IDENTITIES AND EXPERIENCES:
INSIGHT INTO DEVELOPMENTAL WRITING STUDENTS

By
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Abstract

A large portion of college students are required to take courses in math, reading, and/or English that are considered developmental[1] or remedial before they can take traditional college level courses, and the matriculation rates and graduation rates of these students are much lower than the national average (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010; Jaggars & Stacey, 2014; NCES, 2017).; however, research has mostly focused on success and failure rates and how different formats like online, hybrid, and corequisite impact these rates. With lower than average graduation rates, finding ways to help students achieve success is of utmost importance, but too many studies are focusing on structural changes rather than acquiring a deeper understanding of the students themselves. This study responds to this gap.

This embedded case study followed four developmental writing college students at a Midwestern community college and sought to answer the following questions: *In what ways do the experiences of developmental writing students in the developmental writing classroom influence their identities? In what ways do developmental writing students display an academic, social, and virtual identity? In what ways does the virtual identity of students differ from or support their offline identities?* During a one semester period, this study employed semi-structured interviews with the students and their instructors, classroom observations, and document review of students' writing. The data is framed and presented within five conceptual strands: 1) the concept of academic identity, 2) the concept of social identity, 3) the concept of virtual identity, 4) the impact of writing on identity development, and 5) the impact of classroom

[1] There are numerous terms used for developmental education, including remedial, remediation, compensatory, basic writing. Some states, like Tennessee use different terms to distinguish between levels – developmental is considered one level below college-ready and remedial is lower. For the purposes of this paper, the term developmental will be used to encompass any course that is below college level.

experience on identity development. Findings shows students' multiple identities, how identities work both symbiotically and conflictingly, and how the experiences in the classroom impact students' identities and their successes, failures and persistence in the college setting.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Developmental Education

A large percentage of college students are required to take courses in math, reading, and/or English that are considered developmental[2] or remedial before they can take traditional college level courses, and the matriculation rates and graduation rates of these students are much lower than the national average (Bailey et al., 2010; Jaggars & Stacey, 2014; NCES, 2017). Research on developmental students has focused on success rates (Bailey & Cho, 2010; Boatman & Long, 2010; Calcagno & Long, 2008; Martorell & McFarlin, 2011; Park et al., 2016) and student success rates in courses with different formats (Ashby, Sadera, & McNary, 2011; Harrington, 2013, 2014; Jaggars, 2011; Jaggars, Edgecombe, & Stacey, 2013; Jaggars & Xu, 2010). However, the research hasn't been focused on the development of students' identities – academic, virtual, and social – in developmental writers and how this impacts students' successes and failures. Since over 50% of students at community colleges enroll in developmental education (Bailey & Cho, 2010; Jaggars & Stacey, 2014; Smart, 2017), and the graduation rates of those students are so low, any research that can help colleges increase student success is beneficial to society as a whole. As a composition and developmental writing instructor with twenty years of experience, the researcher has seen students succeed and fail in face-to-face, hybrid, online, compressed, and corequisite courses, and simply reducing these students' experiences to success or failure based on grades and class structure overlooks

[2] There are numerous terms used for developmental education, including remedial, remediation, compensatory, basic writing. Some states, like Tennessee use different terms to distinguish between levels – developmental is considered one level below college-ready and remedial is lower. For the purposes of this paper, the term developmental will be used to encompass any course that is below college level.

important aspects of the developmental writing student's life and needs.

Given all the virtual interaction developmental students have, the researcher questions whether students are cultivating identities online that differ from the identities they exhibit in face-to-face interactions, and whether one or both of these identities differ from or support a strong academic identity.

> If identity is not a fixed entity, but discursively and dynamically constructed through interaction between writers, speakers, and audiences, it follows that the ways audiences engage through the use of different linguistic resources may shed light on the process of identity construction. (Flowerdew & Wang, 2015, p. 84)

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to acquire knowledge about the different identities that developmental writing students are curating; specific focus was placed on academic, social, and virtual identity development. It sought to determine if students' identities work symbiotically or conflictingly. It also looked at how the experiences in the developmental classroom and the role of writing impacted these identities.

What is a developmental course? First, it is essential to differentiate developmental education from K-12 special education students, regardless of how institutions reference their courses. Some institutions call their developmental classes remedial or basic; others call them intermediate or transitional (Harrington, 2013, p. 16), but none are considered special education courses. While some students who enroll in developmental courses do come from K-12 special education programs, most developmental students are students who were in conventional courses and graduated with traditional high school diplomas.

Developmental courses are courses that are designed to remediate missing core skills (math, reading, writing) and prepare students for their gateway courses (Mezquita, 2016).

Depending on the missing skills, students may be required to take one, two, or even three levels of developmental classwork before being enrolled into a college credit course. Typically, the courses are numbered under 100, indicating they don't count toward graduation requirements, but they do impact students' grade point average (Bettinger, Boatman, & Long, 2013). For instance, developmental writing courses are designed to prepare students for college level English Composition I (College Composition, first-year English, Composition and Rhetoric, English 101), and the course names can include remedial writing, developmental writing, basic writing, foundations of college writing. Schools teach a variety of levels, including sentence-skills, sentence-to-paragraph skills, paragraph-to-essay skills, and remediation of essay skills. The sequence in math and reading classes are similar – from very basic skills to refresher courses.

Like college level courses, developmental writing courses are taught in a multitude of ways; they are generally 3-credit courses, though some schools teach them in 2-credit and 4-credit setups. Traditional formats, 16-week courses, are very common; however, as acceleration has become mandated by many states, the traditional courses are giving way to more models. Some schools have created 8-week courses (some refer to these as compression courses), allowing students to move through at least two levels of remediation in one semester. Other schools have moved to corequisite courses, which are a form of mainstreaming. Still other schools have opted for online and hybrid formats. In addition, colleges have implemented numerous interventions over the years including "summer bridge programs, learning communities, academic counseling, and tutoring . . . and nonacademic student needs . . . such as child care and transportation" (Bettinger et al., 2013, pp. 94-95).

A typical sequence for students who want to earn an A.A. degree, but test into a

developmental writing level one course like Foundations of College Writing I is as follows: Foundations of College Writing I, Foundations of College Writing II, College Composition I, College Composition II. For students, this could mean two years (or more) before they have completed the required English composition sequence. This also affects their success and enrollment in other college level courses because until students are able to complete Composition I, they often lack the writing and thinking skills necessary to be successful in other college level courses.

Placement. Developmental writers are students who have been granted high school diplomas and have enrolled in college, but have been deemed non-college composition ready; however, there are "inconsistent definitions of what constitutes developmental coursework across states, college systems, and institutions" (Schak, Metzger, Bass, McCann, & English, 2017, p. 4). In addition to inconsistent definitions, schools determine students' readiness through different methods including high school GPA, ACT/SAT scores, placement tests like Accuplacer, and/or writing placement examinations. Depending on an institution's placement practice, students might be placed according to only one assessment or through multiple assessments (Coordinating Board for Higher Education, 2012; Schak et al., 2017). Also, as schools determine their placements individually, depending on the institution's definition of college ready, a student who is placed in developmental writing at one school might qualify for college composition at another school. A survey of community colleges in Missouri demonstrates this disparity: Students at some schools qualify for college level composition if they have a 2.5 high school GPA, but at other schools students must have a 3.0 high school GPA to get into college level composition, and one school has eliminated mandatory developmental coursework, so regardless of preparedness, students can enroll in college level composition if

they want.

Gerlaugh et al. (2007) found that "according to the literature in the field, mandatory placement is an integral step in providing successful developmental programs . . . [and] of the institutions in the survey, 92.4% state that assessment is mandatory" (p. 2). However, influenced by the claims of researchers like Calcagno and Long (2008) that developmental education does not make students more successful than those not enrolled in developmental courses, the state of Florida eliminated mandatory developmental education from all its community colleges in 2014. Other colleges have been following Florida's lead and have been making developmental coursework optional. For instance, a medium-sized community college in Missouri moved to guided placement in 2016. Students were no longer required to take a placement exam (COMPASS or Accuplacer) that determined whether or not they were ready for college level courses. Instead, students worked through a series of "guiding" questions online and were given suggested courses; however, these suggestions were voluntary. Eliminating these barriers, however, have not always proven successful. After Florida implemented the changes, enrollment in college level math classes increased, but the rate of students passing dropped from 55.7 percent to 46.8 percent (Smith, 2015).

Abolishing placement (and developmental programs) is not necessarily the right answer, but placement comes with its own issues. Tests, like Accuplacer, don't provide a whole picture of a student's writing ability and needs, aren't considered accurate, and often disproportionately affect minority students (Brothen & Wambach, 2012; Giordano & Hassel, 2016; Shanahan, 2018). "These different groups of students need different types of services, but the assessments do not differentiate among them, and the colleges do not provide different classes or other interventions to address the varied reasons for the skills deficiencies" (Bailey & Cho, 2010, p.

48).

Context and Questions

The study of identity has had a varied past. From its early beginnings with Erikson (1963) and Kohlberg (1977) to theories of identity in the virtual (Nagy & Koles, 2014; Turkle, 1995, 1996, 2005), researchers have been trying to understand how people develop different concepts of self. Early researchers focused more on children and general theories, but as more researchers began to look at different populations (D'Augelli, 1994; Renn, 2003; Torres, 2003; Torres & Phelps, 1997; Vandiver, 2001) more and more ideas about identity and its impacts on people emerged. Researchers began to look at identity development in minority and marginalized populations (Cass, 1984; Cross, 1994; Phinney, 1996), thus giving voice to different narratives. The latter decades of the twentieth century also saw a surge in research on retention of college students (Astin, 1993; Tinto, 2004) as college populations and students' needs were becoming more diverse.

The study of identity in virtual spaces offers a multi-faceted look at how students' identities are now developing. Being able to recognize that the identities students display in the classroom may be different from the identities they promote online is an important step into finding ways to help students succeed. While older theories do provide a strong groundwork for studying student identity, the theories stop short of helping researchers and educators understand how the online world influences student identity. Because so many students spend a significant portion of their time online, researchers have begun to question if students are leading dual lives (Kurek, Jose, & Stuart, 2017) and whether these dual lives affect sense of self. Finally, "[t]he fluidity of identity is also a consequence of globalization, a phenomenon that has profoundly changed the landscape of academic communication" (Flowerdew & Wang, 2015, p. 83). It is

this fluidity that requires researchers to study students' identities beyond the classroom.

Developmental writing students compose a large percentage of college students, and their graduation and success rates are lower than average (Bailey et al., 2010; Jaggars & Stacey, 2014; NCES, 2017). Recognizing that a large population of students is generally less successful than other populations, researching ways to improve student success rates – often defined as matriculation to gateway courses, continued retention, and graduation – in the developmental sequence has become of utmost importance for many colleges. Finding ways to help these students be more successful is in the best interest of both the student and the institution; however, past studies have overlooked identity as an area of inquiry. Studying the different identities that developmental writing students are curating can offer needed insight for those working with this population. In order to understand what types of identities students are cultivating and how their experiences in the developmental writing classroom impacts the development of these identities, this study is designed to address the following research questions:

Research Question 1: In what ways do the experiences of developmental writing students in the developmental writing classroom influence their identities?

Research Question 2: In what ways do developmental writing students display an academic, social, and virtual identity?

Research Question 3: In what ways does the virtual identity of students differ from or support their offline identities?

Key Terms

The following terms will be used throughout the study. While they are common terms for those in developmental education, they may require additional explanation for those unfamiliar

with developmental programs.

- *Acceleration:* a way to move students through a course or set of courses faster than a traditional sixteen-week period
- *Compressed:* a type of acceleration in which a student completes the coursework in fewer than sixteen weeks; often set up in eight or twelve week schedules
- *Corequisite:* accelerated class in which developmental students are placed into the gateway course with an additional supplemental support course
- *Developmental education:* any coursework that is below college level and usually numbered under 100; can impact students' GPA, but doesn't count toward graduation requirements; also called remedial, remediation, compensatory, basic writing
- *Face-to face:* classes that meet in a classroom for a traditional number of days/hours, usually 150 minutes per week
- *Gateway course:* the first college level course a student takes; for English it is Composition I
- *Hybrid:* classes that meet partially through a virtual platform like Blackboard or Canvas
- *Online:* classes that meet only through a virtual platform like Blackboard or Canvas
- *Portfolio*: a sample of student writing; for this study it includes one letter to the assessment committee, one summary, one expository essay and one argument essay, one of which incorporates sources
- *Portfolio assessment*: an assessment of students' writing; for this study it is a double-blind assessment based on a departmental rubric

Overview of Theory & Method

To fully understand how students are cultivating their identities and how the classroom

impacts these identities, this study is framed by five conceptual strands: 1) the concept of academic identity, 2) the concept of social identity, 3) the concept of virtual identity, 4) the impact of writing on identity development, and 5) the impact of classroom experience on identity development.

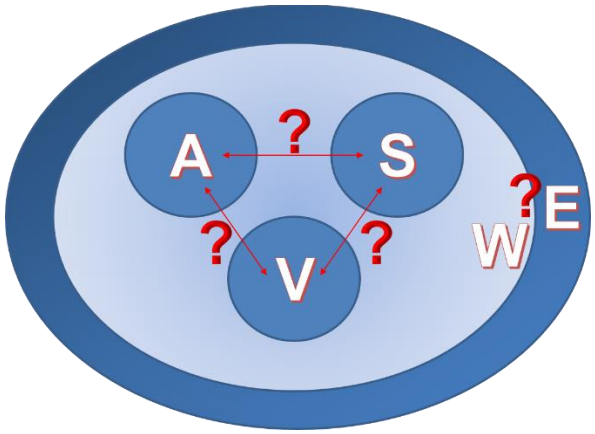

Figure 1-1: Theoretical Framework

This embedded, single-case study drew upon ethnographic practices (Clifford & Marcus, 1986) to provide data. Each individual case study is presented according to the strands of academic, social and virtual identity and analyzed through the strands of impact. The individual cases are then analyzed as a whole case study to present common themes.

Organization of the Dissertation

Following this introduction are four chapters. Chapter 2 includes a review of the relevant literature that demonstrates a lack of research on developmental students' identities and situates the importance of this study. It provides an overview of the history of developmental education and an in-depth look at current movements and research in developmental education. It then provides a framework for the research study by developing the five conceptual strands of

academic identity, social identity, virtual identity, the impact of writing on identity development, and the impact of classroom experience on identity development.

Chapter 3 is an in-depth look at the methodology that guided this study. It starts with the purpose of the study and explains how an earlier pilot study helped mold the current study. This is followed up by detailed explanations about how data were generated and analyzed, participants were identified, the role of the researcher throughout the process, and provides evidence to demonstrate the researcher followed ethical guidelines in executing the research and analyzing, storing, and reporting the data.

Chapter 4 begins with an overview of the students enrolled in English 99 during the fall 2019 semester as illustrated through their survey responses. It then provides detailed profiles of the participants' academic, social, and virtual identities as told through their own words and the words of their instructors of record.

Chapter 5 concludes this project by connecting the results in Chapter 4 to the literature, and using the literature as a method of analysis. The participants' identities are also analyzed using their own words, the words and observations of their instructors, and the observations of and interviews with the researcher. These results are followed with sections discussing the interpretations and implications of the study, which are followed by the limitations of the current study. The chapter concludes with recommendations for future studies focused on developmental writing students.

Chapter 2 Review of Literature

History of Developmental Education

Developmental education has been around since the late 1800s (Casazza, 1999), when schools like Harvard and Cornell realized that many of their students were entering college completely underprepared. Currently, over 50% of community college students are required to take at least one developmental course (Bailey & Cho, 2010; Jaggars & Stacey, 2014; Smart, 2017) in reading, English, or math. While these programs are also offered at universities (Gerlaugh et al., 2007; NCES, 2003), most developmental courses are taught at the community college level. Whether at a community college or university, the courses are provided to help prepare "students who would likely otherwise be unable to complete a higher education program of study" (Gerlaugh et al., 2007, p. 1; NCES, 2003). Researchers have long been studying the effectiveness and methods of instruction.

In 2003-2004, 68% of students beginning at a two-year college tested into at least one developmental course; 28% of students tested into developmental English/writing. While fewer students at four-year institutions tested into developmental courses, the numbers, 39.6% in at least one course and 10.8% in English, are still significant (Boatman & Long, 2018; Jaggars & Stacey, 2014). The number of students requiring some type of remediation is not the only concern for colleges as ". . . only 28 percent of community college students who take a developmental education course go on to earn a degree within eight years (Bailey & Cho, 2010; Jaggars & Stacey, 2014) compared to 59 percent of "first time, full-time undergraduate students . . . at a 4-year degree-granting institution" who go on to earn a degree within six years (NCES, 2017).

While many focus just on developmental courses when they discuss developmental

education, it should be noted that many schools include services like advising, counseling, and various forms of learning assistance (Bailey et al., 2010; Mezquita, 2016) under the umbrella of developmental education. While many students in developmental classes are encouraged or required to utilize these services, students' knowledge and acceptance of such services can vary widely despite research that does show using these services does lead to higher success rates (Winkle-Wagner, 2010).

Movements

There has been movement across the nation to lessen the number of developmental classes students are expected to take before they are deemed college ready and allowed to take gateway (college level entry) courses. However, the movement to shorten and streamline students' developmental educational experiences has not always originated with faculty; rather state legislatures and foundations like Lumina and Complete College America are driving many of these changes. Complete College America (CCA) (2012) sees developmental courses as being roadblocks to student success and has been strongly encouraging institutions to offer all their developmental courses in accelerated formats. Numerous accelerated models have been created including "paired-course models, extended instructional time models, Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) models, academic support service models, and technology-mediated support models" (Daugherty, Gomez, Carew, Mendoza-Graf, & Miller, 2018). Many states, like Texas and California have eliminated separate reading and English departments and created Integrated Reading and Writing (IRW) programs. Some states like Florida have eliminated mandatory developmental education, allowing students to enroll in college level courses regardless of their skills and abilities. Still other states have mandated program reforms, including accelerated learning programs. Movements like these have resulted because state governments have pushed

colleges to eliminate the perceived barrier of developmental education (CCA, 2012) in order to increase matriculation and graduation rates at two-year and four-year colleges. For many who perceive developmental education as a hurdle and unnecessary, they also perceive these hurdles as unnecessary added costs and time that hinder student success (Boatman & Long, 2018; CCA, 2012; Jimenez, Sargrad, Morales, & Thompson, 2016). Still others are more concerned with the expense of developmental education to the colleges and universities themselves (Boatman & Long, 2018). However, organizations like the Two-Year College English Association express concern about these mandates, "particularly those efforts that exclude two-year college faculty from the public discourse and ignore the academic and material realities of two-year college students' lives" (Hassel et al., 2014, p. 227).

> One of the most prevalent themes in recent research into developmental education is that remedial programs are not effective because students who take this coursework do not perform better than nonremedial students in subsequent comparisons . . . [w]hat this means is that recent researchers believe if developmental courses are effective, then students who take these courses should do better than students who never need to take developmental courses. (Goudas & Boylan, 2012)

States who are promoting these structural rather than instructional changes (Bailey & Cho, 2010, p. 49) regularly reference Martorell and McFarlin (2011), Calcagno and Long (2008), and Boatman and Long (2010). Each of these studies assert that students who were just below the cutoff score that deemed them college ready would have done just as well to take the college course without remediation. In 2018, the Community College Research Center defined effective developmental education programs as programs that help students "[earn] better grades and [proceed] more quickly" (Jaggars & Bickerstaff, 2018, p. 471) than students who didn't need

remediation. The weakness lies in thinking that students coming out of developmental education programs should be stronger students than those who didn't take any developmental education courses. The point of developmental education has been to get students prepared *for* college level coursework, not make them *more* prepared. Prior to CCRC's new definition of the purpose of developmental education, Goudas and Boylan (2012) raised concerns about the interpretations of these studies and the impacts they would have had on subsequent studies and policies, and ultimately on students. Their concerns, as well as those of TYCA, are echoed by many practitioners in the field because instead of looking at ways educators can make students' experiences in the classroom more meaningful, thus also leading to higher rates of success, entities like the Departments of Higher Education and state legislating bodies, are more focused on acceleration or elimination as the key to higher rates of success.

Integrated reading and writing courses (IRW). One movement that has gained steam over the past few years is integrating reading and writing courses into one course that "emphasizes the relationship between reader and writer" (Shanahan, 2018, p. 20). Some states, like Texas, have mandated that all lower level developmental reading and writing courses be redesigned and integrated (Paulsen & Van Overschelde, 2019). Other states, like Virginia and California, have also moved to Integrated Reading and Writing programs (IRW), but not all educators see integration as the answer to acceleration. In fact, there is a pedagogical split between those who see IRW as a progressive and beneficial move and those who feel students learn better from separate reading and writing experts (D. P. Saxon, Martirosyan, & Vick, 2016). Regardless of whether IRW or separate courses are being taught, faculty are being pressured to shorten students' developmental coursework experiences.

Corequisite courses. The corequisite formats vary for math, reading, and English, but in

English, developmental writing students are mainstreamed into a regular composition course. This format allows students to complete both their developmental writing requirements and Composition I requirements in one semester. In corequisite formats, instead of taking a traditional 16-week developmental course as a prerequisite to Composition I, students co-enroll in a Composition I course that has been linked to a special developmental course. Corequisite courses can be set up several ways. Many schools are following the Accelerated Learning Project (ALP) model designed by Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC) while other schools are following a model often referred to as the triangle model. In either model, the regular Composition I students have a traditional experience by attending only the three-credit course. The developmental students attend the Composition I course with everyone else, and then attend a separate support course. While enrollment numbers may vary, generally corequisite courses are at least 50% traditional composition students and 50% or fewer developmental writing students. At CCBC (2018), where the ALP began, the Composition I course has ten regular students and ten developmental students; however, different institutions have implemented different ratios. The ratio at the research site is eleven developmental students and twelve traditional Composition I students.

In the ALP model, the developmental students attend the Composition I course with everyone else, and then attend a separate course immediately after. The developmental portion (the corequisite) is often called a "just-in-time" teaching format, and due to its small size becomes more of a focused tutorial. ALP corequisite courses are usually taught by the same instructor, so the developmental students get the added benefit of increased face-to-face time with their instructor, a factor often associated with higher success and retention rates (Bollash, 2013; McClenney, 2007).

In the triangle model, the developmental students from two composition classes combine into one corequisite class. Because two sections of developmental corequisite courses come together in the triangle model, class sizes in this model could have as many as twenty-four students in the developmental portion (D. Coleman, 2014). Also unlike the ALP corequisite, students don't always have the same instructor for both classes. Triangle courses, while still offering focused teaching, often follow their own course schedule rather than being focused on the Composition I course schedule the corequisite is connected to.

Many educators believe corequisite courses work because of the small nature of the class sizes, the personalized attention, and the individualized instruction. Students in corequisite courses often find they have higher levels of self-efficacy because they are appropriately challenged but properly supported (Shanahan, 2018). Corequisite students also have the benefit of role models; the traditional composition students, generally assumed to be stronger academically, often model the skills, behavior, and success that developmental writing students may not possess. These developmental students also often have higher levels of engagement than their peers in traditional developmental classes because they have more personalized interaction with their instructors, additional social learning experiences through peer review and small group discussion, and additional opportunities to gain confidence as students and writers (Bailey et al., 2010; Sommers, 1982b; Tinto, 1997). Student success rates in corequisite courses are very high across the nation. At the research site, 77% of developmental students in the corequisite course passed English 99 and 61.5% passed Composition I. The traditional courses have a 67.5% success rate in English 99 and for those who matriculate to Composition I, a 54.4% success rate.

While the corequisite and accelerated format is currently the trend in developmental

education, there are those who don't believe that all developmental students should be required to enroll in corequisite and accelerated developmental courses. Hunter Boylan, former Director of the National Center for Developmental Education[3], is one of these people, and P. Saxon, Boylan, Stahl, and Arendale (2018) argue that some of these reported successes may be indicative of misrepresentation "by advocacy groups to support their agenda" (slide 2).

Compressed courses. Compressed formats, like eight-week classes, are also being pushed by colleges as forms of acceleration, though they aren't getting the attention of the corequisite courses because they are not new; eight-week classes have been available to students for decades in summer terms and as part of traditional semesters. The success and matriculation of students in eight-week classes, however, warrants a discussion about goals and purposes. Current data at the research site show that students in eight-week English 99 courses (highest level of developmental writing) pass at a higher rate than traditional courses (66.67%) and enroll and pass at a higher rate in Composition I (46.15% & 33.33% respectively); however, only 2.56% enroll in Composition II and zero percent of those students are successful in English 102. The traditional courses have a 62.17% success rate in English 99, a matriculation to Composition I rate of 39% with a 28.15% success rate. These students enroll in Composition II at a rate of 16.86%, with a 9.97% success rate (J. Pallett, personal communication, May 8, 2018). If the goal is to get students into and passing Composition I, then eight-week courses show promise; however if the goal is to get students to enroll in Composition II, a requirement of the Associate in Arts degree, then eight-week courses may not be the right curricular and program choice.

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[3] In March 2019, the National Center for Developmental Education changed its name to the National Organization for Student Success. See thenoss.org/history for more information.

Online courses. Many educators and researchers believe that online developmental writing courses have "the potential to knock down many of the hurdles developmental students often face such as problems with child care, transportation, and parking" (Carpenter, Brown, & Hickman, 2004, p. 35). However, other educators disagree "whether developmental students, with the unique problems and personal situations they bring to the classroom, can be successful in courses requiring heavy independent study and [a] more lenient attendance" policy (Harrington, 2013, p. 23) that is often associated with online courses. Still others believe "[t]he online format does not engage students in critical thinking; instead, it renders critical thinking impossible inasmuch as it does not allow for embodied human discourse and contributes to the dehumanization of the population" (Petitfils, 2015, p. 69). Despite the massive growth of online classes being offered, especially by community colleges where so many developmental students attend, "little is known about the effectiveness of online courses for community colleges" (Jaggars et al., 2013, p. 1) and "[t]here is a need for more research on the topic [online developmental education], as few studies exist that focus solely on developmental students" (Smart, 2017, p. 50). "Research on the success rates of online developmental education has been limited to a few major studies" (Smart, 2017, p. 42), but some studies like Ashby, Sadera, & McNary (2011) focused only on developmental math courses, a content area that is much different to teach than developmental writing.

Regardless of the lack of rich research, "online course enrollment has increased by 29 percent, 97 percent of two year colleges [offer] online courses" (Jaggars et al., 2013, p. 1), and "sixty-five percent of all reporting institutions said that online learning was a critical part of their long term strategy" (Allen & Seaman, 2011, p. 4). When choosing if and how many online classes to offer, Natow, Reddy, and Grant (2017) found that colleges and universities

based their decisions on costs and resources rather than on effectiveness of the platform. "Recent estimated annual costs for providing postsecondary developmental education in the United States total more than $3.5 billion" (see also Bettinger et al., 2013; Natow et al., 2017, p. 3). Replacing face-to-face classes with online classes reduces operating costs – no longer do schools have to worry about providing classroom space and good classroom equipment or covering the costs of utilities since online students don't need to be on campus. Other cost reduction decisions have included substituting classroom instruction with software-based homework like McGraw-Hill Higher Education's CONNECT (English) and ALEKS (math) which can reduce employee expenses, either through creating larger classes that are monitored by a GTA while students work independently, using these programs as the content for online classes, or by deciding that the software can replace teacher expertise, so more adjuncts are hired to teach developmental classes. In Texas, the decision to use technology in developmental courses, especially through the use of Learning Management Systems like Blackboard and software programs like CONNECT, ALEKS, or MyLab (a Pearson product), was mandated by the legislature (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2012) despite concerns expressed by faculty.

Hybrid courses. As colleges try to find the best formats that will help developmental students overcome both academic and personal hurdles, many have eschewed fully online courses in favor of hybrid courses. "The hybrid environment allows an exploration of the new world of online teaching and learning opportunities while, at the same time, retaining the structure and personal connection" (Stine, 2010, p. 50) needed by developmental students. In fact, despite the overwhelming growth of online course offerings, "less than one-third of chief academic officers believe their faculty accept the value and legitimacy of online education"

(Allen & Seaman, 2011, p. 5). Many faculty at these schools recognize that students who have transportation issues, childcare responsibilities, or work schedule conflicts need the flexibility of online classes, but believe the mix of flexibility and personal contact that hybrid courses offer is a better choice. Some hybrid courses have "students meet on campus every other week and work online during the off weeks" (Stine, 2004, p. 50), others have students meet once a week for 75 minutes instead of twice a week (typical Tuesday/Thursday schedule), and still others have students meet a specific number of times (i.e., five set face-to-face class periods). Many of these courses are coupled with the use of software-based programs like CONNECT and ALEKS, as the educators see technology being able to successfully replace some of the classroom activities.

