looking at the picture of the basic writing classroom community that emerges from the multiple sources of data provided, that all five case study students experienced changes in their perceptions of who influenced the “success” of their academic writing. These students came to value each others’ input and honesty, in varying degrees, as such input and honesty led their drafting and revising in directions that they perceived the instructor desired for them to head. Their community offered richness and possibility within relationships; however, they consistently emphasized the relationship of instructor/student as being primary. The democracy that appeared to be flourishing in the classroom was subtly checked by students’ perceptions of standards of “success” that operated in the wider academic community, which reinforced their previously ingrained behaviors of looking to an authority figure.
Summary

This chapter has focused on the changes between drafts of the case study students' assigned essays, which they negotiated with various sources within the classroom community as they worked toward their final written products. Case study students' applications of community definitions of "successful" academic writing to their written revisions have been examined. In addition, evidence of the sources that influenced these students' changes between drafts, as they worked to produce "successful" academic writing, has been presented. In Chapter VII, I will summarize the main themes that emerged from my data analysis, and I will discuss the implications of the students' primary reliance on the instructor as a source of influence, even though the philosophy and pedagogy of this basic writing classroom, which was based on an adaptation of the Bartholomae model, fostered "liberating" personal voice and "empowering" individual writers.
CHAPTER VII
THE PROMISE OF SUCCESS

Freshmen come to a college or university with certain preconceived notions of what it will mean to be a successful writer at the college or university level. They have gleaned those notions from sources such as high school teachers, peers, or parents; they have based their expectations of academic writing on their own experiences with “school” writing in grades 9-12. They believe they are familiar with the practices they need to engage in and the kinds of products they need to produce in order for their academic writing to be judged as “successful” in a university classroom setting.

Freshmen arrive on campus with various understandings of the processes that will bring them success in university level academic writing. Some students believe success will come by having the right process-oriented practices in place -- by making sure they include webbing or brainstorming or some evidence of pre-writing, by writing the required number of drafts, by editing right before the due date to polish up the final copy. Others have been trained to write an outline and a topic sentence before they begin writing the essay itself. Often, these students learn to write their outlines after they finish, taking pride in the thought they could fool the teacher who required them to produce an outline first. For some students, “success” entails a primary emphasis on the structure and form of the written product that is submitted for a
grade. Doing it "right" means starting an essay with a thesis sentence and supporting that thesis in five paragraphs. It also means purging all mechanical and grammatical error from the final copy.

For some freshmen, research paper writing is the kind of academic writing they expect in college. The authority for this kind of writing comes from the words and thoughts of others that are gathered from books. Some students are carefully trained to document every thought they commit to paper as originating from an authoritative, printed source. Some have never been allowed to put their own opinions in papers, have never been permitted to allow their voice to come through in their writing. Some have never written an academic paper that contains interview data, which values the voices of the people around them. Many students have learned well that authority lay in other, not in self.

Freshmen with these kinds of experiences and expectations were enrolled in the particular introductory level university basic writing classroom that I studied. When they entered this classroom in September 1991, they encountered an instructor who encouraged critical inquiry through writing, inquiry which included the exploration of personal voice. Writing was taught and talked about as discovery of meaning. For students who had spent several years learning to incorporate someone else's meaning into their essays, the first few weeks in this basic writing classroom amounted to culture shock.

At the beginning of the two quarter basic writing sequence, certain attitudes and behaviors based on past beliefs and practices concerning academic writing were prevalent among the students in this classroom community. At first, they resisting letting their voices come out as they kept their opinions to themselves. They clung to previous ways of approaching writing
that had worked in the past, choosing safe or sterile topics that could fit neatly into a prescribed number of paragraphs. They attempted to mold their ideas and write for another's expectations. They tried to figure out what the instructor wanted, and they gave her writings born of these perceptions for the first assigned essay. Even as they prided themselves in being able to do this, they became upset when this old way of "psyching the teacher out" was no longer the rule of the game. They became even more upset in finding out that the game, as they had perceived it, had been altered.