It would stand to reason that if fully online courses have lower success rates than face-to-face courses, a course that offers both formats should demonstrate higher success rates than a fully online course. Xu and Jaggars (2011) did find that "completion rates were similar between hybrid and face-to-face courses" (p. 14) but these studies focused on four-year college and university students, not community college students or developmental students. When Jaggars and Xu (2010) studied the Virginia Community College system, they "found students completed the online and hybrid courses at a lower rate than students who took the course in a face-to-face, traditional format" (Smart, 2017, pp. 43-44).

Hybrid courses do include the face-to-face instruction that developmental students need, but they obligate students to use technology on their own to facilitate their own learning during the hybrid portion of the class. Just like fully online classes, hybrid classes still require "students to learn writing while often at the same time learning the relatively advanced computer skills required to produce writing online" (Stine, 2004, p. 51), which seems to be one of the factors inhibiting student success. While often highly motivated, developmental

students lack more than just the content skills to successfully navigate the online or partially online classroom; they lack the functional literacy (Stine, 2004, p. 52) and needed access to reliable technology. Even if the hybrid courses meet in computer labs that are overseen by a GTA or adjunct faculty, meeting the needs of the twenty or more students, who are working individually with different functional literacy levels and varying content competencies, can prove to be a difficult task.

The research, albeit currently thin, overwhelmingly shows that developmental students experience less success in online and hybrid courses than in face-to-face courses. "The few empirical studies that have compared online and face-to-face outcomes in the community college setting suggest that students are substantially less likely to complete online courses, even after controlling for a wide array of student characteristics" (see also Carpenter et al., 2004; Xu & Jaggars, 2011, p. 1). According to Smart (2017), Smart and Saxon (2016), Xu and Jaggars (2011), and Jaggars et al. (2013), developmental students withdraw from online classes at a much higher rate than face-to-face classes and are "less likely to progress into college-level coursework than their traditional, face-to-face counterparts (Smart, 2017, p. 82). In fact, "in online developmental English, failure and withdrawal rates were more than twice as high" (Jaggars et al., 2013, p. 3) as students in face-to face formats, and students who complete the courses are "3 to 6 percentage points less likely to receive a C or better than students who completed face-to-face course sections" (Jaggars et al., 2013, p. 3).

In contrast to what the research shows, a community college in Missouri that teaches online developmental writing has "around a 90% success rate [but] most of the students are military" (K. Hobbs, personal communication, December 4, 2017). "Online courses require self-direction, but basic writers, while often highly motivated, frequently have not developed

the structured study habits and time management essential to success in distance education" (Stine, 2004, p. 54); however, active military personnel work within highly structured environments, which can help their success rates. Enrolling active military personnel also counters several other contributing factors of low success rates for online students: isolation, lack of support, and technical difficulties (Jaggars, 2011).

Just because a student is active military does not automatically mean that student is allowed to enroll in the online developmental course. Before a student is allowed to enroll, he or she must go through an extensive interview process and are vetted in additional ways. Restricting who is enrolled in the courses instead of allowing open enrollment, as was the case in the Virginia Community College and Washington State Community College systems, ensures that students are placed in a format that is appropriate to their needs, skills, and abilities and should improve their chances of success (Smart, 2017).

The focus is on structure not students. Although research on developmental writing students is not as robust as other student populations, research has been emerging as more and more states look at developmental writing, and all developmental coursework, as a hindrance rather than a help. Thus accelerating or even eliminating students' developmental education experiences has been the focus. One of the driving forces of these movements is how the data is being interpreted and how developmental education has been defined. While the Community College Research Center (CCRC) data are often used to support policy changes, many experts in the field disagree with the interpretation of the data and point to the economic and public policy backgrounds of many CCRC researchers as a reason the data may be misinterpreted (Goudas, 2019).

Developmental Writing Courses & the Students

Developmental writing is a discipline that services a widely diverse group of students (Bettinger et al., 2013). Classes can consist of students who have been in special needs classes, basic or regular classes, and honors classes. Depending on the school district from which they graduated, the standards of the classes can vary so significantly direct comparisons of class levels across two districts can prove impossible. Often, developmental writing classes have a high percentage of minority or ESL/ELL students. Socioeconomically, many are from poorer groups and often come from the urban core or very remote rural areas and suffer the disadvantages of "reduced accessibility to jobs, high-quality public and private services (e.g., child care, schools, parks, community centers), and informal social supports" (McLoyd, 1998, p. 185). Some of these students are "'normal' student[s] . . . who progressed at the regular pace demanded"(Tyack & Tobin, 1994, p. 459) by their subpar school districts, while others spent their school years resisting "the requirement that they learn to speak and communicate in 'the standard' English dialect" instead of their more natural home language (Fordham, 1999, p. 273). Still other students, though at lower rates, come from middle-class backgrounds and school districts, indicating a possible "misalignment between high school and college academic standards" (Chen & Simone, 2016, p. vi). Regardless of their histories, they enter college under-prepared for the rigors required for successful completion of a degree, and it is the diversity of the students' experiences and needs that can often cause struggles within the classroom experience.

Developmental students come from every socioeconomic background, race, and gender; they are often first-generation college students, and a large percentage are minorities and Pell grant recipients (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). First generation students, who often lack

the cultural capital needed to navigate college admissions and placement, experience social inequality and are often placed in developmental classes (Winkle-Wagner, 2010). For students who are minorities, the statistics are staggering: 67.7% of African Americans and 58.5% of Hispanic students at two-year colleges find themselves required to take developmental courses (CCA, 2012; Smart, 2017, p. 18). Developmental students "are less likely to have access to . . . technology than their college-level counterparts due to economic conditions, ethnicity, and age" (Harrington, 2013, p. 27; Stine, 2004) and while "people of all ethnic groups and income and educational levels are making gains, noticeable divides still exist between those with different levels of income and education, [and] different racial and ethnic groups" (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2000; Stine, 2004).

Developmental writers have developmental lives, and "basic writing students [are] . . . poorer, less apt to come from stable, highly educated families, and more apt to have learning disabilities, are still less likely than the average student to have easy access to the kind of technology" (Stine, 2004, p. 51) that is often expected in the classroom. They have weaker study skills and lack content knowledge often expected of high school graduates. Developmental students have a

> tendency to read selectively and thus miss main arguments, read only parts of a text and not get the underlying meaning, read with a limited range of internalized schema that would help them gather meaning, find only those meanings they want rather than ones that the author presented, and misunderstand the boundary between paraphrasing and plagiarizing. (Stine, 2004, p. 53)

It is not uncommon for developmental writing students to have weak typing and word processing skills, lack content knowledge often expected of high school graduates, work

twenty or more hours a week, and have numerous responsibilities outside of the classroom. The mix of weak skills and demands outside the classroom create extra hurdles for developmental writing students that traditional college students may not face.

Developmental Writers and Identities

Developmental writing students have very different backgrounds, but they all have some level of writing deficiency. Many come from high schools believing they are well-prepared, but upon enrollment have been told their abilities are insufficient. Others have always known they are weak writers and hate writing because of their background. Still others are returning adults who have not had to write an essay for twenty years. These weak skills can often translate into a negative view towards writing and towards their abilities as students, possibly influencing their academic choices. Students recognize that they have been accepted to college, but are being placed in non-college credit classes, so they often don't treat developmental writing courses with the same focus as credit-bearing classes. Students also recognize that what they are learning is also taught in elementary, middle and high school. This juxtaposition of being in college, but not being in a college level class or treated as a *real* college student, can create a dissonance that impacts their feelings and attitudes towards themselves as learners. Having connection and feeling "relevant in the academic classroom . . . [because] their identity and actions are congruent" (Komarraju & Dial, 2014, pp. 1-2) results in higher persistence and can lead to higher success, so it stands to reason the dissonance students experience could be a possible factor in lower success rates for this populations.

Developmental writing students often don't understand how the assignments they are required to write in academia will translate to "the real world." To them, writing an essay is an exercise that must be endured, rather than an activity that can have and produce meaning. They

don't see the connection between writing an expository essay and developing new knowledge and ideas, or the connection between writing an argument essay and creating new opinions, but ". . . textual production is at the core of negotiating the interactive relationships among the members of academic communities and claiming and constructing academic identities" (Flowerdew & Wang, 2015, p. 82).

In addition to weak writing skills, developmental writing students often lack academic connection, especially those students who attend community colleges (Nguyen, 2011). Community college students, unlike college students who attend four-year residential schools, are often juggling multiple endeavors in addition to classes. Some work full-time jobs and attend college part-time; some work full-time and try to attend college full-time. Many are parents. Very few live on campus as most community colleges do not offer on-campus housing. Because most developmental writing students are juggling so many responsibilities, their identities – student, parent, employee, care-giver – can often pull the student in multiple directions at one time. Individuals need to be able to negotiate their identities and relationships with others. The more opportunities we can give students – face-to-face, online, socially – the better able they are to construct strong identity (Flowerdew & Wang, 2015).

The Study of Identity

Studies on developmental writing students are less extensive than studies on traditional college students, and there is a lack of research focused on developmental writing students' identity development. Research on developmental students has often been more focused on success rates or structural movements, like corequisite teaching or online platforms, and a majority of these studies are quantitative with a focus on outcomes as indicators of success. Understanding identity development, however, is imperative to better appreciating

developmental writing students, the different types of identities these students create, and their needs as students.

Much of the literature concerning identity in students, though, focuses more generally on children and teens and how they develop their identities as they approach adulthood (Erikson, 1963; Marcia, 1966). Studies that focus on academic discourse and identities (Benwell, 2006; Flowerdew & Wang, 2015; Komarraju & Dial, 2014; Lawrence, 2017; Luehmann & Tinelli, 2008) generally focus on those pursuing academic careers or students who are academically elite, not students who have found themselves requiring extra coursework before they can take college credit classes.

As personal computer use became more common in the 1980s and 1990s and the onset of the Internet opened new virtual worlds, the study of identity moved to different realms. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, a body of literature developed that looked at "how Internet users might build an online identity that differs from their offline identity . . . and on the ways (e.g., personal home pages) through which individuals established virtual identities on the Internet" (Hu, Zhao, & Huang, 2015, p. 466). Researchers have looked at how identities are affected by computers usage (Greenfield, 2015; Thompson, 2013; Turkle, 1995, 1996; Turkle & Wellman, 1997), and gaming (Gee, 2007; Gee & Hayes, 2011). In the 2010s, as social media became more prevalent, researchers began looking at how people develop identities on platforms like Facebook and LinkedIn, often with a focus on professional identities (Gil-Or, Levi-Belz, & Turel, 2015; Luehmann & Tinelli, 2008; Michikyan, Subrahmanyam, & Dennis, 2015; van Dijck, 2013).

Other studies of identity and the relations to academia have focused students' *input* and how input directly affects *experience* and, ultimately, *outcome* (Astin, 1984, 1993). As students

learn new information, are introduced to new beliefs and new people, and synthesize the new with their past ideas and experiences (input), they develop the qualities that help them achieve things like competence, interdependence, integrity, and identity. Identity, a "solid sense of self, that inner feeling of mastery and ownership that takes shape as the developmental tasks for competence, emotions, autonomy, and relationships are undertaken with some success . . . provides a framework for purpose and integrity" (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 181). However, as students go undergo these experiences and changes, they can often struggle to feel connected to the community around them. Not having a "cultural awareness, knowledge about educational institutions (schools), educational credentials, [or] skills, abilities, or mannerisms" (Winkle-Wagner, 2010, p. 5) expected in the college setting can hinder even the most motivated of students. This lack of knowledge can make it more difficult for students to understand expectations and feel like they belong and matter (Schlossberg, 1989). In a similar sense, lack of social connections and the information that comes with those connections can hinder students' abilities to successfully navigate the college setting (J. Coleman, 2016). If students don't know who to ask or what to ask, they may either try to unsuccessfully figure it out on their own or just give up (Townsend & Wilson, 2006).

Feeling like they belong, are an important member of the college community, and that others are interested in them (Fleming, Oertle, Plotner, & Hakun, 2017; Schlossberg, 1989) can lead to "academic and social integration on campus" (Locks, Hurtado, Bowman, & Oseguera, 2008, p. 260). This can be vital to helping students persist and succeed (Schlossberg, 1989) because they view themselves as academically validated. "[S]tudents' academic self-concept, their academic identity and sense of belonging to the environment, are significantly related to their academic achievement" (Jensen & Jetten, 2015, p. 2) . While it is not uncommon for

students transitioning to a new place (college) to feel some sense of marginality, educators wanting to help students gain a sense of belonging, especially in students' first year, can help students become more involved, leading to higher success (Astin, 1984; Locks et al., 2008; Schlossberg, 1989). All of these experiences can directly impact students' academic identities, and ultimately their self-identity thus affecting their *output* (Astin, 1984, 1993).

Developing academic identity. According to White and Lowenthal (2019), an academic identity is one in which students feel comfortable in participating in the "accepted intellectual, linguistic, and social conventions" (p. 20) of the school, college, or university. When the "aspirational self feels relevant in the academic classroom" (Komarraju & Dial, 2014, p. 1) students will persist more at difficult academic challenges. Students with a strong academic identity feel connected to their education, are open and willing to changing their minds, and are willing to take intellectual risk.

Developing social identity. According to Hogg, Abrams, and Brewer (2017), a person's social identity is "defined and evaluated in terms of attributes shared with other members of a self-inclusive social category" (p. 571). The formation of identity is social (Vygotsky, 1978), but the formation of a social identity takes on special characteristics as a person internalizes a sense of self based on his or her personal and impersonal relationships (Brewer & Gardner, 1996). The relational self develops from intimate relationships and the collective self develops from group membership (Brewer & Gardner, 1996). A social identity can be symbiotic with the group identity or in conflict with the group identity, depending on a person's individual self (Brewer & Gardner, 1996). Those who have multiple distinct social groups may exhibit different identities with each group, while others may exhibit a similar social identity across multiple groups. Students' social identity is based on their social relationships and groups, and the strength of

their self-identity can affect the display of social identity/identities.

Developing virtual identity. People have always had different personae they projected in different arenas – the professional, public, and private identities – and ". . . every group or individual experiences a vital pressure to produce themselves meaningfully in a system of exchange and relationships" (Baudrillard, 1981, pp. 74-75). However, now more than ever, people are creating additional identities through online platforms. "Members of online communities frequently adopt pseudonyms and carefully construct their digital alias to reflect or refract offline qualities and attributes. Material aesthetics and vulnerabilities can be transcended, providing the opportunity for recasting in countless, empowered roles" (Paech, 2009, p. 207). People on Facebook and Instagram spend hours snapping that perfect photo to post, creating an online presence that may or may not reflect the person's reality. People on LinkedIn carefully craft their perfect "professional" identity in the hopes of getting noticed by co-workers, by other businesses, and for potential job opportunities. The crafting of the online identity has become second nature to Millennials and ". . . it is a deliberately constructed, socially desirable self to which individuals aspire but which they have not yet been able to achieve" (Greenfield, 2015, p. 117).

In the process of studying participants in online multi-user dungeons (MUDs), Turkle (1996), found that MUDers were "engaging in a sort of alternative reality, a hyperreality where they play with self and identity in ways that do indeed challenge our traditional notion of self and identity" (Introna, 1997, p. 9). Since the 1990s, people have begun to embrace the notion of creating identities separate from that of reality. For many, these identities are just as real in the virtual world as in the "real" world, and with improvements in technology, the abilities of online users to create truly dynamic, yet completely hyperreal personas will "only be limited by the

imagination of the participants" (Introna, 1997, p. 3).

The Impact of the Virtual on Education

Since the inception of television, philosophers have been looking at the effects of "TV reality" on reality.

> At one time there was a clear difference between an exterior and an interior. . . . What is real is no longer our direct contact with the world, but what we are given on the TV screen: TV is the world. TV is dissolved into life, and life is dissolved into TV. The fiction is 'realized' and the 'real' becomes fictitious. (Sarup, 1993, p. 165)

While Sarup specifically targets TV, we could argue that TV is too narrow and should be included with the Internet; social platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat; and applications like Photoshop. Jean Baudrillard "moved beyond the postmodern discourse from the early 1980s to the present . . . and developed a highly idiosyncratic mode of philosophical and cultural analysis" (Kellner, 2007). His theory of hyperreality "is a new condition in which the old tension between reality and illusion, between reality as it is and reality as it should be, has been dissipated" (Sarup, 1993, p. 165). These blurred lines have very clear implications that impact all facets of society. In fact, "in 1967, Guy Debord, remarked that representations of reality through images had gradually led to a dissimulation of reality – and implicitly, to society's alienation from it" (Arva, 2008, p. 62).

"[Umberto] Eco (1986) encouraged us to closely examine image use in our cultures for evidence of fakeness or for images that embellish the truth, and [Roland] Barthes (1972) asked us to examine the world around us for images that seem so natural to us that we do not recognize the truth in representation" (Atkinson, 2008, p. 27). As early as the 1960s, researchers and philosophers were warning people against misperceptions of reality created by electronically

generated images, and how these misperceptions could impact people's identity, sense of well-being, and sense of place in the world.

More than forty years later, the effects of hyperreality are evident in numerous ways, most notably in society's inability to distinguish reality from virtual reality, real news from fake news, "which in Baudrillard's language means that humankind is becoming less and less capable of discerning meaningful events from 'image-events,'"(Arva, 2008, pp. 67-68) and "allowing pseudo-reality to triumph over concrete reality" (Viens, 2014, p. 93); in other words "the fiction is 'realized' and the 'real' becomes fictitious"(Sarup, 1993, p. 165).

Being unable to distinguish between reality and a contrived reality becomes especially problematic within the educational setting as teachers and professors are faced with more and more students who have been raised within a hyperreal world and don't always distinguish differences between reality and a contrived reality, which is affecting the development of young people's identities. Nicholas Carr (2014) and Susan Greenfield (2015) both discuss how screens and the virtual are affecting our ability to fully experience things, which in turn affects how we develop. "[T]he mind is not sealed in the skull but extends throughout the body. We think not only with our brain but also with our eyes and ears, nose and mouth, limbs and torso" (Carr, 2014, p. 148).

People are losing the ability to differentiate between reality and a contrived, simulated reality. People (especially students) need the constant connectivity of belonging to something, which is evident through constant consulting of their devices (e.g. social media) for "connections and feedback" (Sarup, 1993, p. 164), something they find lacking in the traditional classroom because it does not provide the immediate kudos and admirations that students desire.

One aspect that education has embraced, hyperreality in its best form, is online teaching.

Online classes offer contrived, simulated realities – students can attend whenever and from wherever they like. They can project whomever they wish to be to the class and professor. Petitfils (2015), in his analysis of hyperreality's effects on curriculum, argues that our reliance upon virtual reality, especially through online teaching, presents a paradox:

> on the one hand, these ubiquitous gadgets embody the seductive promise of 'constant connectivity;' on the other hand, of course, as people become more consumed by these devices, they are being colonized by code-generated simulation, a dehumanizing force worse than that of the assembly line during the Industrial Revolution. (p. 64)

The Role of Writing

When developmental writing students are asked, they will often readily admit to disliking writing. They do not connect what they post, text, or e-mail to writing, and they do not think they do it much. Writing online has become an everyday, ordinary experience, but most people do not think about how much they write each day. According to Thompson (2013), our daily online writing is creating the equivalent of about 36 million books.

> The Internet has produced a foaming Niagara of writing. Consider these current rough estimates: Each day, we compose 154 billion e-mails, more than 500 million tweets on Twitter, and over 1 million blog posts and 1.3 million blog comments on WordPress alone. On Facebook, we write about 16 billion words per day. . . .Text messages are terse, but globally they're our most frequent piece of writing: 12 billion per day. (p. 47)

Students often consider writing a blog or posting a tweet more authentic because they are writing to their followers – a *real* audience in their minds. This development of identity through online writing can also lead to students' connections to others who impact the development of a student's identity/identities. "Passionate affinity-based learning occurs when people organize

themselves in the real world and/or via the Internet (or a virtual world) to learn something connected to a shared endeavor, interest, or passion" (Gee & Hayes, 2011, p. 69). For instance, in online gaming, in the forums created to help other gamers navigate certain tasks, gamers write clear how-to pieces. In groups that focus on animal care, members might help someone solve a problem through the scientific method of creating a hypothesis and then searching for answers to support or refute. In other groups like political forums, members argue and discuss policies. All of these activities use the rhetorical modes like expository and persuasive that are taught in the classroom.

Creation of knowledge is an important goal in developmental writing courses. While the focus is on essay development, the purpose is on developing thinking through writing (Flower & Hayes, 1981). However, to students, "[c]omposing essays *is* meaningless. Teachers are an inauthentic audience" (Thompson, 2013, pp. 185, emphasis in original). Because developmental students often don't understand how the assignments they are required to write in academia will translate to "the real world," they don't see the connections between the act of writing and the act of developing new ideas or opinions.

Developmental writing students often experience dissonance between the comfort of writing to a more authentic or online audience versus their discomfort writing to a classroom audience. Writing online can feel more authentic to students because language is social (Gee & Hayes, 2011). However, in the classroom, literacy and language is often seen as print only, which overlooks the multiplicity of literacy (Gee, 2007) to which students innately adhere. What they write online is "liked" or commented on, often almost immediately, and can turn into an exchange of ideas between the writer and one or more friends/followers/subscribers, and rarely do the responses critique the manner in which the ideas are written or presented. However,

writing in the classroom is less interactive and immediate. While students do get feedback from peer reviewers and professors, students don't perceive this feedback as an exchange of ideas, rather they see it as criticism instead of a constructive conversation (Sommers, 1982a, 1982b), and too often this is the case as instructors struggle with helping students grow from their home language rather than eliminate native dialect (Shaughnessy, 1977).

Writing changes our cognitive behavior and clarifies our thinking (Thompson, 2013), but many developmental writing students struggle just with the act of writing. Because writing and thinking are such key components to the developmental writing classroom, the impact of learning the skill of writing should not be overlooked as a factor of student identity development and curricular successes or failures. "Does the medium of communication matter for knowledge creation? There is increasing evidence that it does. Studies of [information and communication technologies] . . . suggest that ICTs do not merely act as a substitute for face-to-face communication, but distinctly shape communication, thus enabling new kinds of interactions to take place" (Baralou & Tsoukas, 2015, p. 594). So, even though developmental students often have less access to reliable technology (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2000), and their experience with technology is rarely academically inclined, they already believe that the virtual is a more authentic platform for knowledge and have an automatic buy-in for writing online.

The Impact of the Classroom

Many students expect that when they enter college, their classes are going have a certain culture and tone to them. For college students, the experiences they have both in and out of the classroom impact their academic successes and failures (Astin, 1993). Students need to feel relevant and connected (Komarraju & Dial, 2014), and the activities within the classroom must provide a purpose for students to engage (Harper & Quaye, 2009). However, when

developmental writing students are admitted to college and are told they are not ready for a college level writing course, their expectations may not always be congruent with their reality.

Classrooms with cultures that do not encourage academic and social engagement can have a negative impact on students' experience (Chang, Witt, Jones, & Hakuta, 2012). On the other hand, classrooms that encourage connections with peers, the instructor, and outside services can help students who have struggled find success (Jensen & Jetten, 2015; McCormick, Gonyea, & Kinzie, 2013). Instructors who create classrooms that encourage students to learn through social connection and group membership can also positively impact student success (Flowerdew & Wang, 2015). Relationships matter. Faculty-student relationships. Student-student relationships. Student-staff relationships. Student success and "retention is a function of dynamic relationships between the individual student and other actors within the college and the student's home community" (Hossler, Dundar, & Shapiro, 2013, p. 143).

All college students are novices, but developmental writing students find themselves labeled as less than. They are college students but not college ready. They are expected to complete coursework that is often taught in middle and high school level English classes. The experience in their developmental writing classrooms can either confirm their expectations of college and their abilities or cause added dissonance (Zhou & Cole, 2017).

Conclusion

There is a lack of research focused on developmental writers. Research focused on the identities the students are curating and how the classroom experiences impact these identities is conspicuously absent. Without a more in-depth knowledge about students' identities, creating curricular experiences that have meaning for students is more difficult. How students see themselves when entering college – especially when they have been told they are required to take

at least one developmental course before being fully enrolled in all college-level courses – is important to understanding their successes and failure. The experiences that students undergo in the classroom can impact their identity development, and as classrooms now include virtual realms, it is equally important that the study of identity includes the virtual space (Abes, Jones, & McEwen, 2007; Dewey, 1915, 1938; Erikson, 1963; Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977; Piaget, 1936; Turkle, 2011; Vygotsky, 1978; Zhao, Grasmuck, & Martin, 2008).

Chapter 3 Methodology

Purpose

This study sought to determine if students are actively curating different identities, whether the identities are working symbiotically or conflictingly, and how the experiences of the developmental writing classroom and learning to write a college level essay impact these identities.

An embedded, single-case study, drawing on ethnographic[4] techniques, was appropriate for this study because it allowed for "methodological eclecticism" (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, p. 19) that used both ethnographic and case study data collection methods, but "bounds the research in time and space" (Fusch, Fusch, & Ness, 2017, p. 926). The questions that this project sought to answer benefit from qualitative study because they seek to "explore and understand the complexity of human behavior" (Hu et al., 2015, p. 468). Additionally, conducting a case study helped to explain, describe, or explore the subject being studied (Yin, 2014), and drawing upon ethnographic practices added depth about the "feelings, beliefs, and meanings of relationships between [subjects] as they interact with their culture" (Fusch et al., 2017, p. 923). This research project was situated as a "production of knowledge" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 2) to help contribute to the conversation of developmental writers' needs.

For the purposes of this study, the embedded single-case was bound by the fall 2019 semester, by the participating teachers, and by the particular developmental classes in which the participants were enrolled. Within this case study are four embedded subcases. A variety of data

[4] Ethnographic techniques draw upon close study of a context in which the researcher is immersed in the setting and employ a variety of data collection methods (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Artifacts and context, as well as close study of the participants, are hallmarks of the techniques used.

collecting methods, including surveys, analysis of writing assignments, and observations and interviews, were used to provide as much depth and context as possible to allow for substantial interpretation (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The data were analyzed within each embedded case and holistically across all four cases to illuminate common themes.

Pilot Study

In addition to the literature, this research project was influenced by a pilot study conducted by the researcher during the spring semester of 2018. The pilot study occurred at the same campus at City Wide Community College where the dissertation research occurred. The pilot study was a qualitative study focused on acquiring an understanding of the different identities that developmental writing students possess. During this study, three students who were enrolled in English 99 were interviewed. The interviews provided information about the students' different identities and roles that they navigated within their daily lives.

Studies on developmental writing students are less extensive than studies on traditional college students, and there is a lack of research focused on developmental writing students' identity development. Research on developmental students has often been more focused on success rates or structural movements, like corequisite teaching or online platforms, and a majority of these studies are quantitative with a focus on outcomes as indicators of success. In addition to the narrow focus of research on developmental writing students, the research focused on identity in students has focused more on children and teens and how they develop their identities as they approach adulthood. The literature contains gaps. There is very little research into the different identities, specifically academic, social, and virtual, that developmental writing students are curating. The focus of the pilot study was to begin to fill in that gap of information.

While the study looked at only three students, the analyzed data indicated that the

students, despite being in very different places in their lives, all had very strong senses of self-identity. They each demonstrated a self-awareness of their current abilities and projected future path. They all discussed identified purposes in life and strong support systems. None of the three showed any hesitancy that their futures would not be better than their present.

The analyzed data did not lead to any conclusive information regarding whether students' identities worked in symbiosis or in conflict with one another, but it did demonstrate that students do acquire different identities online, socially, and academically, and that whether consciously or not, they actively cultivated their identities. From these findings, the researcher looked at additional research focused on identity development and the impact of the educational experience on those differing identities, ultimately impacting the design and focus of the dissertation study.

Project Overview

Drawing upon ethnographic practices (Clifford & Marcus, 1986), this embedded case study (Yin, 2014) sought to inform the following questions:

1. In what ways do the experiences of developmental writing students in the developmental writing classroom influence their identities?
2. In what ways do developmental writing students display an academic, social, and virtual identity?
3. In what ways does the virtual identity of students differ from or support their offline identities?

This research project was framed by five conceptual strands: 1) the concept of academic identity, 2) the concept of social identity, 3) the concept of virtual identity, 4) the impact of writing on identity development, and 5) the impact of classroom experience on identity

development.

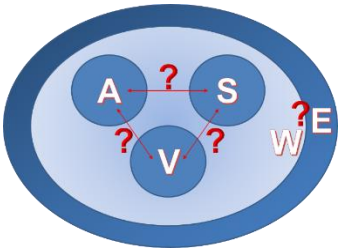

Figure 3-1: Overview of Conceptual Framework

Within the framework, following research procedures (figure 3-2) and data collection timeline (table 3-1) were employed.

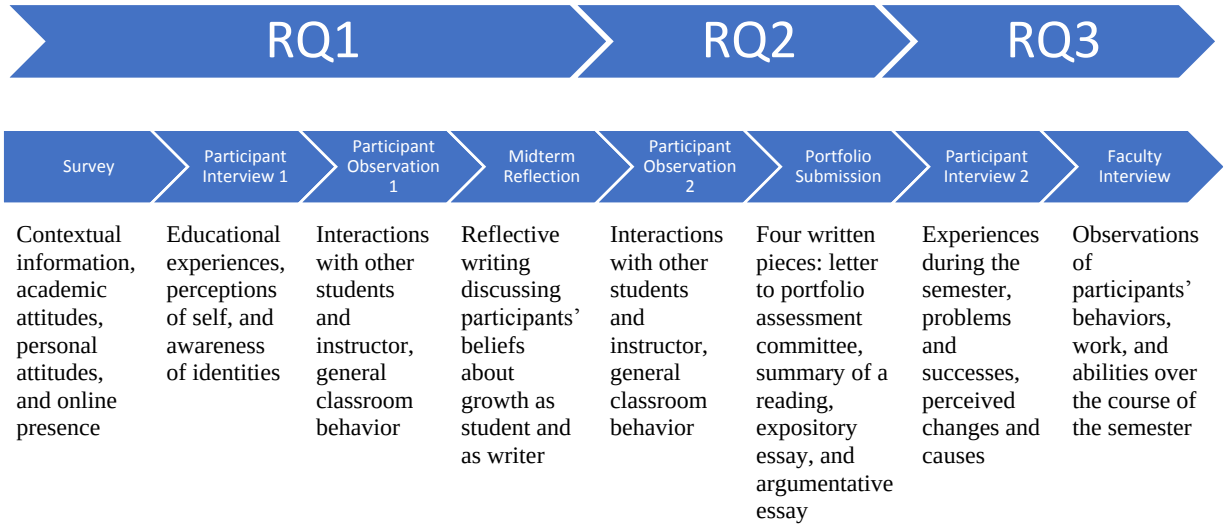

Figure 3-2: Research Procedures

Table 3-1: Data Collection Timeline

Participant	*Survey*	*I1*	*O1*	*MR*	*O2*	*PS*	*I2*	*FI*
Kaylee	8/22/19	9/4/19	10/26/19	N/A	N/A	NA	12/2/19	11/13/19
Julianna	9/2/19	9/10/19	10/4/19	10/25/19	11/18/19	NA	NA	12/2/19
Andrew	8/24/19	9/6/19	10/26/19	11/7/19	11/14/19	12/3/19	12/10/19	12/2/19
Cameron	8/22/19	8/29/19	10/26/19	10/8/19	11/14/19	12/3/19	12/12/19	12/2/19

Note. I1=Initial Interview, O1=First Classroom Observation, MR=Midterm Reflection, O2=Second Classroom Observation, PS=Portfolio Submission, I2=Second Interview, FI=Faculty of Record Interview.

Research Question 1. Research question 1 drew upon the in-depth interviews of the participants, the researcher's classroom observations (Marshall & Rossman, 2016), and the survey (Yin, 2014). At the beginning of the semester (late August, early September), the participants were interviewed about their past experiences, current perceptions of self, and how they currently interacted with others in the classroom, online, and socially. Two observations were conducted (October and November) and attention was paid to how the students interacted with other students and their instructors. The final interviews were conducted in December, focus was on how the participants' semesters went, what they liked and didn't like, and what changes they had gone through as students and as writers. During the final interview, participants filled out a survey with the same Likert questions they answered in August via the Google Forms survey.

Research Question 2. Research question 2 drew from the survey questions (Yin, 2014), both in-depth interviews of the participants and the interview of the faculty of record for each participant, and the observations of the researcher (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The survey provided general information about participants' habits online and offline, perceptions of themselves, and general attitudes toward school. From this information, specific questions were posed to participants during their first interviews to understand how each of them were cultivating different identities in different situations. During the final interview, several of these questions were again posed to see if participants' academic, social, and virtual identities had changed in any way. The observations allowed the researcher to see the participants interact with other students and faculty, providing information as to how the participants project themselves in a classroom setting. The faculty interview provided another lens with which to analyze how the students are perceived by others. These multiple points of view provided data

to show the types of identities the participants are cultivating and how these identities are perceived the participants themselves contrasted with how they are perceived by others.

Research Question 3. Research question 3 drew on much of the same data sources as research question 2. To answer this question, the focus was on the analysis of the data sources, finding where participants' identities were similar or different in varying situations, and developing a deeper picture to participants' online identities in comparison to their offline identities.

Overview of Site

This study took place at on a multi-campus community college located in a Midwest metropolitan city, City Wide Community College (CWCC). Initial focus was on the experience of students in the developmental writing program offered at City Wide Community College, specifically students enrolled in the second level of the developmental writing sequence, hereafter called English 99.

While English 99 classes are offered on all five campuses, focus was on participants who attended classes at the same suburban campus. At this specific campus, during the fall 2019 semester when data were collected, five traditional sixteen-week, one twelve-week, and four corequisite developmental writing classes were offered. A total of 122 students were enrolled in English 99 courses; 75 in the traditional sixteen-week courses, 6 in the twelve-week course, and 41 in corequisite courses. All students, except those in the twelve-week course were invited to participate in the initial survey. Students in the twelve-week course were not invited to participate in order to maintain a similar time frame for all the data collection points. Participants for the study were chosen from traditional courses and not the corequisite courses. Students in the researcher's corequisite English 99 courses participated in the initial survey;

however, they were not part of the more in-depth qualitative research. The class size of English 99 is capped at twenty-one, though enrollment trends impacted course sizes; some courses began with twenty-one students while others began with as few as six or ten.

Community college students who are enrolled in the upper level developmental writing courses have a variety of backgrounds and varying years of college experience. Many are first-time college freshman, while others have attended the college during a previous semester or year. Students in their second or subsequent semester may have taken a Developmental Writing I (English 98) course and are now moving to the next level, or they may have enrolled in a Developmental Writing II (English 99) course and were unsuccessful in passing. Enrolled students vary from traditional first-year college students living at home, traditional students living on their own, non-traditional students, and/or students who come from low-SES through high-SES homes.

Data Generation

Within each embedded case of individual students, surveys, interviews, observations, and writing assignments were used to determine whether students are curating different identities and in what ways the experiences students had in the classroom impacted these identities. Data were collected over the period of one semester (August to December) to provide a broader perspective of any changes students experienced. The data from each embedded case were analyzed within each case then analyzed as one larger case to provide a more holistic picture.

Instructors teaching the English 99 course were contacted during early summer 2019, prior to the beginning of the fall semester. The project was explained in full, so faculty were able to decide whether to let their students participate. During the fall semester, seven instructors taught sixteen-week English 99 courses, including the researcher. Five faculty

expressed interest in participating; one faculty member didn't respond to any of the correspondence by the researcher. Materials, detailing the project, were provided to each faculty member who indicated interest; the researcher also visited each of the faculty member's classes to explain the project to the students. Six faculty, including the researcher, provided their students a link to an online survey through Google Forms. Students were asked to complete the online survey by the end of the first week of school though a few surveys didn't come in until the end of the third week. The survey provided an overview of the project, asked biographical data, questions about online use, and general attitude toward education; the final question asked whether students would like to participate in the project, and for those who agreed to participate, a space for contact information was provided.

Timeline

All faculty made the survey link available during the first two days of the semester and the survey was closed on September 8, providing a three-week window for students to respond. Once students were identified, initial interviews were conducted between September 4 and September 10. Following the initial interviews, the researcher observed all the students during a class period between September 26 and October 4. Care was taken to schedule the observation during a class period in which participants were engaging in a group activity like peer review. During midterm week, students wrote a reflective self-evaluation for their instructors and a copy was sent to the researcher. A second observation of the students occurred between November 14 and November 18. Final interviews with the students were conducted between December 2 and December 12. At the final interviews, two students provided the researcher with their final portfolios and the assessment sheets. All students in English 99 are required to submit a final assessment portfolio that is submitted to a committee to determine whether they pass English 99.

During the final interview, students were given a hard copy of the Likert questions from the initial online survey and were asked to reassess them. Two students answered the Likert questions while in the company of the researcher and one student chose to answer the Likert questions using an online link provided by the researcher. One student did not participate in the final interview or provide a second set of answers to the Likert questions.

The timing of the interviews and observations was purposeful. To acquire a picture of students' self-perceptions before the impact of the developmental class, initial interviews were done as early in the semester as possible. Classes began on August 20 and all interviews were completed by September 10. The first observation was conducted within the first third of the course, when students are beginning to feel the pressure of the coursework. The second observation was conducted during the final peer review/group activity before students were required to submit their final portfolios. Two of the final interviews were conducted after the students had met with their instructors to learn whether or not they had passed the course. One final interview was conducted December 2 as the student had been withdrawn from the class due to attendance; she did not submit a portfolio. One student didn't grant a final interview nor did that student submit a final portfolio.

In addition to working directly with students, faculty were also interviewed during the final two weeks of the semester, prior to the final portfolio submission date. Interviews with the faculty of record for each of the participants were conducted on November 13 (for the withdrawn student) and December 2 (for the three students who completed the semester).

Participants

Participant selection was purposive and theoretical (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). In order to learn whether English 99 students are cultivating virtual, social, and academic identities,

only students enrolled in the second level developmental writing class and students who indicated some type of online presence and interest in participating were contacted with a follow up e-mail. The purpose of the sample is not to be representative of all Developmental Writing II students, rather it is to provide enough data to learn answers to the research questions. In fall 2019, the research site had a total of ten sections of English 99 classes: four corequisite, one twelve-week traditional, and five sixteen-week traditional.

At the beginning of the fall semester in August 2019, a total of 122 students were enrolled in an English 99 course. Six faculty (including the researcher) provided links to the survey; the total student enrollment for those six faculty was 105. Forty-two students responded to the survey; 19 indicated an interest in participating. Of the 19, seven students were current students of the researcher's and one student was a former student of the researcher, so focus remained on the eleven students who had no prior or current relationship with the researcher. Ten students were contacted to request interviews; eight responded with interest and six agreed to interviews. Four students followed through with the initial interview, signed the consent form, and agreed to be studied over the course of the semester. Of the four students who participated, only three students completed the semester, and only two students passed. Student withdrawal and non-completion rates for developmental students are higher than students who are not in developmental coursework (Schak et al., 2017), and the four students' experiences were congruent with research focused on success and completion rates.

The Participants in Brief. Four students participated in the study, and Chapters 4 and 5 provide in-depth looks at the participants, their experiences, and identities.

Kaylee is a nineteen-year-old female who first enrolled in CWCC in fall 2018. She has taken classes every semester, has taken English 99 three times without success, and is enrolled in

a corequisite English 99/English 101 class in the spring 2020 semester.

Julianna is an eighteen-year-old female who enrolled in CWCC in fall 2019. She suffered some personal issues during the fall semester and did not pass any of her classes. She did not enroll in any classes for the spring 2020 semester, but did indicate she would like to enroll in classes for the fall 2020 semester.

Andrew is a 1996 high school graduate who enrolled in CWCC fall 2018. He was not successful in English 99 during his first attempt (spring 2019), but was successful in fall 2019. He is enrolled in English 101/Composition I in the spring 2020 semester.

Cameron is a 2014 high school graduate who first enrolled in CWCC in 2016. After a failing semester, he stepped away from CWCC and re-enrolled in spring 2019. His first attempt at English 99 was fall 2019, and he was successful. He is enrolled in English 101/Composition I in the spring 2020 semester.

Data Sources

Qualitative researchers "view social worlds as holistic and complex, engage in systematic reflection, remain sensitive to their own identities and how they shape the study, use deduction and induction, and are systematic" (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, p. 2). In order to conduct quality research, multiple forms of data were collected to create a comprehensive picture of the identities that Developmental Writing II students are cultivating. Analysis was ongoing throughout the project. Interview questions were adjusted according to individual participants' information. Observations were adjusted according to instructor requests. Data was analyzed and interpreted using inductive methods to find emerging themes within each embedded case and holistically within the larger case. By allowing the themes to emerge, the data guided the findings.

Survey. Initial identification of participants was facilitated through an online survey using Google Forms (see Appendix B). Surveys answer the who, what, where, how many/how much types of questions (Yin, 2014). By doing an introductory survey, the researcher was able to choose a purposeful sample of students (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Using an online survey service like Google Forms allowed multiple instructors the ability to share the link to the survey through Blackboard, the Learning Management System (LMS) used at the research location. In addition to biographical information, students were asked brief questions about their online presence and their general attitude toward education. Information from the surveys was used to identify potential participants. All of the information learned through the survey has been included to provide an overall picture of students in English 99 during the fall 2019 semester at City Wide Community College. Additionally, the participants' survey information is discussed in detail and has been included as part of the analyzed data.

Interview. The four participants and their instructors of record were all interviewed (see Appendixes C and D for interview protocol). Interviews allow the researcher access to attitudes and subjective experiences and as the interviews sought past and present information, the interview provides the best tool to learn this information (Peräkylä & Ruusuvuori, 2011). The first in-depth interviews (Marshall & Rossman, 2016) with the participants were conducted within the first three weeks of the semester. During the final week of the semester, after students had received their grades, two participants were interviewed. One participant did not grant a final interview though that participant did correspond via e-mail and text. One of the participants was dropped from the course by the beginning of October; the final interview with this student was conducted December 2.

Scheduled interviews were semi-structured to ensure all participants were asked the same

initial questions, but allowed for the flexibility needed to respect the participants' narrative (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Interview questions sought to learn about students' educational experiences, online experiences, social experience, and perceptions of self (see appendix for sample potential questions). Interviews all took place on students' home campus; one was conducted in a library conference room and the others were conducted in a faculty office, to ensure semi-privacy. All interviews were recorded to assist with reliability and analysis, and no interview recordings contain identifying information like participants' names to ensure privacy.

In addition to the planned interviews, several non-scheduled interactions, initiated by the participants, occurred. The researcher met with one participant two additional times, and two other participants regularly e-mailed the researcher. Detailed field notes were kept for each interaction.

Interviews were also conducted with participants' instructors during the final week of the semester, prior to students' submission of final portfolios. The exception is the interview that was conducted November 13 to discuss the student who had been withdrawn from the class. Semi-structured interviews focused on instructors' perceptions of students' academic connections as students and emerging writers. All interviews were held in the researcher's office to ensure semi-privacy and were recorded to assist with reliability and analysis. No recordings contained identifying information like students' names to ensure privacy of both student and faculty.

Interviews were all transcribed, annotated, and analyzed in detail (Geertz, 1973). Analysis of interviews focused on emerging themes of academic, virtual, and social identities, whether the identities support or conflict with each other, how experiences in the classroom were perceived by participants, and if these experiences impacted participants' identities. Data from

the interviews were analyzed alongside the observation and document collection in order to determine whether students' perceptions support or conflict other data points and whether students demonstrate change in their online or offline identities.

Observation. "Observation is central to qualitative research" (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, p. 143). Observation allows the researcher to witness behaviors and interactions that may not be otherwise revealed through other data gathering methods. The researcher was an observer-nonparticipant (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Recognizing the researcher as instrument is important, so detailed field notes with thick descriptions were created to ensure quality (Geertz, 1973).

There were two observations during the semester, the first occurred during weeks 6 and 7 of the semester and the second during weeks 13 and 14 of the semester. The observations were scheduled during class periods when the faculty were having students do group work. Effort was made to observe peer review, an activity in which all English 99 classes participate; however, observing a peer review session was not possible for one of the participants, so the researcher worked with the classroom instructor to find comparable activities to observe.

Observations were recorded to ensure field notes were accurate and detailed and focused only on the students participating in the research project. Care was taken to have no other student in the camera's eye, and the faces of the students who were accidentally caught on camera were edited to ensure anonymity

Both observations focused on the participant's interaction during the observed activity. Instructors often execute peer review sessions differently, but the focus was on the interaction the participants had with their peers, the actual conversation between the students, and the verbal comments about the papers while the papers were being reviewed. The researcher was also able

to observe several conversations between the participants and their instructors during these activities, so an additional level of discourse was provided.

Observation notes focused on discourse and projected identity. Notes on body language and setting were included to provide additional context. Comparisons were made to the different review sessions to see if students became more confident over the course of the semester. The use of discourse as a piece of data offers insight into "how individuals alter their behaviour in different contexts in order to manage how they both view themselves and are viewed by others" (Terras, Ramsay, & Boyle, 2015, p. 133).

Document collection. Because documents can provide added insight into "values and beliefs of participants" (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, p. 164), document collection for this project was essential to understanding participants' development as writers, students, and thinkers. A variety of documents were collected. The two instructors of record had all their students complete a reflective piece of writing during midterm week though participants didn't all complete the writing during the same time period. Copies of the three midterm reflections that were submitted were provided to the researcher.

All students in English 99 are required to submit portfolios as part of the English 99 coursework. Final portfolios must include a letter that lists the included assignments and how the assignments meet course outcomes, a one-paragraph summary of a reading, a two-to-three page expository essay, and a two-to-three page argument essay. One of the two essays must incorporate sources. Portfolios are assessed by a committee in a double-blind format. Each portfolio is read by two readers. If the two readers don't agree on the score, a third reader makes the decision. Portfolios were due the last Tuesday of the semester, December 3, and were assessed Wednesday, December 4 and Thursday December 5. Students' assessed portfolios were

returned to them during finals week (December 10 – 16).

Two of the four participants submitted portfolios for the final assessment. Each participant gave the researcher his assessed portfolio during the final interview. All the documents were analyzed to find common themes. Textual analysis focused on tone, language choices, and content compared to previous writing samples to determine if a more academic identity emerged or was in the process of emerging (Penuel & Wertsch, 1995). Additionally all documents were juxtaposed alongside the interviews and observations to identify students' different identities and the fluidity and change of students' identities. The collection and analysis of the documents were used to complement the information gathered by the interviews and observations (Peräkylä & Ruusuvuori, 2011). Analysis focused on not only the context of the assignments, but the growth as demonstrated through a strong understanding of the strategies of revision (Faigley & Witte, 1981; Sommers, 1982b) stronger essay and sentence structure, stronger word choice, and integration of outside material.

Data Analysis

The research questions and data sources influenced the data analysis strategies (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The interviews, observations, and written documents were analyzed using thematic analysis, textual and conversational analysis, and content analysis. The surveys were analyzed using thematic analysis to present an overall picture of the students enrolled in English 99 during the fall 2019 semester; this data also provided a context with which to analyze the participants' individual data and results. Collection of data and analysis were recursive and ongoing; the researcher continually interacted with and reflected upon the data as they became available. In addition to collecting the data, care was taken to keep the data organized and secure (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

The process of gathering and analyzing data was an ongoing process that, in addition to recording, included taking systematic field notes while interviewing or observing, reviewing those notes and creating thick, detailed notes after the interview or observation (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). Not only did these notes include factual information, but they also contained the researcher's interpretations and thoughts about the factual recorded words or actions.

Although the conceptual strands guided the analysis, analysis actually began with general coding to see what themes naturally emerged (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Color-coding was essential to the analysis of the information. Each conceptual strand was assigned a color. Through multiple reads, the interview transcripts, observation transcripts and notes, and the students' writings were highlighted according to the color-coding key. Some information fell under multiple strands and was highlighted to demonstrate as such. Information that fell outside of the conceptual strands was noted and analyzed for patterns of support or contradiction toward the guiding conceptual strands.

Once the general themes emerged, a more detailed analysis was implemented. By transcribing the interviews and observations, they became textual data like the participants' written work. Through textual analysis and conversational analysis, the conversational voice of the participants could be analyzed against the written voice in their papers (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Through conversational analysis, participants' interactions with their peers and instructors were also analyzed.

Trustworthiness and Dependability Multiple types of data were collected throughout the semester to create an in-depth picture of each participant; the data gathered included interviews, observations, and document collection. To create trustworthiness and validity, detailed, thick notes were written about the data, and the multiple data were triangulated within

each embedded case and across the larger, holistic case (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Maxwell, 2013).

In addition to the writing artifacts that students created, a detailed paper trail was also created through the recording and transcription of interviews and observations, along with thick, detailed field notes. All data were analyzed for emerging themes and patterns, as well as discrepancies. Throughout the analysis, additional notes and annotations were created on all transcripts and documents. Excluding the consent to participate forms, students' actual names were not associated with any of the data collected. All data were kept in an organized, secure location to ensure privacy.

Surveys. Once the survey was closed, the researcher looked at the overall results with which to situate the individual participants. The survey, administered through Google Forms, was downloaded as an Excel spreadsheet. The spreadsheet was used to generate charts and graphs depicting general attitudes, experiences, and activities. To ensure privacy for any students who had included their names in the final question, these names were deleted. The spreadsheet was saved on an external hard drive in a secure location.

Interviews. All the participant and faculty interviews, except for one, were held in the office of the researcher, a semi-private location. The one interview (a first interview) not held in the office was held in a semi-private conference room in the campus library, per the request of the participant; however, that participant met in the researcher's office during subsequent meetings. While the interview occurred, it was recorded using the researcher's phone and the Rev.com recording and transcribing application. As soon as the interview was over, the researcher submitted the recording for transcription. While this was being done, the researcher reflected on the interview, made additional notes to her field notes, and wrote down additional

thoughts, feelings, and observations. Once the professionally created interview transcript was available, it was double-checked by the researcher. As the researcher analyzed the interviews, she listened to the actual recording while reading through and notating the printed transcript. Any mistakes by the service were corrected by the researcher, and subjective notes like tone, inflection, and silence were additionally recorded and annotated on the printed transcripts to add depth to the researcher's analysis. However, care was taken not to "fix" mistakes like grammar, so participants' own words and voice were truthfully represented.

Observations. To ensure that observations were represented truthfully, while the researcher observed and created field notes, the observations were also recorded. Immediately after the observation, the researcher reflected on the observation and created more detailed notes. As technology can be unreliable, at least two small cameras were used to record the observation to ensure that if one camera failed a backup was available. The video recordings were transcribed by the researcher and not a professional service, and as the researcher transcribed the observations, thick descriptions were also created. Care was taken to avoid filming students not involved in the research. A few students were briefly captured on camera; those sections were edited to avoid identification. To maintain security, the recordings were moved from the cameras to a secure external hard-drive.

Documents. The document collection included participants' midterm reflections and portfolio submissions. Both participants who submitted their portfolios also included several rough drafts. Because these documents all contained the names of the actual students when they were submitted to the researcher, the researcher took care to ensure anonymity. The first thing the researcher did was white out the participant's actual name and put the pseudonym in its place. If the name was still visible, the researcher made a copy of the original and then shredded

the original piece, thus ensuring no identifying information was available. All documents were kept in files that corresponded to the pseudonyms assigned to the participants and were kept in the secure location.

Limitations

This study focused on the experiences of four students who attend community college in the Midwest. The experiences of the students may not be fully transferable to similar classes on community college campuses nationwide; however, the methods of the study are transferable. In addition, the results may prove informative to other instructors who work with this demographic. To help ensure as much transferability as possible, rich descriptions and detailed analysis are provided (Marshall & Rossman, 2016) to demonstrate why the conclusions are credible.

Additional limitations occurred because of the role of the researcher. Because the researcher is a faculty member at the research location, some students were unwilling to participate. Conversely, students in the faculty member's classes volunteered to participate at a higher than average rate, which left fewer volunteers from which to draw.

Gaining Access and Approval

This study followed all ethical guidelines and received IRB approval as well as approval from the participating community college. After the dissertation proposal was approved by the proposal committee, the researcher applied for IRB approval through the University of Kansas Office of Research, which was granted June 28, 2019. Following the approval from the University of Kansas, the researcher applied for IRB approval at City Wide Community College, which was granted in early August 2019. Once approval was granted by City Wide Community College, the researcher communicated with English 99 faculty to explain the research project and request permission to engage their students. Student recruitment began on the first day of the

semester.

The Researcher's Role

As a developmental writing instructor with over twenty years of teaching experience, the researchers' focus of this project is an extension this experience. Student success is at the forefront of what the researcher does and better understanding students' perceptions of themselves can help inform needed adjustments to curricula and practices to better meet students' needs. It is the hope of the researcher that this research will better inform those who work with developmental writing students by creating an understanding of how students see themselves in the virtual and the real and inside and outside the classroom, ultimately opening a conversation about students' identities and needs in curricular design.

During the research project, it was imperative how the researcher situated herself since the research was conducted at her institution of employment (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Care was taken to avoid working with her own students. Also, the researcher maintained awareness of the power dynamic that did come into play because of her role as a faculty member. Full disclosure about the study and students' complete privacy was maintained. To build trust, the researcher interacted with students strictly as a researcher rather than as a campus faculty member. This included insisting participants refer to the researcher by first name rather than her faculty title, dressing more casually, and keeping any written communication more casual in tone. One concern about participants possibly looking to the researcher to advocate for them involving a curricular issue did occur. In this particular incident, the participant was needing to vent and blame; the researcher listened to the student's frustration, reminded the student that faculty were there to help students, and encouraged the student to talk with the faculty of record. The researcher talked to the participant more as a peer – student to student – to help avoid the

power dynamic of faculty-student.

Conclusion

Once qualitative research questions are asked, designing a study requires finding methodological approaches that will best answer those questions while providing a learning opportunity for the researcher. Choosing to do an embedded case study that draws upon ethnographical practices allows the researcher to learn through process and develop good research skills (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 303). Because identity and reality are fluid and nuanced (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), the methods laid out in this chapter provide a strong framework for gathering data focused on the purpose of this study: students' identity development and the impact of their classroom experiences on those identities. By following the ethics and guidelines of good research practice, the results and analysis in the following chapters should have the trustworthiness and credibility expected of this type of research project.

Chapter 4 Results

This chapter aims to provide each participant's profile in relation to the research questions of the study. Each profile will follow a specific format – a brief biographical overview, educational experience, academic identity, social identity, virtual identity and faculty perception. While some analysis is included, care has been taken to present the information in as objective a manner as possible. A more in-depth analysis of each participant, as well as an overall study of the four participants' experiences and identities will be presented in chapter five.

The majority of the data that are presented in this chapter come from the initial interviews with the students (29 August – 10 September), their midterm reflections (7 October – 29 October), and the faculty interviews (25 November and 2 December). While the researcher did observe the students, collect the final portfolios, and interview the students after they found out about their semester grade, that information will be presented in an analytic form in Chapter 5.

In order to situate the participants' information, an overview of the research site and a general overview of the students enrolled in English 99 during the fall 2019 semester will be presented first. This information was gathered by the researcher through the initial online survey and through the researcher's role at the research site. In Chapter 5 additional data from the research site will be included to help provide analysis and context for the individual study participants.

Overview of Site

The research was conducted on one of the suburban campuses at City-Wide Community College (CWCC). During the fall 2019 semester, CWCC had a student enrollment of 16,063. The campus on which the research took place had 4,070 enrolled students and a total of 122 students were enrolled in English 99. Eighty-one students were enrolled in traditional English 99

courses, 75 students in sixteen-week courses and 6 students in a twelve-week course. The other forty-one students were enrolled in Corequisite 101/99 courses.

All faculty teaching English 99 were invited to have their students participate in the online survey; six faculty (including the researcher) provided the link to their students; responses included students from all six faculty's classes. Forty-two students responded to the survey, which represents 34% of the total number of students enrolled in an English 99 course. Total enrollment for the six participating faculty was 105, so the 42 respondents represent 40% of the participating faculty's students. Fourteen students (33% of respondents) were enrolled in corequisite courses and eleven of those students were current students of the researcher. Twenty-eight student respondents were enrolled in traditional sixteen-week English 99 courses, representing 35% of total student enrollment in traditional English 99 courses.

All students in traditional English 99 are required to submit a final portfolio that is assessed by an outside committee comprised of all faculty who teach developmental writing and any volunteer English faculty who teach other composition courses. Students have to "earn" the right to submit a portfolio, which usually includes stipulations like turning in all rough drafts, meeting the attendance policy, and participating in all peer review sessions. Of the 81 students who started English 99, 41 were enrolled all semester and 38 submitted final portfolios. Of the 38 portfolios, 21 were deemed passing. In total 26% (21/81) students started and passed traditional English 99.

Survey Responses

The survey was broken up into four sections. In the first section, students were asked general biographical questions and questions about their educational experiences. In the second section, students were asked about their online and electronic usage, including social media and

online gaming activities. In the third section, students were asked Likert scale questions about their personal and academic perceptions. The final section asked students to provide their name and contact information if they were interested in participating in the study. (See Appendix B for a copy of the survey.)

Graduation and ethnicity. Figures 4-1 through 4-3 show respondents' graduation years, graduation locations, and ethnicity. The majority of respondents graduated from local, in-district high schools. Forty-six percent reported they had graduated in 2019 and 49% of identified as Caucasian. Comparatively, about 50% of the enrolled students at the research location were 2019 high school graduates, and about 62% identify as Caucasian. Three students reported they had graduated from out of the country – one from the Philippines and two from Nigeria, and all three international students had graduated before 2007. Two students received their high school diplomas from Penn Foster High School, an online for-profit high school, and one student acquired a GED from CWCC.