Students were challenged in their reading journals to wrestle with text and write about the places in the texts that they did not understand. Because their writing in previous school contexts had been done for the purpose of proving they did know and did understand, they found this challenge extremely difficult. They realized that it was risky to expose the places where they had questions, the places where they did not have their thoughts all together. Where the public self these students had been taught to portray on paper was knowledgeable and authoritative with borrowed authority, this basic writing course asked them to do writing in which they assumed their own authority in ways they had never done before. They were asked to use writing heuristically, to discover and explore possibilities. An essay could end with questions, with things that still needed to be explored. In her evaluation, the instructor gave these students latitude if they had not tied up everything in neat little packages by the end of the essay. It was evident that most of the freshmen in this basic writing class had not been given permission by previous teachers in previous classroom communities to use writing to explore, much less to be messy in that exploration. They avoided the chaos of exploration because it was not neat, because they recognized it might get them into trouble by taking them down an
alternate path in a direction they did not originally plan to go.

In this particular basic writing classroom, it was also acceptable if all the mechanics and grammar in the final draft of an essay were not perfect. The instructor in this class did not emphasize surface error very much the first quarter, and only moderately so the second quarter. The message within the written text was elevated as being of the prime importance; as long as the medium did not get in the way of the message too much, the medium was allowed to be imperfect. The instructor stressed that because much of university writing is thinking and hammering out ideas, much of it by necessity is unpolished and unfinished, because there always seems to be another layer of meaning waiting to be discovered. The instructor’s actions and words conveyed the message that there were times and places for polished, finished products, but there should also be times and places for messiness and exploration; it is in the womb of such that great ideas are born.

During the course of the two quarter sequence, students were introduced to a practice described by the instructor as “letting your voice emerge in your writing.” They were challenged to write more and more, to fully disclose details about chosen topics. They were asked “why” repeatedly until they became so weary of hearing it from others that they started asking it of themselves first. In so doing, they internalized that voice that continually asked for them to risk and disclose themselves in offering their opinions within the community forum. Peers asked each other “why” and “what,” demanding more detail, at first because they observed this kind of questioning in the instructor’s talk and behavior, later as they came to see the necessity of asking “why” and “what” because they realized their readers needed to know. The influence of the classroom community was reflected as students took responsibility for their own
learning, as they explored their own thoughts and reached for the success that was promised through hard work and a willingness to take risks.

Students pursued success in the actions they took to get their ideas on paper, in the ways they permitted their feelings to flow. They reached for success in their writing processes, in adopting an attitude of honesty or in leaving behind their once-treasured habits of padding an essay with “B.S.” or “cushion.” They negotiated success as they shared their drafts and revisions within their classroom community, bouncing perceptions off each other. They risked letting their voices come through their written expressions and learned to trust each other not only with the content of their personal writing but also with the process of making that writing come alive on paper.

Students found success in their written products as they were able to arrange words and ideas on the page to reach certain audiences for certain purposes. They became willing to move beyond surface level revisions and “get dirty” working with a text until it reflected their meaning. They did not put aside all considerations for surface level editing, but rather expanded their repertoire of what they were willing to change once it was committed to paper. Students tried different ways of changing their writing. As they searched for images that conveyed their ideas they tried on metaphors and discarded them; they even drew pictures to help them get to the heart of what they wanted to say. Most students in this class learned to word process. They discovered that drafting and revising were not drudgery with a computer, for they did not need to recopy everything constantly. Prospects of a neat, finished copy came within their grasp. They experimented with layouts and fonts. Raycha, who had never touched a keyboard before the first quarter, became the “computer queen.” She spent a great deal of time the second quarter in the computer lab composing,
showing Roger and any other class members who came over how to play with fonts and make their finished products look “sharp.”