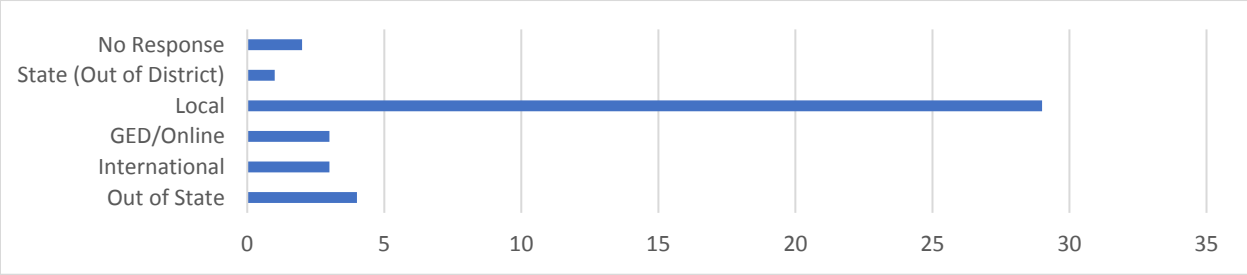

Figure 4-1: Graduation Location

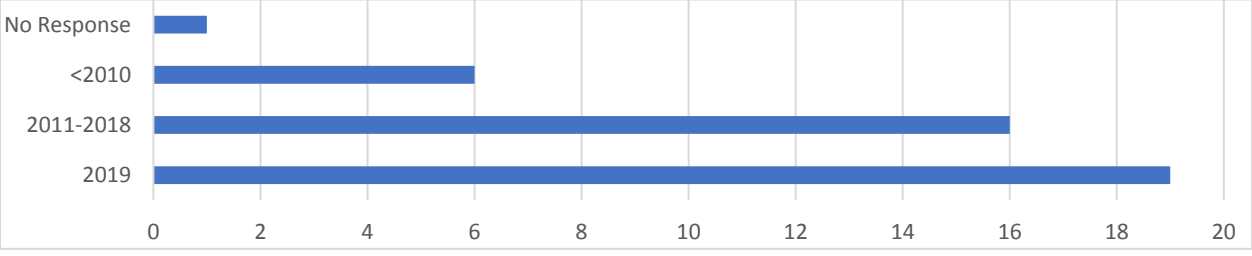

Figure 4-2: Graduation Year

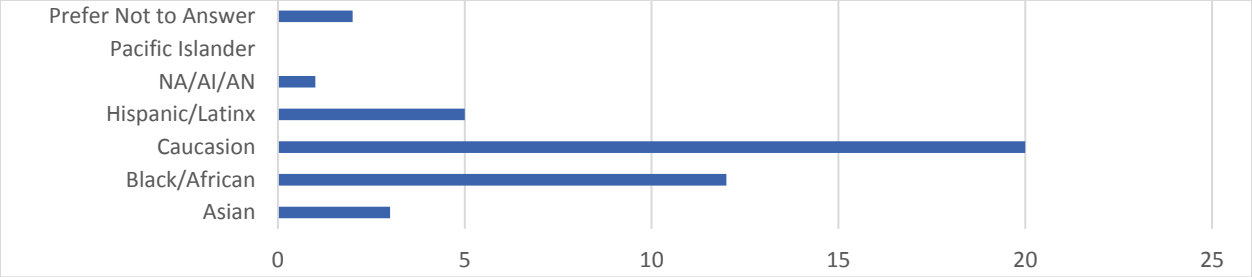

Figure 4-3: Ethnicity

Enrollment and work. Twenty-seven of the respondents (64%) were first time CWCC students, and 34 (80%) were enrolled in English 99 for the first time. At the research site, first time CWCC students accounted for 64% of the student population. Ten of the respondents reported that they were the first person in their family to attend college. Of those that were first generation college students, two were international students and over 31 years old, four were 18-21 year old Caucasians, two were 18-21 year old Latinx, one was an 18-21 year old African American, and one was a 22-30 year old Caucasian.

The majority of respondents (21/40) reported that during the fall 2019 semester, they were taking a full college load (12 or more credits), which is fairly congruent with the campus statistics (50%). Twenty-two students reported they were working more than 21 hours a week, with thirteen reporting they were working more than 26 hours per week. Twenty-one students reported they had accumulated no college credit prior to the fall 2019 semester and were first time college students, four students reported having earned more than 24 credits, and six students reported having between 13-23 accumulated credits.

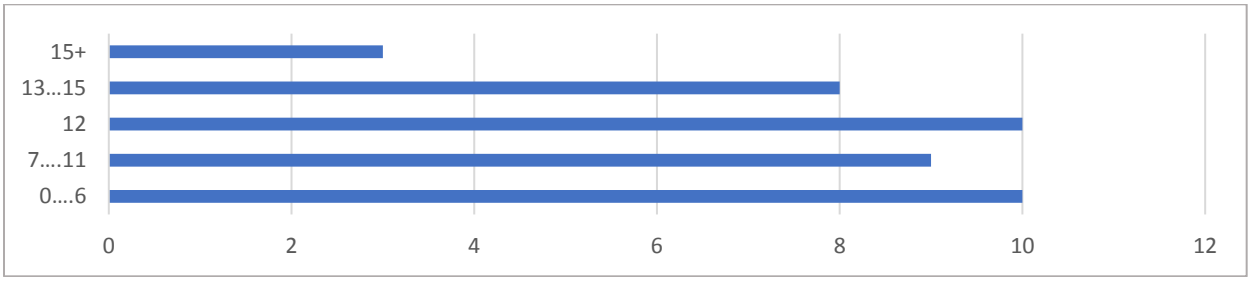

Figure 4-4: Number of Enrolled Credits

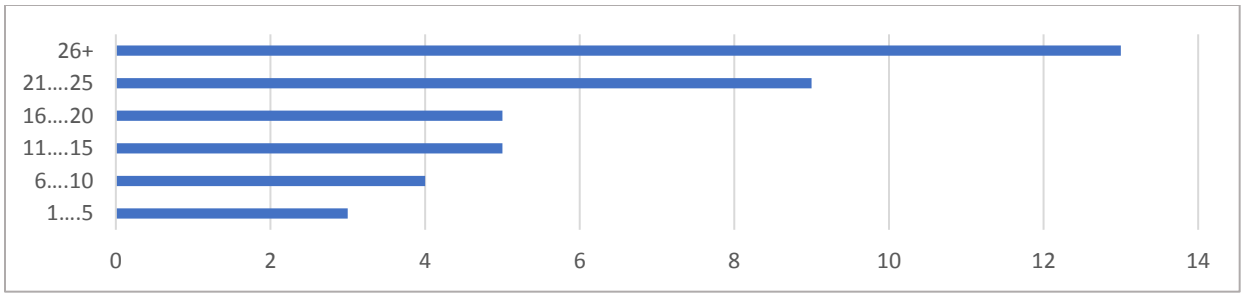

Figure 4-5: Number of Hours per Week Working

Electronic use and online presence. Students regularly use their phones (40/42) and computers (30/42). Fewer students (19/42) regularly watched TV and four students reported regularly using a gaming console. Over 90% of students reported using social media, and 77.5% of those that did use social media, reported using it more than two hours a day. The most popular platforms were YouTube (28/42), Facebook (27/42), Instagram (27/42), Snapchat (27/42), and Pinterest (13/42). Seven students reported using Twitter and two students reported using LinkedIn. Other social media apps that were used were DeviantArt (1/42), Tumblr (1/42), WhatsApp (1/42), Reddit (1/42), Google Hangouts (1/42), and TikTok (1/42).

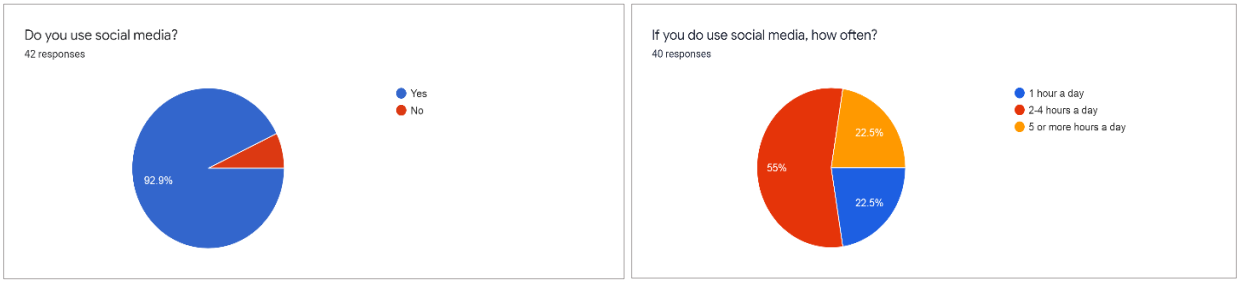

Figure 4-6: Social Media Use

Fewer students reported playing online games than using social media; however, 45% did report playing online games, and 60% of those who do game, do so for more than two hours a day. Game choices were varied, though GTA Online (Grand Theft Auto) was the most popular with 50% of respondents indicating they played this game. Call of Duty (6/19) and Fortnite (5/19) were the next most popular games. One respondent, an 18-21 year old Caucasian, reported playing more than five hours a day and playing eighteen different online games.

Figure 4-7: Online Game Use

Only five students indicated they use online blogging sites; however three students who indicated they do not use online blogging sites did indicate they spent at least one hour a day writing online. Student responses indicate that some students identified writing online as part of their social media use (Tumbler, Reddit, Instagram), while others identified writing online as a separate activity (Wattpad, Wix).

Figure 4-8: Online Writing or Blogging

Use of online sites. The majority of respondents reported using online sites for academic work, but two students (4%) did indicate that they rarely use online sites for academic work. Both respondents were under thirty-years-old, Caucasian, and had graduated from urban school districts. Most respondents also reported using online sites for entertainment; many students indicated they spent a lot of time shopping and watching YouTube as part of their entertainment.

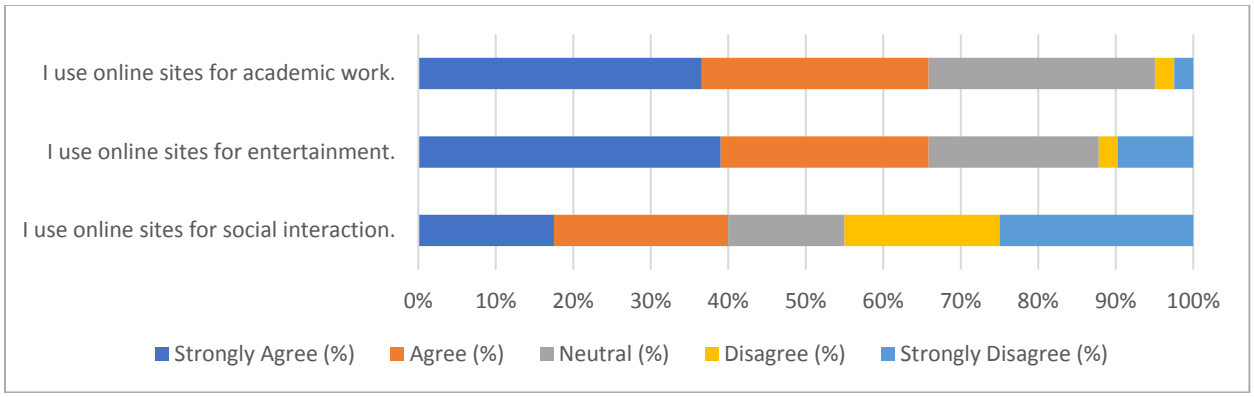

Figure 4-9: Use of Online Sites

Attitudes toward school and self. The majority of respondents (81%) see college as an opportunity for a new beginning and are excited to be in college (69%); however, fewer respondents (57%) actually enjoy school. Only 45% believe they are strong students, and only 20% believe they are good writers. In contrast, 60% either don't like English classes or are neutral about them and 59% don't like to write. Despite their perceived weaknesses, most respondents reported being serious about their studies, but 2% admitted to not being serious students.

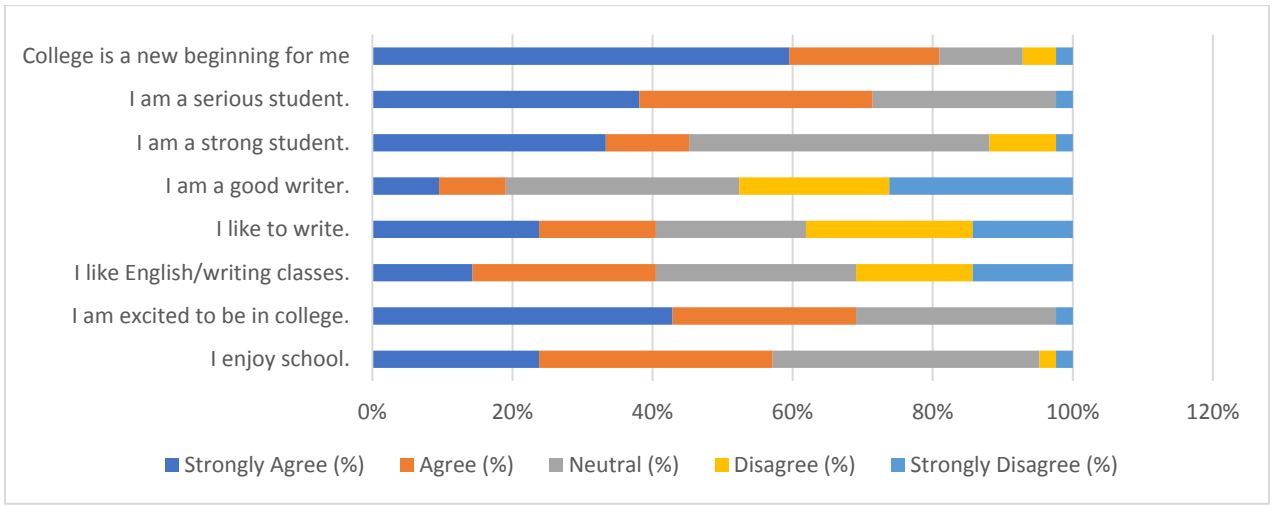

Figure 4-10: Attitudes

Conclusion.

Overall, student responses reflected common characteristics of developmental students (Stine, 2004). The ages of students had a wide range. There were six respondents who were

over thirty-one; two had graduated in the 1980s, two in the 1990s, one in 2002, and one who didn't share a graduation year. There were six students who were between the ages of 22-30 and had graduated 2007-2014. The remaining students (29) were traditional 18-21 year olds, except for one student who was under 18. The split between part-time and full-time status was almost equal (19:21), and the majority (22/30) reported working more than twenty-one hours per week in addition to their college attendance.

Study Participants.

Identity is a complex subject to study and understand, and the experiences that individuals have directly impact the development of different identities. Students' encounters in education, from kindergarten through their senior year of high school, directly impacts whether they enter college and how that college experience unfolds (Astin, 1993). These experiences also impact how students see themselves academically and how they approach the classroom setting (Komarraju & Dial, 2014; White & Lowenthal, 2019). Being a member of a group helps students internalize a sense of self because formation of identity is social (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978). Students' social identity is based on their social relationships and groups, and the strength of their self-identity can affect the display of social identity/identities. Finally, since the inception of the virtual world, students have had additional ways to develop their identities, specially focusing on identities they wish they had or are striving for (Greenfield, 2015). Curating an online identity has become second nature to the younger generations that it must be considered when studying students' identity development.

The following sections provide individual, detailed profiles of the four participants. Through their own words, their backgrounds, educational experiences, academic, social, and virtual identities are presented. Finally, the perceptions and observations of the students'

instructor of record are included. More in-depth analysis, including contrasting perceptions, will be included in Chapter 5.

Kaylee

Description/Overview

Kaylee is a vibrant and bubbly nineteen-year-old Caucasian female. She is a 2018 high school graduate and has been at CWCC since fall 2018. She has taken English 99 three times and has yet to be successful. She enrolled in a corequisite English 99/English 101 course for the spring 2020 semester with the same instructor she had during the fall 2019 semester. During the fall 2019 semester, she was enrolled in fourteen credits, and reported that she worked an average of 21-25 hours per week. She is not the first person in her family to go to college; her mother is a graduate of a local state university. She first started thinking about college when she was in middle school, and in August, she reported that it was fairly important (Survey item #15: 4/5) for her to be enrolled and extremely important to her family (Survey item #16: 5/5). She is very open and enthusiastic and was one of the first students to sign up to be part of this study. Despite her lack of success, Kaylee believes she will ultimately be successful, no matter how many times she has to retake English 99.

Educational Experience

For most of her educational experience, Kaylee attended Farrington School District[5] (FSD), a large suburban school district that has almost 18,000 students, three high schools, one alternative high school, and one technological academy that services multiple school districts.

[5] All names of participants, schools, and school districts are pseudonyms.

For first and second grade, Kaylee attended Cedar Elementary, a school in a neighboring urban school district until her parents divorced. Her mother moved Kaylee and her sister to FSD, and she attended Hawk Ridge elementary for third grade. The following year, the school district redrew the boundary lines, and Kaylee was moved to Mason Elementary.

> I think that affected me a lot because it was always new friends, new space. I like change, but it has to be a healthy change. I would say and that was kind of a lot, especially being so young. My parents were just divorced and we were moving all these places, schools and new friends and I finally find good friends. Then it's like okay, different school.

Once she was at Mason Elementary, Kaylee's progression through school was less chaotic. All students from Mason Elementary moved to South Middle School and then to South High School, which "was kind of nice just having the same boundary, all of that evened out."

During her freshman year, Kaylee was a cheerleader, but damaged her lower back, which put her behind in school. She also contracted mononucleosis, and wasn't healthy again for about eighteen months. During her junior and senior years of school, she worked for the district before and after school program (BASP), and graduated with her class in May 2018. In August 2018, she enrolled in CWCC and began attending classes. She has been enrolled continuously since August 2018, and has enrolled in a total of 12 credits for the spring 2020 semester.

Academic Identity

Kaylee's educational experience has been filled with quite a few hurdles, including family changes, address changes, school changes, injuries and illness, yet she persisted and chose to enroll in college. She doesn't see herself as a strong student (Survey item #35: 2/5) or as a student who really enjoys school (Survey item #31: 3/5), but when she talks about being at CWCC, even though she has struggled to pass English 99, she is extremely enthusiastic, "I love

this college!" She is also very positive about two of her English 99 instructors. Her first English 99 instructor was "wonderful" and "so sweet," and her third English 99 instructor is kind and "he doesn't make you feel stupid . . . [and] he's very accepting of all of our answers, all of our questions, which helps a lot." For Kaylee, good grades or success in a class do not seem to influence her enjoyment of a class or subject. "I enjoyed Biology, but I wasn't good at it. I enjoyed it, but I wasn't good at it. . . . I learned to love math once I understood it. I still struggled at it, but I still loved it."

Kaylee expresses that during her last two years of high school, she was a better student because she had learned study skills that work for her. She credits writers/bloggers like Rachel Hollis as "life changing" and spent a lot of time reading

> a lot of self-help books and that really helped me learn, "Okay, this is all you. No one can do it for you." That I think gave me the strength within myself to say "Okay, I can do this. It's okay to ask questions. It's okay to ask for help." I think that's really where I learned it is being okay with myself. If I failed, that's ok. Try again.

Kaylee has taken to heart the mantra of try again, as she has been more unsuccessful in the college setting than successful but continues to try. In the three semesters she has attended, she has attempted the same developmental math and English course three times, and has yet to find success with either of these classes. In contrast, she has found success in two college level courses, one with a final grade of A. Her spring 2019 semester shows she attempted twelve credits, but withdrew from all of them, consistent with her claim that she "didn't have that drive and motivation" to complete the courses. Her spring 2020 enrollment indicates that in addition to trying English 99 again, she is also retaking the reading course she withdrew from in spring 2019.

Kaylee has an emerging academic identity, and she struggles with consistency. She knows the right things to say, "You've got to put in the work," but the follow through isn't always there.

> I did not like math freshman and sophomore year . . . And I didn't really put a lot of effort in, so that's probably why. I was just at the point I would sit there, and I would do my work, and then I'd be like, "Okay, I'm done. I give up."

She has had some successes and multiple failures; sometimes she accepts responsibility for the failures while other times she offers excuses. When asked about getting extra help in English during high school, she expressed frustration at being one of thirty students in a 45 minute class who couldn't meet with the teacher before or after school because of her job, "the timing part was hard." When asked about using the college writing tutors either fall 2018 or spring 2019 during her first two attempts at English 99, she replied "I did not use the writing studio because I was scared to go." However shortly after expressing this fear, she also stated that "I think it helps that they've [the writing tutors] been in my position." She recognizes what she should be doing and what will help her, but struggles with taking that first step.

In Fall 2018, when Kaylee was first told she needed to take a developmental class, her original reaction was that she "wasn't enough," but then decided she was "thankful that I can be in school and that I get to go to college." She expressed that her experience that fall was good, and she was surprised when her portfolio did not pass the department assessment, and she was told she would have to repeat English 99. She did, however, feel she had learned her lesson and would be successful the following semester. Her explanation for not passing English 99 in the spring semester is that the semester "was horrifying" because she and her boyfriend broke up and "she didn't have that drive and motivation . . . just gave up . . . and withdrew from two classes."

Her success in English 99 during the fall semester was hindered by her attendance "due to having to take my sister to work and her appointments." All three semesters, she liked her instructors and found them to be nice and approachable; nonetheless, she didn't reach out to any teacher for additional help in finding success.

Social Identity

During Kaylee's elementary years, the changes in school settings required her to have to make new friends. It wasn't until she was at Mason Elementary that she found a little more stability in her social group. "I was the kind of person that was friends with everyone."

Kaylee's social life and academics were heavily hindered by her health. During her freshman year of high school, Kaylee tried out and made the cheerleading team. She enjoyed it until she "fractured two discs in my lower back," which not only impacted her cheerleading, but impacted her school work and social life as she was homebound for several weeks. Once she was healthy, she tried joining the swimming team, but it "was too hard on my back." This was followed by a bout of "mono for about a year and a half . . . and [I] almost ruptured my spleen," which meant she slept a lot and did the bare minimum academically and socially.

In addition to trying to participate in athletics, Kaylee was "the assistant manager for the theater team freshman year" and the prom committee during her senior year; "other than that, [I did] nothing too crazy" as far as extracurricular activities. "I was busy with school and work."

Not being involved in extracurricular activities did not mean that Kaylee didn't or doesn't have an active social life. She didn't have "a huge friend group," but she "didn't really care" about that as her friends were close and supportive. She dated and had a long-term boyfriend. She also counts family as part of her social group, especially her mom who is very supportive.

Since she has been in in college, her social group has changed a bit. "My first semester

of college, when a lot of my friends left, [I had to decide] *these* are the people that I want in my life." Now she and her friends "all hang out and do card games once a week" and really try "to connect as one and be friends" because "that time is precious to us, because we know, okay, five years from now, someone's going to be married, someone's going to be in their own house."

Kaylee's ability to recognize how life and time impact friendships has made her more thoughtful about what she chooses to do with friends. When they are together, unless they are out for brunch when they want to "take pictures and stuff" of the food, "we put our phones away."

Virtual Identity

Kaylee is an avid user of her smart phone and computer. She reports that she spends at least two to four hours a day on social media or shopping sites and regularly uses Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat, Tumblr, Twitter, and YouTube. A large portion of her time on social media is spent on Instagram, "watching bloggers . . . in their daily life."

Kaylee's relationship with social media is complex. She recognizes that "it's not good for you" but because she's "been born into this, the social media," she struggles with how social media "will take a toll on you," but finds herself drawn into it. Recently, she has "been trying my best not to look at it," especially when she gets up in a morning or during class. Nonetheless, she actively posts and interacts on a daily basis.

For her, Facebook is used to keep up with family members, both locally and nationally and while she recognizes most people post the parts that are "really exciting . . . [and] no one wants to share the hard stuff . . . the real and raw stuff," she does feel that her family's posts keep her connected and up to date with what is actually happening in their lives.

I can see what they're doing and all of that. . . . Oh, they're hiking today. . . . I can see

what they're doing every day rather than if I didn't have [social media]. Those updates make me feel, okay, I know what they're doing."

Her belief that her family's posts do give her a picture of their lives does not extend to her personal posts on either Instagram or Facebook. When deciding what to write or what picture to post, she "always think of other people's opinions," and will often take multiple pictures, at least "five to seven" before finding one that she feels comfortable posting. She knows "no one has to look perfect," but admits that she is really critical of how she looks in the pictures and is very deliberate in choosing a picture of herself to post. In contrast, she will readily post one where one or more family members don't look their best or "silly pictures" because "they're crazy and they're fun, so it kind of describes us." Most commonly, she posts when she and family or friends are "doing brunch in Kansas City" and enjoys posting pictures of the foods they are experiencing.

Her struggle with wanting to portray a certain image online, but recognizing that it isn't real life is evident in her struggle to articulate her feelings about social media. On one hand, she recognizes that she needs to take breaks, and has taken several month long breaks, but on the other hand, she finds herself regularly viewing social media and comparing "[herself] to other women . . . [and] to other people's lives." She recognizes that it takes a toll on her mind and emotions, and when asked whether she uses online sites for social interaction, she was adamant that she rarely did (Survey item: #40 1/5); however, she also admits to spending a large part of her day interacting with it.

Faculty Perception/Observation

According to Kaylee, she had no option but to miss certain classes because of the needs of her sister, and she felt that she had adequately shared these issues with her instructor. Her

instructor, Mr. Crawford, on the other hand, saw things quite differently. Each semester, he has students fill out index cards with their names and something they want him to know about them. "I think she started with a lot of enthusiasm. . . . I think hers [index card], if I remember correctly, was something to the effect of 'I'm really excited for this. I'm looking forward to it.'" He noted, however, that her enthusiasm quickly dissipated, "really after probably that first week," and her attendance started to become a problem. What he found odd was that unlike most students who will want to talk to him about an absence, "she never talked to me once. I don't think I got any emails from her about the absences. She just didn't show up."

Kaylee also believed that she was motivated and showed that motivation in the classroom. Again, the perception of the instructor was different from hers; he felt she was not engaged or motivated to be part of the class.

> When she was in class, she was pretty clearly not focused on whatever we were working on. And she never tried to hide it necessarily. I was pretty sure that she was working on other core subjects while she was in my class."

He also expressed that she had "no sense of urgency or concern about what the impact" of her lack of focus or attendance was going to be on her ability to succeed.

Mr. Crawford noted that Kaylee didn't initiate participating in class but would do so if prompted. During peer review, if he asked her to review someone's paper, she would do that, but wouldn't voluntarily read a second paper. She also didn't initiate choosing a partner or group when he would ask students to group up.

> I don't remember her moving up. She wouldn't get up and walk across to the other side of the room to, to find a group, unless I told her, "Hey, I want you to get up, go over there to that group. . ." Yeah, it felt like I was just kind of pulling her through to just do

anything.

Despite this lack of engagement, she was not disruptive or rude, and Mr. Crawford was quick to point out "she wouldn't push back or argue with me." She was always polite, if apparently disinterested.

"Whatever enthusiasm, that balloon deflated quickly for whatever reason. I don't know."

"It was like somebody turned the light off in the room."

Conclusion

Kaylee is a complex young woman who truly wants to succeed in college, but struggles with the how. She is extremely personable and values her friends and family. She is concerted in what she presents – both online and offline – but what she believes she is projecting to others is not what is always perceived by the recipient. This disconnect of her perceptions and reality is also evident in how she contradicts herself, especially when talking about her virtual presence. She is trying to be more aware, and sees hope in the advice provided by the bloggers and inspirational writers she follows, but still hasn't figured out how to turn the mantras into successful action.

Julianna

Description/Overview

Julianna is a very shy, hesitant and thoughtful eighteen-year-old Caucasian female. She is a 2019 high school graduate, and the fall semester was her first semester at CWCC. During the fall 2019 semester, she was enrolled in five credits and reported that she worked an average of 21-25 hours per week. She is not the first person in her family to go to college; her sister started but dropped out and her brother graduated. She first started thinking about attending college when she was in elementary school, and in August, she reported that it was extremely important

(Survey item #15: 5/5) for her to be enrolled and equally important to her family (Survey item #16: 5/5). She sees college as a chance to reinvent herself and have a more successful educational experience than her K-12 experience.

Educational Experience

Julianna was born in Arizona and lived there until she was in third grade, when her mother's job required they move to New Mexico. They moved again, in the middle of Julianna's sophomore year to the Northridge School District, a suburban school district that has about 6,000 students, one high school (Northridge High School) and one alternative high school (Northridge Academy). Prior to moving to New Mexico, Julianna experienced numerous school changes, which she didn't always like. "It kind of sucked. . . . There was this one school I went to for just two weeks. And I really liked that school in the matter of the two weeks. . . . It was cool. That was my favorite one." The move to New Mexico gave her seven years of educational stability, but the moving in the middle of her sophomore year heavily impacted her because, "I didn't even get to take finals, so I failed a lot of it. I got a lot of zeros because I left before finals."

Julianna's enrollment in Northridge School District was also chaotic. She expressed that her enrollment in the alternative high school, Northridge Academy, was because she was missing so many credits from her sophomore year. However she also stated that she was attending CWCC instead of a four-year university because

> I actually messed up a lot of my school records . . . [and] no one's going to want a kid that was suspended twice, a ten-day and then a twelve-day in one year, and then ended up being almost expelled and put in a long term suspension.

The Academy is an alternative option for students facing long term suspensions in the Northridge Academy, and requires students to go through multiple steps, including an interview. Julianna

recognized that attending the Academy was an opportunity that she needed to take advantage of.

Despite "pretty much everybody [thinking] I was going to end up dropping out," Julianna did graduate with her class, "with the entire class instead of just the academy kids" and her diploma doesn't show that she went to an alternative school, "so that's cool." In August 2019, she enrolled in CWCC and began attending classes to "get my first two years out of the way" so university admissions personnel "don't look at my school memories [records]" and focus instead on the community college records. Because of some devastating personal reasons, Julianna was unable to complete the semester, did not enroll in classes during the spring 2020 semester, but does have plans to try again in August 2020.

Academic Identity

Julianna's educational experience has been rocky and she "wanted to drop out [her] senior year," but credits her mom for helping her graduate high school. While she reported that she doesn't really enjoy school (Survey item #31: 3/5), she did report that she was excited to be in college (Survey item #32: 4/5) and that college is a new beginning for her (Survey item #38: 5/5). She also expressed that she likes to write (Survey item #34: 5/5) and likes English/writing classes (Survey item #33: 5/5), but doesn't believe she is a good writer (Survey item #35: 3/5).

Because she attended so many elementary schools, Julianna didn't really connect with any teachers until her 8th grade math teacher, who "ended up getting a job with the high school, so I still had her in two other math classes after that." She found success in the math classes by learning "different ways to process [the subject] rather than just the one way [usually taught]," but didn't enjoy the subject nor did she see herself as a strong student. And while she was appreciative of the option of attending the alternative school, she expressed that the curriculum was not traditionally implemented.

> At the Academy, we don't do finals, we don't have testing except [for the End Of Course (EOC) state mandated tests], any of that. It's just the packet, and then you turn it in at the end of the week. . . . They don't teach you.

Students worked individually on their assigned packets and received individualized help when they asked. Julianna missed traditional classes; she "missed doing the big projects [and] actually learning something rather than just getting a paper, looking in the book, and there's the answer."

Julianna does see her shyness as a hindrance to her education. "I sit by myself . . . everyone's starts talk (sic) to each other now. They all just get along, and I still kind of sit back and do my own thing." She also believes that she became too comfortable in the Academy, "because I was there for so long," and "there's only thirty kids in there," so she wasn't forced to get to know new people like she has had to do at CCWC. Transitioning to CCWC has been good, but she has struggled to connect with other students. "I talk to one boy because he came and sat next to me, and he's been talking to me. So he's the only person that I talk to." She has also struggled to communicate with her instructors, and doesn't ask questions during class. "When it's a new surrounding, I won't talk. If I want to talk to the teacher, I'll wait, and then preferably if she says she'll do an email, I'll just rather do the email than face to face."

Julianna also struggles with confidence and has changed her educational goals to avoid potential failings. "My entire life I wanted to go to University of Arizona" but I was sure I wouldn't get in. "I didn't even send out school applications or anything . . . because I just thought my school records were so bad nobody was going to look." She originally wanted to go to school to be an orthodontist, but decided against it because "it's all sciences, and I can't. I suck at science." Instead, she asked herself, "What do I even like? What am I so interested in?" She decided she wanted "to know why people feel things," which has led her to pursue

psychology, specifically behavior therapy with prison populations, a field that she admits seems odd for a shy, quiet person to pursue. She explains this as simply, "I just feel a lot of it is childhood experience, what they went through. And so then they get so angry, and then just don't feel anything at all. A lot of it is childhood trauma." Knowing that childhood trauma and anger are things Julianna connects with, helps explain why Julianna's current academic goals seem to conflict with her shyness and inability to reach out in new surroundings. "My biological dad walked out . . . what I go through now, it's considered daddy issues. . . I have a really easy temper."

Despite these struggles, Julianna's belief that college is a new beginning is evident in how she explains what she is doing differently, starting with accepting her initial college placement. In fact, when she was told at enrollment that she would need to take a developmental writing course, she felt the admissions personnel "know best; they got my tests scores right there, so that's fine." She also recognizes that her past habits don't have to dictate how to approaches college. "I'm doing my homework instead of procrastinating, waiting 'til the last minute. I'm doing it as soon as I get it."

Julianna has high expectations for herself, but lacks the confidence to identify as a student, especially a college student. In different situations, like getting a new job, she doesn't mention she is in college until she has to explain things like why she cannot work certain hours.

> I think I like the words going to school better than I go to CWCC . . . a lot of people from my class didn't even go to school, continue going to school, [but] . . . when they ask, 'What grade are you?' And I'm like 'No, I go to college.'

She is proud of her status as a college student, and desires the respect that college students often get, but has yet to internalize that respect. Her hope, however, is high. "I like learning. I like

learning new things. I like researching stuff. I like to do projects." "What I'm looking forward to is redoing, restarting all my grades, all of that."

Social Identity

Julianna's shy nature coupled with her instability during her elementary years has made it difficult for her to make and keep friends. Moving around meant "I would make a friend and then I would lose a friend. . . . You would think after [moving and making new friends] so many times, I would get used to having to go out there and make friends." Without the stability of good friendships during school, Julianna has relied heavily on her mom to fill those gaps. "My mom would be right there" for school help, social help, and advice, which is important because "my mom can tell when I'm upset" and has the ability to pull Julianna out of her shell when necessary.

During one of her longer enrollments at an Arizona elementary school, Julianna felt like she had really connected with kids. "I had a lot of friends at this one [elementary school] I went to. And I was there for a year. And I stayed in touch with them even when I went to New Mexico with my mom." However, when her mom had to get a new phone, some numbers were lost and Julianna lost touch. Even though she expresses, "I really hope they're good, like doing great," she hasn't really reached out through social media to reconnect with those friends.

Another instability that has impacted Julianna's social connections are her family dynamics. "I have four siblings," but only two share the same father. "My dad, he's not blood, but that's still my dad. He's there. My biological dad walked out. What I go through now, it's considered daddy issues." Julianna readily admits that many of her decisions that have impacted both her social connections and academic successes are results of her biological father's abandonment. "I did go through a really deep depression because I was a daddy's girl."

During her senior year, Julianna did find herself wanting to drop out. She was struggling with "so much stress. It was a lot of school stress. And then a lot of kid drama, and I was like, 'Dude.' So, eventually I really did just separate myself from everybody." Instead of hanging out with friends, she began to focus just on her classwork and her job.

It is at her current job, Arby's, where she met someone she now considers one of her best friends. "His name is Carson. And he trained me on the drive through, the front line." However, when she first started, she was so shy, "it was to the point where I couldn't even ask [a question] to the manager. I made [Carson] go ask for me. He got me to start being comfortable." Comfortable, though, for Julianna doesn't mean performing the required duties have been easy. "I did not want to do drive-through at all because I didn't want to hear my own voice. . . .[but] the front line, it was really nerve wracking too, talking to people I don't know." And while she does admit it has gotten a bit easier, when her friend Mackenzie told her about a job opening at Ross that "makes more money and you can work with me," Julianna took the risk and applied. She is currently working both jobs, but really likes the one at Ross because "you're not sitting there talking to somebody . . . it's pretty much just fixing clothes and the only time you really talk to someone is when they come and ask you." She does enjoy working at jobs where her friends are because it adds a layer of comfort; she knows she can reach out to either of them for help in situations that her shy nature may be a hindrance.

Virtual Identity

Julianna has a prolific presence online, and she reports that she regularly spends more than five hours a day on her phone or computer using social media or shopping. She uses all popular social media platforms, "even Twitter." She sees the different platforms as having different purposes; for instance, she posts pictures of trips on Facebook, so "nine years from now

. . . [I can see a] cute little face with memories."

Julianna sees social media as way to control how people perceive her, and will adjust content accordingly. Julianna doesn't "take a drastic amount [of photos] like some girls do" before deciding which photos to post online, but she is "big on likes, so if I don't get enough likes at a certain amount of time, I'll go delete it. Because I'm like, 'Oh, it's ugly. Nobody likes it. I don't want to sell my face ugly.'" She also likes the control of being able to post things "for certain people to see, and then after they see it," deleting the post. She does admit that "there's times where I do [post the bad stuff] . . . but most of the time, I don't like people knowing when I'm upset."

Julianna admits to having a lot of followers "that I don't know, and they like my stuff too." She says it's more important to have the people she knows like her stuff, but she still says she will delete posts if not enough likes are added, regardless of whether she knows the "likers" or not. She also knows that comments from people she doesn't know impact her.

> I try to be so nice to people and then someone will, like, be rude to me, and I'm like, I didn't even do anything to you, I'm so nice. . . If I get a rude comment, at first I'll get into it, but then eventually, I'll just delete it.

Julianna uses social media, despite, or possibly because of her shyness, because "[the likes] make me feel like I got a lot of friends." She has control over how long something is posted, what is posted, who sees the posts, whether the comments remain or are deleted, and it allows her to put herself out there in a safer environment. "People are more bold on social media," and Julianna is able to project a nice, pretty, young woman with lots of friends and connections.

Faculty Perception/Observation

Sometime in October, Julianna went through a devastating personal experience that greatly impacted her attendance and her work. She didn't share the details with Mr. Wallins; however, she did tell him "that she had some personal things going on that were causing her to not be as mentally or physically present." Prior to this event, she "was more present . . . like mentally present during class."

During the first third of the semester, "she didn't miss turning things in," and Mr. Wallins felt it was "more likely that she would have been successful if she didn't have personal issues." The last piece of writing Mr. Wallins remembers seeing is the midterm reflection that was turned in the 25th of October, almost two weeks late, so he cannot "say for sure whether or not [her portfolio] would have passed" if she would have turned one in "because that comes down to how much she [would have engaged] in class or in the assignments." Even though she wasn't turning in any work, she continued to attend though "her participation in class really dropped off . . . [and] she was just laying her head on her desk a lot." Mr. Wallins believed that her continued attendance showed "a desire to pass the class, but maybe a lack of capacity to do so because of personal situations or because of just a lack of interest in the subject."

> According to Mr. Wallins, even when Julianna was in class, she wasn't overly engaged. I only actually remember her speaking in class on one occasion. . . . I think it was just the beginning of one of the classes. I asked a question, and she answered it. I was like, "Wow, she's talked in class. That's great," but then cut to twenty minutes later and hear head's back on the desk.

He speculated that "maybe it's a misconception that her attendance alone will be enough to get her through. Maybe that's something she actually believes." Mr. Wallins was unaware of

Julianna's past educational experience, and without knowing her personal and educational background, "she's not been one of those [to share her past educational experiences]," Mr. Wallins' observation is based on what he has seen in other students. He has had many past students' who think "let's see how much I can get away with and still pass the class." He does believe, "if I were a betting man. . .I think maybe there's a little bit of that in this situation."

Mr. Wallins also expressed that Julianna's writing was "very surface level" and "shaky." She showed a lack of basic fundamental understanding, "grammar, sentence structure, syntax," but didn't seem to "want to put the extra effort into actually put[ting] something cohesive together." He also said he wasn't sure whether or not she it was a lack of understanding, a lack of ever being taught the information or "apathy." Either way, her writing and understanding was on the "low end of average."

Despite her lack of talking and engagement in the classroom, Julianna did correspond with her instructor "on a couple of occasions" regarding her absences prior to the Thanksgiving break, but according to Julianna, she "stopped going to all my classes before Thanksgiving break. I gave up" (email 12/13). She did not contact her instructor about the decision to quit attending or not turn in the final portfolio. Mr. Wallins' interview occurred December 2 before his class met, so he did not mention that Julianna had quit attending, but he may have been unaware as the portfolios were due December 3. He did not follow up to let the researcher know Julianna didn't submit a portfolio; it was through email correspondence on December 14 with Julianna that this information came to light.

> Mr. Wallins emphasized that probably the most
>
> relevant thing is her personal circumstance. That's going to throw any student off. I commend her for continuing considering it was, like, the middle of the semester that she

[had this experience]. It's very admirable that she's kept coming.

Conclusion

Julianna is a thoughtful and sweet young woman who elicits empathy from those around her. It is obvious that she is painfully shy and nervous in unfamiliar situations, yet she is willing to take risks like participating in this study. She uses social media voraciously, trying to project a certain image that she herself struggles to articulate. She relies heavily on family and friends to be her safety net, and she has high aspirations, but has not yet figured out how to use her safety net to help her achieve her final goals.

Andrew

Description/Overview

Andrew is a Caucasian male who is in college to begin a new career. He is a 1996 high school graduate, and has been at CWCC since fall 2018. He successfully passed English 98 (Developmental Writing I) in the fall 2018 semester and enrolled in English 99 during the spring 2019 semester. He withdrew from English 99 and reenrolled during the fall 2019 semester. Prior to entering college, Andrew worked for the railroad until he "got injured, and they sold the company." Because of his injuries, Andrew could no longer do physical work, so he enrolled in CWCC with a goal of getting a degree in cybersecurity. During the fall 2019 semester, he was enrolled in eight credits and reported that he worked an average of 11-15 hours per week. He is not the first person in his family to go to college; his mother also attended college. In August, he reported that it was extremely important (Survey item #15: 5/5) for him to be enrolled and somewhat important (Survey item #16: 3/5) to his family. He sees college as a new start and as a chance to be a strong role model for his three children.

Educational Experience

Andrew has dyslexia and dysgraphia, and his education began with speech therapy and special education classes in first grade because "I couldn't read" and continued until fifth grade.

> I needed a little bit of help [but] they didn't offer special ed in the middle school or high school. . . . I mean, I struggled in English. I still do. History – struggled. Math I loved. Failed geometry but love math."

With no extra support from the high school, his mom, who attended CWCC while Andrew was in high school, "had to help me with a lot of my papers."

Even without the proper special education accommodations he believes he needed, he was able to take advantage of a pilot program offered by his school district that allowed him to graduate early. This pilot program was aimed at students who had a GPA that qualified them for graduation, but they were missing a few credits. Students were given a set amount of time to do an extensive research project, write up the paper, and present it at school.

> So basically, an entire quarter, I was at home doing a lot of research, and you know we didn't have internet. . . and I actually had to literally go [to the library] or go to places and set up interviews . . .I remember the title, too – Electronics on the Railroad Today.

The project required students to be highly motivated, self-starters, with strong organizational skills. Andrew thinks the program was extremely beneficial for students like him who were ready to get out of high school; however, the school district felt differently and suspended the program the following year.

Unfortunately for Andrew, even though he was able to finish the project and graduate early, family circumstances eliminated his chance to start college right away.

> I had it in my mind that I'm going to try to graduate early, so I can start my career, and

> maybe go to college. And I had all those plans, but my plans got derailed because helping my mom. . . . My parents were divorced, and I was living with my mom, and I was working four jobs and going to school. And I was just helping mom with the bills . . . so it was very hard at that time, you know, age of 18. . . [so] I graduated early, but still I had to basically pull my weight and help mom pull for the family.

Andrew put his "own career on hold" to help out his mom, but soon the weeks turned into months and years, and then marriage and children came along. It wasn't until his injury with the railroad that Andrew was forced to go back to his original goal of attending college. "I had some good jobs, and it was all labor intensive, and then working at the railroad, just physically, it just outdid my body." Finally, twenty-two years after graduating high school, Andrew enrolled in CWCC and began attending classes. He has been continuously enrolled since January 2018.

Academic Identity

Although going to college has been a lifelong goal, Andrew doesn't necessarily enjoy school (Survey item #31: 3/5) nor is he excited about being in college (Survey item #32: 3/5), and he struggles with identifying as an academic student. He doesn't like to write (Survey item #34: 1/5) and doesn't believe he is a good writer (Survey item #35: 1/5), nor does he enjoy English classes (Survey item #33: 1/5). In fact, he adamantly asserted,

> I hate the course [English 99]. I really do. It takes me a long time just to write. . . I get writer's block, and that's the biggest struggle I have is just writer's block and just trying to write . . . you know, I'm in college; I'm not in high school anymore. . . but I still struggle with it.

He did enjoy school when he was younger. However, when the support system from his special education classes was no longer available, his enjoyment went down, and one of the reasons he

took advantage of the program for early graduation was to just get done with high school.

He recognizes that college is a chance to "better myself," but he doesn't share with people he is in college because "they don't need to know that." When Andrew told his family that he was going to enroll in CWCC, "eventually they were happy with it . . . but I don't get the support from my friends, and family, really, besides financial." Without the moral support, he finds that friends or family are not always understanding when he needs to keep a meeting or an outing short "because I have homework," so he tends to downplay his needs and goals. He does express that the financial support he gets from his parents is extremely helpful and allows him the time he needs to focus on his academics and his children's needs.

Andrew has had some excellent success at CWCC, including making the Dean's Honor Roll during his first three semesters, but this success has not translated into feeling confident about being a college student. Additionally, during the spring 2019 semester he withdrew from English 99 because "I was falling behind on math, and I couldn't handle both math and writing essays and summaries . . . and it did help, quite a bit, just not enough." Withdrawing from one course and not passing the second course impacted both Andrew's GPA and his already low confidence. During the midpoint of the fall 2019 semester, Andrew had to deal with some family issues, and he "thought about quitting school with all the issues that I cannot control my life. . . I am pushing through it And I want to better myself to better my family. . . I have not given up." Andrew persevered, and he passed English 99 during the fall 2019 semester. Much to his surprise, his belief that "I barely passed" was incorrect when he reviewed the portfolio readers' comments that included: "Expository has a great thesis!" "Essay is well-organized and developed."

Andrew successfully achieved the rank of Eagle Scout when he was a teen, but says that

confidence and attitude does not extend to his ability to do academic work; nevertheless, he knows has "to get it done regardless if I understand it or not." Andrew sees college as a means to an end, "in order to get that job, you have to have a piece of paper, saying I can do it," and recognizes that the persistence he showed when achieving his Eagle Scout rank will be needed to complete his degree goals. "I want to sit behind a desk, working for Homeland security. That's my dream job."

Social Identity

Andrew has a complex social identity as much of his social life revolves around his children and Boy Scouts. He has had some online dating experience in the past couple of years, but multiple bad experiences have caused him to delete his profiles. He does worry that meeting someone will be difficult because "I used to party, but I don't drink anymore, [and] I have to be pushed to go out" because of his shy, introverted nature.

His children are involved in middle school and high school band, and as a band booster who pulls "one of the trailers" to transport the instruments, band season is especially busy for him. "Our stadium is not done, so our home football game is in Farrington. . . this week is Farrington High School . . . last week it was at North." Because of the lack of a home stadium, Andrew spends multiple hours on Thursday evenings and Friday mornings with other band parents loading the trailers and then driving to the games Friday evening. After the games, he helps load the trailers, drive back to the home high school to unload and store the instruments. Additionally, he has helped build items needed for the band performances. "I'm in it for the long haul." Although he spends countless hours with the band and other band parents, Andrew does not see the other parents as part of his social group.

In addition to being a very involved band parent and booster, Andrew has been heavily

involved in Boy Scouts "for over thirty years." Both of his boys are involved in Scouts, and Andrew has been a den leader, a mentor, and teaches the "railroading merit badge" at the local historical railroad where I have been volunteering "since I was fourteen." When no one would step up to be den leader for his son's troop, "we waited and waited and no one would do it. I said, 'Fine, I'll do it.'" This role continued as both boys moved through Scouts;

> I was constantly there, constantly being a leader, being a den leader, being a troop leader, whatever, and always involved. . . . [I] never had a plan . . . I always came up with something different than what the book, the handbook, had.

Despite his deviation from the prescribed lessons, he still did ensure that the required information was taught to the Cub Scouts. However, in the past few years, "it's time to step back and let someone else do it. . . . I think I'm just tired" even though he still takes time to mentor new Scout leaders. Like the band parents, Andrew does not socialize with most of the other Scout leaders. He keeps these parts of his life compartmentalized from his private and personal life.

Virtual Identity

Andrew's use of online sources is much more limited now than two years ago. He spends less than an hour a day on social media, and limits his time to Facebook, YouTube, and Google Hangouts. He used to have two accounts on Facebook, "one was my general friends and the other one was for Scouts," but he now has one account that is used "for Scouts and band . . . but I just look at the information for our closed groups" and nothing else because "Facebook's horrible."

After Andrew's divorce, he tried a couple of different dating sites, and "was just honest" when he created his profiles.

> My profiles that I've made, you know, I'm shy. I'm honest. I have three kids. I'm divorced. Haven't been in the dating scene for a while, for a long time, 13 years . . . I'm an introvert . . . I don't drink anymore . . . I've found honesty is the best practice.

After a couple of years of trying sites like Tinder, he has deleted his profiles and has no interest in trying online dating again. "A lot of people aren't [honest]. The women that I met weren't what they seemed to be." Andrew's identity was stolen from the first dating site he used, Plenty of Fish, so he deleted his information and pulled away from online dating. However after a significant period of time had passed, he decided to try again, this time using Tinder, but after "talking for like almost two years" with someone who turned out to be not who he thought, he avoids all forms of online dating. Also because of the experience of having his identity stolen, he has drastically reduced how much time he spends online, what he does online, and the information he shares online. He also "has no internet now" at home, so he uses library resources or, when necessary, his phone's hotspot.

Because of Andrew's experiences, he is much more conscientious about the information he shares and what his children are sharing online, but he cannot monitor them as much as he would like "because they live with their mom." He worries most about his youngest because "he has no idea how to keep his identity a secret and not give it out to anyone." His distrust and desire for privacy are part of the reason he is pursuing a degree in cybersecurity; he feels that too many people are vulnerable like he was, and his helpful and civic-minded attitude is pushing him to become part of the solution.

Faculty Perception/Observation

Despite Andrew's lack of confidence, his instructor thinks "if his circumstances [were] just a little bit different, I think he'd be a standout student." Andrew's grades his first three

semesters support Mr. Crawford's observations. He has the ability to achieve high marks, "I think he's got a ton of potential."

What impedes Andrew's potential is the same thing that impeded entering college when he was nineteen, "I think he feels such a strong sense of obligation to everything else in his life." This sense of obligation is evident in what he does for his children, often putting their needs ahead of his. Sometimes this was a choice; however, other times Andrew's responsibility as a parent had to take precedent. "Speaking of horrible life circumstances, I think his plate is overflowing as it is." During October 2019, Andrew had to deal with some very major events involving his family that required him to miss several classes "because of court stuff." Both the physical demands and emotional demands impacted his ability to keep up with his schoolwork. "It sounds like he's got primary custody of three kids," which was a change from the beginning of the semester. Unlike the spring semester, however, Andrew reached out for more help earlier and was able to fulfill his responsibilities to both his family and himself.

Mr. Crawford also noted that in addition to the family situation, "he's got the limp thing going on, he's got his knees giving him fits or something." In fact, Mr. Crawford empathized with Andrew, "it's just one thing after another for [him] and doesn't seem to be letting up." However, he noted that while many students would just give up, it was obvious that his kids were what kept him motivated and persevering through everything.

Even though Mr. Crawford believes Andrew "wants to do well," he did note that although "he's one of those people who will ask a question if he doesn't understand, he doesn't always ask in class." He believes that Andrew "worries about looking stupid," but because he asked "legitimate" and "intelligent" questions, he wishes Andrew would have been more vocal in class "because chances are if one person has a question, a lot of other people have the same or

similar question." He also notes that Andrew is "a little bit of a perfectionist." Mr. Crawford believes Andrew wants to make sure he "nails it the first time," which is part of why he struggles with confidence, but this perfectionist attitude drives his focus "on the details" and continued desire to "do a good job" in a "conscientious way."

"He just wants to keep going, learn as much as he can."

"He's really good in class. I really like having him in class."

Conclusion

Andrew is a serious student who is driven by family and personal responsibility. He wants to be a strong role model for his children, just as he has been a strong model in Scouts. He wants to find a job that is not impacted by his health, but more importantly allows him to positively impact his society. Although he struggles with confidence, his abilities and achievements show that he is more capable than he believes. While his feelings of obligation to others can impede his own personal successes, these feelings are also what have helped him persevere through numerous impediments.

Cameron

Description/Overview

Cameron is a very serious, twenty-four year old Caucasian male. He is a 2014 high school graduate. He first enrolled in CWCC in 2016 but did not have success. He re-enrolled spring 2019 and finished that semester with a 4.0. During the fall 2019 semester, he was enrolled in sixteen credits and reported that he worked over twenty-six hours per week. He is not the first person to go to college; both his mother and father are college graduates. He didn't start thinking about attending college until his senior year, and in August, he reported that it was extremely important (Survey item #15: 5/5) for him to be enrolled and fairly important to his

family (Survey item #16: 4/5). Despite a rocky start in college, Cameron has found focus and motivation and plans to graduate with honors.

Educational Experience

Cameron was born and raised in a small town in rural Iowa with a "graduating class of about 40 kids" and was one of the older students in the class, "I was 19 when I graduated." He lived with his mom outside of town, so he felt "isolated." In middle school, while other students were "socially evolving" with each other, Cameron was "out of the picture" though he was still involved in some sports teams, but that changed in high school when he "started dropping out of sports . . . and working." In "early high school is when I branched off because I wasn't being social with people. I didn't have the opportunity to be social with them." This lack of connection impacted his attitude in the classroom and he "just didn't like school."

Even though he didn't enjoy school, he did have several teachers he really liked and connected with. Despite his disengagement with school in general, he actually got along well with most of his teachers. He was often obviously disinterested, but didn't cause problems or get into trouble, "I started getting quieter, keeping to myself." However, one teacher in particular resonated with Cameron and kept him engaged in her class.

> The junior to senior English teacher . . . a lot of kids didn't like her because they thought she was mean, abrasive, and just outright rude. I liked her because of that. Even though I didn't like school, I like it when I have a teacher that is going to tell me everything I'm doing wrong. And she did that. She told me everything that I was doing wrong. . . . But she was a personable teacher. You could talk to her, joke with her, and that's what I liked about her.

After graduation, Cameron moved to Delaware, where his father, who "was not in the

picture" while he was growing up, had recently moved. "Couple years over there things started to get interesting, so we moved down here. . . . This is where his family is, my grandparents." He and his father temporarily lived with his grandparents, which was the same semester that Cameron initially enrolled in college and "took a couple classes, D and F. Did not try. I did not try." A couple of years ago, Cameron "moved out on my own," found himself in a better situation and "mindset," and in spring 2019, restarted his college career with much better results.

Academic Identity

Cameron's middle and high school educational experience was overshadowed by his feelings of isolation, and he didn't start thinking about enrolling in college until he was a senior in high school. He did, however, feel "insulted" when he first found out he would have to take a developmental writing class, but he "understood on the same side" because "I knew how I took high school. . . . Obviously I didn't try very hard in high school . . . there was just a level of disinterest."

> During his first college attempt, he was still living with his dad and struggled.
>
> I wouldn't say depressed. I don't really know if I was or not, but it just wasn't a good state of mind I had. Pretty overall negative. Didn't want to try, very rarely showed up for class. And I mean, I failed probably the easiest class here. I mean, really?

He openly admits that his attitude while in high school and during his first attempt at college could be summarized as indifferent and without effort.

Since 2019, however, Cameron has had a very different attitude and now reports that he really enjoys school (Survey item 31: 5/5) and is excited to be in college (Survey item #32: 5/5). In fact, he perceives college as a new beginning (Survey item #38: 5/5). He still does not really enjoy English/writing classes (Survey item #33: 3/5) or writing (Survey item #34: 3/5),

and he did not attempt English 99 the first or second semesters at college. He also reports that after the spring 2019 semester, he has become a more serious student (Survey item #37: 5/5) and believes he is a strong student (Survey item #36: 5/5); however, he still doesn't believe he is a good writer (Survey item #36: 3/5).

Cameron now approaches learning differently than he used to, and his attitude toward classes demonstrates a more engaged identity as a student.

> The English class is presenting more of a challenge than I expected because I'm pretty rusty. . . . [and] the computer programming one, I like it *because* it's challenging. There's a lot to remember. There's a lot going on, a lot of information to retain.