In reflecting on personal “successes” over the two course sequence, students produced various responses. Some, like Renay, were simply glad to have completed the basic writing requirement. She claimed no goals when she began this two course writing sequence, other than to finish with good grades so she could go on to the freshman writing course that would give her the credit she needed for the Freshman English requirement. Raycha claimed she learned a great deal about being honest and letting her feelings flow, even though she admitted that she did not believe she would learn anything when she began the two course sequence. Todd remarked that he did not think he would ever forget to add more detail to his initial drafts. William said he had become more confident, a confidence that was a foundation for the strong convictions and clear voice embedded in his final theory of adolescence essay. Craig did not believe he had a voice that could come through in his essays to speak the language necessary to produce a piece of “successful” academic writing, even though he had produced an autobiographical essay that was judged as being “successful” according to the other members of his classroom community. Because he had been told throughout twelve years of schooling he could not write properly, he was unable to recognize that a piece of his writing could be “successful,” claiming he had no idea how to duplicate his effort to produce another “A” paper.

In all, freshmen came into this university basic writing community looking for “success” in academic writing to conform to certain beliefs and practices they had come to associate with it through their previous experiences in their high school writing communities. They left their university writing classroom
experiencing success in their academic writing by altering many of their beliefs and practices to conform to the notions of “success” that were operating within their classroom community. Students had come into this writing class with certain notions of what had to be in an academic essay in order for it to get a good grade from the teacher. Most of them left with altered notions of writing as a way for them to express themselves for various purposes and audiences. Peers and tutor had been included as potential audiences in this community, even though a final copy of each assigned essay was still submitted to the instructor for a grade.

Even though I observed many changes in these freshman writers’ beliefs and practices concerning academic writing over the six months I spent among them, I also sensed tensions that arose between their past and present beliefs and practices concerning “successful” writing. The student voices in this classroom community speak of the tension between writing as a solitary act and writing as a communal act. They reveal the extent to which students wrestle with the question, “How much will I permit my writing to be influenced by the expectations of another?” These voices testify of the decisions students sometimes make to write “their way” regardless of what anyone else may think. In addition, they highlight the choices that face student writers in an academic discourse community as they wrestle with decisions of writing to please themselves versus writing to please the one who will evaluate their final product. In doing so, they also reveal these students’ practices of accepting advice from peers as they perceive this advice to be in accordance with the guidelines set by the one who will evaluate the final product for a grade.

This evaluation for a grade component of this class was in tension with what had been accomplished in creating a genuine forum for sharing and
revising writings in a community of student peers and concerned adults. As long as that component of a final evaluative mark given by a single individual to each written assignment remains fixed within basic writing classrooms, this tension will remain. It was clearly shown in the data of my study that students looked to the instructor as a prime source of definitions of "success" in their academic writing, and they revised their essays according to what they perceived she required. Even within this basic writing classroom community that appeared to be democratic, with an instructor who was extremely supportive of individual students as she encouraged them to express their own ideas and find their own ways into their topics, these students sensed that there were still restrictions of audience and purpose in place that they needed to abide by. They responded to an agenda of writing for a grade, even though grades were not overtly emphasized in class.

The voices we have heard from this basic writing classroom community speak of the tension between the goals of a well-intentioned, student-centered teaching philosophy and the realities of the university basic writing classroom which evaluates according to product-centered practices. The classroom observations I made, along with the other data gathering in my study, speak volumes about community. Members of this basic writing classroom created a community with goals of valuing student input and fostering student voice that would be deemed worthy by many. But their desire for a specific kind of community was not enough to undo old perceptions that came in with the students, perceptions that were reinforced when they encountered the same type of evaluation system. In subtle ways, students fell into familiar practices of teacher pleasing, by adopting new terminology to use to talk about writing and changing their written products to conform to what they perceived to be a new
set of standards.

My observations in this classroom community lead me to ponder how realistic it is to encourage first quarter freshmen to write their feelings and opinions in personal narratives for an audience of their peers, when many academic writing situations they will encounter beyond their introductory level freshman class will require them to return to composing in an impersonal voice for an audience of one and a purpose of showing they can synthesize the ideas and opinions of others. Students know, from past writing experiences, the possibility exists that their feelings and ideas may be criticized by one in authority who gives the grade, one who may not agree with their opinions, or who denies them the opportunity to voice these opinions at all. The students in my study confided that they often choose to keep their voices shut up because of fear, because they are afraid to be vulnerable to such an audience, afraid that who they are will be criticized along with what they have produced in their writing. To appease that fear, they impose a "filter" of what they think the instructor wants and they struggle to write through this filter, to squeeze their voices into molds of what they perceive is required; or else, they suppress these voices altogether.