He credits his fiancé with many of his changes because "she pushes me and helps me get the drive from myself to do better." He recognizes that while she does inspire him to be better, he has to do it on his own, which means having a more focused attitude in class, avoiding "people who are distracting" in and outside of class because "I struggle with focusing," and socializing less in order to get his homework done. He also recognizes that he often overthinks and over focuses on things, but he is "taking steps towards releasing myself of this burden."

Social Identity

Cameron's social identity has been impacted by multiple circumstances, including his "isolation" during middle and high school, his absent father, and his home life. In elementary school, he remembers liking school and playing sports; "it was ok," but nothing really sticks out to him. In middle school, because he was unable to participate as much in activities due to his home location, he began to pull away, "I wasn't social with people. . . . because I'm in the middle of nowhere, I can't go hang out with some buddies or anything."

"Throughout high school, I'll just say there was some trouble at home . . . I wasn't a fan

of my mother's significant other at the time." The situation at home, coupled with his feelings of isolation at school, became the catalyst for what Cameron calls "a gaming addiction." His anger needed an outlet and online games, especially "games that take time . . . that you have to work at" provided that needed escape. This all culminated in 2017 when he met his now fiancée who helped him see that he needed to make personal changes if he wanted to be with her.

Since he and his fiancée started dating, Cameron spends less time playing online games, more time studying and working, and going out "every now and then." "We prefer to stay at home . . . we're homebodies . . . [do] "socialize a little bit in class but not very often." He still does not reach out to many in his classes, though he will "pick out the people who are quiet or seem like an outcast in a way" to talk to. "I try to make friends with people who don't seem like they have anything going on or they're struggling." He recognizes students who may feel the same way he did when he was younger or may be experiencing similar struggles he has had and is drawn to those students.

One person Cameron did connect with in his English 99 class was a young man who "is a nerd like myself [and] reached out to me." Cameron connected with the other student when they started talking about Warhammer books[6] and he realized the other student was "trying to do the same thing I am, trying to make more friends, trying to be a little more social."

> I do keep up . . . I don't want to say a wall, but my fingers on the button more or less. I would say I'm cautious. I'm careful about who I'm networking with because I'm trying to find the right people and trying to find a solid top five . . . I'm trying to find a good

[6] Games Workshop uses the Warhammer Universe in many of its games, including table-top and online games. Dozens of books have been released that develop background information and characters, and tell stories set in the universe, all beyond what the games contain.

number of people that I can connect with, make friends with, and grow with.

Virtual Identity

Cameron still uses social media and plays online games, but not like he used to. He reports that he spends about an hour a day using social media sites like Facebook and LinkedIn and about "one to two hours a week" playing online games, "but during school I can't. I don't have the time."

Online gaming has been an escape from reality for Cameron "for a good portion of high school up until about two years ago when it ended, which is about the time I got together with my current girlfriend." He believes that it was not just an escape, but also an addiction, "that's all I did from . . . 2010 to 2016. A lot of gaming hours. I mean days' and days' worth. . . [and] I put money into [War Frame] too, a couple hundred, little bit ashamed of that." He has played numerous games including Call of Duty, Minecraft, Smite, War Frame, RuneScape, For Honor, and Rainbow Six Siege. Even though he feels he played games with an addictive mindset, he was still quite choosy about the types of games he played.

Some of the games Cameron played, like RuneScape, were MMOPRGs[7] that "take time" because the "goal in the game is not achievable within a couple of days." He likes "complex" games that require "you to focus on everything that's going on [and] require strategy." And while Cameron did have to create an avatar for RuneScape, he claimed that "appearance [of his avatar] never really mattered that much me" because the game wasn't as complex as some of the more modern MMORPGs. "You create an avatar, but it's very simple. I mean you get to select hair, skin color, body shape to a certain degree. . . . [but] I mean the pixels were pretty rough," so

[7] MMORPGs are massively multiplayer online role-playing games.

he didn't spend too much time thinking about his character, especially "if I'm not going to be seeing the character that much."

Instead of focusing on what his character looks like, Cameron is more interested in **who** his character is going to be. "I usually try to play the good guy, because I feel bad if I'm mean, even to a virtual person." In real life, Cameron does "not like confrontation," and tries not to have confrontation in games that he plays through an avatar; however, Cameron does like first-person shooter games, which do require him to compete against other players and sometimes kill the other opponents. "It's the complete opposite isn't it? I try to be the nice guy. I don't know what it was about my interest in first person shooters, maybe it very well could have been the fact that the competition or violence" was a release and an escape.

Cameron also used to use social media a lot, including SnapChat, Instagram, MySpace, Twitter, and Reddit. He no longer has accounts on most of the social media platforms, but cannot remember the password to close his MySpace account. "Over the past couple years, I've been slowly but surely clearing everything. Ever since I found out that companies have been data mining, that makes me uncomfortable." He still uses Facebook because "I feel like I have to at this point . . . use it to transfer money . . . keep in contact with family members."

Cameron closed his Reddit account because "I did not like who I was on Reddit. I was an asshole. I was more judgmental towards people. I was mean." Ultimately, closing his account and deleting old messages occurred because his "fiancée found the account" and this account was representative of himself during his later high school years and while he was living with his father; it "was an anger outlet." Cameron recognizes that while there are still "embarrassing" things on the Internet about him, he "was young." He is now focused on cleaning up his online image and protecting his privacy because he knows future employers' hiring choices could be

impacted by his online presence.

> I'm not particularly interested in integrating social media into what's going on right here. It's not much of an interest to myself. Also, the internet and social media, especially, has zombified a lot of people, in my opinion. A lot of people are focused on their appearance, their online identity, and who they are, showing themselves "as" on Facebook, Twitter, blah, blah, blah.

Faculty Perception/Observation

Cameron's perception of himself as a very serious student is echoed by his instructor, "I feel like he's maybe the most solid of all my students in there this semester, always driven and focused. . . . always on time . . . [often] the only one who would ask questions in class." His instructor even asserted that "I wish I had a classroom full of him. With a class full of Cameron's, I think we could just go further and do more." This sentiment was repeated several times throughout the course of the interview, and Mr. Crawford was resolute that students like Cameron are what make teaching exhilarating.

In addition to Cameron being on time and focused, Mr. Crawford did admit that Cameron's "writing was pretty good to begin with," but his writing did improve over the course of the semester as he figured "out how to tighten up his sentences and consider his word choice." Mr. Crawford credits this improvement on Cameron's willingness to ask questions "he legitimately doesn't understand . . . and wants to make sure that he has it before he goes on." Unlike several students in Mr. Crawford's class, Cameron would ask questions in class instead of waiting until after class to have a private conversation. Also, Cameron "has a very, kind of, I'll do whatever it takes kind of attitude," which Mr. Crawford noted extended to asking questions multiple times if he still didn't understand something, revising drafts as many times as needed,

and staying "super focused." Although, he also admits, "There's not much that [Cameron] doesn't get, and it's clear from reading his work that he has a pretty good lock on most things."

During peer review or other group activities, Cameron showed drive and motivation. He didn't wait to be told to do something; instead, he would look for something to do. "When we do peer review, as soon as he is done with somebody's essay, he'll get up and walk around" asking students if he can review their papers. "He doesn't just sit there, do one, and then sit there and play on his phone. He gets up and goes, seeks out other people's work to read and respond to." Mr. Crawford was impressed with this self-initiative, and even though Mr. Crawford didn't sit in on any conversations between Cameron and another student or read the specific feedback given during peer review, he did feel that "based on [Cameron's] work that I've read, I have to think that the advice that he's giving is probably pretty solid."

> Mr. Crawford did note that if Cameron wanted,
>
> he could be a leader. I mean, he's enthusiastic enough. If I told the class, 'Okay, I'm going to step out for twenty minutes, and if you need something talk to Cameron, Cameron would be fine with it. He'd be great at it.

Cameron's more quiet and focused attitude demonstrated his responsibility and maturity, something that Mr. Crawford would like Cameron to see in himself.

Unlike many students in writing classes who share lots of personal information, Cameron is private, "pretty much all I [Mr. Crawford] know of him is from his writing." Mr. Crawford did acknowledge that he had no idea whether or not Cameron had any problems during the semester, and "other than the one or two days" he missed over the semester, Cameron's behavior and focus was maintained throughout the entire semester.

> He shows up . . . he doesn't pull out his phone while talking . . . doesn't have a book for a

different class opened on the desk . . . takes notes. . . . He'll ask questions. He makes eye contact.

Conclusion

Cameron was not a model student in middle school, high school, or even during his first attempt at college; however, he has become one. He has recognized his past mistakes and has been focused on learning from them. He has changed his attitude toward school and homework, and has found great success in those changes. He has limited his online presence and has been focused on cleaning up his online image to better reflect how he wants people to see him. He no longer spends countless hours ignoring the present, and instead, has become even more focused on being present.

Conclusion

All four students have varied backgrounds and have found varied successes in the college setting. Neither woman was successful during the fall 2019 semester, but neither one was deterred by this hurdle; one of the women has enrolled in a corequisite English 101/99 for the spring semester. Both men passed English 99, and have enrolled in English 101 during the spring 2020 semester. All four students dealt with personal issues that impacted their experiences in different ways over the course of the semester; fortunately, for two of the students, the personal issues didn't impact their semester success. All four students had positive things to say about their instructors, their classes, and the college in general. Three of the four students are still actively enrolled, and even though one student is not enrolled for the spring semester, she does have plans to return in fall 2020.

Chapter 5 Analysis

With such a large percentage of students being required to take developmental coursework before they can enroll in college-credit bearing courses, having a deeper understanding of the students themselves can provide needed context to help the students find more success. This qualitative embedded, single-case study developed a conceptual model to study currently enrolled developmental writing students. This study allowed academics involved in teaching and developmental writing program development to gain insight into the identities that students are cultivating and how the experiences in the developmental writing classroom impacted those identities.

This chapter begins with a brief summary of each chapter of this dissertation. The remainder of the chapter presents additional insights into participants' stories as told through their own writing and through their final interviews. In this chapter, the participants' own perceptions are analyzed using their own writing, the faculty interviews, the researcher's observations, and the final interview with the researcher all within the framework set out by the literature. These findings are organized as: Major Findings, Interpretations and Conclusions, Implications and Contributions, Limitations and Constraints, Future Directions, and Final Remarks.

Overview of the Study

The first chapter of this study provides a brief introduction to the study, general background and the research questions:

1. In what ways do the experiences of developmental writing students in the developmental writing classroom influence their identities?
2. In what ways do developmental writing students display an academic, social, and virtual

identity?

3. In what ways does the virtual identity of students differ from or support their offline identities?

Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature including the history of developmental education and the available research focused on developmental education. Specific focus on the current movement of acceleration and class format as an indicator of success or failure was provided to help situate why a study on developmental writers' identities is needed. Chapter 2 then examined the students who find themselves placed in a developmental writing course to demonstrate the diversity that is often found within the developmental writing classroom. The five conceptual strands – 1) the concept of academic identity, 2) the concept of social identity, 3) the concept of virtual identity, 4) the impact of writing on identity development, and 5) the impact of classroom experience on identity development – are then explained to create the framework for the research study.

The third chapter explains the methodology taken to develop and validate the qualitative embedded, single-case study. It provides explanations as to how the researcher gained access to the research site and was situated within the research site. It explains each of the sources of data and outlines how the data were gathered and analyzed, and provides evidence to demonstrate the researcher followed ethical guidelines in executing the research and analyzing, storing, and reporting the data.

Chapter 4 presents each of the studies' participants' stories as guided by the threads of social, academic, and virtual identity. It begins with an overview of the students enrolled in English 99 during the fall 2019 semester as illustrated through their survey responses. Following this contextual information, each participant's words are used to develop their stories and

illuminate the information. To offer a second point of view, the words and observations of instructor of record for each participant are presented.

Major Findings

Through interviews, observations, and document collection, insight was provided into four students' academic, social, and virtual identities, how these identities work both symbiotically and conflictingly, and how writing and the experiences within the developmental classroom impacted the students' identities. Of the four students who participated in the research study, only two passed the class, which is higher than the campus average. During the fall 2019 semester, 45% of the students who started in English 99 persisted through to the end of the course, and of those, 92% submitted portfolios. Fifty-five percent of the portfolios received passing scores. In total, 23% of the students who started in English 99 passed the course.

Academic Identity Having an academic identity helps students persist because they feel connected and are willing to participate in the culture of the college and persist in their studies (Komarraju & Dial, 2014; White & Lowenthal, 2019). All four participants have had rocky educational backgrounds, which are typical of developmental writers (Stine, 2004). Both Kaylee's and Julianna's elementary school experiences were full of moves and disruptions, but both women found connection and stability with their 8th grade math teachers. Andrew's elementary school experience was filled with support for his learning disabilities, but his middle school and high school years didn't have these services, which impacted his comfort and connections to his academics. Cameron's elementary experiences were fine, but his middle and high school years were overshadowed by his feelings of isolation and his addiction to online games. None of the participants reflected on their K-12 education with a nostalgia that indicated an engaging and happy experience. All four participants are in college to better themselves, and

they all see college as a way forward. However, not all of them "feel relevant in the academic classroom" (Komarraju & Dial, 2014, p. 1) and their past experiences have solidified how they feel "about themselves in achievement situations" (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003, p. 6). This shows in how their academic identities are developing.

Kaylee has an emerging academic identity. She has continued to take classes regardless of the outcome; sometimes she finds success and other times failure, but she continues to "try again." Kaylee believes she is projecting herself as an engaged and enthusiastic student, but her perceptions and reality are often misaligned. Mr. Crawford, her instructor, noted that "she started with a lot of enthusiasm" but it quickly dissipated. He also noted that she "just didn't show up" for classes and didn't correspond with him about her conflicts. Kaylee, on other hand, believes she had been communicative. The researcher's observations were more congruent with Mr. Crawford's observations of Kaylee's role as student. During the peer review activity that the researcher observed, Kaylee was late arriving (15 minutes), didn't bring a rough draft to be reviewed by her classmates, and worked on other students' essays only after being prompted by the instructor. Once she got started, however, she remained focused on the work at hand for about thirty minutes. For the remainder of class, she, she busied herself with writing in a notebook (3 minutes), talking with a student behind her (3 minutes), reading her phone (13.5 minutes) and leaving the classroom (4 minutes). Much like what her instructor noted, she would work when prompted, but didn't demonstrate strong engagement or self-motivation. Contrastingly, Kaylee's role outside of school is as a teacher, which requires strong motivation and engagement. She has been with her K-12 district's before and after school program (BASP) since her junior year. During high school, "I was the student all day. Then I would go and switch roles and I would be in the teacher point of view right at 3:00," and during college she works a

split shift, so for two hours in the morning and four hours in the afternoon, she is the teacher. The "switching roles" is hard for her, but her role as teacher has not necessarily translated into identifying as and carrying out the behavior of a stronger academic student.

Julianna is struggling with cultivating an academic identity, and struggles to see herself as a college student. In fact, she enrolled in CWCC to "get my first two years out of the way" so university admissions personnel "don't look at my school memories [records]" and focus instead on the community college records. She doesn't see her current enrollment on par with enrollment in a university like her dream school, the University of Arizona. She has had the tenacity to overcome suspensions and enrollment in an alternative high school, but doesn't demonstrate feeling comfortable or motivated in the current academic setting. She also doesn't demonstrate that she has the cultural awareness and mannerisms needed to successfully navigate the college setting (Winkle-Wagner, 2010), which has hindered her ability to connect to the academic setting and reach out when she has needed support. Her instructor, Mr. Wallins, noted that she was "mentally present" at the beginning of the semester, but didn't really engage much, and remembers her "speaking in class on one occasion." He also stated that she often put her head down on her desk or looked at her phone during class, which the researcher detected during both observations.

During the October observation, Julianna was engaged while the instructor relayed information about their current writing assignment, but when he asked students to group up and talk about their topics, Julianna remained in her seat and didn't make eye contact with any of the other students. She spent the rest of the class period looking at her phone, and once in a while, writing in her notebook. Julianna was late to class on the day of the November observation. She sat in the back of the classroom and spent the first few minutes eating and looking at the

instructor. Within three minutes, she began looking at her phone. After fifteen minutes of texting and reading social media posts, Julianna put her head down and spent the rest of the period completely disengaged. While Julianna was clearly not interested in participating in class, the researcher observed that the class itself did not have a culture that encouraged engagement from the majority of the students, which could have been an additional factor in Julianna's decision to quit attending just before the Thanksgiving break.

Andrew, despite a mostly successful college career, doesn't internalize the I-am-a-college-student mentality and exhibit a strong academic identity. He does however, show persistence when unsuccessful or struggling. Mr. Crawford, his instructor, sees Andrew as someone "with a ton of potential," but Andrew's past academic struggles overshadow his current successes. What others observe is extremely different than what Andrew internalizes. During both observations, Andrew was extremely engaged and focused. He was on time, had drafts for others to review, and actively reviewed other students' papers. In addition to looking over other students' drafts, he talked with the embedded tutor and the instructor about his own writing. While discussing his writing with Mr. Crawford, Andrew was very serious both in body language and verbal communication. He employed direct eye contact, asked specific questions, and engaged in academic discourse about his papers. Andrew, once he was done reviewing all the available papers, did not engage with other students in any of the casual conversations going on around him. Instead, he looked over his essays and just sat quietly until the instructor called for the class's attention.

Cameron's academic identity is strong and has developed over the past couple of years. During high school and his first college experience, Cameron didn't take his education seriously and didn't try. This second attempt at college has him much more focused and mature about his

education, his abilities, and the work he needs to put in to get his desired results. His instructor, Mr. Crawford, sees Cameron as the ideal student and would welcome "a classroom full of him." During both the September and November observations, Cameron exhibited an incredibly strong academic identity. He was early to both classes, had multiple drafts for students to work on, sought out other students' essays to peer review, and paid attention to Mr. Crawford whenever he addressed the class. He remained fully engaged the entire class period and was approached by several students seeking more information about their papers. He avoided the social chatting that did occur with several students, and during the few periods of downtime, spent that time looking through his textbook and making notes on his own essays.

Both Cameron and Andrew found success in English 99, but their confidence about their writing was very different. Andrew thought he had "barely passed," but Cameron was "pretty confident." Both students said they struggled with the argumentative essay. Cameron felt that he "didn't have a lot of time to write it" and while he didn't think it was terrible, he didn't feel it was "my best work." Andrew, on the other hand, felt like he had "rushed around and did it last minute," but he also said that he visited "the writing studio almost twice a week to get" it done. Mr. Crawford indicated that they had both submitted multiple drafts of their argument essays, so their perceptions that they didn't have time may be more about their writing confidence and less about the actual time spent on the essays. Their reactions are congruent with how they perceive themselves academically. Cameron is very serious about his school and believes in his abilities; he also credits "that little voice in the back of my head" that says, "You can do better" for pushing him to succeed. Andrew is also very serious but struggles to see his abilities as others do. Both indicated that they believed some of their success was because they felt significant in Mr. Crawford's class, and his attention to their needs, knowledge, feedback, and assistance

helped them take the risks in their writing that ultimately helped them find academic success (Jensen & Jetten, 2015) .

Neither Kaylee nor Julianna found success in English 99, and neither exhibited strong academic connections to their classes. While, ultimately, Julianna's lack of success was more related to her distressing experience earlier in the semester, prior to this experience, she wasn't exhibiting a strong academic connection to her class. She was, however, participating in a limited fashion in the social conventions (Komarraju & Dial, 2014) of the class by doing her work and attending classes, but not engaging other students or the instructor. Kaylee also didn't exhibit a strong academic connection to her class, and was quick to blame outside factors on her failure. When asked why she dropped the class, her immediate response was, "He dropped me. I didn't end up dropping." Kaylee didn't see that her lack of engagement, lack of turning in any assignments, or her lack of communication may have been the reason for her lack of success, and this is congruent with her misaligned perspective. She believes she is a fairly serious student, but her actions don't support her perceptions. She has had many academic failures but does continue to persist, and this persistence could come from a desire to have or to project a stronger academic identity than what she currently has.

Academic identity is complex, and while college offers students opportunities to reinvent their academic identities (Komarraju & Dial, 2014), the college experience doesn't always mean students will be able to shed their old academic identity in favor of a new one. Students like Cameron successfully embrace an academic identity opposite to what they had in high school. They recognize what they are capable of, what skills they are missing, and are able to successfully formulate an endgame. Others, like Andrew, may find new successes in college and continually persist, but may not internalize the academic success. Some students, like Kaylee,

have what they believe is a strong academic identity, even if the skills and results are not congruent with the perceived identity. These students will persist because they think they are better students than they really are. Students like Julianna struggle to reinvent an academic identity, which hinder their success when hurdles present themselves. Each student's experiences, successes, and failures affects the development of their self-identity within the academic setting.

Social Identity Identity is generally impacted by social connections (Vygotsky, 1978), but people's social identity is more specifically connected to how people internalize their sense of self based on personal and impersonal relationships (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Hogg et al., 2017). Group membership is important to a person's social identity, whether or not the group identity is symbiotic with the person's self-identity (Brewer & Gardner, 1996). For students, their social identity can often be connected to the extra-curricular school activities they participate in as well as classmates they talk with both inside and outside of the classroom. Those with multiple and distinct social groups may exhibit different identities with each group. Others, however, may exhibit a similar social identity across multiple groups. Students' social identity is constructed through their social relationships and social groups; the strength of their self-identity can impact the display of social identity/identities within and across their group associations. All four participants displayed identities associated with different groups, but these identities varied in importance.

Kaylee embraces being social. She sees herself as a very friendly person who "was friends with everyone." While she wasn't involved in a lot of school sanctioned extra-curricular activities, the few activities she did participate in (cheer, prom committee, theater) are more socially focused rather than academically or athletically focused activities. She projects a very

outgoing personality both in person and online. Kaylee could easily be described as bubbly. During both interviews and the observation, the researcher observed a young woman who exhibited a very positive, extra friendly personality. She easily spoke to students around her in class, was observed several times chatting with other students in between classes, and was extremely open during her interviews. Despite the friendliness she exhibited toward other students, she didn't connect with them on a more personal and social level. Her conversations were opportunistic but didn't extend beyond the campus. Her social identity is more connected to her friends, most of whom are carry-overs from high school and haven't moved away for college. She and her friends like to "do brunch," which is a very public, social activity and complements the socially connected identity that Kaylee is trying to project.

Julianna's social life and identity are impacted by her shy, quiet nature that elicits empathy from those who take time to engage her. She doesn't seek out friends, but waits for people to approach her. She knows that her family life has impacted her social life, but she also sees her mother as significant to her social well-being. She admits that she is extremely quiet in class and doesn't really try to connect with other students. During both observations and the interview, the researcher observed a young woman who was so painfully shy, it was shocking she agreed to be part of the study. She wasn't really involved with extracurricular activities in school, but did have some good friends and has had boyfriends. However, despite her shyness, she engages in some riskier social behavior, "daddy issues" as she called them, that has had consequences socially, academically, and personally.

Andrew's social identity is currently controlled by his identity as a father. While he has tried dating in the past (both online and offline), he has put this part of his life on hold to focus on school and his children. When he is not studying or attending classes, his time is taken up by

volunteering for Scouts or his children's band programs. His altruistic nature dictates where he spends his social time; he wants to be a role model and wants others to see him as a role model and mentor. He also worries that others won't fill the roles and is willing to do so – outside of academia. He has changed his social behavior to better reflect how he wants others to see him, "I used to party . . . I don't drink anymore." During both observations, Andrew was extremely focused on peer reviewing other students' papers. He was very business-like and didn't socialize or chat with the other students, but he did mention that the support of his classmates was part of what helped him succeed on his argument paper. Right now, for him, socializing with peers is not something he is necessarily seeking out because that part of his life doesn't factor into his college goals and goals as a good father.

Cameron's social identity has taken a drastic change from being online to being a good fiancé. When he was growing up, his isolated location and his home life drove him to spending more of his free time socializing and developing his identity through a virtual life. However, since meeting his fiancée, his desire to be a good mate has changed what groups he socializes with, how often he socializes with the groups, and what that socialization entails. In the beginning of the semester, Cameron had begun socializing with one student in his class; however, he "grew to dislike him" because "he didn't seem like he wanted to further himself in the class." In addition to his desire to be good enough for his fiancée, Cameron's academic identity impacted with whom and how he socialized in class. During both observations, it was evident that Cameron was embracing a more studious, serious identity than what he explained he used to have. He conversed with other students only about their essays, and did not participate in any of the general chit chat that periodically took place. This choosiness extends to any socialization he and his fiancée do outside of class; they both work forty hours a week and are

enrolled in 16 credits (him) and 17 credits (her) at CWCC, so they have become very selective what they do with their downtime. At this point in his life, Cameron's social identity extends to proving his worth as a fiancé and future husband.

Even though feeling socially connected to the college campus is important to the social and academic identities of students (Fleming et al., 2017; Locks et al., 2008; Schlossberg, 1989), each of the participants saw socialization in a different light and none of the participants reached out and really connected socially to their classmates. They saw their classmates as part of the academic setting only, which did not transcend to their social lives. Cameron's and Andrew's social identities are heavily influenced by their own self-identities. Cameron's has become a more conscientious, studious, and mature person than he was when he was eighteen, and with these changes have come changes in his social self. Andrew's role as a father and desire to be a good role model has made him more conscientious of what he does socially, which has led to his choice to no longer drink and party. Kaylee's and Julianna's social identities are more focused around hanging out with friends and having fun, which have included working with friends at jobs, eating out, playing cards, and partying. Their identities are less influenced by their academic identities like Cameron's or Andrew's; however, they are younger than Cameron and Andrew, who both admitted that their maturity played a large part in their current social choices.

Social identity is impacted by relationships, and all four students made choices based on these relationships. Andrew and Cameron both cut people out of their lives and became more cautious about inviting new people into their lives to have better social and self identities. Kaylee recognized that many of those she valued in her social circle were moving away because of college, so she began to have more purposeful contact with those she could. Julianna's social life outside of the college setting had repercussions that she is still working through. Each

student also made choices based on whom they want to be – their "hoped-for possible self" (Aresta, Pedro, Santos, & Moreira, 2015, p. 71) through social connections and social comparisons (Yang, Holden, Carter, & Webb, 2018) and the internalization of their group memberships (Jenkins, 2004).

Virtual Identity The impact of technology on identity development has been studied since the 1980s (Turkle, 2005), and researching the phenomenon of online identity quickly followed (Greenfield, 2015; Hu et al., 2015; Paech, 2009; Zhao et al., 2008). "Today's youth spend a significant amount of time online, and recent research has suggested that this involvement may lend itself to living two different lives" (Kurek et al., 2017, p. 3). Cultivating an online identity that may not reflect reality and instead promotes a more desirable self is not uncommon, especially with the numerous social media platforms that people can use (Hu et al., 2015). Creating a specific virtual identity by "posting photos of friends, and quoting thoughtful sentences . . . [is a way to] build a social desirable identity" (Hu et al., 2015, p. 466; Zhao et al., 2008). Members of other online communities, like MMORPGs, also create identities through their carefully constructed avatars (Paech, 2009). For Millennials, cultivating an online identity is second nature.

Three of the four participants have never known a world before the Internet, and only Andrew remembers a time when "we didn't have Internet because it wasn't there." However, all four participants have cultivated online personae with different outcomes. Cameron and Andrew have both been part of online communities that required creating a "digital alias" (Paech, 2009, p. 207), but both have been concerted in cleaning up their online presence. Julianna's and Kaylee's online presences have been more focused around social media where they have presented themselves "meaningfully" (Baudrillard, 1981, pp. 74-75) in a "deliberately

constructed, socially desirable self" (Greenfield, 2015, p. 117). While Kaylee's presence is easily accessible through simple Google searches, Julianna's, Cameron's, or Andrew's presence is either extremely private (the Facebook account shows up, but is inaccessible) or difficult to find (the account or web page is not on the first page but on a later page of the Google search).

Kaylee's online presence is prolific. A quick Google search provides links to profiles on Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest, SoundCloud, TikTok, Prezi, and Twitter, and most of these, while somewhat private, are easily accessible without needing to officially request access. She has also written Amazon product reviews and commented on bloggers' posts. What she posts online is a carefully constructed identity that is similar to what she thinks she is projecting to her instructors, friends, researchers. Her photos show a smiling young woman surrounded by lots of friends. Her comments on bloggers posts are extremely positive with excited tones and lots of exclamation points. Her Pinterest pins are inspiration and future focused – wedding dresses, engagement rings, pictures of moms and children. Both her Facebook and Instagram profiles have an inspirational quote from Michael John Bobak, "All progress takes place outside the comfort zone," that connects back to her mantra of "try again" and her reading of self-help books and inspirational bloggers. She uses the online world to project her "hoped-for possible self" (Aresta et al., 2015, p. 71) and build her socially desirable identity (Hu et al., 2015).