I also found that because of past experiences with school writing, students are afraid to discover as they write, to let their writing go in ways that is unpredictable. To let writing take its own course may mean missing a deadline, or it may produce something that is not responsive to the assignment. Students are afraid to break out of the "familiar" ways of doing academic writing tasks that they have brought with them to the university. They fear leaving behind their practices of imposing a particular structure upon a "good" idea that they start with, in order to substitute what they perceive as a more "risky" practice of
permitting "self" to come through their words as they write to discover.

As the many voices in the basic writing classroom community I studied came together to negotiate definitions of "success," they found they were constrained by notions of "successful" academic writing that existed in the larger academic community. Even though they did not consciously acknowledge its presence, they worked under the constraint that academic writing must display a certain kind of voice and appearance that conforms to the expectations of the wider academic community. In addition, grades at the university level must be "meaningful" in a wider context, as writing instructors are challenged to defend the rigor of their grading systems as falling in line with the grading systems of other academic units. With the presence of such constraints, there seems to be a danger in asserting that instructors and students can create a classroom discourse community, with all the freedom of negotiation that is implied in the full sense of the term, when in the final analysis, no matter how supportive the instructor and the tutor may be, no matter how well the peers work together to negotiate meaning and make changes in their writing on the basis of that negotiation, there are "standards" fostered by the wider academic community to which community members must adhere. My observations revealed that "success" in a system that had such constraints on it was found in working with "expert" responders such as the instructor, who had the knowledge and ability to guide students' writing in ways that were acceptable to the wider academic community.

Any future research that addresses issues of community in the university level freshman writing classroom will also need to acknowledge the tensions that are inherent within and the constraints that are placed upon such writing communities. There exists a need for additional descriptive ethnographic works
of this type, including studies that may shed light on whether my observations hold true for "unsuccessful" writers or for writers from other ethnic and cultural groups. With such additional ethnographies, comparative work across studies could be done and generalizations could begin to be drawn. In addition, longitudinal study of students' academic writing in their freshman through senior years would be useful, as it would trace individual students' paths through several classroom discourse communities. In such future studies, students' notions of "success" in their academic writing could be recorded over time and examined for patterns or inconsistencies that might emerge as their university coursework progresses. It is important for us as researchers to continue to listen to students' voices, to permit them to inform us of the many facets of their individual quests for the promise of "success" in their academic writing.
APPENDIX A

INTRODUCTORY LETTER AND CONSENT FORM
Dear Freshman Student Writer:

My name is Cheryl, and I’m a graduate student in Education who is conducting a research project on freshman students’ writing processes. I’m going to be attending your English class Autumn and Winter Quarters because I want to learn what you think makes your college writing successful. I’d like you to think of my research project as an opportunity for you to be a teacher, and I will be the learner.

I will be asking your opinion about what you think makes writing good, about what you do when you write, and about who and what influences your writing. These questions will come in the form of three written questionnaires, which I would like all of you to complete, and some brief interviews, which I will conduct with you if you volunteer to participate. Each of these things will take about fifteen minutes of your time -- an hour total. To give me some background on you as a writer, I will also ask your permission to look at your English placement essays and ask you about your scores on any standardized tests (e.g., ACT or SAT) that you took before you came to college.

Around the middle of the quarter, I will ask some of you to talk with me about the essays you write for this class, focusing on your writing process and the changes you make between each draft. If you decide to discuss these things with me, our talks will probably last for about fifteen minutes each time. I also will ask for your permission to photocopy your written work so I can study your changes between drafts.

By listening to what you think about what makes writing successful and observing what you do when you talk about writing in your classroom, I will be able to highlight in my final written report some of the success stories in a freshman writing class. Before I turn anything in, I will show it to you and let you tell me whether I have accurately represented your views. However, I won’t be able to tell people that it’s you, your class, or your written work I’m writing about. Everything you tell me will be confidential. If you decide to let me interview you, I’ll ask you choose a “pen” name to use in order to protect your identity (you know, like many famous writers do!). When I’m done writing my report I’ll also erase any audiotape recordings I make of class sessions or conversations we have.

Since everything you tell me will be held in confidence, this means your classroom instructor and tutor will not know about the things you share with me, unless you choose to tell them yourself. I also want you to know that even if you choose to participate, you can decide at any time, for any reason, to stop talking with me about your writing. As for me, I look forward to talking with you over the
next six months. I know I have a lot to learn!

After you read this letter and feel that you completely understand the things I’m going to ask you to do, please indicate your desire to participate in my research project by signing and dating your agreement on the lines below. Thanks for your cooperation!

Signature ___________________________ Date ________

Witness ___________________________ Date ________
CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN
SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL RESEARCH

I consent to participating in (or my child's participation in) research entitled:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________ or his/her authorized representative has
(Principal Investigator)
explained the purpose of the study, the procedures to be followed, and the
expected duration of my (my child's) participation. Possible benefits of the
study have been described as have alternative procedures, if such procedures
are applicable and available.

I acknowledge that I have had the opportunity to obtain additional information
regarding the study and that any questions I have raised have been answered to
my full satisfaction. Further, I understand that I am (my child is) free to
withdraw consent at any time and to discontinue participation in the study
without prejudice to me (my child).

Finally, I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand the consent form.
I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me.

Date: __________________________ Signed: _________________________________
(Participant)

Signed: __________________________
(Principal investigator or his/her Authorized Representative)

Signed: __________________________
(Person Authorized to Consent for Participant - If Required)

Witness: __________________________

HS-027 (Rev. 3/87) --(To be used only in connection with social and behavioral research.)
APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRES
ENGLISH 000  
WRITING QUESTIONNAIRE #1  
NAME ________________________

Directions: Please answer the following questions as completely and as honestly as you can. There are no right or wrong answers.  
Please note: "academic writing" refers to assigned writing for school purposes.

1. a. How would you describe some characteristics of successful academic writing (what do you think it is)?

   b. What are some characteristics of academic writing that isn't successful?

2. Who or what influenced you the most in forming your current opinions about what is and what isn't successful academic writing?

3. a. In your opinion, what strengths do you display in academic writing (what do you do well)?

   b. What weaknesses do you display in academic writing (what kinds of things do you need to work on)?
4. Do you consider your academic writing to be successful? Why or why not?

5. a. What matters to you the most when you work on a piece of academic writing?

   b. What matters to you the least when you work on a piece of academic writing?

6. a. What have teachers told you that your strengths as a writer are?

   b. What have teachers told you that your weaknesses as a writer are?

7. Have you ever shared your academic writing with friends or classmates? (If you have, please explain when and how).
8. What is your opinion about sharing your academic writing with friends or classmates?

9. What do you think is the major challenge facing college freshmen who are at a university learning academic writing?

10. If you were given the chance to tell teachers how to teach academic writing (in a way that would make instruction more helpful to you), what would you say to them?

Thank you for your cooperation in answering these questions.
ENGLISH 000
WRITING QUESTIONNAIRE #2

NAME__________________

Directions: Circle the letter of the answer that most closely reflects your opinion.

Please note: "academic writing" refers to assigned writing for school purposes.

1. Which of the following statements most accurately reflects your current definition of "successful" academic writing?
   a. it contains correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling
   b. it receives an "A" or "B" from the teacher
   c. it gets my ideas across in a clear, well-organized manner

2. Who or what influenced you the most in forming your current definition of "successful" academic writing?
   a. your self
   b. a teacher
   c. a parent or relative
   d. classmates
   e. textbooks
   f. a course of study or curriculum

3. In your opinion, are you currently able to produce academic writing that you would call "successful"?
   a. yes
   b. no

4. Do you like to write?
   a. yes
   b. no

5. Do you think the teacher in this class will be able to help you decide whether or not your academic writing is successful?
   a. yes
   b. no
6. Do you think your classmates will be able to help you decide whether or not your academic writing in this class is successful?
   a. yes
   b. no