Julianna, while expressing that she uses most every social media platform available, has tight privacy settings in use because a Google search of her name provides only her SoundCloud account. This corresponds with her shy, private nature; however, the profile picture on the account that is publicly available projects a sexy woman who has several happy, smiling friends, which is much more indicative of her desire to control how people identify her. Julianna is very concerned about belonging, which is indicated by her need for positive "connections and

feedback" (Sarup, 1993, p. 164) and how she will change or delete posts depending on how many positive responses she gets in a certain time. Julianna sees the online platforms as safe spaces to control her identity. In face-to-face interaction, she is very quiet and shy; she waits for others to approach her. However, in the online environment, she can control who sees her posts, whose comments remain on her posts, and she can very carefully control a projected, desired identity.

Andrew used to have more of an online presence, but after having his identity stolen twice, has clamped down on the information that is publicly available. Currently, the only information that is publicly available about Andrew is his Facebook profile picture (in his Scout uniform) and a few mentions in connection with Scouts and his son's high school band. While he was online dating, he created profiles that he believed were honest, because "honesty is the best practice." Like his perception of his academic abilities, Andrew's "honest" online presence had a self-deprecating tone to it as he made sure to mention things like not having dated in thirteen years and "one person's idea of having fun is not my idea . . . and I'm not included in the fun." His interest in cybersecurity is another factor that has influenced Andrew to spend time erasing as much of his online presence as possible and keeping only what is necessary.

Like Andrew, Cameron also used to have more of an online presence than he does now. Although he still does play some online games, he no longer plays as many or as often as he used to. When he was creating avatars, he liked being the good guy and liked avoiding being mean; ironically however, on Reddit, where he could be anonymous, he found himself being an "asshole." When he was younger, he embraced the ability to "create multiple identities . . . in both embodied and virtual spaces" (Petitfils, 2015, pp. 49-50); however, over the past couple of years, he has concertedly eliminated as much of his online past as possible. Despite this effort,

"you're going to find a picture of me with two birds . . . there's an embarrassing photo of me up on the Internet." However, his privacy settings are so high that Google currently doesn't produce any results for Cameron, including the embarrassing photo he references.

All four participants recognize that the Internet is part of life whether they really want to be part of it or not, and all recognize that their online image can impact their offline self. Each participant also commented that they know people are "more bold on social media" (Julianna) and "aren't honest [or] what they seemed to be" (Andrew). The participants recognized that they, along with other people, use the virtual to "stage the imaginary to fabricate (simulate) the real" (Introna, 1997, p. 6). They all have very different relationships with their online selves, but these relationships are also indicative of their current status and past experiences. Having the ability to invent and reinvent their online selves to impact their offline selves has also become very important (Petitfils, 2015). Andrew and Cameron are both older and have had negative repercussions from their online identities, and in response have focused on carefully curating their identities that are available online; they have both spent time editing and deleting what had been available in order to create an identity they feel can be publicly acceptable (Petitfils, 2015). For both Kaylee and Julianna, there is a sense they both feel their virtual lives portray a more perfect life (Petitfils, 2015) and allow them control over how others see them, so they "don't sell my face ugly" (Julianna). Kaylee's online presence is quite open, and it portrays a young woman with lots of friends and lots of happiness in her life. Kaylee also feels that the online world allows her to be a part of her family's experiences even when she is not there, so she feels more connected (Tiffin & Terashima, 2001). Julianna's presence isn't as public as Kaylee's, but she does admit that she tries to portray a certain persona that is as nice as she feels she is in real life. "Image has to do with first impression. Sometimes the message is spin; sometimes the message

is the absolute truth" (Atkinson, 2008, p. 30), but what is projected online is always created.

Curating Identities Each of the students has been and continues to curate different identities, and many "self-concept researchers [suggest] that people come to view themselves as they believe how others view them" (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003, p. 3). "Self-concept is heavily influenced by frames of reference or standards against which to judge one's own traits and accomplishments. Social comparison often serves as the most potent source of information for self-concept" (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003, p. 3). All four participants have been influenced by these frames and standards both online and offline. Sometimes these outside influences support how each student wants to feel about himself or herself, but other times these influences cause incongruous feelings about themselves.

Kaylee's self-identity has not been impacted by her academic successes or failures, but she definitely looks to others as a reflection of her own self. Her identity within her family has impacted her as she has put the needs of her sister before her own needs; she wants her family to see her as a good, helpful, important member. Her virtual identity is a projection of how she wants others to see her, and while she recognizes that not everything online is real, she does believe that what she projects online is more real than contrived. Her different roles also impact her self-concept as they often contradict each other rather than work together.

Julianna is struggling with whom she is inside the classroom and outside the classroom. In person she is a very sweet, quiet young woman who has a mournful quality, but online she is projecting someone who is sexy and vibrant. Like Kaylee, she also judges herself by how she perceives others see her. The contradictions she feels when she doesn't get enough likes on pictures, mainly pictures of herself when she thinks looks good, or doesn't connect with those around her, impact her own recognition of herself.

Andrew's self-identity began in elementary school when he was enrolled in special education courses to help him with his dyslexia and dysgraphia, but his academic identity was heavily impacted when those services were no longer available, yet he was still expected to succeed. Being part of Boy Scouts of America helped him find success outside of academia, and it is this strong, confident identity that has translated to persistence and success in school even if he doesn't self-identify academically. Because Andrew struggles with a strong academic identity, he doesn't expect others to see his academic endeavors as important though he does recognize that he is establishing a positive role model for his children. His identities as good father and mentor drive him and override any contradicting self-concepts he internalizes.

Cameron's self-identity has changed a lot in the past couple of years, and it is mostly because he wants to live up to the way his fiancée sees him. He has erased past identities by cleaning up and almost eliminating his online identity, and he has embraced a new academic identity that is almost opposite what it was in high school. He has carefully cultivated identities that support him being a good (future) husband and provider, and he doesn't entertain any identity that would work against these goals.

Self-identity is how a person thinks about himself or herself, but self-identity is not singular (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003). Academic identity develops through connections, successes, and failures within the classroom and campus setting (White & Lowenthal, 2019). Social identity relies on connections and relationships both within and outside of the family unit (Kurek et al., 2017). Virtual identity allows individuals to create normal or hoped for lives when their offline lives may not be as positive or credible (Jenkins, 2004, p. 73). Sometimes the identities are congruent, yet other times they conflict, and how a person navigates these multiple identities can vary with each given circumstance.

Impact of Writing on Identity Development Analyzing the work written by the students can offer insight into much of their life and can help indicate how they view themselves and the world around them (Peräkylä & Ruusuvuori, 2011). However, learning to write a college level essay can be wrought with frustration for students in developmental writing classes, and this struggle can often impact how they view themselves. Sometimes this struggle is articulated in the students' writing, and other times it is only evident by looking at the students' writing process.

Andrew and Cameron were the only two students to remain in class all semester and submit final portfolios to the assessment committee. Kaylee did not provide any written documents for analysis. She was withdrawn in October and hadn't submitted any assignments prior to her withdrawal. Julianna attended until Thanksgiving break and had submitted several assignments prior to the break, but she did not submit a final portfolio. She did provide a midterm reflection that was analyzed for this research project. None of the four students indicated that they changed their opinions about academic writing, but several of the students did demonstrate growth – in writing and in thinking, but not necessarily in self-perception.

Although Kaylee had no academic writing to analyze for fall 2019, she did take English 99 in fall 2018 and completed the class, only to find out from her instructor that she didn't pass the portfolio. That semester, Kaylee's instructor had two sections of English 99 and only 32 percent of the portfolios passed, so Kaylee's experience was the more common outcome for her instructor's classes. She thought she "did good . . . but learned her lesson." However, even though she believed she had learned the lesson being taught to her, which she could not articulate, this hit to her academic identity impacted her subsequent semesters, and instead of recognizing that her actions might be the cause of her failure, she blamed outside factors (Millar

& Tanner, 2011). She didn't stay focused on her English classes during the spring 2019 or fall 2019 semesters and didn't do many, if any, of the assignments. She is, however, still a very prolific writer online although that writing is not academically focused and much more social in nature. Because her online profiles are quite public, many of her comments on bloggers' posts and her Amazon reviews are available. These writings are all indicative of the virtual identity that Kaylee is carefully constructing – positive, fun, friendly, and connected – which is a more successful identity than her current academic one.

Julianna also did not submit a final portfolio, but during the first ten weeks of the semester, she did turn in her assignments. According to her instructor, Julianna's writing was "shaky" and definitely demonstrated "a lack of understanding of some fundamentals." Although she was doing her work, according to Julianna, by midterm, she didn't feel that she had improved either as a writer or as a student. She also found that she had lost motivation and "would really like to get that motivation back." By late October, when Julianna submitted her midterm reflection, she was able to produce a lengthy paragraph of focused writing that while not perfect, did show that she understood basic sentence structure and organization. She was able to create complex sentences and compound-complex sentences; however, she did mostly employ a sentence-verb-object pattern. Julianna expressed that she feels "as if my writing has stayed the same," but if, as her instructor said, her writing was shaky in the beginning of the semester, then her midterm writing demonstrates growth that Julianna is not recognizing.

In her midterm reflection, Julianna also addressed her growth as a college student, expressing that

> I feel as if for me to work on myself to become the best college student I can be, I need to fully show up to class on time. I need to give my full undivided attention and have my

> phone put up. I need to stop procrastinating and just get the work done, even if it's a couple days before its (sic) due . . . everything I choose to do will determine myself as a student.

She articulated her shortcomings and demonstrated that she was developing her thinking through writing (Flower & Hayes, 1981), but Julianna didn't recognize that the writing assignments were helping her to develop both as a thinker and student. Instead, she saw herself as someone who suffers "writers block . . . due to the lack of writing in a while" even though she does write daily in the online setting. She clearly delineates between writing in the classroom and "real" writing.

Andrew provided every draft he wrote for every paper leading up to his final portfolio. For his summary, which is one paragraph in length, he created at least "ten different revisions," and through these revisions was able to take sentences that were written in a way that asserted Andrew's opinion and revise them to assert the author's opinion. He was also able to create more intricate sentences that better followed the standard rules of grammar and created more clarity and complexity within his writing:

> If you study every day and have a schedule, it will be easier to get in the frame of mind to study, then you will have routine" (29 August draft).
>
> Studying and maintaining a schedule will make it easier to keep a routine according to O'Keeney. He says that by keeping a positive attitude and not thinking about all the negativity in one's life, students will succeed in college (Portfolio submission).

Andrew's initial belief that he barely passed demonstrates that he didn't see changes like these in his summary as major both in how he understood the material and understood the purpose of a summary. His initial summary focused on ideas that were insignificant, but by the end of the semester, he was able to create a summary that showed that he was better

understanding the meaning of the text and could better convey his understanding.

The drafts of his exemplification essay also demonstrate a development and clarity in his thinking and an understanding indicative of a student who has moved beyond developmental (Thompson, 2013). His drafts also demonstrate an ability to understand the importance and difficulty of revision and was able to move beyond just surface level changes to some more text based changes (Faigley & Witte, 1981). Andrew's topic was something that he, himself, was dealing with – the conflicts in the life of a single parent who has returned to college. Not only did his unity and grammar improve but his ability to articulate important ideas improved. In his first draft, Andrew was able to create a strong thesis, but his topic sentences didn't support the thesis. This resulted in paragraphs starting like this:

> The everyday hustle and bustle getting children to their after school activities, making sure that they have transportation, our lives are busy enough, then you add college life on top of it. (3 October)

Not only is this sentence a run on, but it contains a lot of awkward phrasing. However, after nine drafts, he had identified the main points he wanted to make, broken the original statement into two complete sentences, and ended up with a strong topic sentence, followed by a good supporting sentence:

> It is hard for a single parent to attend college and take care of a family while juggling everyone's schedule. With the everyday hustle and bustle of getting children to their after-school activities and making sure they have transportation, our lives are busy enough and adding college life on top of it makes it even more hectic. (Portfolio submission)

The topic of his essay also demonstrated that Andrew was reflecting on the conflicting roles and

identities he is experiencing as he pursues this new path in life. He focuses on his roles as a parent and student, his struggles as a student, and his struggles with his learning disabilities.

Andrew's lack of confidence about his argument essay is not based in the content as much as it is based in the process. Unlike his other portfolio pieces, this essay had only three drafts. His first draft, dated 19 November, has some of the same issues as his first exemplification drafts – poor topic sentences and grammar and clarity issues. However, he was able to improve these problems in fewer drafts than his other pieces of writing and create a 2.5 page essay that made an argument and was supported by outside sources. While not perfectly executed, he was able to integrate direct quotes, paraphrases, and summaries with citations that show he understands the boundaries between presenting material and plagiarism (Stine, 2004). Not only does his content demonstrate academic growth and development, but his process, shorter than before, also demonstrates academic growth as he is able to create strong writing in fewer drafts.

Despite his evident improvement in his writing and ability to articulate his thinking, during the final interview Andrew's attitude toward his abilities still tended toward self-deprecating. In fact, when he first entered the researcher's office for the final interview, he seemed deflated as if he had failed the portfolio rather than passed it. The first words out of his mouth were "barely passed." Even after the researcher and Andrew read through the readers' positive comments, his interview was interspersed with statements like: "I struggled with the argumentative." "I rushed around and did it last minute." "I was not confident when I submitted [the portfolio]." "I'm not a very good writer." He did, after much discussion, begin to acknowledge that his writing had improved, but instead of acknowledging the amount of work (and drafts) he had done, he credited "everyone involved, my classmates, my instructor, and the

writing studio."

Cameron didn't provide every draft he wrote, but did provide several rough drafts for comparison to his final submissions. As his instructor indicated, Cameron's writing was fairly strong to begin with, but he did show improvement in unity, clarity, and coherence. His summary was extremely well written and demonstrated that he understood the main arguments and underlying meanings (Stine, 2004) of the text he was summarizing. His grammar and structure are virtually error-free, and he employs a strong command of sentence variety. In fact, one of his portfolio readers wrote, "Very clean and organized summary."

Cameron provided two copies of his exemplification essay rough draft, dated 14 September. One draft included all his marks indicating his planned revisions. (See Appendix E for a sample of his revision process and the final product.) What his draft indicates is that Cameron understands that revision should be more than just surface level changes, but should extend to text-based changes that include deleting, adding, reorganizing (Faigley & Witte, 1981). His changes also indicate a more mature approach to writing as his original thesis was more developmental in nature. Instead of being a broad, complex idea, his first thesis statement was written in second person, as if he was "talking" to the reader, and listed what he was going to talk about, a type of thesis that is taught at the high school level. His second thesis, which is broader, demonstrates an ability to visualize the main argument and the essay organization without having to list, or simplify, his points.

> However, I am a good student due to my ability to utilize my resources and practice good study habits while improving my note taking skills. (14 September draft)
>
> I take solace in the fact that I improve a little bit each day. (Portfolio submission)

His topic sentences and paragraph development also demonstrate similar changes,

including changing one sentence from "Asking for help in one's studies is a great way to get ahead in college" to "It is crucial for students to understand when they are struggling and know when to seek support." Other changes include changing vague statements with vague support like "provide a helpful hand" to more specific statements like "provide constructive criticism and give me helpful feedback," followed by detailed, personal support. Not only do these changes indicate a stronger grasp of writing, but they also show a change in cognitive behavior (Thompson, 2013). The content of his essay shows that he understands that he needs to recognize when he needs help and that criticism can be constructive and should be welcomed.

Cameron's argument essay demonstrates that he has advanced his reading and comprehension skills, employed a strong writing process, and has developed his understanding of how to integrate outside source material into a thesis driven essay (Stine, 2004), which all indicate that he has moved beyond being a developmental writer. One indicator of Cameron's growth as a writer and thinker is his ability to take several charts and graphs from his original source and explain the information in his own words in a manner that seamlessly integrates within his essay. He used a book, *Paying the Price: College Costs, Financial Aid, and the Betrayal of the American Dream*, as one of his sources, but instead of directly quoting the author or merely inserting a copy of several of the author's charts, Cameron interpreted the charts and summarized the findings. His ability to understand the "boundary between paraphrasing and plagiarizing" (Stine, 2004, p. 53) indicates his growth as a writer, thinker, and college student. His word choices also demonstrate a development of his voice, "the way individuals represent or identify themselves in their discourse" (Flowerdew & Wang, 2015, p. 85).

Cameron and Andrew both had the same instructor, so their portfolio submissions all focused on the same topics. For the summary, they were to write about the article, "How to

Make It in College Now That You Are Here." The exemplification essays were actually reflective; students were to explain what kind of student they are, supported by specific examples from the semester's work that show their strengths and weaknesses. The argument essays focused on specific problems that college students confront. Andrew's essay focused on the difficulties of being a single parent and college student at the same time. Cameron's essay focused on the unrealistic expectations colleges have, including costs and satisfactory academic progress (SAP).

Like Andrew, Cameron was most concerned about whether or not his argument essay would hinder his ability to pass the portfolio. His concern was similar to Andrew's in that he didn't feel he had enough time to "rewrite and I didn't have a lot of time write it [the first time] . . . and it was definitely not my best work." Both students worried about the shortened time frame as their first drafts of the argument essays were due early November, allowing only about three weeks' time for students to revise. However, both students produced solid essays that received good remarks from the portfolio readers. They both received comments that their essays were "well organized" and the attempts at citation and source integration were good, though both were told they would want to "pay attention to Works Cited and citation formatting just to make sure you avoid small mistakes" (Cameron) and make sure your essay is not "APA citation" (Andrew). While neither one recognized it, their writing ability had developed and matured, so a shortened revision time didn't impede their progress.

Cameron and Andrew also both discussed the feedback they received in class from other students. Andrew was grateful that his "fellow classmates, they jumped in and helped me" when he was struggling with a topic for his argument essay, and did credit his classmates' feedback (along with the Writing Studio and his instructor) for helping him improve his writing. Cameron,

on the other hand, "didn't like . . . the help that I got from fellow students" which he found "frustrating." Cameron also indicated that he felt a lot of students just didn't care and weren't treating the class as seriously as they should, and he believed this was part of why the peer review process didn't feel like an exchange of ideas or a constructive conversation (Sommers, 1982a, 1982b). As Mr. Crawford said about Cameron, "his writing was pretty good to begin with," so his writing may have intimidated others in the class who recognized that the things he was able to do were things they, too, should be able to do, but were struggling with. The disconnect of teachers being an inauthentic audience (Thompson, 2013) for several of the students could have also impacted Cameron's interaction with the students.

"Textual production is at the core of negotiating the interactive relationships among the members of academic communities and claiming and constructing academic identities" (Flowerdew & Wang, 2015, p. 82). Because Cameron has such a strong academic identity, he saw the assignments as necessary and meaningful; many of his classmates may not have felt the same, which helps explain Cameron's frustrations with their feedback and his businesslike rather than social attitude toward his classmates. Andrew's confidence about his writing continues to be weak, and he absolutely hated the class though he did appreciate the support he received from his instructor and classmates. It was his social identity – being a good role model for his children – that drove his focus to take the writing assignments seriously, develop his ideas, and provide the best peer feedback he could. Julianna and Kaylee both struggled with the requirements of academic writing and didn't connect the writing to developing themselves as students. However, both women actively write online where they get "likes" and immediate feedback and can develop their virtual selves. These immediate connections are more important for both women than the academic connections. Writing can have profound effects on students'

perceptions of self, especially as they navigate the numerous writing platforms and genres (Flowerdew & Wang, 2015).

Impact of Classroom on Identity Development Three of the participants were in the same class with Mr. Crawford, which met Tuesday and Thursday mornings. Mr. Crawford's class began with twelve students but was down to eight students by the end of the semester. Of those eight, only six submitted portfolios. Five of the six portfolios passed the assessment. The fourth participant was in class with Mr. Wallins, and her class met Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings. Mr. Wallins class began with twenty-one students and fifteen students completed the semester. Only six students submitted portfolios, and only one of the portfolios passed the assessment.

Julianna was enrolled in Mr. Wallins' English 99 class. During the fall semester, Julianna attended English 99 until right before Thanksgiving break. She would "sit by myself . . . [and] do my own thing" though she did "talk to one boy because he came and sat next to me." She did not really involve herself with most of the class. The lack of motivation Julianna wrote about in her midterm was evident during both observations, October 4 and November 18. Julianna spent the majority of the class periods looking at her phone or with her head on the desk; she was disengaged with what was happening around her. However, Julianna's disengagement may not be strictly because of her shy nature or her personal circumstances; the instruction and culture in the class may have placed her and her classmates at a disadvantage (Chang et al., 2012).

During both observations, it was evident that the class itself did not engage Julianna, but it also didn't engage several students. During the October observation, Mr. Wallins' class began late because he was having a casual conversation with two students in the front of the room. The previous class period, students were to have identified broad topics they wanted to write about

for the current assignment. For this class, they were going to work to narrow their topics. Once Mr. Wallins got started, he spent a few minutes going over a PowerPoint that explained how to narrow topics, and then told students to group up. The groups were to work through three questions to help each student narrow his or her topics. Julianna was not the only student to remain in her seat and not join a group. Two other students did the same. The groups were focused for about five minutes, but then general conversation started up. Mr. Wallins, in that time, talked with one group, but did not interact with any other students. Quite quickly, one group – and one student in particular (and one of the students that had impacted the class start time) – commandeered Mr. Wallins' attention and proceeded to loudly discuss topics not related to the assignment at hand. For the remainder of class (28 minutes) Mr. Wallins and this student talked. Julianna looked at her phone. Other students put their heads down or looked at their phones. The only students engaged with the instructor were the two students sitting next to the one who had commandeered control of the class. The November observation was similar in experience. Mr. Wallins spent almost the entire period just talking with the same student who had commandeered control in October. During this observation, Julianna arrived late, ate some chips, looked at her phone, and slept. Other students could be seen openly reading their phones, listening to music or watching videos with headphones on, and sleeping.

Julianna's lack of engagement with the class may not be just because she was shy or because she had some personal issues. The entire class seemed very disinterested in the content or in developing their writing, and the one student who engaged with the instructor seemed very intent on keeping the instructor off topic. The results of the class – 21 students beginning, 15 completing, only 6 submitting portfolios and only 1 student passing – indicate that Julianna, as well as others, may have been negatively impacted by the classroom setting (Chang et al., 2012).

Without academic discourse and the give and take needed to develop, students in Mr. Wallins' classroom were not provided the opportunity to develop their academic selves.

Kaylee, Andrew, and Cameron were all enrolled in Mr. Crawford's class, which started out small, but very quickly dropped to an even smaller group of eight regularly attending students. Mr. Crawford did note that this smaller class size allowed him to teach his class differently than he does a larger class. He used more just-in-time-teaching methods, worked more with students one-on-one, and was able to provide them with extra library time during class periods. During the fall semester, Mr. Crawford was one of several instructors who took part in an embedded tutoring program offered by the campus Writing Studio. This program assigned a peer tutor to a specific class, and during peer review sessions and any other activities identified the instructor of record, the peer tutor would be in the class and engage with the students. In Mr. Crawford's class, the peer tutor attended peer review sessions and acted as an additional reviewer, often working with the students one-on-one for up to thirty minutes.

Kaylee believed she was unsuccessful in English 99 during the fall 2019 semester because her instructor withdrew her. "The frustrating part is I missed, I think I officially missed four, and then he had to drop me [because of the attendance policy]." Her lack of attendance wasn't a choice in her eyes, "I missed classes due to having to take my sister to work and her appointments," but according to her, these outside hurdles didn't impact her standing in her other courses (her transcripts show otherwise). Her explanation for the difference in outcomes (that she conveyed) was that her other teachers were more understanding about her absences and would allow her to make up the absences by attending a different section of the same course, but this was not the case with her English instructor. She stated that if she was absent, "for the most part, every time I would e-mail him . . . [but] there's only so much he can do as well." Mr.

Crawford, however, stated that "after probably that first week [her] attendance started getting spotty," and she didn't communicate with him regarding her absences. He also said that when Kaylee was in class, she was not engaged. According to Mr. Crawford, she was not focused on what was going on in class, often didn't have her textbook, and when a draft was due, "she wouldn't have a draft." This behavior was observed in October when Kaylee showed up for class late, without her own draft to have reviewed, and worked on only two students' papers after being prompted by Mr. Crawford.

Andrew and Cameron were both very engaged in the classroom, according to Mr. Crawford. They both did their work, participated in group activities, and rarely missed class. During both the October and November observations, Andrew and Cameron had drafts ready for students to look at, looked over multiple students' drafts, interacted with the embedded tutor, and worked individually with the instructor. Mr. Crawford regularly moved about the classroom checking in with students, looking at essays, and trying to keep students on task. While some students, like Kaylee, were able to disengage or put in minimal effort, Mr. Crawford made it more difficult for students to choose doing nothing over participating in the activity. Although Andrew does not identify with a strong academic identity, both he and Cameron exhibited one during the observed class periods.

Cameron credited Mr. Crawford for his approach to teaching the class as part of the reason he was successful. "I really enjoyed him. He made it more about progressing as a writer versus deadlines, deadlines, deadlines." His respect for Mr. Crawford, as well as his strong focus on developing his identity as a serious student, allowed him to work through his frustrations with the other students during peer review. He also appreciated the embedded tutor and "got a little bit of help from her. I like having the extra help in there." He also took seriously his role as peer

reviewer and heavily "marked up" other students' paper. "I covered them in ink." He would also explain to the students he was just "trying to help…trying to further you." The feedback he got from Mr. Crawford and the embedded tutor were what gave him the confidence to provide so much feedback to his fellow students, though he wished more students would have done the same for him.

Andrew credited Mr. Crawford and the Writing Studio for his success, "Between Mr. Crawford and the writing center…he had some good ideas; they had some good ideas." Unlike Cameron, Andrew perceived the peer review process to be helpful, "everybody putting in their input; I'm not a very good writer but with their input, they kind of helped me." And, unlike Cameron, Andrew did not like working with the embedded tutor as he felt that she and his instructor "didn't have their information the same." He did, however, believe that the help the writing studio offered did support Mr. Crawford's information, so his desire to learn, despite his dislike of the class, influenced his regular visits to the Studio (Bettinger et al., 2013). Andrew also really liked the smaller class size because he felt that Mr. Crawford was able to give much more individualized attention, which he believes also positively impacted his success.

For all four participants, the classroom environment had an impact on their identities. "[T]eaching and learning are no longer conceptualized as simply a cognitive process, but also as situated social practice during which novice members of communities develop new identities" (Flowerdew & Wang, 2015, pp. 82-83). For some, the classroom experience had a positive impact on their academic identities, but for others, their academic identities were not impacted by their academic successes, failures, or connections within the classroom. Instead, the identities and roles they had outside the classroom (working 40 hours, parenting, family responsibilities) often created a hierarchy that dictated how they spent their time and what identity or role took

precedent.

Interpretations and Conclusions

All four students are actively developing their academic, social, and virtual identities meaningfully through relationships and experiences because "every group or individual experiences a vital pressure" (Baudrillard, 1981, pp. 74-75) to do so. Kaylee experiences dissidence between her identity as a teacher at the before and after school program (BASP) and her identity as a student; she also projects a carefully curated online identity that she wants people to believe is reality. Julianna is extremely shy in person, wants people to see her as nice, and struggles to see herself as a college student, but she also projects a sexy online identity who has lots of friends. Both young women may be projecting these online identities in the hopes that the virtual may connect to the real (Hu et al., 2015) or that the virtual will become the real. Despite past successes, Andrew perceives himself academically weak; it is his identities as mentor and father that override his academic identity and help him persist. Cameron's desired identity of being the best fiancé and future husband he can be predominates all his other identities; those that don't support his future goals are no longer embraced. Even though both men have varying academic identities, their "perceived membership in various social groups" (Nagy & Koles, 2014), especially their families, motivates them.

While Kaylee was successful her first semester, the subsequent semesters have seen her fail or withdraw from classes, but she admits that she hasn't reached out for help or used the Writing Studio. While she admits she knew about some resources (Writing Studio and tutors), she didn't know that campus counselors and her advisor could have helped her navigate the personal hurdles. Like many students who find themselves failing, withdrawing, and/or dropping out, Kaylee tried, unsuccessfully, to navigate everything on her own (J. Coleman, 2016;

Townsend & Wilson, 2006). Julianna also struggled with reaching out to resources, and while some of this was because she, like Kaylee, lacked the knowledge of the resources, she also lacked the confidence to reach out and make necessary connections to the college community (Winkle-Wagner, 2010).

The classroom setting clearly had an impact on all the students. Mr. Wallins' classroom didn't encourage student engagement, and for a student like Julianna who is shy and quiet, this allowed her to more easily check out and not participate. Mr. Crawford's classroom required participation though students were able to get away with minimal effort at times. For Kaylee, Mr. Crawford's attendance policy ultimately impeded her success, but despite a third unsuccessful attempt at English 99, Kaylee was undeterred about being able to complete the course or complete college. "I'll just have to take it next semester." For Andrew, Mr. Crawford's class provided him the tools to succeed, which he did, but he still did not develop a stronger academic identity nor did he recognize his academic abilities. Cameron, the student with the strongest academic identity in the study, found the classroom setting to be frustrating because he felt like many of the students just didn't care; however, he focused on doing his work, working with the instructor and embedded tutor, and engaging only academically with the other students, ultimately finding success.

None of the participants made social connections on campus, which is usually significant to students' success and persistence (Jensen & Jetten, 2015). Because Andrew and Cameron are driven by their social identities off campus, the lack of social connections on campus haven't hindered their experience. While they did not connect with other students, they both did have good connections with their instructor and the Writing Studio tutors, and these connections offset the lack of connections with peers (McCormick et al., 2013). Julianna and Kaylee, however,

could have benefitted from social connections with other peers or with their instructors – either to help them reach out to needed services, stay up on the classwork, or find someone who could be a sounding board. Engaging in "in educationally purposeful activities, both inside and outside the classroom,"(Harper & Quaye, 2009, p. 4) leads to higher rates of success, but to engage, students need to feel some type of connection and relevance within the classroom (Komarraju & Dial, 2014).

Research on developmental writing students is not as robust as research on other populations, and the research that is currently available overlooks identity development, writing's impact on identity development, and the impact of the classroom experience on developmental writing students. While numerous studies have looked at class format and pass-fail rates for developmental writing classrooms, these studies overlook information on the students themselves to better understand why they persist, pass, fail. This study explores the individual students and their multiple identities, it explores how their experiences in the classroom impact their identities, and it highlights some reasons students have that allow them to persist even when faced with failure. This study helps provide some insight to help fill current gap of research on developmental writing students.

Implications and Contributions

Each semester, thousands of students are required to take a developmental writing class, and their success rates are often very low (Bailey & Cho, 2010; Jaggars & Stacey, 2014). Not only do these students enter college with low skill sets, but they often have difficulties outside of the classroom that hinder their college success (McLoyd, 1998; Smart, 2017; Tyack & Tobin, 1994). Understanding who the students are and what their needs are is an important step to better understanding how to help developmental writing students find better academic success. It is

also important to understand that much of the research focused on student success in developmental education currently available may not be as reliable as many would like people to believe (Goudas, 2017; Goudas & Boylan, 2012). Therefore, it is important that those in the field, especially curricular specialists and faculty, look beyond the narratives and initiatives being pushed by outside sources to better understand how to help students become successful (Goudas, 2020).

Reducing students' successes and persistence to simply pass/fail overlooks the experience and input of the student. If a student enters college with weak input, it will impact the experience, which will impact the student's outcome (Astin, 1993). Current developmental education researchers and reformers are often choosing to overlook these factors, and instead look specifically to class format as the experience that impacts students' success (CCA, 2012; Goudas, 2020; Smart, 2017). Participants in this study showed that their experiences in K-12 education had direct impact on their academic identities, which also impacted their current experiences within the college setting and the developmental writing classroom. The participants also demonstrated that outside factors often had more impact on their ability to be successful in the classroom – both positively and negatively. Their ability and desire to make a connection on campus also impacted their experience and ultimately, their semester outcome.

As the corequisite courses often show, smaller class sizes, just-in-time-teaching practices, and small group discussions can lead to higher success rates for developmental writing students (Bailey et al., 2010; Sommers, 1982b; Tinto, 1997). These smaller class sizes allow for instructors and students to make the necessary connections that help students persist (Komarraju & Dial, 2014) and provide a more personal experience. Three of the participants in this study had the experience of a very small class – eight regularly attending students – and both students

who were successful commented that this smaller class size made a difference in their ability to connect and engage with the instructor and to have their individual needs met when outside factors began inhibiting their classroom success.

Developing curriculum that connects with students requires faculty to understand the students. If students believe teachers to be inauthentic audiences and academic essays meaningless (Thompson, 2013), developing assignments that can bridge this gap may lead to more student engagement. Developing better assignments may also help students see the connection between writing an expository essay and developing new knowledge and ideas or the connection between writing an argument essay and creating new opinions. Ideas and opinions they can share in class, socially, or virtually.

Understanding that students may project themselves in class differently than outside of class may help faculty better connect with students. Learning that students play video games that require focus and concentration or finding out students like to regularly blog on social media could give insight to faculty about different topics or writing experiences that may help students understand that academic writing can be meaningful. Understanding that students value the virtual as much, if not more, than the non-virtual could help faculty create more opportunities in the classroom or online for students to interact, which, may help students better develop their language and literacy skills (Gee, 2007; Gee & Hayes, 2011). Recognizing that students who may project weak academic identities might have strong social or virtual identities could help faculty find ways to help students tap into those additional identities that could positively impact their academic success.

Developmental writing is a discipline that services a diverse group of students and no "one size fits all" program is going to be the panacea for every student. Reducing students to a

nameless group overlooks the individual needs that each developmental writer brings to the classroom, but if practitioners and researchers start looking at the identities that students are curating and how their writing development and the experiences in the classroom impact these identities, better curricular experiences may result.

Constraints and Limitations

This study was intended to provide insight into whether students are actively cultivating different identities, whether the identities contradicted or supported each other, and how the experiences of the developmental writing classroom and learning to write a college level essay impact these identities. The results of this study should be of interest to developmental writing researchers, faculty who teach developmental writing, developmental writing curricular designers, and administrators at colleges and universities where developmental writing is taught. The study was, however, not without limitations, and the results of this study should not be interpreted as representative of all developmental writing students. While the results are not generalizable, the methods set out by the study could be replicated by individuals seeking more information about developmental writing students.

Because this study was a qualitative study that focused on four students, their experiences cannot be generalized to a wider population. Studying only four students is also a very insignificant sample size of the number of students enrolled in a developmental writing course. The four students' experiences are theirs alone; however, the general themes that emerged from them can be used to guide future research. Each of the students is cultivating different identities academically, socially, and virtually. Each of the students' educational experiences has impacted those identities. Each of the students' experiences with academic writing has impacted those identities.

Choosing to conduct this study as an embedded case over the course of one semester instituted time constraints. A longer study could provide more information about each of the students. More interviews and observations throughout the students' continued enrollment through the college composition sequence could provide more information about how their identities continue to develop, how their different classroom experiences continue to impact their identities, and how their writing and thinking develops. Persistence, connection, and engagement could also be looked at better if the study were longer.

Another limitation of this study was the role of the researcher. Because the researcher is a faculty member at the research site, it took a concerted effort to have the students her not as a faculty with power, but as a student like them. This included dressing more student-like while conducting interviews, insisting they call the researcher by her first name, and making sure e-mails, while still professional, had a friendly, casual tone to them. Regardless of the effort, power differences were always at play, which may have impacted some of the information participants chose to share.

Additional limitations that have impacted the study's results are the general inexperience of the researcher, which included the general study design, question design, and contingency plans. First, there should have been at least one, if not two, more interviews with the participants, and follow-up interviews should have been part of the contingency plan. Follow-up interviews would have helped clarify some questions that emerged while analyzing the data; instead of having to wait until the final interview at the end of the semester, more immediate follow-up interviews could have provided better and earlier insight to help inform later decisions. Additional interviews could have provided more information about their identity development and experiences in real time. The questions used at the initial interview provided a lot of data,

but the final interview questions should have been more thought out to elicit better information. The questions about social identity needed stronger development to help elicit more information about that thread; focus should have included what different groups the students identify with, why, and what their roles within those groups are. Also, in the original study design, the plan was to collect only the mid-term reflection and the final portfolio, but a better design would have been asking participants to submit every piece of writing they did for the class. Because Andrew did provide all his drafts, more information was learned about his writing and thinking development than without the drafts. One of the limitations of studying writing on the impact of their identities is that "we do not have an end point for college writing" (Sommers, 1982b, p. 154), so students don't really know they have succeeded/completed that part of their learning; this was evident with Andrew. Finally, having a strong contingency plan (or two) is essential to a good study, and while this study had some contingency ideas, more specific plans could have been put in place.

One of the limitations that was not foreseen by the researcher, and therefore did not have a contingency plan, was the English 99 instructors themselves. Despite specific and detailed e-mails, several instructors did not follow the requests of the researcher. One instructor downloaded the sample consent form, printed multiple copies, and then told his students they needed to sign them (none of these students ended up participating). One instructor gave his own midterm reflection, not the one sent out by the researcher. One instructor continued to refer students to the researcher throughout the semester even though the researcher had made the time frame clear.

The limitation that most impacted the study, and was not a surprise, was the students themselves. However, there was not a strong contingency plan in play if enough students didn't

volunteer, other than extending the research an additional semester. Developmental writing students often have difficult lives, so while the study required only about two hours out of their semester, many of them thought it was just too much to take on. Several were unsure about why the study was being conducted, and explaining the project and its purpose was complex. Students who are just beginning their college experience, in a developmental writing class, don't all understand what a PhD research project is. Once it was explained, some students didn't think they wanted to be "exposed" (student survey comment) and others still believed that they would not be anonymous. Several of the students also still saw the researcher as a faculty member, so they perceived the study more as a campus or student assessment rather than a research project.

Future Directions

As the literature review shows, research on developmental students is not as robust as other populations and the research that is available is often more focused on structure of classes or moving students through developmental coursework as quickly as possible. As this overlooks important factors – like the students themselves – more research on students, their identities, and their experiences could help provide better insight into the students themselves and help inform better curricular design. Future researchers should also consider more longitudinal studies; studying students for one semester gives only a snapshot into their college experience as developmental students. Following those students beyond the developmental writing classrooms and through the entire composition sequence could provide added depth as to how the students' identities impact their successes, failures, and persistence. Future studies could use ethnography as the guiding method and more deeply study the impact of the classroom experience on students. The study's design could also be used to create in-depth research of students in other developmental disciplines (or non-developmental disciplines). While this is a low sample, so the

findings are not necessarily generalizable; it does pave the way for future in-depth studies of developmental writing students.

Final Remarks

"Obviously identity is not something we 'are' but something we become. It is of our own making" (Introna, 1997, p. 10). The participants in this study saw identity as something to develop and curate, and the different identities played different roles in their successes and failures. Some of the participants focused on and projected identities that were more desirable than realistic. For some, like Cameron, what he projected translated into action that equaled success, but for others, like Kaylee, the projected identity didn't translate into actions that supported that projected identity and didn't equal success. Others, like Andrew, had successful actions that didn't equal confident identities. And for those like Julianna, devastating experiences can have negative effects on each identity being curated.

Focusing research only on structural changes for developmental writing students limits necessary understanding to better help students. Research on identity is complex and research on developmental writers is complex, but until we understand the developmental writing student better, we cannot make curricular choices that are in their best interest. Currently, ". . . the recognition of the role affective factors, such as the development of self-identity and self-efficacy, is noticeably lacking in the conversation" (Kriner, 2017, p. 2). We need to be making more informed decision and look to their identities – academic, social, and virtual – to help us make curricular changes that benefit them. We need to broaden and deepen the scope of research on developmental writing students.

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Appendixes

Appendix A: Consent for Participation Forms

Faculty

Consent for participation in research

Title of project: Identities and Experiences: Insight into Developmental Writing Students

Dear research participant,

I am interested in how students enrolled in English 90 (Foundations of College Writing II) perceive themselves academically and virtually (online), and how the experiences in the English 90 course impact students. In order to investigate this, I am asking you to be a participant in this study by sharing your experiences and observations of students in your class who have volunteered to participate in my study.

There are no risks involved in participating in the study. While you may feel slight anxiety at being interviewed, every effort will be made to make you feel comfortable. I will interview you once, and interviews will take between thirty (30) to sixty (60) minutes. I will be recording the interviews, so that I can ensure I represent your experiences truthfully. However, your name and any other identifying information will not be associated with the video or transcript. Digital videos will not be kept longer than ten years, and digital files will be kept on a password protected computer. Benefits to you, as a participant, include the opportunity to learn about students' experiences and perceptions in the developmental writing classroom. Benefits to the greater society include a deeper understanding of Developmental Writing II students' perceptions of themselves.

Please note that your participation in this study is voluntary. If you wish to withdraw, you may do so *at any time* without penalty. You may refuse to sign this form and not participate in this study. You should be aware that even if you agree to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time. If you do withdraw from this study, it will not affect your relationship with this unit. At no point will your participation affect your progress in the MCC English 90 (Foundations of College Writing II) class in which you are enrolled.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Coordinator of the Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) at 785-864-7429 or e-mail irb@ku.edu

Confidentiality
All of the information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. Digital videos and transcripts will be stored in the researchers' offices. Only the researchers for the study will have access to these tapes and transcripts. Digital videos will be destroyed ten years after the completion of the study. You will not be identified by your real name; you will either select a pseudonym or the researcher will select one for you. Only the pseudonym will appear on transcripts, and any excerpts of dialogue that are published or appear in print will have all identifying details removed. Recordings will only be heard and viewed in professional settings with other researchers.

KU Lawrence IRB # STUDY00144235 | Approval Period 6/28/2019 – 6/27/2024

k

Authorization

I, _____ (print name), agree to participate in the research described above.

I, _____ (print name), agree to participate in an interview during the semester.

Data from this research study will potentially be used in research publications (journal articles, book chapters, books) and presentations.

Printed name:_____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

My signature indicates that I have received a copy of this consent form.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact me

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Students

Consent for participation in research

Title of project: Identities and Experiences: Insight into Developmental Writing Students

Dear research participant,

I am interested in how students enrolled in English 90 (Foundations of College Writing II) perceive themselves academically and virtually (online), and how the experiences in the English 90 course impact students. In order to investigate this, I am asking you to be a participant in this study by sharing your experiences and samples of your writing during the fall 2019 semester.

There are no risks involved in participating in the study. While you may feel slight anxiety sharing your experiences and writing with me, every effort will be made to make you feel comfortable. Students will either choose or be assigned a pseudonym at the beginning of their participation. All documents and recordings will use only the pseudonym to ensure the confidentiality of the student.

The work will take place over the course of the semester:

- During the first two weeks of school, I will interview you. Interviews will take between thirty (30) to sixty (60) minutes. I will be recording the interviews, so that I can ensure I represent your experiences truthfully. Your name and any other identifying information will not be associated with the video or transcript.
- In September, I will observe you during an in-class activity. I will be recording my observation, so that I can ensure I represent your experiences truthfully. However, your name and any other identifying information will not be associated with the video or transcript. Digital files will be kept on a password protected computer and will not be kept longer than ten years.
- In October, students in English 90 will write a short reflective piece. I will collect your reflective piece. Your name and other identifying information will not be included on the document.
- In November, I will observe you during an in-class activity. I will be recording my observation, so that I can ensure I represent your experiences truthfully. However, your name and any other identifying information will not be associated with the video or transcript. Digital files will be kept on a password protected computer and will not be kept longer than ten years.
- In December, I will interview you. Interviews will take between thirty (30) to sixty (60) minutes. I will be recording the interviews, so that I can ensure I represent your experiences truthfully. However, your name and any other identifying information will not be associated with the video or transcript.
- I will also collect your assessed portfolio along with the readers' comments. Your name and other identifying information will not be included on the documents.
- Finally, I will have you complete an online survey similar to the one your instructor had you fill out during the first two days of the semester. Your name and other identifying information will not be included.

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Benefits to you, as a participant, include the opportunity for self-reflection and greater insight regarding the topics of academic identity and virtual identity. Benefits to the greater society include a deeper understanding of Developmental Writing II students' perceptions of themselves, the experiences they have in the classroom, and how these experiences impact students.

Please note that your participation in this study is voluntary. If you wish to withdraw, you may do so *at any time* without penalty. You may refuse to sign this form and not participate in this study. You should be aware that even if you agree to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time. If you do withdraw from this study, it will not affect your relationship with this unit. At no point will your participation affect your progress in the MCC English 90 (Foundations of College Writing II) class in which you are enrolled.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Coordinator of the Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) at 785-864-7429 or e-mail irb@ku.edu

Confidentiality

All of the information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. Digital videos and transcripts will be stored in the researchers' offices. Only the researchers for the study will have access to these tapes and transcripts. Digital videos will be destroyed ten years after the completion of the study. You will not be identified by your real name; you will either select a pseudonym or the researcher will select one for you. Only the pseudonym will appear on transcripts, and any excerpts of dialogue that are published or appear in print will have all identifying details removed. Recordings will only be heard and viewed in professional settings with other researchers.

In addition to interviewing and observing you, I will be collecting class documents. The documents I will be collecting will be your midterm reflection, your final portfolio that is submitted to the assessment committee, and the rough drafts of the final essays submitted in your portfolio. All documents will be de-identified immediately and a pseudonym will be put in place of your name. Your class papers may be shared with other researchers but will not be able to be linked to your name. Your identifiable information will not be shared unless (a) it is required by law or university policy, or (b) you give written permission. You will be provided with a copy of the records disclosed if you request.

Authorization

I, _____ (print name), agree to participate in the research described above.

I, _____ (print name), agree to participate in an interview during the semester.

Data from this research study will potentially be used in research publications (journal articles, book chapters, books) and presentations.

Printed name:_____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

My signature indicates that I have received a copy of this consent form.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact me

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Appendix B: Participant Identification Survey

Following are the questions posed on Google Forms to learn about currently enrolled students in the upper level developmental writing class, called English 99 for the sake of this study, and to identify potential participants. The final question, asking students for their contact information has not been included in this form.

Section 1 Biographical Information

1. Who is your English 90 Instructor?
2. From what high school did you graduate?
3. What year did you graduate from high school?
4. How old are you?
5. I identify my ethnicity as: (select all that apply)
6. Is this your first semester at MCC-Longview?
7. How many credits are you taking this semester?
8. How many credits have you already taken?
9. How many hours do you work each week?
10. Is this your first time in English 90?
11. If not, when did you previously take English 90 (or English 30)?
12. Are you the first person in your family to go to college?
13. If not, who else in your family has attended college? Please indicate if they graduated or not.
14. When did you first start thinking about attending college?
15. How important is it for you to be enrolled in college?
    a. (Not Important1-2-3-4-5Extremely Important)
16. How important is it to your family for you to be enrolled in college?
    a. (Not Important1-2-3-4-5Extremely Important)

Section 2 Online and Electronic Usage

17. What electronics do you use on a regular basis (phone, computer, TV, etc.)?
18. What electronic activities do you devote time to (social media, shopping, podcasts, etc.)?
19. What non-electronic activities do you devote time to?
20. Do you use social media?
21. If you do use social media, how often?
22. What social media platforms do you use? (Check all that apply.)
23. If you don't use social media, please explain why.
24. Do you play online games?
25. If you do play online games, how often do you play?
26. What games do you play? (Check all that apply.)
27. If you don't play online games, please explain why.
28. Do you use online writing or blogging platforms?
29. If you do use online writing or blogging platforms, how often do you write?
30. What online writing or blogging platforms do you use? (Check all that apply.)

Section 3 Academic Perceptions

31. I enjoy school.
    a. (Strongly Disagree1-2-3-4-5Strongly Agree)
32. I am excited to be in college.
    a. (Strongly Disagree1-2-3-4-5Strongly Agree)

33. I like English/writing classes.
    a. (Strongly Disagree1-2-3-4-5Strongly Agree)
34. I like to write.
    a. (Strongly Disagree1-2-3-4-5Strongly Agree)
35. I am a good writer.
    a. (Strongly Disagree1-2-3-4-5Strongly Agree)
36. I am a strong student.
    a. (Strongly Disagree1-2-3-4-5Strongly Agree)
37. I am a serious student.
    a. (Strongly Disagree1-2-3-4-5Strongly Agree)
38. College is a new beginning for me.
    a. (Strongly Disagree1-2-3-4-5Strongly Agree)
39. I use online sites for information.
    a. (Strongly Disagree1-2-3-4-5Strongly Agree)
40. I use online sites for social interaction.
    a. (Strongly Disagree1-2-3-4-5Strongly Agree)
41. I use online sites for entertainment.
    a. (Strongly Disagree1-2-3-4-5Strongly Agree)
42. I use online sites for academic work.
    a. (Strongly Disagree1-2-3-4-5Strongly Agree)

Appendix C: Initial Interview Protocol for Students

The following questions were posed to each of the students who participated in the research project. Additional questions, specific to each student and the experiences he or she shared were asked, were asked as needed.

Interview Questions: Student

- How would you describe your overall experience with education up to this point?
  - How did you feel when you were told you would need to enroll in a developmental writing course?
  - What type of student do you think you are?
    - Can you tell me a story that explains why you think you are this way?
  - Why do you feel you are the way you are in class?
  - How do you think teachers see you?
    - Can you tell me a story about an interaction with a teacher that makes you think this is why he/she sees you this way?
  - How do you think students see you?
    - If these differ from student perception, why do you think the teacher/other students see you differently than you think you are?
  - What leadership positions have you had in high school or college?
- How would your friends describe you?
  - What types of leadership positions have you had with friends?
- How would you describe your online activity?
  - Explain the types of online communities do you belong to [wording will be adjusted according to their answers on the survey].
  - Describe what your participation in these online communities is like.
  - Explain the types of social media you use [wording will be adjusted according to their answers on the survey]. Describe the types of activities you do on social media?
  - Describe the types of things you post online (social media, news media, fan forums, etc.).
  - How do you decide what to and what not to post?
- How would you describe the image of yourself that you project online?
  - How would you say it differs or is similar to how you are off-line?
  - How would you say it differs or is similar to how you are in class?
  - Why do you choose to project a direct/indirect extension of yourself online?
  - How do you think others perceive your online self?
  - How do you think others perceive your "real" self?
  - Why would you say others perceive your "real" or online self in this manner?
- How would you compare your online persona, your offline persona, and your in-class persona?
- Would you consider you post a direct extension of yourself or do you filter what you post?
  - Yes, it is a direct extension: Why do you choose to project a direct extension of yourself online? How do you think others perceive your online persona? How do you think others perceive your "real" persona?
  - No, it is not a direct extension: How would you describe your online personal or the image you project online? How would you say it differs or is similar to your actual, off-line persona?
  - How would you describe your process of filtering and posting?

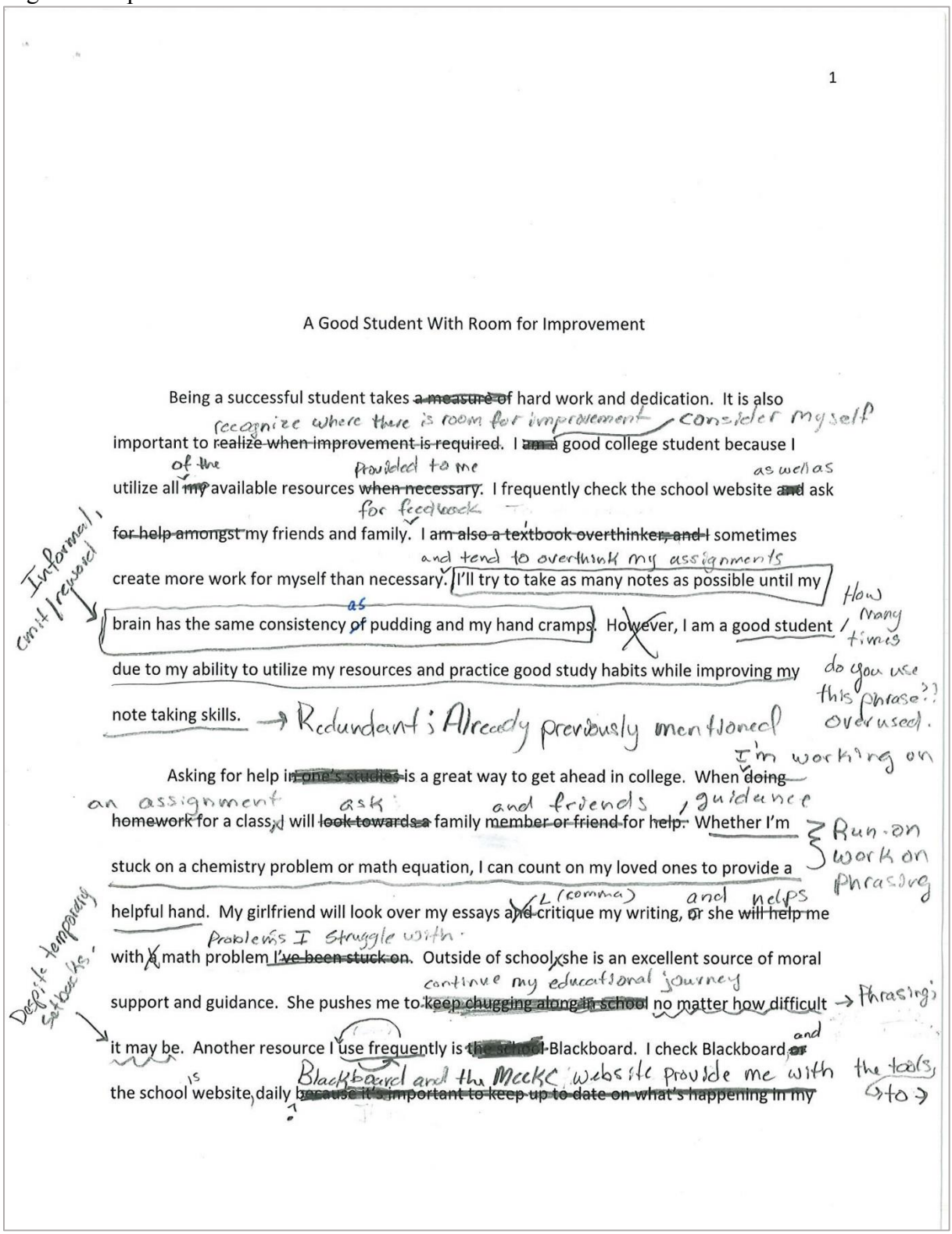
Appendix D: Interview Protocol for Faculty

The following initial questions were posed to the faculty about each of their students who had participated in the research project. Additional questions, specific to each student were used as follow-up:

- Share with me how you think "student" progressed this semester?
    - Can you give me a specific example that would demonstrate the student's progress?
- What behaviors did you see that helped/hindered the progress?
    - Can you give me a specific example?
- Tell me what changes you saw in "student's" writing? academic voice? confidence?
    - What specific examples can you recall that would support your perception?

Appendix E: Writing Process – Revision – Cameron

Page 1 of September 14 draft with Cameron's Revision Notes:



1

A Good Student With Room for Improvement

Being a successful student takes ~~a measure of~~ hard work and dedication. It is also important to ~~realize when improvement is required~~. I ~~am~~ a good college student because I utilize all ~~my~~ available resources ~~when necessary~~. I frequently check the school website ~~and~~ ask ~~for help amongst~~ my friends and family. I ~~am also a textbook overthinker, and I~~ sometimes create more work for myself than necessary. I'll try to take as many notes as possible until my brain has the same consistency ~~of~~ pudding and my hand cramps. However, I am a good student due to my ability to utilize my resources and practice good study habits while improving my note taking skills.

Asking for help in ~~one's studies~~ is a great way to get ahead in college. When ~~doing~~ homework for a class, I will ~~look towards a~~ family member or friend for help. Whether I'm stuck on a chemistry problem or math equation, I can count on my loved ones to provide a helpful hand. My girlfriend will look over my essays and critique my writing, ~~or~~ she will help me with ~~a~~ math problem ~~I've been stuck on~~. Outside of school, she is an excellent source of moral support and guidance. She pushes me to ~~keep chugging along in school~~ no matter how difficult it may be. Another resource I use frequently is the ~~school~~ Blackboard. I check Blackboard ~~or~~ the school website daily ~~because it's important to keep up to date on what's happening in my~~

Page 1 of Revised Submitted Essay:

A Well-Rounded Student With Room for Improvement

I consider myself to be a successful student. I ask for help when I need it, utilize my resources, and acknowledge my academic weaknesses. Along with acknowledging my faults, I find various ways in which I can improve them. I work full time, go to school full time, and although college is overwhelming, I take solace in the fact that I improve a little bit every day.

It is crucial for students to understand when they are struggling and know when to seek support. When I work on an assignment for a class, especially an assignment I find difficult, I ask for external input. I can count on my loved ones to provide constructive criticism and give me helpful feedback on a variety of topics such as English, math, and Chemistry. My girlfriend Marlena looks over my essays, critiques my writing, and guides me through difficult mathematical equations. Outside of school she is an excellent source of moral support. She pushes me to continue my educational journey despite temporary academic setbacks. Students also need to recognize when to ask for assistance with problems outside of their academic career. There have been multiple instances of my vehicle failing me this semester. Had I been too shy to ask Marlena and her family for support, I would not have been able to transport myself to work or school. Aside from asking people for help, it is important to utilize the many resources available through the college.

In order to maintain success this semester, I utilize both MCCKC's website and Blackboard. I use Blackboard to keep track of due dates, upcoming assignments, and exams. Blackboard also allows me to communicate with my professors and keep track of my grades. Checking my grades frequently allows me to recognize which classes need more work and helps