7. Do you think the tutor who helps with this class will be able to help you decide whether or not your academic writing is successful?
   a. yes
   b. no

8. Do you think the textbooks used in this class will help you produce successful academic writing?
   a. yes
   b. no

9. In your opinion, which of the following behaviors contributes to writing a successful academic paper? (circle as many as you think apply)
   a. initial planning, such as brainstorming or list-making
   b. writing more than one draft
   c. talking with classmates about revising parts that are unclear
   d. checking for errors in grammar, punctuation, or spelling
   e. conferencing with a teacher or a tutor

10. Which of the following behaviors describes what you do when you work on an academic writing assignment? (circle as many as you think apply)
    a. I do initial planning (brainstorming or list-making)
    b. I write more than one draft
    c. I write the whole thing, then revise parts that are unclear to me or to someone else
    d. I have to get each sentence just "right" before I go on to write the next sentence
    e. I check for errors in grammar, punctuation, or spelling
11. Which of the following statements most accurately reflects your behavior when you want to improve a piece of your academic writing? (circle as many as apply)

   a. I ask my classmates to read my writing and give me suggestions for improvement
   b. I ask my teacher to read my writing and give me suggestions for improvement
   c. I talk to a tutor about my writing
   d. I try to improve it the best I can, by myself

12. What matters to you the most in your academic writing?

   a. communicating my ideas clearly
   b. sharing my feelings
   c. having a correct style
   d. having correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation
   e. meeting the required length
   f. getting an "A" or "B"

13. What matters to you the least in your academic writing?

   a. communicating my ideas clearly
   b. sharing my feelings
   c. having a correct style
   d. having correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation
   e. meeting the required length
   f. getting an "A" or "B"

14. Which of the following statements most accurately reflects your feelings about sharing your writing with your classmates?

   a. I think it's helpful to have a classmate read my writing and give me an opinion about it
   b. It's O.K. to spend class time reading other peoples' writing, but I don't get much out of it
   c. I don't think it's helpful to have classmates read my writing and give me an opinion about it
15. Which of the following statements most accurately describes a decision you may make to revise your writing? (circle as many as apply)

a. I revise my writing when a classmate gives me suggestions for improvement
b. I revise my writing when I don’t think it says what I want it to say
c. I revise my writing when a teacher makes suggestions for improvement
d. I don’t revise my writing

Thank you for your cooperation in answering these questions.
ENGLISH 000
WRITING QUESTIONNAIRE #3

Directions: Please answer the following questions as completely and as honestly as you can. There are no right or wrong answers.

1. In your own words, describe what an essay written for your English class needs to have in it to be considered "good" or "successful."

2. Describe how you became aware of any standards for "good" or "successful" essay writing in your English class.

3. Do you feel you are able to write essays for this class that reflect the class standards for "good" or "successful" writing?

4. What are some strong points of your written essays?
5. What are some areas of your essay writing that you are currently working to improve?

6. Do you think the reading assignments in your English class helped you with your writing assignments for the class? Were any books or class handouts particularly helpful in opening up possibilities for your own writing?

7. Was it helpful to you to spend class time reading your essays to your classmates? Explain your answer.

8. When a classmate read his or her essay out loud in class, how did you decide whether you would offer comments?
9. How did you decide what kinds of comments you would offer your classmates?

10. Did you make changes on your written drafts because of things your classmates told you? Explain your choices.

11. Did you make changes on your written drafts because of things the tutor told you? Explain your choices.

12. Did you make changes on your written drafts because of things your instructor told you? Explain your choices.

Thank you for your cooperation in answering these questions.
APPENDIX C

PROPOSED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
Proposed Questions for Initial Student Interviews

1. Do you like to read? What kinds of things do you read? (e.g., newspapers, books, magazines, etc.)

2. Tell me about your reading experiences in high school. Did you read much in your high school classes? Which ones? What kinds of things did you read?

3. Do you like to write? What kinds of things do you write? (e.g., letters, grocery lists, term papers, etc.)

4. Tell me about your writing experiences in high school. What kinds of writing did you do? Did you write much in your high school classes? Which ones?

5. Describe your best high school writing experience. Describe your worst high school writing experience.

6. In high school, did you ever write responses to things you read? Describe.

7. Do you ever feel there is a connection between what you write and what you read?

8. Have you ever tried to write the same way as someone you admire? Have you ever imitated someone's style or their way of saying things?

9. Can you think of anyone or any incident that influenced or changed the way you write?

10. Do you feel you have a good enough command of language in general to communicate your needs, interests, and feelings to others?

11. How do you feel about your ability to use the kind of written language required in school/college?
12. Did you take any tests before coming to college (e.g., ACT or SAT) that gave you scores to "predict" your success in college English/writing classes? What is your opinion of such tests? Would you permit me to see your scores?

13. What do you think it will take to be successful in your college English class?

14. Do you measure success by grades? If so, what do you think it will take to get a good in your college English class?

15. What do you worry about most when it comes to writing assignments for your English class?
Proposed Questions for Discourse-Based Interviews

Questions for the Initial Draft:

1. Where did you get the idea for this essay? How did it come to you?

2. What kinds of planning / pre-writing did you do? Why?

3. When / how did you decide to get started on this draft? At what point did you know you were ready to begin writing?

4. How did the writing of this draft go? Smoothly? Like pulling teeth? Describe.

Questions for Subsequent Drafts:

1. Discuss the changes you made from your last draft to this one. What were the changes? Why did you make them?

2. Do you like this draft better or worse than your previous one? Why?

3. Did anyone influence you to make changes in your draft? How did you decide whether or not you would listen to their advice?

4. Did any readings influence you to make changes in your draft? If so, which ones?

5. At this point, do you plan any further revisions on this draft? Why or why not?

Questions for the Final Draft:

1. What do you think are strong points of your essay? Do you think it has any weak points or "bugs" you couldn't iron out?

2. How do you think your essay compares with other students' essays that you've read in this class for this assignment?

3. Do you think other people would consider your essay to be a piece of "successful" academic writing? Why or why not?
Proposed Questions for Student Exit Interviews

1. When you look back over your past two quarters in freshman English, does any one thing or person or experience stand out in your mind? Explain.

2. When you began freshman English class last fall, did you have any goals in mind? Anything particular that you wanted to learn to do or accomplish in the class? Explain.

3. In general what would you say that a piece of university writing has to have in it in order to be “successful”? 

4. In general, what could be some roadblocks that may stop some freshman from producing writing that would be “successful” in a university class? Where do such roadblocks come from?

5. Have you done any writing for other classes this quarter? If you have, have you seen any differences in the requirements for the writing you’ve done for your English class compared to the other class? Explain.

6. Do you think that the writing you’ve done in your English class these past two quarters will help you with future writing assignments at the university? Why or why not?

7. Was proofreading/editing a final draft of your assigned papers important to you? Why or why not?

What was your personal practice for proofreading/editing the final drafts of your assigned papers? Did you proofread or edit by yourself, or did others participate in the process with you?

8. What is your opinion of the instructor’s response to your written work in this class?

What is your opinion of the grades you received for your written work in this class? What final course grade do you anticipate?

9. Are you taking [the next course in the freshman writing sequence] this spring? How do you predict you will do in that course?

10. Do you have any suggestions or advice for instructors who teach first quarter college freshman?
APPENDIX D

CLASSIFICATION SCHEME: COMPONENTS OF "SUCCESSFUL" ACADEMIC WRITING
CLASSIFICATION SCHEME FOR
COMPONENTS OF SUCCESSFUL ACADEMIC WRITING

1. Language/Usage
   grammar, punctuation, spelling, vocabulary, word choice, correctness

2. Voice/Style
   creativity, feeling, honesty, tension, earnestness, excitement, how it sounds, if I
   like it, discovery in writing

3. Ideas/Topic
   good topic, strong main idea, clear ideas, organization or format used to think
   through ideas

4. Detail/Development
   length, support, facts, “how,” “why,” content, description, covers the subject,
   dialogue as detail, explanations, completeness

5. Rhetorical Concerns
   introduction, conclusion, paragraphing, topic sentence, structure, form, “hook,”
   transitions, responsive to assignment

6. Reception by Audience
   grades, if the teacher likes it, if it sounds professional, if it sounds like college

7. Genre
   differentiation of type (i.e., narrative from exposition); “necessary ingredients” for
   a certain type of essay

8. “Other” (general category for items mentioned only once)
   looks (i.e., set up on page, printer font used), if there was “time” to “do it right”
COMPONENTS OF SUCCESSFUL ACADEMIC WRITING

1. Language/Usage
   grammar, punctuation, spelling, vocabulary, word choice, correctness

2. Voice/Style
   creativity, feeling, honesty, tension, earnestness, excitement, how it sounds, if I like it, discovery in writing, perspective/distance

3. Ideas/Topic
   good topic, strong main idea, clear ideas, initial framework to organize ideas

4. Detail/Development
   length, support, facts, "why," content, description, covers the subject

5. Rhetorical Concerns
   introduction, conclusion, paragraphing, topic sentence, structure, form, "hook," responsive to assignment

6. Reception by Audience
   grades, if the teacher likes it, if it sounds professional, if it sounds like college

7. Genre
   differentiation of type (i.e., narrative from exposition); "necessary ingredients" for a certain type of essay

8. "Other" (general category for items mentioned only once)
   aesthetics (how it looks); time

___ TOTAL
APPENDIX E

CLASSIFICATION SCHEME: REVISION
1. Changes on Surface Level
   1.1 Spelling (includes capitalization)
   1.2 Punctuation
   1.3 Abbreviations (includes shorthand symbols and contractions changed to full form)
   1.4 Singular vs. Plural (nouns, pronouns)
   1.5 Verb Form (tense, number, modality)
   1.6 Format (paragraphing, setting off dialogue or quotations)
   1.7 Aesthetics (word processing, changes in fonts)

2. Additions to Text
   2.1 Word
   2.2 Phrase/clause
   2.3 Sentence

3. Deletions from Text
   3.1 Word
   3.2 Phrase/clause
   3.3 Sentence

4. Substitutions within Text
   4.1 Word (synonyms, pronouns)
   4.2 Phrase/clause (substitutes phrases or clauses that represent the same concept)
   4.3 Sentence (substitutes one complete sentence for another)

5. Permutations (rearrangements) within Text
   5.1 Order shift of single word
   5.2 Order shift of complete phrase or clause
   5.3 Order shift of complete sentence

6. Substantial Changes in Text
   6.1 Partial rewrite of the essay (1/3 to 1/2) that changes its direction but still retains some material from a previous draft
      1.2 Partial rewrite by addition
      1.3 Partial rewrite by deletion
      1.4 Partial rewrite by substitution
      1.5 Partial rewrite by permutation
   6.2 Total re-write of the essay with few or no one to one correspondences with material from a previous draft
7. Interlinear and marginal notations related to change

7.1 Surface level (changes in grammar, mechanics, spelling, format)
   1.1 Spelling/Capitalization
   1.2 Punctuation
   1.3 Abbreviation
   1.4 Singular/Plural
   1.5 Verb Forms
   1.6 Format
   1.7 Aesthetics

7.2 Additions to Text
   2.1 Word
   2.2 Phrase/Clause
   2.3 Sentence

7.3 Deletions from Text
   3.1 Word
   3.2 Phrase/Clause
   3.3 Sentence

7.4 Substitutions within Text
   4.1 Word
   4.2 Phrase/Clause
   4.3 Sentence

7.5 Permutations within Text
   5.1 Word
   5.2 Phrase/Clause
   5.3 Sentence

7.6 General/non-specific notations for change
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### Revision Classification Scheme

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Coded by: ________

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Bizzell, Patricia. (1986). What happens when basic writers come to college? *College Composition and Communication, 37* (3), 294-301.


Farr, Maricia, and Harvey Daniels. (1986). *Language Diversity And Writing Instruction*. Urbana, IL: NCTE.


